



WARREN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

www.warrencountyhistory.org Box 256, Indianola, IA 50125 (515)961-8085

October 2011

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LOG CABIN FESTIVAL PARADE WINNERS



Historical Best: WORKING TOGETHER TO SERVE YOU BETTER; Democrat Auditor Traci VanderLinden and Republican Treasurer Polly Glascock



Best of Theme:
Westview Care Center



Merchant's Choice :
Details Plus

WCHS CALENDAR

WCHS GENERAL MEETING

Tues. October 25th
7:00 pm
COAL MINING in IOWA
Doug Wilson, Knoxville

WCHS EXECUTIVE MEETING

Thurs. November 10, 4 pm

ROOTS MAGIC WORKSHOP

Saturday, Nov. 12, 10 am

WCHS VOLUNTEER DINNER

Tues., November 15
6:00 pm
Free dinner for all
who have volunteered
in 2011
Please Join us!



St. Marys Pioneers

Quilt Raffle Winner:
Jack Mayer





Capt. J. M. Browne Co. F, 39th Iowa Infantry
 2nd Wife Jennie A. Browne, married January 28. 1885
 Children: James Kenneth W. Browne and Agnes Jeanette Browne
 Photo 1889



Winterset Reporter

October 8, 1913

Former Citizen Dies, Joseph McCaskey Browne



Capt. J. M. Browne, one of the pioneer citizens of Iowa, a former leading citizen of Madison county, and well known throughout the state, died at his home in Indianola Sunday afternoon from the infirmities of old age.

Captain Browne was 93 years old and had lived in Iowa 58 years. He was a member of the 11th General Assembly (Whig) from Madison county in 1865-1866 and had lived in

Indianola for about twenty years.

When the war opened Capt. Browne organized Co. F of the 39th Iowa Infantry from Madison County and at the organization was elected captain. He was wounded at the battle at Parker's Crossroads in Tennessee on December 31, 1862 and shortly after resigned and was retired from service because of his injuries. (He resigned his commission and returned home but after partially recovering he again went to the front and resumed his command. He found that he was unfit for duty and was obliged to give up his position.) He then returned to Madison County, engaging in the mercantile business (farming and banking) at St. Charles where he lived until removal to Indianola (1895), when he retired from active business life.

Capt. Browne was born (to Mathew Browne and Jeanette McCaskey, married in Tyrone, Ireland) in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, July 11, 1820. (He married Mary Stillings in 1852 and then married Jennie Watt in 1885). In 1850 he moved to Ohio and in 1855 emigrated to St. Charles, Iowa. The widow (Jennie) and three children, Walter of St. Charles, Kenneth and Agnes of Indianola survive.

Funeral services were held in Indianola yesterday afternoon at three o'clock. A number of the captain's old soldier friends attended the funeral while on their way to his regimental reunion now in session at Adel.

Note 1: Joseph is buried at the Indianola, I.O.O.F. Cemetery, Warren County, Iowa.

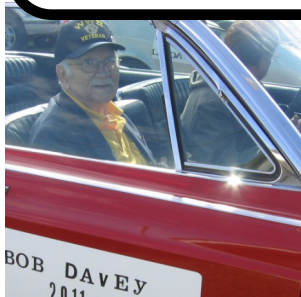
Note 2: Agnes was Jim Weinman's mother

WARREN COUNTY TIDBITS

1861—Washington, April 14

The President (Lincoln) will issue tomorrow his proclamation calling out 75,000 militia to suppress insurrection in the seceding states....The first service will probably be to repossess forts that have been seized from the union. He also convenes Congress on the 4th of July.

"TO ARMS! There will be a meeting at the seminary (Simpson) at 7 o'clock pm for the purpose of taking steps to organize a military company in response to the proclamation of governor Samuel Kirkwood.... Shall the county which boasts the name Brave Warren falter in this exigency? MANY CITIZENS"
Over 70,000 men left Iowa for the battlefield and 13,000 died.



