

# Union Township Guide

Published by the Rock County Genealogical Society

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



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

Dane Co.		Jefferson Co.		
Rutland	Dunkirk	Albion	Summer	Koshkonong
UNION	Porter	Fulton	Milton	Lima
Magnolia	Center	Janesville	Harmony	Johnstown
Spring Valley	Plymouth	Rock	LaPrairie	Bradford
Avon	Newark	Beloit	Turtle	Clinton

Winnebago Co., IL Boone Co., IL  
Laona Shirland Rockton Rescoe Manchester Leroy



**Town of Union** - Town 4N Range 10E

**Physical Features** - Allen Creek, Spring Creek, Lake Leota, Jug Prairie, Catfish Prairie

## Place Names of Union Township

**Butts Corners** – Section 8.

**Evansville**, Village and City – settled in 1839 – Called The Grove before village government established in 1866; City government established in 1896.

**Jug Prairie** – the western section of Union township and eastern section of **Green County**, adjacent to Union township – never a separate government.

**Union Village** – section 10, settled in 1839 but never a separate government.

## Union History

The published accounts of settlement were printed many years after settlement. All accounts agree that the year of settlement was 1839 with a larger immigration of people in the spring of 1840.

Union township was established by the Wisconsin Legislature on February 17, 1842. The township boundaries in 1842 included what is now Porter and the north half of Center and Magnolia townships. The present boundaries of Union, Porter, Center, and Magnolia townships were established by a Legislative act on February 2, 1846.

The first census taker for Union Township finished his recordings on July 18, 1840 and said that he had "made actual inquiry at every dwelling house or a personal inquire of the head of every family." When the first census was taken in the summer of 1840 there were 16 families living in the Township. There were seventy-nine people ranging in age from infants to 70 years old.

Only the names of the male head-of household were listed in the census. Others were accounted for by a hash mark as to whether they were male or female and within an age range. The census taker also noted the general occupation of the adult males. The twenty-four men reporting employment said that they were farmers.

Although the first settlers usually built one-room cabins to house their families, there were large numbers of people living in each household. Stephen Jones and John Baker each had nine people in their household.

Stephen Jones, a farmer and Methodist minister was born in Ohio. Jones was said to have settled on the land that served as the first camp for the earlier settlers. The farm was later known as the Butts farm, west of Evansville. A man with a plow followed a new frontier. He left Union township in 1855 for a new settlement in Chatfield, Minnesota.

John T. Baker, a native of Ohio had also farmed in Illinois and Green County, Wisconsin before buying land and settling in Union township. One of his sons, Alan S. Baker, an inventor and entrepreneur, was one of the men responsible for starting Baker Manufacturing Company, the longest continuously operated business in Union township. the wagon tracks of the group and offered to plow a small piece of land. Potatoes from the group's provisions were planted on the newly tilled garden.

In the 1840 census, Erastus Quivey listed eight members in his household. Accounts say that Quivey and his family lived in a tent that first winter, while their cabin was under construction. The log cabin was a small structure, 16 x 18 feet. The first winter was very harsh and Quivey's infant child died, and was the first burial in a cemetery established in the township. The first religious service was held in Quivey's home.

Wilbur Potter and Charles McMillan each had seven people living in their newly built log cabins. Charles McMillan came to Union township in the fall of 1839 with his family. He settled in section 15 and built a double log cabin. It was said to be the first permanent structure in the township and the log structure was the McMillan family home for many years. In 1852, McMillan moved to northern Wisconsin to work in the lumber industry in the pineries.

Boyd Phelps, a farmer and Methodist minister had one of the smaller families. Four people were listed in the household, Phelps, his wife and two small boys. Phelps moved from Ohio to La Porte, Indiana, and then to Union Township in 1839. Long after he had moved from the area his farm was known as the Phelps' place.

Ira Jones, who arrived in Union Township in 1840 was a native of Ohio and had farmed in Winnebago Co., Illinois before purchasing land in section 32 of Union township. By 1850, Jones had a farm of 378 acres and kept 311 sheep.

Jacob West, another farmer reported only four members in his household. He purchased land in Union township in 1839 and brought his family to the area the following year. Like many of the other early settlers, West had several different occupations. He was a farmer, merchant and the first brick maker in the township. He also served as a Justice of the Peace, Union Town Clerk, member of the Board of Health and assessor for the Township and the federal government.

