

HISTORICAL SOCIETY WORD SEARCH

R	E	P	A	I	R	S	D	Z	E	T	J	O	K	S	Y	K	I	R	D	U	L	P	T	E
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SCIOTO MILLS
 LEROY WILSON
 RESEARCH CENTER
 CEDARVILLE
 MEMORIAL DAY
 PARADES
 ALFRED STEWART
 SCHOOL
 REPAIRS
 DIARIES

JANE ADDAMS
 MILL STREET
 PROGRAMS
 SECOND STREET
 CEMETARY
 EXHIBITS
 MARY MAU
 VOLUNTEERS
 MONUMENTS
 MUSIC

HISTORICAL SOCIETY
 CLINGMAN
 MUSEUM
 MEMBERS
 RENOVATION
 RICHART GENERAL STORE
 ROSABELLE CRONAU
 VERNON MACOMBER
 BLACKBOARDS
 LUNCHEONS

Test your visual skill. Find the words listed below the box of letters and mark them in the box with a light colored felt tip pen. Send your marked copy to the Cedarville Area Historical Society, P.O. Box 336, Cedarville, Il. 61013. Or send your answer as an e-mail attachment to info@cedarvilleareahistoricalsociety.org. The first five correct answers will receive a free copy of the 22 page illustrated book on Cedarville history. Make sure to include your mailing address with your answer. This puzzle created by Wendy Bade Gilpin.

ECHOES OF CEDARVILLE APRIL 2009

Cedarville Area Historical Society



Cedarville Historical Museum to Open With New Exhibits on Saturday, May 2

Six new and two updated exhibits will greet visitors to the Cedarville Area Historical Museum when it opens for the six month 2009 season on Saturday, May 2.

As in the past, the museum will be open every Saturday and Sunday through October from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free for historical society members. Non-members over 12 years will pay \$2.

This year's art gallery in the first floor south room has a new twist. Rather than works by local artists, the room will feature almost two dozen very large local historical photographs taken from the historical society archives. The 13 inch by 19 inch black and white prints were produced using the society's recently purchased professional ink jet HP printer. Society members with historical family photographs can make use of this service.

A second new exhibit features text and photographs of the little-known Arabian horse stud farm that was on Cedarville's Mill Street for several years after World War II.

Operated by Dr. George Conn and his wife, the 20 plus acre farm closed down in the middle 1950's to make room for the residential Oak Ridge subdivision.

This exhibit was extensively researched by Ladonna Wardlow, a historical society member.

Ladonna's husband, Merle, was largely responsible for the information and photographs used to create the exhibit highlighting several aspects of the Kryder family, one of the largest in Stephenson County. Merle is part of the family.

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***Our website: www.cedarvilleareahistoricalsociety.org
 Our e-mail: info@cedarvilleareahistoricalsociety.org***

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The fourth, fifth and sixth new exhibits deal with the small settlements that are near Cedarville — Scioto Mills, Red Oak, Buena Vista and Damascus. The first three to a large extent owe their few decades of glory in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to the fact that they were along the route of the Illinois Central Railroad. The proximity of the Pecatonica River probably played a major role in the life of Damascus. Whatever the reason for their earlier existence and brief prominence, all four today are mere shadows of their former selves. However, while researching these settlements for the exhibits, it became clear that the present residents of all four are very proud of where they live and they have extensive knowledge of their history.

Many of the photographs in these three exhibits were taken from boxes and albums kept by the dozen or more residents who were contacted. A byproduct of research done for these exhibits was to learn that many “facts” found in the 1880, 1910 and 1970 published histories of Stephenson County simply are not true, probably because the published information relied heavily on oral history rather than primary documents and verifiable facts. The Cedarville Museum exhibits on these four settlements are interesting and well worth viewing. But they do not tell the complete story of what happened. Perhaps the exhibits will open new doors to new discoveries.

Two ongoing Cedarville exhibits have been updated for the 2009 season.

New photographs have been added to the Jane Addams exhibit. They illustrate various events in her life including her work at Chicago’s famous Hull-House and her involvement in the international peace movement that in 1932 won her a Nobel Peace Prize.

