

## Newsletter to Members 2010 SPRING ... ISSUE #2/4

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



The 1957 article in the Tribune's "Mystery Farm" series featured the Pritchard Farm. Their farm was located north & slightly east of Ames.

### Ames Historical Society Board:

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

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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:** mail@ameshistoricalsociety.org  
**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.

## Part 2 – The Continued Farm Saga: Iowa State's Horticulture Research Station

by Mary E. (Meg) Speer, Society Board Member

In the last newsletter, we presented the early historical chapters of the farmland that is now Iowa State University's Horticulture Research Station north and east of Ames. We began with records from 1870 and Part I ended around 1940. That's where our story continues.

### George F. Veenker

Story County records show George F. and Rose Veenker purchased land from



Bert Anderson in April 1940. John Dodds, who lives west of the Research Farm, remembers the Veenkers built a summer home. It has since been enlarged and is still occupied. George Veenker was head football coach for Iowa State from 1931 to 1936, athletic director from 1933 to 1945 and chaired the Department of Physical Education for Men from 1933-1946. Veenker retired in 1945 and moved to his farm, selling it to Albert and Nina Pritchard in February 1946. Pritchard's daughter, who later lived on the farm, remembers Veenker planting both an apple orchard and plum trees. Veenker passed away in 1959 at the age of 65. The Iowa State golf course was renamed Veenker Memorial in his honor shortly after his death.

### Albert and Nina Pritchard

Albert and Nina Advise Pritchard were married in 1933 and for several years, they farmed at Bondurant and then moved to State Center. In 1946 they bought and moved to their 229-acre farm east of Gilbert. Quoting from the Ames Tribune's 1957 "Mystery Farm" article, "...years later they can look contently over their farm which offers an especially beautiful view to the east where the Skunk River and the bordering trees may be seen about a half mile away and feel they have accomplished much."



Nina Pritchard Shearer, now 102 years old, lives south of Boone. She shared many stories and news clippings of their family and the farm. Albert farmed alone and was well known in Story County. He was president of the Gilbert Coop and active in many other organizations, his picture appearing in numerous newspaper articles. He also won many corn husking contests.

There are articles and pictures of the 12-acre erosion control pond he built in 1956 at a cost of \$8,000 - one of the finest in the state. The dam was over 30 feet high and formed a lake of over 12 acres, providing a drainage point for 465 acres of watershed. Lyon Brothers of Cambridge did the construction work.

A drought one year made a family trip possible the following year. An article written prior to the trip reads, "Usually, there's hay to make and corn to plow in June, and you can't get away. This year, however, we have no hay because it didn't get started in last year's dry weather." The article continues, "At this point, it would be hard to find a prettier scene than that which can be seen from the Pritchard farm lot situated at the top of a hill which tapers off gradually in all directions. To the north is a little wooded pasture. A winding creek runs through it and goes down to drain into Kegley Branch.

In the distant background are tree after tree of wild crab apples, all in bloom.”

Another article read, “There are 185 crop-acres at the Pritchard’s 229-acre home. At this point, 80 acres are planted to corn that is already up, 35 to oats, 13 to rye and 25 to wheat. There are still the 16 acres of beans to plant. Beef cattle are the principal livestock crop at Farm 328. Pritchard has marketed 43 Hereford and Angus animals thus far this year, and they now have 25 cows and 26 calves at the farm. He also raised 23 acres of sweet corn for the Marshall Canning Company in Roland.”

Nina took care of the little chickens—1,000 baby chicks and later about 400 pullets for laying. She and her daughter, Leah, planted a big garden and one year canned a total of 359 quarts of fruits and vegetables. Leah grew pumpkins, which she sold to help make money for band uniforms in Gilbert.

Nina was instrumental in starting the Story County Society for the mentally challenged and later helped in the establishment of a school for them. Ernest, the Pritchard’s 20-year old son, kept busy chopping wood and occasionally attended the school in Nevada. Nina was quoted, “We feel that we have created a little understanding for this problem.”

Nina was also was a home typist for the Reuben H. Donnelley Corporation. Later she worked at Mary Greeley Hospital and as a secretary at First Baptist Church in Ames. Their daughter, Leah, graduated from Northwestern College in Minneapolis and married John Huffman. They were missionaries in Costa Rica for 28 years and now live in Omaha, NE. Leah’s daughter is married and lives in California, and their son is a student at the University of Nebraska.

Albert passed away at age 55 on May 26, 1962 in Ames and is buried in Bondurant. Nina remained on the farm for 2 years. She spoke of hunters and fishermen showing little respect for a female owner when using the property. She re-married on September 5, 1964, to Harold W. Shearer.

A farm sale was held in November 1964 and Homer Larsen, the realtor in Madrid who originally sold them the farm, contacted them again. Iowa State University Research Foundation was interested in their property. Harold and Nina moved to Ames and lived on Top O’ Hollow Road until they relocated south of Boone, Iowa. On her 100th birthday, Nina played hymns on her church organ for many relatives and friends. She was 102 last November 11.



### **The Research Station, Summer 2010**

The Iowa State Research Station land presents a far different picture today. The Farm is relatively new, purchased in 1966 and established at the present site in 1967. It was moved from Ames as the campus of Iowa State University and the Ames community expanded. The land has been completely drained and its topography includes flat lands, rolling hills, and waterways. The 15-acre erosion control lake (upper left) built during the Pritchard ownership is a source of irrigation water for the site’s many research projects.



The station has a highly developed arboretum-like setting and conducts extensive ornamental tree trials. In addition, the station has extensive research orchards and vineyards, a wine lab, as well as strawberry fields and an extensive turf research area.

Many annual vegetable and fruit crops are grown for research purposes. Non-horticultural research conducted at the station includes extensive disease and pest control on soybeans, Tree Swallow research, and turtle and fish studies at the Aquatic Research Facility constructed in 2003.

In 2010, over 85 research projects are scheduled at the Station. Significant development of the Chieftain Apple and the use of corn gluten meal as an organic herbicide at the farm revolutionized the market place. Earthkind Rose and Hydranga trials are underway.

A new sign at the entrance to the ISU Horticulture Research Farm reads: VISITORS WELCOME, 7:30am-4:00pm Monday through Friday.



*The public is invited to the*  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Annual All Hort Field Day, Thursday, July 29**  
Featuring tours, displays, demonstrations and a ride on the "People Mover" with Nick Howell, Superintendent.

### Horticulture Research Farm Timeline

- 1940** - George F. and Rose Veenker purchased land from Bert Anderson
- 1946** - Albert and Nina C. Pritchard purchase property from Veenkers
- 1956** - 12-acre erosion control pond build for \$8,000
- 1962** - Albert Pritchard dies
- 1964** - Farm sold to Iowa State University
- 1966** - \$373,930.00 estimated cost for locating buildings and improvements
- 1967** - ISU Research Farm established with Al Kemp as supervisor
- 1960s** - Proposed reservoir would have covered 2,100 acres along Skunk Valley, Bear Creek, and lower Keigley Creek, expanding to 5,000 acres in high flood. Had it been built, a considerable portion of the eastern part of the farm would have been lost.
- 1968** - \$98,704.00 in federal funds granted toward Research Farm
- 2003** - Aquatic research facility constructed



*Pritchard Farm  
ca. 1950*

### References

- Allen, Wm. G., A History of Story County, Iowa, 1887
- Ames Tribune "Mystery Farm" series, 1957
- Goodspeed Publishing Co, Biographical and Historical Memories of Story County, Iowa, 1890
- