

# 1897 Clark County Jail Museum, Inc.

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## First Newsletter

Welcome to the first edition of the 1897 Clark County Jail Museum Newsletter! We’ve had “good intentions” of starting this newsletter, for a very long time, and have finally managed to get the process started. We are hoping to publish a quarterly newsletter, and look forward to your comments or ideas to make it as interesting and

## 2011 Annual Membership Meeting

productive as possible. Contact any of the Board Members with questions, ideas or concerns you may have.

### **ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING FEB 12, 2011**

Notice of the 2011 Annual Meeting has been published in the Clark County Press (December 1, 2010 edition) and given via the mailing of

Membership Application Forms and letter — sent January, 2011. The Meeting will be held at the Jail Museum. Members are welcome to join us for a **Potluck Luncheon at 12:00 Noon on Saturday, February 12th, with the Annual Meeting beginning at 1:00 pm.** (Plates, utensils, and beverages will be provided).

## “Thank You” CCHS Members

The 1897 Clark County Jail was saved from destruction in the mid- 1970’s, through the vision and efforts of the members of the Clark County Historical Society, Inc.

Without the tireless efforts of these people, there would not be a Jail Museum today.

The Jail Museum filed incorporation papers with the State of Wisconsin in January, 2008 and has been

granted federal and state tax-exempt status. The 1897 Clark County Jail Museum, Inc. (CCJM) operates, today, as an entity separate from the CCHS, and with it’s own by-laws and mission. This new structure allows the CCJM to remain viable and focus on the continued preservation of the property and the collection started so many years ago.

Life Members of the

CCHS (as of Jan, 2008) were recently invited to join the CCJM Membership (all annual fees waived). An acknowledgement and “thanks” for their efforts and dedication these past years.

The current members of the 1897 CCJM are forever grateful to the past members of the CCHS / Jail Museum.

Without you....we would not exist today.

**Thank You!**

# WANTED:

## PERSONS INTERESTED IN:

- CREATING FAMILY HISTORY PACKAGES FOR SALE & / OR RESEARCH
- STARTING A CLARK COUNTY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
- RESEARCHING THE HISTORY OF EACH CLARK COUNTY SHERIFF
- ARCHIVAL & PRESERVATION PROJECTS
- BUILDING MAINTENANCE SUPERVISION

Opportunities are everywhere to get involved at the Jail Museum. The “WANTED” poster (left) features just a few of them. It’s just like the Ancestry.com commercial on TV... *“you don’t have to know what you’re looking for... you just have to start looking!”*

On the other hand, as a museum member or volunteer, you can spend time browsing through the files and records, the rooms in the house or the displays in the Jail. You’ll be surprised how much Clark County history we have in our own local Museum.

If you’re interested in helping with these (or any other) projects, please call any of the following people, or come to a monthly meeting. We meet the 1st Tuesday of each month, at 7:00 pm at the Jail Museum. Hope to see you there!

- |                |          |
|----------------|----------|
| Natalie E.     | 743-6234 |
| Shirley A.     | 743-6058 |
| Bonnie K.      | 743-6746 |
| Sue Krueger    | 743-2571 |
| Harvey Fischer | 743-2734 |



## Neillsville Furniture Company 1891 - 1910

In 1890, a group of local businessmen organized the **Neillsville Furniture Company**. The capital stock of the company (\$64,000) was owned entirely, by Clark County residents. The manufacturing plant was constructed in an “L shape”, measured 136’ x 128’ x 64’, was 4 stories tall and had over 51,000 sq ft of floor space. The building had an outside elevator, but no inside stairways!

Production began in 1891 when their first order for furniture came from London, England. Sales orders for the company’s furniture line was so strong, that the owners ran into financial trouble. The business needed more working capital than stockholders had antici-

pated, and, in order to save the business, it was sold to a group of Baltimore Maryland businessmen. The name of the company was then changed to the **Wisconsin Furniture Manufacturing Company**.

The factory provided good employment for hundreds of area residents. Railcars of furniture were shipped to the east coast for sale to anxious buyers.

Unfortunately, in the early morning hours of June 28, 1910, a fire was discovered. Within 2 hours...the entire building was lost, leaving hundreds unemployed. A valiant effort, by local citizens, was made to raise money to rebuild, but in the end they fell short.



## Clark County's Jails



Clark County's 1st Jail was built in 1866 by Hewett Woods & Co. This is a picture of the 1st jail after it was no longer in use. Cost \$1300

Built in the Summer of 1881, this house was the Sheriff's residence. The County Jail was located behind the house.

Clark County's 3rd Jail and Sheriff's Residence—Built in 1897 at a cost of about \$15,000.

While Clark County had been officially organized in 1853 by the State of Wisconsin, it did not have a Jail (building) until 1866. The new Jail was to be completed by September, 1866, in time for the beginning of the September term of court. It was about 20' x 24' - one story high and built with iron, oak planks and spikes. It had one large room and a few small cells

In 1881, a 2 story Sheriff's residence was built that adjoined to the new 2nd Jail immediately behind it. Total cost for this construction (including cells) was about \$8000. While the structure was an improvement over the 1st Jail, it was not modern or sanitary. Several prisoners managed to escape, and in 1896 the County Board appropriated

\$15,000 to construct the 3rd Clark County Jail and Sheriff's residence. Completed in 1897, this structure would serve as the Sheriff's home until 1974, and as the County Jail until 1978. Thanks to the efforts of the Clark County Historical Society, the structure was saved from demolition and is now the home of the Jail Museum.

## Civil War Sesquicentennial (1861 to 1865) Begins this Year

In 1861, the Civil War (or the Great Rebellion) began. Clark County WI, had a total population of about 800 citizens, and yet sent more than it's share of recruits—nearly one full company. Many of those first recruits did not return...and those that did, as in all wars,

bore the mark of battle the rest of their lives.

2011 marks the 150th Anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War. Over the next 5 years, we will revisit this chapter of America's history and the part Clark County and it's citizens played in it.



Log onto the Wisconsin State Historical Society's website at [www.wisconsinhistory.org](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org) to learn more about Wisconsin's role in the Civil War

1897 Clark County Jail Museum, Inc.  
215 E 5th Street  
PO Box 41  
Neillsville WI 54456

**1897 Clark County Jail Museum, Inc.**

**Officers:**

<b>President:</b> Natalie Erpenbach	nerpenbach@tds.net	715-743-6234
<b>Vice Pres:</b> Shirley Anderson	<b>Secretary:</b> Kevin Struensee	<b>Treasurer:</b> Snick Quicker

**1897 Clark County Jail Museum, Inc.**

**Upcoming Events**

(All at the Jail Museum—215 E 5th St—Neillsville, WI 54456)

February 1, 2011	7:00 pm	February Monthly Meeting
February 12, 2011	12:00 Noon	Potluck Luncheon
February 12, 2011	1:00 pm	<b>ANNUAL MEMBER MTG</b>
March 1, 2011	7:00 pm	March Monthly Meeting
April 5, 2011	7:00 pm	April Monthly Meeting
May 3, 2011	7:00 pm	May Monthly Meeting

**Month of May**

**Wisconsin Historic Preservation Month**

**Month of May**

**Free Jail Museum Tours—Clark County Schools invited**

**Memorial Day Weekend**

**Summer Tours Begin!**