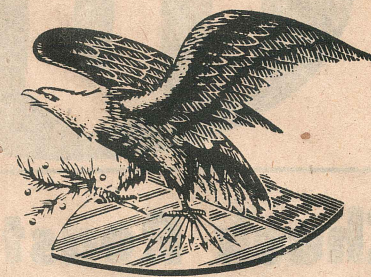


# BICENTENNIAL

1776-1976



"Remembrances of Days Gone By"

## Madrid Schools Date Back to 1855

Education in Madrid dates back to 1855 when the first school building was erected on lot 2 block 18 of the original plat of the city. As may well be imagined, the building was neither commodious nor large. It was built of native lumber, carved from the logs grown in this community, and sawed at the local mills.

While the building lacked some of the conveniences students enjoy today, and despite its somber appearance, it served the community well for a period of 14 years.

### Teacher Comes from East

Perhaps no local person was qualified to teach at the time, or no one was found who wanted to teach. In any event, the first teacher was a Massachusetts man who evidently wanted to follow the advice of Horace Greeley and "go West young man." His name was Rollen Niles.

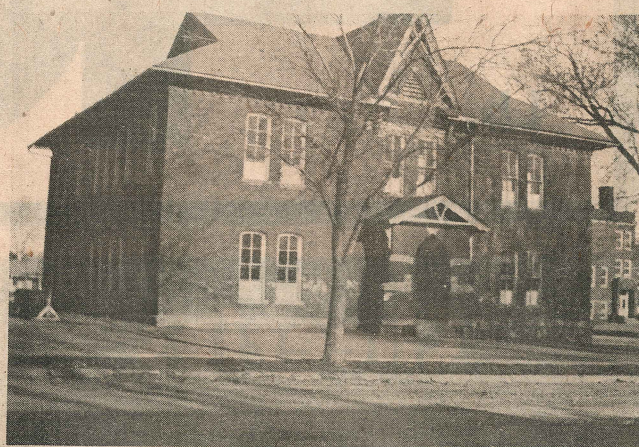
Information is scarce on how long this man remained at Madrid or who succeeded him. However, the school continued in this building, a one-room structure until 1869 when the growth of the community demanded a two-room building.

This second building, was built on Lot 3 in Block 6 on Water Street southeast of city hall. Several teachers taught in this building including Mrs. Q. A. Sturgeon, then Miss Zylph Graves.

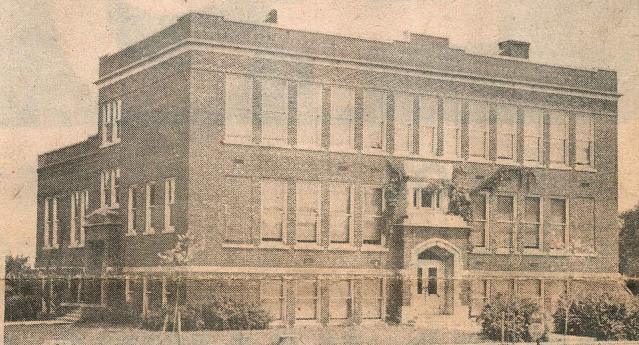
But the coming of the Milwaukee railroad brought new vigor into the supposedly dying town and the population began rapidly growing. In 1889 it was realized that school facilities, even with the two-room building was inadequate, and the community, with a daring venture into the future, determined to build a new building and one which would do duty for many years.

So it was decided to build four rooms. This was done by way of a two-story building. It was built of soft brick, from a kiln that stood at Murphy branch on what was the George Buhrman farm.

This was sufficient until 1901 when a west portion was added on to the building. The need for more space came about in the short time of seven years. At this time, the schoolhouse was in the lot across from the present elementary-junior high school.



The history of the Madrid schools is similar to a great degree to schools all over the state. The building lasted for a time, before population once more played a factor in bringing about the building of the present junior high-elementary building in 1915.



