

Lima Township Guide

Published by the Rock County Genealogical Society

This guide contains the tenth township in a series of twenty township resource guides. It is intended to be of use to those doing genealogical or historical research in Lima 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 Museum.

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 .



Rock County's Townships
With Surrounding
Counties and Townships

	Dane Co.		Jefferson Co.		
	outland	Dunkirk	Albion	Sumner	Koshkonong
Green Co.	Union	Porter	Fulton	Milton	Lima
Spring Grove	Magnolia	Center	Janesville	Harmony	Johansstown
Decatur	Spring Valley	Plymouth	Rock	LaPrairie	Bradford
Albany	Avon	Newark	Beloit	Turtle	Clinton
Brooklyn					
	Winnebago Co., IL	Boone Co., IL			
	Laona	Shirland	Rockton	Roscoe	Manchester Leroy

Whitewater
Richmond
Darien
Sharon
Walworth Co.



Place Names of Lima Township

Lack of development leaves few place names of mention. These include:

Name	Former Name	Sec. #
Lima		15
Lima Center	Child's Station	22
North Lima	Logtown (6 miles NW of Lima Center)	?
Springville	The spring water source for Spring Brook/ Whitewater Creek	22
Utter's Corners		36
Bullock's Corners		33

There were also "neighborhoods" that took the names of area landowners, i.e. "Cravath Neighborhood."

Lima Township Location

Town 4 North Range 14 East

Physical Features –

Lima Marsh State Wildlife Area (approximately 1/6th of Lima Twp.)
Otter Creek
Spring Brook (at one time called Harrington Creek)
Whitewater Creek

History of Lima Township

The history of Lima Township, like the history of the other Rock County Townships, is tempered by the recollections of those who wrote about the history before there were carefully kept records. In the 1856 History of Rock County: Transactions of the Rock County Agricultural Society and Mechanics Institute, Col. O. GUERNSEY (Corresponding Secretary of the Rock County Agricultural Society) describes Lima township: “The surface is gently rolling, covered mainly with Bur and White Oak openings, the bur oak predominating. Nearly one sixth of the area is marsh; the largest is that which is known as “Otter Creek” marsh...”

Most sources agree that in the summer of 1836 a Col. James M. BURGESS made a claim in what is now Section 17 of Lima Township. He never made any improvements, and left the area, so his claim lapsed. Next came Solomon L. HARRINGTON and Thomas VANHORN, who arrived in June of 1837. They made a claim and built a saw mill on Harrington Creek (Spring Brook). Mr. HARRINGTON also has the distinction of being the groom in the first marriage in the township. He and his bride, Margaret PALMETER, were married on June 7, 1841. The next wedding was that of Oliver SALISBURY and Miss Emily CRAVATH (she was the first teacher) on July 22. The SALISBURY's became the parents of the first Caucasian baby born in the township. This was Albert SALISBURY, who served as president of the state normal school in Whitewater from 1881-1911.

The first death of an adult to occur in the town was Newton BAKER, who died on September 19, 1839, of typhoid. He was among the settlers who had arrived in 1838.

Mr. Joseph NICHOLLS came in 1837-38 and built a cabin in Section # 1. He is the subject of the often-told story about the settler who found 200 pounds of honey while on a bee hunt during a time when the community was running short of supplies. He transported his prize honey by sled to Milwaukee, where he traded it for flour and other commodities.

In 1840, a group of about 20 persons arrived from Cortland, New York. Among those arriving were Deacon Prosper CRAVATH, Azel KENNEY, Levi and Giles KINNEY, Deacon Zerah HULL, James HULL, Ara HARDY and their families. Other early settlers were William SLOCUM, John TRUMAN, George B. HALL, Abram EDGERTON, Morris PRATT and John ARMSTRONG. Mr. M. F. GOULD's farm had a trout pond and a fine spring, which was a good source of water. This spot is sometimes referred to as “Springville.” Farms began to fill the township and the population was growing.

A legislative act on February 24, 1845, set Lima off as a separate town. Until then it had been a portion of the Town of Milton. There is no consensus as to how the township came to be named Lima. There are three versions: first, that it was named for Lima, New York; second, that the settlers in the town who came from Lima, Ohio, wanted to remember their roots; third, that the solid limestone foundation found in the township gave it its name. Is one of these correct, or does the real answer await discovery? Lima Township was organized on April 1, 1845. The first town election was held at the schoolhouse where Prosper CRAVATH was chosen Chairman of Supervisors. John CHILD and Abram ALLEN were elected as supervisors. Paul CRANDALL was elected town clerk; William P. STILLMAN, treasurer; and John H. TWINING, collector. John TWINING, and Giles KINNEY were the constables and John CHILD and Horace HAMILTON were the justices of the peace.

