



# Joiner Room *Journal*

*Saving the past for the future*

Volume 15 No. 1

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## Every Grave Has a Story

**G**enealogists know that cemetery research can be fascinating and time consuming. The gravestone art and symbols can represent so many things. There are many unique stones in Elmwood Cemetery in Sycamore that are of interest. One in particular is the grave of the “son of H. B. Vedder.” Unfortunately, the stone is almost unreadable today. This put us into “History Detective” mode to find out more about this child, so we gave Joiner History Room super sleuth Sheri Baker the task.

According to the *Sycamore True Republican*, the “son” died at ten years of age in November of 1874 of diphtheria, which still raged at that time. Many other children were listed in the newspaper as dying from the effects of this disease. By gently rubbing the stone with our fingers to get rid of the “yuck,” we discovered the boy’s dad was H. B. (Horace) Vedder and the mother was Mira. After searching the 1870 U.S. Federal Census,

we learned the son’s name was Lynn.

H. B. owned a 220-acre farm a mile west of Sycamore in Mayfield Township. Mr. Vedder raised oats, as many other farmers did at that time. In 1881 there was severe attack of army worms to the crop, devastating the crop, from which Mr. Vedder was not able to recover.

In 1882 his farm was up for sale and the family moved from this area. We learned that in 1887 they were living in Glidden, Iowa. By 1905 Mr. Vedder had died. This explains why there are graves at the cemetery purchased by Mr. Vedder with only one grave marked, belonging to the son, Lynn. This is just one of the many stories you can find in a cemetery.



## County Farm and William Eckhardt

In 1912 DeKalb County Soil Improvement Association made history when they hired William G. Eckhardt, an agronomist and professor from the University of Illinois, as Farm Adviser. That same year, the DeKalb County Board of Supervisors voted to hire Eckhardt for “services as expert in charge of the farm operations on the County farm,” also known as the “poor farm.” The expectations were that Eckhardt would bring the county’s farm up to a high state of productivity by scientific methods of soil conservation. By 1915 the county’s poor farm had returned \$1048 per year more than the average of the four years preceding Eckhardt’s arrival. This photo of the county farm property along Sycamore Road was taken circa 1940. The building in



the center housed indigents who worked at the farm. Later the building was used as the county’s nursing home.

## Fabulous Photos from the Files



Waite Embree in 1955 at the site of the plaque commemorating the first railroad depot in DeKalb. The plaque’s stone base can be seen today behind O’Leary’s restaurant at the corner of Third Street and Lincoln Highway. The actual plaque is no longer there.

Plaque dedication June 17, 1973, at the United Presbyterian Church, Sandwich, to commemorate the boyhood home of Gov. John Beveridge, site of the first log cabin in DeKalb County.



### Other photos recently shared with:

DeKalb Theatre—photos used in restoration of the marquee  
*Northern Star*—photos of Lincoln Highway  
Ellwood House—post card display  
“Looking Back” column in the *Midweek*



# Sandwich Manufacturing Company

The first manufacturing company in the county was the Sandwich Manufacturing Company. Founded in 1856 under the name of A. Adams and Sons, it was incorporated in 1867 as the Sandwich Manufacturing Company. The company made farm implements such as corn shellers, grain elevators, hay loaders, gas engines, rakes and presses, etc. By 1882, the company had an annual business income of \$1 million. In 1930 the company changed ownership when it was acquired by the New Idea Spreader company located in Coldwater, Ohio; in 1945 that factory became a branch of the Avco Corporation of New York. The plant continued to manufacture equipment and tools until 1955 when the factory was closed down. The facility continued to serve for a period of time as a sales division and warehouse, permanently closing in 1981.



SANDWICH MANUFACTURING COMPANY

State of Illinois  
DeKalb County

B. C. Whitcomb chosen by the Sandwich Manufacturing Company, and Robert Jackson chosen by A. Adams & Sons as appraisers, who are competent and disinterested, to appraise the property of A. Adams & Sons, used in connection with and for the purpose of carrying on their manufacturing business in Sandwich and which said A. Adams & Sons desire to have received by said Sandwich Manufacturing Company at a cash valuation, as payment for stock in said Company. Each being duly sworn on oath that they will faithfully and impartially appraise the said property, both real and personal estate of A. Adams & Sons as may be shown to them according to the best of their skill and judgment.

Subscribed & sworn to before me  
this twenty ninth day of April 1867  
Nestor H. Sedgwick  
Justice of the Peace

State of Illinois  
DeKalb County

B. C. Whitcomb chosen by the Sandwich Manufacturing Company, and Robert Jackson chosen by A. Adams & Sons as appraisers, who are competent and disinterested, to appraise the property of A. Adams & Sons, used in connection with and for the purpose of carrying on their manufacturing business in Sandwich and which said A. Adams & Sons desire to have received by said Sandwich Manufacturing Company at a cash valuation, in payment for Stock in said Company. Each being duly sworn on oath say that they will faithfully and impartially appraise the said property, both real and personal estate, of A. Adams & Sons as may be shown to them according to the best of their skill and judgment.

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Justice of the Peace



## JOINER HISTORY ROOM

At the Sycamore Public Library  
103 East State Street  
Sycamore, IL 60178

Phone: 815-895-7271

E-MAIL:  
JOINERHISTORYROOM@  
DEKALBCOUNTY.ORG

**HOURS**  
**TUES & THURS 10-3**



Sgt. James P. Mason of DeKalb, 101st Airborne Division. On October 17, 1968, the helicopter Jim was in crashed on takeoff in rough waters off the coast of Vietnam. Jim was MIA for a number of years before he was finally identified.

## New in the Archives

- Dinosaur Bones Found in Sycamore and DeKalb County, written and donated by Bill Wakefield
- 1956 DeKalb Centennial photos and documentation, Ivan Williams collection from Roger Nelson
- Collection of First Savings & Loan memorabilia, from National Bank & Trust
- Coltonville School memorabilia, Barb Wallin collection from Judy Maxwell
- DeKalb Centennial items, miscellaneous booklets, magazines and maps, from Donna Holdridge
- Hendrickson's Diary, collection from Fred Kunz
- Cat's Meow of Jane Fargo Hotel, from Made Just For You
- Kirkpatrick Civil War Diaries, written and donated by Douglas Kirkpatrick
- DeKalb and Northern Illinois University post cards, from Debbie Benson
- "Poems for Everyday Living" by Claude E. Wilson, from Jane Fay
- Columbia Literacy Club collection dating back to 1892, from Gayla Nieminen of the Columbia Literacy Club

## Thank You!

- In honor of Dave and Carol Woodin's 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary from Sandy Lyon
- In memory of Ivan Williams: Sycamore Charities; Ron Klein
- IDEAL Industries for two laptop computers

Send contributions for the Joiner History Room Endowment Fund to:

DeKalb Co. Community Foundation  
475 DeKalb Ave.  
Sycamore, IL 60178  
815-748-5383  
[www.dekalbccf.org](http://www.dekalbccf.org)