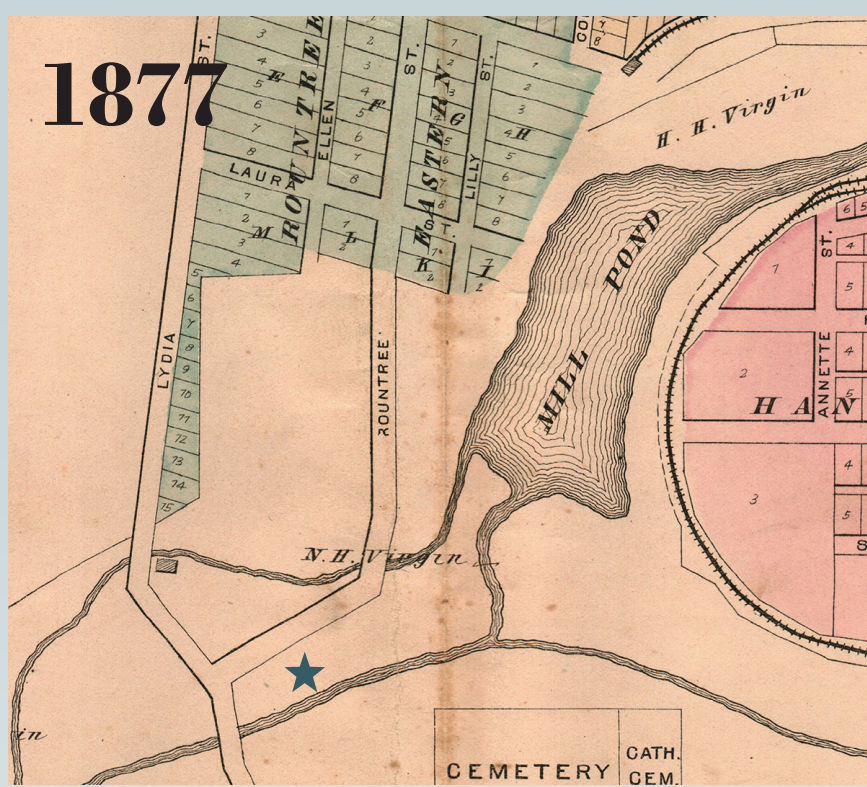




# The History of Here:

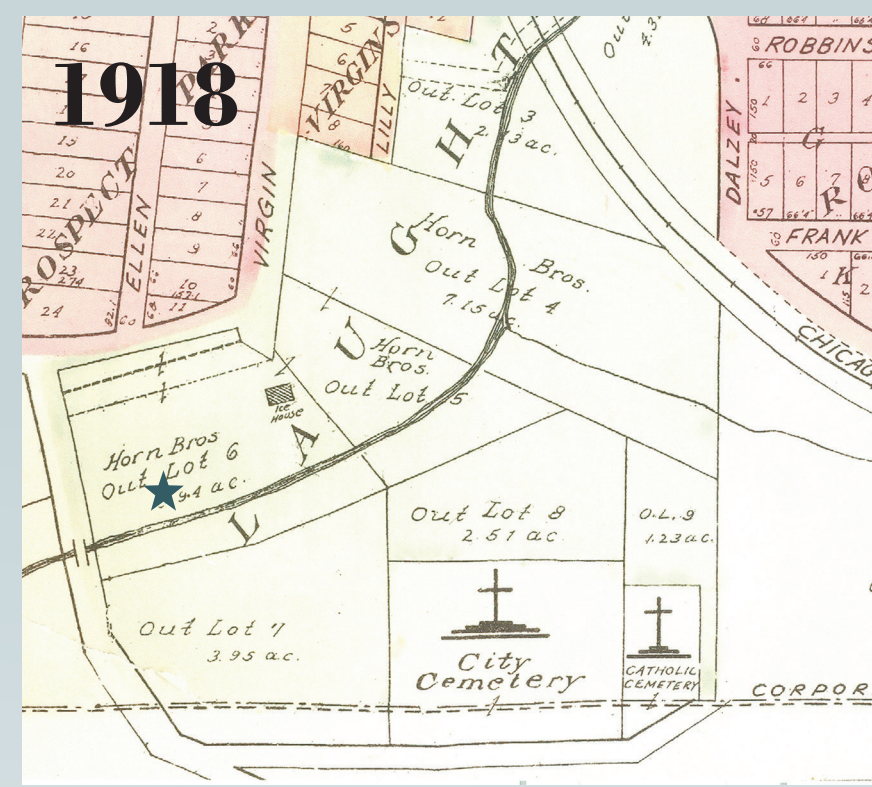
## Flour Grinding, Ice Cutting, and Custard Serving



