

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

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# **National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## **1. Name**

historic  E. G. Potter's Jasper Flour Mill

and/or common Potter's Mill

## **2. Location**

street & number South and Second Street  not for publication

city, town Bellevue  vicinity of

state Iowa code 019 county Jackson code 097

## **3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
district	public	occupied	agriculture
XXX building(s)	XXX private	unoccupied	XXX commercial
structure	both	XX work in progress	educational
site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>		entertainment
object	in process	xx yes: restricted	government
	being considered	yes: unrestricted	industrial
	N/A	no	military
			other:

## **4. Owner of Property**

name Daryll M. and Carolyn T. Eggers

street & number R.R.#1, Box 110,

city, town Laurel  vicinity of state Iowa 50141

## **5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Clerk's Office

street & number Jackson County Courthouse

city, town Maquoketa state Iowa 52060

## **6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title N/A has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town  state

## **7. Description**

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	<input type="checkbox"/> original site <input type="checkbox"/> moved      date _____

### **Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

E. G. Potter's Jasper Mill survives after one hundred and forty one years of flour and feed mill service. One of a handful of surviving frame mills of its type, this building is certainly one of the oldest frame mills extant in this state. The Jasper Mill is notable for its association with three long term millers, E. G. Potter, Nathaniel Kilborn, and Arnold Reiling. Potter's tenure as owner was the mill's most significant era of operation, a period during which the mill enjoyed a regional if not a national reputation for its quality product.

#### Physical Description:

This three story frame mill, rectangular on plan (79' by 45'), with a rectangular full length monitor on its gabled roof, is located on the north bank of Mill Creek. The building sits upon an ashlar limestone foundation, with basement turbine across the west, upstream end, the west foundation wall being fully eleven feet thick at its base. Structurally, the building's skeleton consists of massive square posts and beams, with mortise and tenon joints and diagonal corner bracing. The 16 foot high first floor is separately framed, corner posts extending only the height of the floor. Each corner post is anchored to floor and cap beams, all pieces are hand hewn. Longitudinal beams are joined with alligator splices of three varieties. Single piece corner posts above the first floor level extend to the eaves line. The second floor ceiling plate is mortised into these corner posts and support the floor beams. The second floor is fifteen feet high, the third being twelve feet high. Each floor has two longitudinal ranks of vertical posts with octagonal section and bolster caps. A total of six bents support the building, each rank of interior posts numbering four, while two bays of ten and a half feet width are formed by those ranks. On the attic level, two frame longitudinal trusses, placed interior to the interior post ranks, support the roof and monitor housing. An eight foot headway is allowed in the attic center. A twelve foot high monitor, rectangular on plan, extends from side wall to side wall. The monitor has an extremely low pitched gable roof. A square dust collector housing is located on the southwest corner, and an elevator penthouse is on the northeast roof corner.

Classically derived exterior architectural details formalize the outward appearance of the mill and disguise its vernacular origin. These details include partially returned cornices, plain wide frieze and molded cornice lines, corner boards, and very simple window surrounds. The monitor cornice line matches and underscores that on the main building below.

The exterior cladding is six inch oak clapboard on the monitor and cupola, and eight inch on the mill itself. Fenestration consists of double-hung sash, 12/12 on the lower two floors, 12/8 on the upper two floors, and 6/6 on the monitor level. A vertical line of four centered single width doors define the north public facade. With the exception of the first floor, two windows per floor flank each door. Those on the first floor are more numerous, included a left hand side door and were not in line with those above. End wall fenestration was originally symmetrical, three windows per floor, with two attic level windows which partly cut into the frieze line. On the south side, three windows were symmetrically arranged on the top two floors, those on the first floor reflected two

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below							
prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion				
1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science				
1500–1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture				
1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/				
1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater				
1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation				
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)				

Specific dates 1843/4–1871

Builder/Architect E. G. Potter, John Gammel (millwright  
unknown)

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph).**

E. G. Potter's Jasper Mill survives after one hundred and forty one years of flour and feed mill service. One of a handful of surviving frame mills in Iowa, this building is certainly one of the oldest extant frame mills in the state. The Jasper Mill is notable for its association with three long term millers, E. G. Potter, Nathaniel Kilborn, and Arnold Reiling. Potter's tenure as owner-operator is the most significant era of milling operation, a period during which the products of this mill enjoyed a regional if not a national reputation. The surviving records of this mill serve to substantiate a very broad and long enduring commercial involvement between Potter and his upper Mississippi market.

Elbridge Gerry Potter (1791–1875) was born in Massachusetts, learned the mason's trade in New York State, and emigrated to Illinois in 1830. For his War of 1812 military service as a New Jersey artillery company captain, he was throughout his life called "Captain" Potter. There, in Lebanon, Illinois, he engaged for twelve years in a profitable milling and distilling trade. In 1840 he patented a spring coupling for machinery which was driven by reciprocating machinery (titled "Spindle and Trundle Head of Mills, Patent Number 1,703, July 18, 1840). Its purpose was to prevent backlash in the gearing of mills. A local 1879 county history notes "He applied this idea to his own mills and sold a few rights, but soon let it go to the public, it is now in the original or slightly modified form, in use in nearly every steam mill in the county." In 1842 he settled on his "Paradise" farm (so called he said because he had to go through purgatory to get there) (NHRP) which was four miles west of Bellevue, in Jackson County Iowa. In 1843 or 1844 he constructed in partnership John Gammel, another local farmer, the Jasper Mill near the mouth of Mill Creek on the south edge of Bellevue. Potter, while never an office holder, would die one of county's wealthiest and most respected citizens.

Jasper Mill was constructed as stated by Potter and Gammel. A wooden plaque on the mill claims the 1843 construction date. A letter from John Gammel to Potter dated July 11, 1843 apparently refers to the construction of the mill. His receipts list "7 Barle flowar," a grind stone and 73,341 feet of logs. Potter and Gammel were apparently buying logs for a saw milling operation. Payment was to be made in cattle, flour and pork that fall. The mill itself is first pictured in a lithograph of Bellevue in 1848. Gammel's half interest in the mill was purchased in 1847 by Elijah Gove. Gammel would later construct a competing mill just upstream from the Jasper Mill. Two surviving articles of agreement between Potter and Gove are of interest. Their partnership originally dated from November 1, 1847. A supplemental agreement dated May 10, 1849 established a procedure by which Potter would buy out his partner. It also allowed Potter to erect a saw mill below the mill. A supplemental agreement dated July 8, 1851 deferred Potter's purchase until at least July 1, 1852. It concluded with a series of operational agreements;

"...at the expiration of said partnership all the barrels, staves, &c on hand at the time shall be taken by the said Potter at cost, and paid for at the time.-- Agreed also that no flour, brans, or offalls of any kind shall be sold on credit under any circumstances and all debts now due the firm of Potter and Gove shall be collected forthwith. Further agreed that said Potter shall put the Mill same in good and sufficient repair, the cost of which shall be borne as

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Refer to Continuation Sheet 9-2

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Bellevue Iowa-Illinois

Quadrangle scale 1/24,000

### UTM References

A	1 5	7 1 2 2 8 0	4 6 8 0 6 1 0
Zone	Easting	Northing	
C			
E			
G			

B			
Zone	Easting	Northing	
D			
F			
H			

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Refer to Continuation Sheet 10-2

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	James E. Jacobsen, National Register Coordinator		
organization	Iowa SHPO	date	2 March 1984
street & number	Historical Building E. 12th & Grand Ave.	telephone	515-281-4137
city or town	Des Moines	state	Iowa 50319

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national     state     local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Executive Director Iowa State Historical Department

date

3/5/84

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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slightly different floor levels within. The monitor has two windows per end wall, and four windows per long side.

