

About the Post Office

Portions of the following are from Sketch I through IX of the *Baraboo News* dated January 31, 1906.

When the Pecks, Browns, Websters, Crawfords, Canfields and others came to Baraboo in the early 1840's there was little time to devote to writing letters to far off eastern homes. Not only was the postage at that time twenty-five cents, and quarters were few, but also there were many things to be done, so that a post office was not among the early requirements. The first families to come to Baraboo were Abe Wood and Wallace Brown in 1839 but it was not until 1847 that an office was established. Previous to opening an office in Baraboo all mail for the hamlet was brought from Prairie du Sac by some neighbor who happened to be over there on an errand, and it is unnecessary to state that irregularity was the chief characteristic.

Naming the Office

Prescott Brigham had loaned money to the county to purchase the county seat and claimed the right to name the post office when established. He greatly admired John Quincy Adams, once president of the United States, and called the new office Adams. There were many post offices by that name in the United States and the department at Washington asked that the name be changed. At that time there was considerable rivalry between the two sections of the village, upper and lower town, and Miss Eliza Chapman remembers how Lyman Clark would stop the stage at his hotel where Ruhland's brewery now stands, in order to procure the mail before it reached the office over the river.

When it was decided to change the name, "what shall we call it?" was the question. The village was then in the town of Brooklyn and an effort was made to give it that name. That part of the village near the river or "under the hill" was known as Baraboo or Baraboo Mills and finally in 1852 the question of naming the town was settled for once and no doubt for all time to come.

The First Mail

At the time the office was established, Prescott Brigham resided on East Sauk Road on Sauk Prairie and near the bluffs. He contracted to carry the mail and made weekly trips during fair

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Often the mail came across the hills on the back of an Indian pony which was indeed quite a contrast to the great iron monster which would later snort through the beautiful Baraboo valley scattering epistolary favors and the great dailies fresh from the lightning press.

The First Postmaster

On March 8, 1847, Dr. Seth P. Angle was appointed postmaster. It is not certain where he had his office. Victor Peck of Madison, and others remembered that it was between the Daniel Kelsey Blacksmith Shop, which was located at 139 Water Street, and Ash Street. The location would have been very close to, if not at, 147 Water Street. It was in a wood slab building, which housed Angle's general store.

A. A. Noyes, who was the brother-in-law to Seth's brother Ira Angle, held that Dr. Seth Angle was a partner of Lemuel Stanley in a little drug store at 128 Fourth Avenue from 1846 to about 1850, and ran the post office out of that building at one time? Angle and his wife first appeared in a one-horse buggy in lower town (Water Street) about 1846, having to ford the river, as there were no bridges at that time. Angle's first stop was by the a small frame house which later housed the Jackson Saloon, the Doctor hastily put up a small wood-slab shanty and moved in. This would have been about 147 Water Street, the corner of Ash & Water Streets, where George Hiles would later conduct a store. Angle soon built a home at 304 East Street, where the parochial residence of St. Joseph's church was later located, and moved the office there. This dwelling burned in February of 1895.

O. F. Angle of Sparta, Wisconsin, a nephew of the first postmaster, states that Dr. Angle came to Baraboo from Lockport, New York, and was no doubt born there. After the doctor came west

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he was followed by his father and mother, then by his brothers, H. G. and Lloyd.

From Baraboo, Dr. Angle went to Angelo, Monroe county, Wisconsin, where he was engaged in the milling business until 1855 with his brother Ira S. Angle, who was a miller. Domestic difficulties followed Dr. Angle after leaving Baraboo, his wife going to Kansas in 1856 and he following a year or two after. For a time he practiced medicine at St. Mary's, Pottawattomie County, Kansas; then was admitted to the bar and for a time was considered quite a good lawyer. After his wife died in 1882 he lived with his daughter, Fannie, in one of the western states and passed away about 1887. He was buried beside his wife in the family lot at St. Mary's.

