



## Middleton Area Historical Society Newsletter

Sept 2017

Number 171

Middleton, Wisconsin

OUR MISSION: TO PRESERVE AND PUBLICIZE THE HISTORY OF THE MIDDLETON AREA.

### BACK TO SCHOOL Issue

It is interesting to note the big increase in the number of students from the town. Out of the total of fifty-six, twenty-five are now attending, who reside in the Town of Middleton, and two are non-residents, coming from the Towns of Springfield and Madison respectively. It is indeed encouraging when the boys and girls of the farm are taking full advantage of the educational facilities which the Town of Middleton offers.

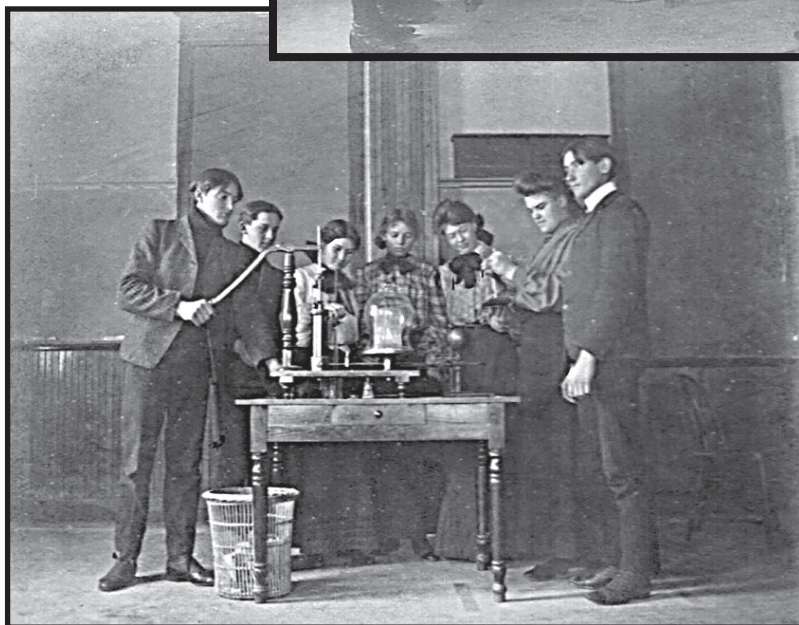
## HIGH SCHOOL NOTES

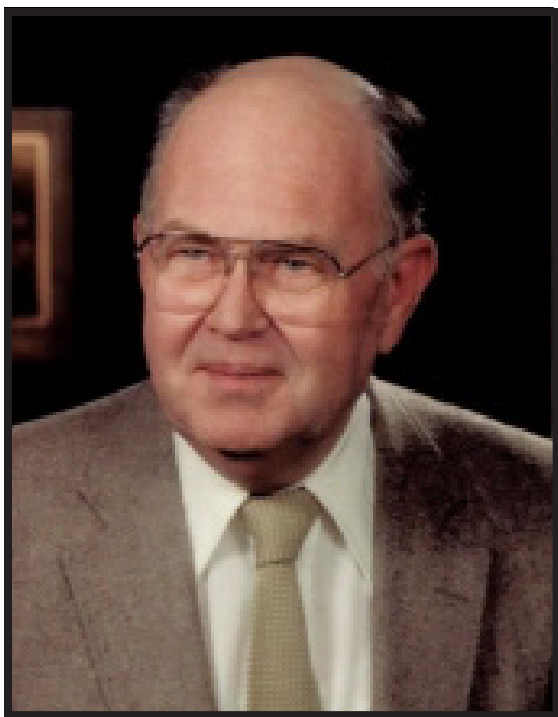
*From the Middleton Times-Herald  
September 24, 1909*

Now that the enrollment is complete, there remains but one thing to be desired, namely a sufficient number of seats to accommodate all students. Through the courtesy of Mr. Louis Russ, tables have been placed in assembly hall, while Mr. George Baltes of the Elk's Hotel sent a sufficient number of chairs, until the new desks arrive.

The total enrollment of school keeps the two teachers more than busy, especially in view of the fact that just one half of the total number of students are real live and healthy boys. This is quite in contrast to two years ago, when there were but twelve boys and twice as many girls.

Romanzo Toepfer, a senior, joined his class last Monday. He was detained for several weeks on account of an operation which he underwent during the latter part of the vacation.





# In Memorial

This summer the Middleton Area Historical Society lost an irreplaceable member who gave tirelessly of his time and knowledge of history to the Middleton community.

