



MCHS News

July 2020

Opening Doors to Madison County History

Vol. 8 No. 4

Historical Museum
715 N Main Street
Edwardsville, IL 62025

Hours:
The museum is currently closed for renovation.

Archival Library
801 N Main Street
Telephone Hours:
Wed-Fri 9 am - 4 pm
Sunday 1 pm - 4 pm
(Closed to patrons due to COVID)

Phone:
618-656-7569

Web Address:
madcohistory.org

E-mail:
info@madcohistory.org

About Us:
The MCHS museum complex, consisting of a modern archival library, a museum in the 1836 Weir House and the Helms Collection Center, is owned by the nonprofit Madison County Historical Society and operated jointly with Madison County.

The Madison County Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

ALHAMBRA: A TALE OF TWO VILLAGES

by Cindy Reinhardt

The Village of Alhambra is one of several small farming communities that can still be found in Madison County. Located six miles east of Hamel on Route 140, it is a combination of two early villages, Alhambra and Greencastle. Although the two merged in 1884, the division can still be seen today on the landscape and in references to "Lowertown" or the "West End," both names for Greencastle.

Although farms were established in Alhambra Township as early as 1817, it was more than 30 years before a community was founded. In 1849, Dr. Louis Sheppard bought a large tract of land in Section 14 and platted six blocks for a village. The following year, on Nov. 2, 1850, the plat was recorded at the courthouse.

When the Sheppards first arrived, they lived with the Levi Harnsberger family until they could build their own home. Legend has it that Mrs. Sheppard and Mrs. Harnsberger had been reading a book by Washington Irving called "The Alhambra" (published in 1832). In the book, Alhambra referred to a Moorish castle in Spain known also as the "red castle." The ladies suggested that Alhambra would be a good name for the new village and Dr. Sheppard agreed.

The first building in the new village was a general store built for Solomon Tabor. Dr. Sheppard built his new residence at about the same time; however, it was north of the platted lots in Alhambra. Sheppard also built a sawmill (1849) and other businesses followed that brought new residents to the emerging village located along the well-travelled road from Vandalia to Alton.



Looking east on Main Street (Route 140) men are standing in front of The Big Store. Also in view are the telephone company and Citizen's Bank. (Village of Alhambra)

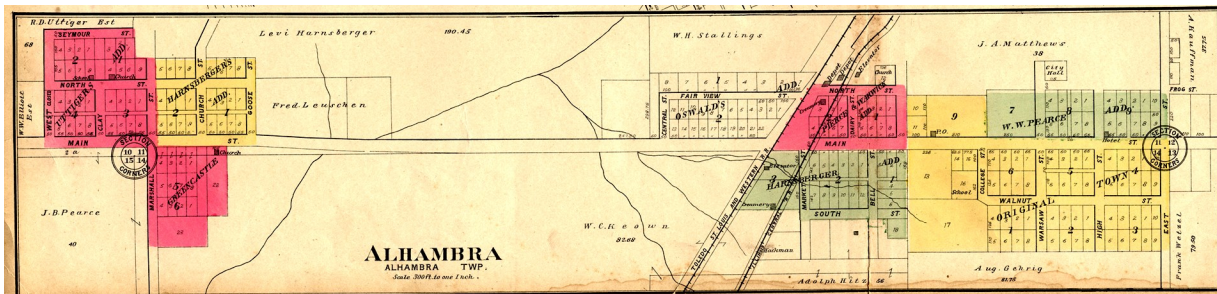
Six years after the village was platted, an additional 3 blocks were added on the north side of Main Street by William Wriley Pearce. Sheppard's original six blocks were all on the south side of Main Street. (See plat below.)

Within the next few years Alhambra flourished as Pearce moved his family and business interests to the village. The first schoolhouse was built, the first hotel/tavern opened, and numerous other concerns were established.

Ten years after Alhambra was platted, Greencastle, a second village, was founded less than a mile west of the first village. Levi Harnsberger, W. S. Randle and Henry Harnberger partnered to plat the village on adjoining sections of their farms on Oct. 19, 1859. The first store building was

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Plat of Alhambra from 1906 Atlas of Madison County. The former village of Greencastle is at left. (MCHS)



ABOUT US

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VOLUNTEERS

There are abundant and varied opportunities for volunteers at either the Museum or the Archival Library. If interested, please call 618-656-7569.

