

# History of grist and sawmill goes back to mid-1800's; Eby's Mill is now just a name

What has always been known as Eby's mill was built by Applegate of Scotch Grove, Iowa. Samuel Eby purchased it about 1875, well after the Civil War had ended.

Samuel Eby had sold a smaller mill at Sabula, Iowa and then came here and purchased the property later to be known as Eby's Mill.

It was a two-story, two-floor building with an underpass which the water flowed through to furnish the power for grinding and sawmilling. A great many of the homes built close by were built out of native lumber, cut at this mill.

The mill also furnished large amounts of bridge plank for construction. The mill was used to grind hog and cattle feed, corn meal, buckwheat and rye for flour. Rye and buckwheat grinding took special

machinery to belt and hull before it was usable for eating or baking with.

Farmers from as far away as Oxford Jet., would leave Oxford around midnight in order to arrive at the mill around 4 in the morning prior to the mill beginning its day operation.

Samuel Eby sold the farm and mill to his two sons, Joe and Will, in the early part of 1900. William later sold his interest to Joe. Joe Eby then later sold the farm and mills to William and Otto Lange. Shortly after this sale, the dam washed out and without the impounded water the mill became useless.

Samuel Eby kept seven or eight men working the year around to cut and haul logs and to help in the mill and with farm work. I went to work for Joe Eby in the year of 1911 as a hired man. I worked there

for seven years. The mill was still in excellent shape at that time. Some years later the mill was torn down.

—by Walter Eby: son of Ben Eby,  
nephew of Joseph Eby

Eby's Mill was built during 1855 and 1856 by or for Mr. Applegate. It originally was a flour and grist mill. The rough timber was hewn from native trees for the framework used in the building.

The sawn lumber used for siding and sheathing was hauled from Dubuque, having been shipped down the river from Minnesota. (Note: Probably floated down from the Chippewa Flowage by way of the Chippewa river. Most important lumber during the 1850's to 1880's came from this area of Wisconsin to Dubuque and Bellevue.)

It was white pine. Some of the boards were up to 16 and 18 inches wide.

Second owner of the mill was a Mr. Corbett. In 1874 Samuel Eby, a former miller from Sabula, became interested in acquiring a mill in this area, and after looking around decided to purchase the mill and land, that later became known as "Eby's Mill".

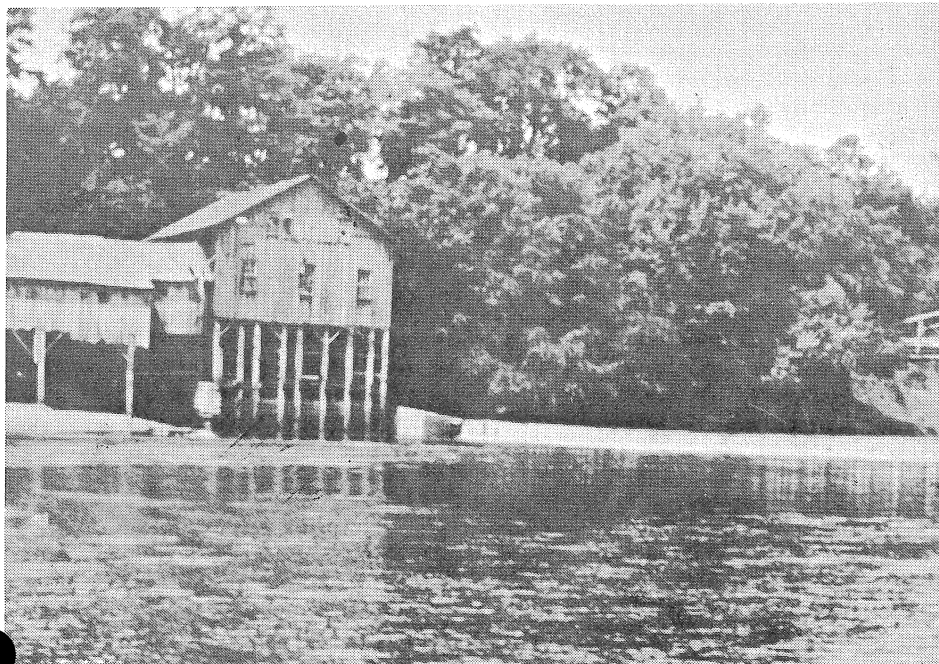
Moving his family to their new home in 1875, he took possession and began operations. He immediately enlarged the operation by adding a sawmill. Samuel Eby retired in 1900 when the business was sold to his two sons, Joseph M. and William L.

