

Ames Historical Society

AMES • IOWA

Newsletter to Members 2013 WINTER....ISSUE #4/4

*Discovering our history,
Preserving our past,
Sharing our stories.*



Toy jeep made during World War II from a cheese crate, typewriter spools and other scrap materials.

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The Board meets the 2nd Thursday of each month 6:45pm at 416 Douglas. Members welcome!

Director Casie Vance
Staff Alex Fejfar, Margaret Vance
Hannah Frederick
Curator Dennis Wendell
Collections Manager Sarah Carlson
Newsletter Editor Kathy Svec

Ames Historical Society is an incorporated, 501c3 not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting interest in local and state history through publications, programs, exhibitions and operation of an archive and historic site.

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Open Mon-Fri, 1-5pm
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Facebook: www.facebook.com/ameshistoricalsociety

The **newsletter** is published four times a year for AHS members. Direct comments and questions to: Editor, PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010 or e-mail above.

Hoggatt School is located on the grounds of Meeker School, near 18th and Burnett, Ames, Iowa. Open April 1 through October 31.

Holidays, Toys and Other Aspects of Life in Ames During the WWII Years

By Steve Grooms, Ames native, now a freelance writer residing in St. Paul, MN



on nearby farms during evenings after a full day's work at their regular jobs.

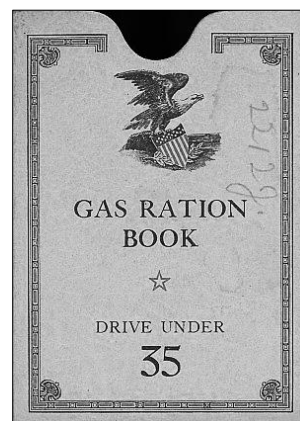
The effects of World War II on Ames were strong albeit distant. My father was just 35 and starting a family as of Pearl Harbor, so he declined his country's offer of free room and board and world travel, but he did his part on the home front. Because so many farmers were away at war, the males remaining in town often drove tractors and did other physical labor

There were no new cars available from 1942 through 1945, so some rather classic vehicles roamed the streets. Even bicycles had to be bought second hand. No new household appliances could be purchased; old stoves and sinks and cast iron bathtubs with feet were common. Those residences that had iceboxes continued to use them.

A typical mechanical refrigerator had only enough freezing capacity to make a few ice cubes (very slowly). If one screamed for ice cream, one got it from a dairy and served it immediately. Frozen foods hadn't been invented, so all victuals and viands were either fresh or canned ... and orange juice came from real oranges.

There was rationing of meat and gasoline and tires, so the ration book of coupons was a treasured imperative. There were recovery drives for paper, metal and rubber. Cooking grease drained from frying bacon or hamburger was saved in cans on the stove and recycled at intervals.

Waste was unthinkable. Victory gardens were popular, though they didn't really provide much food, just better tasting food, and something to do to feel useful on the home front.



One could buy fruit in bulk in small crates or in large double-sectioned ones, these latter being just the right size for use by children as tandem vehicles for make-believe. These wooden crates had pine sides 1/8" thick and end pieces 1/2" thick, so that a great many household projects could be done with them.

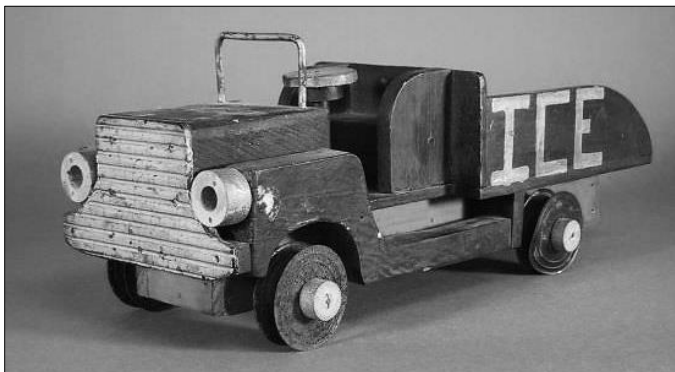
During the war years when manufactured toys were not available, wooden toys were often constructed of such scrap material. Processed cheese was sold in two-pound quantities in rectangular wooden boxes. With these, cigar boxes from Walt's News Stand, steel typewriter ribbon spools, wooden spools from sewing thread or adding machines, coffee cans and various glass jars, adults as well as children had plenty of raw materials with which to entertain themselves.