MADISON/MIDDLETON-John Skinner, age 93, of Madison, left this world after a prolonged battle with Parkinson's disease on Sunday, July 2, 2017. John was born on his parent's farm in Nebraska and spent his first night in a hospital at age 77. He was an only child. John inherited a love of fancy poultry at the age of four, when his father gave him a pair of pure-bred Buff Cochin Bantams. This led to a fascination for avian life and he later pursued it as a career resulting in his being inducted into the American Poultry Hall of Fame, the youngest person to be so honored. He met his future wife, Jean, in front of his chicken display at a fair in Nebraska in 1940 and they were married four years later. John served in the U.S. Army Air Corps in WWII and was in on the securing of Iwo Jima. This gave him access to the GI Bill enabling him to get two college degrees. John experienced period of industry employment followed by faculty positions at Texas A&M College, the University of Nebraska, and the University of Wisconsin. John's goal early in life was to be a licensed poultry judge which he achieved in 1953, the youngest person to hold a general license. He joined the Poultry Science Dept. at the University of Wisconsin in 1963. He was awarded a full professorship in 1967. In 1971, he became the country's first designated Poultry and Small Animal Specialist. John participated in the writing of 18 books, numerous journal articles, and educational and 4-H publications. He served on many organizations, advisory panels, and committees. Because of his early recognition of the society's effect on commercial agriculture, he was frequently asked to speak at industries, organizations and conventions, including organizing the first symposium on poultry industry waste management. He retired as Emeritus Professor in 1985. He was

a member and licensed Judge of the American Poultry Assn., the American Bantam Assn., Poultry Science Assn., World Poultry Science Assn., Life member and Lifetime Director of the American Poultry Historical Society, and a member of the British Rare Breeds Survival Trust. He was elected into the American Poultry Hall of Fame and a Fellow in the Poultry Science Assn. John and Jean lived in Middleton for many years and were very active in their community. In 2010, he was awarded a Proclamation by the City of Middleton and in 2003 they were recipients of the Middleton Good Neighbor Festival Award. John was a charter member of the Middleton Historical Society and served as director from 1986 to 2006, (seven years as President). They enjoyed extensive foreign travel, giving John the opportunity to research his writing for foreign poultry publishers, expand his collection of automotive toys, and add to their collections of poultry oriented material. John is survived by his two devoted and loving children and their spouses, John Jr. (Delphine) Skinner of Madison and Jan (Jeff) Lynn of Marine of St. Croix, Minn. He was preceded in death by his wife of 66 years, Jean, and his three grandchildren, Deborah Skinner, Jaime Lynn, and Jenna Lynn. A Memorial Gathering will be held at GUNDERSON WEST FUNERAL & CREMATION CARE, 7435 University Ave., Middleton at 1 p.m. on Thursday, July 13, 2017. Memorial contributions may be made in his name to the Middleton Area Historical Society, 7410 Hubbard Ave., Middleton, WI 53562. The family would like to express a special thank you to the dedicated staff at Oak Park Place Assisted Living on Jupiter Drive, Madison and to Heartland HospiceCare of Madison.

*Obituary courtesy of the Wisconsin State Journal*



# Education

Excerpts taken from **"When You and I Were Young"**  
by Pearl Geary Williams

December 1975

In the late years of the last and the early years of the present century (the 20th century), not many citizens of the Middleton area considered it important to attend school beyond the grades. They thought you could get your education in the "school of hard knocks" and not in book learning. There were few office jobs then, and it was more desirable to learn a trade, so you would be equipped to earn a living. They thought farmers needed no education, nor did housewives. One of our neighbors said he would get married, and not use their schooling. The boys who were not needed for help on farms, either were hired by another farmer or went to the village to learn carpentry, brick-laying, house-painting, blacksmithing, wagon-making or other similar trades. The girls would learn dress making, millinery, clerking in a general store, or perhaps go to a near-by city to get a job as a housekeeper job in Madison, and since the city home had a few more conveniences than she had known in her farm home, such as city water, and central heating, altho none of the present day push-button appliances, she found the work too easy, so she got another similar job in the same neighborhood, so she could keep busy all day. She was maid of all work at both places cooking, cleaning, washing, ironing and all other incidental tasks which might arise.

There were school drop-outs then, as now, especially among boys in the rural areas, because when they were old enough to help on the farms they were urged to do so by their parents. During the winter months they would come back to classes, sometimes just to harass the teacher. I never had the latter happen, but I know of teachers who did. One year the district in which I was teaching planned a vacation in the fall when the corn harvest was under way. They needed all the kids, big and little, and both girls and boys to help. Then in order to make up that two weeks, school was in session until June 23rd and the weather was extremely hot.



