



# Ames Heritage Association The Ames Intelligencer

Issue 4 of 4

■ Newsletter for A.H.A. Members ■

Fall 2003

■ The Ames Intelligencer was the first newspaper in the city of Ames ■

## Upcoming Exhibit

### Coming & Going:

### The Lincoln Highway in Ames

Nov. 9, 2003 - January 15, 2004

*presented at Ames Public Library on the mezzanine;*

*open to the public during library open hours at 515 Douglas*



In 1913, the Lincoln Highway charted a route through Ames, putting our community on the first trans-continental highway - a route that inspired

many Americans to take to the road and see America through the windshield of their autos. The exhibit will show what Ames looked like in the nineteen-teens and twenties, with homes, local businesses, filling stations and cafes lining the road.

## Hoggatt School:

### Open through October 31

AHA's school museum will be available to host groups for pre-arranged visits through October 31. Call Carole Jensen, 233-2404 to arrange a tour.

#### Hoggatt School in Sept.

Sept. 16 - St. Cecilia's 1st & 2nd grade; 29 children, 6 adults. Sept. 26 - Northwood, two 3rd grades; 39 children, 3 adults; classes spent the day; they came in period costume carrying their lunches. At noon, the music teacher came and taught old time songs. In Oct. a Webelos Boy Scout Den will come for a visit. They are working on a badge about the changes in education. They will receive a tour and program on this subject

## Here's How You Can Help!

### Hoggatt School

- Work crew to build and install steps
- The following - appropriate to 1860's time period: globe; black & white alphabet strips; dictionary with metal stand; pointer stick
- Wood bookcase - 2 or 3 shelves with glass doors

### Museum @ 108 Fifth

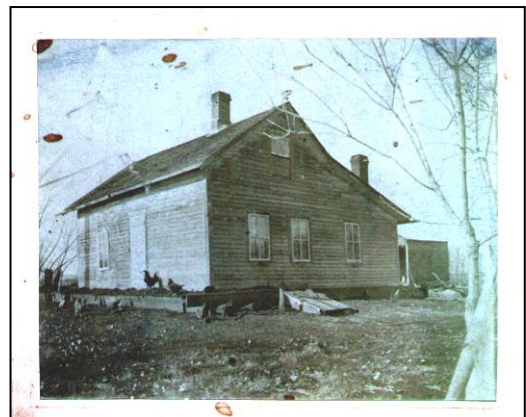
- UV filter sleeves for fluorescent lights
- Archival supplies to include:
  - label holders for document
  - mylar photo sleeves, slide pages,
  - acid-free folders for document boxes
  - document boxes and storage cartons
  - flat storage boxes
  - Wei-To spray for acid paper

Contact the museum if you would like to make AHA wishes come true! 515-232-2148.

## AHA Learns from Vintage

### Bauge Log Home Photograph

Helen Koch of Oswego, Illinois, loaned this vintage image of the log home, clearly showing an entrance to a cold cellar and placement of chimneys.



## Wish Lists

## Singing the Blues in Ames: Big Bill Broonzy



Among fans of country-rural blues, Big Bill Broonzy is regarded as a major talent.

In the Guide to Jazz (1956) by Hugues Panassie and Madeleine Gautier, he "is one of the great blues singers. He sings with spontaneity, purity and a variety of inflection that have

seldom been equaled. Unlike others who sing a whole blues in the same manner, Big Bill builds up his song with subtle gradations, culminating in a tremendous and moving final chorus. He is also a great guitar player of unusual talent and gets a magnificent tone from his instrument."

Although Broonzy was actively performing and recording during the 1930s and 1940s, he had difficulty supporting himself from his music. For a time he lived on a chicken farm in Arkansas, but eventually moved to Chicago. There he came in contact with Studs Terkel, the writer and broadcaster. Terkel included Big Bill in his folk music production "I Come For to Sing."

In the late 1940s this show played in the Iowa State Armory. After the show Leonard and Lillian Feinberg, members of the English Department faculty, invited the cast to their home for a reception.



Some time later a doctor in Chicago told Broonzy that if he didn't get out of the city and start living a more regular life style, his life expectancy was limited. So Broonzy wrote to "Mr. Finberg" requesting help in getting a job on the Iowa State farm.

