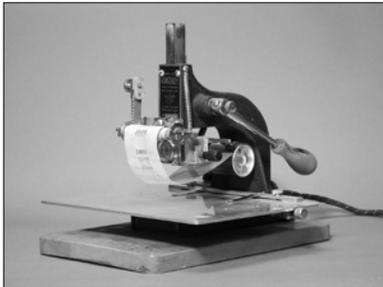


## Newsletter to Members 2008 WINTER... ISSUE #4/4

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



From the Society's collection: the Kingsley gold stamping machine used by Ames Stationers.

### Ames Historical Society Board:

**President** Kathy Svec  
**Vice-President** Peggy Baer  
**Secretary** Joanne Goldman  
**Treasurer** Ken Cameron

### Board Members:

Mary Atherly, Bob Bourne, Roger Coulson, Matthew Donovan, Nick Howell, Carol Phillips, Neal Tarman, Dennis Wendell, Sharon Wirth

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  
**Phone:** 515-232- 2148  
**E-mail:** ameshistorical@qwest.net  
**Website:** www.ameshistoricalsociety.org

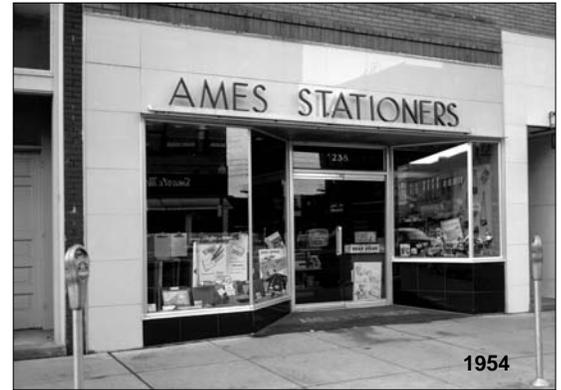
The newsletter is published four times a year for AHS members. Direct comments and questions to: Editor, PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010 or e-mail above.

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

## Ames Stationers: An Ames Institution for 65 Years

By Dennis Wendell, Curator

For 65 years, Ames Stationers was the premier office supply store on Main Street. Items from typewriters and paperclips to cameras and greeting cards were available for home, office, and classroom. Who could forget their reliable Remington, Royal, and Smith-Corona typewriter brands or their classic Parker, Esterbrook and Schaeffer fountain pens?



### GROVE NEWS

The origin of the business may be traced to Grove News, an early newsstand operated by E.T. Grove at the east end of Main Street. The Grove family provided early Ames with a number of prominent businessmen.

### REYNOLDS & IVERSEN

In 1912, the Grove store was sold to two business partners from Odebolt, Iowa, Charles Reynolds (1884-1953) and D.L. Iversen (1891-1970), who changed the store's name to Ames News Stand. After two years, the business was relocated to the Woods Building at 238 Main Street (*currently Quilting Connection*) and re-named "Reynolds and Iversen, Ames Newsstand."



Charles Reynolds began his business career in 1904 at the Iversen and Dinger general store in Odebolt. He was past president of the Ames Chamber of Commerce and also served on its board for six years. Mr. Reynolds also served on the boards of the Ames School District, Mary Greeley Hospital, and Ames Trust and Savings Bank. He was a 25-year member of Ames Rotary Club and for many years had an interest in the Campus Drug Store.

D.L. Iversen was a founding member of the Ames Chamber of Commerce, and served on the board of the Ames Civil Service Commission. He was chair of the War Services Branch of the Ames Civilian Defense Council, and a continuous member of the Ames Rotary Club from 1921 until his death. He served on boards and committees of the United Church of Christ (Congregational).

### STUDENT SUPPLY STORE

In 1914, Reynolds and Iversen expanded their operations to campustown where they opened the Student Supply Store in a building on Lincoln Way near the present US Bank. The store moved in 1916 to a new building at 2424 Lincoln Way (*currently Bali Satay*). Donald Ross, who came to work there in 1928, recalled how the store changed in the 1950s when self-service was initiated. Prior to that time, students handed clerks their class schedules, and textbooks were retrieved by staff. In 1955, Stevenson's Fabric Shop vacated the old wooden building next door. After it was torn down, a new structure was built for book store expansion. Remodeling more than doubled the Student Supply space. Richard Ross, son of Don, joined the business in 1959 during a time when paperback books were flooding the market. He also witnessed the decline in sales of slide rules, the ever-present status symbol hung from the belts of engineering students.

