

Ames Historical Society

AMES • IOWA

Newsletter to Members
2008 FALL ISSUE #3/4

The mission of the Ames Historical Society is to preserve local history and illuminate its stories.



How the presentation room could look at the new Ames History Center & Museum.

Ames Historical Society Board:

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The Board meets the 2nd Monday of each month at City Hall at 6:30pm. Members welcome!

Administrator Alan Spohnheimer
Staff Sara Vouthilak, Dennis Wendell

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

Headqtrs: 416 Douglas, Ames, IA 50010
Open Wed-Fri, 1-5pm
Mail: PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010
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Website: www.ameshistoricalsociety.org

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, IA. Open April 1 through October 31.

Announcing the Campaign for an Ames History Center & Museum!



Legacy Ames:

Save the Past for the Future!

The Ames Historical Society announces the kick-off of Legacy Ames, the capital campaign for a permanent Ames History Center & Museum!

The long dreamed-of permanent home for local history is within reach! Society members are invited to join the capital campaign and make the dream a reality!

We have great news!

An active fundraising committee headed by Ames residents, Rollie and Willie Struss, has been working diligently since early 2008 to “grow” the Building Fund and set the stage for a successful campaign.

In the last newsletter, an update was provided – the Fund stood at \$249,965. We are pleased to announce that the Building Fund **now stands at \$347,000!**

Our goal for the current phase is \$558,000 to purchase the building at 416 Douglas where we currently rent Suite 101 (about ½ the first floor) and an additional \$100,000 for remodeling and furnishing.

The office building at 416 Douglas is pictured above. In the upper right corner is the way the building looks now. The larger picture shows one idea for what the building could look like, with embellishments to make it more inviting and visually interesting – one of a number of options for the enhancing the facade

After reviewing over a dozen sites in and near downtown in 2006, the Society's Site Committee recommended this structure as the one that most effectively meets the needs and requirements of a history center/museum. It is a sturdy masonry structure built on a slab, with clear-span construction that would allow interior spaces to be opened up for exhibits, presentation spaces and storage. It is energy efficient, has an elevator and handicapped accessible bathrooms, a long-term metal roof and seven parking spaces.

Here's the Phased Plan:

Phase I - \$650,000:

Purchase 416 Douglas by the end of 2008 or early 2009. Negotiate with the tenant that now rents the other half of the first floor for mid-year 2009 occupancy of the whole first floor. Remodel the first floor to accommodate Society activities. Second floor tenants would be maintained until resources are secured to occupy the entire building – hopefully sometime in 2010. In the meantime, rental revenues would be used to cover maintenance costs and taxes for which the Society would be liable.

416 Douglas is a 50' x 75', 2-story, 15-year old structure that would provide 7,500 square feet of space. The purchase would include a 7-stall parking lot. The asking price is below the assessed value, and the seller has been patient, but is eager to close the deal!



Phase 2 - \$350,000

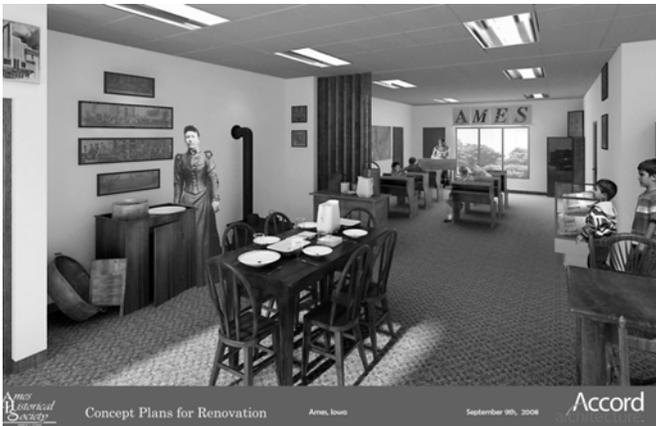
Purchase the Pantorium (above right) that adjoins 416 Douglas as well as an additional parking lot owned by the same the selling party. Renovate for occupancy. The Pantorium is a historic 2-story building that would provide 2,980 square feet of additional space that could be used for exhibitions or storage. An apartment occupies the second floor. The Pantorium is extremely well-built and is in good condition. A passageway can be opened up between it and 416 Douglas.