MEMBERSHIPS

Several membership levels are available to those interested in supporting the work of preserving Madison County history through an MCHS membership. Memberships run on the calendar year, Jan 1-Dec 31. Applications are available on our website, or at the Archival Library.

PUBLICATIONS

MCHS NEWS

6 issues annually
 Cindy Reinhardt, Editor

ARCHIVAL LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT

The Archival Library will remain closed to the public until at least August 1; however, the employees are still working regular hours and will do everything they can to accommodate the needs of patrons. Staff can be reached at 618-656-7569 or by email at jlparkin@co.madison.il.us.

When the library reopens, appointments will be recommended and patrons asked to notify staff in advance of their research topic. When they arrive, materials will be waiting for them.

While the museum is closed for renovation, the staff is working to reconfigure the library conference room to provide exhibit space as well as additional places for patrons and staff to work socially distanced.

In addition to his regular duties, Superintendent Jon Parkin has been contributing Facebook content on events that reflect "Today in History." He is also writing and experimenting with videos about various aspects of history. A link will be posted when available. These outreach efforts reach thousands of people with information about Madison County history.

Research Assistant Carol Frisse is the voice people usually hear when they call the Archival Library. In addition to assisting patrons, she has been working on a project to

scan and catalogue all of the photographs in the collections so that digital copies are available. There are thousands.

Another project receiving well-deserved attention is the indexing of the "Veterans Scrapbooks" compiled by the late Harold Meisenheimer of Alton. For decades, Meisenheimer scoured historic and current newspapers copying articles and obituaries about Madison County servicemen and women.



One of the images Carol is working with shows a captured Japanese submarine on parade in 1943 on Edwardsville's Main Street. The submarine traveled the country promoting the sale of war bonds. (MCHS)

MUSEUM SPOTLIGHT

Staff at the Madison County Historical Museum have a new on-line exhibit, "One Hundred Years of Cooking." This exhibit, created by Asst. Curator Mary Rose, under the direction of Curator Jenn VanBibber, shows vintage cooking utensils from the collections, photographs and stories of some of the people who owned them, and even recipes.

Shown above right is a lunch box, one of many images in the new exhibit featuring the locally made NESCO graniteware.

Since the last newsletter, the Korte Company began work on the back porch of the museum building. While restoring the porch, the new floor was raised slightly to make it easier for wheelchairs to enter the building and a new ramp will be constructed leading to the parking lot and library entrance. The company will also install new walkways.



\$15 SUMMER MEMBERSHIP SPECIAL

In July and August, MCHS offers a \$15 new membership opportunity that runs to the end of the calendar year when all MCHS memberships expire.

Please consider introducing a friend to

the Society through this special offer. Send a check payable to MCHS with member information (name, address, phone and email) to MCHS, P. O. Box 422, Edwardsville, IL 62025.



MCHS RECEIVES GRANT

The Madison County Historical Society is pleased to announce the receipt of a CARES Emergency Relief Grant in the amount of \$2,500 from Illinois Humanities (IH).

Illinois Humanities is a nonprofit organization and the state's affiliate for the National Endowment for the Humanities. IH activates the humanities in Illinois through free public programs, grants, and educational opportunities that foster reflection, spark conversation, build community and strengthen civic engagement.

Funds from this grant will be used to design and print a series of posters to be distributed for display at public places in Madison County. The posters will rotate throughout the county and each will provide a snapshot of a particular event or person in Madison County history. The posters provide a way to spread Madison County history beyond the walls of the museum and archival library.

GRANT FROM SIUE FOR MUSEUM STUDIES INTERN

MCHS is pleased to announce the receipt of a grant from the SIUE Emeriti Faculty Association. The grant will cover the expense of a paid graduate internship from the Historical Studies Department. The intern will work under the direction of Associate Professor Laura Milsk Fowler, Director of the Museum Studies Program. The candidate will work at the Madison County Archival Library and Historical Museum 10 hours per week for 15 weeks beginning in August. In addition to wages, the intern will receive a tuition waiver for the semester. Duties will focus on creating an understanding of how a local museum and archival library operate through participating in the work of the organization. Museum Superintendent Jon Parkin will coordinate activities with Dr. Fowler.