With this change in ownership the grinding of wheat for flour was discontinued, although they continued grinding rye and buckwheat.

With the advent of portland cement at this time, improvements were made to the mill and dam. Operations and demand changed so that very quickly grinding and gisting gave way to the sole operation of lumber production.

In 1909 William Eby sold his interest to his brother, Joseph H., and moved to Colorado. The mill continued to operate under management of Joseph until March 1920, when he sold the mill and farm to William and Otto Lange of Scotch Grove.

Thus ended about 45 years of Eby



**EBY'S MILL**, located on the Maquoketa river northeast of Scotch Grove, was once a thriving place. Originally called Applegate's gristmill, it was built in the mid 1800's. Wheat and corn were ground there and hauled to market. In 1875, Samuel Eby bought the mill and added a saw mill. The mill ceased operation in the 1920's and later was torn down. "Eby's Mill" today refers only to a spot along the river.



THIS WAS MONTICELLO'S champion baseball team of 1907. In a conversation with the late Lee Crim in 1961, Gus Norlin, president of Jones County Historical Society, learned that "Blue Laws" prohibited athletic games of any sort on Sundays within the corporate limits of the city of Monticello. Therefore, Sunday games were often held on the Maquoketa river flats east of the city, approximately 1,000 to 1,500 feet down stream from the

present dam on the west side of the river. Mr. Crim, who is not in the picture, was one of the star players with the Monticello team 10 years later. Those in the photo as identified by Ray George, who is in his 90's, are front row, left to right: Mr. Thompson, Fuzzy Baylor, Frank Locher. Middle row: Will Podhaski, Lon Bigley, unidentified, Charlie Byers, "Bo" Starry. Back row: unidentified, Al Steiner, manager, and Tom Carson.

## Eby's Mill--

ownership of this mill and site. In 1933 the remains of the mill were torn down, and the only vestige remaining is a faint outline of foundation rock of the dam in this year of 1976. The original steel arched bridge built in 1870 remains, unusable and unused since the new bridge was built in 1959.

--by Raymond Eby: son of Joseph Eby

Martelle was the first Bicentennial town in Jones county, receiving its official status Dec. 14, 1975. Morley was second on Dec. 20, 1975.

Oxford Junction became an official Bicentennial town on Feb. 20, 1976 and Stone City on June 12, 1976.

## The Trail Grows Dim

As a service to subscribers we will include an "inquiry" column in each issue of the Historical Review. This will help those tracing ancestors, who have run out of leads.

The column will be entitled, "The Trail Grows Dim". Inquiries will be printed on a first come, first served basis, but out of necessity will be limited to six inquiries each issue. Your inquiry will eventually be included.

The inquiry should be no more than 200

words. The inquirer's name and address must be printed clearly, so those replying can contact the inquirer directly. The Review will not handle the exchange of correspondence.

We give here a sample of how inquiries should read and be addressed. Address: Jones County Historical Review, Trail Grows Dim Column, Box 124, Monticello, Iowa 52310.

Dear Readers: Samuel Nesbitt was born Troy, New York, 1812. Parents were Hiram and Lottie (Bleadker) Nesbitt who immigrated from England. Samuel moved to Jones county, Iowa in 1839, settling in what is now Madison township.