The community of Lima Center was originally known as Child's Station because it began on the farm of John CHILD. His farm was located along the road to Milwaukee. John CHILD built and operated an inn on his farm. Often inns were also taverns, but Mr. CHILD's inn was a temperance house and known as the "Temperance Inn." The road was the stagecoach route between Madison, Janesville, and Milwaukee, so business was good. By 1850 the population of Child's Station, or as it became later, Lima Center, had grown to 839 citizens and by 1855 there were 1,054 with 161 farms in the surrounding town. In 1853/6 Mark CHILD and Lewis CHILD, sons of John CHILD, built and opened a store. Other businesses, churches, a school, and homes were built and the area developed into a thriving village along the Milwaukee and Mississippi rail line, which came in the early 1850's. Later the railroad became the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad. When the railroad arrived, a depot was constructed. The depot remained active until 1947 when it was dismantled and replaced with a shed for freight. John TRUMAN, on whose land the depot was built, was the first in a succession of several station agents. Passenger service to Lima Center ended in 1951 when travel by car became more convenient. Over the years, the village was home to an active Odd Fellows Lodge, the DADUM grain elevator and feed store, a garage, and a creamery. There was a YMCA, an active WCTU, a Forester's Lodge, and the Lima Literary Society. The Cloverdale Cheese Factory was located north of the village. In January of 1948, the village suffered a devastating fire. The main business district of Lima Center burned, including the grocery, post office, lumber office, and feed warehouse. The fire was believed to have started near the GATES Lumber Company, either from the sparks of a passing train or a truck parked at the lumber company. Only the town hall, telephone office, and two welding shops were not destroyed. Property loss was set at \$100,000. A post office is always central to a community and in Lima Center it was housed in a village store. Mark CHILD, who ran the first store, was also the first postmaster. Several long-term postmasters followed him until the post office was closed in 1963 and the residents were assigned to a rural delivery route out of Whitewater. For many years the village had its own doctor. Two of the early doctors mentioned by Fred KRAEGE were Dr. L. M. COON and Dr. M. H. STETSON. Dr. COON's home is on the 1858 plat map of the village so we know he was in practice by then. Being a very patriotic community, there is a long honor roll of citizens who served in our country's wars.

An interesting historical note for Lima Township is that in 1862-63 a group of residents organized a Lyceum that evolved into the Farmers' Union Club and Lyceum. The library had nearly 100 volumes of mostly agricultural works. In the spring of 1872 the group organized The Lima Mutual Insurance Company, which provided insurance to the residents and farmers of the township.

Also, arriving in the township in the late 1830's was Curtis UTTER, who made a claim in Section 36. His brothers, Joseph and SIMEON, joined him and a community developed there which took the name of UTTER's Corners. There was a store and post office, a hotel and bar, a blacksmith and church, and a school. The railroad and the community's proximity to Whitewater brought about its demise by 1860.

Lima Historical Books

- *Rock County Wisconsin*. William F. Brown, 1908. (RCHS/RCGS Library)
- *Lima Township and Lima Center 150 Years of Statehood*. Kraege, Fred, 1998
- *Schools and Churches of Lima Township*. Kraege, Fred. 1998. (RCHS/RCGS Library)
- *Rock County Wisconsin*. Western Historical Company, Chicago, IL. 1879. (RCHS/RCGS Library)
- "History and Statistics of School District #9 of the Township of Lima, Rock Co. Wisconsin" by Harry Truman found in *Lima Township and Lima Center, 150 Years of Statehood*. Kraege, Fred. (RCHS/RCGS Library)

- *History of Rock County: Transactions of the Rock County Agricultural Society and Mechanics Institute*, Wm. Doty and Brother. 1856. (Hedberg Public Library)
- *Remember When in Lima Center*. Kraege, Fred. (RCHS/RCGS Library)

Other Lima Historical Publications

Those interested in knowing more about Lima Township will find, in addition to the book resources above, the following in the RCGS/RCHS Library:

