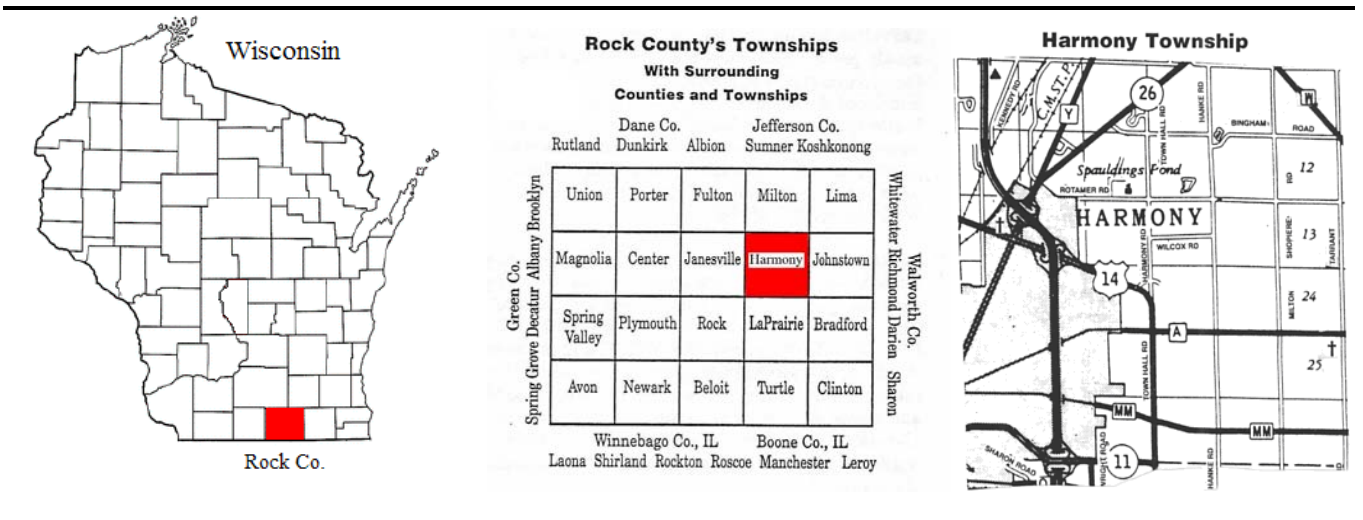


Harmony Township Guide

Published by the Rock County Genealogical Society

This guide contains the fourteenth township in a series of twenty township resource guides. It is intended to be of use to those doing genealogical or historical research in Harmony Township, Rock County, Wisconsin. Besides being published here, the resource materials collected for each Rock County township will be placed on file in the RCGS Library located at the Wilson King Stone House on the grounds of the Lincoln-Tallman House Restorations. Additions and corrections to this information are welcome and should be sent to the Rock County Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 711, Janesville, WI 53547. These additions and corrections will be put on file and added before final publication of the compendium of Rock County Township Guides in the future. These materials will be available and much-used by RCGS research volunteers and individual genealogists and historians. Copyright 2005 RCGS. See more general resources relevant to all Rock County Townships at: http://www.rootsweb.com/~wircgs/rock_twps.html.



Resources for Harmony Township, Rock County, Wisconsin

Town of Harmony

- Township 3 North Range 13 East

The town hall is located in rented office space at 440 N. Hwy. 14. Jody PARSON is the town clerk. 868.6065

