

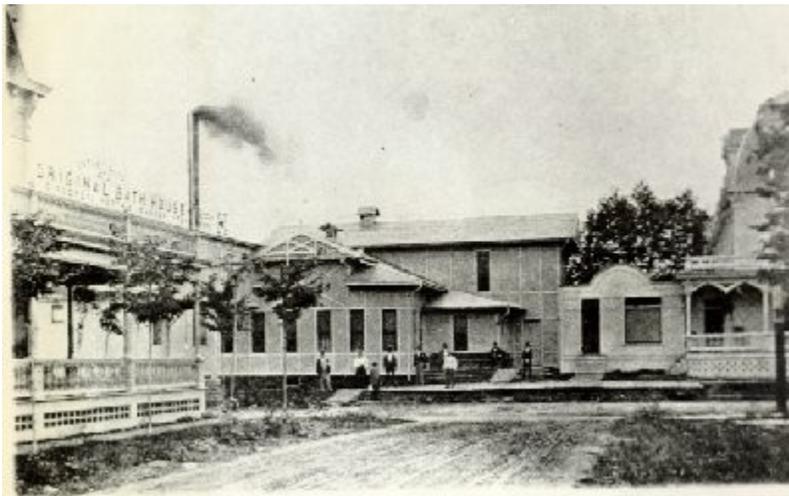
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Local History Sketches

The Original Bath House and Avery and Egnew Hotels

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The Original as it appeared after being rebuilt in 1884

In 1873, the first bath house was built at the corner of Jones and Water streets. It was financed by contributions of the citizens of Mount Clemens, with **Dr. Henry Taylor**, his son, **Dr. Henry Taylor, Jr.**, and **E. W. Lewis** as guiding lights in forming the company, named the **Mineral Springs Company**. Thus was erected the bath house that came to be known as "The Original."

An early advertising booklet published by the Mineral Springs Company contained an analysis of the water by **Professor S.P. Duffield**. The 1916 *Cutter's Guide* quotes Dr. Duffield's statement in the *Philadelphia Medical and Surgical Reporter*: "This water belongs to the sulphurous or hepatic class. It also has a large amount of mineral salts. It will be valuable for all bathing purposes, affording the bather the combined influence of salt and sulfur both. The water shows the presence of magnetism or electricity, which positively exists in large quantities." The wells were as deep as 1,380 feet, with a capacity of 1,000 barrels a day. Water was pumped into wooden tubs elevated above the ground and then piped to the bath house. Slightly colored and brackish or bitter to the taste, it had a temperature of about 59 degrees Fahrenheit. The bath house was opened to the public on July 10, 1873.

At that time visitors to Mount Clemens were served by the **Sherman House Hotel**, built in 1865. This three-story brick building, operated by **E.H.** and **W. J. Conner** for 26 years, was located at the corner of Court House Square and Cass Avenue. Soon, however, the need for more housing for people coming to take the baths became apparent. Early hotels were the **Central Park**, erected in 1879, and the **Clifton House**, constructed in 1875 as a residence by **John E. Brehler** and converted to a hotel

in 1878. The **Shackleton House**, built in the summer of 1881 by **Thomas Shackleton** and operated by **John W. Cleveland**, was possibly the only "temperance" hotel in the history of Mount Clemens. Yet another hotel, the **St. Cloud**, was on a poor location and was never economically successful, according to the April 30, 1880 edition of the *Mount Clemens Monitor*.

The Original Bath House was taken over in 1877 by **Seth B. North** of Hancock, Michigan, and **Charles B. Johnson** of Brooklyn and New York, who added 46 tubs. The *Cutter's Guide* of 1901, an advertising booklet published annually, gives credit to North and Johnson for providing the capital needed to develop the mineral baths. For many years the Original was the only bath house. Baths were given for \$.50 without an attendant or \$.75 with an attendant. Mineral water was \$5 a barrel. Mount Clemens was very accessible for visitors coming to take the baths because the steamer *Ida* made daily trips to Detroit, and there were five trains a day on the Grand Trunk Railway. The business was so successful that in 1880 plans were made for an expansion of the bath house. The work, under the supervision of **Frederick Kendrick** and a **Mr. Allor**, called for two additions to extend over the river and be set on piles.

The Original continued to prosper until it burned on August 23, 1883. The need to serve the increasing number of visitors insured the prompt rebuilding of the bath house. When it reopened January 15, 1884, the new facility could handle 500 baths a day in its 58 tubs. Ups to July 1, 1893, 750,000 baths had been given.

In 1899, the entire plant, consisting of the Original Bath House and two adjoining hotels (the **Avery** and the **Egnew**), was sold by North and Johnson to the **Original Bath and Hotel Company**, whose officers were **F.G. Kendrick**, president; **S. B. Spier**, secretary; and **George A. Skinner**, treasurer. Fire again claimed the Original in January, 1902. Once more it was rebuilt, this time as the **New Original Bath House and Sanitarium**. It was connected to the Egnew Hotel and had **Dr. Richard Leuschner** as medical director.