Samuel Lewis established a home in what later became the Village of Union, arriving in September 1839. He reported six people living in his home in July 1840. Lewis operated a hotel (sometimes called a tavern), and the stage coach between Janesville and Madison that traveled the Territorial Road stopped at Lewis' to deliver mail.

David Johnson and his family arrived on the 25th of June 1840. The Johnson's stayed at the log cabin of Samuel Lewis. On the first night of their stay, 24 people lodged in Lewis' small building. Lewis later built a frame two-story building that served as the hotel and post office.

Johnson recalled in later years that on the 2nd of July all of the men living west of the Catfish River and east of the Sugar River gathered to build a log cabin for his family. The Johnsons moved in the following day, just in time to be recorded in the 1840 census. The little log cabin was used as a church, a school that Mrs. Johnson taught, and a shelter for others who needed a place to stay.

Union Township's first school was built in 1841 on the north side of the road known as the Janesville and Sugar River Road. The school was located west of Evansville's current city limits and was built of logs. Erastus Quivey, Ira Jones, John Griffith, John A. Griffith, Hiram Griffith, Boyd Phelps, Stephen Jones and John T. Baker joined in "raising" the school, with each family providing some of the materials, including logs and white oak shakes cut from nearby groves of trees. The first teacher was a young lady from east of the Rock River, Mary Jane True.

The second school was built near Union village and the third in a small settlement, known unofficially as "The Grove" and later named Evansville in 1842. The Grove school served as both a church and school. Levi Leonard was the first teacher in this school.

## Union Churches

- **Christian Science Church** – established in the 1920s
- **Congregational United Church of Christ** – established 1850s - 112 West Church Street
- **Evansville Seventh-Day Adventist** – 453 West Main Street
- **First Baptist Church** – established 1866 – 103 West Church Street

- **Free Will Baptist Church**- Established 1854, 23 West Church Street united with First Baptist in 1913
- **Free Methodist Church** - Established 1880, used the Evansville Seminary buildings until the congregation purchased the Free Will Baptist Church, 23 West Church Street
- **Grace Independent Baptist Church**, 23 West Church Street
- **Jehovah's Witness Kingdom Hall** – Elmer Road, Evansville
- **St. John's Episcopal** – established 1860s – disbanded in the 1936 – building sold to St. John's Lutheran – then razed in 1959 to make way for the U. S. Post Office building,
- **St. John's Lutheran** – established 1936 on South First Street in the St. John's Episcopal building was razed for post office and congregation moved to new location in the 1958 – 312 South Third Street ,
- **St. Paul's Catholic Church**, 39 Garfield Avenue, established 1906
- **Union Baptist** – Union Village, established 1844 – united with **First Baptist Church Evansville** – Established in the 1930s – building has been razed
- **United Methodist Church** – established 1840, 31 South Madison Street

## Union Schools

Union Township's first school was built in 1841 on the north side of the road known as the Janesville and Sugar River Road. The school was located west of Evansville's current city limits and was built of logs. Erastus Quivey, Ira Jones, John Griffith, John A. Griffith, Hiram Griffith, Boyd Phelps, Stephen Jones and John T. Baker joined in "raising" the school, with each family providing some of the materials, including logs and white oak shakes cut from nearby groves of trees. The first teacher was a young lady from east of the Rock River, Mary Jane True.

The second school was built near Union village and the third in a small settlement, known unofficially as "The Grove" and later named Evansville in 1842. The Grove school served as both a church and school. Levi Leonard was the first teacher in this school.

## Union Schools - Settlement to Present:

- **Brown**
- **Butts Corners**
- **Emery**
- **Evansville Community School District**
- **Evansville Junior College** (Private)
- **Evansville Seminary** (Private)
- **Franklin**
- **Holt**
- **Leota School for Girls** (Private) also known as the Bone School
- **Millard School** (Private)

- **Pleasant Prairie**
- **School District No. 10**
- **Tuller**
- **Tupper**
- **Union School**
- **Wyler School** (Private)