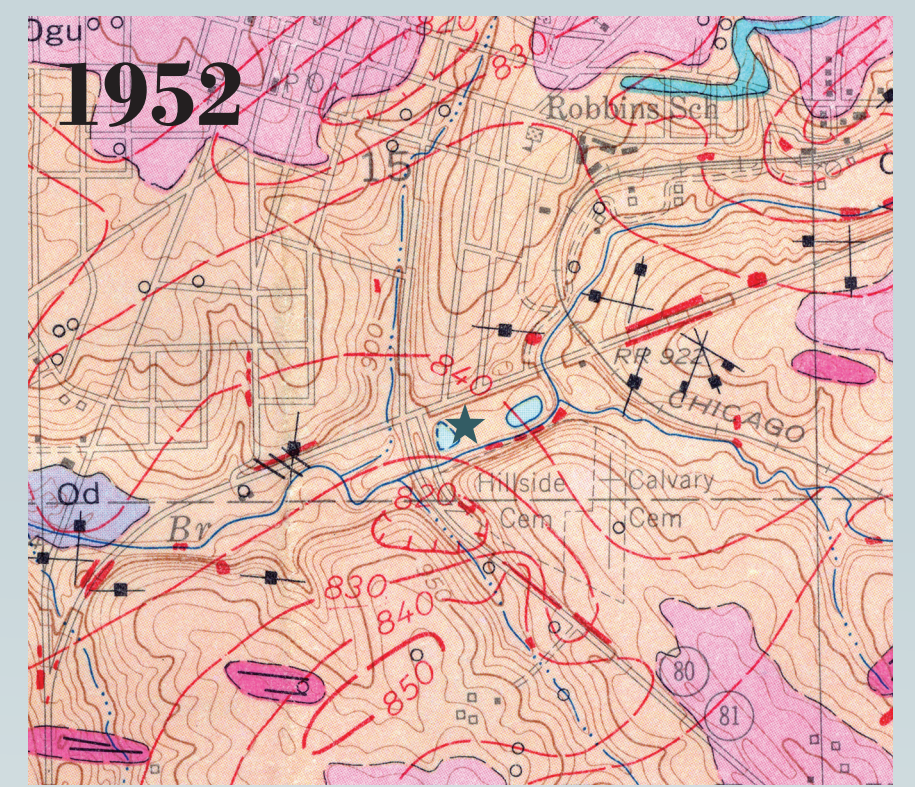
This 1877 plat map shows a mill pond clearly. The Virgin Flour Mill is the small square in the southwest corner between Lydia St. and Rountree St.



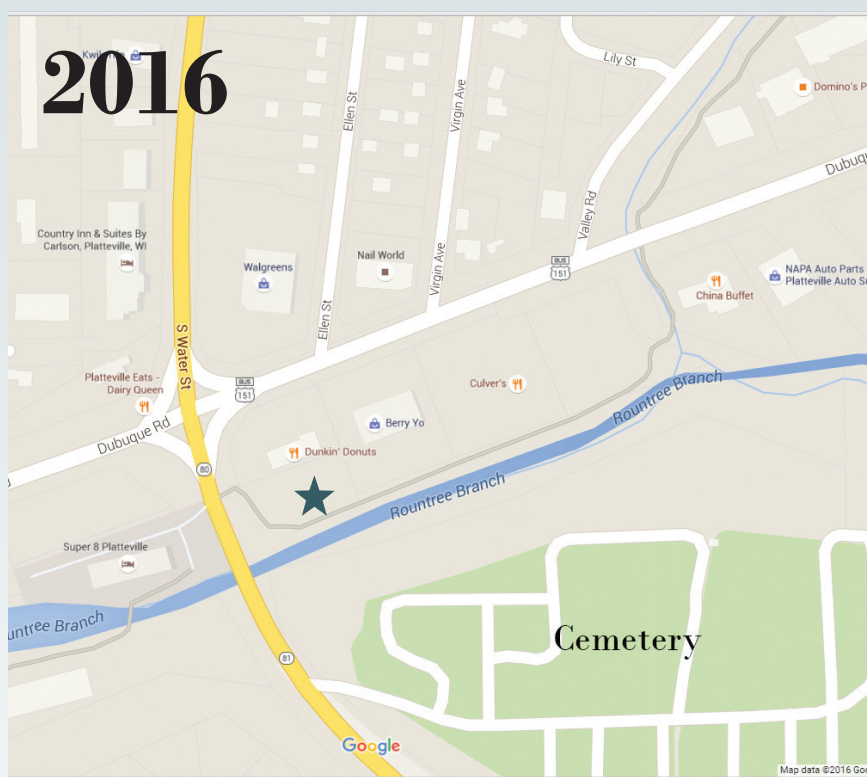
The 1895 plat shows the flour mill but not the pond. Note that the road that was Rountree Street in 1877 is now Virgin Avenue.



