

# While You Are Touring...

Spend extra time enjoying Hamilton County as you tour the Ghost Towns and Settlements drive!

## Eats & Dining

Ellsworth Stanhope  
Jewell Stratford  
Kamrar Williams - off of I-35  
Webster City

## Lodging

The Cabins of Hamilton County at Little Wall Lake & Briggs Woods Park  
Motels in rural Williams - right off of I-35  
Motels in Webster City

## Camping

**City Parks** - Stratford City Park  
**County Parks**  
Bell's Mill a Briggs Woods a Little Wall Lake

## Shopping

Seasonal Farmers Markets in Jewell & Webster City  
Vintage, Salvaged, Consignment & Repurposed Shops in Ellsworth, Jewell, Kamrar & Webster City  
Soap & Gift Shops in Jewell & Stratford  
Quilt & Fabric Stores in Jewell & rural Ellsworth  
Rock Shop in Stratford  
Hardware Stores in Jewell & Webster City  
Equine & Animal Supply Stores in Stratford & Webster City  
Clothing Stores in Webster City  
Sportswear Store in Webster City  
School Spirit Stores in Jewell & Webster City  
Bakeries & Donut Shops in Webster City  
Flower Shops in Webster City  
Gardening Shops in Stanhope & Webster City  
Winery in rural Stratford  
Grocery Stores in Jewell, Stratford and Webster City  
Coffee shops in Jewell & Webster City



Family Fun Is Here  
Hamilton County ~ Iowa  
You Should Be Too!



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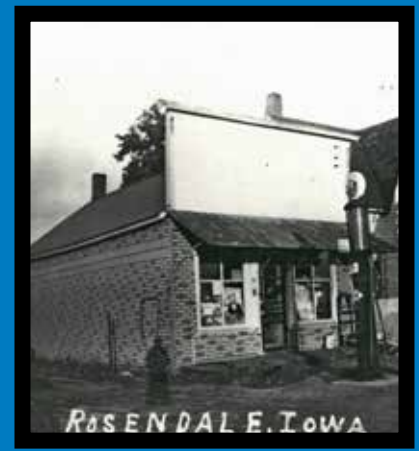
Blairsburg | Ellsworth | Jewell | Kamrar | Randall  
Stanhope | Stratford | Webster City | Williams



This project paid for in part by MIDAS Council of Governments

# Quirky Historical Information

Celebrating Our Heritage  
Rich in Tradition  
Rooted in History



= Hamilton County, Iowa =

Ghost Towns & Settlements

GHOST TOWNS



## And Then There Were Nine...

Since 1848, when the first settler arrived in what is now Hamilton County, there have been a total of 48 settlements and towns in Hamilton County.

This historical scenic drive through Hamilton County, will take you through some beautiful, unexpected variations in the landscape.



This landmark has now vanished from the landscape. It was located near the ghost town of Hook's Point north of Stratford.

## THE NINE:

Blairsburg Kamrar Stratford  
Ellsworth Randall Webster City  
Jewell Stanhope Williams

## THE THIRTY-NINE GHOSTS IN HAMILTON COUNTY HISTORY:

Batch Grove	Kentucky Grove	Poplar Grove
Callanan	Lake Center	Prairie Queen
Challe's Grove	Lakin's Grove	Red Cedar
Christy Town	Little Chicago	Reinicker
Dakota	Marion City	Rose Grove
Druid Siding	Mettamora	Rosendale
Flugstad	Mulberry Center	Russell's Grove
Hawley	New Saratoga	Saratoga
High Town	North Skunk Grove	Skunk Grove
Highview	Oak Glen	Stonega
Homer	Paris	Stringtown
Hook's Point	Plow	Tunnel Mill
Hope Hollow	Poland's Grove	Tremaine

### Blairsburg

Was incorporated in 1900 and is still home to one hundred seventy-six\* people. Their restored Blairsburg Opera House is listed on the National Historic Register. It is located just off Highways 69 and D25.

### Ellsworth

Always Growing, Always Moving! since 1880. This community is where just over five hundred\* citizens call home. A bit of shopping and a bite to eat are available in this community located right off I-35.