Phase 3 - \$2 million

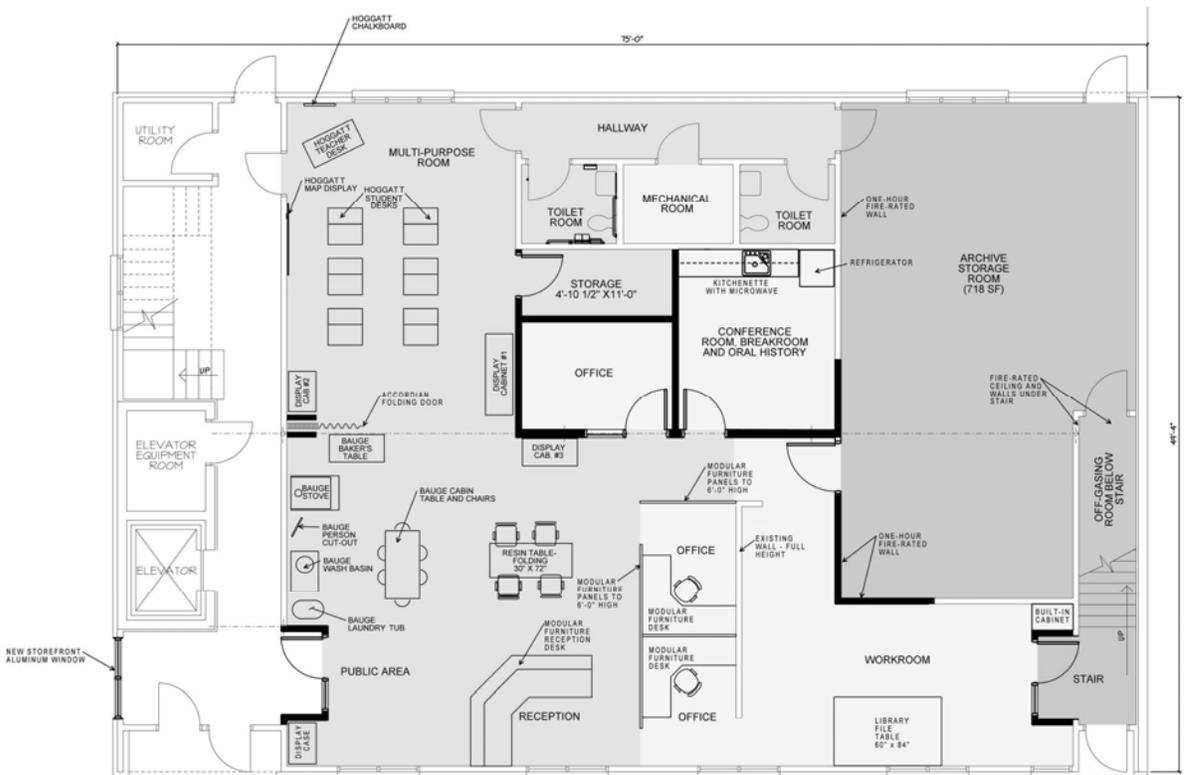
Increase the Endowment (currently at \$19,000) to fund programming, operations and on-going maintenance. Five percent of income generated by the Endowment will be usable for daily operations. The remaining earnings will stay in place to increase the fund. This will ensure long-term financial stability for the Ames History Center and Museum.

Total - \$3 million

Acquisitions, renovations, and operations endowment.



Artist's rendering of what the remodeled first floor space could look like – exhibit area, front, and presentation area, back..



This plan shows what the first floor of 416 Douglas could look like after completion of Phase I.

