

Iowa County History

Brought to you by the Iowa County Historical Society

Volume XXXIV

No. 2

April 2009

Potpourri

ICHS Directors

Dinner Dance "Spring Fling"

Sunday, April 26

Ludden Lake Supper Club

Brunch-Buffer ... Serving 12 noon to 1:30 pm

Dance, Music, Friendship ... 1:30-4 pm

*Enjoy food, friends, fun ... Support restoration of the
Floyd School to memorialize our country school history*

Alice Griffiths, Pres.	935-0574
Boyd Geer, VP	930-9084
John Hess, Sec.	588-7082
Marie Sersch, Treas.	935-5752
Eileen Arndt	935-2623
LeRoy Grunenwald	943-8004
Don McGuire	929-7494
Margaret Peat	935-5532
Neil Giffey, Editor	935-5557
giffey@mhtc.net	

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*Hyde Smithy
Open House
May 16, 2009
10 am—3 pm*

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The Iowa County Board Presents

a Sesquicentennial Celebration

Saturday, June 13, 2009

at the Courthouse

Iowa Street-Dodgeville

12 noon to 3 pm

150 years a courthouse

Short Dedication

Ceremony

Cornerstone Laying,

Artifacts, Souvenirs,

Music, Wagon Rides,

Bike Tour,

Food and snacks by 4-H Clubs



*"Forgiveness" Ceremony at noon
by Mineral Point Citizens*

Everybody Welcome ... Especially You



Judge Aldro Jenks

at Home

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Zachary Taylor

*From Old Zach' to
Young Barack*

**160 Years of
Presidential
Elections
in Iowa County
Pages 5-6**

See insert in this
newsletter

**Cheese Factory
book prepublication
discount**

**Breckinridge lecture
well attended**

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Reverend Mathews and Slavery

by Neil Giffey

Picture if you will, a boy born in Oxford, England. By the age of ten the boy was memorizing a chapter of the New Testament every week. Becoming a Baptist Preacher at eighteen years, he shipped out to New York and became a clerk to sustain his body. He taught Sunday school at a church in New York at the time already showing a burning desire to abolish slavery. This young man, **Edward Mathews**, was soon appointed the Baptist missionary to the raw new territory of Wisconsin, becoming the most articulate foe of human bondage in Wisconsin. The journal he wrote as he trudged and rode and became lost in the wilderness of the frontier was compiled into a book after he returned to England in about 1860. His efforts made him a hero to some in Wisconsin, but he was overshadowed by those who had access to better publicity. His target for conversion was a small body of slavery supporters, mostly in the lead region then populated by those of Southern extraction. They held few slaves in the Territory; however, there were 27 declared slaves in the 1835 census of Michigan Territory in a total black population of 91. Remember 27 was the "declared" number of humans held in bondage; the actual total was likely higher. Mathews, on his travels around the Lead Region, was armed with a hard won list of slave owners in the Territory many of whom were



Reverend Edward Mathews

generous contributors to the local churches. Mathews called this "hush money," not a pleasing appellation to the slave holders on his list. He confronted Governor Henry Dodge at his substantial home between Dodgeville and Mineral Point. Dodge won Mathews over with the statement that in his opinion the slave was free the moment he stepped into Wisconsin Territory and that he had provided manumission papers to the 5 slaves he brought to the territory in 1827. Mathews, satisfied, stayed the night with Dodge.

The next day he marched to Platteville to confront a man whose wife held two slaves, then on to Dubuque where he preached at a local church, then back over the then mile wide Mississippi to Galena where he encountered a congregation with both black and white members. One of them, **Tom** by name, told Mathews that he had been a slave of **William Israel Maddin**, a son-in-law of Governor Dodge. As Maddin was whipping Tom for an imagined offense, Tom wrapped his arms around Maddin's legs and prayed in a loud voice.

