

# Milton Township Guide

Published by the Rock County Genealogical Society

This guide contains the seventh township in a series of twenty township resource guides. It is intended to be of use to those doing genealogical or historical research in Milton 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](http://www.rootsweb.com/~wircgs/rock_twps.html).



**Rock County's Townships  
With Surrounding  
Counties and Townships**

	Dane Co.		Jefferson Co.		
	Rutland	Dunkirk	Albion	Sumner	Koshkonong
Green Co.	Union	Porter	Fulton	Milton	Lima
Spring Grove	Magnolia	Center	Janesville	Harmony	Johnstown
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 Darren Sharon
					Watworth Co.



## Resources for Milton Township, Rock County, Wisconsin

### Town of Milton

- Town 4N Range 13E

### Physical Features

- Grass Lake
- Clear Lake
- Lake Koshkonong
- Otter Creek
- DuLac Prairie

## Place Names of Milton Township

<b>Name</b>	<b>Former Name</b>	<b>Section</b>
Charley's Bluff		5
Koshkonong		2
Milton	formerly Prairie du Lac	27
Milton Junction	formerly West Milton until 1870	28
Prairie du Lac	(see Milton)	27
Smithville		11
Teotsa		12
Tillman Park		17
West Milton	(see Milton Junction)	27

## History of Milton Township

The first settlements in this town were made in 1836, since which time it has enjoyed a steady growth. The villages of Milton and Milton Junction are both located in the Town and on two main lines of railroad, affording facilities for marketing and shipping second to none other in the county. Milton College, located at Milton, affords excellent educational facilities. The surface of the township is gently undulating, and pretty evenly divided between prairie land and oak openings. There is a considerable amount of low land in the vicinity of the lakes that is visible for pasturage and meadow land. Koshkonong Lake occupies an area of about one thousand acres in this township. On the bank of this lake Mr. TAYLOR has erected a very fine hotel for the accommodation of tourists and sportsmen, hundreds of whom visit the lake every season. Clear Lake, another very pretty body of water, is a favored place for picnic excursions and other pleasure-seekers in summer-time. <sup>1</sup>

The town of Milton was first settled, in the summer of 1836, by Alfred, Jason and Aaron WALKER, who located on section 35 and 36. In May, 1837, Daniel F. SMITH and wife came in and located on section 11. Mrs. SMITH was the first white woman in the town. Others came in that year, among whom were Peter McEWAN and Nathan C. STORRS. The former made claim to the north half of section 34, and the south half of the northeast quarter of section 27. Mr. STORRS made claim to the south half of section 26, and the north half of the southeast quarter of section 27. He erected his residence on the northwest corner of the south half of the southeast quarter of section 26. Mr. McEWAN built very near the center of the northeast quarter of section 34.

In July, 1838, Joseph GOODRICH came out from Alfred, Alleghany Co., N.Y., and bought from Mr. STORRS his claim. During the following month he erected a story and a half frame building, in the upper part of which he placed a small stock of general merchandise. In September he returned to New York, leaving James PIERCE in charge of the house and claim.

During the year 1839 a second building by Mr. GOODRICH, which was the original Milton House, was built and the erection by him of a substantial barn. In March, 1839, the surveyors locating a road between Chicago and Madison reached Goodrich's.

In 1852 the present Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad was built through the place, and shortly afterward a small portion of the village of Milton lying on either side of the road was platted.

Milton Junction, lying one mile west, owes its existence to the building of the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad, which crosses the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad at this point. The road was built through here in 1858, when G. W. MATTHEWS erected a hotel at the crossing of the two roads on the site of the present Morgan House. The village has since had a slow but steady growth, and to-day numbering about 1,000 inhabitants, presents a very neat and attractive appearance. Its business men seem to be thriving, with almost every class of business represented. There are three churches in the village, and its public schools compare favorably with any in the county.<sup>2</sup>

Henry CRANDALL brought his family to what was to become Milton Junction in 1838. Mr. CRANDALL donated the land for the Rose Hill Cemetery (known as Milton Junction Cemetery), and his wife was the first burial there.

