



THE LAND, ABSTRACT AND ROCK VALLEY MILL



In the Fall of 1965, a move was imminent. Our destination was unknown for several months. The opportunities were widespread and varied. We viewed and dreamed of a bowling alley, skating rink, bar, laundromat and motel. The decision was made to buy a small mobile home park on the edge of the woods. It was like bungee jumping to a new location. Shady Oaks was near the Marshall County seat town of Marshalltown, Iowa (just three miles east of the intersection of Highways 30 and 14 and one-quarter mile north on Shady Oaks Road).

It was difficult to leave family, friends and memories in Polk, Dallas and Guthrie Counties. My mind was flooded with doubts and anticipation. After four and one-half decades, I was leaving everything and nothing behind. My husband, Robert ("Bob"), still had one brother and five sisters. Our daughter, Judy Jurgensen (recently divorced), and her three-year-old son, Michael ("Micky"), were also making the move. Micky was a joy to me. With his help, boxes were chosen at the grocery store and packed for the venture ahead. All of my living family would be making the move to Shady Oaks.

"The grand essentials of happiness are something to do, something to love, something to look forward to."

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

I liked the storybook setting of Shady Oaks and could visualize it as it had been in its beginning on the Main Street of America, the Lincoln Highway. The historic area brought back childhood memories of my first vacations, staying in cabin camps and visiting with other guests in the evening. One didn't travel as far in that day, and I looked forward to a new, little home each night.

It was easy to transform Shady Oaks into a small island southeast of Marshalltown's mainland, connected to it by the Rainbow Bridge. I thought of the site as "Shady Oaks Junction."

Sometimes following the move, even on sunny days, my eyes were blinded by tears.

My inner self bubbled through, as I thought of familiar places and faces I would see only now and then or never again. I found the woodland setting nostalgic and quaint. I felt like Red Riding Hood living on the edge of the deep woods. The area was filled with secrets known only by the old, gnarled oak, elm and maple trees.

On foggy mornings, the stately oaks loomed tall like sentinels guarding the little camp area. I did not realize that the ghost-like moths flitting about were the spirits of previous inhabitants that I would later come to know. When the fog lifted over Timber Creek Meadow, it was like a huge, purple velvet curtain raising on a giant stage. This vista is timeless. Steam, curling like smoke, followed the small stream as it trickled along the property and then entered the larger creek that crossed the County through the rough and beautiful terrain known as Timber Valley.

The redheaded woodpeckers, flickers and jays were large and noisy. It was their abode, along with the squirrels, deer and other woodland creatures. The morning and night sounds were comparable to an environmental experience tape. From the beginning, I became a puppet on a woodland stage. My actions would be prompted and controlled by the location of our home and business. The beautiful trees would produce many leaves to be raked each fall, and the small stream would continue to have a mind of its own.

In March, the adjacent Shady Oaks Cafe ("Cafe") reopened, as it did every spring after being closed for a couple of months. Cars lined both sides of the road from the Cafe north past our driveway. The tantalizing aroma of steak wafted in the air each evening. Many businessmen from Marshalltown drove out to the Cafe on Friday evenings. At closing time, people chatted happily as they walked to their cars and called good night to one another.

To everything, there is a season; and the spring's awakening ritual was a beautiful sight. The huge, bare trees burst forth with lacy green foliage. The forest floor was marbled with lavender, pink and white

wildflowers. There were thick carpets of timid purple and white violets. Golden dandelions followed the small stream.

Periwinkle trailed down the rock hill, and fern monsters uncoiled. Delicate shades of Virginia waterleaf, sweet William and spring beauty dotted the south hill. The legendary trout lily sprung up in profusion on the woodland floor. Legend says that trout fishing is fine when the leaves have brown spots. Later, dayflowers or hula skirts of tall grass encircled the big trees.

In the summer, bright orange tiger lilies swayed above the mixture of five-foot tall prairie grasses that outlined the little, meandering stream. In one corner of the back yard, there were old-fashioned hollyhocks of every hue. Wild roses blossomed by the roadside. By fall, the tall, coarse grasses, skirting the small stream, became very dry. They disappeared one inky, dark evening in a blaze of glory like a prairie fire. Tumbleweeds raced down the highway before the snow blew.

*The essentials for happiness
(according to Emerson) are all mine.*

The inspiring history of my new home in Section 8 of LeGrand Township goes back to the Treaty of 1842 when the Sac and Fox Indian tribes ceded their beloved Iowa land to the United States Government. This opened up the land for settlement which is now Marshall County. In 1847, just one year after Iowa became a state, Joseph Davison became the first permanent, white settler in Section 8 of what is now LeGrand Township (established 1855). He is recognized for growing the first corn in the County. Joseph was soon followed by his brother, William.

This period in history is known as the "Fabulous Forties." Gold was discovered in California, and Easterners were migrating west. The railroad and telegraph were beginning to link the nation together. James K. Polk, the 11th President, served from 1845 to 1849. Zachary Taylor was next; he was the first President to die in office. Millard Fillmore took office in July of 1850.

Many of the first settlers who came to Iowa were from states where woodland farms were prevalent. If a family came from a wooded area, they relocated close to streams and timber. In 1848, a number of people erected

their cabins in the grove along Timber Creek. This detached grove contained 5,000 acres of the best timber in the County. The leading varieties were different kinds of oak, walnut, hickory, butternut, cottonwood, maple, locust, sycamore, hackberry, ash and elm.