A limestone power house on the west side is single story on a raised stone foundation with an exceptionally steep lean-to roof. The foundation base along Mill Creek is slightly raked out along its length, reflecting the thicker stone mass at that level. The west abutment wall is eleven feet thick at the river level, and is stepped back at ground level on the inside of the wall. Windows penetrate the stone basement and first floor levels on the south side. Two small vertically aligned windows apparently overlooked the exterior water wheel. A stone pilaster marks a remnant of the original dam. The north first floor level end of the stone power house unit has a door and window penetration.

Identified Major Alterations to Jasper Mills:

1843/44:

Mill and dam constructed. Head race and flume parallel south side of stone power house and apparently power overshot wheel. Very large mill pond formed in Mill Creek is located to northwest. Refer to c. 1870 photo and map. In 1855 a 20' water wheel with cast iron buckets 12' in width was constructed, with power sufficient to run 3 sets of burs.

1868:

Date on south stone wall and presence just upstream of pins in bedrock indicate probable raising of dam head level by as much as eight feet at this time. Potter acquired additional mill pond land area in 1867 (Lots 485 and most of 486 and 492), built up the west wall and added the power house, along with an arched centered opening for the turbine manifold, and apparently installed turbines at this time.

1870:

Large scale modernization of mill surrounding and interior functions and arrangements. Railroad extends line south across Mill Creek, building viaduct over Front Street (street continues to wagon bridge over same creek) just east of mill. A spur track is constructed to parallel east end of mill where spouts, interior elevator in east bent, and probable loading door alterations are made to utilize rail access. A small frame office was built on the north end of the power house. The mill had been recently converted to water turbine power, replacing the exterior wheel, which still remained in the 1870 photo of the mill. Interior rearrangements can be linked to this period by virtue of the consistent use of a specific type of squared nail and (1 x 6 or 1 x 8) boards having a routed bead. Machinery mounts from this period consist of a consistent type of clear large scale timber which is mortised into ceiling joists, and again has a unique chamfer.

Mid 1870's:

Monitor roof replaces two skylight openings on original gabled roof. This addition evidences increased need for space for cleaning and storing wheat and flour.

1894:

The mill was still water power dependent, the office wing on the north side remained.

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Associated buildings included a hog pen east of the stub track and a single story shed to the northwest.

**1896:**

The May 24 floor destroyed the dam, drained the mill pond, demolished the office, and filled the lower part of the mill with mud. The stub rail line was washed away as were the two associated bridges to the east. The site was greatly eroded. A post floor photograph indicates the presence of a narrow bracketed platform and flexible (cloth?) grain spouts on the east end of the mill. An interior brick flue then stood on the northeast corner of the mill.

**1900-02:**

A photo of this period indicates presence of steam power in the form of a tall metal smokestack which projects from the power house to a point above the monitor roofline. A new gabled office has replaced that which was lost. The building is painted a dark color, apparently a barn red. The monitor is painted a lighter color. By this time the nearby lumber yard had covered the area north of the mill. The stub service line does not appear to have been relaid to the mill.

**1928:**

The mill was electrically powered, the railroad stub once again reached the riverside along the east wall. A scale house and two rectangular coal buildings stood to the north. A larger square frame office building stood on the north end of the former power house.

**1951:**

The building is unchanged, a railroad car shed was next to the office, and only one coal shed remained.

**1961:**

A fire destroyed the office, and in 1963 this was rebuilt in concrete block.

**Recent:**

A metal roofed awning was added to the north side. A small shed roofed addition was centered on the east wall, indicating the removal of the rail line. The mill was painted yellow. The building was deteriorated, with many windows boarded up or clapboarded over. The riverfront foundation was severely eroded. The building was painted a dark brown during its museum tenure.

Restoration efforts in the last two years have included the replacement of rotted oak supporting timbers in the basement, roof repair, some rafter replacement, window reproduction, sagging floor reinforcing, and a complete replication of oak siding on the south wall. The original materials were used to restore the remaining walls. The building was repainted a dark barn red with white trim.

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Site Description:

Jasper Mill is located on a high creek bank elevation on the south end of Bellevue. The town occupies a floodplain which is flanked on the north and south by prominent steep hills and rock outcroppings. The mill, being three stories tall, historically was the southern visual anchor of the town and could readily be seen from the Mississippi River to the east. Presently, levees and the railroad and auto bridges block this view. A high wooded and rocky bluff rises abruptly on the southern bank of Mill Creek opposite the mill. The riverbed consists of a stepped series of limestone shelves, and offered an excellent foundation for a dam at this site. The very large mill pond, dry since 1896, was for a long time farmed, and in recent years has been partly filled to ground level and developed as a trailer court. No vestige of dam, headrace or other physical remnants are found on or around the mill.

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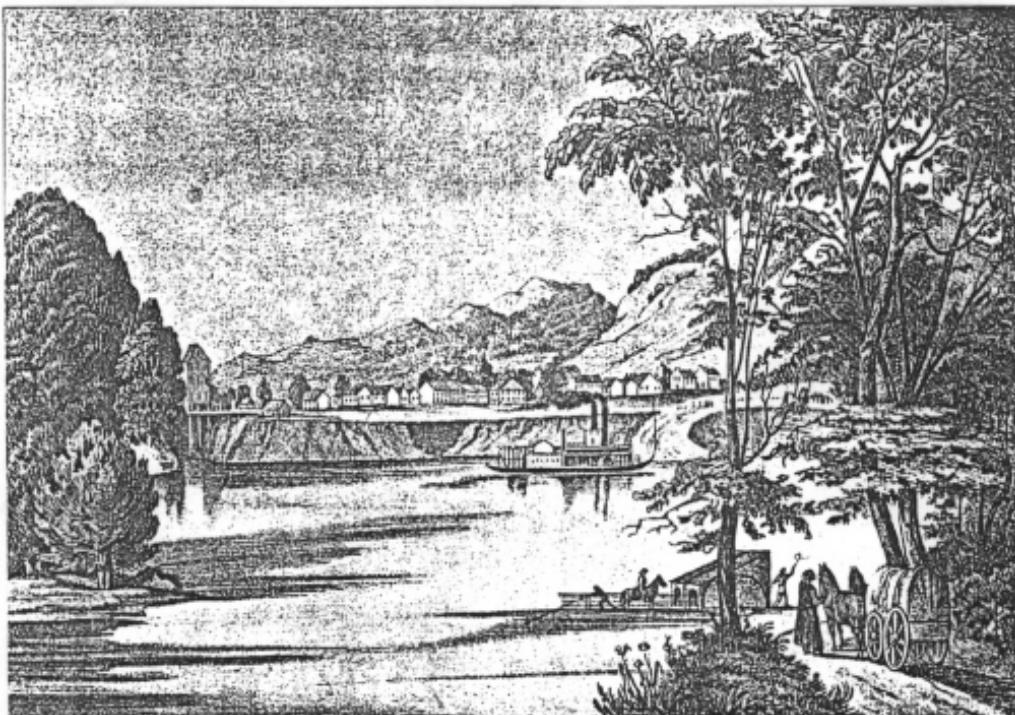
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

