

JOIN THE CHALLENGE!

An anonymous donor has challenged us to fund a local statue and they will fund a second statue. Make a contribution and leave a lasting legacy by inscribing a brick in honor of a loved one. Make a gift of an inscribed brick as a lasting memory of a special person. Honor your group with a gift of an inscribed brick, in their honor!

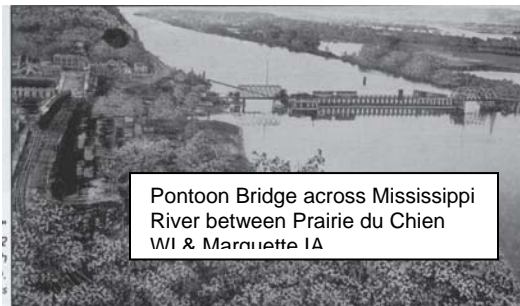


John Lawler was born in Ireland in 1832. He arrived in Prairie du Chien in April of 1857. That summer a 25 year old John Lawler became a railway station agent for the Milwaukee & Prairie du Chien Railroad. Soon after the completion of the railroad to Prairie du Chien he became interested in the securing cheap and speedy transfer of passengers and freight across the Mississippi River to McGregor, Iowa. He bought barges and transferred railcars across the river towed by steamboat. In 1843 he invented and obtained a patent for the railway pontoon bridge. This allowed the railcars to travel across the river year-around. It was adapted in many places around the world and the concept is still used today. He became a very wealthy man.

John Lawler an active Catholic layman and philanthropist was responsible for purchasing the Christian Brothers' of St. John's College located in Prairie du Chien and given to the German Jesuit Missionaries and the school later became Campion Boys School. Lawler also paid for St. Mary's Academy, a Jesuit girls' school.

Lawler was very well connected both politically and with church leaders. It was John Lawler who accompanied Civil War Generals, Grant, Sherman, Sheridan and Hancock to La Crosse, Wisconsin. His religious honors attest to his church service as he was made a Knight of St, Gregory by Pope Leo XIII.

Lawler Park was named after John Lawler, Prairie du Chien's greatest philanthropist.



Pontoon Bridge across Mississippi River between Prairie du Chien WI & Marquette IA