## CHANGING PARTNERS

Various partners were added through the years. Donald Ross was hired in 1925, Jack W. Hazlett in 1928 and Ray Van Meter in 1931. Reynolds and Iversen dissolved their partnership in 1938. As a result, Reynolds ended up owning the Student Supply Store and Iversen ended up with the downtown store. In 1945, Jack Hazlett and Ray Van Meter joined Iversen



in ownership of the Main Street store which was renamed Ames Stationers. Marvin F. Miller started working in 1939 and joined the company as a partner in 1952. Iversen,

Hazlett and Miller incorporated in 1956, but in 1966, the business was sold to Hazlett (r) and Miller (l).

## CHANGING MERCHANDISE

In the early days, newspapers, magazines and stationery were the staples. Newspapers were wholesaled to delivery boys and a large selection of magazines was available to customers. Tobacco products, candy, fireworks (at Fourth of July) and even a rental library were offered at one time. Office supplies gradually took up more and more space. For large-scale consumers of supplies, a convenient automatic service was provided whereby a salesperson went to the business to take inventory and restock or order needed items. Mary Greeley Hospital, McFarland Clinic, Bourns Inc. and 3-M, among others, took advantage of this service.



For many years, Ames Stationers was the sole book store on Main Street, specializing in both fiction and non-fiction titles in hardcover editions. By contrast, the Ames News Agency (Walt's News Stand at 221 Main Street and 620 Lincoln Way) offered pulp fiction in paperback in addition to their magazines and cards. Before Ames Christian Supply came to downtown, religious books were an important genre along with reference and children's books.

The store carried the most complete selection of Hallmark greeting cards in Ames at the time. Although customers were attracted for miles around by the wide selection, one has to wonder about the patron who annually drove up from Des Moines on Valentine's Day to buy two of the most expensive valentines, one "To My Wife" and one "To the One I Love." A selection of games, puzzles and gifts also proved to be good sellers.



A photo department, added in 1935 became the most complete in Ames for many years. Brands featured included Graflex, Kodak, Leica, Argus, and Bell and Howell.

Still and movie cameras and accessories, projectors, albums, darkroom equipment, film and film processing were offered.

## EMPLOYEES

At various times, the photo department employed Bob Berry (26 years), Jack Hazlett (he could talk a good photo if not take one), Duane "Scotty" Scott, Phil Elrod, Paul Buegel, Don Mimnaugh, Dick Axtell, and Carl Reynolds. Names of other store employees may be familiar to Ames residents: Marian Chance, Lou Page, Kitty Mahlstede, Idella Richardson, Edna Mendon, Marie Newell, Cliff Sevold, Russ Richardson, Orville Busby, Ray Van Meter and typewriter repairmen, Jim Litzel and Bill Winton.

Dick Axtell went on to manage the photo department at Eschbach Music House before starting his own business. Marian Chance, who worked for 26 years as sales clerk, office supplies purchasing agent and card and gift buyer, also achieved recognition for caring for more than a hundred foster and crisis children over the years. Ray Van Meter left Ames Stationers to work 31 years for the Student Supply Store in campustown.

## EXPANSION



Following the removal of the Chicago & Northwestern Railway Co. switchyards and its replacement by a city parking lot, businesses on the south side of Main

Street had to create new entrances on the back sides of their stores. In 1968, an office at the rear of the store was taken over to provide an entrance to Ames Stationers from the parking lot.



In May 1977, Jack Hazlett and Marvin Miller sold the business to Equipment Services, a diversified office supply and furnishing company with home office in Marshalltown. Mr. Hazlett retired at this time after 50 years with Ames Stationers, but kept ownership of the building while Mr. Miller continued in a transitional role.

Thomas J. Evans joined the firm as store manager and became part owner and secretary-treasurer in 1978 and vice-president in 1979. Tom came to Ames after serving as dean of students at Luther College, and soon became a strong supporter of the Downtown Betterment Association.

An interesting position of interior designer and furniture sales coordinator was advertised and filled in 1978 by a recent ISU graduate, reflecting the emphasis on office interiors. A full-page ad in the Ames Daily Tribune announced a grand opening set for Sept. 27-29, 1979. This event celebrated expanded store facilities, including an additional 1800 square feet of furniture showroom space, an enlarged photo department, and a new gift and greeting card area.

In July 1982, Ames Stationers became Midwest Office Systems. Tom Evans, promoted to president and general manager in 1980, continued as part-owner with partners Randall B. Howard and Michael J. Whitehill. The name change was prompted by the desire to move the business away from implied paper and greeting card merchandise toward a focus on three areas: business information systems, office interiors and design service, and business supplies. This translated to computers, copiers, electronic typewriters, word processors, machine repair and maintenance; furniture, carpet, wall coverings, lighting, modular paneling, acoustics and accessories; and office supplies, word processing and data processing supplies and magnetic media.

