



Walking Tours

LAVINIA GOODELL

in Janesville, Wisconsin

In the footsteps of Lavinia Goodell,
Wisconsin's first woman lawyer.

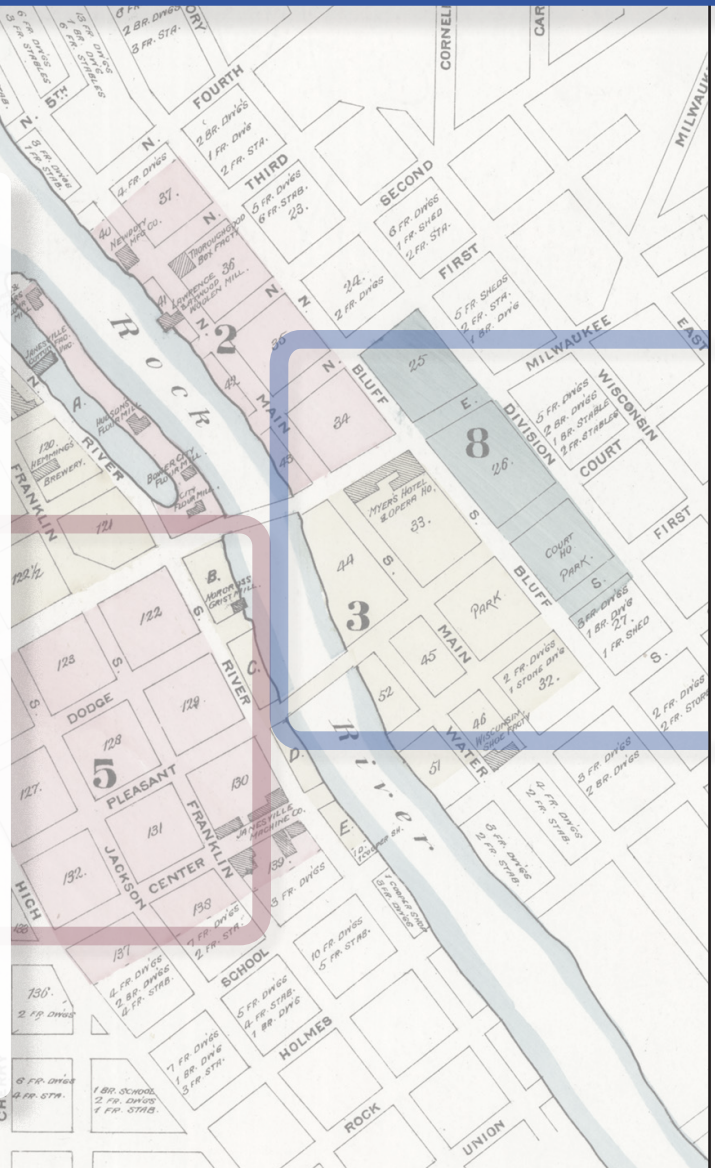
THESE WALKING TOURS

explore important locations in the life of Lavinia Goodell. In late 1871, Lavinia left her job as an editor at *Harper's Bazaar* in New York City and moved to Janesville to care for her elderly parents, William & Clarissa Goodell.

On June 17, 1874, Lavinia became Wisconsin's first woman lawyer. Most of the buildings from Lavinia's day no longer exist. However, we have included vintage photos where available.

Janesville has renumbered all of its buildings since Lavinia's time. The addresses shown in this guide are current addresses.

Detail: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Janesville, Rock County, Wisconsin; Created / Published: Sanborn Map Company, Jul 1884. Retrieved from the Library of Congress.



To learn more about Lavinia Goodell, her life & times, visit: www.laviniagoodell.com.

Follow Lavinia on social media!



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laviniagoodell

Walking Tour 1

Lavinia's daily stomping grounds

1 Train station

*Court Street & Centerway
(the "Five points")*

The Goodells did not have a carriage, so when Lavinia needed to travel, she generally took the train. In the fall of 1874, she had an early court appearance in Jefferson County to prosecute liquor dealers, she writes of her father accompanying her to the station at 3 a.m. with a lantern so she could catch a freight train because the first passenger train left too late to get her to her destination on time.

