

# THE MATZ FARMSTEAD

1852-2012



The Matz Farmhouse, approx. 1907



You are standing in front of the stone remnants of the Matz farmhouse. The land was first homesteaded in 1852. Friedrich describes the initial living quarters as, “An American farmer isn’t set up right away like a German, he simply builds himself a house, so that he can live, and the barn is finished right away, the sky is the roof and the ground is the floor, that’s the kind I have.”

The Matz family raised oxen, cropped hay, and grew produce such as corn and potatoes on the land. At the time, plowing oxen could be sold for \$120-150, which was described by Friedrich as “unbelievably expensive”, and wheat was being sold for \$1 a bushel.

The house pictured above was built of local stone about ten years later after Friedrich returned from his service in the Civil War. Unfortunately the house burned down in 1949. This photo features Friedrich and Katherina’s son, William Matz (second from the left), his wife Anna Evert (far left), and their children Raymond, Erwin (far right), and Linda. Dane County Halfway Prairie Wildlife Area, which features the Matz farmstead, officially opened to the public in 2012.



Friedrich Matz  
1826-1906

After traveling to Milwaukee in 1848 from Landsendorf, Germany, Friedrich was reunited with his brother Christian and began working on the local railroads in order to raise money to purchase property. In 1852 he traveled west to the town of Berry and purchased his initial plot of land.

In March of 1865 he was conscripted into the Union Army for the Civil War. He was mustered to Camp Randall and assigned as a private in 11th Infantry, Company E. He participated in the Battle of Fort Blakely in Baldwin County, Alabama, considered the last major battle of the war. He was officially discharged on the 5th of September in 1865.



Katharina Schubert Matz  
1830-1895

Originally hailing from the Oberfranken region of Germany, Katharina, her son, Friedrich, and her father, mother, and brother arrived in America in 1850. She was wed to Friedrich Matz on May 1st, 1854 in Sauk City. Together they had five children: Richard, William, Herman, Henry, and Anna. Many of their descendants still live in the local area today.

To honor the men who went to fight in the Union Army during the Civil War, the Women’s Club of Berry planted thirty-eight fir trees in the year of 1861. A few can still be seen at the intersection of Hwy 19 and Old Settler’s Road. The remaining trees are over 150 years old!

“I’ve often said out loud that I’m happy with America, but I say it privately to myself even more often. I owe God many thousand thanks for...putting me in a free and better country, where each person only has to worry about himself...”

- Friedrich Matz, in a letter adressed to his family in Germany (1855)