UNIQUE LUSTRON HOUSES



Lustron houses are prefabricated enameled steel houses developed in post-World War II era United States in response to the shortage of houses for returning GIs. The low maintenance, extremely durable, baked on porcelain enamel finish was expected to attract modern families who might not have the time or interest in repairing and painting conventional wood and plaster houses. There were eight exterior colors: "Surf Blue," "Blue-green," "Dove Gray," "Maize Yellow," "Desert Tan," Green, Pink, and White. Window surrounds were primarily ivory-colored

Prefabricated housing had existed before the Lustron home came on the market. However, it was Lustron's promises of assembly-line efficiency and modular construction that set it apart from its competitors. The homes were designed by Morris Beckman of Chicago firm Beckman and Blass Interiors. Strandlund's **Lustron Corporation**, a division of the Chicago Vitreous Enamel Corporation, set out to construct 15,000 homes in 1947 and 30,000 in 1948. From its plant in Columbus, Ohio (the former Curtiss-Wright factory), the corporation eventually constructed around 3,000 Lustron homes between 1948 and 1950. The houses sold for between \$8,500 and \$9,500, according to a March 1949 article in the *Columbus Dispatch*—about 25 percent less than comparable conventional housing. By November 1949, however, a Lustron's average selling price had come up to \$10,500.

The interiors were designed with an eye toward the modern age, space-saving, and ease of cleaning. All Lustrons had metal-paneled interior walls that were most often gray. To maximize space, all interior rooms and closets featured pocket doors. All models featured metal cabinetry, a service and storage area, and metal ceiling tiles. In the Westchester Deluxe models, the living room and master bedrooms featured built-in wall units. As an added option, customers were presented with the unique Thor-brand combination clothes - and dish-washer, which incorporated the kitchen sink.

There are 3 Lustron homes in Warren County: Carlisle— near the high school, Indianola— West 609 Salem and Hi Way 65/69 south of Indianola (formerly Freda Caviness' home).

PROUDFOOT & BEYMER, EARLY INDIANOLA CONTRACTORS

Elias Proudfoot

Elias was born December 25, 1833 in Taylor's Drain, Barbour County, West Virginia. He came to Indianola in 1855 and married Martha Ann Barnett on December 18, 1856. Martha died in 1876 and Elias married Mary Beymer in 1878.

Elias Proudfoot (W.T. Proudfoot's father) built many buildings in Indianola. He was a member of the general contractor firm of Proudfoot and Beymer. Proudfoot's partner was W. J. Beymer. They built the 1876 Irving School (where the Warren County Administration Building is now located), the old Hawthorne School in 1893 at a cost of \$20,000, and the 1903 Indianola High School (which was located where the Indianola Library is currently). They also built many of Simpson College's early buildings.

It is believed that W. T. worked for his father, and it appears that there is some confusion on which Proudfoot built several Indianola buildings—Elias or W. T.





Hillside Cottage - 303 Circle Dr., Wichita, Kansas

In 1887 architect Willis Proudfoot (1860-1928) selected this yet undeveloped location to build his personal residence. He designed the Colonial Revival cottage with an English gambrel roof, an elliptical gable window, a 15-foot-tall colored glass window lighting the interior stairwell, and a circular entrance porch supported by Doric columns.

The basement and first floor walls are built of native limestone. A cartouche inscribed Hillside Cottage is located beneath the colored glass window on the north elevation. Proudfoot & Bird built more than 75 buildings in Wichita.

WILLIAM THOMAS PROUDFOOT

The composition of architectural firm, Proudfoot & Bird is the product of several firms and many architects. Of particular note are the contributions of Harry D. Rawson,, William T. Proudfoot and George W. Bird in forging the most prolific and dominant architectural firm in Iowa during the early decades of the twentieth century. Their work also reflects, literally the construction boom that accompanied Iowa prosperity in the early 20th Century.

For over 40 years, Proudfoot & Bird played a significant role in designing Iowa's architectural heritage. The firm designed more than 100 commercial buildings, including a number of tall office edifices; 200 single family dwellings; at least 30 apartment buildings; several public libraries; more than 50 public school buildings; approximately 100 collegiate buildings; 5 county courthouses; and a scattering of other public and semipublic buildings like hotels, theatres, churches, hospitals, and fire stations. As of 1988, twenty of these have been listed on the National Register of Historic places.