### Jewell

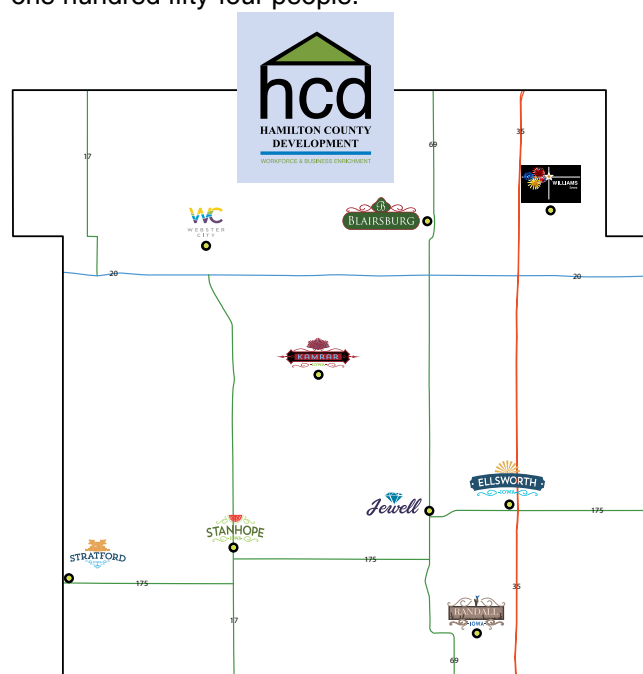
Living Up to Our Name! since 1880. Here you will find locally owned places to shop and eat. Home to just over twelve hundred\* people, this town is located on the junction of Highways 69 and 175.

### Kamrar

Was platted in 1881 and is still home to One Hundred seventy-nine\* people. There is a locally owned place to satisfy your hunger and shop.

### Randall

The post office of Randall was established in 1863. The town itself was platted in 1878, but not incorporated until 1940! It is home to one hundred fifty-four people.\*



### Stanhope

A Little Slice of Home! since 1883. This community is home to three hundred sixty-four\* people. Just the place to eat and stretch your legs in their city park. It is located on Highway 17.

### Stratford

A Poetic Welcome Home! since 1880. Home to a bit over seven hundred\* people, this community has several places to enjoy satiating your hunger. Located along Highway 175, it is just the place to come before or after visiting Brushy Creek Park. The Hamilton County Freedom Rock is located on their main street.

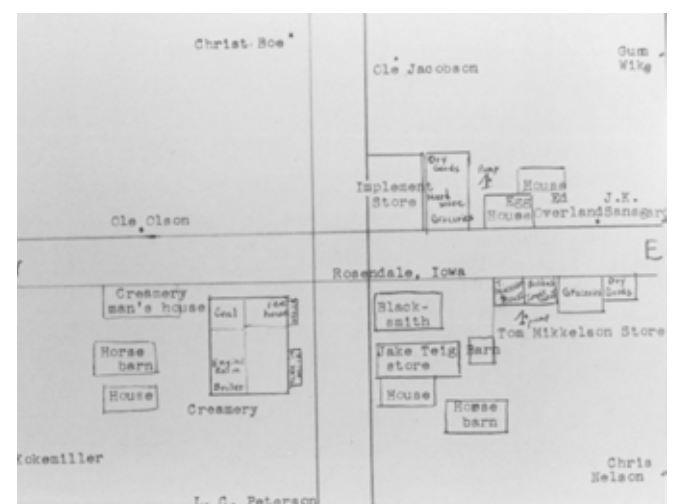
### Webster City

Was founded in 1854 as New Castle. It is the county seat with over seventy-eight hundred\* people. Home to many places to eat, shop & browse, recreation, and relaxation. It is located just off Highway 20.

### Williams

1869 was the year this community was platted. Three hundred seven\* people call this place home. There are a couple of new places to shop! Come check them out.

\* according to the 2020 Federal Census figures



Layout of the ghost town of Rosendale as found in the 1985 edition of the *History of Hamilton County, Iowa*

**Batch Grove** - Sometimes spelled Bach Grove. The settlement got its name from three bachelor trappers who lived in cabins here. A post office was established in a log house in 1858.

**Callanan** - Was a post office from 1878 until 1881. The town had a violent history because it became a popular spot for rowdy folk from Des Moines to go for a happy weekend trip. The Callahan Hotel was busy; the many taverns made the liquor flow freely at all times. When sober residents objected, they were told that the business was good for Callanan.

**Challe's Grove** - Is marked on a hand-drawn map in the 1985 edition of the History of Hamilton County Iowa, Vol. 1. No other description or mention of this settlement was found.

**Christy Town** - As many as twelve families lived here at one time. Today, the site is the home of the Riverside Bible Camp.

**Dakota** - Is not marked on the Ghost Town Tour Map because its exact location is unknown. It was mentioned in an 1853 state road survey.

**Druid Siding** - Was the name given to a railroad siding (a loading area for farmers) on the Illinois Central Railroad. It was located about a mile east of present day Stonega Elevator. The name was changed to Reinicker.

**Flugstad** - Had a post office from 1890 until 1913. Today all that remains of this site is an elevator consisting of several buildings, which is operated today by United Cooperative at Highview.

**Hawley** - Was a stagecoach stop established in 1855 between Alden and Newcastle (now Webster City) on the Maria McNabb farm.

**High Town** - Was named for a family named High, who owned the land on which the siding was built. It was changed to Highview in 1892.