*Manual Arts Class - circa 1922*



*Senior Sewing Class - circa 1921*

The older boys who came back to school in November made it a little more difficult for the teacher, as you had to have an extra class for them, since they had missed two months. Some would only take certain subjects. Those most often omitted were grammar and physiology and persuasion by the teacher didn't change their minds, nor that of their parents.

Middleton township voted for the establishment of a free high school in April, 1878. One room was leased from the elementary school of district No. 12, and sixteen applicant passed the entrance examination. Four graduates are listed in the first annual, published in 1906, as having finished the course in 1879.

In 1900, the high school and the upper grades had a literary society, which met once a month during the school year in the evening. The only lighting the building had was furnished by six kerosene lamps with reflectors. They were held by brackets secured to the window casings. Members engaged in debate, songs and recitations.

Some years later, perhaps 1916 or 1917, a course in manual training was offered for the boys in both the high school and upper grades where they were taught to make things out of wood. The teacher was drafted in the army during the war and it was decided to discontinue the course. However, Miss Linda Griesbach (Mrs. Henry Pierstorff) who taught eighth grade said "Give me the books and I'll finish out the year."

About this same time someone suggested home economics as a course in high school for the girls, but the board had

no money for an extra teacher. After they assembled a few working tools, one of my neighbors, Miss Lillian Hinrichs, volunteered to teach sewing and cooking the last few months of that year. She got no pay, but at terms end the principal gave her a set of James Whitcomb Riley's poems.

There are my memories of the opinions of our local citizens in regard to schools since 1900. Attitudes on education race, religion and many other things have changed recently, just as the ending to the old cowboy story which pictured him riding into the sunset is no longer relevant for now, if we view the western sky in the evening, it is the jet pilot and his plane, who appears to be flying into the setting sun.

*Today the Middleton-Cross Plains school district has approximately 6,700 students in six elementary schools, two middle schools, one high school and a charter high school.*

## HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS-THE EARLY YEARS

### MY, HOW THINGS HAVE CHANGED

In the fall of 1911, both boxing and football were introduced at the high school. Boxing practice was held in the furnace room at the high school.

The football uniform consisted of a helmet, the goal posts were made of 2 x 4s, and practice was held at "Sandy Hook" which is now the site of the Pines Office Center. The principal, out of necessity, was the coach and opponents were from much larger schools.



*Early 1920s football team*

In 1913, the girls, as well as the boys, began playing basketball.



*1929 boys track team*

The games were held in the Elk's Hotel and didn't begin until 8:45 p.m. According to the school newspaper, "

"The Middleton High School girls came out on the floor .... and very handsome in their red suits, black stocking, white tennis shoes and little red nightcaps. They made such a beautiful picture that no artist could describe it".

The Girl's Athletic Association (GAA) was organized in 1918. The aim of the organization was to make the lives of the girls basically normal, happy and efficient. They played basketball, baseball, took hikes and did Red Cross work one hour a week.



*1921 girls gym class*

Middleton produced a championship basketball team during the early twenties. The team rode trains to surrounding town including Arena, Prairie du Sac, Black Earth, Sauk City, Blue River and Muscoda. Players would dress for the game in a hotel and run to the halls to play ball. Because some of the rooms they played in had low ceiling, one player who stood over six feet tall, could reach up and lay the ball in the hoop. His height advantage enabled him to get the center tip most of the time and also accounted for the fact that the opponent failed to score while he was in



the game. One player from Muscoda mistakenly tipped the ball into Middleton's basket, giving Middleton a 12 to 10 victory.



*1913 girls football team or cheerleaders?*

The Rowley House has a new walk-in pantry located off the kitchen. Pantries were used to store food and kitchen necessities before the 1920s and 1930s when the use of modern cabinetry came into style. Please plan on stopping by to view kitchen artifacts from a past era.



Thank you to our donors and all the volunteers who made this years Pie and Ice Cream Social a great success.

