



Ira S. Haseltine House, 133 South Grove Street, 1852-1857.



**Ira S. Haseltine - Richland County
History Room**

Ira S. Haseltine was the founder of Richland Center. Haseltine was born in Andover, Vermont in 1821; at the age of sixteen years he came west first locating at Waukesha County and then Rockbridge on the Pine River north of what was to become Richland Center. In 1850 he purchased the land upon which Richland Center would be located and platted the village. In July 1854 Haseltine was a delegate from this county to the first Republican state convention. He was elected a member of the assembly in 1867 from the county by the Republicans. He resided here until 1870, leaving for Missouri and settling on a farm near Springfield where he developed one of the largest apple orchards in the United States. He was elected to the forty-seventh congress from Missouri on the Greenback ticket. He died on January 13, 1899 at his home in Missouri at the age of 78.

Haseltine was said to be a restless man full of vitality, wearing his hair long in "the southern fashion," but when he spoke, there was no mistaking his yankee origins. There was some disagreement as to whether he was totally honest in his machinations in assuring that the county seat would be located in Richland Center, but he was certainly a dynamic man. He built a dam on the Pine River, erected a sawmill, and then added a grist mill, which he later sold to A.C. Parfrey in partnership with Joseph Nichols. He prospered and built a fine house on the west bank of the Pine River overlooking the mill pond. The house is likely the oldest residence still intact in Richland Center. Ira Haseltine could sit in the upstairs



The Haseltine House is visible directly behind the mill. Richland County History Room.

rooms and watch the men at work in the mills below. In those days, the front of the house faced the river, unlike today, as the front entrance faces South Grove Street. Most early brick houses in Richland Center were built of bright red Boaz brick, but the brick for Haseltine's house was imported from Ohio and was three courses thick. (Some accounts describe the walls to be five courses thick). It is estimated the house contains 100,000 bricks. The

only heat for the house, in the beginning, was fireplaces. His house could be described as Early Georgian in style, with its symmetrical design, column framed door with pediment above, dentiled cornice at the top of the front wall, and low gabled roof.



Ira Sherwin Haseltine and Augusta Thomas Haseltine and their sons and daughters c. 1883. Rear, left to right: Seward Augustus, Gertrude Augusta, Charles Sumner, Nellie Lincoln. Center, left to right: Louis Kissouth, Ira Sherwin Haseltine, Augusta Thomas Haseltine, Spurhgium Ira ("Spurzy"). Front, left to right: Rose, Vinnie. Richland County History Room