**Highview** - The settlement of High Town had a post office established in 1892. By this time the High family had moved from the area. Some of the residents thought that Highview sounded better. So the name of the town was changed.

**Homer** - Was, at one time, the largest town in all of Webster and Hamilton Counties combined. The town was laid out in 1852 just after Risley and Yell Counties were combined. This put Homer in the center of the large new Webster County. The original plat showed 42 blocks. Today all that remains of Homer is the Homer Methodist Church, the Lamb Small Engine business, a house and a mobile home.

**Hook's Point** - Originated when Isaac and James Hook came to the area in 1851. An old plat map of Hook's Point showed a brickyard, sawmill, wagon shop, cheese factory, drugstore, two saloons, three general stores, and a hotel. It was here that the first murder in Hamilton County was committed.

**Hope Hollow** - Was the first stopping place for Wilson Brewer and his family as they moved up the Boone River in 1850. They wintered here and named the area Hope Hollow.

**Kentucky Grove** - Is not marked on the Ghost Town Tour map because its exact location is unknown. It was the earliest Hamilton County settlement in the U. S. Postal Service records, and dates back to the time our county was called Risley. The post office operated from 1851 until 1852.

**Lake Center** - Is listed in the postal records as having a post office from 1851 until 1884. It has never appeared on any U. S. maps, but did appear on a state map dated 1860.

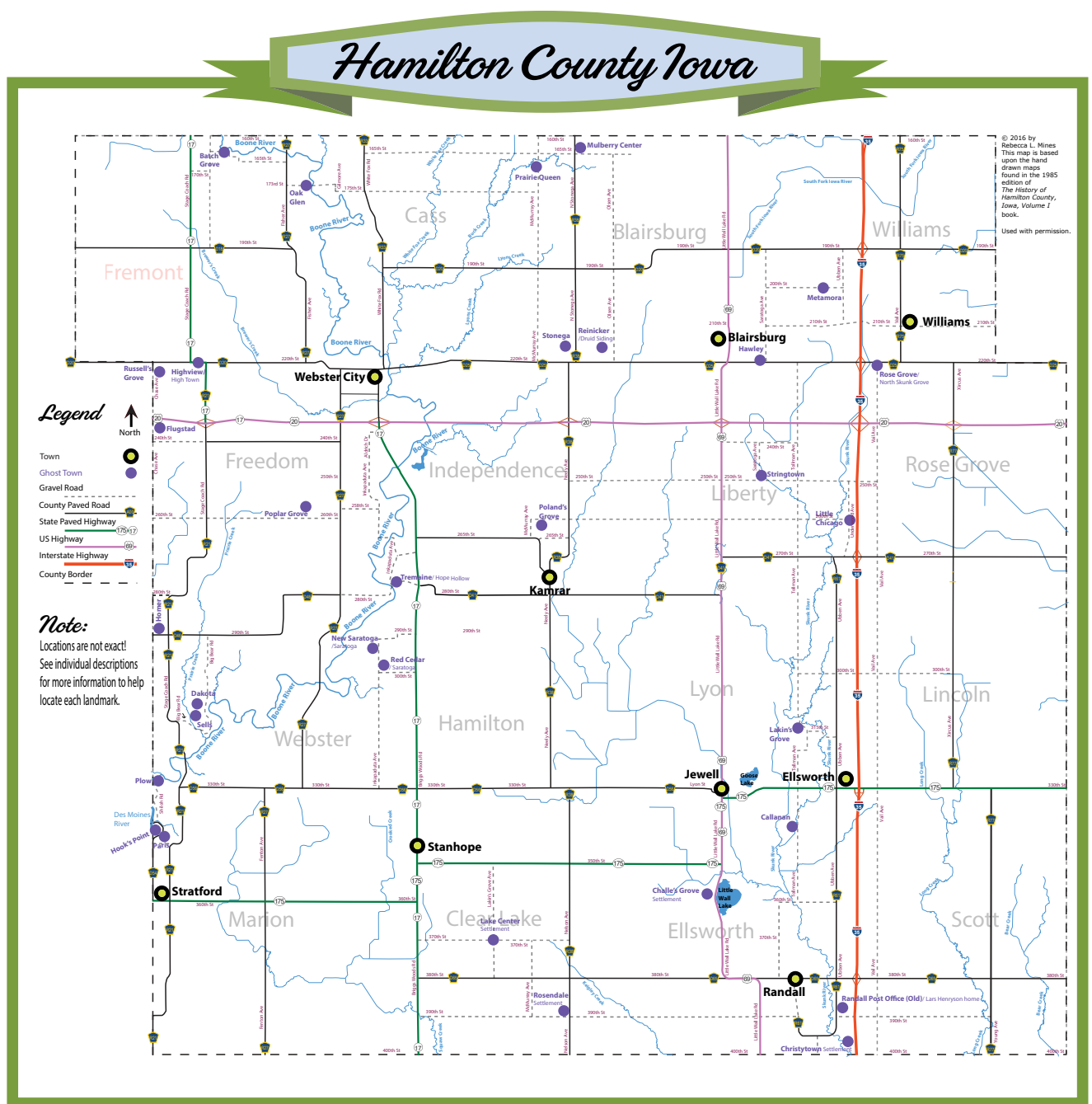
**Lakin's Grove** - had a post office from 1857 until 1878. This village served for a time as a stage coach stop for the line from Newton to Nevada to Skunk Grove.