He married Elizabeth Conshocken in 1841. Seven children were born: Samuel Jr in October 1842, Dednam in 1844, Mary in 1845, Hiram II in June 1847, Samantha in

# 103-year-old reformatory started as branch of state penitentiary

The first act of the Territorial Legislature relating to a penitentiary in Iowa was approved Jan. 25, 1839, to be located in the town of Fort Madison, Lee county. For 30 years this institution dealt with the problem of what to do with the criminals in Iowa.

On April 23, 1872, the 14th General Assembly appointed William Ure, Foster L. Downing, and Martin Heisey for a board of commissioners to locate and provide for the erection of an additional penitentiary.

The board met June 4, 1872, at Anamosa, Jones county, and selected a site within the corporate limits of the city. Fifteen acres were donated by the citizens of Anamosa to the State of Iowa. Also donated was 61 acres of good pastureland close to the area. Three nearby quarries were sufficient for all State demands for high quality limestone for public buildings.

L. W. Foster and Company, architects from Des Moines, furnished the plans. Work commenced Sept. 28, 1872. On May 13, 1873, 20 convicts were transferred to the "Anamosa branch of the Fort Madison penitentiary". About 12 acres had been enclosed with a board fence 16 feet high. The whole structure could accommodate 60 convicts.

During this time (about 1874) convict labor was let out to contractors for a term of 10 years, \$.403 per day per convict paid to the State, who in turn furnished shops, tools, machinery, and supervision necessary for the preservation of the prison's order and discipline.

This had its disadvantages, primarily the competition of labor at reduced prices

## The Trail--

November 1848, Bledsoe in 1849 or 1850, and Colleen in 1856.

All members of this family departed Jones county right after the Civil War but it is not known where they went. Hiram II was my great-grandfather and is reputed to have returned to Jones county in 1871, when he married Betsy Thexton.

Family records indicate that Betsy Thexton, as a widow with three small children, moved to Scott county, Kansas in 1879.

With what information I have, it is evident that Hiram II is buried somewhere in Jones county, but county records at that time were incomplete.

Will appreciate any information in Hiram Nesbitt, II, locating his gravesite and learning where Nesbitts settled after leaving J.C. John Nesbitt, 303 Edge Rd., Sooner, Kansas 76135.

against honest citizen's labor. Laws were passed prohibiting outside industries from using inmate labor. This change in the law brought about a need in the institution to provide occupations for the convicts.

The Board of Control then authorized the creation of Iowa State Industries with limited markets -- tax-supported institutions and agencies. At present there are license plates, soap, metal furniture, print, sign, and tire recapping shops. These industries plus maintenance crews and farms provide daily tasks for inmates. Earlier industries included a cooper shop (making and repairing barrels) and garment shop.

In 1873, 318 cells were completed under Warden A. E. Martin. In 1886 the building for the criminally insane was completed, and the walls erected around the insane and female departments with no openings to each other. One female was incarcerated then and only a total of 15 females from Iowa were imprisoned at Anamosa. Cellhouse "A" (North House -- the cellhouse north of the Administration building) was erected in 1889.

During the period between 1892 and 1898, under Warden P. W. Madden, the institution really started to take shape. The water works was put in; the foundations, part of the wall for the Administration building was laid; cement foundations for the north cellhouse, chapel, library buildings all were connected. The female department, administration dining room, chapel, and library were completed. The library was destroyed by fire in 1896.

Starting in 1900, the grade system was employed. The prisoners were divided into first, second and third grades. One and two grades were clothed in respectable grey, instead of stripes, and ate in the dining hall. Third grade prisoners ate in their cells. Conduct controlled the level of grade the prisoner was in and aided much in maintaining discipline.

Under Warden W. A. Hunter, who served until 1906, Cellhouse "B" (South House -- the cellhouse south of the Administration building) was erected in 1902. The school, which had fallen into a state of decline, was reorganized around 1898. A 1907 bylaw changed the institution from a penitentiary to a men's reformatory for first offenders who were 16 to 30 years old.

A separate institution for women was constructed at Rockwell City in 1918. The cellblock that housed the women was vacant for a short time until the State approved a plan to take Federal women prisoners for one-year sentences. This group of from 40 to 50 women prisoners brought the State one dollar per day per

inmate. This practice lasted only three years.