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Three pes.

Lith. Just. Arns & C° Düsseldorf.

BELLEVUE, IOWA

C. 1848 view of Bellevue from the southeast, showing Potter & Gove's Mill on left hand side next to mouth of Mill Creek. Lewis, H. Das Illustrirte Mississippithal. Leipzig: H. Schmidt & C. Günther, 1923 (Reissue).

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August 5, 1870 Photo of Jasper Mill, Bellevue, from south.  
Note presence of dam and wheel housing, mill pond, and con-  
struction of railroad spur and trestle. Reproduced courtesy  
of Ms. Alda Kendell, Paradise Farm, Bellevue.

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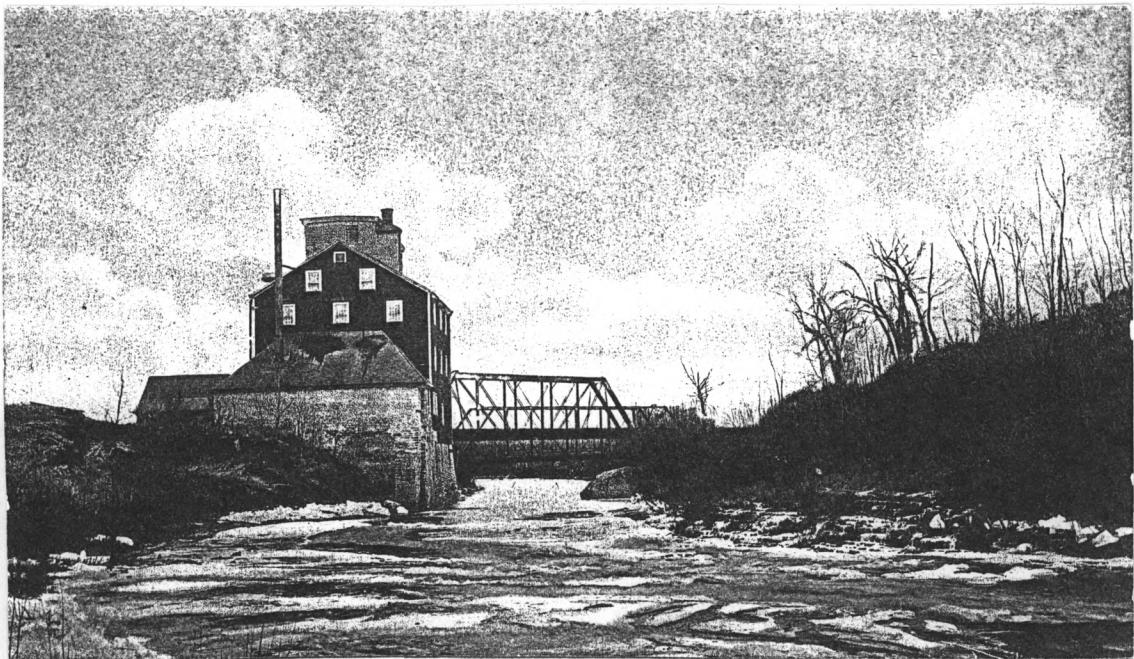
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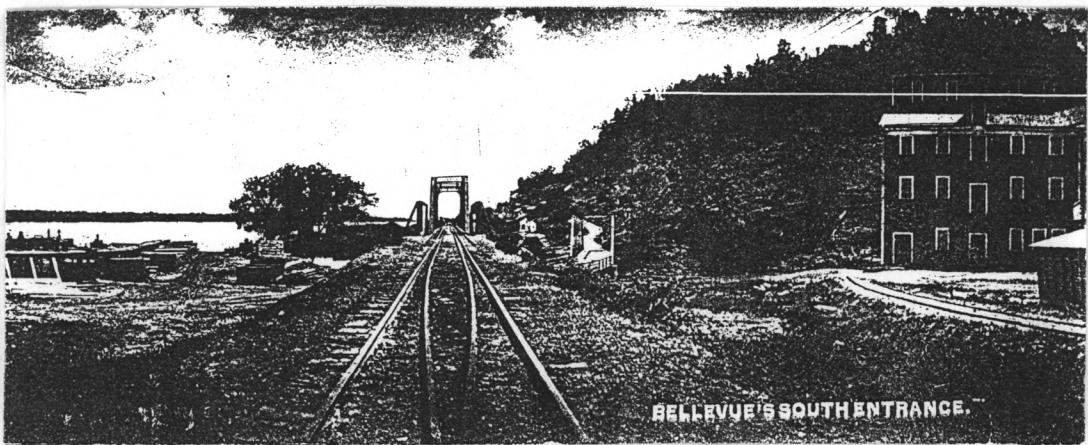
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Bellevue postcard, dated c. 1900, down Mill Creek to east with Mississippi River in background. Mill and power house (note stack) to left, wagon and railroad bridge center.



Bellevue, view c. 1896-1900,<sup>10</sup> towards south, shows relationship of mill on right to downstream bridges in center, sawmill on left.

