# Davidson Hibbard Tax-Sale Certificate

*The 12 May 1845 sale, the 1848 redemption endorsement, Nauvoo parcels, and Sheriff William Melgar Couchman*

## Summary

William Melgar Couchman was a Kentucky-born frontier officeholder whose public career crossed northeastern Missouri and Hancock County, Illinois. By age twenty he was present among the Sac and Fox communities of the upper Mississippi as a witness to an 1834 petition to Congress. He served as postmaster at Sweet Home, Missouri, in 1836 and won election as one of the first justices of newly organized Clark County in 1837. The 1874 Hancock County directory states that he came to Hancock County in 1845. He emerged the following year as the successful sheriff candidate of a county coalition assembled at an Anti-Mormon convention in Carthage.

Couchman did not belong to the Nauvoo Legion, and no record located for this study identifies him as a Latter-day Saint. His documented relationship to Nauvoo was governmental: he executed court judgments, issued redemption certificates, conveyed property through sheriff deeds, collected or acknowledged public payments, and summoned residents in litigation. That distinction matters when interpreting the 1848 Davidson Hibbard tax-sale certificate. Couchman appears on that paper because he held county authority, not because he was a Nauvoo religious or municipal officer.[5678]

His later career included service as Hancock County judge, Carthage Township assessor and supervisor, president of the county agricultural society, agricultural-implement manufacturer, and chairman of the committee responsible for the new county jail. During the Civil War he again served as sheriff and became involved in the bitter conflict between Democratic county officials and Republican Union organizations. Evidence of formal Freemasonry has not been found. An archival description connects papers about him with material on a local Grand Lodge, but this is not proof that he was initiated or belonged to a lodge.[39101114]

## Verified chronology

| Date | Place | Event and significance |
|---|---|---|
| 22 Aug 1814 | Paris, Bourbon County, Kentucky | Probable birth date and place; supported mainly by compiled genealogical and cemetery evidence. |
| 26 Aug and 20 Sep 1834 | Sac and Fox villages, upper Mississippi region | Named as a witness to a petition by Sac and Fox people asking Congress for direct and equitable payment of tribal annuities. |
| 1836 | Sweet Home, Clark County, Missouri | Postmaster of the Sweet Home post office. |
| 6 May 1837 | Jefferson Township, Clark County, Missouri | Elected justice of the peace in Clark Countys first county election. |
| 1837 and 1839 | Kentucky or Missouri | Births of William Oscar and Adelia Lodoska Ann Couchman, children of Melgar and Adelia Lodoska White. |

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|---|---|---|
| 1 Mar 1847 | Carthage, Illinois | Death of first wife Adelia Lodoska White Couchman, according to cemetery transcription. |
| 1846 to 1849 | Hancock County, Illinois | Sheriff; court minutes place him in office from October 1846 through September 1849, with a temporary acting sheriff in April 1849. |
| 1849 to 1854 | Hancock County, Illinois | County judge during the disputed transition between county-court and township government. |
| 2 or 21 Apr 1850 | Carthage, Illinois | Marriage to Rebecca Susan Dickinson, widow of Simeon R Pennock; derivative sources disagree on the day. |
| 1850s | Carthage, Illinois | Manufacturer of agricultural implements; census and directory evidence place the household in Carthage. |
| 1859 | Hancock County, Illinois | President of the Hancock County Agricultural and Horticultural Society and assessor of Carthage Township. |
| 1862 to 1865 | Carthage and Hancock County | Carthage Township supervisor and later county jail committee chairman; again sheriff during Civil War conflict. |
| 29 Apr 1882 | Carthage or Bentley area, Hancock County | Death; sources agree on the date but vary between Carthage and Bentley as the locality. |

## Kentucky origins and the Couchman family

The most consistent genealogical reconstruction identifies him as William Melgar Couchman, born 22 August 1814 at Paris in Bourbon County, Kentucky. Compiled trees name his parents as Malachi Couchman and Ann Breckinridge. Because the accessible evidence for these parent names is derivative rather than a contemporary Bible, probate, or church record, they should be treated as probable. The unusual middle name became his public name: most official records call him Melgar Couchman or M Couchman rather than William.[1213]

