



Letter to the Editor: National Day of Prayer

May 1 2015 2:28 PM

In 1952, the U.S. Congress established a day to remember the religious heritage of this country and to celebrate the rights to freely exercise our faith, and yes, to pray to God. As a nation, we unite on the first Thursday in May for the National Day of Prayer.

In Madison County, we had Benjamin Godfrey (1794 – 1862), for which the Village of Godfrey is named.

Recently, I read the book “God’s Portion: Godfrey, Illinois (1817 – 1865),” by Judy Hoffman, which tells the tales of the ship captain and merchantman who landed in the Prairie State in 1832.

Hoffman described Godfrey as, “one of the most intriguing figures in Illinois history.” Of his pre-Illinois life, Godfrey said it, “would make a novel.”

Godfrey made and lost several fortunes trading between New England, the West Indies, Mexico and New Orleans. The “reformed sinner” as he called himself, once told a friend, “all which he could ever accomplish would do nothing toward repairing the evil he had wrought by his previous life of sin.”

In 1833, he built Alton’s first church building, which both Presbyterian and Baptist congregations used. In 1838, the man with eight daughters founded the Monticello Female Seminary, to advocate higher education for women and teachings based in Christian principles.

Godfrey said, “educate a man and you educate an individual; educate a woman and you educate a family.”

Godfrey’s legacy is one we should not forget. His faith, and prayer, guiding him.

Kurt Prenzler, CPA

Madison County Treasurer

Edwardsville, Illinois

Opinions expressed in this section are solely those of the individual authors and do not represent the views of RiverBender.com or its affiliates. We provide a platform for community voices, but the responsibility for opinions rests with their authors.