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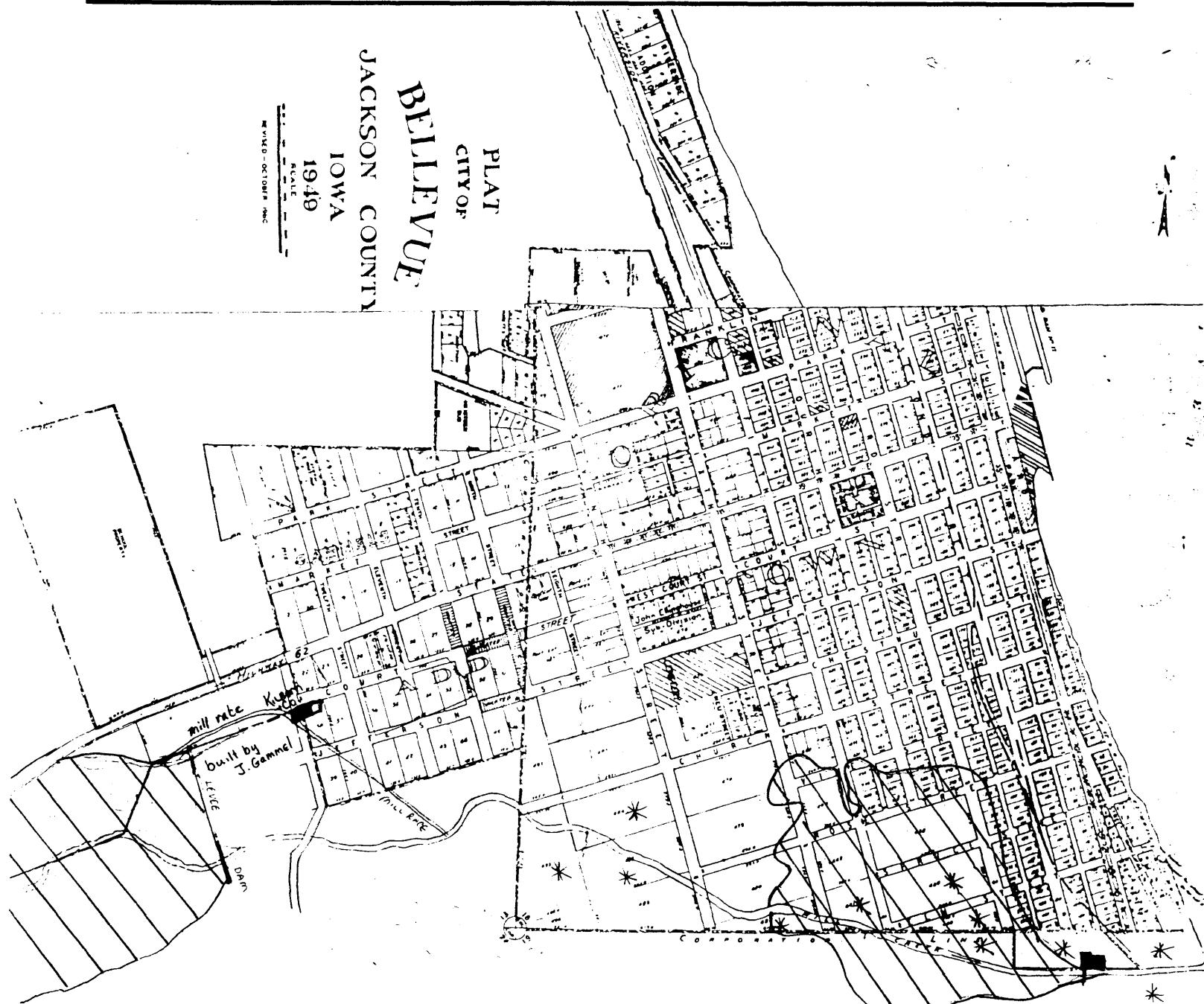
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Bellevue Townplat (1949) with superimposed mill ponds, those of John Gammel's/Kilborn Mill on left (upstream) and E. G. Potter, on right. Asterisks mark those properties which Potter purchased in 1843. The 1868 mill pond enlargement become evident by comparing these with later land acquisitions.

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as follows, to wit—one third by the said Gove, and two thirds by the said Potter."

Two receipts for mill supplies survive from the Potter-Gove partnership. The first, dated August 21, 1848 was with Nicholas Dowling of Galena, and recorded purchases on July 17 and 29 of 160 pounds of castings, fees for the turning of shafts and gudgeons, three gudgeons and shafts. The second receipt, dated September 25 of the same year was with G. & C. Todd of St. Louis, "Importers and Dealers in Mill Materials." The receipt recorded the purchase of seventeen and a half yards of bolting cloths (Numbers 4, 5, 8 and 9). Elijah Gove would be bought out by Potter by 1852. He apparently continued to live in Quincy, Illinois during the period of his partnership with Potter, but he was directly involved in at least the mill marketing operations. The mill capitalization, as indicated in the Federal Industrial Census every ten years, varied considerably, totalling \$20,000 in 1850, \$40,000 in 1860, \$26,000 in 1870, and only \$10,000 in 1880. Potter purchased Gove's half interest in 1852 for \$3,000.

The actual mill site purchase, or at least Potter's half interest, occurred on July 4, 1843, and consisted of five town lots and "...the undivided half of all the water privileges...." By September 22, 1844 Potter and Gammel were seeking a good miller and recommendations for the proper cloth brands for their upper and lower bolting reel. Joseph Walker of Pontiac Michigan offered his services in a letter of that date: "As I am not very well suited with my present situation—if you felt inclined to make me a good offer—I might feel inclined to come out and start your mill...I have always been considered first rate in my business...." Walker had developed a locally popular grinding stone dressing which Potter was interested in utilizing. Walker's employer in a postscript indicated that he had just returned from the new mill site and that he would be returning the next April or May. These references would indicate that milling operations could not have begun until late 1844. The 1850 Federal census would list a Hamilton McCullum from Michigan, a millwright. It is possible that he was hired following these communications.

Potter was in these early years also involved in a host of other entrepreneurial adventures. He operated a wharf-boat service, including a grocery business, for an undetermined period of time. In mid 1849 his orders for this firm included three barrels of whiskey from Russell and Bennett of Galena, Illinois. He constructed two warehouses in the middle of Bellevue's riverfront and used these to store his flour and produce. His large scale farming activities are represented by the Paradise Farm National Register listing. He operated a cooperage in conjunction with his mill. Here by 1850 five male and three female employees were producing 8,500 flour barrels a year, valued at \$3,200. This firm eventually became a major saw mill site, operated for some years by Potter and William Hays. That operation would survive well into the present century. Potter's cooperage was not listed after 1850. He apparently had a local cooper who assembled his barrels, as will be indicated by surviving transaction records.