The family belonged to the Kentucky-to-Missouri migration stream that supplied many officials and settlers along the Mississippi frontier. Couchmans early public responsibilities suggest literacy, numeracy, and established local trust. A postmaster handled money and correspondence; a justice of the peace heard minor disputes, acknowledged instruments, and performed other local judicial duties. These offices predated his better-known Hancock County career by a decade.[1]

## Sac and Fox petition and the Missouri frontier

Couchmans earliest located public appearance is unusually informative. A congressional document preserves a petition dated at Sac and Fox villages on 26 August and 20 September 1834. The petitioners complained that annuity payments were being concentrated in the hands of a few chiefs and creditors and requested distribution to families or individuals. Melgar Couchman appears with

J B Patterson, interpreter Joseph Cota, and Alexis Phelps as a witness. The document does not identify Couchmans occupation or explain why he was present, but it places him within the trading, interpreting, agency, or settlement network surrounding the tribes when he was about twenty.[2]

By 1836 he was postmaster at Sweet Home, then a small settlement in Clark County, Missouri, near the Des Moines and Mississippi river country. On 6 May 1837 voters elected Simeon Conway and Couchman as justices of the peace for Jefferson Township in the first election held after Clark Countys organization. These records firmly locate him in Clark County. Searches of available histories and indexes for Daviess County and Jackson County, Missouri, have not produced a second Melgar Couchman entry. Those counties remain reasonable places to examine for relatives or brief residence, but the present evidence does not place him there.[1]

## Marriage and children

Couchmans first wife was Adelia Lodoska White. A derivative marriage entry places their marriage on 3 May 1836 in Gallatin County, Kentucky; the original bond, consent, license, or return has not been recovered online. Their children and her cemetery record independently establish the family. Their son William Oscar Couchman was born in 1837, and their daughter Adelia Lodoska Ann Couchman was born 12 March 1839. The mother died 1 March 1847, shortly after Couchman began serving as Hancock County sheriff. The daughter died in 1857; the son lived until 1929 and married Eliza Dickinson Metcalf, extending the family through the Bentley and Harmony Township area.12

In April 1850 Couchman married Rebecca Susan Dickinson, the widow of Simeon R Pennock. Sources disagree whether the ceremony occurred on 2 April or 21 April, so the month and year are secure while the day requires consultation of the original Hancock County marriage register. Rebecca brought Dickinson and Pennock relationships into the household. She and Couchman had at least one known son, John Henry Couchman, born in 1851, and cemetery compilations also mention an infant son. Rebecca died in 1882, the same year as her husband.[1213]

| Person | Relationship | Documented or reported facts |
|---|---|---|
| Adelia Lodoska White Couchman | First wife | Born about August 1816; died 1 March 1847; mother of William Oscar and Adelia Lodoska Ann. |
| William Oscar Couchman | Son | Born 1837; married Eliza Dickinson Metcalf; agricultural family associated with Bentley and Harmony Township. |
| Adelia Lodoska Ann Couchman | Daughter | Born 12 March 1839; died 26 March 1857. |
| Rebecca Susan Dickinson Pennock Couchman | Second wife | Widow of Simeon R Pennock; married Couchman in April 1850; died in 1882. |
| John Henry Couchman | Son | Born 1851; child of Melgar and Rebecca. |

## Arrival in Hancock County and the Mormon conflict

No located contemporary record places Couchman in Nauvoo or Hancock County during Joseph Smith's lifetime, which ended in June 1844. Clark County probate minutes show him serving as a surety in the intestate estate of William M. Couchman on 14 December 1841. More decisively, the 1874 Hancock County directory lists M. Couchman of Prairie Township, a Bourbon County, Kentucky native, and states that he came to Hancock County in 1845. That retrospective entry is not a day-by-day migration record, but it is the strongest located evidence for his arrival and weighs against placing him at Carthage Jail in June 1844. His first firm official Hancock County role remains his election as sheriff in 1846.