According to an 1878 list of Marshall County's "Real Pioneers" who came prior to 1850, the names of John Fletcher Campbell, William Asher and Carpenter Gear were among the 50 some mentioned. Today, however, the Marshall County Historical Society considers anyone who lived here before 1885 as a "pioneer." By 1848, there were eight families in the County and four single men. Thus, Campbell was one of the four eligible bachelors of the day.

Campbell was born in 1824 in Tennessee. He was one of eleven children born to David and Sarah (Kines) Campbell. In 1830, his family moved to Sangamon County (near Springfield), Illinois. Twenty-one year old Abraham Lincoln also moved to Sangamon County the same year. Campbell and Lincoln were acquaintances and split rails together. The Campbell's were lured westward once again, and they settled near Lynn Grove (Lynnville, Jasper County, Iowa) in 1845.

On March 13, 1848, a small party of settlers, including young Campbell and Joseph Cooper, set out to explore the territory to the north. The first night they camped on the wooded banks of Timber Creek. Spring had come early that year. The next day they traveled further north to the west fork of the Iowa River (Arney Bend) but found nothing to their liking. On March 18th, they returned to the Timber Creek area and staked their claims.

The settlers then went home to prepare for their move. On April 1, 1848, the settlers returned to their claims. The Coopers brought a team of oxen, and another family had a team of horses; these teams are reputed as the first in the County.

Later in the Spring of 1848, William Asher, a millwright, and young Campbell built a gristmill on Linn Creek. Campbell named the Creek in memory of his previous home. The Mill was a folly, as high water washed the dam away. However, the determined friends and partners were not disheartened.

Meanwhile, Campbell learned that the first land patent in Marshall County had been granted to Joseph Cooper. It was transferred

by the government to a land office in Iowa City on June 1, 1848, at a cost of \$1.25 per acre.

Filled with inspiration, Campbell blazed trees on the banks of Timber Creek (his original claim) in the Fall of 1848. The partners (Campbell and Asher) had decided to build a grist mill. The tree-lined banks and abundance of leaves were essential for a mill site as they slowed spring thawing.

To give you some idea as to where the Mill was located, look back the long lane across the road from the defunct Shady Oaks Cafe. The Mill was just south of the lane on the edge of the mill pond. The perimeter of the pond is easily identifiable yet today.

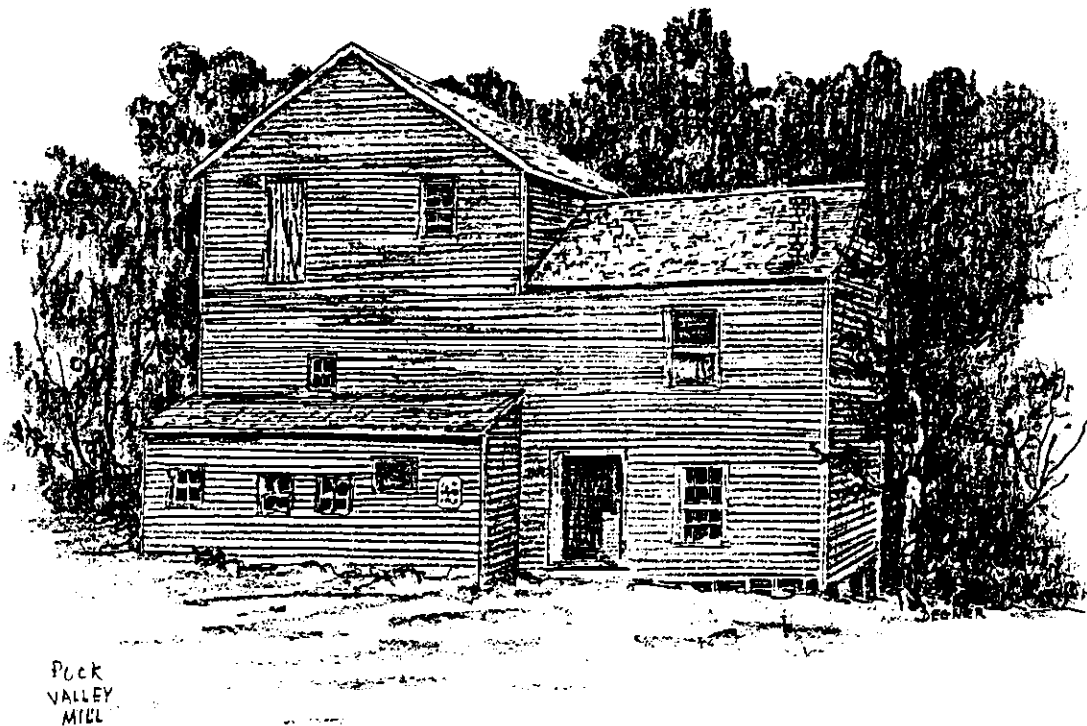
The Winter of 1848-1849 was very severe due to deep snow. In the spring, the melting snow filled the streams rendering travel impossible; and pioneers in the County had little knowledge of each other. South of the little settlement on Timber Creek was an obscure wagon trail that extended on to the Skunk River. Another wagon trail along the south side of the Iowa River could be traced to settlements west of Iowa City. These trails

were made by early trappers and hunters who followed the river in quest of fur-bearing animals and game.