Grand Opening—Hyde Smithy

Saturday, May 16, 2009

10 am — 3 pm



The Hyde Historic Territory invites you to attend an open house

Saturday, May 16, to support the restored Hyde blacksmith shop located on the Klint and Wanda McCutchin farm 4 miles north of Ridgeway on Iowa County Road "H"

Raffle Tickets available from
Hyde Historical Territory board members
and at the Smithy.
\$10 per ticket

Band Music
Wagon Rides
Humorous Speaker
Grandma Mary's Lunch Wagon

Daily drawings in April—\$3,000 in total cash prizes.

Tickets are returned to the drawing daily. You can win more than once.

\$900 will be awarded at
Grand Opening Day.

Mathews continued from first column

Maddin was so disconcerted by Tom's piety that he promised to free him if he would cease his actions. The locale of this poignant scene is unknown but was probably in the frontier lead region. Maddin (*sometimes spelt Madden*) later became postmaster at Elk Grove in Lafayette County. During the California Gold Rush, he vanished without a trace on a trip to the gold fields.

The intrepid Mathews continued to confront slave sympathizers and slave holders wherever he found them. Upon returning to England, Mathews continued to lecture on the horrors of slavery. His life's work was all in a day's work for the Reverend Edward Mathews.

Judge Aldro Jenks at Home

by Dorothy H. Jenks

*We are indebted to Jenks-Goodsell descendants, **LeRoy Grunenwald** and **Marion Paynter Howard**, for the story of this adventurous confident family. Editor.*

*Author **Dorothy Jenks** states: I should emphasize that this is a mixed report of facts gleaned from the newspapers and family papers, memories of things that someone else told me and therefore have been filtered through at least three memories.*

Aldro Perry Jenks was born on January 18, 1855 in Watertown, upper New York state, and came to Wisconsin with his parents and older brothers (via Conestoga wagon, I always understood) when he was two years old. The family settled in Darlington, Lafayette County, Wisconsin.

His mother **Matilda's** family, the **Barkers**, had emigrated from England, probably the Milford Haven area. Her three sons were **Milford**, **Volney** and **Aldro**. A map of this area shows that there is a village named Volney and, while I did not find any village or natural feature named Aldro, it seems likely that there is such a name. Their daughters were Amy and Ella.

Many immigrants from this area settled in the same area in upper New York State and became early converts to the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (Mormonism), her family among them. However, when the doctrine of plural marriage was enunciated, **Miss Matilda Barker**, then a young woman, fell away from the church and, when the sect moved to Nauvoo, Illinois, she remained behind and made her living as a schoolteacher. Meanwhile, **Alonzo Jenks** had been engaged to a young lady who became a convert to Mormonism and chose a plural marriage in preference to marriage to him. Therefore, Alonzo and Matilda made common cause and found consolation in each other's company and eventually married.

Family legend has it that Matilda's aunt and uncle and one of her brothers came back from Nauvoo, leaving on a moment's notice with nothing but what they could hand carry to escape the "Avenging Angels," the enforcing wing of the sect. When the sect moved on to Utah, they lost touch for some years but the family ties were re-established and members of her family visited her in later years. The Barkers are prominent and well-thought of members of the LDS

Church. Matilda informed her great granddaughter **Ruth Jenks**, with whose family she was living, that she wanted it made plain that she would not return to the church on her deathbed or ever.

Both Aldro's mother Matilda and father Alonzo had been schoolteachers and therefore emphasized the value of learning. Probably though, his lifelong habit of study and accumulation of all available knowledge must be attributed to a natural bent in that direction.

Having gone through all the schooling available in what was then a frontier town, young Aldro went to Mineral Point to "read for the law." After only one year of legal education, he was admitted to the bar at the age of 21 and set up practice in **Highland**, Wisconsin. While in Highland, he met **Laura Goodsell**, and they grew to know and admire each other during a smallpox epidemic which left them among the few on their feet to nurse the sick.

Laura Goodsell was born in Highland, Wisconsin and grew up there.