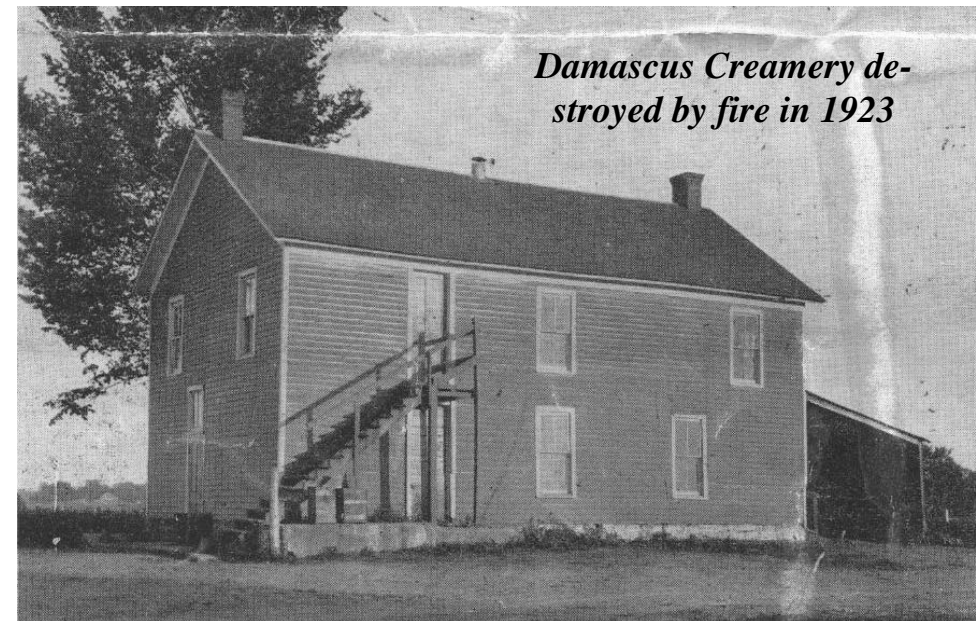
Recently discovered photographs have been added to the Cedarville school display.

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The historical society is recognized as a non-profit organization by Illinois and the U.S. government and as such has been designated as eligible to receive tax deductible gifts under the IRS tax code regulation 501 (c) (3).



Damascus Creamery destroyed by fire in 1923



Phillips family home in 1935

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that the school be used for community affairs as well as education.

This school was used from 1862 until 1919 when a brick school was built a half mile west of the Pecatonica-Cedarville Road bridge. That building is now a private residence. The old stone school house stood until 1937 when it was razed by WPA workers to make way for a new road. The stones were used to provide water breaks on the Lena-Cedarville Road.

The 1854 census of the Harlem Corners school district showed there were ninety children under 21 years of age and a census of the Damascus district taken in 1862 indicated 105 children under 21 years. Attendance at that school was as high as 60 with all students taught by one teacher.

The other structure that still stands is the early general store-residence across the Pecatonica River and east of the north-east corner of the Damascus-Cedarville roads intersection. The building was constructed and opened in 1878 by John Folgate. He also served as postmaster. Folgate sold the operation to William Bechtold. Jacob Hutmacher purchased the store in 1893.

George Phillips took over the site in 1895 and four years later built a store on the west side of the house to make more room for his family. Phillips also served

as post master as did his grandfather Norman. Rural free delivery came in 1904 and Damascus then lost its post office, as did many other small settlements in the United States.

George Phillips ran the general store for sixty years. The store that he built no longer stands; however, the residence is still there.

The Damascus Creamery was built in 1893 on the south side of the Cedarville Road across from the general store. The creamery was destroyed by fire on July 13, 1923. The creamery was owned by George Phillips but was being operated by a firm called the Marketing Company..

Until 1848 there was no Cedarville Road bridge across the Pecatonica River. One was built then and it served a short time until one of the periodic floods took it out in 1860. A new bridge was built in that year by John R. Stout and his son John H. Stout. This became known as Stout's Bridge until 1884 when it was replaced by an iron structure.

The iron bridge was used until the 1950's when it was replaced by a cement bridge. Early in 1999 this bridge gave way to the structure in use today.

The good farm land, the water and the timber that attracted the early settlers are still here today. Most of the buildings that drew the early settlers together are no longer a part of Damascus.



South Room Exhibit

On this page are two of the two dozen Cedarville historical photographs on display in the museum's first floor south room. All photos measure 13 by 19 inches and were produced on the historical society's recently purchased ink jet printer. They were mounted by Harlan Corrie, artist and historical society member. The top photo is of the Jacob Sills blacksmith shop on Cherry and Stephenson streets. The right shows 1928 construction of the bridge over Cedar Creek.



Damascus: How It Came to Be

By Dave Macomber

Historical Society Member

(Dave, a successful farmer west of Cedarville, comes from a family with deep roots in Stephenson County.)

The small settlement of Damascus in Stephenson County was probably named by Norman Phillips, one of the early settlers who also became the first postmaster. It has been known by this biblical name ever since.

Norman and his wife Phebe were encouraged by her parents, Agrippa and Rhoda Martin, to come to Illinois from New York and to acquire farm land. The Martins had previously migrated to the county in 1836. Today a stone marker identifies their cabin location in a grove of oak trees just south and west of today's Cedarville Road bridge over the Pecatonica River.

Norman and Phebe arrived in Stephenson in 1837. Their first cabin was built on higher ground just west of today's bridge. A modern log cabin now occupies the site, but again a stone marker testifies to the Phillips occupancy.

On the southwest corner of Cedarville and Ayp roads, is the land where Norman's son James M. Phillips farmed and raised a large family. Today, the land is worked by me, a great grandson of James, and my son.

