James Duane Doty

One hundred and seventy-nine years after the *Mayflower* landed in Massachusetts on November 5, 1799, James Duane Doty, was born in the village of Salem, New York. His great grandfather, Eduard Doty, had been a passenger on the *Mayflower*. From that small hamlet, just miles from the Vermont border and near the Hudson River Valley, came a boy destined to become great in maturity with the qualities of a fighter without sword and dagger.

In the story that follows is a portion of James Doty’s biography narrated as a champion of another sort, perhaps.

The story of James Doty begins in the time-frame of America’s struggle with England for independence on land and sea. Among the early patriots were many stout-hearted believers in freedom and the building of a new nation. This group of brave colonists included members of the Doty family. Chillus (pronounced Kee-lus) was born in Salem, New York, in 1770, and was married in 1790 to a very lovely young woman, Sarah Martin. They had three children: son, Baron Steuben Doty, born 1795; son, James Duane Doty, born November 5, 1799; and daughter, Lanada born in 1803, but who died in infancy.

Sarah Martin’s brother was General Walter Martin, hero of the War of 1812. Perhaps the fighting spirit of the man who became Wisconsin’s territorial governor was genetically related to that strain of vital spirit in his father and his mother’s brother.

General Martin had two sons, one of whom was Morgan L. Martin, who would travel a parallel path with James Doty in the years to come.

Chillus Doty moved his family to Martinsburg about 1803. This village would be the home of the future governor of Wisconsin through his adolescent years. Chillus was much involved, in the growth of Martinsburg and held several important positions in the government of the Town and the State of New York. The key township of Martinsburg, with its worthy leadership in Chillus Doty and Walter Martin, probably gave birth to the future life of James Doty. James keenly
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observed the actual function of politics so well demonstrated in the frequent meetings of area governmental sessions held at the tavern. He would later say, "I learned what politics was in the Doty Tavern in Martinsburg, New York".

Formal education was scarce everywhere early in the 1880's and particularly in New York State, but James attended the Lowville Academy where geography became his prime interest. Eager for higher learning and impatient with the seemingly inadequate teaching available at Lowville, James sought private teaching.

Having achieved a recognizable social standing in the community, young Doty fell into a valuable relationship. This was the beginning of his entry into the fundamentals and executions of the law. One Ela Collins in Lowville, one of the leading lawmakers of New York, was district attorney for Lewis County and a member of the United States Congress. Baron Doty, brother of James, much interested in the legal profession, followed the traditional pattern of preparation by serving as an apprentice to some of the most outstanding jurists in the Mohawk Valley. His brother then opened the door of introduction to the Collins family. Maria Clinton, daughter of the Rev. Clinton who was the main instructor at Lowville Academy, had married Ela Collins from Oneida County when he was rising to fame in law and politics. Maria Collins perhaps contributed the most to the education of James Doty. Being much accomplished in teaching at the academy, her areas of knowledge in the fields of higher education were just those that young Doty needed.

He was impressed by this attractive and friendly woman several years his senior. His attainments from that relationship were described in broadening abilities in public speaking, the protocol of the political arena, and qualitative research into the annals of law and governmental administration. From his pleasant association with Maria Collins he learned the fine points of social interaction. Truly, this was a woman for whom he had the highest regard.

During his frequent visits to the Collins home another figure appeared that captivated his attention of another sort. Sara Collins was a beautiful and talented daughter of Ela and Maria. She was of slender form with dark hair and brown eyes. Her voice was gentle and her lovely manners most gracious. It was not difficult for young Doty to admire her in ways far beyond the ordinary.

During the times when events placed James Doty away from his home in Martinsburg and the Collins home in Lowville, Sara Collins became an inspiring thought. Long before a courtship began, the grass roots of a permanent joy and
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happiness in his life were formed. The early relationship for both James and Sara was reciprocal in its genuine stability. The meetings between them became cherished in actuality and in memory. James Doty, not yet embarked on his destiny down the years, came to the realization that Sara Collins was the woman he wanted for his life partner.

