

The 1851 Richardson-Jakway House



Abiathar Richardson, a native of Maine, arrived in Iowa in 1849, and built a log cabin on the west side of Buffalo Creek. In so doing, he became the first settler in what came to be known as Buffalo Township in Buchanan County, Iowa. In 1851 Richardson built the first frame house in the township. His log cabin had become the home of Mr. and Mrs. Silas

Messenger. Richardson was an experienced woodsman who had worked in the ship building trade in his native Maine. He fashioned every joint and every beam, and split the shingles out of native oak and walnut from his own timber. The house was painted the *romantic color of red*, as described in an early account.

Growth of a Town

Buffalo Township was officially established in 1852, and a little village grew up around the Richardson House. The village was known variously as Buchanan, Buffalo Grove, or Mudville. The settlement was laid out and platted by Richardson in 1857. His house was used as a polling place for the first election ever held in the township. It also housed the Buffalo Grove post office from 1857 to 1885. Richardson served as the first postmaster. The *old red house*, as it came to be known locally, was a stopping place for the area stagecoach line, and served as a stage coach inn from 1857 to 1886.

- By 1881 the following businesses were located in Mudville:
- groceries and dry goods - John M. Price
- groceries and dry goods - Theodore Williams
- wagon shop - Robert Trotter;
- blacksmiths - John Ripke; G.D. Russell and William Bradley;
- steam-powered feed mill - Johnson Allison
- steam sawmill - William Bradley
- wind grist mill - J. M. Price
- wagonmaker - G.D. Russell
- physician - J. M. Price
- postmaster - John M. Price
- broom manufactory - J.W. Russell.

There was also a town hall, church, and school in the village.

The Town's Final Days

Abiathar Richardson died in 1872 and the home passed to his family. Mudville thrived until 1886 when the Chicago Great Western Railway laid their tracks 1.5 miles to the north. The present-day town of Aurora sprang up along the railroad line, and signalled the end of Mudville.

Most of the Mudville buildings were moved to the bustling community of Aurora. The former Aurora Baptist Church, which now houses the Country Alamode Craft Shop is one of these original buildings.

The Richardson-Jakway Historic Site

In 1894 the Richardson family traded the farmstead for a farm owned by the John Jakway family. Later, the Palmer family became tenants of the Jakways, and lived in the house for several years. Glenn Jakway, John's son, moved into the house in 1910, and remained there until his death in 1967. After Jakway's death, the farm and buildings were sold to the Buchanan County Conservation Board, and became known as the Jakway Forest Area.

In 1985, Richardson-Jakway House, was included on the National Register of Historic Places. A non-profit corporation, the Richardson-Jakway Foundation, was formed to raise money for the restoration and preservation of the historic site. In 2004, the Richardson-Jakway Historic Site became a Point of Interest destination for the Silos & Smokestacks National Historic Area.

Historic Interpretation

Today, the Richardson-Jakway Historic Site is managed by the Buchanan County Conservation Board as an educational resource. The buildings, gardens, a prairie plot, and interpretive exhibits greet visitors to Jakway Park. Interpretive programs can be scheduled by calling the Conservation Board office (319-636-2617/ fontanapark@iowatelecom.net). The Richardson-Jakway Foundation continues to sponsor an annual Jakway Septemberfest. This traditional music and heritage craft festival raises funds for the future restoration and interpretation of the historic site.



The Richardson-Jakway Historic Site

Located in the Jakway Forest
south of Aurora, Iowa

- Historic sites
- Camping
- Walking and ski trails
- Wildlife observation blind
- Picnic areas
- Areas for public hunting



People Make Things Happen

The Richardson Jakway Foundation is established to raise funds and further support the Conservation Board's efforts at the Richardson-Jakway Historic Site. Persons interested contributing or assisting with these efforts should contact the Buchanan County Conservation Board.

Buchanan County
Conservation Board

Fontana Park
1883 125th St.

Hazleton, Iowa 50641
319-636-2617

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Managed by the
Buchanan County Conservation Board

A Silos & Smokestacks National Historic Area
listed on the National Register of Historic Places



www.east-buc.k12.ia.us/BCCB/home.htm