EVENTS CANCELLED OR POSTPONED

Due to COVID-19 and an abundance of caution, MCHS has cancelled, postponed or modified events through the end of this year.

MCHS Speaker Series: If local residents were looking forward to the line-up of programs scheduled for 2020 and disappointed to have them cancelled, don't worry, all of the speakers have agreed to move their programs to next year in the same months as scheduled this year. The only exception will be the October speaker, Eric Robinson, whose program has been moved to February 2021. This year, the February program was the only one not cancelled since it was scheduled before the pandemic reached Madison County.

Dining in History and Annual Meeting: Dining in History has been cancelled and in lieu of an annual meeting, members will be sent a copy of the annual report along with a card to return for voting purposes. Watch for that in November.

Living History Day (Chautauqua): MCHS was ready to repeat the successful event of last year in September but this event also had to be postponed. Grants had already been awarded to fund the event, but all of the sponsors agreed to extend the grants to the new date for the festival, Sept. 13, 2021.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

On July 2, Roland Harris of Highland was awarded the Illinois State Historical Society's Best of Illinois History Lifetime Achievement Award for his work in preserving and sharing Illinois history.

MCHS nominated Harris for the award earlier this spring. Since the ISHS awards gala was cancelled in April, ISHS representative Cindy Reinhardt delivered the award to Harris on his 95th birthday.



2020 NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

May-June ♦ Thank you for supporting MCHS!

\$50 Family

George & Nolen Provenzano

\$35 Individual

Krista Adelhardt
Donald Carnly
Janet Eck

Ken Gehrig

Edna Grench
Denise Evans Hanson
Carol Manning

Matt Meachum

Diane Senalik
Glenna Spitze

2020 DONORS FOR MUSEUM RENOVATION

Thank you for your generosity!

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Lynn Engelman

The Korte Company
Arnold Meyer
Jeff Pauk
Phillips 66

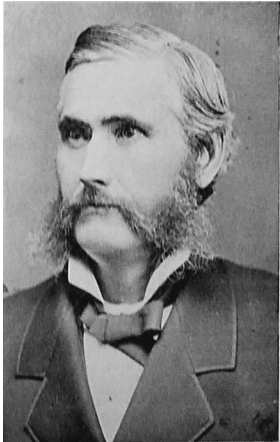
Mike & Cindy Reinhardt
Lisa Shashek
Mark & Ann Shashek

erected in 1860 by John Thornburg. According to an interview with Joseph B. Pearce that appeared in the *Greenville Advocate* in 1931, the village was named by Thornburg after Greencastle, Indiana. Thornburg was a native of Indiana before moving to Madison County.

The Gazetteer of Madison County gives a brief snapshot of village life in 1866.

Alhambra – “This is a thriving village of about two hundred, and is situated in township five north, range six west, eighteen miles northeast of Edwardsville. It contains a good hotel, one general store, one grocery, two wagon shops, two blacksmith shops, one carpenter shop and one school house.”

Greencastle – “Is about one third mile distant from Alhambra. There are in it, one church, two hotels, one store, one steam flouring mill, one wagon shop and one blacksmith shop. The post office is in Alhambra.” The population of Greencastle then was less than 100 souls.



Francis M Pearce First Village President

The two villages naturally had a competitive spirit, but in 1884, they decided to merge. Alhambra wanted to incorporate, but didn't have the 300 residents required; however, the combined population of Greencastle and Alhambra met the criterion. The two communities officially became one when the Village of Alhambra was incorporated on April 4, 1884. The first officers were Francis Pearce, president, John Pearce, clerk, and trustees Nick Ochs, Henry Sharp, Charles Ruedy, Robert Utiger and Jacob Leef.

All of these men were important to the development of the village. The inaugural president of the village, Francis Pearce, was a physician. He was a brother of William Pearce who added the addition to Alhambra in 1855. Their father, James Pearce, arrived in Madison County from Kentucky in 1815. Three years later he became one of the first settlers on Silver Creek in nearby Leef Township. The brothers each served one term in the Illinois legislature.

The clerk for the newly incorporated village, John Y. Pearce, was the son of Francis Pearce. Later, William Pearce's son, Joseph B. Pearce, the village barber, would also serve several terms as president of the village, making village governance a family affair. But nearly all of the early administrators of the village were in-laws or children of others on the Board.

