

Mineral Point HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Dedicated to Preserving the Unique History of Mineral Point

Historic Desk Added to MPHS Collections

by Nancy Pfothenhauer

The Mineral Point Historical Society recently made a significant addition to our collections, the desk once owned by William R. Smith. Smith, a prominent figure in the history of Wisconsin, was an early settler in Mineral Point, arriving here in 1837. (See inside for details about his life and influence.)

Among his many accomplishments, Smith was the author of several works detailing the early days of Wisconsin, works which were no doubt written at this very desk.

Gen. Smith's desk was most likely made right here by a local craftsman. Emily Pfothenhauer included the desk in her 2006 Master's Thesis "Furniture in Mineral Point, Wisconsin, 1830-1890: Trade, Craft, and Fashion in a Midwestern Marketplace." She says about the desk: "Examples of American case furniture in the 18th and 19th centuries are typically capped with an ornamental molded cornice. Fashioning these cornices required multiple molding planes and a significant amount of wood. A local solution that required less labor and material... was a flat strip of wood nailed at an angle across the top of the piece... The Smith desk features [this] flat cornice common to Mineral Point furniture. The drawers' dovetails are finely hewn, displaying the work of a skilled craftsman. Yet other elements are not at this level of careful

workmanship; the sides of the desk frame are attached with large visible nails and the scrolled flankers on either side of the writing surface join up awkwardly with the rest of the desk. The 17th century style turned bun feet are anachronistic for the period. The disparate elements of this desk may reflect the work of an early carpenter/joiner, the only type of craftsman available to Smith when he first arrived in Mineral Point."

The desk has not left Mineral Point since being owned and used by Gen. Smith. It was acquired by Robert Neal and Edgar Hellum, in the late 1940s or '50s, and moved to Pendarvis House on Shake Rag Street. Mineral Point antique dealer Ron Fay purchased the desk in the late 1970s and moved it to his house on Jail Alley, where it has been ever since.

The MPHS board felt that the desk, an important piece of local and state history, needed to stay in Mineral Point and purchased it with money from the Ken Colwell fund. This massive piece was carefully moved to Orchard Lawn earlier this year thanks to board member Carl

Tunestam and Hollandale Freight and is now ensconced in one of the upstairs display rooms where it will continue to be a reminder of the rich and varied history of our town. ●



The Life and Times of Gen. Smith

by Nancy Pfotenhauer

William R. Smith was one of the people who made the mix of those attracted to the Lead Region so diverse and so interesting. Well traveled, well educated, and from a well connected family, he first came to Wisconsin in 1837, appointed by President Martin van Buren, along with Territorial Governor Henry Dodge, to negotiate a treaty with the Chippewa Indians at Fort Snelling. Smith's journey, well chronicled in his "Observations on Wisconsin Territory," was arduous and the treaty was concluded before he arrived but he remained in the region for several weeks. During this time he became deeply attached to this new frontier and determined to make it his home.

For as much as the Territory affected Smith, he had a similar influence on it and its development as a state. Fifty years old when he first moved here, his previous experiences and his connections were brought to bear as Wisconsin moved from raw frontier to statehood. He was considered "A gentleman of the old school, of polished manners, [who] mingled freely with all classes of society, and was universally popular."

Gen. Smith's life, both before and after he moved to Wisconsin, was so full and so varied it is almost impossible to summarize, but, as briefly as possible:

He was born in Pennsylvania in 1787; in his autobiography, he reminisces about seeing George Washington on the streets of Philadelphia; another account says that he saw every U.S. President from Washington to Lincoln. As a boy his grandfather William Smith, DD, was involved with his education. The grandfather came to Philadelphia in the 1750s, invited by Benjamin Franklin to teach at a newly established academy (now the University of Pennsylvania) but eventually fell out of favor with Franklin due to his anti-Quaker stance. (The Quakers' pacifist beliefs made it difficult to provide funds for defense, and anti-Quaker sentiment ran high, especially in the Pennsylvania back-country which suffered from frequent raids from Indians allied with the French.)

In 1803, Smith's father, William Moore Smith, was sent to England as a Commissioner under the Jay Treaty of 1794 to adjust and settle the demands of British claimants; William R. Smith accompanied his father as his private secretary and, while he was in London, studied law in the Middle Temple.