Lima Twp. General Files

- Lima Benefit Club
- Lima Mutual Insurance Co.
- Lima Ladies Aid Society
- Lima Township
- Lima Marsh Wildlife Area
- Town of Lima Cemetery Records
- Doctors of Lima Township
- Lima Center Cheese Factory
- Historic Sites in Lima Township

Lima Twp. Postcards and Photos

- See RCGS/RCHS Photo (F) Files

Lima Twp. Schools of Lima Township

- Records for the rural schools (years and records vary, most date from the 1880's through 1907 with some into the mid 1900's)
- Records for Lima Center Graded School including the 1909-1911 Register
- Photos of the schools in Lima Township

Lima Twp. Aerial Photographs

- Aerial Photographs of Lima Township taken in 1937.

Lima Twp. Military Records

- *Lima Men in the U.S. Service (from the Revolutionary War to 1972)*. Paul, Mabel Hull.

Lima Twp. Commerce

- "From Cheese Factory to Creamery," in The Rock County Chronicle, Vol. II, No. 1, pp 7-9.
- Lima Center Creamery. Records Dec. 1933-Oct. 1941 (Cherry-Burrell Cream Record). Holograph.

Lima Twp. Cemetery Index

- Lima Center Cemetery. Davis, Don and Elsie. Photographs.

Lima Twp. Directories

- Rock County Directories. includes the rural population and villages 1891-1919.
- Town of Lima Cash Book 1955-1970.

Lima Twp. Church Records

- North Lima Presbyterian Church. Paul, Mabel Hull. History of the church (includes Mary Cravath's childhood memories of Rev. Daniel Smith and wife.)
- Lima Presbyterian Church. Boyd, Martha M. The history of the Presbyterian Church from 1850-1928.
- Lima Circle. Ladies Aid Society–Methodist Episcopal Church, Records: 1906-1920.
- Town of Lima Churches. Recording of a November 21, 1969 meeting of Rock County Township and Local Historians. Paper by Mrs. Harry B. Paul on Lima Churches

Lima Twp. Land Records

- Grantor/Grantee Indices from 1839-1900 for the town of Lima.
- "Highway 59 in Lima Township." Paul, Mrs. Harry. The Rock County Chronicle, Vol. II, No. 2.
- Tract index of the farm lands of Lima Township from 1835 to 1947, photocopied for John F. Mawhinney of the Rock Title and Abstract Service circa 1947.
- Combination Atlas Map of Rock County. Everts, Baskin and Stewart. Map of Lima Township and lithographs of homes of prominent farmers.

Lima Twp. Legislative & Political Records

- Journal of the House of Representatives of the Fourth Legislative Assembly of the Wisconsin Territory. Simeon Mills, Madison, 1945. 4th session, 1845, pp 224 ff.
- Town of Lima. History, Poll Lists, World War II Election Ballots.
- Town of Lima. Chattel mortgage records filed in the office of the town clerk of Lima, Vol. 1, April 1850-1859, and Vol. 2, 1860-1875.

Lima Twp. Scrapbook

- Town of Lima Scrapbooks compiled by Mrs. Harry B. Paul. 1949-1968.

Lima Twp. Web Sites

Check the Rock County Genealogy Society Web Site for additional online resources, including:

- 1858 Rock County Plat Map,
- 1922 Rock County Plat Map
- Rock County Pioneer Index,
- Roster of Largest Rock County Farms in 1855.

Lima Twp. Newspapers

Because of its proximity to Whitewater and Milton, the newspapers of those communities, as well as the Janesville Gazette, have always carried the news of Lima Township. Lima Center has never had a local newspaper.

Churches of Lima Township

North Lima Presbyterian

Organized in 1850 in Section 15 by Scot-Irish settlers and met at Stoddard School.

Reformed Presbyterian Church

A church was built in 1866 as the Reformed Presbyterian Church. The minister from Rock Prairie Presbyterian Church came until 1867. It is still an active congregation and is located at 9233 N. Lima Center Rd. (north of Lima Center). The telephone number for the church is (262) 473-2431.

Lima Church of Christ

Organized in 1854 in Lima Center, Section 22 by the minister from Center Church of Christ, Center Township. The church closed when the two churches merged in 1855. No records are available.

Methodist Episcopal

Organized in 1868 in Lima Center Section 22, this log church was moved from Bullock's Corners in 1868, and placed on the north side of the school in Lima Center. The building was sold in 1925.