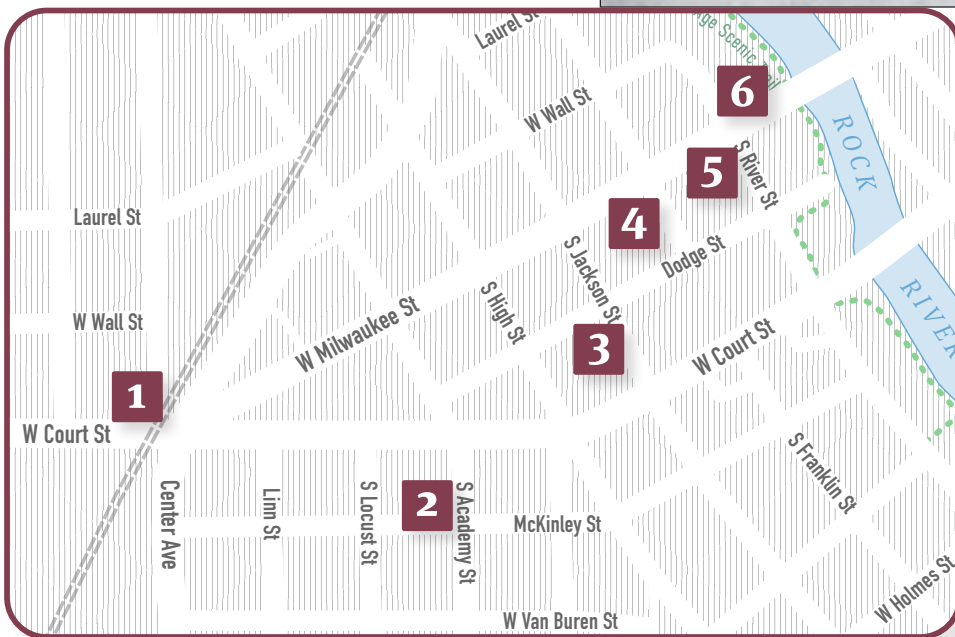


ABOVE: Photo of the Janesville train station.

2 Lavinia's home

168-70 South Academy Street

The Goodells rented one-half of a "double house" at this location from the summer of 1873 until 1878 when Lavinia's parents died. Their landlord was Mrs. Stafford. Lavinia described the house to her sister: "a hall, good sized parlor, small back parlor, good sized bedroom & closet, good sized dining room, a small summer kitchen, three chambers above. Rent \$150 per year." When the Goodells moved in, they did some minor renovations. Lavinia reported, "Bridget [the Goodells' hired girl] and I did nearly everything about setting, including putting up parlor shades; we have shades with gilt bands, similar to those we had in Brooklyn." When giving directions to the house, Lavinia said, "No. 29 is on the door and also our name. There is a big gate for teams with a tall sort of fixture over it which marks the place from a little distance." Lavinia especially enjoyed sitting on the piazza in the evenings.



3 First Congregational Church

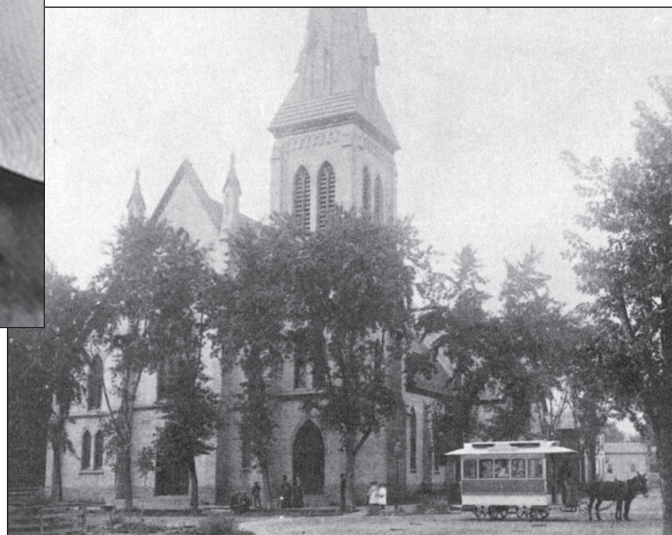
54 South Jackson Street

Lavinia and her parents were members of the Congregational church, and Lavinia was a good friend of the young pastor, Rev. T. P. Sawin, and his family. In 1878, Lavinia became the first woman to hold the position of church clerk. The church that stands today was built in 1876 (after a fire destroyed the previous structure), so this is the same church in which Lavinia and her parents worshipped. (Lavinia's father, William Goodell, preached here on at least one occasion.) Soon after being admitted to the bar in June 1874, Lavinia attended an ice cream social at the church and reported, "Lawyer Cassoday [John Bolivar Cassoday, legislator who introduced bills drafted by Lavinia giving women property rights & rights to child custody and support in a divorce] waited on me to supper and was quite polite and agreeable. He calls me his sister in law."



ABOVE: Reverend T. P. Sawin.

RIGHT: Photo of the First Congregational Church on South Jackson Street.



4 Mitchell's Block

West Milwaukee & Franklin Streets

Lavinia was a frequent visitor to Mitchell's Block. In 1875, before Janesville had a public library, the Janesville Ladies Temperance Union, of which Lavinia was a founding member, opened a free reading room in Mitchell's Block. Lavinia often "manned" the reading room. In 1876, Lavinia became a founding member of the Round Table literary society. Its members, which included many prominent Janesville residents, met every two weeks in Mitchell's Block to discuss classic literary works.