The firm was not on the cutting edge of architectural experimentation but they provided a solid body of design within the self-imposed limitations of the demands of their clients and accepted architectural styles for the period. The architectural philosophy of the firm can be characterized as conservative, both in design and attention to cost. Their designs reflected those who commissioned them: the local boards of education, the State Board of Education, Des Moines public schools, and county boards of supervisors. The philosophy was to produce Architecture in the unlimited sense of beauty, utility, and commodity; unlimited in that none of the three properties was allowed to predominate; none was neglected.

Proudfoot (who went by the name of William T., W. T., and Willis) was born May 2, 1860 near Indianola to Elias B. and Martha (Ann Baret). By 1872 his father Elias was a carpenter, joiner and later Indianola contractor. The young Proudfoot became acquainted with building techniques through his father. In 1878 William graduated from Indianola High School and in October of 1880 he had a job with the important Des Moines architectural firm of Foster & Liebbe. He remained there until April of 1882. The only formal training he received was from a semester's courses at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, probably between the fall of 1884 and early 1885.

Before receiving the MIT schooling, Proudfoot had struck out on his own, marking the beginning of the firm's "barnstorming" for architectural commissions in the developing Plains states. In 1882 Proudfoot was in Huron, South Dakota, moving to Pierre the next year. In both cities, Proudfoot & Bird received commissions. The Boston study trip Proudfoot had made was beneficial: the contrast in quality of design between the courthouse in Pierre, South Dakota and the later work in Wichita and elsewhere is evident.

Sometime after 1883 and probably in 1885 after his MIT courses, Proudfoot transferred operations to Wichita, Kansas where he remained until 1891. Despite the Kansas residency, Proudfoot designed a Methodist church in his hometown of Indianola in 1885. In 1891 the construction boom and numerous commissions that Proudfoot & Bird had enjoyed in the Wichita area ended. Proudfoot moved on to Salt Lake City in 1891 where the firm gained a number of commissions. Proudfoot returned to Des Moines (via Philadelphia) for good in 1896.

He died while still active in the firm on June 8, 1928 at the age of 68. Flags were flown at half staff at the University of Iowa in respect for the architect's contribution to the campus. "He was recognized as the outstanding architect of the state," according to a university engineering professor. The State Board of Education took special note of the passing of Proudfoot, noting that: as an architect, he has placed the imprint of his genius upon the physical aspect of the educational institutions of Iowa, an imprint which will endure for generations. According to John Woolson Brooks of the firm, "He was considered to be a quiet man of considerable depth...He appreciated Architecture, but was content to devote his energies to budget and practical considerations rather than beauty. He maintained a capable staff which he supervised carefully."

From U.S. Dept of the Interior, National Register of Historic Places Documentation Form 12/20/1988 by the Iowa Historical Society, Bureau of Historic Preservation

Central Iowa Buildings by Proudfoot & Bird -1st Methodist Episcopal Church 10th & Pleasant, Des Moines, Lincoln & Roosevelt High Schools, Dallas & Polk County Courthouses, Hotel Ft. Des Moines, Iowa State Memorial Union, and S.U.I buildings.

NORWALK'S FIRST MAYOR

Adam Stiffler was born in Tuscarawas County Pennsylvania on January 7, 1828 to George and Nancy (Dust) Stiffler. The family moved to Delaware County , Ohio where Adam received his education. He married Nancy Thompson. Adam and his brother Simon moved from Ohio and headed to St. Charles, Iowa sometime around 1858. Adam worked as a blacksmith in St Charles.