It could include exhibit space, a multi-use presentation room, offices for staff, storage and work areas, a room for oral histories, as well as mechanical and restrooms. The hallway walls could be used for exhibits, and a welcoming reception area could be located inside the front doors.

Additional Donor Opportunities:

Exhibit galleries	\$75,000
History research center	\$50,000
Learning center	\$75,000
Collections repository	\$150,000
Preservation lab	\$50,000
Oral history room	\$25,000

Endowed Positions:

Director	\$40,000
Curator	\$30,000
Preservation Specialist	\$30,000
Student Internships	\$15,000

We have an opportunity NOW to create a museum that preserves local stories!

Despite early calls for a museum facility, consistent collecting of Ames artifacts did not begin until 2001, 137 years after Ames was founded in 1864.

The Society is now in a rented facility with very limited exhibition, programming, and storage space.

Many important artifacts are in the hands of private citizens who are seeking a meaningful home for them. When their caretakers pass away or move from the area important objects and archives are in danger of being lost, permanently.

Since 2001, more aggressive collecting of archival records and artifacts has filled our limited storage and exhibit space.

- Storage of collections has been maximized
- Rented space is not sustainable
- Expansive in-house exhibits are no longer feasible
- Presentation space is severely restricted
- Interaction with the public has increased ten-fold, creating pressure for more open hours and additional staff.

The community deserves a first-rate museum facility - the time is now!

The History Center and Museum will provide stimulating educational and experiential activities for children, young people and adults, and well-organized archives for those pursuing their own research.

What the History Center and Museum will mean to the community.

The Ames Historical Society's History Center and Museum will be dedicated to keeping alive the memory of people, developments and events that have made our town what it is today. The evidence of your story and many others will be carefully preserved to enrich the community for years to come.

No other organization in Ames is dedicated to this mission!

A Unique Story

Ames was set on course by strong-minded pioneers, educators, entrepreneurs and philanthropists.

At an Ames History Center and Museum, that spirit will be reflected in a changing exhibition plan. Artifacts will be staged in context, and interpreted with text, pictures, sound, lighting - whatever best conveys a sense of the time and place, the story.

It's a way for our citizens - long-timers and newcomers alike - to learn about our past and understand where we have come from, who we are, where we are going, and what makes Ames unique.



Stories such as ...

- Ames growing from a swampy bog and suffering deadly fires to winning awards for its water.
- Finding a solution to the early "train problem" by building the Grand Avenue underpass (above).
- The conversion of a collegiate pennant-making company to the WWII War effort of making GI raincoats.
- Helping our nation grow by the development of the slip form paver, changing the way America builds roads.

No one else can claim these stories! They are ours alone, and wait to be heard by new generations of Ames residents.

Although Ames has not had an established history facility in its past, the future will be different if we act now! We do not want to lose this chance!

Your commitment to Legacy Ames will ensure that this vision becomes a reality!

To participate in Legacy Ames or for more information:

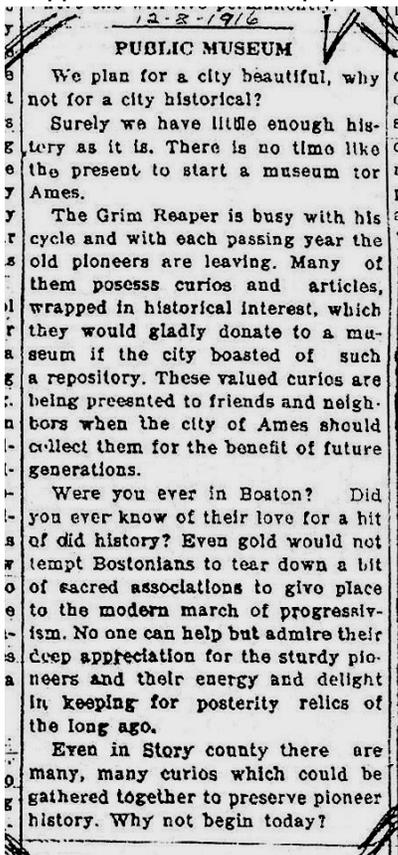
Fill in the form in this newsletter and return it today with your donation for Legacy Ames!