Elijah Gove, Potter's second partner, visited Quincy, Illinois in late June 1849, and reported to Potter concerning a better local example of how a similar milling operation might be run. He also was acting as a middle man to receive flour forwarded from the

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mill and to arrange sales. He states "...I think you had better not send the flour mentioned in your letter-if it should not be a first rate article it would injure the reputation of the brand very much...I had intended to visit St. Louis...to make a permanent arrangement with some good house to sell our flour after harvest...I think an arrangement can be made so that we can draw in advance for three to five thousand dollars without paying anything more than interest.-I intend to offer this arrangement to Smith Brothers & Co...." Gove offers a lengthy descriptive comparison between the Jasper Mills and one in Quincy:

"I have had a long talk with Jonas V. Wheeler one of the best mill owners in this City as to the amount of labour necessary to grind and pack with a packing machine from sixty to ninety barrels per day. Their miller has a share of proffit of the mill much in the same way that Mr. Philips does with the exception that he finds his full share of funds to purchase wheat with. When they can only get wheat so as to run about twelve hours each day and make about 60 barrels the miller tends to the grinding, packing, and retailing flour and keeping a sheet out of everthing that goes out of the mill on a statement which is taken to the store at night and put on book by the clerk of the store. Mr. Jonas goes to the mill about nine in the morning and assists in taking in the wheat untill about four or five in the afternoon and then leaves, in this way to grind about sixty barrels all the help they hire is one foreman. Except mondays on that day the miller dresses his stones and sometimes hires an extry hand and other times Mr. Jonas and the miller gets allong with it between them as there is most generilly but little wheat comes in on monday. When they make about 90 barrels a day they take the same course except that they hire one hand to assist in packing & delivering flour and run the mill about 16 hours. The extra hand releives the foreman some three hours each day when they run 16 hours=when they run night and day they have in addition to the above hands one miller and one foremand and make about 125 to 140 barrels in 24 hours. There millers always tend the packers on there tour unless they are dressing stones-at this mill they retail a verry large amount of flour by the hundred barrel and it is all done by the above hands. I have been at the mill when there was a crowd of retail business going on and the miller would frequently be so much hurried that he would take out from under his packers five or six barrels as the case would require and set them aside with out heading and sosoon as the retail business would slack for a short time turn in and head them all up and prepare more barrels See to the mill &c. I wish we could get in something like this way of runing our mill, there seems to be a great economy of time in all of the arrangements of Jonas & Wheeler and in this way they are able to make money with there mill when a loose way of carrying on the same mill would be shure to loose money. I am verry anxious to hear how the wheat crop is coming in with you, I really hope the crop will be a good one and if so I wish you would try and pattern after Jonas & Wheeler in the way of runing our mill-from this time until new wheat comes in, the millers and hands arround the mill must have a considerable leisure time.-a good part of this time could be occupied in prepairing large amounts of lining for barrels so that when the new crop comes in there will be nothing to dosofar as the lining is concerned only to soak and use it. In this way much valuable time could be saved when the hurry comes

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on. I think it would be a good plan to over haul all the barrels we have on hand and drive down the hoops on the bilge and head that is not to be opened and nail the same. This to I think would be a great help when there is a crowd of business to be done...I feel that every man around the mill is well paid and well fed and that it is no more than right that there time should be used to the best possible advantage for the interest of all concerned in the mill=I am in hopes that I will be able to come up after harvest and assist for a month or two....I feel anxious to hear the prospects of the new crop and what the expenses has been for repairs since I left, also how much flour you will make from the time I left until the old crop is ground out...."

Mr. Gove's letter, in addition to providing a sense of the milling industry of the time, provides a host of facts about the Jasper Mill and its operation. The mill probably has a daily output of from sixty to one hundred and forty barrels, especially in non-peak harvest times. As late as June 30 the Jasper Mill was still busy with the grinding of the previous year's crop. The employees at the mill include at least several millers and other laborers. The milling equipment includes a packer, and the mill cooperage is operating. Lastly, the partners are concerned about profit, and wish to minimize the number of permanent employees at the mill.

Mr. Gove was apparently successful in engaging the Smith Brothers firm in St. Louis, as is indicated by a note to Potter from that firm dated November 24, 1849 which stated "We are happy to inform you that the Jasper brand name is growing in favor with the consumer and we hope you may keep improving till it will take a stand among the very best that can be made...." The Jasper Brand was selling at \$4.50 per two hundred pound barrel. An attached receipt acknowledged the arrival of four steamboats that month alone, which carried 523 barrels of flour and 9 barrels of buckwheat flour. The total value of \$2,459.24 resulted in a profit of \$2,168.96 after shipping, insurance and commission fees were deducted. This flour was being exported via New Orleans by the St. Louis wholesaler.

By mid-1850 E. G. Potter was doing business with Barup and Champlin, Wholesale Grocers, Forwarding and Commission Merchants, of St. Louis. On 23 April 1853 the steamer Enterprise delivered 195 bushels of wheat to Jasper Mills from Portage City. Potter was already having to purchase wheat from distant sources. I. M. Whaling, of Hudson (Iowa?) complained in June of that same year of the non-delivery of a sixty-barrel flour order which he had placed following a meeting with Mr. Phillips of Potter's firm, while in Galena. "...If you choose you can send me some Flour or not as you think best I never Beg and pay to." Local newspaper references to the mill are quite rare in the early 1850's, one note on August 31, 1853 announced that Jasper Mills was paying 65¢ per bushel of fall wheat, and 55¢ for spring wheat. "...These mills can buy all the grain that offers, and will pay as good prices as any others establishment in Northern Iowa." On January 5, 1854, James Carter and Company purchased one thousand barrels of "Superfine" flour for delivery at Potter's warehouse at the opening of navigation on the Mississippi. Seven hundred additional barrels were committed five days later, and five hundred more on the 25th, the last order being based on a per barrel cost of \$4.70, being 45¢ higher than the first two orders. In August 1854, Potter purchased 1,186 sacks of

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wheat in a transaction which involved a number of actors. The shipment was sacked by S. W. McMaster, weighed at Clayton, and shipped by Clark & Rogers. By August, 1856, Potter was selling flour via Galena to R. Galloway of St. Paul, who that month placed an additional twenty barrel flour order, paying on his Galena account. These surviving records speak to Potter's broad market as well as the central role of Galena, Illinois as a financial and wholesaling center.

Early Bellevue census records list numerous millers and millwrights residing in the town and township of that same name. Mr. Gove's 1849 letter and Mr. Whaley's 1853 complain both refer to a Mr. Philips (or Phillips) who was in Potter's employ. A J. S. Phillips, miller appears in the 1856 state census. In 1850, two German born millers, Andred Reiling and Goodlup Sharp appear. Millwrights were John Stetting, Joseph and John Anderson, and Hamilton McCullum (the last named being from Michigan, aged 38). In 1856 resident millers included Samuel Johnson, Joseph Cumber, Jacob Sells, and the aforementioned Phillips. Joseph Anderson was the only local millwright. There was only one local mill in the town until 1859, and it perhaps can be assumed that all of the early millers were associated with Potter. The millwrights most likely were not permanently employed by any one mill, and might have been involved in bridge building and the like. By 1855, John Gammel's Jackson Flour Mills was also in operation locally. Six millers are listed in Bellevue, two of whom Jack Dorchester and Sylvester Burke, can be linked to Potter's mill. The millers were Sylvester Burke, A. J. Dorchester, Jacob Sells, Sylvanus Pearce, William R. Hinton, and Solomon Semmes. The 1910 county history stated that Dorchester (1827-1904) came to Bellevue in 1853 "...and engaged with E. G. Potter in milling until 1870 when Mr. Potter retired from the firm...." By 1870, local millers include George Wise and Lustuis Byron Potter, both of whom worked for Jasper Mills. Potter (1824-1894) was the only child of Elbridge Potter was called the "Little Captain" locally, had appeared in earlier censuses as clerk and bookkeeper for Potter. Industrial census records indicate that the mill work force numbered five in 1850, and included three males and two females (uncommon for milling to employ women). By 1860 six males were employed. In 1870 five males worked a full twelve months out of the year. In 1880 three full time hands were employed. Wages over this same time period were as follows. In 1850 the average monthly pay for a male worker was \$110., in 1860 only \$30. Yearly wages for all workers in 1870 were \$2,500. In 1880 a mechanic was payed \$2. a day for twelve hours of work, a laborer one dollar for the same hours. Totally yearly wages were \$1,400.

