

BENJAMIN NYE FIRST SETTLER IN THE COUNTY BUILDER OF THE MILL MURDERED !!!

Nye was not timid when it came to protecting what was his. There is a story of a violent confrontation involving Nye and his neighbor William Gordon. Gordon was a graduate of West Point Military Academy, and like Nye an early settler. Both men were seriously wounded by Bowie knives. It was feared that both would die. Both were charged with attempted murder. Both were acquitted by claiming that the other was at fault. Gordon seems to have disappeared from history.



George McCoy

Nye did not win all of his battles. Nye hired George McCoy as a farm laborer. McCoy and one of Nye's daughters, Harriet, married and moved out of the area to nearby Cedar County. In 1849 McCoy left Harriet with the children and went to the California Gold Rush to seek his fortune in the gold fields. His wife and children returned to Pine Mills to live with her parents. Upon his return 2 years later, McCoy found Harriet with a child that was not his.



HARRIET MCCOY

McCoy divorced his wife and the court gave him custody of his children. McCoy went to the Nye home and took the children that were his. He took his children in a wagon but Nye and his other son-in-law, Robert Patterson, caught McCoy. A fight ensued between McCoy, Nye, and his other son-in-law Robert Patterson. In the melee McCoy killed Nye with a knife and gun. All of this in sight of the children. The court ruled that McCoy acted in self-defense. McCoy left Iowa with his children and later helped found the town of Antioch, California. He also became a Justice of the Peace there. McCoy later took his own life because of cancer.



Historical marker of Nye's murder



Robert & Laura Patterson

After Nye's death son-in-law Robert Patterson took over management of the mill.