## Union Funeral Homes

- **Walter Biglow**, 10 East Main Street – 1897 – sold to Harry Roderick in 1920, used until 1931
- **Roderick Funeral Home**, 39 North First, Evansville, Wisconsin – 1931 became **Roderick – Ward Funeral Home**
- **Allen Funeral Home**, 103 West Main Street, Evansville, Wisconsin 1930 – became **Allen-Meredith**, 103 West Main Street, Evansville, Wisconsin
- **Ward Funeral Home**, Fifth Street

## Union Early Settlers

The earliest published account of settlement was printed in the 1873 Combination Atlas Map of Rock County by Everets, Baskin and Stewart, of Chicago, Ill. Although the author of this account is unknown, the first settlers are listed as Ira Jones, Stephen Jones, Boyd Phelps, Charles McMillen, Hiram Griffith, John Sayles, Erastus Quivey, Washington Higday, Samuel Lewis, Jacob West, John F. Baker, Levi Leonard and Willis T. Bunton settlers. By his own account, Levi Leonard did not arrive until 1840.

The 1877 account goes on to say that Phelps and Jones were followed by Charles McMillen, John Rhinehart, Samuel Lewis and Erastus Quivey, all married with families. In the spring of 1840, Rev. John Griffith, Ira Jones, Jacob West, John T. Baker, I. W. Haseltine, Levi Leonard, David Johnson, Daniel Johnson, John Cook, John Adams, Washington Higday, Hamilton Higday and John Sale.

## Union Cemeteries

- **Maple Hill Cemetery** is the largest cemetery, located in the City of Evansville, on the east side of Evansville, on Cemetery Road. There is a published index for this cemetery titled Maple Hill Cemetery, Evansville, WI by Bernie Frammer, published by Rock County Genealogical Society, 1990.
- **Holy Cross (Catholic) Cemetery** is located in Section 22, on Highway 14, north of the city of Evansville.
- **Old Baptist Church Cemetery** (Union) is located in Section 10, south of Union Road, in the village of Union.
- **Unnamed Cemetery** in Section 10, on Highway 14, north of junction with Highway 59.

- **The Jug Prairie Cemetery** in in Section 15 in Brooklyn township, Northeastern Green County, is the burial place of several early Union township settlers.
- **Mt. Hope Cemetery** in Section 31 in Brooklyn, Rutland Township, Dane County also has burials of Union Township people.

## **Union Library Resources** - RCGS, Janesville, WI

### **UNION BOOKS**

- Campbell, Byron. *Pioneer Days in Evansville*, 1915
- *Evansville Century of Process*, 1939.
- *Maple Hill Cemetery, Evansville, WI*. by Bernie Farmer, 1990.
- MISCELLANEOUS
- Finn, William. *Account book & farm day register 1846-1884*.
- Rock County Government. *Tract Index* of the farm lands of each township from 1835-1947.
- *Scrapbook of Town of Union and Evansville people*, 1919-1940, 25 pgs.
- *Genevieve Norgovd Scrapbook*.
- Donald Webb Johnson, comp. *Scrapbooks of Union and Fulton Townships*, 1924-.
- Maud Gillies Spooner. *Scrapbooks of the Town of Union*, 1951, 1953-1955.
- *Union, town of, Scrapbook*, 1919-1940.
- *Union Township School District* (financial, attendance 1924-27, 1930-1957, & school board minutes)

### **EAGER FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY**, 39 West Main Street, Evansville, Wisconsin

- *Books, Scrapbooks, etc.*
- Antes, William Bowes. *An Analysis of the Evansville Review*. Thesis for University of Wisconsin Bachelor of Arts Degree in Journalism. 1927
- The Badger, *Evansville Wisconsin Newspaper* 1894 – 1906 – on Microfilm
- Baker Manufacturing Company. *Catalogs and newspaper reports* 1873 - . History Room files
- Baur, John I. H., *Theodore Robinson, 1852-1896*. Brooklyn Museum. 1946
- Campbell, Byron, *Pioneer Days of Evansville*. Antes Press, Evansville, Wisconsin 1915