The 1918 plat shows that the Horn Brothers have acquired the land and build an ice house.



This United States Geology Survey Map from 1952 shows two small ponds. Also note that Business 151 and Highway 80/81 are now present.



2016 Google Map

The land you are standing on now has a rich history, going back to the early settlement of Platteville. These maps show the evolution of how Plattevillians have used this land. The star on each map shows your approximate location.

### Virgin Flour Mill

In 1838 John H. Rountree, Noah H. Virgin and Neeley Gray established the Virgin Flour Mill in this vicinity. Until that time, the closest mill was seven miles away. The structure wasn't complete until 1840 and began grinding corn that fall. With its 36 x 40 foot three-story building, the Virgin Mill could grind 150 bushels every 24 hours. It was still listed as being a mill in 1895 on the Platteville plat map.

### Horn's Ice House

The Horn Brothers began operating Horn's Ice House sometime between 1895 and 1900, and continued through the 1940s. Tools for harvesting ice included saws for cutting the ice, pike poles to guide the ice to the channel, a jack hook to pull the ice blocks up the chute, and shavers.

The Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad was a big customer of the ice, as they would use the ice to keep refrigerator cars and livestock cool. Horn's ice was also used at local breweries, cheese factories, at the Cunningham Hospital, and in private homes.



Albert Plourde picking ice. Finney Machine Company helped to construct the ramp for the Ice House.



Cutting ice at Horn's Pond.



The largest ice house on this site was 120x 60 feet and 20 feet tall. It stood about where Culvers is now.



George Slyfield jumping off the high dive at Horn's Pond. Circa 1925.

### Horn's Pond

Horn's Pond was also used as a swimming hole in the early 1900s. The City of Platteville helped maintain the pond for swimming and had lights for night time swimming. There were two ponds connected by the Rountree Branch of the the Platte River. The City of Platteville built a public swimming pool on North 4th Street in 1934 and while swimming continued in Horn's Pond, it fell out of favor.

Local resident Maynard Shepherd recalls that in the late 1930s and 1940s Walter Horn would let the kids make rafts out of the wood and telephone poles on the property. They would also take an old metal and wood bathtub and slide down the ice house ramp into the water. When they wet the ramp first they could get it going pretty fast.

Shepherd also remembers the pond being a great place to go ice skating since the Horn Brothers would plow the snow from the top of the ice, creating a nice, slick surface to skate on.

### Beyond the Pond

In February of 1993 the Culvers opened, the former pond having been filled with solid fill beginning in the 1970s.

Find out more about John H. Rountree and the history of Platteville at the Mining & Rollo Jamison Museums just a few blocks north of here.



Bob Bruger (left) and Maynard Shepherd (right) try to coax Laddie the dog into Horn's Pond, circa 1943. From the collection of Maynard Shepherd.

Sources:  
Frozen Custard Franchise will Cover Memories of Ice House, Platteville Journal, circa 1992, from the Southwest Wisconsin Room at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville  
C.W. Butterfield's History of Grant County 1881  
Photographs courtesy of Southwest Wisconsin Room at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville unless otherwise noted.  
Plat books and maps from the collection of the Mining & Rollo Jamison Museums



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