Dr. Angle's brother, H. G. Angle, married Frances Canfield, sister of W. H. Canfield of Baraboo. H. G. Angle was a wealthy banker at Ottumwa, Iowa, at one time. Dr. Angle's mother was one of the first persons to pass away in Baraboo and was the first person buried in the new cemetery near the water tank at the top of the hill not far from the end of Birch Street. Her name was Mercy and in honor of her the new burial place was called Mount Mercy. The cemetery has long since been abandoned. The father of Dr. Angle was overtaken by the dark shadow while living in Baraboo and sleeps in a lot owned by Dr. Noyes in the "White City" just beyond the gates.

The Second Postmaster

Eber Z. Crandall, an uncle of Mrs. J. G. Train of Baraboo was the second postmaster and was appointed July 11, 1848. He first held office at the residence of D. K. Noyes, 138 First Street where George M. Reul later resided. It remained there until Col. Noyes grew weary of acting as postmaster in the absence of the duly appointed official and the location was changed to the Munson & Tuttle store, 516 Oak Street, where Fisher Brothers later had their pharmacy.

Postmaster Crandall was born at Fire Hill, NY, April 6, 1804, located at St., Charles, IL, in 1841 and came to Baraboo in 1847 or 1848. After leaving Baraboo he resided with his daughter, Mrs. L. D. Randall, at Dubuque, Iowa, until he died December 8, 1865.

Postmaster Crandall was twice married, his first wife being Juliette Evans, and of their two children, Pembroke died in childhood and Mrs. L. D. Randall became the mother of Mrs. Fanny and Mrs. Juliette Sammis who resided in Iowa, their husbands being brothers.

Third Postmaster

When the rush for gold was most exciting, Benjamin L Purdy refrained from joining the mad rush and became postmaster on June 28, 1849.

The office was located in the front room of a dwelling, which was located at 315; some records indicate 309, Ash Street next to the alley where A. G. Malloy later resided. The old building at 413 Oak Street where W. F. Hagen later had his gun shop was the very structure used for the office. C. M. Blake and others remembered attending school in that building when Prof. Newcomb was the master. In 1853 The Baraboo Lodge No. 34 of the Free and Accepted Masons held their meetings on the second floor.

At that time Postmaster Purdy resided across the alley at 309 Ash Street, in the same building where Louis Metcalf later had his home. Concerning Postmaster Purdy, his daughter, Mrs. Susie Purdy Kesterson of Fairbury, Nebraska, kindly furnished the following:

"Purdy was born September 27th. 1816, in New York city and lived in Tarrytown, N.Y., until 10 years of age, when his parents moved to Ohio where he learned the trade of cabinet maker. In 1839 he was married to Susan Hubbard Meadows in Woodfield, Ohio. In 1843 they moved to Wisconsin, settling first in Whitewater. In 1846 they followed George Brown to Baraboo where they lived until 1871 when they moved to Fairbury, Neb."

It was written in early newspapers that Purdy came to town as a cabinetmaker and had to go barefooted a certain amount of time, having no money for shoes. It was said that he was lucky to have a wife that really pitched in to give them a start here. After arriving in Baraboo, the Purdy's ran a boarding house for Delano Pratt who employed many workmen at that time. The claim was that Mrs. Purdy was the "better man of the two." However, Purdy being a cabinetmaker by trade did find a lot of work finally doing finishing

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work on new homes being constructed in the area.

Nine children were born to them, Maria and Julia born in Newport, Ohio; Cordelia, born at Whitewater, Wisconsin; Leonidas, Ellen J., Benj. L., Emma, Susie and Ebner born in Baraboo, Wis. Mr. Purdy lived to bury all his family except one daughter, Susie, Mrs. J. C. Kesterson, at whose home he died, on July 16, 1905, only lacking two months of being 89 years old. He was buried in Fairbury, Neb.

He was engaged in active business until three years before death occurred. He was postmaster in Baraboo from 1849 to 1851, afterwards engaged in the insurance business and was the only undertaker in Baraboo for a number of years. During his residence in Fairbury, Neb., he carried on his insurance business and was probate judge for several terms and was always an active member of the community. His death was the result of falling from a considerable height.