Physical Features

Place Names of Harmony Township

- **Mount Zion:** This hill in Section 23 is the highest point in Rock County and, according to the USGS, is 1,037 feet above sea level at its highest point. Mt. Zion owes its name to two clergymen, James WOOD and Erastus CODDINGHAM, who after ascending the hill and noting the expansive view, said it reminded them of Jerusalem's hill of the same name.
- **SPAULDINGS' Pond:** In Section 10 and is now the site of the Janesville Rotary Club's Camp Rotamer. The land where the pond is located originally belonged to Owen SPAULDINGS.
- **Blackhawk Creek:** In Sections 25 and 26.
- **Spring Brook Creek:** In Sections 27 and 34 of present day Harmony Township and Sections 32 and 33 which are now within the Janesville city limits.
- **Rock Prairie:** *The History of Rock County-1908* notes this settlement of about 30 people in Section 23. It was a "post-village" as it had a post office for the area and was on the mail route from Milwaukee to Janesville. For many years, the post office was in the home of James CROSBY on Mount Zion. Thomas BALDWIN, 1854, p. 1002, also shows it in *The New and Complete Gazetteer of the United States*.
- **Place Names of Avon Township**
- : Located at the intersections of TARRANT/VICKERMAN Road, BINGHAM/Six Corners Road, and County M in Section 12 and 1. TARRANT Road divides the towns of Harmony and Johnstown.
- **Place Names of Harmony Township:** The city of Janesville has, over the years, annexed part or all of Sections 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, and 33 of Harmony Township.

Camp Rotamer: At SPAULDINGS' Pond in Section 10. It is at 5245 E. Rotamer Road.

History of Harmony Township

Harmony Township, Rock County, WI

The *1873 Rock County Atlas/Plat Map* by EVERTS, et. al. describes Harmony Township in this way—"The north part of this town is quite heavily timbered, furnishing an ample supply of wood for fuel and fencing, not only for the citizens of this but many of the adjoining towns. The south half of the town is prairie and on it may be found some of the finest farms in Rock County; the only objection being a scarcity of water, there being no streams. Mount Zion, in the east portion of the town, is a beautiful elevation of prairie, commanding a view of the country for many miles around. No spot in the State probably presents a more enchanting view to the

stranger than does this. To the west, south, and east a broad expanse of prairie lies spread to the eye of the beholder, that for expanse and beauty is surpassed nowhere.” p. 31

The first settlers of Harmony Township would see a strikingly different township if they returned to visit today. The eastern sections of the township retain the fine farms but many of the western sections have been annexed partially or in total into the city of Janesville over the years. Now the interstate system, residential subdivisions, and busy shopping areas are a part of the landscape. Mount Zion still serenely overlooks it all.

The *Rock County History of 1908* tells us that the first settler in the township was Mr. Daniel RICHARDSON, who arrived in 1837 and built a shelter in Section 17. Arvah COLE, Jeremiah WARNER, Ansel DICKINSON, John DEAN, and William and Joseph SPAULDINGS soon followed. In these early years John MENZIES and Andrew BARLASS also arrived from Scotland. According to the *History* these early settlers worked hard, but also stories abound of their misadventures. The story involving John DEAN and Jeremiah WARNER illustrates this very well. It seems that gophers were quite a problem and a bargain was made between Mr. WARNER and Mr. DEAN. Mr. WARNER would get rid of the gophers on Mr. DEAN's farm at the cost of one cent per gopher. By noon on the first day he had collected 220 gophers and the agreement was cancelled because Mr. WARNER was making too much money! p. 686.

Another story tells of the event that led Judge KNOWLTON to decide to study law. He was a good ax man and was busily at work when a nearby neighbor's calves that had been turned loose to graze chose to dine on his coat that he had left hanging on a nearby bush. When he finished his work, he found his coat had been ruined by the calves. He demanded payment from the neighbor who, of course, refused. KNOWLTON went in search of a Blackstone's law book and then returned to the neighbor. His threats so frightened the man that he ended up paying for the coat. This inspired KNOWLTON to study law. pp. 686-687. It is unclear whether this was James or Wiram KNOWLTON who had come to Rock County from New York. The men were brothers and later both became practicing attorneys and judges. Is there a family genealogist out there that knows the answer?

The town was organized by an act of the Wisconsin legislature and approved by Governor DODGE on March 11, 1848. The first town meeting was held on April 4, 1848, at the school near Mt. Zion. John JENKINS and Justice WHEELER were elected supervisors and Cyrus MITCHELL was elected town clerk. By 1855 the township had a population of 805 people and by 1905 there were 1,138. People from New England and the Middle States settled the township along with new citizens from Scotland, England, and Germany. The small "post-village" of Rock Prairie in section 23 had a population of 30 people. p. 687.

