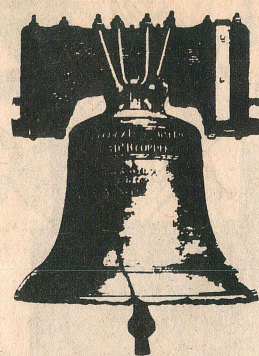
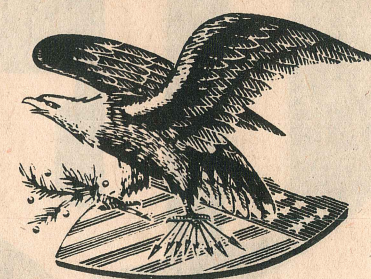


MADRID

AREA



BICENTENNIAL



1776-1976

"Rememberances of Days Gone By"

History of Elk Rapids

The following information was taken from an article written by B. Lamberti of Des Moines and appeared in an earlier edition of the Register-News. Lamberti lived around the Madrid area for many years.

Elk Rapids was the first settled area in Boone County back in the 1840's and by 1850, the town began declining. It was located in Boone County, Township 82, Range 26, Section 34, on the east side of the Des Moines River and a few miles west of Madrid. Its name was derived from the Rapids in the river at that point. The elks, which were plentiful at the time the settlement was made, were in the habit of crossing the river at the rapids.

Elk Rapids and Swede Point, (later Madrid), were the only settlements in Douglas Township before the 1860's. Douglas Township was created March 6, 1858, and was named after Stephen A. Douglas, U. S. Senator from Illinois.

The winter of 1846-47 found several hundred Indians making their winter quarters in this vicinity. Some of them turned renegades and did heavy property damage to the Milton Lott home. A few of the residents of Elk Rapids took part in hunting down these Indians. The first recorded death in Boone County was that of Lott's son, which was a result of the incident. He died of exposure going for help along the Des Moines River.

Early Businesses

The first store for the sale of dry goods and Mr. Williams in 1850. The man opening the store was named Sawson. He was not only the first merchant in Douglas Township, but also in Boone County.



This mill, known as the Boles Mill, was first located in Elk Rapids in 1855. It was owned by two brothers, Johnathan and Adam. The mill was used to grind flour for many of the farmers in this area.

A mill was built by the settlers in 1850 for grinding grain. The burrs were made out of large round stones called "niggerheads" that were found in the local area. A freshet carried the mill away in 1857 and it was not rebuilt. This particular incident helped lead to the decline of this Boone County community.

A lumber mill was started in 1855 and this equipment was moved in from Keokuk. This same equipment was later used in Madrid for 59 more years.

Dr. Jonathan Rice, one of the first physicians to practice his profession in this county was located at



The Elk Rapids schoolhouse is pictured above. One time a village schoolhouse, it stood at the foot of a hill in the east part of town. Early pioneer teachers were H. R. Wilson, Phillip Eversoll, J. W. Madison, B. Williams and Joseph Keys.

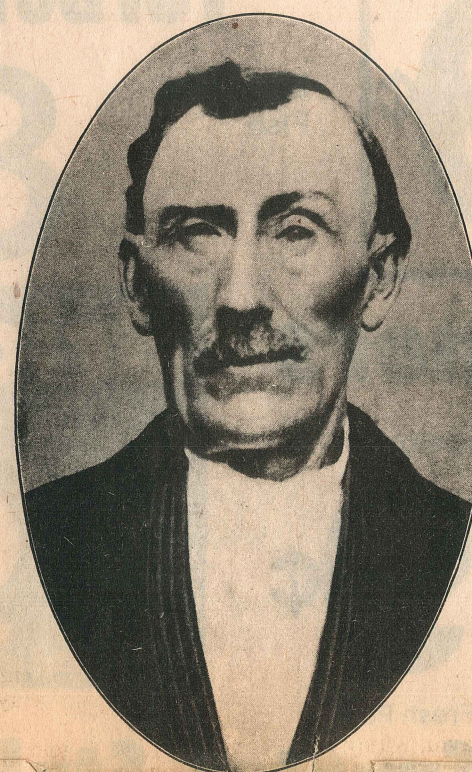
The building is presently located behind the Bob Howard residence.