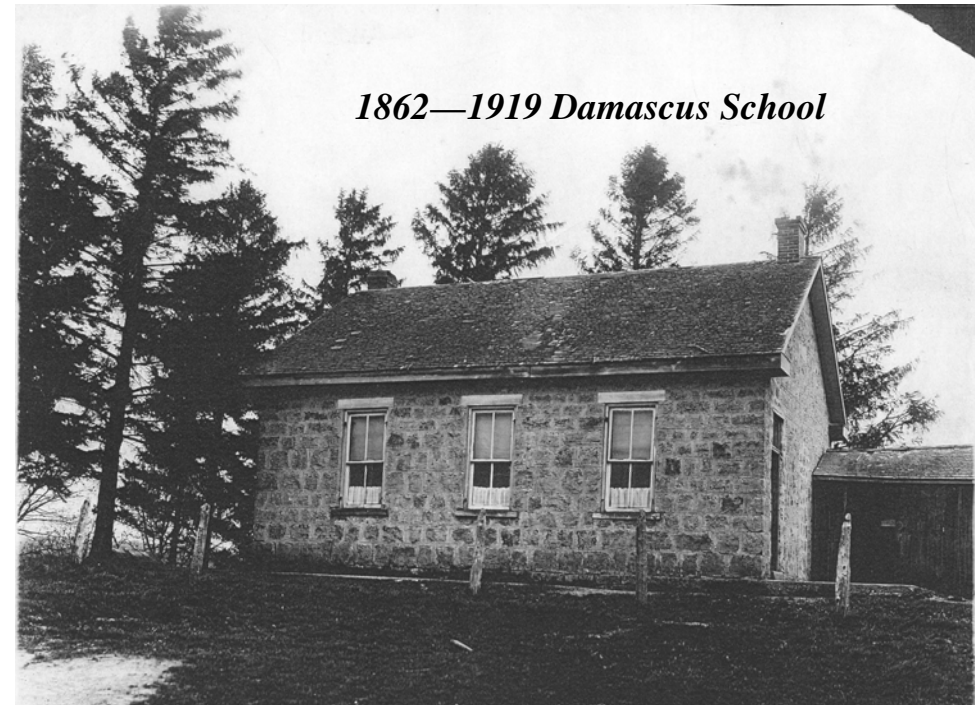
At one time Damascus had at least six public buildings. They included a blacksmith shop, a school, a Baptist church, its parsonage, a creamery and a general store which also housed the post office.

The parsonage for the church stood on the site of the boat landing now being constructed on the west side of the Pecatonica River by the Cedarville Road bridge. The church was built in 1903 on the south side of Cedarville Road and west of the farm originally owned by James Phillips. The building in 1916 was moved slightly west and provided with a basement. The structure was torn down in the early 1950's.

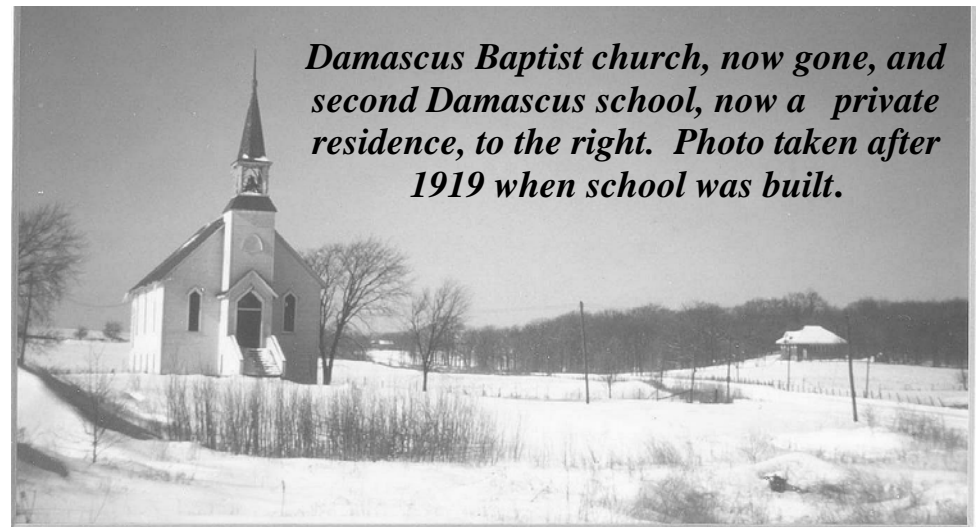
The first school in the Damascus area opened in the summer of 1850 in the Agrippa Martin log cabin and continued there for two years. For the next ten years, classes were held in several nearby locations.

In 1860 the Harlem and Waddams townships formed a school district and constructed a stone school house. The building was 28 feet by 34 feet and had walls one and a half feet thick. Masons who worked on the building were paid \$100 for their labor and were boarded by the people of the district. Lumber from a river bridge that had collapsed was used to construct the framework. Norman Phillips donated the land with a request

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1862—1919 Damascus School



Damascus Baptist church, now gone, and second Damascus school, now a private residence, to the right. Photo taken after 1919 when school was built.