[Because there were] no new manufactured toys, children had to make do with hand-me-downs from older siblings or used toys bought from other families.



My father, ever the doomsayer, anticipated shortages in 1941 and bought me the last metal tricycle from the Western Auto store (above) on Main Street, long before I was able to use it. He attached wooden blocks to the pedals to allow me to get going while my legs were short.

He also used odds and ends of the project materials previously mentioned to make more than a dozen large wooden toys for my birthdays and Christmases. All projects were made using manual tools — brace-and-bit, coping saw, hand drill, etc. — since there were no power tools in most home shops.



Toy Ice Truck made from orange crate wood (by Homer McNeil).

Everyone was overjoyed when World War II ended.

During holiday seasons in 1945, 1946, and 1947, children carried canned goods to school to deposit in CARE boxes for starving children in Europe. People started procreating again, hence the “baby boom.” Rationing ended. By 1947 one could buy almost anything: bicycles, toy trains, Mixmasters, electric drills, furniture, AM-FM-record player consoles, kitchen appliances, new bathroom facilities, swing sets for the backyard, and new cars. A lot of the products on store

shelves bore the label “Made in Occupied Germany/Japan.”

Our family splurged on all these products, except for the new car; we drove our black 1941 Ford coupe until 1950 and cried when we had to part with it, though happily we did see it around town for some years after!

More of Steve’s charming stories are on our website under “Your Stories”.



End of the Year Appeal

You Make us GO!

Members have by now received our annual end-of-the-year appeal letter. We hope you have been inspired by all the Society has accomplished this past year and will consider how far your dollars go in this organization!

We are so grateful for your membership and for additional donations that allow us to enrich the cultural life of the community. This year, you can choose whether to support day-to-day operations, contribute to the Capital Improvement Fund or grow the Endowment.

Don’t forget that donations can be made to AHS with:

- Tangible assets such as cash, corn in a bin or real estate property
- Transfers of appreciated stock
- IRA rollovers of up to \$100,000 if you are over 70 ½ ** (see below)
- Memorial gifts in honor of a loved one or community member
- Bequests from your estate
- Gifts resulting from being a beneficiary of a retirement account or insurance policy

Donations may be sent to our PO Box, or directly to the AHS Endowment at the Story County Community Foundation, 416 Douglas, Suite 202, Ames, IA 50010.

Gifts to permanent endowment funds may be eligible for Endow Iowa Tax Credits. The Endow Iowa Tax Credit Program was created in 2003 to encourage philanthropy for the benefit of Iowa citizens. The program includes a tax incentive program administered by the Iowa Economic Development Authority. By applying for the Endow Iowa Tax Credits, individuals, businesses and financial institutions can receive a State of Iowa tax credit equal to 25% of their eligible donations to a permanently endowed fund at a qualified community foundation or affiliate foundation (including the Story County Community Foundation). This Iowa tax credit is in addition to normal federal charitable deductions. Please note: A donor may not take both a state charitable deduction and receive the state tax credit for the same donation. Tax credits are offered on a first come, first served basis, with \$6 million available annually statewide.

Society News – Renovation Open House!

Celebrating the Expansion!

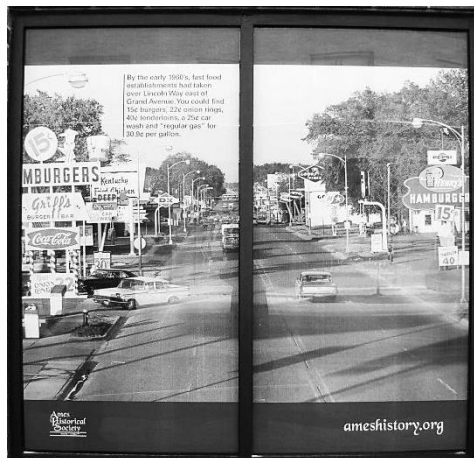
The Grand Opening on Wednesday, November 6 of the newly renovated space at 416 Douglas was well-attended by over 300 people. The staff from the Ames Chamber of Commerce that conducted the ribbon cutting reported that it was the largest ribbon cutting they had ever had!