Tom also adopted the evolving industry trend toward stocking less inventory onsite and ordering more items on demand. By 1985, the store returned to the familiar Ames Stationers name, and the photo department occupying 240 Main Street became Ames Photography.

## MAJOR FIRE

Ames residents will vividly recall the disastrous Ames Stationers fire that lit up the night sky on November 22, 1987. Dramatic photos of the 12-hour fire were carried by area news media. The cause of the fire was apparently spontaneous combustion of a mop head saturated with an oil-based floor conditioner left to dry in the basement. Losses were estimated at \$300,000 for the building and \$200,000 for merchandise and equipment.

On the second floor, the roof caved in, the walls buckled, and the six offices were totally burned out, while almost everything on the first floor was lost. Fortunately, all the checks, cash and bookkeeping records survived in a fire-proof safe, so billing went out on schedule. One customer even joked that he had hoped to get by without having to pay his November bill. With the busiest shopping day of the year rapidly approaching, the timing of the fire added to the disaster.



The business was temporarily relocated to 202 Main Street. Tom saw the building as having historic importance for Ames (part dated from the 1890s and part from 1912 with usage as a bank and retail) and felt that he owed it to the community to restore it.

The Evans family (four married children and their families) purchased it and hired Story Construction to remove the second floor and renovate the first floor. Construction work was put on fast track enabling the store to reopen only seven months later. Tom Evans' spirit has been commemorated since 1989 in the downtown plaza bearing his name at Burnett and Main.

## END OF AN ERA

The coming of Staples to Ames in 1998 provided another option for consumers seeking a ready source of office supplies. In the mid-Iowa merger mania of 1998, it was announced in August that ASI Office Experts



(Ames Stationers) had merged with Storey Kenworthy of Des Moines, the largest independent office furniture company in the state. After continuing the Main Street store until 2005, Storey Kenworthy moved to 424 South Bell Avenue in southeast Ames, thus ending a 93-year downtown office store presence.



## Remembering Marvin F. Miller

1914 - 2001

### SCHOOL WHIZ

As the youngest of five children born to August G. and Laura Belle (Speas) Miller, Marvin grew up in Laurel, Iowa south of Marshalltown. He began schooling at the early age of four so that he could accompany two brothers and a sister in their daily ride by horse and buggy to the Barrett one-room school.

Young Marvin amazed the class when he read the entire first reader by himself. Upon being promoted to the next grade, he immediately disappointed everyone when he was unable to read a single word in the second reader. In fact, the lad had memorized the text of the introductory reader after hearing all of his siblings read from it!

Marvin graduated from Laurel High School in 1931, then prepared for a business career by attending Central Iowa Business College in Marshalltown and the American Institute of Business in Des Moines. After graduation he continued to live in Des Moines while working as a CPA.

### MARRIAGE

Marvin moved to Ames in 1939. Two years later, he married Thelma Holveck of Marshalltown. When asked to recall her unusual January shivaree, Thelma recalls that none other than "Farwell Brown borrowed a sleigh and pulled us down Main Street behind his car for an unforgettable ride. Arriving at our house at 1217 Kellogg, Daisy and Ray Van Meter, ably assisted by

others, poured rice into every imaginable nook and cranny in the house. Months later we found rice inside hats in the closet, drawers in the bedroom and every pot, pan and bowl in the kitchen cupboard!"

### BUSINESSMAN & CIVIC LEADER

As co-owner and manager of Ames Stationers from 1952-1977, Marvin remodeled the store's exterior in 1952 and the interior the following year. Floor space was increased 25% and a balcony was added for the business offices. Marvin also expanded the line of office equipment and supplies, enlarged the photo department, and increased the selection of books, games, stationery and Hallmark cards. One thing that really bothered Marvin was the way mothers, while shopping, would allow their children to read through and wear out all the comic books in the store.

Marvin introduced gold foil stamping for cards and napkins using this machine donated to A.H.S. by Thelma.



Marvin exemplified the best qualities of a civic leader. His contributions included service as president of the Ames Chamber of Commerce in 1963, member of the board of directors of First National Bank and Ames National Corporation for 27 years, and board member at Northcrest Retirement Community for six years. He also volunteered his time for the American Red Cross, United Way and Retired Senior Services Foundation as well as the City of Ames Planning and Zoning Commission. For many years he was a loyal member and officer of Ames Rotary Club. Marvin also served First Christian Church as deacon, elder and Board chairman.