His political entrance was closely tied to the final stage of the Hancock County conflict. After Sheriff Jacob B Backenstos resigned for military service, a convention held at Carthage on 25 July 1846 nominated an Anti-Mormon county ticket. Couchman was its nominee for sheriff and won the election. The ticket mixed party affiliations, and Couchman was identified as a Democrat. The Anti-Mormon label describes the coalition that nominated him; it should not be enlarged into a claim that he took part in the 1844 killings or in extralegal violence, for which no evidence has been located.[4]

## Sheriff and administrator of post Nauvoo legal affairs

Circuit-court records identify Couchman as sheriff by October 1846 and repeatedly through September 1849. His duties placed him in legal disputes left behind by the departure of most Latter-day Saints. On 2 January 1847 he attempted to enforce a judgment against Nauvoo businessman Hiram Kimball by levying on horses, a buggy, warrants, and accounts. A Henderson County injunction stopped the collection after Kimball challenged the underlying judgment. Couchman acted as the enforcing officer; the surviving record does not show that he had a personal financial interest in the controversy.[35]

On 5 May 1847 he certified that Wilson Law, through attorney Almon W Babbitt, paid 7 dollars and 75 cents to redeem two quarter-sections sold under execution. In August he executed and acknowledged a sheriffs deed in Sweeney v Miller. An 1849 order in the Lewis C Bidamon papers instructed him to summon Emma Hale Smith Bidamon, Nathan Prentice, and other parties. Together these records show that his apparent connections to prominent Nauvoo families arose from official process, property enforcement, and litigation.[678]

The 1848 Davidson Hibbard certificate belongs to the same administrative pattern. The notation best read as M Couchman Collector or a similar official designation records payment or collection on the reverse. The handwriting can resemble Conchman or Kochman, but the county official and parallel signatures identify the man as Melgar Couchman. His participation supports the documents authenticity and places the transaction within Hancock Countys post-exodus tax and title system.

## County judge and the structure of local government

Couchman became Hancock County judge in 1849 and served through 1854. This was an administrative as well as judicial office. He and the associated justices handled county finance, infrastructure, pauper care, and other public business during an unsettled transition to township organization. In March 1849 he and Jason H Sherman were appointed to choose a location and plan a county poorhouse. Couchman resigned from that particular commission in December.[3]

His authority later became the subject of People ex rel Wesley H Manier v Melgar Couchman and Milton M Morrill. The dispute concerned whether Hancock County had lawfully discontinued township organization and whether Couchman and Morrill could continue acting as a county court. The litigation was institutional rather than a charge of personal misconduct, but it illustrates the confused state of county government in the early 1850s.[3]

## Business agriculture and property

A Carthage business listing identifies M Couchman as a manufacturer of agricultural implements. This trade fits his later leadership of the Hancock County Agricultural and Horticultural Society, which listed him as president in 1859. Agricultural-implement production connected him with farmers throughout the county and helps explain his continued public visibility after leaving the county judgeship.[39]

The 1850 federal census reportedly valued his real estate at 3000 dollars, a substantial holding for the period, although the original schedule should be rechecked before using that figure in a formal property analysis. His later responsibilities included Carthage Township assessor in 1859 and supervisor in 1862. In 1863 and 1864 he served on the committee that selected plans and let contracts for the Carthage jail and sheriffs residence; by June 1864 he was chairman of the jail committee.[311]

## Civil War politics and possible militia associations

No muster roll or commission located for this study places Couchman in an Illinois militia unit, the Nauvoo Legion, or the United States Army. His significant wartime role was civil: he again served as Hancock County sheriff and remained part of the countys Democratic political network. That office could require possession of arms, formation of posses, and interaction with military authorities, but it did not itself make him a militia officer.[10]

Hancock County experienced sharp partisan and military tension during the Civil War. A modern study reports that Couchman posted bail for men charged in a federal case arising from wartime violence. In October 1864 he and about twelve men confronted Colonel Thomas A Geddes at the Carthage railroad depot when Geddes arrived with state arms for a Republican-supported home guard. Couchman ordered the weapons surrendered; Geddes refused, asserting that they belonged to a lawfully organized company, and Couchman withdrew. This episode associates Couchman with resistance to that particular militia organization, not membership in it.[10]

