

BEGINNING, Continued from Page 2

Famous meteorite fell on May 10, 1879

gregated in the newspaper office.

Whatever the source, "blizzard" in its present use apparently was employed for the first time in print on April 23, 1870, in an issue of the Vindicator.

Another event that made Estherville famous happened about two miles north of the town on Highway 4 on May 10, 1879.

The Estherville Meteorite fell 482 feet due west of the marker now just off of Highway 4 north of town commemorating the incident.

It's been said as the meteor fell a large piece was loosened and thrown about one mile west of Superior into a pond in Richland Township. It's never been verified, but the meteor did separate into three parts, all falling in Emmet County.

The rock fell into a slough and made a hole 15 feet deep and about 12 feet wide. It's metallic stone make up was considered somewhat of a mystery.

The largest piece weighed 431 pounds, although its dimensions only were 26 inches long, 23 inches high and 14 inches

thick. The other two pieces weighed 151 and 106 pounds each.

Hundreds of other fragments were discovered and sold off as souvenirs. The two largest pieces were sold to the British Museum of London and the 106-pound block was bought by the University of Minnesota Museum in Minneapolis.

It is considered one of the three greatest "falls" on record, all of which happened within the boundaries of the state of Iowa.

Parts of the meteorite can be found today at the Estherville Public Library and several museums around the world.

The Ridleys

A closer look at the family that gave Estherville its name

COMPILED BY RUTH HACKETT
FOR THE ESTHERVILLE DAILY NEWS

Robert E. Ridley built the first house in Estherville in 1857 near the east bank of the Des Moines River in the area of present-day Fourth Avenue North.

Ridley, 24, and his brother, Algernon H. Ridley, 21, were born and raised in Harpswell, Cumberland County, Maine and had come to Emmet County in the fall of 1856 — the first year that any white settlers (10 in all) chose to settle in this county. The brothers left the area to spend the winter working in the lumber camps in northern Michigan.

They returned to Emmet County in June 1857, about three months after the Spirit Lake Massacre in Dickinson County. In July Robert left for Dubuque to meet his wife, Esther Ann, who arrived there by train. At that time there was no train transportation west so Robert and Esther traveled across the prairie for 12 days in a covered wagon drawn by a team of oxen, arriving in northwest Iowa on August 8th. They lived temporarily in a log cabin in an area called Kettleon Springs in Emmet township.

In December they moved into their 16-foot-by-22-foot block house which Robert and another new settler, Jesse Coverdale, had constructed with walnut logs. Because of their wariness of another Indian attack, the house was fortified with loopholes in the walls to accommodate firing of guns. A ladder was built from the cabin's dirt floor to a loft where the couple slept. The lower part of the chimney was constructed of sandstone and the upper part consisted of basswood plastered together with mud obtained from the river by breaking the ice which covered it.

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