Of the trustees, Ochs was a carpenter responsible for many of the early buildings in Alhambra. A wealthy landowner, Henry Sharp, in addition to trustee, would serve several terms as president. Ruedy was a storekeeper, owner of The Big Store for many years. Utiger held many public offices including justice of the peace, postmaster, president and trustee of the village and state legislator. Leef was a blacksmith by trade but for a few years worked as a carpenter. He also held various offices including tax collector, constable, deputy sheriff, and more in addition to serving as both trustee and president of the village.



Illinois Central Railroad Station in Alhambra

(MCHS)

By the time Alhambra was incorporated it was a bustling village with general stores, hardware stores, tailors, milliners, doctors, hotels, liverys, implement stores and more. The Clover Leaf Railroad, which first arrived in 1882, contributed greatly to that growth. Originally a narrow gauge line, it soon converted to standard and in 1922 was sold to the Nickel Plate Railroad. What would later become the Illinois Central connected Alhambra to Greenville in 1889 and four years later to Glen Carbon. The tracks for both companies ran between Alhambra and Lowertown. They made Alhambra a rural hub for sending milk, grain and livestock to market as well as providing convenient transportation for passengers to visit nearby towns.

The banking business came to Alhambra in 1907 with two banks, Citizen's Bank and the Hitz State Bank. Adolph Hitz had been operating a bank from his home and then from his store in Alhambra, before formally organizing and opening in 1907. The new bank was in an attractive two-story brick and stone building that still can be seen on Main Street today, although it closed as a bank in 1947 when Hitz retired.

When Citizen's Bank was liquidated in 1927, all of the shareholders were repaid. Timing probably saved them from taking losses during the Great Depression.



The Adolph Hitz Bank on Main Street

(Village of Alhambra)

ALHAMBRA

Other milestones include the arrival of electricity in 1927 and completion of “the hard road” when Route 140 through Alhambra was paved in 1931. Telephones arrived much earlier, in 1905.

The village celebrated its centennial in 1949 and its sesquicentennial in 1999. Many of the families involved in the marking those anniversaries are descendants of the earliest Alhambra families. Both milestones were commemorated with the publication of a village history book to mark the occasion

With the dawn of the automobile and the hard roads, many of the store fronts in Alhambra began to close. They had relied on a wide circle of farm families who now began travelling to larger towns to shop. The community remains close-knit through their churches, schools and parks, but the commercial district is pretty quiet these days.

A century ago, as with many small rural communities, Alhambra was like the fictional Boston tavern on *Cheers*, it was a place where “everybody knows your name.” For many residents of the village, their neighbors were either relatives or married to relatives. Children were, for the most part, well-behaved because every adult in town looked after them all. Alhambra was, and still is, a fine place for families.



After Salem Church's parochial school closed in 1926, the congregation used the building for a fellowship hall. By the 1950's the congregation had outgrown the building, so they sold it to the Fireman and Legion Association of Alhambra for \$885. Moving the building to Fireman and Legion Park, according to the church's 2010 history, turned into a real challenge. "The location in the park required the movers to take the building down a fairly steep hill and then up another before it could be placed in its new location. It reportedly fell off its trailer once during the move but arrived intact only to shift dangerously when it was unloaded." The 1918 building is still in use today.

(From Celebrating 150 Years 1860-2010)

ALHAMBRA BUSINESSES

The East End Hotel and Tavern



The East End Hotel and Tavern was built in 1858 by George Shurman. From the time it was built until 1898 when it was sold to the Highland Brewing Company, there were a number of owners. Highland Brewing Company owned taverns in a number of small towns in Madison County where they, of course, sold their own brew.

The Highland Brewing Company hired local managers, first August Talleur, and in 1907 Peter Mulloy who ran the business with the help of his daughter, Annie, and her husband, John Willman.

The Highland Brewing Company began selling off their taverns when Prohibition became the law of the land. In 1923, they sold the business to John and Annie Willman who had been running the business since the death of Annie's father in 1910. The Willman family owned the building until they sold it to Godfried “Peanuts” and Pearl

Aemisegger in 1947. The Aemiseggers had been managing the hotel and tavern since 1942. Godfried died in 1958 and Pearl ran the business alone until selling to Daudermann Mortuary who tore down the building.