The evidence supports describing him as a conservative Hancock County Democrat whose law-enforcement decisions collided with Union League and Republican mobilization. It does not, by itself, prove membership in the Knights of the Golden Circle, Sons of Liberty, or another clandestine organization. Those allegations circulated widely in wartime Illinois and require individual membership evidence before being attached to him.[10]

## Freemasonry and fraternal affiliations

No located lodge roster, initiation record, obituary, or Grand Lodge proceeding identifies Couchman as a Freemason. A Western Illinois University finding aid describes the Wesley Williams papers as containing letters about the local Grand Lodge and separate notes concerning Melgar Couchman. Their presence in the same collection description is a research lead, not proof

of membership. The papers should be examined for a lodge name, degree, office, or direct statement before any Masonic affiliation is asserted.[14]

Carthage and nearby Missouri communities had active Masonic and Odd Fellows lodges, and many men in Couchmans political circle belonged to fraternal orders. Social proximity therefore makes membership possible. At present, however, the defensible conclusion is no documented Masonic affiliation found. The same conclusion applies to Odd Fellows membership.

## Nauvoo religious and family associations

No baptismal, church-office, temple, Nauvoo Legion, or migration record located for this study identifies Couchman as a Latter-day Saint. His 1846 nomination by an Anti-Mormon convention points in the opposite political direction. Yet he necessarily dealt with Latter-day Saint and former Latter-day Saint families as sheriff. The records connect him officially with Hiram Kimball, Wilson Law, W W Phelps, Almon W Babbitt, Emma Hale Smith Bidamon, Lewis C Bidamon, and other litigants or property holders.[4568]

Those names should be understood as a docket network, not automatically as kinship or friendship. His proven family network ran through White, Dickinson, Pennock, and later Metcalf lines. Adelia Lodoska White is not included among the reconstructed children of Captain James White and Laurancy Barber; absent contrary primary evidence, she is excluded from that early Hancock County White family. No marriage relationship between Couchman and Davidson Hibbard, Sarah McFarland, Joseph Smith, or the Law and Kimball families has been found. Davidson Hibbard nevertheless had his own direct connection to the early White family through the marriage of his daughter Emeline Frances Hibbard to Hugh Henry White.

## Death burial and historical assessment

Couchman died 29 April 1882 at age sixty-seven. Memorial sources variously give Carthage and Bentley as the place of death, while cemetery records associate him with Old Carthage Cemetery. The year 1887 sometimes appears in cemetery transcriptions for Melgar and Rebecca, but stronger compiled evidence gives 1882 for both. The original death notice, probate file, and gravestone image should settle these discrepancies.[1213]

His career is best understood as that of a durable frontier county official. He moved from postal and judicial work in northeastern Missouri to the most politically difficult county office in western Illinois just as the organized Mormon community was leaving Nauvoo. He then converted that prominence into a judgeship, manufacturing, agricultural leadership, assessment work, and county construction oversight. The surviving evidence depicts a Democratic civil officer with anti-Mormon political sponsorship, rather than a Nauvoo resident, Latter-day Saint, legionnaire, or proven Mason.

## Unresolved questions and recommended records

| Question | Best record to consult | Present assessment |
|---|---|---|
| When did he enter Hancock County | 1840 federal census; Hancock tax books and deed grantor grantee indexes for 1838 to 1846 | Between May 1837 and July 1846; exact year unknown. |
| Did he reside in Daviess or Jackson | 1830 and 1840 census schedules, | No located evidence; Clark County is |

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| County Missouri | tax lists, and deed indexes for both counties | verified. |
| Was he a Mason | Carthage lodge minute books and petitions; Grand Lodge of Illinois returns; Wesley Williams papers | Possible social proximity but unproved. |
| Did he serve in a militia | Illinois Adjutant Generals militia rolls; county militia commissions; Civil War provost files | No verified military service. |
| What property did he own | Hancock deed indexes, assessment rolls, probate packet, and 1850 through 1880 census schedules | At least moderate real estate and a manufacturing business; parcel chain incomplete. |
| What was his precise role on the Hibbard document | Comparison with his signed sheriff certificates and county collector accounts | Identity is strong; wording of title and payment notation needs multispectral or higher resolution review. |

### Document analysis and parcel reconstruction

The face is a printed Hancock County Commissioners' Court tax-sale certificate completed in manuscript. It records that Davidson Hibbard purchased the listed property at public sale on 12 May 1845 for state and county taxes and costs. George W. Thatcher signed in his capacity as clerk. The reverse contains the later redemption acknowledgment signed by M. Couchman, whose office, comparison signatures, and formula establish the signer as Hancock County sheriff William Melgar Couchman. The paper therefore records two stages: Hibbard's 1845 tax purchase and a subsequent redemption handled by Couchman.