North and Johnson had built a small hotel called the **Mineral Springs Hotel** in connection with the Original Bath House. It was turned over to the Avery brothers in 1880 and renamed the Avery. **Judge William Avery** of New York, one of the brothers, had been in Mount Clemens for the baths. He was greatly benefited and saw possibilities for the development of a much finer hotel. Accordingly, the Averys secured the entire block on East Street and the corresponding block on the river. They proposed to build a hotel that would be the largest of its kind in Michigan. The building was to be three stories high, with a mansard roof, and have spacious verandas and 385 rooms to accommodate 500 guests. A sketch of the new hotel, which was to be built in sections, appeared in the *New York Graphic*. Lewis and Brehler were given a contract at a cost of \$24,000. The first section of 100 rooms was opened June 1, 1880, and the south wing followed in February, 1881. The *Cutter's Guide* of 1894 describes the Avery as the leading hotel of Mount Clemens. The large porches had hanging baskets and hanging incandescent lights in the shape of pineapples. Rates were \$2.50 to \$4 a day.

Control of the Avery passed through several hands, and in 1884, **E.R. Egnew** took over the management of the hotel and the Original Bath House. His coming, according to the *International* published in 1892, "marked an epoch in the history of the development of Mount Clemens." Born in Indiana in 1841, Egnew as a young man went to Mackinaw for his health. It was there that he first became interested in hotel keeping. He served his apprenticeship in several hotels, including the **Brunswick** in Detroit. However, he was afflicted with rheumatism and had to be brought on a stretcher to Mount Clemens to take the baths. Eldredge's *Past and Present of Macomb County, Michigan* says that he was treated by **Dorr Kellogg**, who had become a rubber at the bath house. He was cured and decided to stay in Mount Clemens. Egnew served successfully as manager of the Original Bath House and the Avery Hotel. He was kindly, considerate, tactful and suave--in fact, the perfect host. He must also have been a bit of a showman. The Avery had an assortment of pets, including an American eagle

named Dick. Another project of Egnew's was the building of the yacht *Roberta* for the pleasure of his guests. He remained at the Original Bath House until July, 1887, and at the Avery Hotel until the fall of 1894.

In 1894 a new hotel, to be known as the **Egnew**, was built on the site of the **Osborne Hotel** (previously known as the **Kendrick**). The *Mount Clemens Monitor* of June 7, 1894, described in great detail the rebuilding of the Hotel Egnew by F.G. Kendrick, calling it a "triumph of E.R. Egnew." An addition of 43 by 74 feet gave the three-story building an unbroken front 240 feet long. There were 100 guest rooms. The central office had a marble floor and leather chairs. A small conservatory led to Egnew's cafe, which was decorated in gold and had 24 electric lamps. The hall, the length of the hotel, was richly carpeted and the walls were hung with oil paintings, steel engravings and etchings. An elevator was to be installed. At the entrance of the dining room was a "Moorish" corner, where handpainted Moorish drapes enclosed an elegant settee. The dining room, 36 by 84 feet, was built without posts and paneled in quarter-sawn oak. There were 21 windows and a large bay window filled with plants. **Charles H. Scott** was the steward. Overall, the Egnew was very elegant. One of the guests enjoying all this elegance in 1897 was the actress **Anna Held**.

Not to be outdone, the Avery had undergone extensive remodeling in 1895. Hodges and Avery are listed as proprietors in the *Mount Clemens Press* of May 30, 1895. The office was enlarged and given a new marble floor, and a Gardner elevator was installed. There was a handsome fireplace, a reading room, a barber shop and a saloon. The passageway to the dining room was made of glass and served as a conservatory. The dining room was decorated in green, with velvet carpet and elegant green draperies. Plate-glass windows were installed. Other improvements included a private dining room, modern kitchen, silver and glass pantry, cold-storage room and a bakery. There was an ordinary dining room for maids and nurses. The 107 guest rooms were furnished in curly maple, birch and oak.

The Egnew and the Avery hotels, connected with the Original Bath House by heated passageways, were the setting for many fabulous social events. One held at the Avery was preserved by a description in the *Mount Clemens Monitor* of September 11, 1896. It was the Silver and Gold Leap Year Ball, originated and conducted by **Professor Harold St. John**. The invitations had gold bugs on the corners. The ladies invited the gentlemen, and sides were chosen. One group wore yellow sashes and had yellow bouquets; the other wore light blue sashes and carried white bouquets. The scene of all this gaiety was to burn later--the fate of many of Mount Clemens's early hotels, most of which were of frame construction.

After the Avery burned, many changes were to come to the rest of the property of the Original Bath and Hotel Company. It appears from the *Mount Clemens Monitor* of April 15, 1910, that the Park Hotel took over the property. The city directory of 1921-22 lists **B. Rosen** as the proprietor. In the 1925-26 directory, **Leon Krim** is named as proprietor, and the establishment was then called the **Riverside**. The **Madorsky** brothers, **Sam, Max and Morris**, took over in 1929 and later added a bowling alley. **Sam Cusumano** became the owner in 1957. He remodeled the property extensively and changed its name to **Clinton Gables**. [The motel portion of Clinton Gables was damaged by fire in 1980 and closed two years later. It was demolished in 1987. The bowling alley portion remained and was destroyed by fire in 1997].

For more information about the Original Bath House and its adjoining hotels, we recommend:

- DeFrank, Frank. "Clinton Gables to Make Way for Development," *Macomb Daily*, February 6, 1987, p.3A.
- "Riverside Hotel Located on Historic Site: Original Well Was Sunk There Back in 1865," in *Pageant of Progress*. Mount Clemens, Mich. : Nellis Newspapers [1928], sec.4, p.13.
- "Story of A Grand Hotel," *Mount Clemens Monitor*, June 7, 1895.

- "The New Avery House," *Mount Clemens Monitor*, May 31, 1895.
- "Re-Opened: 'The Avery' and the Spring Co.'s Bath House Again Ready for Business," *Mount Clemens Monitor*, January 11, 1884, p.1, col.2.