According to the *History of Iowa County, 1881*: "These London days, teeming with recollections of Sarah Siddons, John and Stephen Kemble, of George III, the crazy old King, to whom he had been presented at court, of the Prince of Wales and Beau Brummel, and of the soldiers and statesmen who were then shaping the destiny of the civilized world, formed the solace of many an hour in after years, and incidents of this period remembered and related in his inimitable manner were the delight of three successive generations of listening friends."

Returning to Philadelphia three years later, Smith continued to study law and in 1808 was admitted to the bar in Philadelphia. The following year he moved to Huntingdon, PA, a town laid out by his grandfather, and married Eliza Anthony, of Philadelphia, who was descended on the father's side from the Rhode Island Anthonys, and on the mother's side from Michael Hillegas, the Treasurer of the United States during the Revolution. Over the next eleven years Smith became known as one of the leading lawyers of Pennsylvania, served as Deputy Attorney General for Cambria County; joined the Third Troop of Philadelphia Light Horse, and was active in the organization of the Pennsylvania Militia, in which he served in various grades up to the rank of Major General.

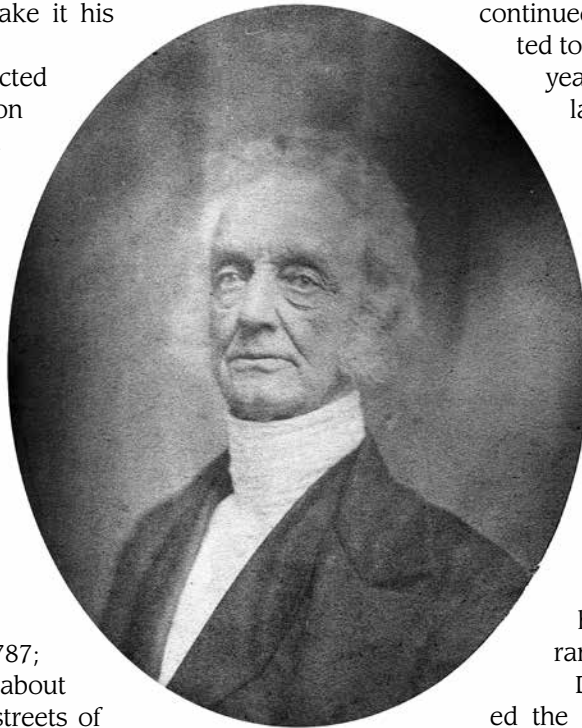
During the War of 1812, he commanded the 62nd Regiment of the Pennsylvania Reserves when it was sent to Lake Erie to support

Gen. Scott; he was in Baltimore during the siege of that city; and witnessed the burning of Washington by the British.

In civilian life, Smith served in both branches of the Legislature of Pennsylvania, held many offices of civil trust and honor, and, in January, 1836, was admitted Counselor of the Supreme Court of the United States at Washington.

Smith's first wife died suddenly, in 1820, and three years later he married Mary Hamilton Van Dyke, whose family, originally from Delaware, had moved to Tennessee. In 1837 he made his first trip to Wisconsin Territory, fell in love with the country, and resolved to move his family to the west, which he did the following year.

Again, from the *History of Iowa County*: "In 1839, he was appointed Adjutant General of the Territory of Wisconsin, by Gov. Dodge, which office he held under successive administrations for about twelve years. He also received from Gov.



Dodge the civil appointment of District Attorney of Iowa County, retaining this office also for many years. In 1840, he presided over the first Democratic Convention that assembled at Belmont, the seat of government of Wisconsin Territory, and he drafted the address sent forth by that body to the people. He was elected Secretary to the Legislative Council of Wisconsin, and, in 1846, was elected delegate to the convention to form a constitution for the State of Wisconsin. The journals of that convention show that Gen. Smith either originated or gave most earnest support to many of the legislative reforms that have since become law in Wisconsin, and have been widely adopted in other States of the Union, notably the "Homestead Exemption Law" and the "Rights of Married Women." In 1849, Gen. Smith was elected Chief Clerk of the Senate, and again in 1850, receiving 'the compliment of a unanimous vote.'