ABOVE: Photo of Mitchell's Block on the corner of West Milwaukee and Franklin Streets.



ABOVE View of the south side of West Milwaukee Street showing the Philadelphia Drug store.

Lavinia's diary entries and letters often reported that she "went down street." The street she was referring to was West Milwaukee Street.



ABOVE View of the bustling West Milwaukee Street from the Rock River looking west, circa 1882.

5 Law Office of Miss Lavinia Goodell 101 West Milwaukee Street

Soon after being admitted to the bar in the summer of 1874, Lavinia rented an office in the Tallman block (owned by the family that built what is now known as the Lincoln-Tallman house.) (Jackson & Norcross, attorneys with whom Lavinia studied before passing the bar exam, also had their offices in that building but declined to take Lavinia in as an associate.) Lavinia described her office furnishings: "My office is prettily furnished, and everybody says looks pleasant. I have a pink straw matting on the floor, the one that was in my bedroom last summer, turned the other side up. Mr. Hoppin's desk varnished up, a carpet lounge, two rocking and three armchairs, a table on which reposes my small library, and in the closet, a mirror, washstand, toilet articles . . ." After much debate, she opted not to have a spittoon in the office, saying, "I do dislike to mar my pretty room with such an unsightly object. So I conclude to wait and see whether my clients develop spitting propensities."



ABOVE: Photo of 101 West Milwaukee Street. Lavinia opened her first law practice in this building.



ABOVE LEFT: Lavinia's professional notice.
RIGHT: Lavinia Goodell.



BELOW: Lavinia and Angie King's professional notice.
LEFT: Angie King.



ABOVE: An excerpt from one of Lavinia's many letters.

LEFT: Photo of the Janesville Post Office on West Milwaukee Street.

6 Post Office West Milwaukee & River Streets

The post office was one of Lavinia's daily stops. She was a prolific writer of long, newsy letters. She sometimes wrote 25 letters in a day and received a dozen in return. Letters were how she kept in weekly contact with her sister and cousin and also how she communicated with other reformers such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Lucy Stone.