The year 1818 arrived. James Doty, 19, had absorbed enough of the formative years in upper New York State. He was on a threshold. Impatient, he scanned his geographical maps looking westward. Beyond the western borders of his home state were the great inland lakes and the untracked wilderness of a new land waiting for exploration and development. Waiting for him, "the amber waves of grain and the purple mountain majesties", beckoned his fiery spirit. He loved the canoe, the horseback and the saddle, the nights and days in the great out-of-doors.

Known for his habit of self-analysis, James Doty assessed his character and personality. He counted the positive qualities and he did not refuse his negative faults. He had learned that he was impressionable, possessed natural ability, outgoing, at ease among people, friendly, somewhat charming, aggressive. He resolved that whatever goal or goals he developed, he would achieve at all costs. Strongly opposed to liberalism, he was addicted to the sense of justice. He never compromised his serious way of life. He could not be a follower. He must lead and acquire strongholds of whatever kind. James Doty fully realized that he had a few flaws in his nature. He was blunt and he was arrogant at times. He made the best of it.

It was July in the hot summer of 1818. The curtain closed on the life and times of James Duane Doty in his native New York. With pack upon his back he moved westward toward Michigan. Part of the journey was made by steamer over Lake Ontario and Lake Erie and then afoot over the road west toward Detroit. Upon arrival there he struck up an acquaintance with Supreme Court Justice George McDougall who took a liking to this sharp young man. McDougall encouraged him to present himself to the bar. On November 20, 1818, just after his nineteenth birthday, he was admitted to practice law before the bar of Wayne County and the Supreme Court of Michigan Territory.

One of the most important people with whom Doty became friendly was Lewis Cass, Governor and Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Michigan Territory. Cass, like Doty, was an avid student of unexplored territories and very able in geographical and geological matters. Both the governor and the young lawyer
of the Supreme Court, unbeknown to each other, were studying with concentration the vast land of the Northwest Territory that lay beyond the great lake to the west and the mighty river which flowed thousands of miles from near the Canadian border to the Gulf of Mexico - the Mississippi.

In 1819 it became known to Lewis Cass that considerable amounts of food, clothing, and ammunition were being put into the possession of the "red men". Very concerned about the alarming trade situation between the British and Indians on the Canadian border, Governor Cass took action. He was apprehensive about the growing problem in that great area between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi River and wanted to know precisely what was going on in that unexplored area.

Governor Cass proposed to Secretary of War John Calhoun a plan to explore the lands of western Michigan. He asked for the authority and the funding to proceed. The authorization was granted, and the purposeful journey which followed would be best known as the Cass Expedition. At other times in history it was called the Schoolcraft Expedition.

Cass selected top-ranking personnel for the long and treacherous journey. The topographer was a West Point expert, Captain David R. Douglass. The geologist chosen was Henry Schoolcraft, accomplished research and engineering stalwart in the field of mining. A physician and Indian agent at Chicago, Dr. Alexander Wolcott, would make the trip. A fourth individual was needed. This person would perform the extraordinary tasks of guide, navigator, personnel manager, and secretary. The governor investigated carefully and confidentially the men who had become familiar to him at the capitol and whose abilities had become well known. He liked the tall, handsome, friendly young man serving Michigan's Supreme Court. Almost an automatic selection by Cass was the man of destiny, James Duane Doty.

The morning of May 24, 1820, came with fair weather and a good degree of excitement at Grosse Pointe, a suburb of the capital on the Detroit River. Governor Cass with his staff, his navigator and secretary and about three dozen men, including a small detachment of soldiers familiar with the French language, said their farewells. Off to the side and ready to board the three large canoes were Canadian voyagers and Chippewa Indian guides. With hundreds of people cheering and waving, the long and heavily loaded canoes pointed northward in Lake St. Clair past Port Huron and Sarnia, Ontario, into Lake Huron, third largest of the five great inland seas. Within days the mariners eased past Drummond
Island, through the estuary of Sault Sainte Marie into Whitefish Bay. Here they rested. Ahead lay the largest, coldest, and roughest inland sea in all the world, Lake Superior. Westward they must struggle against cold northwest winds along the scores of miles of this great lake. Canoeing was rough. Fatigue from the difficulties of man-powered transportation, such as it was, at times brought rumbles of discouragement among the voyagers. It was during these times that young Doty, visibly strong in mind and body, became a psychological leader.