Holding the ribbon are staff members Alex Fejfar, left, and Casie Vance, right, with Kathy Svec working the big scissors. In addition to new exterior signage – “Ames History Center” – the “plain Jane” building was dressed up with large-scale window-film images from our photo archive (below).

The attractive design was created by ISU Graphic Design student, Kayla Brown, in conjunction with her Fall 2013 Design Practicum class.



The entry doors feature a vintage image of Adams Bros. Grocery, late 1890s. First window: Main Street in 1915 with the Fort Dodge, Des Moines & Southern electric trolley letting off passengers. Second window: C&NW Depot in 1938 with a streamliner pulling into the station. Third window: Carr's Pool in 1957. Fourth window: Lincoln Way in the mid-1960s, lined with fast-food joints offering 15¢ hamburgers. The ingenious film material is perforated and screens sunlight, appearing opaque from the outside, and transparent from the inside. The films have been a wonderful way to present some of our favorite images to the public! Below right, Dorian Stripling and Kathy Svec install the window film.



Society News – Unveiling the Renovation



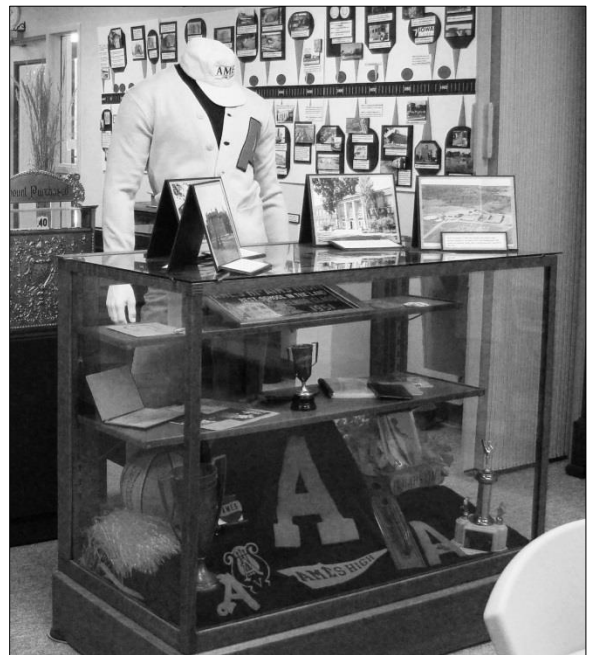
Just inside the main entrance is a new glass door that provides an inviting view into our larger exhibit space. Expanded open hours began November 11. Visitors may now stop in Monday through Friday, 1 to 5pm.



Inaugural exhibits feature a timeline (above) with key events from Ames' past, a ledger with the public library's first inventory of books, Ames High School memorabilia (below), Collegiate Manufacturing items and information on the Martins, Ames's first black family among other items on display.



The hallway now serves as exhibit space, allowing us to show display panels on a variety of subjects (above), as well as 3D artifacts in glass cases (below). Eventually, the tall walls in the stairwell will showcase our collection of vintage business signs.



The renovation provided space to host seated programs for up to 60 people (below). Requests are welcome!



Society News – Unveiling the Renovation!



Shelves in the reference area house a tantalizing array of materials including phone books, Ames High and ISU year books, obituary lists, & publications about people, events and developments both local and statewide. Staff can either assist patrons with using these materials or staff can research questions (though fees may apply).



The Struss Media Room provides comfortable seating for viewing or recording oral interviews, or scanning microfilm. We are grateful to the Becker Family Foundation for funding for this room and other film projects.



Staff, interns and volunteers gained a comfortable and organized work area (above) for processing collections, scanning, editing videos and creating exhibits.