Fourth Postmaster

Concerning Lucy Forsyth Perkins, the first woman to occupy the Baraboo post office, her son, ex-congressman Perkins, of the Sioux City Journal, tells the story how Mrs. Perkins braved the future, only those who are under similar circumstances can know. She was appointed May 3, 1853 and held office until James H. Wells was appointed on February 21, 1857. The post office was located in the Perkins' home at 122 Second Street, just east of the then High School building, where Mrs. White later resided in 1906 and known as the H. N. Southern place.

When Mrs. Perkins received her appointment, the following is a portion of an editorial by the *Sauk County Standard* dated May 18, 1853.

"We understand that Mrs. Lucy F. Perkins has been appointed Post-Mistress at this place; an appointment in every respect "not fit to be made." It is an office that such a woman should not hold, because she cannot discharge the duties profitably for the Government or satisfactorily for the public.



122 Second Street

Mrs. Lucy F. Perkins. Post-Mistress

But what renders this appointment peculiarly improper, is the fact that it is a Whig ruse to retain possession of the office for another term of four years, and is in opposition to the expressed wish of nine-tenths of the Democrats who have business at his office."

A rebuttal was fast in the coming from the *Milwaukee Sentinel*, as by June 1 a letter to the office of the *Sauk County Standard* was received. The body of the letter was preceded by the following comment from the Baraboo editor. "The poor miserable libertine who does the dirty work of Josiah A. Noonan in the Milwaukee News discourses as follows concerning this office;"

There are some valorous gentlemen at Baraboo, for the want of something more essential for combatants, they have lately endeavored to exercise themselves in trying to get up a fight with a lady. Mrs. Lucy F. Perkins formerly of this city (Milwaukee) and the wife of the late John D. Perkins, Esq., has been appointed Post Mistress at Baraboo and forthwith a howl is sent out from the

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groceries and bar-rooms, that it is an outrage because a whig has gone bail for Mrs. Perkins, and she is incapacitated because she is a worthy and exemplary member of one of the churches in that village. Such is the substance of the charges in an article in the last Standard and in letters received in this city from the complaining parties."

In June of 1853, the post office was moved to the building erected for that purpose adjoining the residence of Mrs. Perkins on Second Street.

Fifth Postmaster

James H. Wells was the fifth to become postmaster on February 21, 1857 and located the office in a small building where the Masonic Temple stands, 401 Oak Street, and where the office was located for many years. Mr. Wells was or had been editor of the *Democrat* and was one of the victors of the Buchanan campaign of 1856. From where Mr. Wells came or where he went the writer cannot ascertain. Hon. Phillip Cheek remembered meeting him.

Sixth Postmaster

May 2, 1858, (some records indicate March 3, 1859) Truman J. Wood, became the sixth postmaster of Baraboo. He was born in Chittenden County, Vermont, June 12, 1816, engaged in the mercantile business at Burlington, Vt., married November 16, 1847 at Meredith Village, N.H. to Miss C. L. D. Vittum. Endicott Arcade of St. Paul, Minn., says that Postmaster Wood died at the home of his son, Dr. Louis J. Wood at Wonewoc, Wis.

Seventh Postmaster

In the grand distribution of prizes after the campaign of 1861, Samuel Hartley drew the Baraboo post office and was appointed April 10, 1861, which was only six days after Fort Sumpter fell. Mr. Ryder had been the acting Post Master for the prior several weeks.

Hartley erected a new frame building at 400 Oak Street where the Baraboo Electric Company later had an office. Mr. Hartley was once proprietor of the Cliff House and concerning his life, his daughter, Mrs. M. H. Copeland, Santa Anna, California, stated:

Samuel Hartley was born in Salem, Washington county, Indiana, March 26, 1818. While yet a lad his parents moved to Paris, Illinois, and about 1840 he went to Stephenson County, Illinois. In 1843 he married Clarissa Wichell and in 1851 they came to Baraboo, and in 1861 became postmaster, serving six years. In 1879 he moved to Oberlin, Kansas, where he died Nov. 7, 1884.

Eighth Postmaster

It is believed that Col. David K. Noyes became postmaster on March 7, 1867, some records say May 7, 1867, and the post office at this address was eventually abandoned.