Wild turkeys, geese, ducks, prairie chicken, grouse and quail were found almost everywhere. In the timber, there were wildcats, deer, wolves, raccoon and possum. The streams were full of pike and pickerel. Game was plentiful, and there were no game laws. The settlers caught, seined and speared fish at will; and they shot and trapped game for their meat supplies. These hardy pioneers braved the new west to build the civilization we enjoy today.

Prior to the railroads in Iowa, small villages were often located at suitable mill locations. John Campbell located at such a site. However, the little Rock Valley community never became a town. Many of the first roads led to the nearest mill; thus, Shady Oaks Road was once such a route, or trail.

Campbell and Asher's Rock Valley Mill began operations in 1849. It was Marshall County's first beneficial mill. Customers brought their own grain (corn) to be ground,



Rock Valley Mill

as it was the only alternative to doing it by hand. They came on horseback or with wagons drawn by oxen or horses. Since the early settlers used cornmeal daily, the Mill was of prime importance. It was undoubtedly the first public building in the County. Asher soon relinquished his interest in the Mill and moved to Hardin County.

The Mill was a three-story structure built out of native oak. The timbers that formed the framework were 14 inches square. The foundation was made of stone, as the supply was plentiful in Rock Valley. The broadside of the structure faced the north, and the millrace was on the west side. The water wheel was flat on the flume to allow flood gates to be closed during high water, or until the flow of water was sufficient to turn the wheel. Although the wheel was not a true turbine, it had one characteristic of a turbine - the water ran through it rather than over it. Some of the remains of the old Mill and its foundation were later used in the original Shady Oaks Cabin Camp buildings. This property was also a part of Campbell's 40-acre claim.

Our abstract begins with a Certificate of Entry dated January 8, 1850 to John F. Campbell from the United States. However, many events would transpire in the months preceding the signing of the Patent.

Campbell was king of all the possessions he had acquired. The land was along the edge of the timber which gave him logs for his home, fuel and fences; game was plentiful; the Creek provided a good supply of fish; and a nearby spring provided drinking water.

Timber Creek, the largest and most important Creek in the County, is supplied in great measure by springs. This Creek, as well as all others, was many times larger at that time and provided a good supply of cold, crystal-clear water all year long. Mighty Timber Creek, intersected by streams, threads its way across the southern 23 miles of the County on its way to the Iowa River.

*All man-made things must come and go,
while rivers and streams endlessly flow.*

Prior to the settlement of this County by whites, it was inhabited by the Sac and Fox people, now called Musquakas (1875 spelling). They were remnants of the once powerful nations presided over by the warlike Black

Hawk. Many of the first pioneers in this area were trappers who lived peacefully in little log cabins, some without windows and doors. Wolves and coyotes were nightly visitors, and their howls pierced the silent nights. Bands of roving Indians often camped nearby.

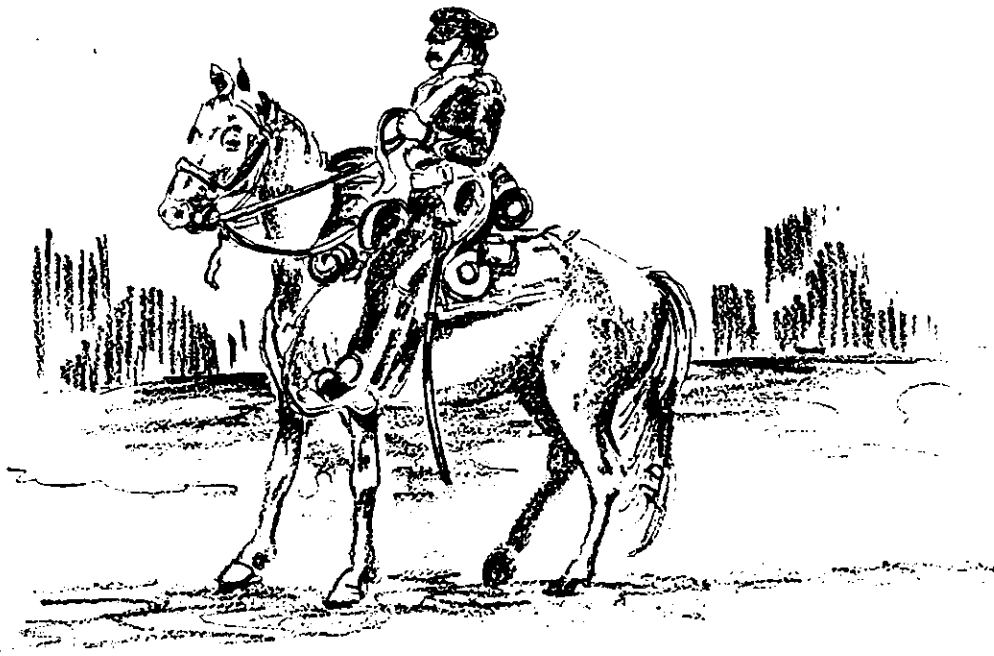
The Indians living along Timber Creek and east along the Iowa River resented the encroachment of the white man in the valley they called home. Thus, pioneer families coming into Marshall County, even after its establishment in 1849, were not welcomed.

In May of 1850, Indians plundered John Campbell's claim (Shady Oaks today). The Musquakas drove off his cattle, killed his hogs and made unpleasant threats. Young Samuel Davison, son of William Davison, and a few other settlers retaliated by taking matters into their own hands. The men destroyed much of the Indians' corn crop and burnt their wigwams while they were away on a hunting expedition. This foolish act nearly brought bloodshed to the Marshall County frontier.