- Or, Call (515) 232-2148
- E-mail via ameshistorical@qwest.net
- See information about the campaign at:
www.AmesHistoricalSociety.org

Ames History Keepers

Here in Ames – we have gotten a very late start in preserving the artifacts of our own history.

One of the earliest calls for establishing a museum appeared in the Ames paper in December 1916:



“There is no time like the present to start a museum for Ames. The Grim Reaper is busy with his cycle and with each passing year the old pioneers are leaving us. Many of them possess curios and articles wrapped in historical interest which they would gladly donate to a museum if the city boasted of such a repository. These valued curios are being presented to friends and neighbors when the city of Ames should collect them for the benefit of future generations..... [ends with] Why not begin today?”

Ames was established in 1864 and the first consistent and organized effort to acquire a historical collection started just a little over 7 years ago – in 2001!

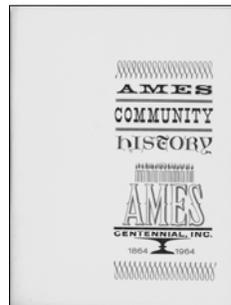
But, to be accurate - during Ames' 143-year history, there have been sporadic efforts to record our local history stories and collect items of interest.

We think of Farwell Brown as the first Ames historian, but he is actually the second. From 1934 - 41, Adelbert (A.B.) Maxwell served as the first official historian for our town. He had been the city clerk for 39 years, from 1889 to 1897, and from 1902 to 1934. When he retired in 1934, he gathered items of interest from Ames' early years – mostly paper items that he assembled into scrapbooks. Maxwell's scrapbooks still survive and are housed in our collection.



When Maxwell, died in 1941, he left no successor.

Fourteen years later, in 1955, Gladys Meads published her book of chatty memoirs, called *At the Squaw & Skunk*. She was a long time resident who became the City's PR person. She was a very social lady and knew everyone in town. She wrote a series of newspaper columns about earlier times in Ames – stories she no doubt heard as she was growing up in Ames. Eventually the columns were collected into a book.

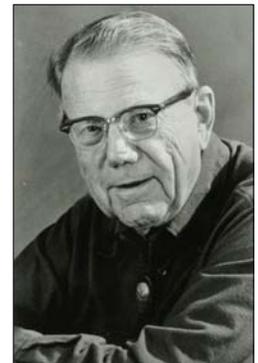


In 1964, Ames marked its 100th birthday - and a committee wrote the Ames Community History, the first effort to write a chronological account of our town's history.

Twelve years later, in 1976, Farwell Brown retired from the Iowa Department of Transportation. It was the nation's bicentennial and there was a great stirring of interest in all things historical. Farwell started presenting programs around town, telling Ames stories based on his own family's long history in Ames. In the course of these talks, he also began accepting Ames artifacts that were offered to him, especially photographs.

Four years later, in 1980, Farwell established the Ames Historical Society (then called Ames Heritage Association) with the long-term dream of establishing a museum.

Farwell went on to write four books on Ames history – the first written in 1993, the most recent in 2005.



All of the efforts of these history keepers have added important information to our storehouse of facts about Ames history and we are indebted to each of these individuals for the work that they did. Our efforts today stand taller because we stand on their shoulders!

With the work of preserving local history now invested in an organization, we are at last able to ensure long-term maintenance of a historical collection!

Please join us today and become part of the next generation of history keepers!



Legacy Ames is a capital campaign to establish a permanent Ames History Center and Museum. This campaign will raise funds to acquire and renovate space at 410/416 Douglas in downtown Ames and provide for the continued operation of the facility. Be a part of this history-making effort! Please consider a donation today!