Potter was after 1852 sole owner and operator of Jasper Mills. He was to borrow large sums of money between 1852 and 1854 from Elijah Gove, John Foley, Onar Potter, and Timothy Paige. His surviving records continue to evidence both a broad market, and a high product quality. Barrel purchases from H. M. Bowling in nearby Iron Hills in April and June of 1860 are recorded. In June 1860 the Galena & Chicago Union Railroad Company offered to haul Potter's flour in minimal two hundred barrel lots to Chicago at 35¢ a barrel, and with "...no charge for cartage in Chicago...." between stations on to Cleveland and Buffalo at an additional charge of 25¢ per barrel. The railroad sent an agent specifically to meet with Potter. In September 1960 Joseph Broker, of St. Cloud Minnesota, advised Potter of the likelihood of cheap wheat being available in his Stearns

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County area. Broker had previously purchased wheat for Potter at Wyanlusing, Wisconsin under the firm name of Broker and Blandford. Broker offered a contract, to be arranged with his Galena representatives. Potter was selling flour to Borup and Champlin, Wholesale Grocers, Forwarding and Commission Merchants in St. Paul in mid-1860. In May 1863, the steamboat Davenport delivered ten bundles of flour sacks to the mill.

No mill-related papers are available for the next five years. By 1868 Potter had prepared a printed overdue payment notice to send to delinquent customers. By late 1869, he was paying 50¢ for a flour barrel. In April 1870 he shipped two hundred barrels of his top brand Jasper to G. B. Johnson & Company, New Orleans. On June 8 he wrote to W. D. French, Chicago "I this day shipped you one hundred barrels of Jasper just ground by our new miller from St. Louis. Please report to me as soon as examined—it gives good satisfaction here to all who have used it." On July 5 he shipped fifty barrels each of Jasper and Tete des Morts flour to French and Baker, Chicago. During that summer he inquired about the feasibility of shipping flour to Philadelphia. In early September one hundred barrels of "...me best brand of flour..." were forwarded to Elkins & Stoddard of that city. In May 1871, Potter purchased 2,500 barrel hoops for flour barrels, which were assembled by a local cooper. In June he shipped one hundred barrels of "Equator Flour" to W. P. Preston & Co., New York City and another hundred barrels to Partridge and Wells in the same city. By this time, Potter was serving as a broker for other area mills, including the Jackson Mills just upstream, and the Tete des Morts mill at Donatus. Corresponding brand names mentioned in the records refer to flour from these mills. In June 1871 Potter ordered two flour sack brands or stencils for a Jackson County Mills XX and XXX "Family Flour." The stencil included the unit weight of 196 pounds and the miller's name, G. W. Wise. The Jackson brand was slightly lower in quality than the Jasper brand of Potters. Shipments in mid summer included these brands, as well as Rose Mill flour to J. F. Calbus, New Orleans, and a four grade shipment to Johnson and Falesmusai and Company, Boston. In September Potter was purchasing barrel heads and staves from Boscobel, Wisconsin. Finally on October 23, 1871 Potter answered a flour order, stating that he had sold his mill. The local history reference to Potter's retirement the previous year, is not supported by his continued direct involvement with the mill correspondence. Potter's son was probably more responsible for mill operations in the last years.

The new owners were Nathaniel Kilborn, Arnold Reiling and Jack Kelso, who operated under the firm name of Kilborn and Company. Nathaniel Kilborn (1811-1881) had been a Bellevue merchant as early as 1843. Following the Civil War his Kilborn and Company (a partnership which included lawyer Joseph Kelso and Arnold Reiling) purchased the Jackson Mill, owned by Gammel. In 1871 they also acquired Jasper Mill. Arnold Reiling (1823-?) was sole owner after Kilborn's death in 1881, and his purchase of Kelso's interest (then owned by John Murphy) in 1883. Reiling was German born, a local merchant since 1859, who owned and operated a steamboat in the river freighting trade prior to becoming an investor in the local milling industry. The 1910 county history notes "...the company of which he was a member controlled all the flour milling in this section of the state. Mr. Reiling still owns the mill property, but it is not operated on such an extensive scale as in years past." Kilborn and Company owned two mills and gazateer

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and census records call both the same name, causing some degree of confusion. The company name outlived Kilborn by at least seventeen years. Gazeteers refer to Reiling and Company's mill as of 1901, and until 1921.

While little is known of mill operations during the final quarter of the nineteenth century, the disastrous flood of May 24, 1896 is recorded, and was to dramatically effect the mill operations. A night time down pour of immense proportions washed out the Kilborn dam upstream. The Jasper Mill dam held long enough to flood the entire southern half of the town, until it finally burst. The dam, mill pond, and the two bridges below the mill were all lost. The mill lost its office and the area around the mill itself was greatly eroded. One of the two warehouses also collapsed. According to the Bellevue Leader "Reiling & Co's loss amounts to about \$8,000. The lower dam was their property. Only last spring considerable money was spent in repairing it. It will not be rebuilt. A gasoline engine will be used instead." It further stated "...The grist mill remains, but is much the worse for the flood, being filled with mud and water." A week after the disaster the local newspaper reported repair efforts at the mill.

"The masses of mud have been cleaned out of the mill, which now presents a fairly presentable appearance. The dam which was washed out will not be rebuilt, but the firm will put in either water power or a gas engine to run the machinery."

Without a dam, the water power option was not a likely one. The loss of a powerful water power marked the rapid decline of the mill's operations. Unwilling to reinvest in a new dam, the mill's capacity would be greatly reduced. The gas engine technology of that day was not a proven one, and on June 23 the newspaper reported the final decision by the mill owners as follows:

"Reiling & Company have decided to put in steam at their flour and feed mill, and have ordered a thirty-horsepower Atlas engine from the manufacturers at Cincinnati. It is expected that this will be here in a week or ten days, and the mill will be put in operation again as soon as possible."