"In 1849, Gen. Smith, together with a few other citizens interested, like himself, in collecting and preserving all matters of historical interest, formed the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. The immediate success of the society in collecting valuable material induced the Legislature to place the institution under State patronage. A room in the capitol was assigned for the use of the society, and thereafter annual appropriations were regularly made to carry out and enlarge the work and usefulness of the institution. By a special act of the Legislature, in 1852, Gen. Smith was authorized to compile a "Documentary History of Wisconsin, from its Earliest Settlement to the Present Time." To this work he devoted several years of his life, and two volumes of the history were published by the State in 1854.

"In 1856, Gen. Smith was elected Attorney General of the State of Wisconsin, and for two years he filled that office with marked ability; then, having reached the ripe age of seventy-one years, he deemed it best to retire from active professional and political life, and, for the remainder of his days, to enjoy the well-earned quiet of his home, his library, and the society of his family and intimate friends. Here, for eleven years more, he was the delight of all who approached him; his ripe scholarship and varied information, his sparkling wit and kindly disposition, gave a charm to his conversation that will never be obliterated from the memories of those who knew him.

Gen. Smith, during all his life, was an active and prominent Freemason, passing through all the degrees of that Order from the Blue Lodge to the Royal Arch Chapter. He had been Grand Master of the State of Pennsylvania, and was several times made Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Wisconsin. He had a singular love and veneration for the Order whilst he lived, and he was buried with Masonic honors in Mineral Point, Wis., on the 26th day of August, A.D., 1868. A stately Masonic monument now marks his resting-place." ●

A Private Letter from General Smith to His Wife

Mineral Point

Wisconsin Territory

September 6, 1837

My dearest Mary:

After staying three days at Fort Crawford with Governor Dodge, to arrange the business, we left the Prairie together, and rode in an open wagon to this place, about 70 miles, through the most lovely country that the sun ever shone upon. Imagine to yourself a fine summer day, and that you are seated in a pleasure carriage — for the total absence of hills, stones, ruts, stumps and mud rendered a common wagon a pleasure carriage, and that you are driving at the rate of six miles an hour over a beautiful level green, or lawn, interspersed with groups of trees, scattered in the most tasteful variety, as if planted by the hand of art to gratify the most luxuriant imagination. Then imagine that the horizon only bounds your view, and no fence, no obstruction whatever, impedes your progress. Even if you come into the strips of wood, you drive through as if in an orchard of fruit trees. Look around, and the whole prairie is covered with yellow, purple and blue and brown flowers, rising above the waving grass, as if a garden had been planted expressly for your gratification. Then the deer, the grouse or moorfowl are constantly flitting across the landscape.

Conceive then that at intervals you can discover the commencement of the settlers' farms, with their little cottages, scattered over the vast sea of verdure, and you have a very faint idea of Wisconsin. I cannot describe the country to you in terms which will do it justice. Then the fruits — gooseberries, raspberries, blackberries, black currants, plums, cranberries, crabapples, cherries, in fine, all the fruits of the East, except orchards of peaches, apples, and pear, which come from cultivation. Strawberries cover the whole soil of the prairie. Low hazelnut bushes loaded with fruit fill the woods and the rider or walker passes through them without any impediment. The lands produce twice as much as in Pennsylvania. They require no clearing, and are most delightfully watered by springs of the purest water, and can be obtained from the government for one dollar and a quarter per acre! Earthly Paradise!

I have been so much delighted with all that I have seen and all that I have learned with regard to the soil and productions of the country that I have come to the conclusion that a more desirable location can not be obtained than in this part of the world, when present comfort and ultimate wealth are in consideration. I am not sanguine with regard to any matters, but in the two weeks that I have been here, and in the views I have taken of this part of the new country aided by the excellent information of Governor Dodge and many friends. I have made the determination of purchasing a most beautiful situation, already improved, near the Three Mounds, called Belmont. ●

Doan's Driftless Testimonials

by Joel Gosse

Question: what do Samuel Terrill, J.C. Stendebach, C.A. Batchelor, and William Hammull have in common? Yes, they were all Mineral Point residents in good standing in the early summer months of 1915. Perhaps some of these gentlemen were prone towards the prominence of employing their initials, but what they shared was the triumph over their kidney maladies, choosing to give testimony to this triumph in a series of ads for the agent of their cure — Doan's Kidney Pills.

In the ad entitled 'What Mineral Point People Seek' from the May 13, 1915 issue of the *Tribune*, Mr. Terrill, 'a well known business man', described his problems with overactive and then inactive kidneys. With the usage of two boxes at the cost of 50 cents per box, Mr. Terrill's problems were resolved. This ad appeared again in the May 20, 1915 *Tribune*.