Hitz Memorial Home

Adolph Hitz was a successful merchant who later had a 40-year career in banking. He was a shrewd businessman who accumulated a great deal of wealth, but was generous in sharing with the community. After Adolph's death in 1949, his wife donated their beautiful home, shown below, to the Synod of the Salem United Church of Christ for use as a home for seniors. It opened in 1952 with Mrs. Hitz as one of the first residents. Since then the home has been greatly expanded and the original house, which had no elevator, was eventually torn down. Today, the Hitz Memorial Home has a reputation as one of the best nursing home/assisted living facilities in the country.



MORE ALHAMBRA BUSINESSES

Gehrig's Store

From 1866 until 2008, Alhambra always had a store with the Gehrig name on it. Over the years they sold just about anything from groceries to farm implements to propane gas, depending on what era is examined.



Above, the Gehrig and Jageman Store that burned in 1902. Below is the new store, completed in 1903.

(Village of Alhambra)



The store was started by John Gehrig and Edward Jageman in 1866, but in 1902, it burned to the ground. By this time, John was of an age where he was not interested in starting over. His brother Jacob took over the business, moving to a larger lot and erecting a larger store in a building that can still be seen on Main Street today.

The Gehrig Store was run by many generations of the Gehrig family and grew to be a large enterprise employing 22 people. In addition to groceries, appliances and hardware, they were a John Deere implement dealer, provided electrical and plumbing services, sold and serviced dairy equipment, sold and provided service and delivery of propane gas and more. When they decided to sell, there was no one that was willing or able to take on such a wide product mix, so the various sections of the business were sold off one at a time.

The building, easily recognized on Main Street today, is currently being used as a residence. The business is missed by many in Alhambra today.

Dauderman's Funeral Services

There were two Dauderman(n) funeral businesses in Alhambra, owned by distant relatives. The first one, founded by Frederick Daudermann, began before the turn of the 19th century. Fred died in 1909, but his son, Robert F. Daudermann also became an undertaker. During those times undertaking was almost a side job. Fred was an undertaker who also ran a livery stable. In the early days, Robert sold tombstones, was a taxidermist, a dental veterinarian, sold insurance and raised stud horses, in addition to the funeral business. The business moved to various locations in town before settling at 609 E. Main Street in the 1920s. Robert F. sold the Dauderman Funeral Home (he dropped the second "n" from the family name) in 1962 but continued to work until his death in 1972.



In 1956, a second Dauderman funeral business was established by Robert M. "Bob" Dauderman in Lowertown. Dauderman Mortuary bought out the other Dauderman funeral business in 1962 and also opened a second business in Hamel. Bob also ran numerous other businesses. He was the manager of the Hitz Home (1959-1965) and managed (later owned) the Galaxy Restaurant (1963-1985). The Dauderman Mortuary in Alhambra (shown above) and the business in Hamel were sold to Spengel-Boulanger Funeral Home.



The above picture postcard was used by Wetzel's Hardware to notify customers when their orders were available. The back of this 1908 card said simply, "Your machine is here. Please come and get it." (Village of Alhambra)

ALHAMBRA CHURCHES

There have been a number of churches in Alhambra, but only two remain in the village today. As synods and denominations changed and merged, the Baptists and Salem Church were able to adapt. The Methodist Episcopal Church founded in 1861, split during the Civil War over the issue of slavery and did not survive. The Pearce family was members of the Methodist Church and Southern sympathizers. In the previously mentioned 1931 interview, Joseph Pearce tells of his father harboring escaped confederate soldiers in their home.

The Baptist Church (now First Baptist) was organized in 1856 a mile or so north of town. It was a country church that moved into Alhambra in the early 1880s. That building, near the railroad tracks, often had services interrupted by traffic on either the Nickel Plate or the Illinois Central Railroad. A new church was built on the corner of Main Street and Central Street in 1964 at which time the congregation also built their first parsonage. The building has been updated several times, including an addition to the church in 2002.

Salem United Church of Christ, originally the German Evangelical Salem Congregation, began by meeting in homes in 1852. To be more precise, the name of the church was the "German Evangelische Salems Gemeinde" and, as can be surmised, services were in German to accommodate the many German immigrant families to the area. The first small sanctuary was constructed in 1860 near Greencastle and Rev. Eduard J. Hosto was the first minister. Hosto's duties also included a full-time teaching schedule in the newly-organized German School. Salem Congregation had a parochial school until 1926 when they were no longer able to find pastors willing to teach school full-time in addition to their pastoral duties.