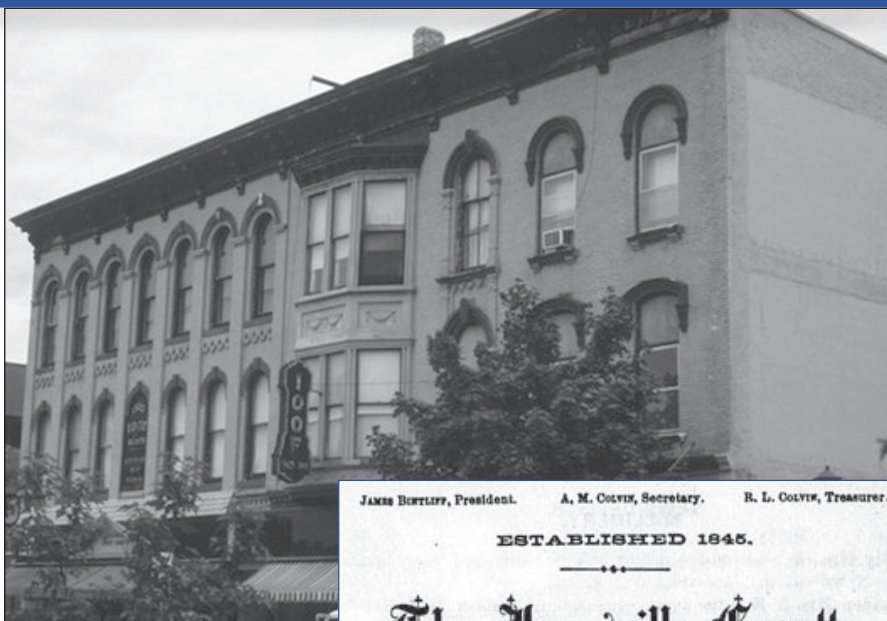
Walking Tour 2

Courthouse, jail & environs

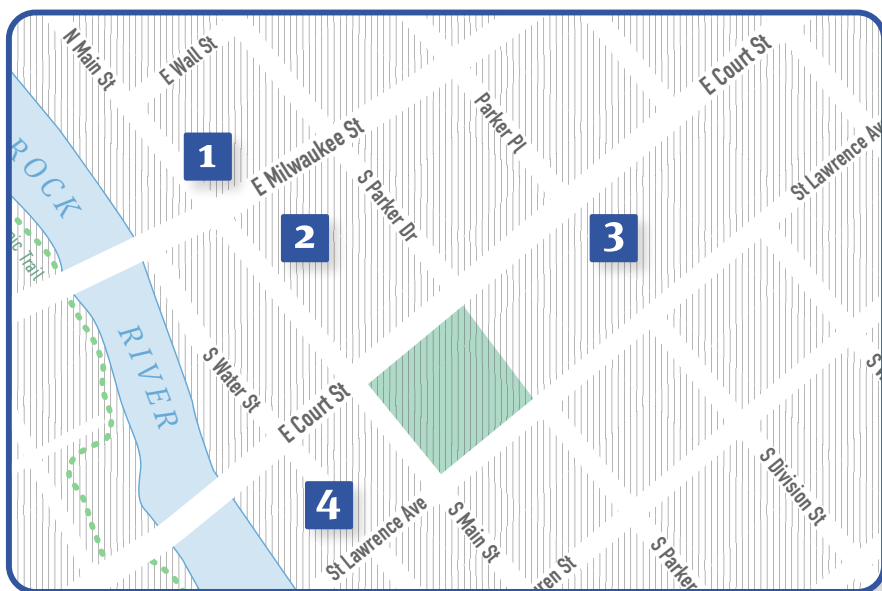
1 Janesville Gazette

North Main Street

Lavinia was a frequent visitor to the Gazette offices, sometimes dropping off articles or letters for publication, sometimes using their reference library, and sometimes just stopping in to chat with the publisher, Gen. James Bintliff, and the editor, Nicholas Smith. Both men clearly thought highly of Lavinia and often mentioned her in the paper's page four local section. In March 1879, the Gazette gave a glowing review of a speech Lavinia had given on woman's suffrage: "She made a strong showing in favor of the cause of which she has been so long an earnest and faithful advocate. Miss Goodell's effort was a worthy one, and those who missed hearing her, lost a treat. She is familiar with her subject, has studied it closely, and is well enough armed to maintain her ground in any case."



TOP: We believe the Gazette Printing Company was located in this block on North Main Street. ABOVE: An ad for the Janesville Gazette.



2 Myers Opera House

118 East Milwaukee Street

The day before the July 1873 temperance march (see *Williams House Hotel*, stop 4 on walking tour 1), Lavinia & her friend Mrs. Beale organized a temperance mass meeting at the Myers Opera House. 200 women attended & Lavinia made a statement about the group's aim to stop the liquor trade. The Gazette declared, "Woman's Will. It is Expressed Through a Delegation of 200 strong. They Resolve That Janesville Has Had Enough of This Liquor Business. A War of Extermination Declared."



RIGHT: Meeting notice.
BELOW: Photo of Myers Hotel & Opera House.

the hour. This is not a but an earnest effort to side of intemperance almost women come. re Judge Conger. re. Rev. Geo. Wallace. re. Sanford A. Hudson. re. J. T. Wright. re. Edward Rager. re. J. A. Beale. re. Lavinia Goodell. re. W. D. Parker. re. A. C. Parker. re. A. H. Sheldou. re. Isaac Farnsworth. re. James Harris. re. H. Brown.



3 Rock County Courthouse *Courthouse hill*

The Rock County courthouse in which Lavinia successfully passed a rigorous examination in June 1874, becoming Wisconsin's first woman lawyer, had been built in 1870. When she was studying law, Lavinia would frequently go to the Courthouse and observe court proceedings. The bailiffs took a liking to her and invited her to sit with the attorneys. Judge Harmon Conger also befriended her, allowed her to take the bar exam, appointed her to represent indigent criminal defendants, and offered advice throughout her career.

TOP LEFT: Judge Harmon Conger.

LEFT: View of the Rock County Courthouse on Court Street.

4 Rock County jail *Water Street, on the Rock River*

In 1875, Judge Conger began appointing Lavinia to represent criminal defendants. She threw herself into the task with zeal and wrote to her sister, "I never had the confidence of a criminal before" and "I had no idea that criminals could be so interesting." Lavinia decided to start a jail school where she and some friends taught the prisoners Scripture as well as reading and arithmetic, with the goal of reforming the inmates so they could become productive and sober members of society. Lavinia had a good relationship with the sheriff and in 1877 persuaded him to release a prisoner for an evening so that he could read poetry to her book group.



ABOVE: View of the Rock County jail in 1871 on Water Street.

CREDITS

Walking tour concept, research, and writing by Nancy Kopp, Madison, Wisconsin. Design and map creation developed by Diana Hoover, Strong Heart Design. Thank you to the Rock County Historical Society for vintage photos. Additional images and information online from Clio collective history project, and the Owen's 1876 Janesville City Directory. Visit the RCHS website: rchs.us. Visit the Clio website: theclio.com. Visit Strong Heart website: strongheartdesign.com.

To learn more about Lavinia Goodell, her life & times, visit: www.laviniagoodell.com.

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