**Little Chicago** - Consisted of a creamery and a general store. The place was jokingly named Little Chicago after the major city of Illinois.

**Marion City** - Is not marked on the Ghost Town Tour map because its exact location is unknown. It appears on early maps from 1856 to 1863 on the stage route between Ridgeport and Homer. It was located several miles southwest of Hook's Point.

**Mettamora** - Was a very large paper town platted in 1857. The town was never settled, and no buildings were ever built here.

**Mulberry Center** - Mr. and Mrs. Phil Morris homesteaded and planted mulberry trees around their farm. These trees gave the name to the small nearby settlement.



**New Saratoga** - Never became more than a paper town. This settlement was located near the Red Cedar Post Office.

**North Skunk Grove** - Was never more than a stagecoach stop which operated from 1865 to 1869.

**Oak Glen** - James and Elizabeth McLaughlin built a house on the west side of the Boone River at a stage coach crossing. Their house became a way stop for the travelers who followed the stage route. A church, cemetery, and school house were located nearby and became a community gathering place until the 1940's.

**Paris** - Was laid out in June, 1853 and has almost the exact location of where Hook's Point was located. The town appeared on maps from 1856 until 1868. It was only a paper town.

**Plow** - Was a hamlet post office that served the area in the 1860's. Nothing more has been found about this settlement.

**Poland's Grove** - Had a post office, but the records are incomplete as to when the post office was started or discontinued. Poland's Grove appears on many maps dated from 1866 to 1875.

**Poplar Grove** - Was a busy place, located around a creamery, a school, a store, and a post office. The settlement appears on maps from about 1896 to 1900.

**Prairie Queen** - didn't have a post office, but the Prairie Queen Creamery, a blacksmith shop, the Royal Neighbor Hall, a house, and a barn were located here.

**Red Cedar** - was a post office from 1876 until 1881. It was located in a blacksmith shop that served as a center of an active community. It eventually took on the name Saratoga.

**Reinicker** - Was never a real settlement, nor had a post office. It did appear on maps dated 1890 and in a 1910 atlas. It was originally named Druid Siding.

**Rose Grove** - was originally called Skunk Grove. The post office, called Rose Grove, ran from 1865 until 1869, with Mr. Rose as postmaster. It reopened in 1870 to 1883 with Mary E. Rose as postmistress.

All Descriptions were taken from the 1985 edition of the *History of Hamilton County, Iowa* and

*The History of Hamilton County, Iowa* by J.W. Lee, 1912.

Used with permission of the Kendall Young Library, Webster City, Iowa.

**Rosendale** - Had a post office from 1888 until 1902. At one time it had two implement stores, dry goods store, hardware store, grocery store, the Rosendale Creamery, blacksmith shop, a general store, and the Peterson Produce House, where he bought and sold eggs, ducks, and chickens. Taig's store, with a gas pump out front closed in 1966.

**Russell's Grove** - Was a stagecoach stop at the farm home of the Russell family from 1855 until 1869. A post office was also there from June 1872 until April 1873.

**Saratoga** - Was also known as New Saratoga and Red Cedar.

**Skunk Grove** - Was located on the Skunk River. The river was named by the Native Americans for the wild skunk onions, which grew along its banks. When the Rose family moved the stagecoach stop to the top of the hill east of the first location, the name was changed to Rose Grove. The move was only about an eighth of a mile.

**Stonega** - Was a stop on the Illinois Central Railroad, where stock and grain could be loaded on the train. It still stands today as a complex of elevator buildings.

**Stringtown** - Consisted of nine homes. The families living there became a tight community and assisted each other. Today,

three of the houses are occupied by members of the Nibe family, who have named their farming enterprise "Stringtown, Inc."

**Tremaine** - Was a small settlement in the approximate location of Hope Hollow. It had a post office from 1888 until 1899, two houses, the dam, the Bone's Mill, a shop, and a store.

**Tunnel** - Had a post office, Tunnel Mill, and a store which sold, among other items, maple syrup and fish from the Native Americans. The Perry home accommodated farmers overnight while they waited for the grinding of their grain. There were many coal mines along the banks of the river and local farmers brought in bags of coal which were sold at the store.

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