On New Year's Day in 1877, the congregation voted to build a new church in Greencastle. Built by skilled members of the congregation at a cost of \$3,215.15, it was dedicated in November of that same year. With many additions and renovations to meet the needs of a growing modern congregation, the original church is still in use today.

The church held its first English service in 1910 (an evening service), but German continued to be the primary language. It's no coincidence that the first confirmation class

confirmed in English was in 1918, when America was at war with Germany.

Both First Baptist and Salem have a variety of organizations that appeal to all age groups, keeping them close to their faith. The congregations also host community events, the longest lasting and most popular being Salem Church's Sausage Supper.

It began in 1949 when two hogs were donated and volunteers took them from hoof to table in the form of sausage for the "Ground Hog Wurst Supper (it was held on Ground Hog Day). It was a great success despite the name and has been a major fundraiser for the church ever since.

By the mid-1990s the church was serving over 2,000 meals, a combination of seated and carry-out dinners; no small feat in a town of only about 650 people. At the church's 150th anniversary, more than 2,000 meals were sold. An example of scale is that the meat alone for this meal included more than 50 hogs and over 8,000 pounds of sausage, in addition to sauerkraut, potatoes and gravy, green beans, applesauce, and dessert. The next Salem Supper will be held, as usual, on the last Saturday in January and will be the 73rd anniversary for the annual event.

It's interesting to note that the congregations of the two churches, together, nearly equal the population of Alhambra. Many come from the country or are people who now live in nearby towns, but always have had their home church in Alhambra. And, of course, some residents of Alhambra attended Lutheran, Catholic or other services out of town. Unlike many small towns, churches outnumber taverns in Alhambra by two to one, although that was not always the case.

Salem Church today (right) and circa 1892 at a mission festival (below). The building directly behind the church in the photo below was the old German school. (Reinhardt; Salem Church)





Madison County Historical Society

Opening Doors to Madison County History

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FAKE NEWS, LYING POLITICIANS AND DIRTY TRICKS...IN 1860

Fake News, Lying Politicians, and Dirty Tricks: Madison County on the Eve of the Presidential Election, 1860 (or 2020?) Presenter: Stephen Hansen

This presentation will discuss the political campaign tactics and behavior of politicians and voters in Madison County leading up to the momentous presidential election of 1860. We will explore how the American electoral system, frayed by uncompromising positions, heated rhetoric, and outrageous behavior, nearly collapsed. By examining political behavior in Illinois and Madison County prior to the 1860 election, we will draw comparisons and mark differences with our own political behavior on the eve of the 2020 presidential election.

MCHS Webinar September 13

This program by SIUE Emeritus Professor Stephen Hansen comparing presidential politics of 1860 with today should prove to be both educational as well as entertaining. Originally scheduled as an in-person program, it has been moved online and will be presented in webinar format. The program will be held on Sunday, Sept. 13 from 2-4 p.m. The recorded program will later be available on the MCHS website. Free registration is required at https://siue.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_9F8aR3xVSa-A7bsZnJzGpw



EDITOR'S RESEARCH TIP

When researching urban properties in Madison County, that is, properties that have been platted into lots, there are "history cards" that provide a shortcut. These cards provide an outline of the abstract from the late 1950s through the mid-1990s, so can be a valuable time-saver when exploring for the history of your building. The former cards, are now in digital format at the Madison County Maps and Plats GIS Division (Suite 229) in the Madison County Administration Building.

If you learn to search these yourself, there is no charge for the information, but you can also ask staff to pull it for you for a nominal fee.

Before you go: You need to know the township where the lot is located, the name of the subdivision (or original town), the lot number and the block number for the property being researched. Most of this is available online through the Assessor's Office in the legal description. "Blocks" have not been used in the legal description since the advent of parcel ID numbers, but these can be found on plat maps.

Madison County offices are open regular hours.

ANNOUNCEMENT!
DUE TO COVID-19, THE ARCHIVAL LIBRARY IS CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC. ALL 2020 MCHS IN-PERSON EVENTS PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED HAVE BEEN CANCELLED.