The mill appears to have increasingly become dependant upon its feed milling operations, although it continues to be referred to as a flour mill right up to 1928. Owner operators after Reiling included Thomas Bausch (1921-23, as a feed mill), Benjamin McGowan (1923-25), Bernard Schulte (1925-28, as a grist mill), Theodore Schulte (1930-31), and finally the Dyas Brothers (1931-69, as a feed mill). Donald Sweitzer operated the building as an farm equipment museum until 1980. The current owners have since that date restored the building for use as a restaurant.

Local Context:

Two flouting mills operated in Bellevue, Jasper Mill and Jackson Mill, the latter being located just upstream above the mill pond to the northwest. John Gammel, Potter's original partner, constructed this two and a half story frame mill in 1859. This mill was smaller in capacity having half as many turbines and runs of stone, and only first appeared in the 1870 industrial census (indicating that it had not operated in 1859, the year upon which the 1860 figures were based). Kilborn and Company purchased the mill in 1866, and gazeteers last refer to the mill as being operated by John W. Golding in 1902. This building still survives on site, and is used as a barn. Its National Register

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eligibility has not been determined. Potter's two riverfront warehouses also survive, at least one of which retains some degree of its integrity.

Jackson County, with its many water powers, was at one time the site of as many as twenty-three water powered mills (1865). This number would decrease to fifteen within four years. Jasper Mill would dominate local milling, and would outlive all of these in a functional sense, and most of them in a physical sense.

Technical Overview:

**Power Sources:**

The mill at least until the c. 1868 was powered by an exterior overshot (or possibly a reverse breast) wheel and the 1870 mill photo shows the flume and wheel housing still in place. At that time, the mill was switched to water turbine power, and sources indicate the presence of six such turbines. Four surviving penstocks composed of two foot diameter steel tubes with revetted angles remain in the power house basement with room for two more. Their head water connecting tubes connected to a single manifold intake unit which passed through the west stone wall. A vertical stone wall within the power house basement separated the vertical head water pipes and the turbines themselves. The capacity of the water power was rated at one hundred horsepower in 1879. Ten years later the turbines were rated individually at fourteen horsepower, and a total of eighty-four horsepower. The head of water was fourteen feet, this being a very good water power potential. Each turbine made three hundred revolutions per minute.

As has been noted, a thirty horsepower Atlas steam engine was emplaced in June 1896 following the loss of the water power due to the flooding out of the dam. A non extant wooden floor apparently supported the boiler, engine and the brick casings and mounts which would have been associated with a steam power system. In 1902 this power unit was rated at twenty-five horsepower. In 1914 the boiler was no longer in use due to the availability of electrical power. A municipal electric power plant had generated its first power on November 9, 1896. Electrical power was used at the mill until 1969.

**Grinding:**

The mill used stones or burr sets exclusively until as late as 1880, the number being unknown prior to 1870 when five pairs were in use.\* Six pairs are noted in 1880. In 1879 In mid 1870 Potter had forwarded a box of thirty mill picks to Galena for sharpening, and had ordered two furrow picks. A year earlier, he had inquired about a Scientific American advertisement which featured a machine with diamond surfaces for redressing millstones. By 1894 the mill retained one set of stones and a custom set as well. In 1902 a single set is still present. A rectangular central basement area, running parallel to and east of the power house basement or turbine area, housed the stones. Six wheel mounts survive in that chamber.

The shift to the use of corrugated metal roller pairs for grinding probably took place circa 1882-83. By 1894 twelve roller pairs were on the main or first floor. By 1902 this

\*Recently found documents indicate that the new 1855 water wheel could power three run of stone.

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had diminished to three double roller sets and a triple high corn roll on that level.

**Capacity, Raw Materials, and Products:**

The mill from its construction had a very large daily capacity due to its fine water power. The 1849 correspondence indicates a likely average daily capacity of at least sixty and perhaps as much as one hundred and forty barrels per day. The following production schedule is found in the various industrial censuses:

1850:

Raw materials, 50,000 bushels of wheat.

Capacity, not known.

Output, 10,000 barrels flour.

Value of end product, \$40,000.

1860:

Raw materials, 42,000 bushels of wheat.

Capacity, not known.

Output, 8,500 barrels of flour, 21,250 bushels of offal,

Value of end product, \$52,000.

1870:

Raw materials, 55,400 bushels all grains.

Custon Work, 5,000 bushels all grains.

Capacity, 1,200 bushels per day.

Output, 12,222 barrels of flour, 50 barrels of buckwheat flour, 1,960 bushels of meal, 1,000 bushels of feed.

Value of end product, \$59,340

1880:

Raw materials, 20,000 bushels of wheat, 4,000 bushels other grains.

Capacity, 400 bushels per day.

Output, 4,000 barrels of flour, 216,000 pounds of meal, 304,000 pounds of feed.

Value of end product, \$22,600.

The mill was capable of all year operation, a unique advantage for a water powered mill, and was so operated at least in 1880. The mill capacity steadily declined despite the change to roller technology. By 1894 the daily capacity was only one hundred barrels, and by 1902 a mere fifty barrels, placing the mill on the bottom of the mill size spectrum in terms of capacity. The last figure apparently reflects the loss of motive power due to the 1896 flood. The mill was producing both flour and feed as early as 1860 when it marketed its by-products as feed. It was a merchant mill, meaning that it purchased its own wheat, and marketed its own flour, throughout most of its early history. Only one industrial census, 1879, shows it doing custom work, charging a one eighth toll for grinding local grains. It is termed a feed mill for the most part following the 1896 changeover, although as late as 1928 one reference calls it a grist mill.

**Machinery:**

Specific early references to operating machinery are minimal in the earliest years.

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Potter inquired about filtering cloths for his upper and lower bolting reels in 1849. Mr. Goves letter of that year mentions the flour packer. Potter in January 1860 had dealings with E. R. Benton of Cleveland, producer of a "World Challenging Bran Duster". Benton's Dubuque agent, Mr. Farquarson, sold a bran duster to Potter for thirty days trial and Benton apparently had difficulty collecting the \$275 payment for same. He finally offered a reduced price and asked for payment in flour. In 1870 Potter referred to a Number 3 Finkle and Lyon machine for which he needed a shuttle. This machine was made by Thomas Barrows of Chicago. A letter from Byron Potter at this time stated "...we are crowded with Fanning Mills of every description" implying that various models of these cleaning machines were being tested for purchase.

A full inventory of mill machinery and its vertical arrangement is provided by the 1894 and 1902 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. The comparison of these two arrangements is as follows:

**Basement:**

- 1894: Driving machinery and a smutter.  
1902: one smutter.

**First Floor:**

- 1894: twelve pair of rolls, two run of stone, oat clipper, corn sheller, and flour packer.  
1902: three double rolls, "3 High Corn Roll," one run of stone.

**Second Floor:**

- 1894: Storage  
1902: Flour and grain bins.