The University's farm was sufficiently mechanized that additional laborers weren't needed. Instead, a job was found for Big Bill

as a janitor in Friley Hall. In "celebration" of his employment, Broonzy would write "The Moppin' Blues" in 1951.

Big Bill's wife (the second Mrs. Broonzy) had no interest in coming to Ames, since she had a well-paying job with benefits as an elevator operator in Chicago.

Housing was found for Big Bill in a quonset hut in Pammel Court. Among those living in such housing at the time were Albert and Jav Walker of the English Department. Big Bill often came over to their home to play the guitar while Albert played the piano.

Eventually Broonzy moved back to Chicago, inviting his friends in Ames to visit him. The Walkers visited Big Bill in his apartment when they went to Chicago for a professional conference. He offered them test pressings from a recording date in Paris in 1951 or 52.

At first Albert refused the gift, telling Big Bill, "You don't want to get rid of these." But when he saw that Big Bill felt affronted, he accepted. Jav Walker continues to treasure these souvenirs of a fascinating acquaintance.



Big Bill Broonzy died in 1958, one year after his mother (who had been raised in slavery) passed on.

## Big Band Era: MU Memories Iowa State Memorial Union 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 1928-2003:

*Responding to a request from the Memorial Union's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary committee, Iowa State University alumni sent their memories of life at the Memorial Union.*

### 1963: For Days After

"For many of us international graduate students, the Memorial Union was a home away from home. We would socialize there, watch the Huntley-Brinkley report, have most of our meals there (I especially liked the ham loaf), play table tennis after dinner before going back to work. I remember vividly one special event in the MU: a concert by Louis Armstrong. Jazz filled the entire building for days after!"

*Klaus Hinkelmann*

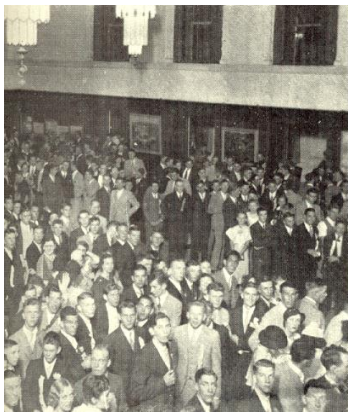
*Ph.D.'63 Statistics, Blacksburg, VA*

### 1965: Shook Hands with “the Man”

"I grew up in Ames, and my friends and I skated on Lake Laverne and used the Union to warm up and, of course, socialize. We also played pool in summer and bowled in winter. I worked at the Union for university events, setting chairs, running the elevators etc. I remember a Stan Kenton concert after which I shook hands with ""the man"" and picked up a pair of his drummer's (Buddy Rich?) drum sticks! Also ran the spotlight for the Homecoming Queen presentation. What a thrill!  
L.J. Skeie, '65"

### 1957: Sharing a Romantic Experience

"Before my days as an Iowa State student in 1953-57, I was a boy growing up in Ames and enjoying the college scene in many ways. My group of high school friends regularly visited the balcony area above the main ballroom of Memorial Union to watch those great homecoming and Veishea dances featuring name bands.



It was at the tag-end of the Big Band era, and those bands were touring college campuses nationwide. We saw them all -- Woody Herman, Ray Anthony, Stan Kenton, Claude Thornhill, Ralph Flanigan, Ralph Marterie. They would play dances at the Union two and sometimes three evenings in a row. We spent many long evenings soaking up the music and enjoying the scene below us.

Later, while attending dances and concerts in the ballroom as an Iowa State student myself, I would look up at that balcony and see young kids watching the same scene in that beautiful ballroom. Low lights, great music, and Iowa State students sharing a romantic experience. That ballroom – and that balcony -- provided me with some of my favorite memories of time on the campus."

*Bill Duffy, Journalism 1957*

### 1950: Saddle Shoes with Bobby Sox

"From the day I walked through the doors of the Memorial Union in the fall of 1946 and was admonished not to step on the Zodiac because it was bad luck, until I graduated in the spring of 1950, I have many fond memories of Iowa State in general and the Memorial Union in particular. It was a central part of the life of students in those years as I suspect it is today many years later.

I remember the freshman mixers and YMCA mixers at the beginning of the fall quarter with the Great Hall packed nearly wall to wall with students. Not many of us knew each other, but we were anxious to meet other students, especially of the opposite sex. We attended the dime dances on Friday nights and some of the various Balls on many a Saturday night.