The Doan's ad in the May 27, 1915 *Tribune* proclaimed 'A Wise Choice' for Mr. J.C. Stendebach. Mr. Stendebach's vocation was noted as a painter residing on Doty Street. His problems were more involved with 'disordered kidneys,' with unnatural secretions and irregular passage. With his purchase of one box from Ivey's Drug Store, his symptoms disappeared, and when he began to experience any sign of recurrence, he would reuse the pills for their immediate benefit. The ad's ending contained a misprint in that instead of mentioning Mr. Stendebach, a P. Whalen was noted. This ad ran in the next issue, also.

Two boxes were required to eliminate High Street resident C. A. Batchelor's back pains and irregular kidneys. The June 10, 1915 ad opened with the title 'Judge for Yourself' stating in its opening: "Something new is an experiment. Must be proved to be as represented. The statement of a manufacturer is not convincing proof of merit. But the endorsement of friends is. Now supposing you had a bad back, a lame, weak or aching one. Would you experiment on it? You will read of many so-called cures. Endorsed by strangers from



faraway places. It's different when the endorsement comes from home. Easy to prove local testimony."

Mr. Batchelor's two box testimony was in the next week's issue, also.

In the July 1, 1915 *Tribune*, 'The Proper Course' was described by High Street resident William Hammull. With the appropriate usage of Doan's Kidney Pills, Mr. Hammull kidneys recovered from their weak state. Mr. Hammull described frequent kidney secretions occurring nightly. He noted the secretions to be colored and scanty.

After these series of ads containing testimonials from Mineral Point, the testimonials for Doan's pills shifted focus to the Darlington region. The ads ran in many regions of the US, employing this local testimony technique; there is a mention of these local flavored ads at a weblog for the historical society in Ray City, Georgia. The ads were printed from a prepared template, as evident by the typographic error in the ad for Stendebach where someone forgot to remove P. Whalen's name at the end. These ads came after the FDA act of 1906.

Doan's Kidney Pills still exist, albeit with a modified name of Doan's Pills, primarily used to alleviate back pains and forms of arthritis. It appears the pills still contain the active agent of magnesium salicylate, today considered a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug. ●



Chamber After Hours

Local businesswomen Gayle Bull (Foundry Books), Claire Johnston (Johnston Gallery), and Chris Phillipson (Berget Jewelers) raised a toast to Mineral Point during the Chamber of Commerce "After Hours" event held at Orchard Lawn in May. The Chamber program was initiated several years ago to encourage Mineral Point business owners to visit one another's shops and studios. Orchard Lawn's beautifully restored rooms glowed in the late afternoon light, enhanced with bouquets picked from the gardens, and a sumptuous repast spread on the dining room table. ●

Margery Gundry King Portrait Restored

Another portrait in the MPHS collection has been restored by Barry Bauman, art conservator, whose studio is in River Forest, IL. The beautiful formal oil painting of Margery Gundry King was given to the Society several years ago by Gundry family members Harry and Eula Jeanneret; Harry is the grandson of Margery G. King.

Margery, born in 1866, the youngest child of Joseph and Sarah Gundry, was a toddler when the family moved to Orchard Lawn. She went to the public school in Mineral Point until she was 17, then attended the Thane Miller School for Young Ladies in Cincinnati, also known as the Mt. Auburn Institute, which offered courses in "History of Art" and "Preparation for Foreign Travel."

In 1889 she married Harry Wheelock King in the front parlor at Orchard Lawn, where her portrait now hangs. At the time, H. W. King was vice president of his family's company, the King Bridge Company, headquartered in Cleveland. According to the *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, the King Iron Bridge & Manufacturing Co. was the largest highway bridge works in the U.S. during the 1880s, and played an important role in the nationwide development and construction of the metal truss bridge, a unique product of American engineering and construction technology. The King Bridge Company was occasionally involved with structures other than bridges, most notably, the Ferris Wheel at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893.



The new couple moved to Cleveland and established a grand home on Euclid Avenue, also known as "Millionaire's Row"; later, they built a country home called "Kingwood," near Mentor, Ohio, whose property bordered that of Mrs. James Garfield, widow of the late president.