### The contemporary control source

The Nauvoo Neighbor of 7 April 1845 published the delinquent real-estate list preceding the May sale. Its Hibbard entries closely parallel the certificate and establish the order of the printed columns: owner, fractional description, lot, block, valuation, and tax. The notice names Davidson Hibbard as assessed owner of numerous lots in Hibbard's Addition and eight lots in Hibbard's Second Addition. This is stronger evidence than the 1874 atlas alone because it is contemporary with the sale.

| Addition | Properties assessed to Davidson Hibbard in April 1845 | Tax shown |
|---|---|---|
| Hibbard's Addition | Lot 1 block 1; 100 feet of lot 4 block 1; lot 3 block 2; portions/lots in blocks 4, 6, 8, 9, 12, and 13 | $0.15-$0.60 each |
| Hibbard's Second Addition | Lot 2 block 4; lot 3 block 5; lots 1 and 4 block 6; lots 1 and 4 block 8; lots 1 and 2 block 10 | $0.30 each |

The amounts written on the certificate include tax and sale costs and therefore should not be equated mechanically with the tax-only figures in the newspaper. The visible total appears to be $3.42. Several individual rows remain pale or overwritten; they should be transcribed conservatively from the original, with uncertain characters bracketed, rather than forced to match a likely newspaper entry.

### Geographic interpretation

The 1874 illustrated atlas places Hibbard's additions immediately east and southeast of the older Nauvoo grid. Hibbard's Addition comprised small numbered blocks south of the principal city grid, while Hibbard's Second Addition lay farther south near the river-facing edge of the developed plat. The certificate therefore concerns urban or suburban town lots, not a single agricultural tract. The listed parcels were scattered inventory within Hibbard's own additions rather than one contiguous holding.

### Adelia Lodoska White: parentage and exclusion from the Hugh White family

The search of remotely available sources did not identify Adelia's parents or siblings. The strongest derivative entry gives her marriage to Couchman on 3 May 1836 in Gallatin County, Kentucky, while the Old Carthage Cemetery transcription gives her birth in August 1816 and death on 1 March 1847. No accessible obituary, probate abstract, cemetery record, or descendant account names her father or mother.

A reconstructed family chart for Captain James White and Laurancy Barber names Hugh Henry White's siblings as Sarah Ann, Alexander, Nancy, Joseph, Captain William, Elizabeth, Mary, Lurencey, and Pauline. Adelia is absent. Although her estimated 1816 birth could fit chronologically between Elizabeth and Mary, the combined absence of a family identification and the Kentucky marriage context warrants excluding her from this family group as the working conclusion. The original Gallatin County marriage papers remain the only realistic online-record gap capable of reversing that conclusion.

### Sarah landowner hypothesis

Searches of the 1843-1845 Nauvoo tax transcriptions and available Hancock references did not connect a Sarah McFarland to the certificate's parcels. Women named Sarah appear in contemporary Nauvoo lists, including Sarah Gibbs, Sarah Gibbons, Sarah Kelley, and a Sarah or Olive Gregory, but none can be attached to the Hibbard lots merely by name. Sarah Tilton Hibbard, Davidson's wife, is biographically relevant, yet the April 1845 assessment and the certificate name Davidson rather than Sarah as the taxpayer or purchaser. Sarah McFarland should therefore be retained only as a rejected or dormant hypothesis, not an alternate reading of the document.