An east addition was built on the building and was dedicated the same day as "Edith Norris Day" back in October of 1952. The addition included a gymnasium, auditorium, bandroom, home economics and shop room, all of which accounted for \$125,000.

A new addition to the elementary-junior high building was constructed in 1964 and was ready for use in the 1964-1965 school year.

Cost of the project was \$180,000 and it consisted of 10 classrooms for students in grades K-3, also for hallways, a parking area and a new shop building northwest of the old building.

Madrid enrollment at that time was 800 students.

This remained as the school housing kindergarten through 12 grades for many years until in 1969, seeing the need for a newer facility, the Madrid School Board contacted architectural firms to have plans drawn up for a new building. The school was built along Highway 17 and Don Flynn was superintendent at the time it was first used in the 1971-1972 school year. The new school also included a new gymnasium which had as its first game, Madrid vs. Norwalk on January 28, 1972. Norwalk won both games, 98-92 in the girls contest and 95-63 boys. The gym was later dedicated on February 8 during the halftime of the Interstate 35-Madrid game.

Highly Construction Co. of Emmetsburg were the general contractors, Siglin Plumbing and Heating of Perry and Ken Jensen Electric all played a major part in the building of the new structure. Members of the Madrid Board of Education were Roy Olson, president, Betty Babberl, Ivan Nelson, Bruno Isolini and Marlowe Carlson. An open house was held on October 31 with over 500 people attending.

### Edith Norris Story

Edith Norris was a teacher in the Madrid school system for 40 years teaching fifth and sixth grades. Over 1441 students had this lady as an elementary instructor and it was on October 16, 1952 that this special lady was honored by students and friends.

Born in a log cabin just west of town, she was a student and teacher in the Madrid school system for almost 55 years. At 15 she began teaching Sunday School and continued regularly until 1952. She took over the Elm City rural school near here, before she had even graduated from high school.

Superintendent E. L. Meek presented Miss Norris her high school diploma in 1900 and while she was teaching country school, she would recite to him a week's worth of school work every Saturday.

She never ceased her outside study and her march toward continual improvement. While she taught in Oak Grove, Belle Point and Bollie rural schools, and later when she taught at Sheldahl and Rhodes, she

continued her studies. She also taught at Luther and White Hall school before taking the Madrid job in 1912.

A long-sought goal was achieved by Miss Norris in 1949 when she received her bachelor of science degree from Drake University.

Through all the years, she had a definite routine for opening classes each morning. She had the children recite the Lord's Prayer and then say the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. "It just seemed to give me the uplift I needed each morning," she said in an interview back in 1952.

Following her retirement in 1952, she went to Canada for medical treatment.

One of the projects that won her high approval among many schoolboys throughout the years was the model airplane building club she sponsored and supervised after school. She first spark-plugged the model builders in her classroom and later helped gain use of an extra school cloakroom as a clubshop.

Miss Norris has two sisters, Mrs. A. E. Steinhaus of Madrid and Mrs. Elmer Harleen of Luther, and one brother, Bert Norris of Sturgis, N.D.

She was a member of the D.A.R., the Madrid Congregational Christian Church, and the Iowa Mineral Society. Her collection of rocks and minerals, a long-time hobby, was donated to the school following her retirement.

Many people called this celebration one of the most splendid and benefitting occasions ever held in the community. The day consisted of singing, remarks from family, friends and former students as well as a few remarks from the honored guest. Pins of blue and white were also made for this special day and were worn by businessmen and school children.

Among those taking part in the service were Rev. Everett A. Rhodes, pastor of the Congregational Christian Church, John Galetich, Jr., Mayor of Madrid at the time, Charles Biza, president of the Community Club and Madrid School Superintendent, Virgil Kellogg.

The 1953 high school yearbook was officially dedicated to her with William Garton representing the annual staff.

Following the ceremony a reception was held in the home economics room with Ruth Alsin and Opal Lehman in charge of the tea. Mrs. C. W. Anderson, Mrs. Otto Scott and Louis Lepovitz were among those responsible for the ceremony.

My old country school until I entered Madrid High School in 1913