The Chief of the Musquakas was in Washington at the time. The settlers were apprehensive as to what would happen when the Chief returned. Meanwhile, word spread that a large number of Indians had gathered in Tama County, near the site of Montour. The anxious settlers decided to build a stockade for defense and sent messengers out for arms and ammunition. Not wanting to abandon their new land, homes and crops, the settlers began building a fort out of split timber, or puncheons.

When the Indians returned from their hunting expedition and found their village burned, a few went to "help" the white settlers who were building the fort. The whites told them that the fort was being built as protection against the Sioux, who were hereditary enemies of the Musquakas. The whites thought the Indians' offer to help was a ruse; however, the Indians showed the settlers how to make loop-holes in the fort and left peacefully.

Fort Robinson was named in honor of the widow who owned the land. Construction on the Fort began on June 11, 1850. Upon its completion, 24 families took refuge. This embraced most of the settlers in the County. Among those seeking shelter were William Asher, Carpenter Geer and John Campbell. James A. Logan was selected as Captain of the garrison.



Dragoon

From a military standpoint, Fort Robinson was strategically absurd. It was built high on a hill, and nearby trees offered cover for Indians stalking the Fort. Water had to be carried from a spring 300 yards away. The spring that provided water for this frightened group of early settlers still flows. It has been measured many times and never varies from its 60-gallon per minute flow in both wet and dry times, and the spring never freezes.

The settlers had to fend for themselves, because Major Wood, who was stationed in Fort Dodge, could not spare any of his troupes. In early July, Major Williams and a battalion of United States Dragoons arrived on the scene; and the Indians peacefully left the Iowa River Valley. John Campbell returned to his home (Shady Oaks) just as the other heroes of Fort Robinson returned to their respective homes.

Fort Robinson was located approximately three and one-half miles (as the crow flies) southwest of the Mill. Now, a boulder with an engraved plaque marks the location which was 80 rods west. It can be found at the top of a hill one mile south of Highway 30 on Smith Avenue.

The Dragoons were an elite army cavalry unit sent to scout, police and keep peace on the Indian frontier (land west of the Mississippi). On May 20, 1843, a big steamboat carrying Captain James Allen and 52 United States Dragoons chugged upstream and around the bend to a place called Racoon Forks on the shores of the Des Moines River. It was the day the white man took over this piece of pristine wilderness. The Dragoons set up Fort Des Moines and then headed north to present-day Fort Dodge.

The actual land Patent further states that on December 2, 1850, "John F. Campbell of Marshall County, Iowa, has deposited in the General Land Office of the United States, a Certificate of the Register of the land office at Iowa City whereby it appears that full payment was made by the said John F. Campbell according to the provisions of the Act of Congress of the 24th of April, 1820, entitled 'An act making further provision for the sale of the Public Lands' . . ." Millard Fillmore, then President, caused these Letters to be made PATENT and the seal of the General Land Office was affixed on the document. Campbell continued to live in this rich, beautiful countryside and was a successful farmer.

The pertinent legal description in this historical 1850 document refers to "Township," not LeGrand Township. In March of 1852, the County had three townships; and this property was in Jefferson Township which had a total of 31 people. In 1855, the County was redivided; and LeGrand became one of the 17 townships.

Some historians include Carpenter Gear as a partner in the Rock Valley Mill. More likely, Gear was the miller, or manager, as his name is not on our abstract. He expanded the Rock Valley operation to harness Timber Creek and include a saw mill. The floods of the early 1850s were possibly of the same magnitude as the floods of 1993; thus, it was an excellent time for the Mill to expand. Contrary to common belief, the saw mill was not adjacent to the flour mill. The eight-acre tract for the saw mill was located in a wooded area southeast of the former Shady Oaks Cafe. Saw mills were necessary, as boards were needed to build barns, homes and fences.

In 1851, Henry Anson built a cabin on what is now Main Street in Marshalltown. He named his little settlement Marshall. Nearby, a friendly Sac Indian chief, Che Muese, helped many of the early settlers get established in the wilderness divide between Linn Creek and the Iowa River.

The Sac and Fox Indians who had been moved to Kansas in the Autumn of 1845 were now trickling back into Iowa to the hunting grounds they loved. The homesick Indians staunchly refused to return to the reservation in Kansas.

The growing farm population turned its attention to growing wheat as a companion crop to corn. Fresh meat and wheat flour were sought-after commodities. Wheat bread and wild honey, found in hollow trees along the streams, were prized table delicacies. Food in those days consisted of wild game, salt pork, turnips, fresh or dried pumpkin, hominy and corn bread.

Early in 1851, Campbell and Asher dissolved their partnership in Rock Valley Mill. Green Ralls became the owner at that time, and he sold out to Samuel Bowman in 1852. Financial reverses beset the Mill, and it went to Isaac N. Griffith the same year. Griffith modernized the operation with new machinery to grind the wheat being grown locally, as milling was a very profitable business.

At first, the Mill had two millstones (French burrs), each 2.5 feet across, and a grinding (corn cracking) capacity of eight to ten bushels an hour. The new stone milling burrs were eight to twelve inches thick and four feet across. Wheat stones were of harder temper than the stones used for corn. The original millstones, perhaps made from prairie boulders, were very soft and incapable of grinding wheat into flour. However, the Mill was invaluable to the population then pouring into the new County to take up land patents between the Years 1850-52.