### Completed biographical searches and negative findings

| Objective | Result of remote search | Conclusion |
|---|---|---|
| Kentucky-Missouri migration | 1834 Sac and Fox petition; 1836 Sweet Home postmaster; 1837 Clark County justice; 1841 Clark probate surety | Clark County connection now extends through Dec. 1841; Hancock arrival remains between then and July 1846. |
| Daviess/Jackson Counties | Name and variant searches of accessible county, military, historical, and genealogical indexes | No evidence that this William Melgar Couchman resided or served in either county. |
| Militia | Black Hawk, Mormon War, Mexican War, Nauvoo Legion, Carthage Greys, Illinois militia, and Civil War name searches | No muster, commission, or membership record found. His 1864 armed confrontation was undertaken as sheriff, a civil office. |
| Freemasonry/fraternal orders | Grand Lodge/lodge-name searches, county histories, obituaries, and WIU finding aid | No membership or degree record found. The WIU collection juxtaposes Grand Lodge correspondence and Couchman notes but does not identify him as a Mason. |
| Sheriff's legal network | JSP legal records, BYU Studies, | Confirmed executions, redemption |

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| | Hancock court chronology, and Bidamon finding aid | certificates, sheriff deeds, and summons work involving prominent former Nauvoo property holders. |
| Religion | LDS biographical, ordinance, Nauvoo municipal, and migration references | No LDS baptism, priesthood, temple, mission, or Nauvoo Legion record; no specific Protestant denomination proved. |

The 1841 Clark County probate entry is particularly important. Melgar Couchman served with Simeon Conway and George Sawyers as security for administrator John Whaley in the intestate estate of William M. Couchman. It proves continuing family and civic ties in northeastern Missouri and makes an undocumented residence in Daviess or Jackson County less likely.

#### Research closure and records requiring special access

The remotely available search is substantially exhausted. Four questions require record images or on-site/special-access examination: (1) the Gallatin County 1836 marriage bond and consent; (2) Hancock County deed indexes, tax-sale books, and redemption registers for complete title chains; (3) Carthage lodge petitions and minute books plus the Wesley Williams papers for any fraternal evidence; and (4) Couchman's probate packet and contemporary death notice. These are access limitations, not evidence that the proposed relationships or affiliations existed.

## New evidence from the comprehensive follow-up search

### Arrival in Hancock County

The 1874 county directory supplies the first explicit migration statement yet located: its Prairie Township entry identifies M. Couchman as a farmer in section 24, born in Bourbon County, Kentucky, and records 1845 as the year he came to Hancock County. The matching name, birthplace, residence, and occupation identify William Melgar Couchman. This narrows the former 1841-1846 gap and makes an 1844 Hancock residence improbable unless a stronger contemporary record is found.

### The William Oscar Couchman reminiscence

A commercial genealogy search index describes an unidentified item in which W. O. Couchman reportedly recounted his father's role in ferrying people to safety during the killing of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. W. O. is plausibly William Oscar Couchman, Melgar's son, who lived from 1837 to 1929. The underlying newspaper image, title, date, and wording have not been recovered, so the claim remains an unverified lead. It cannot override the directory's 1845 arrival date. The index may have compressed or misdated a story about the broader 1845-1846 Hancock conflict, or it may concern another person. Verification requires a page search of the Carthage Republican-Tribune around William Oscar's death on 20 August 1929 and of anniversary or old-settler features.

### Anti-Mormon leadership in 1860

On 21 August 1860 citizens densely filled the Hancock County courtroom at Carthage to consider reports that Latter Day Saints intended to resettle Nauvoo under Joseph Smith III. The published meeting record states that Judge Couchman offered resolutions characterizing renewed settlement as a calamity, protesting the return, and declaring that the people of Hancock County would not allow it. His identity as Melgar Couchman is supported by his Hancock judgeship, Carthage residence, and the absence of another local Judge Couchman. This is direct evidence that his anti-

Mormon political activity continued well beyond his 1846 sheriff nomination. It does not establish complicity in the 1844 murders.

### Civil War sheriff and partisan conflict

The Civil War evidence confirms a second period as Hancock County sheriff. In 1863 Couchman posted bail for men prosecuted after armed seizure of federal draft-enrollment books. On 27 October 1864, following a Missouri bushwhacker raid, he and about twelve men confronted Colonel Thomas A. Geddes at the Carthage railroad depot over six boxes of state arms intended for a Republican-supported home guard. Geddes refused Couchman's order to surrender the weapons and warned that interference with a lawfully organized company would be at Couchman's peril; Couchman withdrew. These incidents locate him within Hancock's Democratic wartime establishment, but they do not prove membership in a militia, the Knights of the Golden Circle, or another secret organization.