From then until 1963 the school area was used for storage. Now the Education Department through Kirkwood Community college is on contract with the institution to maintain classes from primary level to second year college level in this building.

During the depression years the inmate population increased to an all-time high of 1,489 (in 1934). When World War II came, the inmate population decreased to approximately 400 men. The decision to end work in the quarries came at this time. The institution was pretty well completed by then and the competition of privately-owned quarries (plus the fact that inmate labor was decreasing) were reasons for the decision.

Cellhouse "D" (New House -- forming part of the south wall of the institution) was built in 1936; also included in the building was the hospital. From 1936 to 1969, the criminally insane for the entire state were housed in the Reformatory.

By an act of the 62nd General Assembly, the criminally insane department was moved to Oakdale. It is now known as the Iowa Security Medical Facility and receives male residents for evaluations from the courts and from correctional facilities.

In 1968 Cellhouse "A" (North House) was condemned and presently only the New and South houses are being used.

The number of residents averaged 442, during the first six months of 1973. There are approximately 260 full-time staff members. These include correctional services, treatment services, industries and maintenance. The institution has a total of 1,465 acres, 13 of which are inside the walls.

The institution receives first felony offenders under 31 years of age whose sentences range from one year to life. The residents come in from court commitments and by transfer from the Iowa Training School for Boys at Eldora, the Iowa State Penitentiary at Fort Madison, and the Iowa Security Medical Facility at Oakdale.

The primary objective now, as it was earlier, is to release residents as soon as they have learned to cope with their problems and it is felt that they can again live within the rules of society. This is achieved through correctional rehabilitation in individualized treatment through institutional programs promoting behavioral control, academic and vocational skills, responsibility, and decision making.





*THE ODD FELLOWS LODGE was once an active group in Monticello. This photo was taken June 10, 1894 by H. W. Hagen, Monticello, who listed himself as "German photographer". The lodge members are lined up in front of a wall near the old opera house, now the location of the Monticello Community building.*

## President's Message:

A subscription and membership to the JONES COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND REVIEW, makes a wonderful gift for any occasion. Five dollars is all it takes to enroll someone as a member and give them the subscription.

We will acknowledge your gift by sending them a card. Just be sure that you have given us the correct name, address and zip code, as the post office does not forward or return non-profit bulk mail.

Whenever an inquiry is made of the Jones County Historical Society, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Most county Historical Societies exist financially because of membership dues paid. You have made great strides with your county society and museum complex, and there should be no slacking in the continued effort.

If you have not renewed your membership, please do, and encourage a friend to join, also. We need all the help we can get. Without it, the society and museum will cease to exist.

During this past year, from May to October on Sunday afternoons, the museum was manned by the curator and her volunteers for the pleasure of those visiting. We had visitors from all over and

attendance on these days varied from 12 to 75 people.

On weekdays, by special arrangement, the museum hosted many school classes, civic and fraternal groups, and individuals from other states who were doing research on early settlers. REMEMBER: 99 percent of all subscription-memberships run out on Dec. 31 of each year. \$5.00 brings you the JONES COUNTY HISTORICAL REVIEW and one membership. Additional family memberships are only \$2.00 each to the same address.

We are always in need of material for printing in the "Review", and some wonderful pieces have been submitted and used. Why not share with your society those stories of interest that you know

about? If you wish help in putting a story together, write us in care of Box 124, Monticello, and we will be happy to assist.

The museum will open on Sunday afternoons beginning May 1, 1977. On April 17, at 1 p.m. all members able are asked to meet at the museum for a general meeting, cleanup of grounds, and late afternoon picnic. Bring your utensils, meat, etc. Coffee and pop will be furnished. We have an outdoor grill for those wishing to grill meat. Rain date will be April 24.

C. L. Norlin, president  
P.S. ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO: JONES COUNTY IOWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, BOX 124, MONTICELLO, IOWA 52310

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