The Friday night dances were informal. To those, girls wore hand-knit sweaters and saddle shoes with bobby sox. The Balls required formal gowns for the girls. Not many of us had enough gowns so that we could wear something different to each dance, so we traded what we had and wore each other's dresses.



For a little extra pin money I worked as a waitress at the Union for special parties. I also worked most Wednesday nights and Saturday noons as a waitress in the Oak Room, an elegant but rather small dining room where many of the college staff brought their guests. You might be surprised to hear that the patrons were quite generous with their tips.

We all coveted the Oak Room assignment. I worked several times on the cafeteria line downstairs, but didn't like it much. Miss Anderson, the director of food services, was a stern taskmistress. She stood over your shoulder and told you in no uncertain terms if you did not put just the amount of food on each plate. We made from these jobs, what today's students would call a pittance. My income, given out every two weeks, was enough to make me somewhat independent of handouts from my parents.

I dressed up in a long black skirt and white long sleeved blouse for a very formal photograph, taken in the Union in the winter of 1947. It was used for publicity for the spring tour of the Iowa State Singers to Omaha and Kansas City and smaller places in between. I stood at the very place on that stair in the Memorial Union where you could hear a whisper from beyond the stairs. The acoustics on that staircase were remarkable. I hope they still are.

As a senior and a member of the student government Cardinal Guild, I met with other members in the very small Guild meeting room on the second floor. I attended various meetings of other groups over the years in other small rooms in the union. Sometimes I met friends and we studied in one of the lounges on the first floor. It was not unusual to meet friends from campus or out-of-town in the Union.

(continued from page 3)

One morning in January of 1950 I stood in front of the elevator near the central desk to greet Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt as she came down from her room. As a member of Mortar Board I had the frightening task of welcoming her to Iowa State on behalf of our group of girls who sponsored her visit to the campus. She was our main



speaker for our Women's Day Convocation.

I remember how I was struck by her height, nearly six feet tall, I'd judge. She was very homely. She also had charisma. Even though at the time she was the world's most famous woman, she had a way giving her undivided attention to the person to whom she was talking. The other Mortar Board girls and I sat in one of the first floor lounges and chatted informally with her for an hour or so before our luncheon with her and women faculty members. She spoke to us about the importance of learning foreign languages. She also spoke to a large group of students and faculty following the luncheon in Great Hall. This was the major part of the convocation."

*Elaine Rexroat Johnson, Class of 1950*

## Oral History Project: Ames Remembers WW II

More than 15 interviews have been conducted with Ames residents since the launch of the Ames Heritage Association oral history project called AMES REMEMBERS WORLD WAR II. The project will record and share the recollections of people who lived in Ames during the war years.

The interviews will be compiled in a book published by Ames Heritage Association and available for purchase.

It is not too late to participate in the project. Contact Cynthia D. Bennet, AHA's Community Programs Coordinator at 515-268-0356 to arrange an interview, recommend an interviewee or for more information.

Ames Heritage Association Board: President - Kathy Svec; Vice-President - Carole Jensen; Secretary - open; Treasurer - Peggy Baer; Jorgen Rasmussen, Lynn Jenison, Margaret Elbert Benson, Catherine Hunt, Janet Jepeway, Leo Lawler, Micki Nelson, Dennis Wendell. The Board meets the second Monday of each month.

Ames Heritage Association is an incorporated, 501C3 not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting interest in state and local history through publications, programs and exhibitions and the operation of two historic sites. Headquarters: 108 5<sup>th</sup>, Ames; Phone: 515-232-2148, amesheritage@qwest.net.

The Intelligencer newsletter is published four times a year for AHA members. Direct comments & questions to: Editor, PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010.

Hoggatt School is located on the grounds of Meeker School, near 18<sup>th</sup> and Burnett, Ames, IA. Open April 1 through October 31.

Bauge Log Home is east & north McFarland Park's lake. The park is 1/2 mile east of Dayton Rd at 56461 180<sup>th</sup> Street. Open Sundays during good weather months.

Ames, Iowa 50010  
Permit #122  
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The Ames Intelligencer  
Ames Heritage Association  
PO Box 821  
Ames, Iowa 50010