A village school was erected at the foot of a hill in the east end of town and remained there until 1870. Early teachers included H. R. Wilson, Phillip Eversoll, J. W. Madison, B. Williams and Joseph Keys. The pioneer school disappeared and a more modern one was built about a mile northeast.

A road bridge was built across the Des Moines River. It too was known as the Elk Rapids bridge and this structure remained intact until 1960 when it was

dismantled and a new bridge was built a few hundred feet south of the old structure.

Early settlers in the area were C. W. Gaston, Ben Williams, Montgomery McCall and S. Clark. Gaston is given credit to be the first permanent settler in this area. He passed through this section of land in 1835 while a dragoon soldier. Upon release from the service, he went to Missouri and later returned to this area in January 1846. He married Anna C. Dalander in 1849 and later was responsible for the renaming of the community of Swede Point. He died in 1892 and is buried in Dalander Cemetery.



BENJAMIN WILLIAMS



CHARLES GASTON

Ben Williams settled near the homestead of C. W. Gaston in June 1846. This section of land had an abundance of maple trees so he kept the area supplied with maple sugar for a period of between six and seven years. His wife, Ailcy Williams died in June of 1850 and she was buried in a cemetery which was located a short distance south of Elk Rapids. This was the first spot of ground dedicated for a cemetery in Boone County. The Elk Rapids cemetery consisted of two acres of land donated by Williams. This cemetery contained the bodies of such Boone County pioneers as Joseph Bernico, John and Albert Williams, Mr. McCall, Joshua Wheeler, L. L. Wheeler, and three Civil War soldiers: Isaac Hughes, Robert Robertson, and John Gulick. According to reports received, the last bodies entered in the cemetery in 1894. The land was then sold to John Dalander in 1860 and he reserved the rights to the cemetery. The bodies were later moved to

make way for the new railroad bridge across the Des Moines River. Most of the bodies were relocated at Mount Hope cemetery south of Madrid.

The new bridge was known as the Elk Rapids Viaduct and was 2380 feet long, and 146 feet high. The fill east of the river contained 1,250,000 cubic yards of dirt. It was built by some of the residents of the Phildia coal camp located a few miles south of the bridge.

Relocation of Elk Rapids Cemetery

It was back in May of 1973 that some of the early Boone County cemeteries were destroyed because of the Saylorville Lake project. In all, around 120 graves were moved to nearby cemeteries in the immediate area.

The majority of the graves were located in two small cemeteries that had to be removed because of their location within the flood storage area of the Saylorville reservoir.

The Corydon cemetery, located one and one-half miles south of Polk City contained 14 graves and these were reinterred in the Polk City cemetery.

The Elk Rapids cemetery, located two miles west of Madrid, contained 103 graves with one hundred of these moved to the Dalander cemetery, 2.7 miles northeast of the Elk Rapids cemetery and three plots were moved to the Mineral Ridge cemetery one-half miles west of Ridgeport, in Dodge township in Boone County.

The three graves in the Cole Cemetery, located 2 and one-half miles west of town were taken to the Dalander cemetery. The access road to the Cole cemetery was closed by the project and the land on the sides of the cemetery was incorporated into the project.

CORRECTION

In the September 25 Bicentennial story concerning the Indians and their activities in the Madrid area, a reference was made to Benjamin Williams, a man who settled in the Madrid area in June of 1846.

It was reported that descendants of Williams are Mrs. Rex Bellinger and Vaughn Lucas. Upon further information received, it was learned that Vaughn Lucas is not a descendant of Mr. Williams.

A special thanks to Mrs. Wicker for bringing this to our attention.

HELP!

We need your help! Within the next few weeks we hope to run a story on the Madrid Public School system, but we are short of information.

Anyone having information or pictures concerning the school at anytime in its history is urged to stop by or contact us at 795-2730.

Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.