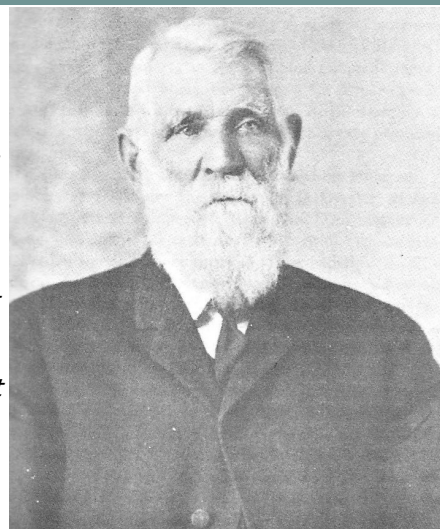
From **History Madison County Iowa and Its People Vol . I**

Mr. Adam Stiffler of Norwalk, Iowa, while here last fall (1914) related that he came to St. Charles in 1856 and operated a blacksmith shop. The shop standing on lot 6 northwest section where W. H. Black's house stands. Mr. Stiffler said he did not belong to a church at that time and there was no Methodist class in town. In 1858 Rev. Murphy held a revival meeting in the house of William Bradshaw, now owned by Eliza McLaughlin, and at these meetings Mr. Stiffler was converted. A class was organized by Mr. D. S. Smith, leader. Smith soon left and Mr. Stiffler was chosen class leader, remaining thus until 1868 when he moved to Norwalk. Stiffler and family lived above the blacksmith shop and that's where meetings were held for the first two years.

While in St. Charles, Adam married his second wife, Matilda Foster. Adam bought 80 acres of land in Norwalk, Iowa, which was then but a stage station. He was elected Norwalk's first mayor and served for two consecutive terms. Norwalk was incorporated in 1900. At the time, the town was one square mile in size.

After his brother James Harvey Stiffler died, Adam married his widow, Emily Byars-Stiffler, and they moved out west to California. Adam didn't stay there, however, returning again to Iowa, where he died September 22, 1916.

Adam's grandson, Frederich Cassius Stiffler, January 26, 1875-June 16, 1958, represented Warren County as State Representative from 1949 to 1952. Frederich also was the Chairman of the Warren County Board of Supervisors when the present courthouse was built.



EARLY COAL MINING IN IOWA

Iowa was probably the second state west of the Mississippi in which a coal mine was opened after the discovery of coal in Iowa in 1835. Missouri was first and held first place in the production of coal on a commercial basis until 1874 and retained it until surpassed by Colorado in 1900.

So far as can be learned the 1st mining of coal in Iowa began in 1840. It is reported that these first operations were in the vicinity of Fairfield in Jefferson County and Farmington in Van Buren County. About the same time soldiers at Ft. Des Moines dug coal from a vein exposed in the Des Moines River bank near Center Street Dam for use by blacksmiths at the Fort. Early settlers knew of the presence of coal but wood was plentiful and had the advantage of convenience and cleanliness.

The "drift" mine was the most popular method of mining coal in the early days of mining because of its simplicity. The coal was dug by pick and shovel from the vein where it was exposed along the banks of creeks and rivers. Posts or timbers were set up to support the overburden as the mining advanced into the bluffs or hills. Some coal was produced by strip mining where the overburden could be removed easily but the amount of dirt removed from the coal was nothing compared to modern day trip mining of coal.

The coal exposed along the banks of creeks and rivers is known as the "top" or "upper" vein and usually decreases in thickness as it is flowed into the hill. In most cases it is of inferior quality and more profitable seams of coal are at a greater depth and are reached by shaft or slope. Early settlers near Carlisle along Scotch Ridge used to gather this exposed coal for family use.

WCBS MEETING

Tuesday , October 25
7:00 p.m.

**COAL MINING IN
IOWA**
Doug Wilson, Knoxville

Join us and share your
Warren County Coal Mining
Knowledge



NEW AQUISITIONS

Beaded Green Dress
Handmade Folding
Wallpaper Table



Orlando Harrison (jac) Baker

Orlando Harrison (jac) Baker (son of **Jacob (geo) Baker**) was born 16 September 1830 in Brownsville, IN., and died 16 August 1913 in Nagasaki Japan, Aboard ship.