During World War II, Marvin served in the U.S. Navy for three years, initially at the Iowa State College Naval unit before being assigned to a destroyer. Both children were born during this period; Janet now lives in St. Louis and Don in New Zealand. Marvin and Thelma enjoyed traveling, especially in company with long-time friends, Earl and Charlotte Howard and Harold and Evelyn Hegland. Their trips are documented by thousands of color slides taken by Marvin, including many of New Zealand, his favorite country.

Marvin and Thelma first became involved with international students attending ISU in the 1960s. The initial hosting of an Indonesian student on a Rotary International Scholarship led to other friendships that lasted a lifetime.

Marvin was often a quiet man, content to enjoy his hobby of collecting antique trivets and sad irons that he displayed in an attractive home exhibit. Toward the end of his life Marvin experienced vision loss as a result of acquiring temporal arteritis, an inflammatory disease of blood vessels. Being homebound, he was given loving care by his wife of sixty years. In spite of this affliction he could still recall, in his mind, places visited when triggered by mention on TV newscasts. He died at age 87 on Aug. 12, 2001, and is buried next to Thelma's parents in Hillside Cemetery at State Center.

### **MILLER'S LEGACY TO AMES!**

Importantly, for Ames Historical Society, Marvin was one of its founders in 1981 along with Farwell Brown and others. He volunteered many hours assisting with restoration of the 1860s one-room Hoggatt School, the impetus for establishing the Ames Heritage Association as it was then known. Marvin enjoyed collecting rocks for the foundation, helping shingle the roof of the shed and laying wooden paving blocks for its floor. The Millers donated artifacts for the school, including a kerosene lamp, water pail and dipper, lunch pails, hand-woven rugs, wall maps, and slate boards and pencils.

Marvin's hope was that one day, Ames would have a museum to help interpret our rich local history.

To honor her husband's strong commitment to the Society's mission, Thelma Miller has generously donated \$55,000 to fund the

**Marvin F. Miller Historical Research Room**  
in the future Ames History Center and Museum.



This space will feature large tables and comfortable seating so visitors can study the historic photos, maps, directories, building plans, and other archival materials in Society collections. The area will be near the research collections used in answering the daily questions received by our staff and volunteers.

**We are proud to publicly express our appreciation to Thelma for her exemplary support!**

## **Legacy Ames: Campaign Update!**

*By Rollie Struss, Legacy Ames co-chair*

The year 2008 started out with about \$88,000 in the Building Fund. A group of individuals met in January to discuss the possibility of buying 416 Douglas, a downtown office building that was for sale. The pros and cons of taking such a big step were weighed. My impatience got the best of me and I said we should just bite the bullet and do it! With very little discussion, the group agreed but wondered how we could get it done.



My wife, Willie and I volunteered to be the co-chairs for the fund drive that was named "Legacy Ames" and kicked it off with a nice donation. We got some interested people to join us on the fund drive team. With good advice from Don Gustafson, former chief of the ISU Foundation, we were determined to make this drive a success even though we were novices.

The donations started to come in and by April, the Building Fund balance doubled. The effort continued with hard work, tours of the facilities and personal calls. The owners wanted a formal Offer to Purchase due by June 30 but agreed to extend to December 31.

By October we had raised more than one-half of the funds needed to reach our goal and held a press conference to announce our effort to the general public. More donations came in. By late November we knew we would need to act on the Offer to Purchase. The fund drive could not reach what was needed to purchase the property by year-end, but the owners offered to sell the building on a contract. Further negotiations resulted in a 3-year contract for the balance due and low interest and monthly payments.

End-of-the-year appeals brought in donations from many sources ranging from \$25 to \$20,000. The building fund grew from roughly \$391,500 to a final balance of \$428,000 by the end of the year.

On December 31, a large partial payment was made and a contract signed for the balance – approximately \$178,000. **Fundraising will need to continue to complete all of Phase I, but we have the keys to the property! Become part of Legacy Ames!**

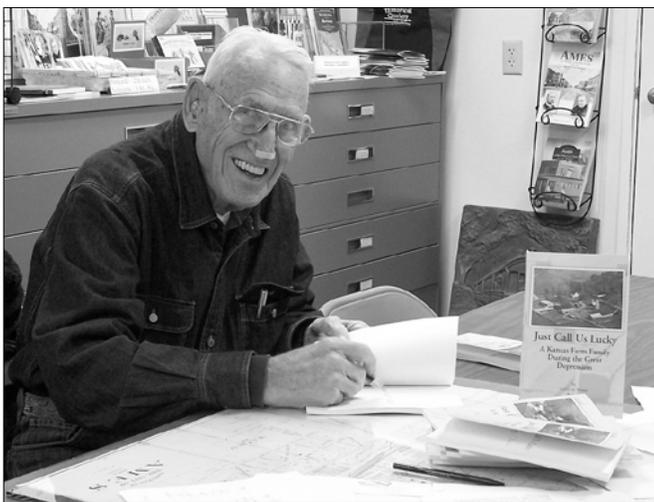
## Grateful To Our Contributors!