Milton and Milton Junction merged into one village government known as Milton in 1967.

### **Milton College**

The Milton Academy building was built in 1844 near the north-west corner of the public square when there were only four dwellings in the village. Construction costs were paid by Joseph GOODRICH, who managed the school.

The Academy was successful, and in the winter of 1847-48 a group of citizens secured a charter for the school. It was named The Du Lac Academy, a name that was seldom used.

A new charter was obtained from the legislature in March 1854, naming the institution The Milton Academy. In the fall of 1855 the "beautiful and commodious building of Milwaukee pressed brick" was ready for use. It was 40' x 44', three stories high, and cost "something over \$4000".

Realizing that the high school and state normal school systems that were developing would leave small demand for private academies, President WHIYFORD felt that the stockholders of the Academy would be justified in seeking a college charter. The charter was granted by the state in February 1867 and the Academy became Milton College.

Milton College closed in 1982.

### **Milton House**

Goodrich built the Milton House in 1844. In this building he made architectural and structural history. The Milton House is the oldest poured grout (concrete) structure in the United States.

The material he used, which he called "grout," was a mixture of slaked (burnt) lime, sand broken stone, gravel and water. All materials were native to the area. His estimate of the materials used was: lime, 250 bushels, slaked cost 4 cents per bushel; lumber for standards and top of wall, \$6; and the gravel was from his own pits. He estimated that the walls of the building were four times cheaper than wood and six times cheaper than brick.

The building was in the shape of a hexagon, 6-sided. Joined to the hexagon on the south was a long two-story section of 5 units, called the Goodrich Block. The upper floors of the hexagon and wing were living quarters and guest rooms. The ground floor of the hexagon housed a lobby and a dining room and the ground floor of the GOODRICH Block housed businesses. In 1867 the third floor was added to the hexagon.

This description of the building appeared in the January 24, 1946 edition of the Janesville Gazette: "A center stone pillar rises from the basement and around which winds a circular staircase, leading to a rotunda in the second story. There are six convenient bed chambers. The roof is concave having a declivity toward the center, with a pipe conveying rain water to a cistern in the basement. The center pillar contains a vacuum to admit all stove pipes used in the different rooms. Each wall is carried seven feet above the roof and terminated in the shape of a gable with an imitation chimney on the peak. The whole of the gravel structure cost \$1,000 and bears an analogy to an ancient castle, the six gables serving as a balustrade. The walls are 18 inches thick in the basement, 15 inches on the first floor and 12 inches on the second."<sup>3</sup>

Oral tradition states that the Milton House was used in the Underground Railroad as a hiding place for escaped slaves heading north. The GOODRICH family's strong anti-slavery stance suggests that if they were called upon to aid fugitive slaves they would have done so. The location of the Milton House on the Territorial Road and near the Rock River, which could have been a route for fugitives, makes it reasonable to assume that at least a few fugitives passed through Milton. There are oral accounts of Seventh Day Baptist Church members at Albion, Milton, Rock River and Walworth aiding fugitive slaves. While the tunnel has been enlarged since the nineteenth century, it was large enough at that time that a person could have crawled through it. It is plausible that the tunnel could have been used in aiding fugitive slaves.

### **Concrete Community**

In 1976 there were nine grout buildings in Milton. Seven were poured grout; two were grout blocks. The Milton House was the oldest of the buildings, five were clustered around the park in Milton, one was on Madison Ave., and two were in Milton Junction.

### **Otter Creek**

In 1837 Isaac T. SMITH and Daniel SMITH came to Otter Creek because there was waterpower for a mill. The mill race ran at the intersection of Hwy. 26 and Co. N. Later a three-story inn was built on the Milwaukee-to-Mineral Point Rd., (now Co. Hwy N) which was an important trail in early days.<sup>4</sup>

### **Koshkonong**

About 1,000 acres of Lake Koshkonong are located in Rock County. The rest lies in Jefferson County. There are hundreds of acres of marsh land around the lake and there are many springs and wells. Before the dam was built at Indian Ford in 1848, the lake was shallow and completely covered with wild rice plants. Koshkonong is an Indian name which means "place where we live".