If Governor Cass had admired and respected Doty earlier, now in this mixed party of professionals, soldiers, and seasoned Indians, his true leadership triumphed. Cass, in his memoirs of the expedition in later years, composed a eulogy of praise for this man who gave the early impression that nothing would ever stand in his way when responsibility and power urged him onward.

One day the canoes headed south into Keweenaw Bay on the east shore of the peninsula having the same name. Heading twenty miles northwest, they crossed the peninsula, passing the present-day cities of Houghton and Hancock, and once more entered Lake Superior.

In early July the Cass Expedition, still intact with men, canoes, and supplies, went ashore into Minnesota and began its longest portage westward to that greatest of American rivers, the Mississippi.

From the bay shore of the western-most beaches of Lake Superior, the expedition began its toilsome overland movement. They would travel about seventy miles west to what is known as the Savanna Portage and rest near the smaller Sand Lake. The group reorganized at Sand Lake and again with four canoes, somewhat lighter now, began the long and most exciting journey southward on the great river. They had a destination in mind, Fort Anthony, Minnesota.

The travellers had the view of both sides of the river. There were rapids and there were sand bars. At times they had difficulty. Once or twice minor accidents occurred. Canoes overturned and supplies were lost. One day the shores began to reveal habitations. Rounding a bend in the lead canoe, James Doty shouted with joy at seeing a waterfall that identified the village as St. Anthony. Here was the first corner-post of the expedition's boundary. Here the Cass Expedition would establish a governmental segment of the Northwest Territory for Michigan.

By chance, while in the Fort Anthony vicinity, Doty visited Camp Coldwater and discovered that Lt. Col. Henry Levenworth, an acquaintance from Detroit, was
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garrisoned there. The acquaintanceship was renewed and Doty became interested in Indian affairs. With the resident Indian agent, he presided over a solemn ceremony. The Chippewa Indians of the expedition and a number of the Sioux from the area declared a peace that was "lasting as the sun". Perhaps this incident where the Sioux Nation was represented, was the origin of a much greater achievement with that nation at a later time in Doty's life.

The second cornerstone geographic outpost location in the plan of the Cass Expedition lay farther south on the river at a considerable distance. It was Fort Crawford, adjacent to a city of French settlers prominent in the early days of Wisconsin history. Here the Governor established a second boundary point. It was the southwest corner of the new Michigan Territory and Fort Crawford was its official location.

A revised plan for the continuance of the expedition occurred during the stopover in Prairie du Chien. The entire group would move north and east on the Wisconsin River to a point near the headwaters of the Fox River. Fort Winnebago was the settlement. The countryside changed. Evergreen forests gave way to hardwoods and broad meadows along the Wisconsin River. Farms began to appear. Upon arriving at Fort Winnebago, Governor Cass and several of the group moved overland to establish a third corner post of the boundary at Fort Dearborn, Illinois. Doty, with the Chippewa guides and soldiers, portaged north to the headwaters of the Fox at the place where the city of Portage now stands. Doty knew that the Fox River emptied into a rather large inland lake to the northeast and then continued north toward a bay of Lake Michigan. This he wanted to see.

It was late in July, 1820, when the two canoes moved through the small Indian settlement of Oshkosh and into the blue waters of the lake that would be named after the Winnebago Indians. Skirting the west shore of the lake early, after a night of camping ashore, Doty was thrilled at the site of the forest-lined shore of the lake. Occasionally wild deer appeared. Looking eastward he observed a rather long ridge that formed the east shore of the lake.

In the afternoon of that eventful day in his life, James Doty, again in the lead canoe, rounded a point and entered the inlet of the Fox River. His geographical research had told him that a large island was bordered by two branches of the river at this point. He paused a moment and gazed with pleasure at the very picturesque east shore of that island. An open meadow extending to the river's edge and flanked by tall trees, some hardwood and some evergreen, became
indelibly implanted in his mind. For the months and years that would follow, he would resolve that this was where he wanted to build a home. A quarter of a century would pass in his life, however, until that home would become a reality.

The canoes passed the rapids of the south branch of the Fox without incident. Overnight camp was near another rapids area in the river near the village of Kaukauna. On the next day the canoes entered the wider mouth of the Fox River at Fort Howard. There the fourth and last corner post of the territorial boundary was established.