Margery King returned to Mineral Point and Orchard Lawn many times; she and her niece, Nancy Lambertson inherited the property when her brother, Will Gundry, died in 1936 and the two of them turned the property over to the newly formed Mineral Point Historical Society for one dollar, in 1939.

Mr. Bauman donates his restoration services to non-profit organizations, with the organization paying for the cost of supplies and materials. Gundry family members Joan Young and Sally Young and David Centers provided a grant that covered those costs; another Gundry family member, Helen Hobbs, paid for the art lamp that lights the portrait. Joan Young is the great granddaughter of Richard Gundry, Margery Gundry King's brother, Sally Young is his great great granddaughter, Helen Hobbs is the great granddaughter of Margery Gundry King.

We invite all MPHS members to tour Orchard Lawn and see this beautiful portrait in the restored front parlor. ●

More Mineral Point Photographs Available Online

The Mineral Point Library Archives recently joined the MPHS with an online sampling of photos from their collections. Both the Archives' and the Society's collections are hosted by Recollection Wisconsin, which compiles digital resources from a variety of sources across the state.

Like the Society's online collection, the Archives' initial sampling of 250 photographs covers Mineral Point residences, most of them from the early 1900s.

The Archives' online presence was made possible by a federal grant from the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) administered through the state's Department of Public Instruction (DPI). The grant provided funds for purchasing the necessary computer, scanner, and software as well as paying for some staff time to get the digitization program up and running. The MPHS provided an additional, oversize, scanner to the Archives, on a long term loan.

Now that the equipment and procedures are in place to scan photographs and documents in the Archives' physical collections, Curators Mary Alice Moore and Nancy Pfothauer intend to continue to add to the one online.

To see the Library Archives collection go to <http://content.mpl.org/mineralpointarchives>; the MPHS collection is available at: <http://content.wisconsinhistory.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/mphs>. For similar historic views of other Wisconsin communities, visit www.recollection.org. ●



News From Orchard Lawn

by Ainsley Anderson

It's here — can you feel it? The buzz that starts around Mineral Point as we all emerge from our winter slumber and begin our preparations for our busy season. As I walk through Orchard Lawn during the winter and spring I swear I can almost hear the house sigh with loneliness. The house seems positively cheerful when visitors are present. We are very excited to welcome you this season.

There will be two new display rooms to share upstairs — the result of more dedicated restoration work. We were thrilled to welcome the portrait of Margery Gundry back from her restoration. She will be back in her place of honor in the parlour this season. Our tour guides are prepared to share the story of Orchard Lawn with you. We're pleased to welcome Bertie Miller, Judy Devido, and Caleb Mitchell back for tours this year; and we welcome Makenzie Wells to the team this year.

Along with tours we have one baby shower, one bridal shower, one graduation party, and nine weddings. I'm thrilled to have Cindy Doney and Sarah Day back for our events; and I'm very excited to have Rebecca Williams, Makenzie Wells, and Caleb Mitchell on the events team as well. We are anticipating four wonderful Jammin' On The Porch Events June through September. This year you'll be able to purchase food at Jammin,' which we think will really add to the event.

Our wonderful garden volunteers have been hard at work weeding and planting the flower beds. We were very fortunate to have a stellar group of high school students volunteer their time spring-cleaning our grounds. At the end of their time with us they had the opportunity to take the house tour with Ms. Bertie. It was confirmation that the house does, indeed, come to life with visitors.

Please join us for a tour this year. Come and enjoy your morning coffee and a good book on the front porch. Our gates are open and we are always happy to see you. ●

New Title/New Job Duties



Ainsley Anderson, Orchard Lawn manager for the past three years, took on additional duties and a new title as of June 1st. As Executive Director, she will be more involved with all aspects of the day-to-day business of the Society, including managing membership renewals, fundraising, website and email, reviewing invoices and paying expenses. Moving from 10 hours a week to 20, Ainsley will continue to oversee weddings and other private events at Orchard Lawn, supervise and schedule the tour guides, and manage the apartment. The MPHS board has been very pleased with Ainsley's upbeat attitude and unflappable demeanor in solving problems and weathering crises and looks forward to having her take on more responsibility for the smooth operation of all aspects of the Society's activities. ●

Easter Bunny Visits Orchard Lawn

The "pasture" on the west side of Orchard Lawn was host to the annual Easter Egg hunt sponsored by the Kiwanis and the Mineral Point Care Center again this year. The Easter bunny and quite a few Mineral Point children had a great time, hunting for eggs hidden in the grass. The lawn mower may or may not have found a few extras, later on. ●