- **Commemorative Biographical Record of the Counties of Rock, Green, Grant, Iowa, and Lafayette, Wisconsin**, J. H. Beers & Company, Chicago, 1907. – History Room and online biographies. <http://freepages.history.rootsweb.com/~wirockbios/index.html>
- **Dane County and Surrounding Towns**. 1877 – Reference Collection
- Eager, Leonard P. **The History of Evansville and the Eager Family**. Paper written for UW History Room Eager Family Files
- **Eager Free Public Library Board of Trustees minutes of meetings**. 1898 – History Room
- Evans, John M. – copies of **Correspondence and Newspaper Articles** – 104 West Main and Evans family files – History room.
- Evansville, **Village Board and City Council minutes**: on microfilm
- Evansville: Enjoy Its Beauty, **Video**
- **Evansville's Century of Progress**. Antes Press, 1939 and 1966. 977.5 Ev1
- **Evansville Area Interactive Strategic Planning ISP Conference** : hosted by Evansville Community Partnership, Inc. REF 977.5 Evansville
- **Guide to Evansville**. 917.75 Guide.
- **Illustrated Prospectus of Evansville**. 1910, Antes Press. 977.5
- Jones, Burr W. **Reminiscences of Nine Decades**. Antes Press. Evansville, Wisconsin. 1936
- **Maple Hill Cemetery Index and Sexton's Records** – History Room
- Montgomery, Ruth Ann, Baker **Manufacturing Co., 125th Anniversary**: 1873-1998, 977.5 M767
- Montgomery, Ruth Ann, **Evansville: Glimpses of the Grove**. Printed by Star Printing. 1979. 977.5 M767
- Powles, James, **Diaries (photo copies)** 1874-1913 – History Room
- Pullen, Lloyd T., Pullen's **Pencilings and various other selections, embracing a variety of subjects: pathos, description, argument and narrative**, Antes Press, 1904, Reference, B Pullen
- Pullen, Paul Pike. **Country Banker**. 1976, 977.5 P96
- **Service Record Book of Men and Women from Evansville**, [Veterans of Foreign Wars, 1948.] 977.5

- **Union Township – Census Records** – 1850- 1920 on microfilm
- **Union township Census Records and Cemetery records** – typewritten copies in private notebook collection of Marilyn Jones Bailey – History Room
- **Union Township – Newspaper Clippings 1960s** – private notebook collection of Marilyn Jones Bailey, partially indexed – History Room
- **Union Township – Hatlevig Scrapbooks** – newspaper clippings 1970s and 1980s– History Room
- **Wisconsin Industrial Business Retention** - Evansville
- Zellie, Carole, **Evansville Architectural Survey and Preservation plan**. 1977. 917.75 R593

### MAPS AVAILABLE AT EAGER FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

- 1855 – Original plat – copy in History Room
- 1858 – Union Township and Village of Evansville – copies in History Room
- 1871 – Bird’s Eyeview of Evansville – copies in History Room
- 1873 – Combination Atlas Map of Rock County. Everts, Baskin and Stewart. Chicago 1873  
Union township on website:  
<http://freepages.books.rootsweb.com/~wirockbios/1873/73Twps/73MapU.jpg>
- 1883 Bird’s Eyeview of Evansville – copies in History Room
- 1891 Plat Book of Rock County. C. M. Foot & Co. Chicago, 1891
- 1904 Atlas of Rock County. – History Room
- 1917 Standard Atlas of Rock County. Hennessey & Company, Delavan, WI 1917 – History Room
- Plat maps of Rock County various dates 1950s to the present.
- Current Map of Union Township on website:  
<http://www.rootsweb.com/~wirock/Maps/rockmap.html>
- Evansville, Wisconsin, Sanborn map collection – on microfilm

### LOCAL HISTORIES OF COMMUNITY & ORGANIZATIONS

More than 500 histories of churches, community organizations, homes, businesses, families, includes newspaper collections, deed histories, and some photographs. – History Room

## NEWSPAPERS AT EAGER FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

- The Enterprise, Evansville Wisconsin newspaper 1881-1910 – Microfilm
- **Evansville Citizen**, Evansville Wisconsin Newspaper 1866-1869 – on microfilm
- **Evansville Journal**, Evansville, Wisconsin newspaper, 1874-75 – Microfilm
- **Evansville Post**, 1974 – Evansville, Wisconsin newspaper – on microfilm
- **Evansville Review**, Evansville, Wisconsin newspaper, 1870 – present - Microfilm
- **The Tribune**, Evansville Newspaper 1881 – 1910. on microfilm

Compiled by Ruth Ann Montgomery and Jennifer Ehle