### **Clear Lake**

Clear Lake was a popular summer resort. A stage ran from Milton and Milton Junction to Clear Lake every Sunday. A steamboat, Lily of the Rock, took passengers on excursions around the lake which

was larger at that time than it is now. The panic of 1890 ended the plans for expansion of the resort and in 1913 it became a summer camp.

## Newspapers in Milton Township

- *Milton Messenger*, 1868-1869.
- *The Merchant*, Feb. - July 1878.
- *The Independent*, Aug. - Nov. 1878.
- *Register*, 1878, continued by *Milton Express*.
- *Milton Express*, 1879-1882, continued by *Weekly Telephone*.
- *Weekly Telephone*, 1882-1905, continues *Milton Express*, absorbed *Milton Junction News* 1899, continued by *Telephone*.
- *Milton Junction News*, 1886-1899, absorbed by *Weekly Telephone*.
- *Milton Journal*, 1894-1912, continued by *Journal-Telephone*.
- *Telephone*, 1905-1912, continues *Weekly Telephone*, continued by *Journal-Telephone*.
- *Journal-Telephone*, 1912-1927, merged with *Milton Journal* and *Telephone*, continued by *Milton Junction Telephone*.
- *Milton News*, 1925-1936.
- *Milton Junction Telephone*, 1927-1946, continues *Journal-Telephone*, continued by *Milton and Milton Junction Courier*.
- *Milton and Milton Junction Courier*, 1947-1967, continues *Milton Junction Telephone*, continued by *Milton Courier*.
- *Milton Courier*, 1967-present, continues *Milton and Milton Junction Courier*.

The Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI, holds microfilms of most of the newspapers listed above.

## Churches in Milton Township

### **Abundant Grace (Full Gospel Church)**

3001 E. Hwy. 59, Milton

Meets in the former Rock River School, Sec. 8.

### **Covenant Reformed Presbyterian**

303 Vernal Ave., Milton

Renting former Seventh-Day Adventist church.

### **Faith Bible Chapel**

41 Third St., Milton Junction

Organized in 1973, purchased building on Third St. in 1976, moved to Janesville in 1980.

### **Faith United Methodist**

44 Second St., Milton Junction

Organized in 1847, built church in 1867, merged with First United Methodist in 1997 as Milton United Methodist, built a new church on Northside Dr. in 2007.

**First Congregational of Milton**

741 E. High St., Milton

Built church on Territorial Rd. (Co. M) in 1842, moved to Milton in 1845. Also known as Congregational Church of Du Lac Prairie & Vicinity.

**First United Methodist**

89 E High St., Milton

Organized in 1846 as Milton Methodist Episcopal, merged with Faith United Methodist in 1997 as Milton United Methodist, built a new church on Northside Dr. in 2007.

**First Universalist Society of the Town of Milton Otter Creek, Sec. 11**

Organized 1867, built next to Otter Creek school, rented building to United Brethren (1889-1890) and Methodist (1900-1920), sold 1928. Also known as Otter Creek Universalist.

**Hope Lutheran**

335 Dairyland Dr., Milton

Organized in 1974, built church on Dairyland in 1982.

**Rock River Seventh Day Baptist**

Vincent Rd. at north end of Trescher Rd.

Organized 1856, closed 1917.

**St. Johns Evangelical Lutheran**

Also known as German Lutheran and Evangelical Lutheran

910 E. High St., Milton

Organized 1888.

**St. Mary Catholic**

819 Parkview Dr., Milton

Organized 1892 on Rogers St., built in 1953 on Janesville St. (now Parkview Dr.).