Doty busied himself exploring the area. He had drawn conclusions about what he had observed along the entire Fox River route. He was impressed. These lands had a potential of greater importance than just a spot on the map.

James Doty returned to Detroit and was placed on the government payroll in 1821 as secretary to the legislative board in Michigan. Within a year he was required to travel to Washington, D. C. While in Washington, on May 13, 1822, he was admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of the United States. At twenty-three years of age he was making another major stride forward in his dreams and ambitions.

Two months later he had to return to Detroit. First, however, he traveled north to his old stamping ground in Martinsburg, New York. Sara Collins was most certainly the main reason for the diverted route. It was much better to see her in person than the letter-writing courtship of the many months of time and distance that had separated them.

When spring arrived in 1823 things were looking much brighter for Doty. He was a recognized member of the legal profession in Michigan and was serving as a federal judge in the western sector. He had become engaged to Sara Collins and in the Presbyterian Church at Whiteboro, New York, on April 14, 1823, the couple was united in marriage by the Reverend Coe. The first schooner leaving Buffalo that spring landed the Dotys safely in Detroit. Sara, who was not interested in climbing the social ladder, tolerated the fast life-style and dissipation of Detroit’s society, but she was very happy when James received his directive to move into the Western Michigan Territory at Mackinac where he would begin his career as judge.

There was a vast Indian country north and west of Lake Michigan. There were many crimes and offenses in Indian relations to be judged and resolved in the court of this man who had developed a special concern for Indians, but he dealt
fairly with all cases. In a way he was thrilled at the opportunity to make America a better place for her natives.

In July, 1823, the court adjourned. Doty had kept a 233-page volume of "Notes of Trials and Decisions". He had kept it for nine years while serving as the additional judge, and the valuable notebook became part of his archives. These notes, so great for reference in future cases and litigations, covered court rules, many of his decisions, some of his charges to the juries, and sometimes a complete case digest. Beyond the ordinary formal writings, documents and necessary legal papers, these notes of Judge Doty remain a solid treasure of information on the first decade of judicial history of Upper Michigan and Wisconsin.

While in Mackinac and between sessions of his court, Judge Doty started and maintained another movement that would be forever a significant milestone in the development of the West. He originated the canvassing and recording of claims to the land of every settler in the West.

Continuing as the additional judge for another seven years he made an annual canoe circuit in western Michigan Territory. This 1360 mile route traversed the area between Prairie du Chien, Green Bay, and Mackinac. Green Bay was only a village. It was known as Fort Howard. Doty built two homes there. One of these was the very first brick residence in the territory. He also founded the first protestant church west of Lake Michigan in this village.

He became intensely involved studying the Sioux, Winnebago, and Chippewa to develop what was called a "native code". This system included laws based upon Indian values rather than American values. Doty's concern for the Indians was now reinforced by the native code and their tribal limits, which provided territorial identity in a land blossoming with promise.

A law was passed that required the territorial judge to live in one of the counties. James Doty convinced his lovely bride to travel across Lake Michigan by canoe into the bay village of Green Bay in August of 1834. After their arrival his earlier friendship with John Jacob Astor was resumed.

In January, 1834, Doty was elected to the Michigan Territorial Legislature. This was a step upward which would allow him further implementation of his skills in the evolution of exploration and territory. About this same time, Governor Cass required someone to lay out and complete the very first road across the area from northeast to southwest. A military road from Fort Howard to Fort Crawford, with a third connection to Fort Dearborn, was planned. Cass appointed James
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Doty with the same automatic sense of confidence that he had when the young lawyer became his most effective leader in the expedition that bore his name. Doty established this first and only military road in western Michigan Territory. Today, over a century and a half later, Wisconsin still identifies the importance of the thoroughfare and the man who made it possible.

As 1835 came, new exploring and developing, ending in land claims in the areas on both sides of this over two-hundred-mile-long road, grew at a steady pace. Doty found himself in a familiar element. Land claims were old friends to him. His friendship with Astor proved to be an advantage when he became the land agent for the prosperous friend. With the skill of an expert, Doty laid out the City of Astor. That name prevailed for a time until its geographical location on the map was named Green Bay. Doty originated the first land office of the territory. The functions of that agency had a progressive effect on the lands within fifty miles of its site.

