

**March 14, 2012**  
**Dodge County Independent**  
**Jabez Hyde Kasson**  
**What's Happening Around Town?**  
*By Joe and Flo*

Joe: Hey, Flo! Interesting talk with you last week about the Nation's White House. How would you like to hear a little about the man that gave Kasson its name?

Flo: Sure, why not; what can you tell me about him?

Joe: Well, you probably are aware that the town got its name from one Jabez Hyde Kasson who owned land in the area and for a period of time, was the town postmaster. He was of Irish origin, of many generations living in this country. His great-grandfather, Adam Kasson made the first spinning wheel in America. His Father, Myron was born in Litchfield, Connecticut and married Betsy Hyde, a native of Hartford. In 1820 while they were residing in Springville, Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania gave birth to a son, Jabez Hyde Kasson. Here Jabez grew up on a farm and received a common-school education.

Flo: Very interesting! Where did he live after he grew up?

Joe: When he was 21 he went to Boone County, Illinois, lived on land 6 miles east of Belvidere and took up farming; afterwards moving to the adjoining county of McHenry and farmed there 15 years before leaving the area in 1856. From what I can tell, he then moved to Mantorville Township in June of 1856 and located on Section 33 where he continued to reside up until the fall of 1883, moving to the area that now bears his name. It was at this time he was appointed postmaster.

Flo: If my math is any good, he would now be 63 years old.

Joe: Correct. He was still in the business of farming growing grain, putting in about 150 acres of the cereal crop. He also raised timothy seed and sheep. Soon after settling here he became the owner of land on which a portion of Kasson now lies, and on the advent of the railroad coming in the fall of 1865, he donated the station ground for that purpose. With two or three others he platted the town site which took his name, Kasson.

Flo: What else do you know about Mr. Kasson?

Joe: He was an abolitionist during the time there was such a party and he helped to organize the Republican Party in McHenry County, Illinois. He also got involved in community affairs, serving several terms as Mantorville supervisor and in many other various capacities. He also always voted against the license of saloons, but was defeated when nominated for the legislature on account of his temperance principles. He was an active member of the Methodist Episcopal Church for some 30 years.

Flo: Did he have a family?

Joe: In September of 1851, at the age of 31, he married Mrs. Jane (Couse) Thayer who was a native of Otsego County, New York and they had a son, George and a daughter Jessie. Mrs. Thayer also had a daughter, Imogene Thayer who eventually became the wife of Horace W. Pratt, mayor of Faribault.

Flo: When did the railroad come to Kasson?

Joe: The "iron horse" came to Dodge County with the building of the Winona and St. Peter Railroad (now the Chicago and Northwestern) from Rochester to Kasson in 1865, courtesy of Jabez Hyde Kasson and from Kasson to Owatonna in 1866. In 1890 a branch of this road was constructed from Kasson to Mantorville, a track 2.9 miles in length; but this branch was discontinued in 1932.

Flo: Are you familiar with Dodge County's first newspapers?

Joe: Each community had a paper. At Kasson, the first village newspaper was the Dodge County Republican, which published its first issue May 3, 1867. It changed ownership five times after that. The name changed to Dodge County Independent in June of 1963 when Folmer Carlson became owner and publisher. Present Editor is Randy Carlson.

Flo: The reason I asked is, recently I was sent a clipping from a friend from the Dodge County Republican dated November 20, 1879 that read as follows: "Kasson is rapidly growing into commercial importance. It is decidedly the largest town in the county. It contains at least 2,000 inhabitants. Its retail trade is done by 26 houses, divided as follows: General Merchandise, 6; Drugs and Medicines, 2; Jewelers and Dealers in Jewelry, 2; Hardware, 2; Groceries, 3; Boots and Shoes, 2; Harness, 2; Furniture, 2; Millinery Goods, 3; Butchers, 2.

We have 3 Grain Elevators and several Warehouses. We have the only National Bank in the county. We have also a number of Mechanical shops of various kinds, and 2 Livery Stables. The professions are well represented. We have six church buildings; a good graded school, which will soon be transferred into our new \$10,000 school house. We have three good and well-kept hotels. A manufacturing mill will soon be in operation. Kasson is beautifully located, and is one of the most prosperous and enterprising towns of its age in the state. It is a good place in which to build up a happy home and a paying business.

Joe: Hmm...interesting....how does that compare to today....133 years later?

*"What's happening around town"*

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