Hubbard Avenue Diner & Bakery

Willy Street Co-op

Costco

Perkins Family Restaurant & Bakery

Pick-n-Save

Walgreens Drug Store

CVS Pharmacy

Barriques Wine Cafe

Urban Garden & Greenhouse  
(Formerly Orchids Garden Center)

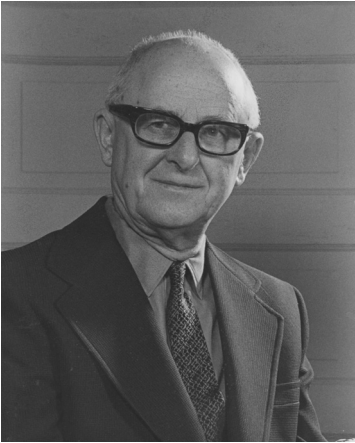
And a big musical thank you to  
**New Horizons Band**

And of course-- Abe Lincoln





# How KROMREY MIDDLE SCHOOL Got It's NAME



Presently the Middleton Cross Plains School District includes two middle schools. Glacier Creek Middle School is located on Military Road in Cross Plains, while Kromrey Middle School is on Donna Drive in the city of Middleton. Today Kromrey Middle School exists as a shiny new, award winning, building replacing the old school. While the building is new, the name has remained the same.

On May 19, 1967, the School Board met at the then named Parkside Heights Middle School and decided to rename the building the Edward G. Kromrey School.

Mr. Kromrey spent forty-two years in education after graduating from La Crosse Normal School in 1924, and receiving his Masters degree from the University of Wisconsin Madison in 1937. He first served as a teacher and principal in the Middleton Cross Plains district and later became Superintendent. He is quoted as saying, "He was the administrator, supervisor, anything, the operator of the school lunch later on in '47 when they started it, playground director, athletic coach, and everything else under the sun. And I stayed here 30 years. I didn't think I was going to stay 30 years!" During this time, seven school building



*Middleton School 1938 - Mr. Edward Kromrey center*



projects were completed. Mr. Kromrey retired at the age of 65 after serving 30 years in the district.

Ed Kromrey ventured beyond his educational duties and was involved in numerous activities and community projects. He was the first president of the Middleton Area Historical Society's Board of Directors. During the years he spent in Middleton he attempted to learn all he could about the history of the area.

During his lifetime he received many honors for his dedication and work in the community. In 1967, Middleton mayor Walter R. Bauman declared May 21 - 27 Edward G. Kromrey Week.



**Thursday, October 26, from 5-9 p.m.**

**1847 at the Stamm House**

**6625 Century Avenue, Middleton, Wisconsin**

Dance to 50s tunes performed live by **Marcy and the Highlights**

Be ready for great food, music, dancing and fun!

Tickets are \$50 each, including heavy appetizers and one drink.

Tickets will be available for purchase at **1847 at the Stamm House**  
or follow the link on Facebook

**Online ticket purchasing** (we have only 120 spaces available) is available now:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/50s-sock-hop-fundraiser-at-the-stamm-house-tickets-37367045840?utm-medium=discovery&utm-campaign=social&utm-content=attendeeshare&aff=escb&utm-source=cp&utm-term=listing!>

## Purses

During August, MAHS displayed vintage handbags in the small exhibit case in the Senior Center. That the Senior Center case is small was not a problem, for the Historical Society has a surprisingly small collection of handbags and wallets. Despite the limited number of items in the collection we were able to display artifacts that are representative of important trends in handbag history. Included were crocheted and beaded reticules, draw-string bags that were the first true handbags; German silver flapper bags; beaded and leather clutches, enameled silver change purses; a tooled leather Art Nouveau bag, and men's coin purses and wallets. Owners of the bags included Carol Burger, Wes Burmeister, Charlotte Dunn, Ernest Fenner, Nel Festl, Nancy Reiter Miller, and Pearl Williams. Compacts, mirrors, and other items carried inside ladies purses on display were donated by Harriett Kubista and Esther Kalverstan.



While we would like to fill the gap in our vintage collection, the day for collecting old handbags bags has largely passed. Instead, we are making a special appeal for **recent** handbags, that is bags from the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. One day they will help tell Middleton's story for future generations. The bags we would like include:

- Women's **recent** hand bags
- Men's and women's wallets and coin purses
- Children's backpacks, especially character backpacks
- Briefcases and messenger bags
- And items women carried in their handbags such as lipstick, compacts, etc.

If you have a bag with a Middleton connection that you would like to donate send an email to: [cmattern@wisc.edu](mailto:cmattern@wisc.edu) describing your handbags. Or leave a message on the Rowley House phone (608-836-7614). We'll get back to you. If you can't make it to the museum to deliver your donations, we'll pick them up..