But all was not to be sunshine. In 1837 a severe economic depression fell upon the entire area of the growing United States. Many individuals, including James Doty, had made large investments in land claims and holdings. John Jacob Astor, because of his great wealth, was able to weather the storm. Doty, following the aspiration of land development and territorial acquisition, had invested quite heavily. Almost a quarter of a million dollars of his resources were threatened to be lost. James Doty would never beg for a hand-out. He was determined to subdue this impending catastrophe, really the first in his lifetime, by whatever means possible. A high quality of friendship prevailed. Doty appealed to Astor for financial assistance, offering his enormous land-held values as collateral.

James Doty entered into exploration that took him south of Astor (Green Bay). The region of the Fox River and Lake Winnebago had features of a natural flowage system. The upper Fox, flowing from Portage to the northeast, had a long tributary flowing south for nearly two hundred miles through pine forests. This tributary was the Wolf River whose headwaters were formed in the northern waters. The Wolf drained a great land area of forests and high ground from the far north. The upper Fox flowed lazily through terrain of small lakes and marshes until its major tributary joined it near the village of Oshkosh. Doty, alert to geographical conditions in the years that had brought him from New York State to the Northwest Territory, realized that the Fox River was uniquely alone in its course of flowing north. All other rivers known to Doty flowed to the south.
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A shallow reservoir, twenty-eight miles long and a dozen miles wide and quite shallow, received the abundant flowage of these two Wisconsin rivers. This thirty-eight thousand acres of water was named Lake Winnebago. Although unclaimed and primitive when Doty explored this region, his interest would be released into the founding of important settlements along Lake Winnebago's shores.

Doty was attracted to the area around the southern-most tip of Lake Winnebago. At this place the Fond du Lac River flowed into the big lake and provided excellent fishing and trapping, the very first industries of the region. Doty and a business associate in Green Bay purchased thirty-five acres of land and a new town was born. James Doty liked the name that meant "End of the Lake", and so the new village was called Fond du Lac.

Doty had chosen Fond du Lac because he envisioned many future commercial opportunities, land development, and transportation routes by land and water. Here was a focal point of commerce in all directions: south to Milwaukee and Chicago by road and canal; east to Sheboygan and the shipping advantages of the great inland sea, Lake Michigan; north through Lake Winnebago and the lower Fox River to Green Bay and farther; and, of course, the wide area of potential development west and southwest toward the Wisconsin River basin. Somewhere in that region to the south or southwest might possibly become a place for a capital for the state that was to be.

Doty would linger for several years near the southeastern tip of Lake Winnebago. There a village of Winnebago Indians had been formed. They named the place Taycheedah. Away from the marshy land surrounding the mouth of the Fond du Lac River into the lake, the village sat upon a gentle slope of the limestone ridge that marked the eastern shore of the lake. With an excellent water shed, the land was very fertile. James Doty discovered this. Standing one day on a high elevation, he gazed northward at the entire expanse of the lake. The sight warmed his heart. A farm was selected. A good house, barn, and out-buildings comprised a new home. For the Dotys this quiet retreat from the ever increasing political battles marked a significant haven of peace. With this farm Doty had established residences at the northern end of the Fox River Valley and at the valley's southern boundary on Lake Winnebago.

Although Green Bay was the center of activities for James Doty, he found himself looking south beyond the environs of Fond du Lac. Small villages were developing. Larger cities such as Chicago and Milwaukee, growing in population,
were showing the needs for the implements of progress: transportation, communication, and government.

Transportation by water and by wagon trains was being joined by a newly designed system called railroads. Already ties and rails, wooden ones, were laid north of Chicago toward Milwaukee. Before very long these same roadbeds of travel branched out to the west of Chicago and to the north and west of Milwaukee. A second long route was established from Chicago to Janesville in the southern border of the state and then north to Fond du Lac. The latter railroad became known as Wisconsin’s very first, Chicago, Janesville and Fond du Lac. Doty would be a major influence for that railroad to become one of the largest in all of the United States by the turn of the century. The day would come when the Chicago and Northwestern Railway would boast nearly ten thousand miles of roadbed. The very word "Northwestern" had significant meaning in the mind of Doty.