The Gift Shop features unique items relating to local and Iowa History that can't be found anywhere else.



The new archive storage area meets museum standards with appropriate shelving and flooring, and independent temperature controls. Square footage doubled.



Emma Altheide, ISU student volunteer, demonstrates the public area computer that can be used by visitors to search through the digital images in our collection or browse our website. During open hours, hundreds of vintage Ames photos scroll through on a large-screen TV for the enjoyment of our daily patrons.

Save These 2014 Dates!

Mark your calendars with these dates for special Society events: March 1, 10am – Annual Meeting and Program at 416 Douglas. And, the 2014 Lecture series will occur Tuesdays, 7pm on March 25, April 29, May 20, June 24.

Online Exhibits Listing at CVB

In an exciting development, the Ames Convention & Visitors Bureau website now has a listing of exhibits and displays that can be seen in many locations around Ames – including the ones at the Ames History Center. See: www.visitames.com>See & Do>Ongoing Exhibits.

SHSI Visit & Our 33rd



The Board of the State Historical Society of Iowa is taking their meetings “on the road” and met at the Ames History Center on November 13.

They enjoyed seeing our new space and meeting among our displays. Coincidentally, their meeting fell exactly on the 33rd anniversary of the founding of our organization! A toast was made to mark the occasion.

Thanks to Overberg

The Board of AHS has worked hard to create a comprehensive Employee Manual for our paid staff. Providing valuable pro-bono expertise was Kathryn Overberg, an attorney in employment law formerly employed by Iowa State. We offer our sincere thanks to Kathryn, whose comments were thoughtful and well-substantiated. Board members learned from her and feel as though they know better how to handle our staff fairly and within the law. Her work will benefit our organization for years to come!

Remembering Roger & Meg



The Society fondly remembers former Board members, Roger Coulson and Meg Speer. Roger passed away on September 17; Meg on August 26.

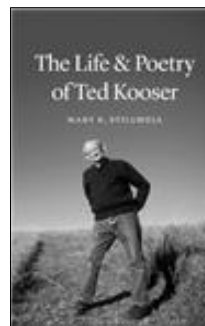
Roger was retired from Iowa State where he headed the Child Development Department. He provided wise counsel in his role as a Board member and was a ready organization volunteer. Meg was a retired dietician with a facility for writing and research who wrote many articles for the Society's newsletter. Both Roger and Meg had multiple interests and were active volunteers in the Ames community. They will be truly missed!

We Get Mail!

AMES HIGH CLASS VISIT: On November 21, Curator Dennis Wendell presented a program about Hallet's Quarry to an Ames High Environmental Science class. They enjoyed the presentation and browsing our displays afterwards, including demonstrations of the player piano, victrola, and amberola.

Teacher Ron Schuck wrote this letter: “Dear Dennis, We really enjoyed learning more about Ames. Most of us are Ames natives and it was really interesting to learn about the place we have lived in our whole lives, because we only know little about it. One of the most fascinating tidbits of information (the catalyst for our field trip) was the history about Ada Hayden Park (Hallet's Quarry), and its old-school Drag Line Excavator. The real-time footage of the drag line moving was awesome. It helped us realize the difference in technology then and now. The cool antique piano that played itself and the record players were our favorite items. We also enjoyed learning about our beloved Carr's Pool where some of us swam when we were kids. Our parents told us about the high dive when they were teenagers, but seeing the actual picture put our imaginations to rest. Thank you for your enthusiasm to teach Ames High students a bit more about their town.”

AUTHOR VISIT: A program on October 1 featuring Mary K. Stillwell, the author of the first biography of Ted Kooser, was greatly enjoyed by both the writer and those in attendance. Kooser is an Ames native who served as US Poet-laureate from 2004-06. The program



was co-sponsored by the Society, Ames Public Library and Octagon Center for the Arts. “The Life & Poetry of Ted Kooser” is available at Books-A-Million and online through Amazon. This note was received from Ms. Stillwell: “It was a lovely venue and a very warm audience; thanks so much for putting this together. I was able to meet several of

Ted's childhood friends and that was fun! We had a good turnout and a student from ISU came out to interview me and ran a nice story [in the Iowa State Daily] the next day.”