**Third Floor:**

- 1894: three purifiers, two centrifugals, one cockle machine, three bolting reels.  
1902: two Smith Purifiers, two Gannon Flour reels, one California Brush (operates at 500 r.p.m.)

**Fourth Floor:**

- 1894: bran duster, two bolting reels.  
1902: Nordyke and Marmon Swing Sifter.

**Fifth Floor:**

- 1894: two Cyclone Dust Collectors.  
1902: no reference.

These listings evidence some alterations even within an eight year period, probably due to changes in the type and amount of power available to the mill. Overall the 1902 system is much simpler and smaller in capacity. By 1914 the feed mill contained only a feed mill unit, corn crusher, corn sheller, and an oat clipper. It is interesting to note that a single floor was devoted to grain storage, usually every floor was incorporated into

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the vertical milling process. The easternmost bent of the mill was built in as an internal elevator as early as 1870 and had an interior double elevator system which passed through the bins on each floor. Surviving mill-related machinery includes the Cyclone Dust Collector, the wooden elevators (one double and one single system), equipment mounts, shafts and pulleys, the penstock mounts, and considerable feed mill equipment. One wooden 36" pulley wheel is marked "Ornamental Iron Works, Dubuque, Iowa Milling and Equipment." An east elevator 12" chain gear is marked "Link Belt Machinery Company", with patent date Feb. 21, 1882.

A 1968 mill equipment inventory included two Speed King Mills (Winona Attrition Mill Company, Winona, Minn.), two Universal Bucket Elevators (six stories high, by Universal Hoist Co., Cedar Falls, Iowa), one extra large bucket elevator (six stories high), a Century electric motor (30hp.), one Speed King crusher, one Haines Feed Mixer (The Grain Machinery Co., Marian, Ohio), one 24" Type 503Y Speed King Mill, and one grain sifter.

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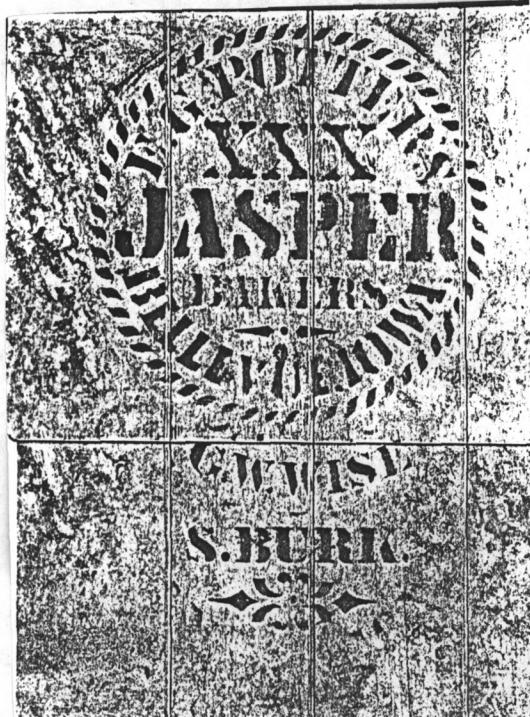
(1)

Flour brand stencils from interior of Jasper Mills, Bellevue:

1. "E. G. POTTER'S XXX JASPER MILLS 196 FROM SELECTED AMBER CLUB WHEAT BELLEVUE IOWA XXX G. W. WISE, S. BURK."
2. JACKSON COUNTY MILLS XXX FAMILY FLOUR 196 G.W.WISE BELLEVUE IOWA." (3)
3. "E.G.POTTER'S XXX JASPER BAKERS BELLEVUE, IOWA. G.W. WISE S. BURK."



(2)



Photos by Brenden A. Eggers.

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Reiling & Company (formerly E. G. Potter's Jasper Mill) Mill, as it appeared on May 26, 1896 following the flood which destroyed the dam, and the mill office. Note telegraph pole in foreground as well as burr stone. Photograph is from the Paradise Farm Potter Collection, view is to south.



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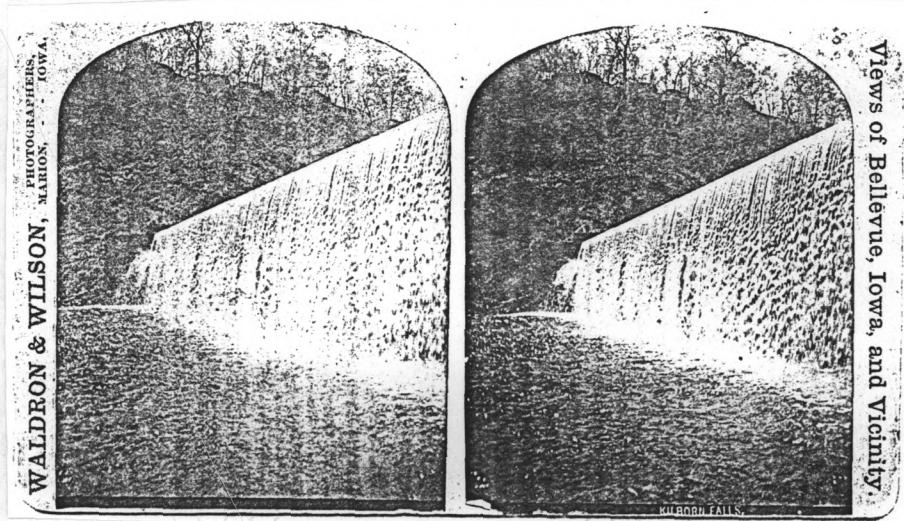
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Stereoscopic view of "Kilborn Falls" at what formerly was E. G. Potter's Jasper Mill. Image dated c. 1871-81 (period of Kilborn's ownership). View is to south from mill. Potter constructed this massive limestone dam in the mid 1840's, and increased its height in 1868.

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**Verbal Boundary Description:**

The nominated property consists of the southernmost portion of the overall property and excludes a small weigh station and a coal shed which are located to the north of the mill itself.

The actual point of beginning is a point which is located in the center of the west boundary of the larger property, therefore, the verbal boundary description had to trace the larger property in order to reach that point, viz;

The point of beginning is identified by following this boundary description, commencing on a Town line on the South side of the Town of Bellevue, at a point Thirty Five (35) feet due East of the Southwest corner of Lot No. One Hundred Fifty One (151) in Town of Bellevue, thence South Forty Five (45) degrees East One Hundred Eight (108) feet to a maple tree Eight (8) inches in diameter, this being the point of beginning.

Thence South Five (5) degrees West One Hundred Eleven (111) feet, (Said last described line running Eighteen (18) feet westerly of the West side of Mill building), thence running South Eighty Five (85) degrees East Two Hundred (200) feet, (Said last described line running Ten (10) feet southerly of the South side of Mill building), thence running North Five (5) degrees East Fifty Six (56) feet, thence North Seventy (70) degrees West Two Hundred and Five (205) feet to place of beginning.