Mark Webb and James Allman laid out the Village of LeGrand. It was three miles east of the Rock Valley Mill. In 1852, Griffith (at the Mill) was their nearest neighbor. These early settlers had to travel to Marengo to get their mail. For Griffith, the round trip was 100 miles.

Griffith is also remembered as one of the founders of the Methodist Church in Marshall County. His cabin at the Rock Valley Mill was the scene of its first organizational meeting in 1852. Nettie Sanford described this picturesque scene in her book, "Marshall County History" (published in 1867). "The first camp fires ever built by the Marshall Mission flamed through the forest near Griffith's mill on Timber Creek. . . . the old-fashioned Methodists from far and near, met in prayer and praise . . ."

In April of 1852, Father Solomon Dunton arrived at Rock Valley Mill on horseback with Bible and saddlebags. Dunton, a circuit missionary preacher from the State Capital in Iowa City, was sent to assist in the founding of the Marshall Mission. He had attempted the trip in 1851, but high water made it impossible to reach the Mill.

In the beginning, seven men constituted the church's official membership; and by the end of the first year, the number had increased to 75. The congregation was undoubtedly larger because of families settling in the area. The Missionary appropriation of \$75 was divided between the Presiding Elder (\$25) and Father Dunton (\$50). Dunton also received \$2 "quartermage."

The Methodist Circuit was organized in 1853, and the timbered area around the Mill (Shady Oaks) was the site of revival camp meetings. The First United Methodist Church on the corner of Second and Main Streets in

Marshalltown is an outgrowth of this early Mission.

In early Methodism, the camp meetings were widely used in frontier areas. People came to a site in wagons. Families brought their own provisions and stayed for several days, sometimes in tents. Crude pulpits were erected, and services were held throughout the day. It was not unusual for several men to preach from different stands at the same time. Methodist camp-meeting grounds for revivals dotted America.

Politics became Griffith's downfall. As the 1850s began, tempers became frayed over the location of the Marshall County seat. Things became so heated that by early Winter of 1852, County Judge John Hobbs resigned. In the Summer of 1853, an election was called; and the County polling place was at Rock Valley Mill. There were 22 voters. Griffith, the Democratic candidate, lost the election to the Whig candidate, William C. Smith. He was the first Whig candidate ever elected to public office in Marshall County. It was not a judicial position, but would compare to the County Board of Supervisors.

Disgruntled, Griffith decided to leave the area. On December 19, 1853, he deeded the Mill and adjoining farm land to a newly arrived German immigrant, Charles Brennecke, who

made the Rock Valley Mill even more successful. When the Mill changed owners, the carefully guarded water rights went with the purchase.

Brennecke was born in Prussia, July 4, 1814. He was a graduate architect and left Heidelberg, Germany, for America in 1842, first settling in Cumberland, Maryland. He helped design and construct the long bridge at Harper's Ferry which was destined to become famous in the annals of the Civil War. This husband and father moved to Iowa in 1854, settling immediately on his newly-purchased property, Rock Valley Mill and Farm.

During the early Civil War years, farmers in LeGrand township realized the low sum of 30 cents a bushel for their wheat. A few years later the advent of the "iron horse" opened a new market for the farmers' products.

On November 11, 1856, John Campbell married his sweetheart, Matilda Ann Denney, in Timber Creek Township. Prior to this (Spring 1852), Campbell (27) and his brother, Mathias (23), went by stagecoach to join in the search for gold in California. It will never be known if the Campbells found gold. During the entire journey, John wore a buckskin vest lined with \$2,400 in gold coins. The brothers' return trip was made via boat through the Isthmus of Panama to New York and by stagecoach back to Iowa.



Methodist Mission Camp Fire

The Land, Abstract and Rock Valley Mill

On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued his Emancipation Proclamation that freed the slaves in the South. Marshalltown was incorporated as a town that same year. The Marshall Methodist Mission, which was meeting in both the Rock Valley Schoolhouse and the Courthouse, began plans for a new building. The railroad was complete, and train service from east to west was in effect. According to the 1860 United States census, there were two grist mills and six sawmills in Marshall County; one of each was located in Rock Valley. At the peak, 13 mills (saw and grist) operated in the County.

Brennecke, a shrewd businessman, operated Rock Valley Mill for 12 years. He also added a small lime kiln and a store at the Mill. Brennecke's store was the second such enterprise in the new County, coming just after the Allman store in LeGrand, and before any store in Marshalltown or Marietta.

As more and more acres of wheat were planted in the County, Brennecke continued to improve the capacity of the Rock Valley Grist Mill. He was, as most millers were, an authority on all subjects. A continuous parade of creaking wagons traversed the road to the Mill. Some camped at the Rock Valley Schoolhouse grounds (Shady Oaks). Farmers waiting for service exchanged tales, or stories, while their horses snorted and pawed at the well-packed dirt. Since Brennecke charged ten cents per bushel for grinding grain, some customers were forced to exchange work for their milling fee. Other Mill visitors bided their time by fishing in Timber Creek.

Meanwhile, Brennecke's business prospered; and his family prospered too. Charles and his wife, Catherine (Riemenschneider) Brennecke, had seven children, five girls and two boys.

Brennecke firmly believed that the milling business was at its high-water mark when he sold the saw mill to Noah Hanks (July) and grist mill to Issachar Scholfield (October) in 1866. Wheat blight soon became a serious problem, and flour was more readily available. Wheat blight softened the partially filled-out grain heads and diminished the yield. This forced farmers to grow other crops. Charles Brennecke's shrewd business instincts paid off; thus, his retirement years were spent living in ease in Marshalltown. Today, his

descendants are prominent in Marshall County.