Orlando H. Baker, United States Consul at Sandakan, Borneo, died on board the United States Transport Thomas as that vessel lay at anchor in the harbor of Nagasaki, Japan, Wednesday August 6, 1913. At peace with the world and without pain the long and useful life ebbed away. Beside him when death came was his wife, while everything in the world of medical science and hospital care was bestowed upon him. Eighty three years of useful busy life found a quiet close. He died in the service of his country, but a few days having elapsed since he left his post of consular duty on a six month's leave of absence to visit his native land. But his eyes were no more to see the fertile green of America's shores or his loved ones at home. The gentle hand of the Ruler of the Universe decreed differently and the summons was met with a quiet calmness.

Orlando Harrison Baker was the eldest child of Jacob and Mary Baker and was born in Union County, Indiana, September 16th, 1830. His parents were pioneers in that new country and the hardships of having only a part of life's necessities were his daily portion. He was brought up in his native state and its western neighbor, Illinois. He early formed a resolve for an education, and at an early age attended MT. Morris Seminary at Mt. Morris, Ill. Later he entered Allegheny College at Meadville, Pennsylvania. He did not finish the prescribed course here however, as pecuniary necessities would not permit his continuing in college until he could gain a degree. He would work awhile in the harvest field or at his trade, that of wagon - making or house painting. Then opportunities to teach a term or more of school would present themselves. He took these, carefully saving the small Monetary, recompense paid him and enter college again. The degree of Bachelor of Arts was conferred upon him, when he completed the course of study at Asbury University, now De-pauw University, at Greencastle, Indiana in 1857. He married Mary Catherine Ridley in 1858. Three years later he was honored with the degree of Master of Arts from this institution. During his student days at the university he was a member of the Beta Theta Pi Fraternity, admittance to which was gained by high scholastic attainments. In 1905 Simpson College bestowed upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws.



Des Moines Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church then included all the territory of western Iowa. The Conference school was at Glenwood and Professor Baker then accepted a call to this school. He remained here a year and in 1868 was elected professor of Latin and Greek in Simpson Centenary College, the successor school known to Indianolan's as the Bluebird Seminary. The campus had no trees "but was surrounded by a high board fence, and the lot was planted in tall corn. Baker and his wife taught the classes. Baker's house was at the northwest corner of Indianola's square, where Indianola Banking Co. would locate in later years. "At that time," recalled Baker, "there was a diagonal path from where I lived, to the Seminary, no houses at that time between. There were no sidewalks in the town, except a broad sidewalk around part of the public square-the north side of the square was almost all vacant land. In muddy weather the pupils literally waded through the water and mud" to get to school. In 1871 he accepted the principalship of Algona College at Algona Iowa, occupying this position until 1875.

Shortly after his marriage in 1858 he was ordained as a Minister in the Methodist Church and between the years 1875 and 1877 he served as pastor of two charges in the Des Moines conference, Cambridge and Boonsboro. In 1878 he returned to teaching and was principal of the Boonsboro schools, then large, as the town was a thriving mining town. In 1879 the family returned to Indianola, where as today, exceptional educational advantages were offered.

On October 7, 1880 Professor Baker became the editor of the **Indianola Herald**, continuing in this position until 1886. The professor's character is well shown in his first editorial in which he says: "To most of you I am not a stranger, as seventeen years ago, about this time of the year, riding from Ottumwa in a stage coach of the old style, I was landed at the 'Hotel de Jimse' (Barnwell House) in the town of Indianola and have ever since called this place my home. There was not much of a town then, and not a great sight to me, I came west to grow up with the country, and though I have been back to see my wife's relatives many times since the memorable day above mentioned, I am thankful that it was well with me, as it is I hope to put my work on the right side of every question affecting your interests ---- political, social and moral."

In 1886 he severed his interest within the **Herald** and from that time until 1892 he traveled as correspondent for the **Chicago Inter Ocean**. During this time in February 1890, his wife died.

In 1893 he entered into the service of his government and was assigned to the port of Copenhagen, Denmark as consul. He was advanced in 1900 to the position as United States consul at Sydney, Australia. Here he remained for eight years until he was sent to similar duties to Sandakan, North Borneo, where he was still serving when Death overtook him

Buried at Indianola Cemetery. Gravestone inscription, Teacher, Simpson College, Editor of Indianola Herald, American Consul: Copenhagen Denmark, Sidney Australia, Sandakan Borneo.