During the 1860's James CROSBY, in whose home on Mount Zion the post office was located, served as postmaster. In the 1880's George WAUFLE was postmaster. There is a photo of the house in a newspaper article at the RCHS Archives. The post office eventually ceased to exist as the residents were served by rural routes from the larger communities nearby. *Janesville Gazette, November 3, 1928*

Another prominent early citizen of Harmony Township was Scotsman John MENZIES, who was the progenitor of the MENZIES family, that farmed in Sections 24 and 25. The family came because they saw pamphlets telling of the wonderful easy life in Wisconsin, where there was abundant and inexpensive land to be had. James MENZIES, a son, kept a diary for many years that provides interesting insights into life in Harmony Township from 1875 to 1908. The RCHS Archives has the original diaries and transcripts of them. In 1844, the original MENZIES family found the journey to Wisconsin so difficult and the land around Milwaukee so disappointing that John, his wife Catherine, his son James, and twin daughters Helen and Christina, were ready to buy return tickets at the wharf in Milwaukee. While waiting they happened to hear someone speaking with their own Scottish accent. That person was Andrew BARLASS, who had arrived in Rock County in 1842. BARLASS convinced them to complete their journey to the rich farmland of what would become Harmony Township, where he had settled. He helped them hire empty wheat wagons for the remaining eighty-mile journey. (From a newspaper article dated March 10, 1950 found at the RCHS Archives.)

The original Town Hall of Harmony Township is famous in itself. The town was without a hall for thirty years and finally in 1876 the citizens voted to spend \$1000 for the construction of a simple wooden structure to serve as the town hall. An additional \$50 was voted to buy 26 chairs, but they drew the line at buying cushions for the chairs! The original hall was a drab olive with brown trim but was painted many times over the years. It served the town well for nearly 100 years at its spot on Harmony Town Hall Road just north of the present Hwy 14 for the “moral, political and religious purposes” of its residents. This included town meetings, 4-H Club meetings, and theater productions. About 1970, the town discontinued using of the building, and in 1975 Dick McNALL, who then owned the building and land, gave it to Old World Wisconsin. For Mr. McNALL to share the special history of the Harmony Town Hall with all Wisconsin citizens was no surprise as he had an active interest in Rock County history all his life. (He passed away in 2004.) The hall was moved and restored with funds raised by the Credit Union League as a 1976 Bicentennial project. After the move to Old World Wisconsin, the 26 pine chairs were found in the attic where they had been resting for many years. Visitors to Old World Wisconsin can visit the hall and see its name proudly displayed in its original name plaque at the peak of the building. (*Janesville Gazette June 14, 1977 and September 8, 1975*, and an undated newspaper article all found at the RCHS Archives.)

Newspapers

Because of its proximity to Janesville and Milton, the newspapers of those communities have always carried the news of Harmony Township.

Funeral Homes

There are no funeral homes in the township. Funeral homes in Janesville and Milton provide services for the families living in Harmony Township.

Churches

Mt. Zion Congregational Society was located on Co. A at Milton-Shopiere Rd. Section 25. It was organized in 1838 at the home of Ansel DICKINSON was the first protestant church in Rock County and the third Congregational Church in the Wisconsin Territory. There were nine

charter members of the congregation. The first church was a log house that was moved by oxen over snow covered ground to its present location in the Milton in 1845. A brick building was built in 1855 with the present church building constructed in 1892 (information from Janesville Gazette 18 Oct 1974.) The church records date from 1838. (608) 868-3428

Woodland Community Seventh-day Adventist Church is at 4324 E. BINGHAM Road. Section 9. The church operates Woodland Christian School, a K-8 school, at the site. The school has been in operation since the 1960's. A new church is under construction at the site but the congregation currently meets in the school. (608) 868-7560

Creston Park Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses at 4129 E. BINGHAM Rd. Section 4. It was built about 1991. Home of some of the Janesville Congregations since 2003. (608) 752-1049

Covenant Community Reformed Church was at 3501 N. Harmony Town Hall Rd. They now meet at 303 Vernal Ave. Milton. (608) 756-8159

Cemeteries

DILLENBECK Cemetery was originally in Section 18, but now lies within the city limits of Janesville on Hwy. 14 West of Hwy 26. The HESSER Hyundai Dealership is adjacent to the cemetery. It started in 1851.