According to our abstract, Hanks then sold the eight acres, together with all appurtenances including the saw mill thereon with the full right, benefit and privilege of the water power connected therewith, to Issachar Scholfield the same year (1866). Scholfield built the LeGrand Mill on the Iowa River; and he and his brother, Thomas, operated both mills from 1866 to 1869.

The late Raymond Handorf's grandparents told him that folks from the Dillon area often left grain to be ground at the Rock Valley Mill on their way to Marshalltown. On their way home, they would again stop at the Mill to pick up the flour.

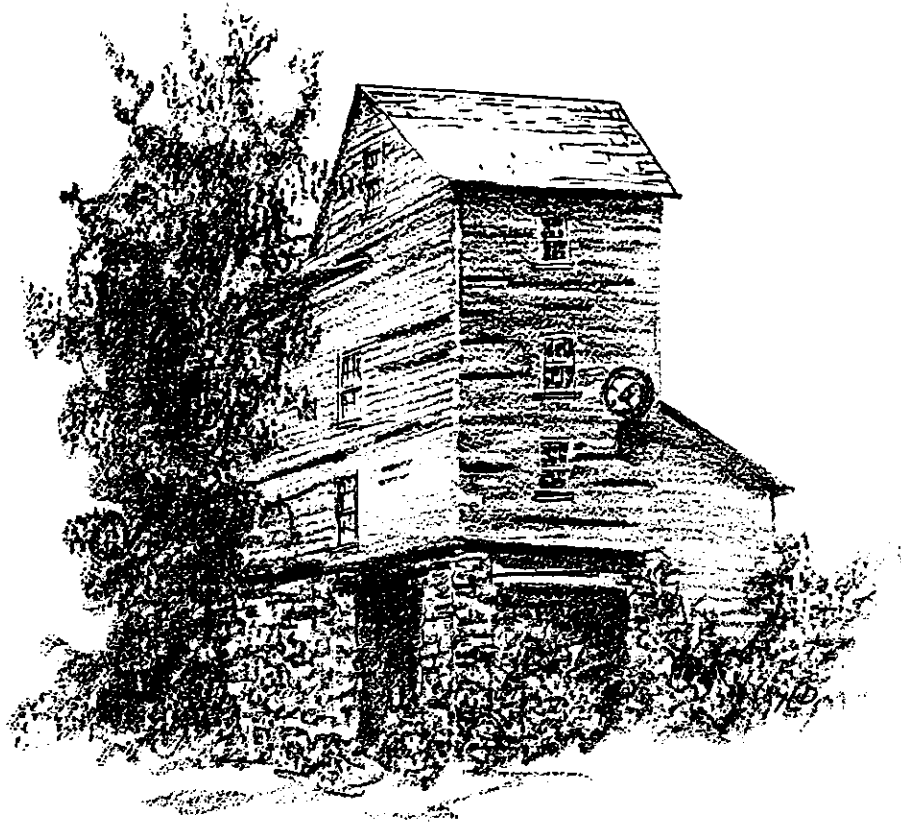
Entry #16 of our abstract indicates that the Mill was sold to Jerry Forney and Edward Thayer on January 4, 1869: "For the consideration of \$15,000, we convey this land, including the Flouring Mill and all tools, fixtures and appurtenances connected therewith and used in running the same, also the right acquired by the said Scholfield to back water by virtue of using of said Mill and dam and all rights of easements to flow back the water (water rights) for the use of said Mill granted me by Elijah Jones, S. W. Hill and E. G. Rogers." H. E. J. Boardman loaned the men \$5,000 to buy the Mill.

Forney sold his half of the Mill to Edward Thayer on August 22, 1870 for \$7,500.

When payment was not made according to the terms of the six-month note, Boardman filed a lawsuit seeking payment plus interest. At a sheriff's auction on July 19, 1873, he bid \$6,640 (the Mill's indebtedness). This bought Boardman the sheriff's deed to the Mill property and adjoining 60 acres.

Boardman was a successful Marshalltown attorney who built his home in the mid-1860s on the corner of Third Avenue and East Main Street. His home became part of the Evangelical Hospital in 1914. The basement of the home remains, and today it is used for storage by the Marshalltown Medical and Surgical Center.

The flour and lumber milling business was dwindling. Steampower was replacing waterpower. The water mills could not run all the time. In hot summer, the water could be too low; and in winter, it might freeze too deep. Steam became a more economical way of milling.



Rock Valley Mill

On July 2, 1875, Boardman sold the Mill property for \$7,500 to S. C. and J. J. Reedy, who, in turn, sold it to Robert Ralls for the same price. Ralls experienced financial failure; and in 1876, he turned it back to Boardman to escape the \$5,500 mortgage. Mill owners were now shipping in, grinding and selling wheat from Dakota.

In the 1880s, Rock Valley Mill fell into disuse and the millstones were lost in the mud. The property flowed through a succession of owners. In the Fall of 1882, Boardman sold the Mill to Charles Low, who sold it to Corydon Bramer Moore in April of 1886. According to Entry #28 in our abstract, J. F. Campbell and his wife, Matilda, filed a quit-claim deed to Corydon B. Moore on November 11, 1886, so the warranty deed would be free and clear.

