

## Museum Notes

by Carol Krogan, assistant curator  
for the week of April 21 – 27, 2019

The history of the town of Webster is featured this week with most of the information taken from the book, *History of Vernon County, Wisconsin – 1884*. The town of Webster, located near the center of Vernon County, is home to the West Fork of the Kickapoo River. The town was organized on April 7, 1856, in the home of Sol Richardson, who arrived about 1854 and settled in section 17. At this time it was decided to name the town after the American statesman, Daniel Webster. Appointed were James Allen, supervisor; John Richardson, clerk; James Oliver and William Huntington, directors; and Isaac Glenn, assessor and treasurer.

Two brothers, R.P. and Avery W. Gillett, were the first to enter land on section 18 in 1852. Other early settlers were William Jobe, John Snider, John Graham, Lemuel Joseph, John Richardson, Isaiah Glenn, Mordecai Adams, Joshua Selby, James Oliver, Jesse Appleman and John Lyons.

The village of Avalanche was laid out in 1854 due to its proximity to the river. Settlers got its name from the formation east of the village which resembles a giant landslide or avalanche suddenly stopped in its course of destruction. Cyrus F. Gillett opened the first store in 1854 and William Cummings arrived in 1858 and worked as a wagon maker. The first saw mill was operated by R.P. and Avery Gillett beginning in 1852. William Piper and Daniel Busbee erected the first flour mill in 1860.

School classes were first held in a dwelling house in 1855 and were taught by Isaiah Glenn. It was located in section 8. The first school house was erected in 1857 in section 18 near the newly established settlement of Avalanche. Webster eventually had 6 more schools, namely, Salem Ridge, Buckeye, Fairview, Brush Hollow, Lyons and Ottervale.

The first religious services were held in the village of Avalanche in 1854, led by Rev. Munyon.

The Mount Zion Church, located in section 26, was organized in 1869 by Rev. D.K. Young with a membership of about 40 people. Soon after, they erected a church of 20 x 30 feet. In 1879, there was a division in some particular church matters and many members left the church. In 1884, only 10 members remained. The church is no longer there but a cemetery remains.

In 1867, the Advent church was established in section 15. In 1875, they erected a 24 x 40' structure for use as a church. The congregation disbanded in 1881 due to lack of funds to support the church. According to an 1896 Vernon County plat map, the church is no longer there.

Methodist Episcopal Church members on Salem Ridge first held services in a log school house. Their first church was built in 1870 and the first pastor sent to the church in 1872 by the Eau Claire conference was Rev. R.S. Mockett. By 1923, a basement, two Sunday school rooms and a central tower were added. In July, 2003, Salem Ridge consecrated its new church building.

For more information on the people and places of the town of Webster, stop in to the Vernon County Museum or give us a call at 608-637-7396. Our website is [vernoncountyhistory.org](http://vernoncountyhistory.org).