Competing now for his attention to ties and rails, paddle-wheels, and steam boilers was the Rock River. It would provide, with the help of man-made canals, transportation passage through Wisconsin and northern Illinois to the Mississippi and the Gulf of Mexico. Doty began planning intensely for the establishment of control for this large area with great potential. His unpublished but thriving desire to see this region become the State of Wisconsin became stronger with every turn of the road.

One of his most outstanding achievements was born on a cold October morning in 1836 when he mounted his favorite Indian pony and rode south. He approached the threshold of a new and exciting land of opportunity. His destination was the little village of Belmont, situated deep in the southwest corner of the state. People, legislature, and lobbyists were in a heated frenzy to cause Belmont to be the capital of the state. At this time legislation and territorial governmental affairs were conducted in a temporary building in Belmont. Doty took a few days to visit the site. Poorly arranged quarters and inadequate heating facilities made him shudder at the possibility that Belmont might become the capital. The big push was for Belmont. James Doty went to work using some of the political tactics he had learned along the way in his career. First he purchased, without fanfare, all the land in the isthmus in Madison. The shoreline areas of two large lakes were high and desirable for development. Doty skillfully laid out choice lots along the shores of both lakes. He envisioned a place in the
very center of the area where the capitol building itself would be highly favorable in all respects.

As November arrived in that year and the legislators were trying to finalize Belmont as the capital, Doty purchased very substantial buffalo robes as gifts for the legislators' families. A second move, just as devious as the first one, was Doty's making available to each legislator a choice lake-side lot on the isthmus, with titles to ownership available at once and at a very modest cost. It became obvious that the legislators were directing their interest toward Doty's land. James Doty, with his eloquence in public speaking and the charm of his personality, presented very strongly and without pause, his proposal to locate the capital between the two lakes. He added that he would select the name of Madison for the city in honor of the recent passing of President James Madison. Other villages were being considered: Dubuque, Cassville, Mineral Point, Portage, and Fond du Lac. Larger settlements like Milwaukee, Racine, and Green Bay also ran. The legislators, pleased by the gifts and the real estate value offered them, were leaning toward the strong recommendation from Doty that Madison was strategically located and was inviting, with its natural beauty.

Late in the afternoon of November 23, 1836, the upper house voted 7 to 6 to make Madison the choice. It was not yet decided. In the next five days, activists on both sides of the question kept the session's chambers exciting in political discourse. On the fifth day, a marathon session of the House of Representatives entered the final hours of deliberation. One by one all the large settlements and the villages were eliminated and, near sundown on November 28, by a majority vote, Madison was selected as the capital of Wisconsin.

James Doty was thirty-seven years old. He built a home in Madison and planned even greater milestones in the territory he loved. Bigger challenges and more aggravating disappointments lay ahead. He was to enter a decade of his life marked by a high office to be attained and bitter struggles with those who opposed him.

A matter of importance in the nation's history was approaching. The very theme of the actions and efforts to be put forth pertained to something that had always been close to Doty's heart. It was the Indian situation. Thousands of Indians had become the unwilling victims of governmental pursuits. Their great long lines were moving westward across the Mississippi. Over seventy treaties had been written swiftly and perhaps without humane concern to cause this movement en masse. Doty was aware of this and disapproved of it entirely.
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West of the Mississippi was the land of the great Sioux Nation. Their territory extended west to the Missouri River. The nations entering Sioux territory were the Winnebagos, Fox, Sauk, and Potawatamis. In the far north on the Michigan border and south of the shores of Lake Superior, there was another Indian nation - the mighty Chippewa.