Welcome New Board Members

The MPHS Board recently elected two new members to the Board of Directors: Joel Gosse and Diane Stuart. Joel, a claims manager for a Madison based insurance company, works at home and in Madison. He has been actively involved in a wide variety of Mineral Point activities since he and his wife, Karen, moved here a little over a year ago, including volunteering regularly at the Mineral Point Archives. Diane works for American Family Insurance in Sun Prairie. She and husband Brian are restoring "Stronghold," the Moses Strong home on Fountain Street; both have been faithful volunteers at Orchard Lawn for several years, helping with the gardens, among other things. The Board extends their heartfelt thanks and a warm welcome to Joel and Diane. ●

The More Things Change, The More They Stay the Same? Or, When Will We Ever Learn?

What would Dr. Talmage think of today's headlines? The following is from the *Mineral Point Tribune* of Oct 17, 1889:

Speaking of "Fashionable Murders" in one of his late Friday Evening Talks, De Witt Talmage, in his happiest vein, hits the practice of carrying weapons. The time was when it was thought honorable for combatants to settle their differences with deadly weapons. But those days are far gone by, and any attempt to revive them ought to meet with the anathema of all decent society.

But they were not so bad as this frequent shooting in our time, without any introductory civilities which would give a man a chance to make his will and say good-bye to his friends.

There is evidently among certain educated and well-to-do men an impression that they can right their wrongs by manslaughter.

There are those who think it looks brave to carry a pistol.

Now, I will undertake to say that any man who lives in a well-defended city, and is afraid to go out and come in without firearms, has not the courage of a sheep.

He who in peaceful times and in well-governed neighborhoods, carries dirk or pistol, has the spirit of murder, whether or not he commits the crime.

In all the history of the world, slander was never baffled, nor was honor vindicated by taking the life of another.

Do not think that by violence you can adjust anything. Keep your heart right, and your life right, and you are independent of the world's bombardment.

Snap your sword-cane and throw your derringer in the East River.

What a chicken liver instead of a heart you must have that you have to be armed to walk Fulton Street or Broadway.

This complete puppyism that cannot live without being armed with deadly weapons ought to be spanked and put to bed.

It is an awful thing to take human life.

Have nothing about you that, in a moment of altercation, may become, under the impulse of sudden temper, set on by the devil, the means of an appalling crime.

Reverend Dr. Thomas De Witt Talmage was one of the most prominent religious leaders in the United States during the mid- to late-19th century, equaled as a pulpit orator only by Henry Ward Beecher. During the 1860s and 70s, Talmage was a well-known reformer in New York City and was often involved in crusades against vice and crime; attending Talmage's sermons became one of the most popular religious experiences of the era. His Friday night sermons at the Brooklyn Tabernacle attracted audiences of 8,000 people, and for many years his sermons were published regularly in more than 3,000 journals, through which he was said to reach 25,000,000 readers. ●

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Nancy Pfothenauer

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Mineral Point Historical Society *Membership Form*

January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015

All members receive the newsletter
and free tours of Orchard Lawn.

Please check one:

Individual (\$15.00)

Family (\$25.00)

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Additional Contribution:

\$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Thank you again for your support!

**Please remember to mail your
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Mineral Point HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Dedicated to Preserving the Unique History of Mineral Point

P.O. Box 188 • 234 Madison Street
Mineral Point, WI 53565
608.558.1937

Mark Your Calendars

Jammin' On The Porch at Orchard Lawn

Here's the schedule for
Jammin' this summer:

June 12: The Katie Burns Band

July 10: The Yellow-Bellied Sapsuckers

August 14: The Cajun Strangers

September 11: Point Five

As always, bring lawn chairs
or blankets to sit on. Food will be
available to purchase this year,
or bring your own picnic supper.

Music begins at 6:00 p.m.

Change Service Requested

www.mineralpointhistory.org



Steve and Cindy Brown have been looking for an early photo of their home on Shake Rag since they moved to Mineral Point almost twenty years ago. One finally turned up in the Mineral Point Library Archives! A handwritten note on the back of the photograph says "Stephen Adams in Mineral Point at home. Right hand window to room where I was born [in] 1885. Eunice Lenor Adams now Clark."