Aldro Jenks - Laura Goodsell
on their lawn

Her father, **Elihu Bernard Goodsell**, had been born and grew up in Vermont. His father owned a store there and he sent the young man west to Ohio on business. There he met some men who were being sent west to Iowa to relocate the local Indians and instead of returning to Vermont, he continued farther to the frontier in Iowa and then to **Mineral**

Point in Wisconsin Territory. He moved into the wilderness with whatever trade goods he could carry on his back and established a trading post at what was to become **Highland**. He built a two-room cabin, one side for the store and one side for living quarters and traded with the **Winnebago Indians** (now *Ho Chunk*) who then lived in that area. For many years, he was the only white man for miles around. *Goodsell's year of arrival in the Highland area is unknown.*

When **Elihu Goodsell** was in his 40's, his father became ill and he was called back to Vermont to help him and stayed on when he died. While Elihu was there, his cousin, who had married and moved to Canada, came back to visit her relatives, bringing her young daughter, **Isabel Oakes**, with her. A series of parties was given for the two visitors and, at one of them Elihu met his second cousin, then a girl of 20. They were attracted to each other and shortly thereafter married. He had intended to stay in Vermont and carry on his father's store; however, the lure of the frontier life was too great for him, so he sold out and they went back to Highland to live.

The **Goodsell** home in **Highland** was also the trading post and there were many Indians in and out. The store door was never locked and the family would often come into the room in the morning and find several Indians sleeping there, sheltering from cold or storm. After many years living among them, her father was a good friend to the local Indians and, when he went to the Wisconsin Constitutional Convention, 1847 and 1848, or was gone to the capital or away on other business, venison or fish would often be left at the cabin to supply the family meal.

Their sixth child (two died in infancy) was **Laura Goodsell**. The few pictures from that period show that Laura was an attractive and striking child. As a young child, her dark eyes and hair and a fine, velvety white skin, which she had all her days, made her resemble the china dolls then given to lucky girls, so that she was called "Doll" and later affectionately "**Aunt Doll**" by most of **Dodgeville**. She grew into a handsome woman, somewhat plump for modern tastes but exactly to **Aldro Jenks**' taste.

Highland proved not to have much work for an aspiring young lawyer, so after two years of practice, he moved to Dodgeville and in 1880, they were married in a double ceremony with her sister **Mary Isabelle (Hoskins)**. Both couples lived to celebrate their Golden Wedding anniversary together in 1930.

The young couple settled in Dodgeville. Eight children were born to them, seven boys and (finally) a girl. One boy (**Herbert**) died in infancy from diphtheria. This disease was greatly dreaded at that time, with reason as it had been known to wipe out whole families of children, but they were fortunate enough to save their other two children. The prominence of their father and the antics of this large family of healthy boys made them a subject of interest to the town.



The Judge and his sons
L-R: Bernard A., Goodsell, Judge Jenks, Maxwell, Allen P.,
Aldro Perry, Frank

When the one girl was born, the **Dodgeville Chronicle** made it a banner headline.

The young lawyer's legal career prospered. In one case he was proud of, he defended an accused murderer who was found with blood on his clothes. He had read that there was a difference between animal blood and human blood and looked up all the information available in the infant science, bought a microscope and managed by means of slides of human blood, of the blood found on his client's clothes and various *types* of animal blood to prove that (as his client had said) the blood was from an animal, not from the victim. Later he made use of the microscope to help the local hospital in some of their medical problems.

On another occasion, one of his clients, a farmer, decided to give his farm to his young son to save inheritance tax. Attorney Jenks talked him into making it a reversible trust, just to make sure it worked out OK. It turned out that his son and daughter-in-law treated him badly, so he took back his farm.

Aldro Jenks ran for **County Judge** on the Democratic ticket in 1897 and was elected. He was re-elected as County Judge for *many* terms, in a predominantly Republican district and served until his death in 1934. He was an able man and his local success in politics led to his being considered for the Democratic nomination for Governor around the turn of the century. He refused this honor because he preferred to raise his family in peace.