**Seventh Day Adventist**

4324 E. Bingham Rd., Milton

Met in Johnstown Center in 1863, then moved to Milton, organized 1884, built church in 1887 at 303 Vernal St., in 2005 moved to Bingham Rd.

**Seventh Day Baptist-Milton**

720 Madison Ave., Milton

Organized 1840.

**Seventh Day Baptist-Milton Junction**

41 Third St., Milton Junction

Met in 1869, called Society of West Milton, building sold to Faith Bible Chapel in 1976. 5

## Cemeteries in Milton Township

**Rock River Cemetery**, section 7, on Trescher Rd., south of Vincent Rd.  
Sexton is Dennis Balch (608-884-3028)

**Otter Creek Cemetery**, section 10, on Co. N at the top of a hill, just west of Hwy. 26. The records for this cemetery are held by Harold Traynor (608-868-3793).

**Milton East Cemetery**, section 27, on N. Janesville St., (Hwy. 26), Milton. The Milton City Hall has the records for this cemetery (608-868-6900).

**Milton Junction (also known as Rose Hill or Milton West Cemetery)**, section 28, on N. John Paul Rd., Milton. Bob Barker has the records for this cemetery.

**St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery**, section 28, Manogue Rd., Milton. The records for this cemetery are at the church (608-868-3334).

### **Cemetery Resources**

*Milton Township: Rock County, Wisconsin Tombstone Inscriptions* by Andrew Chiello, pub. by Origins, Janesville, WI, 2005. This publication contains inscriptions of the existing gravestones through Feb. 2005 for the above five cemeteries.

## [Funeral Homes in Milton Township](#)

### **Early Undertakers/Furniture Makers:**

L. P. Babcock, Herb & Edward Coon, Robert Kelly, Phelps, Henry Gray and Bud Albrecht.

### **Current Funeral Home:**

Whitcomb-Lynch-Albrecht, 828 S. Janesville, Milton, WI 53563 - no early records

## [Schools in Milton Township](#)

<b>Dist.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Joint with</b>	<b>Sec. #</b>	<b>Location</b>
Joint Dist. 1	Otter Creek	Koshkonong	11	Co. N, east of Hwy. 26, red brick
Joint Dist. 2	Rock River	Koshkonong	8	Hwy. 59, now houses a church
Joint Dist. 5	Paul	Harmony-Fulton-Jvl	31	Newville Rd.
Joint Dist. 6	Merrifield	Fulton	18	Pine Rd.
Joint Dist. 6	North Milton	Milton Village	22	Hwy. 26, now a store

## [Resources for Milton Township](#)

### **Hedberg Public Library**

316 S. Main St., Janesville, WI 53545  
608-758-6581

- *Milton Township : Rock County, Wisconsin tombstone inscriptions*, Andrew Chiello., Janesville, WI, Origins, 2005.
- *The Hero from our Town : Joseph Goodrich*, (children's book), Milton East Elementary School, Milton, WI, 2002.
- *St. Mary Catholic Cemetery*, Milton, Rock County, Wisconsin, Mary Kay Mullen, Milton, WI, 2001.
- *Woebegone* (story of a MD in Milton from 1930s – 1958s), Thorn L. Vogel, Carlton Press, NY, 1976.
- *The Bicentennial History of Milton*, Milton Bicentennial Committee, Milton, WI, 1977.
- *Bird's Eye View of Milton Junction*, Rock Co., WI 1881.