The President and the Secretary of War realized all too well how qualified their negotiating agent must be. John Tyler was President. John Bell from Tennessee was Secretary of War. Bell had a magnificent dream. His plan would establish an Indian Territory in the northwest. In this place set aside exclusively for the many tribes, an Indian state could be developed and like all other states it would become a member of the Union. His plan allowed the Indians to develop their villages, their hunting and fishing areas, and their farms for the subsistence they would surely need. Bell's plan allowed the Indians to work out their own form of government. Someone very familiar with the native Americans would indeed be required to organize the plan. James Doty was a very likely candidate for the state's first governor and Superintendent of Indian Affairs. These two positions were arranged and classified as a dual responsibility of leadership no matter who was chosen to fulfill them. Doty had long suggested that the Indians should have a permanent home beyond the Mississippi. John Bell had the same conviction. The choice by the President and the Secretary of War was made almost automatically for Doty to be the negotiating agent for the entire Indian situation.

The main item on Doty's agenda was the authorship of a treaty for the Sioux Nation of Indians. At the assembly place for all the Sioux tribes and chieftains, a conference was called. In a primitive building at Traverse des Sioux, Doty, the sole negotiator, explained what the government proposed. The Sioux chieftains were heartily in agreement with the propositions. Within a week the four main tribes fully accepted the proposed treaty in its entirety. Quickly, a masterfully written document by Doty, was finished and sent post haste to the Secretary of War in Washington. In spite of things to come, this remarkable treaty would remain in the archives of American government as the greatest one ever written.

During the ensuing months, the Sioux Treaty was an embittered matter in the U.S. Senate. Dissent in the Tyler administration was possibly the underlying cause of its demise. Indeed, James Doty was drawn into the battle. Vigorously he would not swerve from his absolute conviction about the total rights of the Indian to share as equally as possible the rights of the white man. He was rudely opposed. On August 29, 1841, the Senate rejected the Sioux Treaty by a vote
of 26 to 2. James Doty’s gallant attempt at treaty-making in the Mississippi Valley was infamously ended.

There was another high office becoming a reality in Wisconsin government, that of territorial governor. James Doty, largely responsible for Wisconsin’s becoming a territory in 1836, was most interested in the position. His campaign was swift. He was elected delegate to congress from the Wisconsin Territory on September 10, 1838, but Colonel Henry Dodge, the war hero seventeen years older than Doty, was appointed as the first Territorial Governor of Wisconsin by President Jackson.

In the beginning of Doty’s term as delegate he approached action with three favorite projects. Measures were passed allowing the funding of roads to the Mississippi River from Racine and to the Wisconsin River from Fond du Lac. Smaller sums were appropriated for the Fox-Wisconsin Canal and for Wisconsin’s very early railroad from Milwaukee to the Mississippi. He also introduced in the House of Representatives a resolution for a survey and report of the Fox River.

Henry Dodge stepped down as territorial governor in 1841 at a time when another president, a Whig, John Tyler, had researched the accomplishments of James Doty enough to find him qualified to take Dodge’s post. So it was that James Duane Doty was appointed the second Territorial Governor of Wisconsin. The Doty family moved into residence in Madison in the fall of 1841. James bought a house close to the shore of Lake Monona and near Capitol Square. Four children had been born in Astor, later known as Green Bay. The oldest, Charles, was born in 1824 shortly after the family’s arrival from Detroit. The second son, James Duane Doty, Jr., arrived in 1827. Charles became out-going like his father and James was unlike him - quietly reserved. The first girl, Amelia, was born in 1829. Never strong physically, she died in 1831 before becoming three years old. The fourth child, Mary, was born in 1832 and was much like her mother in looks and personality.

Charles began his career. He was educated in surveying and assisted in the surveying of the Michigan-Wisconsin boundary line south of Lake Superior. His father had taught him how to manage real estate. Charles advertised himself in Madison newspapers as “Charles Doty - General Land Agent”.

The first message that the Governor delivered to both houses in the Wisconsin House of Representatives on December 10, 1841, concerned Wisconsin’s becoming a state. He proposed now from his high position as Governor that statehood be officially achieved without delay. Wisconsin became a state in the
Grand Loggery as seen from the Fox River.

A later sketch of the Doty property and its surroundings.
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Union in 1848. Much credit for that milestone in the territorial history of the United States must remain in James Doty’s unswerving dedication to it.

After three years as Governor, 1841 to 1844, it was said among those who knew, that real progress had been made. In spite of the negative words of criticism, James Doty had finished his career having made Wisconsin a much stronger territory than it was when he took the Governor’s chair.