Author Dorothy H. Jenks is the daughter of Frank Jenks who was the son of Judge Jenks and Laura Goodsell. Editor.

To be continued.

From 'Old Zack' to Young Barack: 160 Years of Presidential Elections in Iowa County

by Tom Giffey

One-hundred and sixty years ago, the residents of Iowa County – and Wisconsin – had their first opportunity to take part in our nation's most important democratic ritual: the election of a president.

On Nov. 7, 1848 – less than six months after their state became the 30th star on the American flag – the farmers, miners and merchants of Iowa County cast their ballots. They did so in some familiar locales, including Dodgeville and Mineral Point, but also in some places whose names are absent from modern maps, such as **Peddler's Creek, Dallas, Spring Prairie and Otter Creek.**

President James K. Polk, who oversaw Wisconsin's admission to the union, had decided not to seek a second term, and three major candidates vied to replace him: **Zachary Taylor**, a former general and Whig Party nominee; Democrat **Lewis Cass**; and **Martin Van Buren**, a former president, who ran under the Free Soil Party's banner. The voters of Iowa County favored Taylor by a narrow margin, giving him 854 votes to 819 for Cass and 117 for Van Buren. While Cass won Wisconsin's electoral votes, the will of Iowa County voters was reflected nationwide: Taylor won the race, much to the delight of the **Wisconsin Tribune**, a weekly newspaper in **Mineral Point**. "Old Zack Has Come" proclaimed a headline in the Nov. 17, 1848 issue. The article began triumphantly: "We gave notice to our readers last week in a postscript, that 'Old Zack was coming,' and we now have the pleasure of announcing the fact that he has come, and also the 'surrender' of the combined forces under Gen. Cass, and Corporal Van Buren, to the People's Favorite, Gen. Zachary Taylor."

In the ensuing 160 years, Iowa County voters have agreed with the national majority, or at least the Electoral College majority, more often than not: Of the 41 presidential elections in which Iowa County residents have participated, their chosen candidate was elected president on 30 occasions, or nearly three-

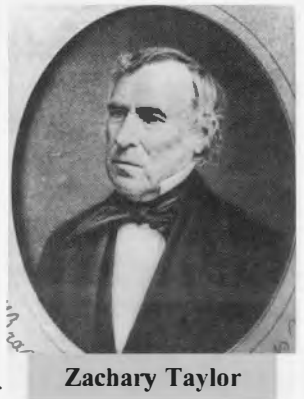
quarters of the time. In most of the remaining elections – eight of eleven -- Iowa County sided with the state in backing an also-ran. The first of these instances, in fact, occurred the third time Iowa County took part in a presidential election: In 1856, county voters backed **John C. Fremont**, the Republican Party's first-ever presidential nominee, who lost to Democrat **James Buchanan**. (It's worth noting that the Republican Party's roots lie in Wisconsin: The city of **Ripon** styles itself the party's birthplace.)

The 1856 election was the beginning of a long-term trend for Iowa County voters, namely an affiliation with the Republican Party: In the 19 presidential contests between 1856 and 1928, Iowa County voters chose the Republican candidate 15 times, from **Abraham Lincoln** in 1860 to **Herbert Hoover** in 1928. The county's preference was part of a larger pattern: The Grand Old Party dominated the White House for most of the time between the Civil War and the Great Depression.

There were notable exceptions to this trend, however. In 1864, county voters – perhaps tired of the Civil War's bloody toll – favored the Democratic nominee, **Gen. George McClellan**, whose party adopted a "peace" platform, with 1,424 votes over the incumbent, Lincoln, who received 1,282 votes. Lincoln, of course, won the election but was martyred by an assassin's bullet months later.

Another noteworthy exception to the county's Republican affiliation came in 1924, when Iowa County residents joined voters statewide in overwhelmingly favoring a native son, **Robert M. "Fighting Bob" LaFollette Sr.**, who ran as the Progressive nominee (though he served in the U.S. Senate as a Republican). LaFollette garnered 4,133 votes in a three-man race in Iowa County, besting Republican **Calvin Coolidge**, who got 3,292 votes, and the hapless Democrat, **John W. Davis**, who received 694.