Several years later, Matilda Campbell died quite suddenly. Thursday, July 5, 1894, the evening Times-Republican ("TR") stated, "Her death was a great shock to the family and community, as the Campbells were among the

best known and most highly esteemed people in this County, of which they were pioneer settlers. The deceased was 61 years of age and five children, two sons and three daughters, all married, survive her." Friends were invited to the funeral service at their home, and interment was at Timber Creek cemetery.

In March of 1905, Moore rented the Mill property to newlyweds, John A. and Mable (Mills) Chinn. Two years later their daughter, Josephine (Sipling), was born in the back bedroom of the yellow house that sat on a mound near the Mill. The family lived there for three years. The young bride, and former schoolteacher at Rock Valley School, resented living so close to the unsightly, old Mill.

In November of 1905, John Campbell took ill and died at the Cooper home a week before Christmas. Campbell had quit farming and was making his home with his daughters, Mary Eva (wife of Jewel Perry Cooper) and Emma B. (wife of Preston W. Hogancamp) of Marshalltown. The December 18th TR noted, "One of the Earliest Settlers of the County

dies Sunday Morning." Surviving the deceased were two sons (David and Issac), and three daughters (Sarah E. Kelley, Mary and Emma). His wife Matilda and a son Alvin preceded him in death. He was 81 years old. The funeral service was at the First Baptist Church and burial was in Timber Creek Cemetery. It is also the burial plot for Robert, Albert and Delia who died in infancy. Campbell had staked his Rock Valley Mill claim only 57 years earlier.

The next family to occupy the Mill property was Austin Abraham Ash and his wife, Nancy. Their four oldest children, Rhondo, Rosa (York), May (Walters) and Ida (Butcher), were born at that location between 1910 and 1915. Ida (deceased 1994) was named after Ida Weise, the lady who lived with her son in the little white house across the road from them.

In 1917, when Rosa was four, her father cleared the tall timber near the home of Ida Weise. Shady Oaks Gas Station/Eatery was later built just north of the Weise home. Rosa delighted in riding with her dad, as he hauled the lumber up their lane. She remembers the sound of the iron-rimmed wagon wheels and the size of the long buck saw used to cut up the wood.

The Mill was still standing in disrepair while the Ash family lived at Rock Valley. The road to their house was within 20 feet of the Rock Valley Mill. An image of the flour mill and how the flow of water controlled the operation lingers in Rosa's mind.

Another of Rosa's childhood memories is the time she sank in quicksand in the middle of the road. The Iowa gumbo entrapped little Rosa up to her knees. Her mother sat on a board to rescue her, pulling out and cleaning off one of Rosa's legs at a time. Rosa insists that her mud pies were the best.

Unfortunate circumstances befell Corydon Moore who was still the owner of the Mill property. In 1915, his wife Matilda was confined to the Marshall County Poor Farm. He continued to farm, cultivate and improve his land, personally or through tenants.

John Garwood, a free-lance writer from Marshalltown (now deceased) remembered the five-and-a-half-mile buggy trip from Marshalltown to the Rock Valley Mill pond. The pond was an enlarged part of the mill stream created by a dam to ensure predicable

water flow. The three-acre pond attracted young and old. The area was ideal for picnics and baseball games.

When the Lincoln Highway was graded in the 1920s, the dam that created the Mill pond was destroyed as well as the associated appurtenances and Mill. Only the Rock Valley Mill pond lingered as a landmark of this early American scene in Marshall County.

Around 1922, the Norton brothers, William and Leslie, of Marshalltown leased a parcel of land from Corydon Moore. The neighbors were curious. Their dream is disclosed in the chapter entitled "Genre of Shady Oaks."

Corydon B. Moore died in April of 1927. His wife preceded him in death in June of 1926. Heirs included a son, James, and a daughter, Emma Mae. Each parcel of land in the Estate had to be appraised and sold separately for not less than the appraised value by the Administrator of the Moore Estates. It was a lengthy procedure. The Patent from the United States to John F. Campbell was recorded on August 2, 1930, 80 years later. The name of Leslie R. Norton now appeared in the chain of title to the Shady Oaks property.

In 1930, the Mill property was sold to C. H. and Alice M. Harris. Their son and his wife, Marion and Della, moved on the property. Their daughter, Jeannine (Harris) Quick-Schneider, now of Marshalltown, still remembers the beautiful patch of violets that grew beside the long lane between the Lincoln Highway and her home and picking a bouquet for her mother's birthday in May.

Jeannine was fortunate that Bart Lawler lived across the road. He was a trustworthy lad, and they became friends. Although she only attended kindergarten and first grade at Rock Valley, they met at Shady Oaks and walked up the road to school together.

One Christmas, Jeannine received a pair of ice skates with four blades, similar to roller skates. Although skating on the mill pond with her dad was fun, it was quite evident that she would never be an Olympic figure skater.

On hot summer days, Jeannine skipped alongside her mother across the pasture to a special shallow place in the Creek where she was allowed to wade. The wrap-around front porch was a great place to ride her tricycle, except on

washdays. Every Monday, her mother carried buckets of hot water from the big copper boiler on the cook stove to the washing machine on the porch.

In these simple times, the kitchen sink had a cloth skirt around it to hide the pail beneath it to catch the water. Jars of home-canned goods were stored on shelves in the pantry, and the cream separator stood nearby. Her parents' bedroom adjoined the living room where there was a large, coal-burning stove. Jeannine's bedroom was upstairs next to a storage room.