- \$25,000 or more
- \$10,000 to \$24,999
- \$5,000 to \$9,999
- \$1,000 to \$4,999
- \$500 to \$999
- \$250 to \$499
- \$100 to \$249
- Other _____

Make checks payable to Ames Historical Society c/o Story County Community Foundation (SCCF)
Mail to Ames Historical Society, PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010

Donors Name _____
 Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
 Phone _____ E-mail _____

- Please send information about:
- Charitable bequests such as cash, property, estates, securities, wills or trusts
 - Tax benefits of donations of appreciated securities or real estate
 - Donations made to create a life income

Ames Historical Society News

Visualizing the Dream!



Society members involved in the Legacy Ames fund drive were eager to make their ideas more tangible so the community could better imagine what a history center could look like. Who to involve? An architect, of course! Scott Blum, left, donated his expert services and worked with Rollie Struss, center, and Dennis Wendell, right, on floor plans that would include the functions needed. The plans were then shipped to a company that created the elevations you see on page 1 and 2. We thank Rollie for funding the elevations!

Worldly Goods Benefit Night Set

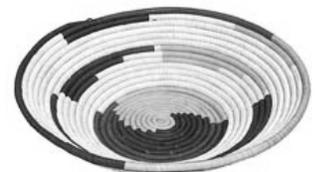
Please join us on:
Wednesday, November 5, from 5 to 8pm
at Worldly Goods, 223 Main Street, Ames.



On that night, Worldly Goods will donate 20% of sales to the Ames Historical Society. Worldly Goods features Fair Trade handcrafted items from around the globe. Last year, over \$200 was donated to The Society, thanks to inspired shoppers!

Purchases at Worldly Goods give three times - once to the recipient, once to the global artisans whose wares are sold and once to support The Society!

Mark your calendar and spend a pleasant evening at Worldly Goods! In addition to a wide selection of unique, handmade goods, refreshments will be provided, including Fair Trade beverages such as hot cocoa, coffee and tea.



Ames Historical Society News

Rotary Grant Funds ChatterVox



The Society was very pleased to receive a \$250 grant from the Ames Rotary Club to purchase the ChatterVox, a compact voice amplification unit for use on walking tours and in other situations where a speaker is mobile. The unit operates from a small, belt-mounted pack containing a battery and speaker, and comes with both a hand-held microphone and

headset. The unit will greatly assist with walking tours where street noise can often be distracting.

Games Days a Big Success!



Since the April first opening of the 2008 season at Hoggatt School, over 340 guests have enjoyed the little schoolhouse.

As a special treat, curator Carol Phillips offered a special "Game Fest" day in June, July and August that featured traditional children's games from the

1860's. Seventy people of all ages attended and had a wonderful time with sack races, tug-of-war and other games from times past. Several children even came in costume! Carol has enjoyed researching games and pastimes from the Civil War era to enhance programs at Hoggatt School. The season closes October 31.



September MusicWalk in the Main Street Cultural District



On Thursday evening, September 18, the Main Street Cultural District presented its second annual Music Walk. The event features local musicians of many types, playing in stores and on sidewalks for the enjoyment of passers-by. The Society hosted David & Donna Wilder and their street organ and about 150 visitors.



Society's Gift Shop Features Unique Mementoes



Children's games, Iowa state seal patches, slates and slate pencils, unusual decks of cards are all featured in the Society's gift shop, along with cards and hard-to-find books on many topics. Stop in during open hours, Wednesday - Friday afternoons, 1 to 5pm!



Curator's Report by Dennis Wendell

Donations to the Collections

Selected highlights this quarter include:

- **World War II**
Civil Defense helmet, Army Air Force uniform, V-Mail greeting, Lawlor exhibits (see below)
- **Business memorabilia**
Ames Trust & Savings Bank coin purse, Durlam & Durlam box, Hanson Lumber yardstick, Hoversten Furniture cedar box, Midnight Madness mug, Ray Cook Construction lighter, Schill & Sons thermometer, Stevens Ambulance Service jacket
- **Visual images**
Real photo postcards of Ames scenes, photo of Stevens Ambulance Service crew, color slides of Central Jr. High School demolition, Ames Centennial Parade, drought of 1977, Hoggatt School move and Iowa's Human Heritage
- **Publications, maps, and records**
Ames telephone directory (1968, 1970), *Sanborn fire insurance maps* (1920), *Story of Northcrest* by Lorraine Hawley (1995), *Ames High School Spirit* (1941), *Soil map of Story County* (1903), additional records of Historic Old Town Neighborhood Association
- **Special Collections**
Catholic holy cards from the 1890s to early 1900s, medical equipment used at Mary Greeley Hospital: X-ray fluoroscope (1930s), tracheotomy tube (1920s), nurse's hypodermic syringe set (1922), apothecary scale (1890s)
- **Miscellaneous**
RAGBRAI t-shirt and bandanas, Ames High School door handle (1939), football helmet (1920s)



Senator Harkin Presents Joe Lawlor War Medals

August 2 was a special day at headquarters as Sen. Tom Harkin presented war medals earned by Joseph P. Lawlor to members of the Lawlor family. Sen. Harkin (above right) assisted in obtaining these medals and remarked on the process. He also reminisced about his student days at Iowa State when he roomed with the Lawlor family. The medals are WWI Victory, WWII American Campaign, WWII Asiatic-Pacific Campaign, and WWII Victory. Joe's sons, Conrad and Leo then made separate presentations to AHS. Conrad (above left) donated an attractive, framed display of these medals along with corresponding ribbon bars and various insignia, pins and dog tags. Leo donated an engaging display he made showcasing his father's pistol surrounded by appropriate artifacts. Joe Lawlor is best remembered by Ames residents as a former mayor (1954-1957) and founder of General Filter Company.

Desiderata List Success!



A "want list" published in the last newsletter netted one of our heavier artifacts: a 120 lb. concrete building block. The "Miracle Hollow Block" was patented June 8, 1906 and

manufactured in Ames by Munn Lumber Company (founded 1891). Vintage advertising hyped the block's resistance to moisture penetration due to its double air spaces. An attempt at lifting a block reveals the reason for its short commercial life – it takes two workmen to heft one!

Merged Index of Story County WWII Veterans

Janet Klaas and Anita Beal have volunteered over 100 hours proofreading and merging several indexes of WWII service men and women from Story County. These materials were acquired from Ames Public Library. Wayne Beal earlier completed a 3½ year project to scan the largest of these collections consisting of 8,100 3 x 5 cards. That effort resulted in 1,355 scans that are now on the AHS Web site. Names of veterans listed in the other three collections have now been merged into one huge list of 5,300 unique names, each name coded to represent the original source. Discussion continues on how best to make the index available to researchers. Kudos to Ames Public Library, Wayne, Anita, Janet, Alan Spohnheimer, Sara Vouthilak, Marti Rasmussen, and Vi Baker for making this valuable resource more accurate and public!

Class of 1953 55th Reunion

The Ames High School Class of 1953 enjoyed the Society's nostalgic presentation at their 55th reunion this summer. The program included photographs from the 1950's that took people on a pleasant trip down memory lane. In appreciation, Chuck Benson (left) presented a check for \$375 to AHS staff Dennis Wendell, Sara Vouthilak, and Alan Spohnheimer to aid the Society's efforts to preserve and share Ames history.

Society presentations are becoming a tradition for class reunions. The engaging and interactive programs



typically feature vintage Ames images in a PowerPoint presentation that prompts enthusiastic identifications and recollections from the audience.

Senator Tom Harkin, right, at the Aug. 2 presentation.

Renew Now for 2008

Membership renewals for 2008 are due on the one-year anniversary of last year's payment. See the label on this newsletter for information about your membership.

Introductory - 1st year	\$10	Sustaining	\$100
Individual	\$25	Benefactor	\$500
Family	\$40	Patron	\$1,000
Friend	\$50		

Additional amount for:

Building Fund \$ _____ Operations Endowment \$ _____

Name _____

Checks payable to Ames Historical Society; send to:

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



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