Continued on page 6



Zachary Taylor

Continued from page 5

(Davis earned a dubious distinction in the annals of Iowa County elections: His 8.5 percent share of the county's vote is the worst in history for a major-party nominee.)

Iowa County voters returned to the Republican fold four years later, helping make Iowan Herbert Hoover the nation's 31st president. However, over the ensuing decades, GOP dominance in the county's presidential preference lessened. Between 1932 and 1972, county voters selected Democrats in four out of eleven races. They preferred Democrat **Franklin D. Roosevelt** in 1932 and 1936 (though not in his two ensuing campaigns) as well as Democrats **Harry Truman** in 1948 and **Lyndon B. Johnson** in 1964. Nonetheless, Iowa County voters still favored Republicans more often than not in the middle decades of the 20th century: For example, they voted for **Dwight D. Eisenhower** twice and **Richard Nixon** three times.

The tide turned, and sharply, in the 1970s. Since the victory of Democrat **Jimmy Carter** – who carried the county, state and nation in 1976 – Iowa County has voted for the Democratic nominee in every election, including the 2008 victory of Democrat **Barack Obama** of Illinois. Obama holds the distinction of winning the most votes ever by a presidential candidate in Iowa County (7,987) and also of winning one of the most lopsided victories: He earned nearly 67 percent of the vote, behind only Eisenhower (69 percent in 1952) and Warren Harding (a whopping 81 percent in 1920).

In 2008, as it was 160 years earlier, Iowa County was a bellwether for presidential victory.

The author, an Iowa County native, is editorial page editor of the Leader-Telegram, a daily newspaper in Eau Claire. Voting statistics were largely compiled from the State of Wisconsin's biennial Blue Book, as well as from contemporary newspapers and the Elections Division of the state Government Accountability Board.



Bob La Follette
Speaking on the radio

Abraham Lincoln

Born 200 Years Ago

Honored by New Stamp

We did not comment on his birth date of February 12, 1809, at the time, except to fly our household flag from the front porch for 24 hours, properly lighted, but we commemorate Lincoln in this newsletter as a reminder of the great debt the American people owe this humble, gifted and supremely courageous leader prior to and during the Civil War.



The stamp pictured above is one of four US Postal Service stamps depicting Lincoln's life as a local leader, a successful attorney and a thoughtful, sagacious president during the American Civil War, 1861-1865.

Incidentally, in 1860 the Republican Party nominee, Abraham Lincoln, won the Iowa County vote by a healthy 1,990 to 1,581 over the "Little Giant," Stephen Douglas.

Share your Iowa County Civil War stories.

From the Press ... From the Past

From the Dodgeville Chronicle, June 9, 1886: Farmers of this community are receiving for their produce this week: 9 cents a pound for wool, \$1.75 per cwt. for packing sows, 9 cents per dozen for eggs, 8 1/2 cents per pound for cheese and 15 1/2 cents per pound for butterfat. Naturally the question is raised: "How will they manage to spend all their money?"

A Snide Remark?

The August 20, 1886 issue of the Dodgeville Chronicle published this snide (perhaps gloating) remark in the "Standart Items" column: "Floyd's School is coldly treated by the teachers this winter, while for the other schools the applications are numerous." The story in the ICHS book, "The Schools of Iowa County," states that Floyd School burned in 1886; however, we find no corroborating evidence.

Can you help to unravel this mystery?

Newspaper Microfilm at ICHS

A reader printer is available.