### Family and institutional results

A compiled family tree identifies Malachi Couchman and Ann Breckinridge as Melgar's parents and William M. Couchman as a probable brother, which would explain Melgar's surety in William's 1841 Clark County estate. Because the tree ultimately relies on derivative online genealogy, the relationship is probable rather than proved until the Kentucky and Missouri probate records identify the heirs. No Grand Lodge proceeding, local lodge roster, military commission, or muster roll located online names Melgar Couchman. No evidence was found connecting Adelia Lodoska White to the Hugh White family; that exclusion remains in force.

### Parcel and Sarah results

The new tax-list search reinforces the established distinction between Nauvoo municipal taxation and the state-and-county sale represented by the certificate. Hibbard conveyed Hibbard's Addition Lot 4, Block 12 to Benjamin Riter on 6 July 1842; the municipal assessment subsequently rendered his surname as Writer. No Sarah McFarland entry has been found in the remotely available Nauvoo and Hancock sources that connects her to this parcel, to Hibbard's additions, or to the 1845 certificate. Sarah McFarland therefore remains a rejected or dormant hypothesis. A transfer to a woman or minor remains legally possible, but it must be demonstrated from the county deed, guardianship, tax-sale, or redemption books rather than inferred from the faint handwriting.

### George W Thatcher and the endorsement

Contemporary narrative evidence expressly calls George W. Thatcher the county commissioners' clerk. The certificate's printed heading and his signature are consistent with that office. Parallel Hancock records show Melgar Couchman issuing and signing redemption certificates as sheriff, including the 5 May 1847 Wilson Law redemption. The reverse endorsement is therefore best understood as a later redemption or collection acknowledgment made in Couchman's official capacity, not as a private conveyance or evidence that he owned the Hibbard parcels.

### Remaining record-level searches

The online phase is now substantially exhausted. The decisive remaining records are the Hancock County Tax Sale Record 1834-1848, IRAD accession 2/0061/52; the Old Certificates of Purchase, Levy, and Redemption, IRAD accession 2/0102/29 and Family History Library film 955142; Hancock grantor-grantee and guardianship indexes; Gallatin County's 1836 Couchman-White marriage papers; local Masonic lodge petitions and minutes; the Wesley Williams papers at

Western Illinois University; Couchman's probate packet and 1882 death notice; and the Carthage Republican-Tribune pages surrounding 20 August 1929.

## Sources


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15. **Nauvoo Neighbor, 7 April 1845.** Delinquent real-estate list naming Davidson Hibbard and enumerating property in Hibbard's Addition and Hibbard's Second Addition. https://byustudies.byu.edu/online-book/nauvoo-neighbor/2723
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19. **Illustrated Historical Atlas of Hancock County, Illinois.** 1874 Nauvoo plat locating Hibbard's Addition and Hibbard's Second Addition. https://archive.org/details/illustratedhisto00ande

20. Hancock County Illinois Directory, 1874. Prairie Township entry for M. Couchman, section 24, Bourbon County, Kentucky, arrival in Hancock County in 1845. https://genealogytrails.com/ill/hancock/1874directory.html

21. History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, volume 3, Carthage meeting of 21 August 1860 and resolutions offered by Judge Couchman. https://restorationbookstore.org/pages/joseph-smith-iii-comes-to-the-reorganization

22. John E. Hallwas, Awful Calamities Now upon Us: The Civil War in Fountain Green, Illinois, especially the 1863 draft-book prosecutions and the October 1864 Carthage depot confrontation. https://www.academia.edu/1074893/_Awful_Calamities_Now_upon_Us_The_Civil_War_in_Fountain_Green_Illinois

23. Digital Archives of the Carthage Free Library. Carthage Republican-Tribune, 1923-1954, identified as the principal repository for verification of William Oscar Couchman's reported reminiscence. https://carthage.advantage-preservation.com/

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