Typical of the day, the farm home was complete with a well and pump, outhouse (and catalogs), barn and small garage used to store feed. The cellar door provided a great jumping-off place for more daring moments. Jeannine couldn't forget, "Our wonderful police dog named Ranger guarded me like an angel from above."

Next, Arlo Harris (brother of Marion) and his wife Rita lived at the mill house from the late 1930s until 1947. One winter, the lane was buried under four feet of snow. Ice skating on the Rock Valley Mill Pond provided recreation for the young people.

According to Rita, "We have many fond memories of Shady Oaks and a few that aren't, like my cook stove, the outdoor plumbing and walking in knee-deep snow down the long lane to catch a ride to work." Treasured keepsakes are pictures of family picnics down by the pond, farm dogs (Spotty, Bowser and Mickey) and Arlo's red Massey Harris tractor with yellow wheels. At that time, the house had multi-colored striped awnings over the south and west windows, tall hollyhocks near the back door, outside hatch-type cellar door and white chickens here and there. These things all typified the era and added charm to the well-kept farm.

The next entry in the abstract is to William S. and Ruth Mary Wright in 1947. Ruth, who now resides in Marshalltown, lived at the Mill site with her husband and daughters for the next 10 years.

Ruth is still a member of the Rock Valley Social Club. The wheels of this organization were put into motion by Gertrude (Santee) Chinn on February 7, 1917. A proud group of ladies have kept this dedicated group alive for over 75 years. Some of the members taught at the Rock Valley School, and three attended school there. Others (or their parents) lived in the neighborhood.

The Wrights' daughters, Kathy and Pat, were born in 1944 and 1945, respectively. Kathy (wife of Willie Robinson), presently resides in Des Moines. Pat (late wife of Dennis McGivern) succumbed to cancer in 1986; her husband and three daughters of Cedar Rapids survive her.

Kathleen (Wright) Robinson described what it was like growing up on their farm: "The earliest memories of my childhood take place at Shady Oaks (the old Mill property). We moved to the farm prior to 1950. I remember attending kindergarten in 1949 at the one-room school (Rock Valley) just up the road from our farm.

"If one were to describe the idyllic setting for growing up in the 1950s, the farm would surely have fit that description. It was a rural setting that included woods, pond, river and 50 acres of farmland for my sister and I to explore, and explore we did.

"The neighborhood was unique, because it was more than just farms. Across the road from our home was Shady Oaks Cafe. It was a treat for our family to stop after church for Sunday dinner.

"Shady Oaks Cabin Camp was just north of the Cafe. Bonnie (Williamson), one of our neighborhood friends, lived there. When we weren't exploring the woods, fields or pond, or playing in the 'chicken coop' (playhouse), we played at Bonnie's. On rare occasions, we played in a cabin that was not being used; and this was a real treat.

"One of the attractions for the neighborhood kids was the highway bridge (Rainbow) over the river (Timber Creek) near our home. It had big, wide arches that went high above the roadway. There wasn't lots of traffic, so the bridge became a magnet for the neighborhood kids who were looking for adventure and testing their courage. The older boys (Ron Chalfant and Mick Williamson) would walk up the arches to the top and down again - a feat that I never quite mustered the nerve to do.

"The farm pond was often times the scene for our adventures. In the summer, we would catch tadpoles, frogs, toads and other various living creatures; and in the winter, we would ice skate on the pond and go sledding nearby. In the adjacent woods, we gathered wildflowers for our May baskets. Year round, the woods provided a place to practice 'tracking wild

animals' and fulfilling our imaginary 'cowgirl' fantasy adventures. Even though the pond and woods together were only a few acres in size, to us, it was a whole new world limited in size only by our imaginations.

"The only 'dark' time I remember at Shady Oaks was when the polio epidemic came onto the scene. Ron, who lived across the road at the Shady Oaks Cafe, was diagnosed with the disease. This put a damper on our explorations, as we were cautioned to stay away from certain areas in the neighborhood. At the time, I don't think anyone really knew what caused polio; but they wanted to limit exposure to possible causes. Fortunately, Ron recovered from the disease, we all received the new polio vaccine and life returned to normal."

In 1957, the Bryant Rutherfords bought the old Mill property from the Wrights, moved the old Mill house north of the Cafe (where it stands today), built a brick home and landscaped the grounds.

Around 1970, the property was sold to Ronald (deceased 1995) and Shirley Settle. When Ron had the former Mill pond area tiled out, the tiler ran into massive underground rock, which was probably the foundation of the old dam. There is still a natural bank along their driveway where Timber Creek once flowed. Small spring-fed creeks still spider across the farmland and flow into the mighty Timber Creek.

*"Intelligence is like water running,
unused, in some region
where no one has yet built a mill.
Yes, that is it:
I have not yet found my mill.
Shall I ever find it?"
— Jules Renard, 1890*

This segment is a composite of gleanings from namely: Our extensive abstract, my great-grandfather's 1875 Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa and penciled notes from a 1982 Marshall County history class offered by Iowa Valley and taught by Wendell Benson, then Managing Editor of the TR and history buff.

*Life is a drama of a few brief acts,
The actors shift, the scene often changes.
Our minds are set to various tunes,
Disrupting and harmonizing in turn.*

Many of the people I have written about are gone. Death is that state in which one exists only in the memory of others . . . which is why it is not an end . . . no good byes . . . just memories. The purpose of gathering this information slightly confuses me. Am I thinking not only of them but of myself? For me, it fills a certain emptiness to know and write about them.