In March of 1872, James Dykins transferred the corner lot at 150 Third Street to postmaster **Noyes** with a stipulation that the Colonel would build thereon a brick building to be occupied and used as a Post office. Here as elsewhere the location of the post office had a tendency to draw businesses in that direction. It just so happened that Dykins owned the building immediately to the west. In mid-January of 1873, in the snow and ice, Noyes transferred his post office headquarters from the old frame building at Second and Oak to his new quarters at 150 Third Street.

With the name of Col. D. K. Noyes therein couples the longest period of service of any Baraboo postmaster to that date. Col. Noyes had fought for the flag down in Dixie and suffered a severe wound at Antietam. Previous to the war he had practiced law, been an editor, went to the legislature and eminently deserved the appointment and long service.

Improved the Office

The Post Office was located at 150 Third Street until 1884 when it was moved to the Wright Block at 534 Oak Street. One of the first things that Col. David H. Welch did when he was appointed Jan. 16, 1884, was to provide a fine lot of new boxes and furniture at a cost of \$1,300 and part of which has been used up to the present time. Before Col. Welch had held the office long there was a change on the political horizon and he was forced to yield the office to Mathew H. Mould on November 2, 1885, which was before, the returns were sufficient to compensate for the outlay of improvements.

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It is an ill wind, you know, and in due time there was a turn in the tide which brought another appointment to Col. Welch on March 7, 1890. By his long service he was fully repaid for the outlay he had made and the public was pleased with so splendid an official. Col. Welch was later a cashier in the office of representatives and with Mrs. Welch enjoyed Washington life in the winter and their old home and Baraboo friends in summer.

Democratic Postmasters

The postmaster appointed in 1885, during the first Cleveland administration, was M. H. Mould, formerly of the book firm of Mould & Buckley and later president of the First National Bank of this city. Mr. Mould had been a resident of the Gem city since the days when the Indians paddled their canoes up and down the Baraboo River. His administration was a model one.

Ransom Jackson, later an underwriter in this city, was appointed to the office on March 15, 1894 which was during Cleveland's second administration and served the four years with entire satisfaction to patrons of the office. Mr. Jackson's home had been in Baraboo for many years. About 1895 the post office was moved one door south to 532 Oak Street and Jackson assumed that post as indicated in the 1898 city directory and the 1898 Sauk County directory. It was during his term that the office was moved to the Masonic Temple where the owners of the Temple added many new boxes and articles of furniture. The office was made one of the best in this part of the country.

Arthur P. Cheek, who was appointed, Sept. 17, succeeded Mr. Jackson 1898. It is believed that Cheek served until 1910. That the office had been a model during the prior eight years all know. During his first term the rural free delivery and free city delivery were established and during his second term the office found a permanent home in a government building after being shifted about from one place to another for almost 60 years. During Mr. Cheek's terms, the service was said to be excellent, the improvements many and more to follow. In February of 1900, the government agreed to lease the lower corner room of the Masonic Temple for another five years. The old lease would expire June 1, 1900.

The article in the *Baraboo News* stated:

"This action means that the post office will be located at this address for another five years, and that Mr. Babcock's big governmental air palace will have to stand idle for several years. Someone blundered." Obviously the new post office building on the southwest corner of the intersection of Second Avenue and Oak Street was constructed by this time or was being constructed.

The first city mail carriers were **Harley Hook, Al. Henderson** and **C. A. Hofmann**. It is thought that they started carrying mail in 1891.

In 1902, **Assistant Secretary Taylor** settled the **Post Office Building** site controversy by selecting the property located at this intersection.

United States District Attorney W. G. Wheeler of Janesville came to Baraboo in February of 1904 and paid for the lot, which the new post office was to be constructed on. M. H. Mould received \$5,000 and Arthur T. Johnson \$3,000.

In June of 1904, Arthur T. Johnson asked the city council to reimburse him \$27.19 which he had paid for property tax on this corner, which was condemned for government use. George McArthur & Sons purchased the Johnson Photography building, which they promptly moved to an unknown location.