Arena Wis. Star, 1874-1876 & 1877-1886, becomes Dodgeville Star in 1883-1886,
Dodgeville Chronicle, 1862 through Dec. 2008
Barneveld Banner, some issues missing
The Hollandale Review, some issues missing
Rural Eye, 1887-1887
Rural Eye of Arena, 1887-1888 and 1888-1889 becomes The Eye and Star, 1890-1893
The Eye and Star 1893-1895 becomes New Star, 1895-1896 & New Star, 1896-1897
New Star, 1898-1900
Miners Free Press - Mineral Point, 1837-1843, some issues missing
Miners Free Press- Wis. Tribune, Mineral Point
Mineral Point Home Intelligencer 13 Sept. 1860 and 31 May, 1862
The Gleaner, Arena, Nov 8-Dec. 6, 1894
The Southwest Wisconsin, Linden, 1854-1907
Index to Wisconsin Miscellaneous Newspapers

The brick wall in your family research may tumble if you search ICHS microfilm using the Index of Obituaries.



Self employed

Membership Application

Iowa County Historical Society
Mail to Marie Sersch
106 E. Pine St., Dodgeville, WI 53533-0044

Membership year is July 1st—June 30th

Membership dues and categories

Individual-annual \$10.00	5 year \$40.00
Couples-annual \$15.00	5 year \$60.00
Historian-annual	\$25.00
Master Historian-annual	\$50.00



Self employed

Spring Fling Again

The date Sunday, April 26, at Ludden Lake. The table set by the proprietors includes a 32 item salad bar and several choices from the brunch-buffet. Serving noon—1:30 pm Dance to 4 pm

Tickets from Directors
and at the door for \$20 each.



General Breckenridge Reenactor Big Hit

Cold and bright was the day and about 50 interested citizens listened as **Gary Young** of Boscobel gave a rousing good impersonation of General Breckenridge, Confederate States of America, to ICHS members and friends at Stonefield Apartments. The General presented the Southern perspective on the Civil War. He made a good case but seemed to not convert the audience. Thanks much, Brother Young. Someday you must return and present the case for the Union in the Civil War.

Name _____ Street _____ P. O. Box _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Membership Period _____ Amount enclosed _____

*I am interested in making a tax deductible gift to the
Iowa County Historical Society. Please contact me at the above address.*

Signed _____

Volume XXXIV No. 2 April 2009

Iowa County Historical Society

1301 N. Bequette St.

P. O. Box 44

Dodgeville, WI 53533-0044

MEMBERSHIPS

MAIL TO: MARIE SERSCH

106 E. Pine St., Dodgeville, WI 53533

Individual-annual \$10.00 5 year \$40.00

Couples-annual \$15.00 5 year \$60.00

Historian-annual \$25.00

Master Historian-annual \$50.00

Membership year is July 1st-June 30th

ICHS SERVICES-GENEALOGY-HISTORIC RESEARCH

The Society has archives for Iowa County: history-cemeteries-
obituaries-photographs-newspaper microfilm-artifacts

Curator Dorothy Anderson

Museum Phone 608-935-7694

Email: ichistory@mhtc.net

**Museum and Archives: Open year-round
except for holidays.**

Weekdays 1-4 pm and by appointment at other times

Web Site: Iowacountyhistoricalsociety.org

**NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
DODGEVILLE, WI
PERMIT NO. 86**

Address Service Requested

Calendar of Events

Dinner Dance-Spring Fling

April 26, 2009

Ludden Lake Supper Club ... Mineral Point

Serving 12 noon-1:30 pm

Dance to 4 pm

Ice Cream Social

*At the museum-1301 N. Bequette St., Dodgeville
Pie, Ice Cream, Plate Lunch, Friends, Music
Serving from 4:30-7:30 pm You are welcome*

Thursday, July 23, 2009

Sesquicentennial Celebration

Iowa County Courthouse, Dodgeville, WI

Saturday, June 13, 2009 Noon-3 pm

Celebrate with us: Ceremony, Artifacts,
Souvenirs, Food, Music



Courthouse 1893

*Noon...Forgiveness Ceremony
by the Citizens of Mineral Point*

Everybody Welcome—Especially You

*ICHS preserves
your memories
and
your family tree*



Reverend Mathews
Abolitionist Lecturer