

M. Ebert Company

Est. 1888

In 1888, Mike Ebert drilled his first well on the Sweitzer Farm southeast of Washington. Without electricity, windmills were used to pump the water to elevated holding tanks. The company used a self-propelled steam engine to drill the well and to get to the drilling sites. Crews travelled by horse and wagon, often staying at the farms overnight if the distance was too great. The Ebert family expanded their operations, including a gravel pit, saw mill, and a grain threshing/corn shelling operation.

Forrest Ebert learned the family business at an early age. During WWI, when called to serve, Forrest received a 30-day deferment in order to finish two wells for the City of Champaign. During the 1920s, business was thriving and Forrest picked well-drilling as the company's main focus. Fortunately for the Eberts, combines would soon make grain threshing procedures obsolete.

Modern innovations for the company included the first mounted well rig on a 1926 International truck. Business expanded in the 1930s and 1940s, when Peoria businesses had wells installed for water-cooled air conditioning. Additionally, WWII increased demand for explosives made with alcohol, thus increasing the role of the distillery business in wartime production. The post-war era witnessed a housing explosion, as low-interest loans fueled suburban sprawl. For a time, there was a year-long waiting list for well drilling beyond the city limits.

Forrest's son, William Ebert, served in WWII and completed a Civil Engineering degree from the University of Illinois. In 1949, William joined the company full-time and stayed with the company until his retirement in 1996. William's son-in-law, Dave Dingleline, joined the company in 1974. Today, the focus of the company is on servicing the work the company completed over the last one hundred years.

Congratulations to M. Ebert Company on becoming a Peoria Historical Society Centenarian organization.