North Lima United Brethren

A log church was built in North Lima or Logtown, 6 miles northwest of Lima Center, date unknown. In 1879 North Lima was attached to Cold Spring (Jefferson Co.) circuit.

South Lima United Brethren

It was organized in 1857, and built in Bullock's Corners Section 33 in 1857. In 1868 they sold a half share of their church building to the Lima Center Methodist group and helped them move the building to Lima Center, where the two churches shared the building. (See Methodist Church above). In 1871 a new church was built by the United Brethren at Lima Center, and enlarged in 1902. It closed in 1950 and the building was razed in 1954.

Seventh Day Baptist - Lima Center

Started in 1868. It is closed, but the date of closure is unknown.

Universalist Circuit

Included Beloit, Janesville, Bullock's Corners and Otter Creek. Services were probably held at Bullock School. The closing date is not known.

First Church in Lima Twp.

In his book, Kraege states that the first church was a log cabin Presbyterian Church organized in 1840, while the 1879 History of Rock County gives that distinction to a 1845 log church built by a Methodist denomination.

Additional Information

For additional information on the churches of Lima Township consult Schools and *Churches of Lima Township*, by Fred Kraege. This publication is available at the RCHS/RCGS Library.

Cemeteries of Lima Township

There are two cemeteries in Lima Township:

- **Lima Center Cemetery** is in Section 27 and is located on Lima Center Road at Highway 59.
- **Utter's Corner Cemetery** is in Section 36 and is located at Town Line Road, just west of the Rock/Walworth Co. Line Road.

Burials records for both cemeteries have been transcribed and found at the RCHS/RCGS Library:

- Cemetery Records, Vol. 1 and Vol. 2, by Fred Kraege (2002)
- Lima Center Cemetery: Listing, Obituaries and Death Notices
- Utter's Corners: Listing, Obituaries and Death Notices
- Lima and Johnstown Townships: Obituaries and Death Notices 1837-1991 by Fred Kraege
- Lima Township: Rock County Tombstone Inscriptions, by Andrew Chiello (2005).

Schools of Lima Township

The first school in Lima Township was in the log house of Deacon Prosper CRAVATH. Emily CRAVATH was the teacher of 8 pupils in 1840-41. The rural one-room schools in the township closed in the 1950's and 1960's consolidating with the K-8 Lima Center Graded School or other school districts. The Lima Center School underwent several upgrades and additions over the years and became part of the Whitewater Unified School District in 1962. The school closed in 1970 and since then most of the students living in Lima Township are bused to schools in Whitewater or Milton.

Dist.	School Name	Joint with	Sec.#	Location
3	Alexander		15	Lake Rd.
9	Lima Center		22	east side of Lima Center Rd.
12	Bullock		32	Hwy. 59 at Co. KK
18	Morgan		9	Co. N
Jt 1	Stoddard	Koshkonong	11	Co. N
Jt 4	Vickerman	Milton	31	Hwy. 59 near Vickerman Rd.
Jt 5	Hunt/Cravath	Whitewater	13	Co. Rd. at Hwy. 59
Jt 7	Sturdevant	Johnstown	35	Town Line Rd. at Sturdevant Rd.
Jt 10	Palmer	Johnstown	33	Co. KK at Town Line Rd.
Jt 11	Spring Brook	Whitewater	25	County Rd.
Jt 11	Burdick	Milton		
Jt 11	Burr Oak	Milton	7	Vickerman Rd. at Godfrey Rd.
Jt 15	Grogan/Logtown	Milton-Koshkonong	6	Co. Line Rd. at Vickerman Rd.

An excellent resource that contains numerous photos, articles, and photocopies of records from these rural schools is *Schools and Churches of Lima Township*, by Fred Kraege. It is available at the RCHS/RCGS Library.

Library & Archive Resources for Lima Township

Hedberg Public Library 316 S. Main St. Janesville, WI 53545	608.758.6581
ARC - UW-Whitewater 800 West Main St. Whitewater, WI 53190-1790	262.472.1032
Irwin L. Young Memorial Library 431 W. Center St. Whitewater, WI 53190	262.273.0530
RCGS/RCHS Library 933 Mineral Point Ave. Janesville, WI 53548	608.752.5891 or 608.756.4509
Wisconsin Historical Society 816 State Street Madison, WI 53706	608.264.6535

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 to assist researchers.

Compiled by Kay and Tony Briski.