In January of 1906 Baraboo welcomed a new post office. The new building was located at 101 Second avenue, one block south of the Bank of Baraboo and just across the street to the west of the then high school building. It was constructed of Menomonee brick, Bedford stone, granite and terra cotta. The private offices of the postmaster and internal revenue collector as well as the lobby was finished in quarter sawn oak, the floor being of terrazzo, with a marble border and base. The other parts of the building were finished in Georgia pine and the walls throughout were of adamant. The closets were finished with marble and had nickel plumbing. In the basement were a swing room and a shower bath. There were a number of vaults for storing records and valuables. The appearance of the interior was beautiful and well worth a visit of inspection.

The furniture was new and of the latest pattern. There were

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Post Office constructed in 1906

no call boxes and all who went to the office and did not ask for their mail, had to carry a key. The sum appropriated for the building was \$45,000 and out of this, \$29,370 was paid to the contractor, Henry Ferge, of Milwaukee. M. H. Mould received \$5,000 and A. T. Johnson \$3,000 for the land.

Of the \$7,630 remaining, sums were paid to the architect and superintendent, a portion for grading and building the walks and a small amount for taking a picture once a month during construction. The furniture and fixtures were paid for from a separate account.

The building measured 54 feet, 6 inches north and south and 56 feet east and west. Between 1951 and 1958 Alfred H. Blake, Collection Officer, had a U.S. Internal Revenue Office located within the Post Office building.

Shults Takes Charge of Post Office

Frank E. Shults again assumed charge of the post office. He was appointed on April 28, 1922 but could not take charge until an inspector had checked the books.

In July of 1960, Congressman Gardner R. Withrow announced that Postmaster General Arthur E. Summerfield had advised him that a new post office building had been authorized for Baraboo. It was to be placed on the northwest corner of Broadway and First Avenue known as 303 Broadway. The new structure would comprise 26,136 sq. ft.

According to then postmaster Roy Bump, bidding forms, specifications and other pertinent data would be available to prospective bidders "in the near future" at which time the post office department would advertise for bids.

"The site option," the postmaster noted, "will be transferred to the successful bidder, who will purchase the land and then will construct the building to department specifications and lease it to the department on a long-term basis."

By 1964 the Baraboo Board of Education's business office was located at the prior Second Avenue site, the post office having moved to Broadway.

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Baraboo Post Masters

Seth Angle, March 8, 1847
Ebner Z. Crandall, July 11, 1848
Benjamin L. Purdy, June 28, 1849
Mrs. Lucy F. Perkins, May 3, 1853
James H. Wells, February 21, 1857
Truman J. Wood, March 3, 1858
Samuel Hartley, April 19, 1861
David K. Noyes, March 7, 1867
David E. Welch, January 16, 1884
Matthew H. Mould, November 2, 1885
David E. Welch, March 7, 1890
Ransom Jackson, March 15, 1894
Arthur P. Cheek, September 17, 1898
Frank E. Shults, August 12, 1911
Alger C. Pearson, July 10, 1916
Oscar Doppler, Acting from June 22, 1919,
after postmaster Pearson was accidentally killed by a train at
Crawford's crossing July 12, 1919, until office assumed by
Mr. Shults.
Frank E. Shults, April 28, 1922
Roland J. Osborne, Acting postmaster, April 28, 1934
Roland J. Osborne, January 29, 1935
Roland J. Osborne, first service postmaster, January 24, 1940
Roy Bump assumed charge November 30, 1954,
confirmed May 15, 1956
John Piernot, Assumed charge February 2, 1962
Andrew McGann, September 15, 1966
John P. Scharnke, Officer in Charge, May 1, 1970
John P. Scharnke, March 20, 1971
Robert J. Madalon, Officer in Charge, June 30, 1973
Robert J. Madalon, February 23, 1974
Kirby L. Roger, March 30, 1985
Terry Baumgartner, Officer in Charge, January 27, 1999
Martin Dawson, Officer in Charge, October 8, 1999

Helen D. Faulkner, Officer in Charge, July 14, 2003
Kay Alstadt, Officer in Charge, July 14, 2003
Ronald E. Fisk, Officer in Charge, November 21, 2003
Ronald E. Fisk, June 12, 2004
Debbie McNicol, Officer in Charge, October 1, 2006
Debbie McNicol, April 14, 2007