CLASS OF 1958: The Ames High Class of 1958's 55th reunion was held in late September and included a virtual tour/slide show of Main Street. This note was received from committee member, Kären Smedal, “Thank you so much for presenting the wonderful “slide show” depicting downtown Ames in 1958. You certainly stimulated our memories of the stores we knew so well in the 1950s. Was that really more than half a century ago? We had a terrific time!”

Society News

School Up in the Air!

Work continues on the relocation of Hoggatt School. The schoolhouse was moved to accommodate plans to build a new Meeker School at the Burnett Avenue site. Goodwin House Movers of Washington, IA, is handling the project. In late October, preparations began and Hoggatt was moved to a temporary location at the southeast corner of the current Meeker building. Meanwhile, utility work near the new location for Hoggatt is being completed.

In late November, work began to construct a new foundation. Additionally, in preparation for the second move, "sister" beams were added to the original joists to stabilize the floor area. Once that work and the foundation work were completed, Hoggatt moved to its new location that is along Burnett Avenue north of the spot where the school was placed in 1980.

The move occurred in mid-December. Board members Sharon Wirth and Carol Phillips have done an excellent job as liaisons working with the District on details of the move. Programming at Hoggatt will resume in the spring of 2014.

Top to bottom:
Preparing the school to move; on the moving trailer; new foundation being formed; in storage on stilts until relocation.



New Membership Levels

For the first time in at least 20 years, the Society is adjusting its membership levels.

As we grow and add staff, collections and space to accommodate the many requests we receive from those curious about the city's past, we need to also increase our monetary support.

Member Levels Effective January 1, 2014:

\$15 Introductory (first year)	\$250 Partner
\$30 Basic	\$500 Benefactor
\$50 Friend	\$1,000 Patron
\$100 Sustaining	

Membership benefits:

- Quarterly newsletter
- Two annual 25%-off coupons for our gift shop (printed in the newsletter)
- Invitation to members-only events, exhibit previews and after-hours tours
- Collectible members-only postcard featuring an image from the collection

Give a Gift Membership!

The old levels are good through December 31 – so think about giving a Gift Membership this holiday season! First-year memberships are just \$10!

Business Memberships & Benefits:

\$50 Organization

- Recognition on our website

\$100 Supporting

- Link to your website from our website
- Photo rights fees waived for prints to hang in your business

\$500 Executive

- Link to your website on our website
- Photo rights fees waived for prints to hang in your business
- 1/8th page ad in our newsletter four times per year



Guests at our grand opening on Nov. 6

Ames Historical Society
PO Box 821
Ames, Iowa 50010

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Return Service Requested

Bring John Blair Home!

Years ago, Ames Historian Farwell Brown, tracked down and brought to Ames a large, elegantly framed portrait of Ames' founder, railroadman John Blair.

The portrait hung in the Ames Public Library until its temporary move last year, when it was officially transferred to us. Blair was recently crated (below) and taken to Minneapolis for restoration, hopefully in time for the Ames Sesquicentennial celebration. We are seeking donations to cover the \$5,000 - \$7,000 cost.

Would you help us bring John home?



Is it time to renew your membership?

Renewals are due on the one-year anniversary of last year's payment. Check this newsletter's label for information about your membership. Memberships fund the day-to-day operations of the Society, allowing us to continue to be a valued community resource. We thank you!

Introductory - 1st year	\$15	Partner	\$250
Basic	\$30	Benefactor	\$500
Friend	\$50	Patron	\$1,000
Sustaining	\$100		

Name _____

Address _____

Ames Historical Society, PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010

Consider This Type of Donation

Several donors have contributed objects specifically earmarked for re-sale through the online auction, ebay. Proceeds from these sales support collections care and other projects. A new volunteer, Hank Zaletel, is placing these items on ebay and has already been successful in selling them. Additional items offered for sale are those that were donated with "no strings attached" that were not appropriate for our collection.

ebay