

HISTORY

Pre-History

Early Dubuque settlers recognize this site is an "enormous mound." The Native American mound soon becomes the focal point of early settler's celebrations including the Fourth of July.

1833

The United States of America opens the Black Hawk Purchase to white settlers seeking to make their fortunes in the Dubuque Lead Mines. This unorganized and ungoverned land is not part of any U.S. Territory and so has no "laws, peace officers, and juries."

1834

Patrick O'Conner murders his lead mining partner George O'Keaf in Dubuque. Dubuque's settlers hold a trial with twelve jurors, despite there being no system of justice in the ungoverned Black Hawk Purchase, and the story makes national news. Unsuccessful attempts for a pardon of O'Conner even go to U.S. President Andrew Jackson, and O'Conner is publicly executed on the Native American mound, where he is then buried.

Nine days after the execution, the United States government expands the nation to include the Black Hawk Purchase under Michigan Territory. The series of events that culminated on this property mark the first step toward Iowa's statehood, making this the exact site where Iowa was born.

1838

The Iowa Territory is organized.

1846

Iowa is admitted as the twenty-ninth state in the United States of America.

1852

Leveling the mound on this site when the City grades 7th Street, owner Joseph Gehrig, a Swiss-German immigrant, reveals it to be a burial mound containing Native American remains, artifacts, hunting tools, and the remains of Patrick O'Conner in his coffin.

1856

Gehrig builds the four-story Jefferson House hotel on this site in Dubuque. A welcoming place for all, it becomes a beacon for German immigrants in Iowa and further west.

1921

The Sanitary Milk Company moves in, paints its signs on the building's exterior, and retrofits the first two floors with reinforced concrete and cork insulation for its large-scale dairy processing operation, permanently strengthening the building.

Local farmers travel on wagons to sell their milk to the Sanitary Milk Company to be pasteurized and bottled, now free of milk-borne diseases through sanitary processing. Every day, the Sanitary Milk Company produces and delivers thousands of gallons of milk, ice cream, and cottage cheese to Dubuque homes.

1930

The Sanitary Milk Company builds the smokestack for power and ventilation of its extensive operations, further cementing the building as a rare example of Iowa's urban agricultural-industrial history.

1943-1980

Farley & Loetscher, the world's largest mill working company located just across the street, buys the building and leases it for light industrial use by machinists and Burke Alumatic, to Dubuque County Relief for its Surplus Food Distribution Center, to McCray's Chicks hatchery and more. The basement even becomes a fallout shelter. The original top two floors of the Jefferson House Hotel are demolished by 1962, leaving only a two-story building.

1970s

Bill Feye of Feye Brothers Auto Body, located just across the alley, purchases the property.

1980s

C&T Motorcycles moves in and uses three levels, including the basement, for motorcycle repairs and sales.

1990s & 2000s

Feye Brothers Auto Parts Warehouse moves in and is joined by Dubuque Paint Equipment in 2002.

2015

Smokestack opens, celebrating adventurousness and creativity.

