

# Rev. Jesse Miner

By Gavin Schmitt

Agreement was made April 6, 1825 between the Stockbridge Tribe of Indians and Reverend Jesse Miner, missionary. Miner took over the deed originally signed between Elijah Pye and Rev John Sergeant, who died September 7, 1824. The land contained a barn and a mission house, under the agreement that if the state purchased the land, the money would go to the tribe. At the time the Stockbridge came to Kaukauna, no white men lived in the area – the closest were at Green Bay, which was primarily a military fort (Fort Howard).

Signing for the Stockbridge was Captain Hendrick Aupaumut, John W Quinney and John Metoxen. Captain Aupaumut was an American soldier in the War of the Revolution, and is said to have received a captain's commission from the hands of Washington. In 1792, when the Stockbridges visited President Washington, Secretary of War Henry Knox commissioned him to undertake a mission to the Western tribes. His great influence with these tribes was thrown against Tecumseh, and he actively assisted Maj. Gen. William Henry Harrison in the campaign which ended in Tecumseh's defeat. He is said to have favored the plan in 1808–10, for forming settlements of all the Eastern Indians, in the White River country in Indiana, where, by 1818, there had been gathered about 800 of the Stockbridges. From here they were invited by the Outagamies to settle in the valley of the Fox, in Wisconsin. Later, they joined forces with the Munsees, Brothertowns and Oneidas; and August 8, 1821, signed a treaty which entitled them to a strip of land about five miles wide, at Kaukauna. Aupaumut's remains were buried at Kaukauna.

John Metoxen was the head chief of the Stockbridge Christian party which left White River, Indiana, in the late summer or autumn of 1822, to take up their new lands in Wisconsin. It was the following year before the Stockbridges who had been left in New York, reached Wisconsin. Metoxen, who had been educated in the Moravian school at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, was an orator of rare power, and frequently preached to his people. He died April 8, 1858, aged 87 years, and lies buried in the Indian cemetery at Stockbridge.

Quinney was born in 1797, and received a high school education in Yorktown, New York. Attaining the chieftaincy of the Stockbridges in Wisconsin, he was largely employed by his people, during thirty years, in the negotiation of treaties with the United States. He died at Stockbridge on July 21, 1855.

Jesse Miner was at this time the American Board's missionary to the Stockbridge at New Stockbridge, New York. Miner arrived at Statesburg in July 1827. He returned to New York in the autumn; but in June 1828, permanently located at Statesburg. He came at first without his family, but later brought them to the new mission.

On April 26, 1828, the Missionary Board at Boston laid out rules for Miner. He was to live as close to the center of town as possible, so the maximum number of Stockbridge children would attend his school and church. He was also to attempt to make alliances with the neighboring Menominee and Ho-Chunk tribes to “bring a good influence” on them.

While completing a house and barn for them, Miner died after an illness of four weeks on March 22, 1829. It was suspected that the cause was dysentery, leading to bilious fever (an obsolete term meaning any fever that exhibited the symptom of nausea or vomiting in addition to an increase in internal body temperature and strong diarrhea). Miner's children were also suffering, with one them dying. Another son, Eliphet, became as thin as a skeleton from diarrhea and inflammatory bowels. They were treated by Dr. Lyman Foot of Fort Howard to no avail. Connecting Statesburgh and Fort Howard was only an Indian trail, with rough forest and no bridge over the river, so Foot was not around often. Miner's death effectively left Electa Quinney in charge of the mission. At the time of Miner's death, the settlement had 225 citizens, 39 of whom were members of Miner's church.

Electa Quinney is widely considered the first public school teacher in what is now Wisconsin. Curiously, in January 1892, when this honor was bestowed upon her by the Door County Advocate, none other than Dr. HB Tanner wrote in to disagree. Tanner, a major promoter of Kaukauna and the Stockbridge, instead gave this honor to Jean Baptiste Jacobs in Green Bay in 1808. I don't claim to know the truth of the matter, but perhaps the key distinction is "public" – it has never been denied that earlier teachers worked as private tutors for the fur trading families.

The burial took place in Statesburg on land that would later (1880s) be on the John Brill farm south of the Kaukauna city limits, today roughly by Thelen Park. Rev Cutting Marsh, Miner's successor for 18 years, came through Kaukauna in 1849 and found the area of Statesburgh to be in ruins and the grave overgrown.

On June 4, 1884, under the guidance of son Thomas Miner (a resident of Brothertown in Calumet County), Rev. Miner was exhumed and moved to Kelso Cemetery by John Lawe, John Daly and TM Kellogg. The stone was also moved, and the white marble slab in Kelso is the original one. The cemetery owner, George W Kelso, purchased and donated a new coffin. As early as 1884, the city considered erecting a monument to Miner in Kelso, but it has never been done.

On February 9, 1890, Rev Miner's son ES, a judge at Necedah, passed away. Local newspapers declared him the second oldest white settler in Wisconsin.

Thomas H Miner, who lived in Kaukauna from 1828-1834, lived in Fond du Lac in 1907 and was 84 years old. He spent his early years in the pine forests of Wisconsin. He served in the 21<sup>st</sup> Wisconsin Infantry during the Civil War and fought in 27 battles. Following the war, he took up farming at Brothertown – back with the Stockbridge? (KT 3-14-1907)