Milton Lawns Memorial Park/Wisconsin Memorial Park is at 2200 Milton Ave. in Janesville. This was originally Section 19. An interesting rules and regulations brochure for the cemetery bears the date of 1932. Those rules include the reminder that "no horse drawn vehicle will be allowed to pass through the grounds at a rate faster than a slow trot..."

Mt. Zion/Clarke Cemetery is in Section 25 on Milton Shopiere Rd., south of Co. A. It started in 1838.

Schools (Wendy UNCAPHER provided this information).

<i>Dist.</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Sec.#</i>	<i>Location</i>
2	DILLENBECK	b 1858-__		
2	DILLENBECK	1924-1964	18	Hwy 14 at Bell St., razed in 2006
3	HOWARTH	b 1858-__	28	E. Milwaukee St. at Hwy. 14
3	HOWARTH	1883-1963	21	E. Milwaukee St. at Hwy. 14
4	Mt. Zion	1842-196_	24	Co. A at Milton-Shopiere Rd.
5	MOUAT	b 1858-196_	35	HENKE Rd. at Co. MM
6	CRANDALL	b 1873-1951	4	Town Hall Rd.
7	Four Oaks	b 1873-1947	11	Rotamer Rd.
8	Milton Avenue	b 1873-__	8	Hwy. 26 at John PAUL Rd (Co. Y)
9	Blackhawk	b 1858-1933	32	RUGER Ave. at WRIGHT Rd.
9	Blackhawk	1933-1976	32	RUGER Ave. at Greendale Dr.

Jt. 1-9	Six Corners	1847-1906	1	between Co. M & VICKERMAN Rd.
Jt.1-9	Six Corners*	1906-195_	1	BINGHAM Rd. at Co. M
	Harmony Elem.	1959-1993	9	4243 E. Rotamer Rd.
	Harmony Elem.	1998-2000	9	4243 E. Rotamer Rd.
	Harmony Elem.**	2000-active	9	4243 E. Rotamer Rd.
	Montessori	1994-active	15	5246 E. Rotamer Rd.

b = before date shown

* Joint with Johnstown Township

** Harmony School is now an elementary school in the Milton School District, but is within the Janesville city limits.

Resources for Harmony Township

- **Hedberg Public Library** (608) 758-6581
316 S. Main St.
Janesville, WI 53545
- **ARC-UW Whitewater** (262) 472-1032
800 West Main St.
Whitewater, WI 53190-1790
- **RCGS/RCHS Library** (608) 752-5891 or (608) 756-4509
933 Mineral Point Ave.
Janesville, WI (not a mailing address)
- **Wisconsin Historical Society** (608) 264-6535
816 State Street
Madison, WI 53706
- **Milton Public Library** (608) 868-7462
430 East High
Milton, Wisconsin 53563

Check the on-line catalogues of these libraries for specific titles. The RCHS/RCGS Library does not have an online catalogue, but does have online resources. Volunteer genealogists are available on site at the RCHS/RCGS Library in the Stone House at the TALLMAN House grounds to assist researchers during posted hours.

RCHS Archive/RCGS Library Holdings

- Files on the MENZIES Family,
- Town of Harmony Cemetery Records, Harmony Town Hall,
- Town of Harmony Post Office,
- Town of Harmony History; lithographs in the 1873 Atlas/Plat Map showing residences in the township including the farms of
 - HOSKINS,

- James YOUNGCLAUS,
- William SPAULDING,
- Andrew BARLASS,
- Joseph SPAULDING,
- W. C. BUTTS,
- John STACKMAN,
- R. I. CUTTS,
- S. C. DICKENSON,
- William MENZIES, and
- James MOUAT;
- Photos of Harmony Township sites and families;
- Records of MOUAT School (various dates beginning with 1867) and
- Mt. Zion School (various dates beginning with 1875);
- Harmony Township Tombstone Inscriptions;
- Aerial Photos from 1937; Harmony Scrapbook from 1951;
- Transcript of and original MENZIES family diaries 1875-1908 kept by James MENZIES.
- Additional general materials for Rock County cover Harmony Township.

Compiled by Kay and Tony Briski