### 2008 Donors to Collections

*In 2008, many unique items were donated to the Society's collection. Among them were:*

- Washington Twp. School Dist. teacher checks, 1880
- Framed portrait of Wallace Greeley
- Flyer from the Tilden Grocery Company
- 1940s Erector Set in original packaging
- Numerous player piano rolls
- A.B. Maxwell's scrapbooks, Ames' 1<sup>st</sup> Historian
- Sanborn fire insurance maps of Ames
- *Ames Intelligencer: souvenir edition, 1905*

**We thank all our thoughtful collections donors:**



Wesley Buchele donated a copy of his World War II story. He also gave the Society 10 copies of the book he and his brother, Luther, wrote about his family of 7 boys who grew up during the Depression. He intends the books to be sold in the museum gift shop to generate funds for AHS.



In December, Marjorie Healey (center) shared her photo album relating to her family and the Layne Western Company that used to be located in Ames. She also brought materials about St. Paul's Lutheran Church. The Curator's favorite item among her things was a booklet telling how to raise melons by Leo Armstrong. It contained a photo of his melon stand just north of Lincoln Way near Dayton Avenue.

## Ames Historical Society News

### Mark Your Calendars for the Society's 2009 Lecture Series!

All at 7pm, City Auditorium, 520 6th Street, Ames.  
\$2 donation defrays auditorium rental expenses

**Tuesday, January 27, 2009**

#### **In the Footsteps of Our Founders: An Historical Tour of Downtown**

After Ames was founded in 1864, its first structures and growth as a town were in the downtown area. This pictorial tour will take you on an historical journey where you'll learn about the personalities that were pivotal in early Ames and appreciate the buildings that marked its development. This expanded presentation by Kathy Svec of the Ames Historical Society will feature a number of images new to the Society's collection.

**Tuesday, February 24, 2009**

#### **After the Dinkey**

A brief history of the Fort Dodge, Des Moines, and Southern Railway in Ames will be presented by Bob Bourne, public transit consultant and Charles R. Mischke, local railroad historian. The FDDM&S succeeded the "Dinkey" in 1907 providing streetcar service between downtown and campus as well as high-speed electric trains to Des Moines. This north-south rail link was important to Ames' growth as a town.

**Tuesday, March 31, 2009**

#### **ISU Cemetery: A Walk Through History**

For more than 125 years, Iowa State University has provided a small cemetery to honor those who want to be interred near campus. Nancy Meredith will present a photographic tour, highlighting the history of the cemetery as well as some of the notable people buried there. Nancy is retired from the ISU Dept. of Human Development and Family Studies where she taught the class, "Death as a Part of Living." Her interest in the cemetery stems from the hours she and her students spent there.

**Tuesday, April 28, 2009**

#### **A Drive through Ames and Story County on Its Highways and Streets**

The Iowa Department of Transportation has a wealth of historic images that have never been seen by the public. Archivist Hank Zaletel will introduce us to the DOT's collection and share many images for the first time. Among highlights from the 19-teens through the 1950's will be the Squaw Creek bridge collapse, construction of the Grand Avenue underpass and a 1958 film of the Lincoln Highway.



## Cub Scouts Visit the Museum

Last November, the Bear Cub Scouts of Pack 196 and six or eight parents made a visit to 416 Douglas. Administrator Alan Spohnheimer gave them a museum tour and short slide show called "Now and Then", explained some artifacts, played the player piano and demonstrated the website. The visit started at 6:30pm and some stayed as late as 8pm to take their turn looking at stereograph slides and trying the player piano. Both the boys and the parents enjoyed themselves and asked lots of questions. They were pleased to learn about the resources on the Society's website.

## Renew Now for 2009

**Membership renewals** for 2009 are due on the one-year anniversary of last year's payment. See the label on this newsletter for information about your membership.

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

**Additional amount for:**

Building Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Operations Endowment \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Checks payable to Ames Historical Society; send to:

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



*Paul Clark, Ames, is an active volunteer who comes in to sort through negatives in The Tribune Photo Collection to see if he can identify more images. This often means referring to the newspaper on microfilm to see if an image was used. If they were, captions provide valuable information. Many of these images appear in The Tribune's weekly "From The Archives".*

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