Don't let anybody tell you that you don't need another purse. You don't need that kind of negativity in your life.  
*PurseStringsStore.com*

## Not to Be Missed... (and a Reminder)

### MAHS Annual Membership Meeting...

The Annual Membership Meeting will be held on

**Saturday, December 2**  
**Middleton Senior Center**  
**10:00 AM**

This year we will have the popular Chad Lewis,

***"Wisconsin Author of the Strange and Unusual ... from the backwoods of Wisconsin to the far corners of the world"***

as our guest speaker. This should be a most entertaining talk as Chad explores some of the many interesting stories about Wisconsin's history. For more information about Chad Lewis,

Please check his web site:

***[www.unexplainedresearch.com](http://www.unexplainedresearch.com)***

and remember, the meeting is open to everyone, so please invite your friends and family members.

### **Membership Dues are DUE ...**

If you haven't renewed your MAHS membership for 2017 please do so as soon as possible. We want you to continue supporting our mission to preserve Middleton's history and continue receiving our newsletter which is published 3 times each year.

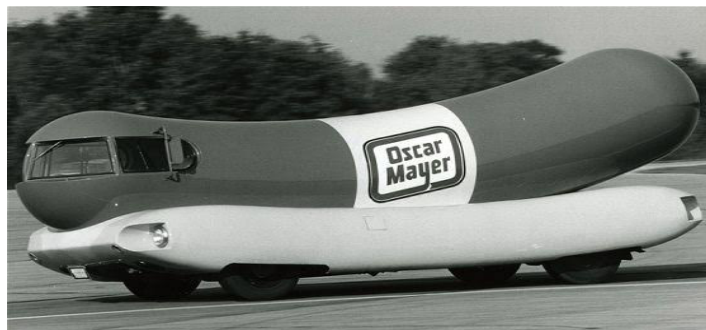


# If You Grew Up In Middleton Do You Remember...?

by Jeanie Velarde

Recently Mary was in Madison, and had her photo taken with a Wienermobile, and posted it on the “If you grew up in Middleton do you remember....” Facebook page, prompting many people to post their memories. We know there are still new Wienermobiles traveling the country, but the old ones were the best. They say the current VW beetle is a poor copy of the original.

- The best part was the wiener whistles the driver threw out to the kids on the street.
- The whistles were legally prohibited in the 70s due to a choking hazard. OM defense was disabled by their admission the holes in the ends were designed to prevent choking
- I sure do remember seeing them driving around. They could always bring a smile to your face.
- I worked for Oscar out of college in Baton Rouge with Little Oscar. He would throw the whistles and try to hit as many kids as he could. In public he was nice, in private he didn't like kids
- My mother hated those whistles! Thankfully we kids lost them just as quick as we got them....or did mom just dispose of them?!?! Hummm
- One Christmas, my brother got a bunch of whistles and gave them to the kids as presents. He even hung them on the tree!!!



- I remember Little Oscar stopping on South Avenue and handing out Wiener Whistles!!
- We all had to learn their little jingle on those whistles.... brilliant campaign but impossible today on a national scale. I'm sure my brother still has a couple of those wiener whistles laying around.
- I can remember the Wienermobile visiting Schwab & Schwartz. It sat there on the East side of the building on the slanty driveway that went down into back for some peculiar reason... One of the Little Oscars his self was there...
- I was in St. Mary's Hospital a month before my fifth birthday, with both legs up in traction (the right leg broken in a car accident). Little Oscar visited all the children in their rooms, and after he left my room my parents wheeled my bed, with traction apparatus attached, over to the window so they could lift me up to see the Wienermobile. Surely the high point in a very trying period for a very active little girl!

*The Oscar Mayer Company was founded by Oscar F. Mayer who moved to the United States from Bavaria at 14 years of age. He purchased a small farmers' co-op meat packing plant in Madison, Wisconsin in 1919. The Wienermobile was created in 1936, during the Great Depression. The Wienermobile was off the road for nine years, but returned for the companies 50th birthday celebration in 1986. In 1988 six new 23-foot-long fiberglass Wienermobiles toured the country with many amenities including a stereo system that plays 21 different version of the Oscar Mayer Wiener Jingle.*

**Executive Officers**  
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[middletonhistory.org](http://middletonhistory.org)

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## We Value Your Membership

Already a member -- you will be contacted by mail or email when it is time to renew.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Annual Memberships**

- Junior Historian (under 18) ..... \$5.00
- Individual ..... \$15.00
- Family ..... \$25.00
- Business/Club ..... \$75.00

**Special Donor Category**

- Contributing ..... \$100.00
- Honorary

Gift for Museum Restoration/Maintenance \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to:**

Middleton Area Historical Society  
7410 Hubbard Avenue  
Middleton, Wisconsin 53562-3118

For those who itemize their taxes:  
The Middleton Area Historical Society is a  
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To update your contact information or to receive this newsletter  
via email, please contact Mary at 836-6776.