### **RCGS Library and RCHS Archives**

933 Mineral Point Ave., Janesville, WI  
608-752-5891 or 608-756-4509

- *The Bicentennial history of Milton*, Milton Bicentennial Committee, Milton, WI, 1977.
- Scrapbook of Town of Milton and Milton Village, 1947-1952.
- Scrapbook, history of Milton Twp. and Milton Junction, compiled by Mrs. Myrtie Sherman, 1949.
- *The Story of Milton Junction*, pub. Fortnightly Club and the Milton Courier, Milton, WI, 1951.
- Reeder Collection, photograph album circa 1900 of Milton, Milton Junction and Indianford.
- Miscellaneous papers of Samuel F Stewart, 1845-1905.
- Milton Academy annual catalogs.
- Maps of Milton City.
- City of Milton Postcard collection.
- Milton twp. & city cemetery transcriptions.
- Milton College photographs, news clippings, pamphlets, programs, and announcements.
- *The Story of Milton College from the Beginning*. 1943.
- *The First Hundred Years of Milton College 1844-1944*, Milton College Century Fund, Milton, WI.
- *Historical Sketch of Milton College*, Atwood and Culver, Madison, WI, 1876.
- *Historic Headlines from the Files of Milton Newspapers since 1878*, Milton Courier, Milton, 1989.
- *Milton Township: Rock County, Wisconsin tombstone inscriptions*, Andrew Chiello., Janesville, WI, Origins, 2005.

### **Milton Public Library**

430 E. High St., Milton, WI 53563  
608-868-7462

- *Tour of historic Milton Wisconsin*, published by the Milton Historic Preservation Commission, 2005.
- *The call to arms, 1950-1953 and Milton's response*. Milton House Productions, Milton, WI, 2002.

- *First Congregational United Church of Christ, Milton, Wisconsin*, sesquicentennial anniversary: historical sketch and sesquicentennial program, October 1-2, 1988, The Church, Milton, WI, 1988.
- *An historical sketch of Milton College*: Milton Academy chartered 1854, Milton College, chartered 1967, by Albert Whitford., Milton College Alumni Association, Milton, WI, 1916.
- *Milton College in the world war*, published by the students of Milton College, Milton, WI, 1920.
- *Sons of harmony: a history of the Milton College Glee Club*, Walton D. Clarke, pub. by the author for the New Alumni Association of Milton College, Inc.,
- *Hero from our town: Joseph Goodrich*, (children's book), Milton East Elementary School, Milton, WI, 2002.
- *The story of Milton Junction*, Fortnightly Club and the Courier, Fortnightly Club & Bowen Printing Co., Milton Junction, WI, 1951.
- *Historic headlines from the files of Milton newspapers since 1878*, Milton Courier, Milton, WI, 1989.
- City directories.

### **Seventh Day Baptist Historical Society**

3120 N. Kennedy Rd., PO Box 1678,  
Janesville WI 53547  
608-752-5055

The Seventh Day Baptist Historical Society library has many assets of interest to genealogists. Holdings include: genealogies of local families, an obituary index to Seventh Day Baptist (SDB) publications, family records by surname, a variety of national and international genealogy materials, and SDB histories and membership lists. Please call ahead to get an appointment to research at the society library.

### **Milton Historical Society (Milton House Museum)**

742 E. Madison Ave.,  
PO Box 245, Milton WI 53563  
608-868-7772

The Milton Historical Society was formed to preserve the Milton House and the history of Milton. Holdings include: newspapers *Milton Courier* 1950-1999, and *Milton Junction Weekly Telephone* 1880-1949, local telephone books 1908-1980, school records for some local schools, local family histories, diaries and letters from local people, indexes to local cemeteries, and yearbooks from local schools. Research can be done personally at the Society with an appointment or by hiring a researcher.

### **Sources**

<sup>1</sup> *Combination Atlas Map of Rock County, Wisconsin*, Everts, Baskin and Stewart, Chicago, 1873, p. 26

<sup>2</sup> *Portrait and Biographical Album of Rock County, Wisconsin*, Acme Pub. Co., Chicago, 1889, p. 1015-1019.

<sup>3</sup> *Bicentennial History of Milton*, Milton Bicentennial Committee and the Milton Historical Society, Milton WI, 1977, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> Uncapher, Wendy, compiled list of Rock County churches from *Rock County, WI Guide to Churches, Cemeteries, Schools & Towns*, Origins, Janesville, WI, 2007.

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