In 1835 Doty had explored the beautiful island between the two branches of the Fox River. On its east shore was a spacious meadow that ended at the river. This was surrounded by a thick forest of hardwood and evergreen trees, and he fell in love with the place. In 1845 he finalized the purchase of the four hundred acres on that island. In that same year, with the help of his son, Charles, the plans for the buildings were laid out. Ultimately a well-constructed log building, with adjacent out-buildings, took its place in commanding posture on the east shore of Doty Island. Sara Doty, noted for her excellence in language and conversation, would name it "The Grand Loggery".

The cabin itself of two-story construction could accommodate several overnight guests. Its solid log framework housed several spacious rooms for dining, utility work, library, and an entertainment room, the parlor. Its comfort in inclement weather of northern Wisconsin delighted not only its owner-inhabitants but also the many guests that had the privilege of lodging there. Sara Collins Doty was a most gracious hostess. With eagerness she provided a pleasant and relaxing abode for many important government persons who found it necessary to be in Wisconsin. Often times some of these friends and associates would go out of their way off the beaten paths to have the opportunity of visiting the Loggery. It has been said, and perhaps rightfully so, that Sara Doty was indeed Wisconsin’s First Lady.

James Doty was not able to rest at the cabin for any length of time. He was now living in the very vicinity of a long-thought-of canal that would connect the upper and lower Fox River system with Green Bay and its perfect access to the Great Lakes. There was a small village of Indians and workmen south across the river in what was called Winnebago Rapids. There were government mills starting nearby. A way of developing the area into a larger city had to be studied and explored.

Four men whose native origins, like Doty’s, were in New York State, arrived on the scene. Three of them were brothers: Harrison, Curtis, and George Reed. One newcomer, a wealthy individual also from New York, was Harvey Jones.
A Tale of Twin Cities

Harrison Reed had begun efforts to incorporate the Village of Winnebago Rapids. His brother, Curtis, stood by anxiously ready to establish an urban situation. George Reed had arrived in the area but chose to take residence on the shores of Lake Michigan in Manitowoc. These men would play major roles in the action that produced its final act, the Twin Cities of Neenah and Menasha.

The incorporation of Winnebago Rapids was made by Harrison Reed. Unfortunately the financial affairs related to it were involved with Harvey Jones. There were uncomfortable delays in settling the claims by title and related monies. Doty’s idea of a canal to connect the river at Winnebago Rapids with a larger body of water beyond the rapids was pounding on the door of possibility. He urged Curtis Reed to dig a canal north of Doty Island. Frustrated with the Jones-Harrison Reed feud, Doty looked to the north at a small village. Actually the north branch of the Fox River could locate this all important canal.

Charles Doty, by now an accomplished surveyor and real estate agent, became an important ally to his father concerning the canal. Doty recruited Curtis Reed, and with son, Charles, an immediate study was made of the terrain and waterway to the north. James Doty found things much easier away from the tangle of Harvey Jones and Harrison Reed. The village was laid out, Irish immigrants were hired, and the canal construction proceeded. Its completion eliminated the need for a Neenah canal. That temporary transport utility was abandoned.

More detailed accounts of the events and efforts that caused the incorporation of the villages of Neenah and Menasha are contained elsewhere in this book. For the presence of James Doty in all of this it is sufficient to acclaim him as the vital frontier pioneer who never sat on his hands and looked back. Doty was the prime mover in a place where he had built his home.

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Nathan H. Wauda
Curtis Reed

By Wynn Pawlowski

Curtis Reed, often known as the Father of Menasha, was born in Massachusetts on March 16, 1815. When he was eight years old, his family, which included mother, father, and eight children, moved to Vermont. In December of 1835, they made a more significant move. This time it was into the west, i.e. Wisconsin. From Troy to Buffalo, New York, the trip was made by stage. From Buffalo, they took a stagecoach to Detroit, by way of Cleveland. A stage-sleigh took them to Chicago, and finally Milwaukee was reached by private lumber wagon which had been hired especially for the purpose.

The name, "Father of Menasha," is truly a very well-deserved and distinct honor. Nearly every good thing that happened during the early development of the city can be credited to his efforts.

"Father of Menasha" Curtis Reed
1805–1895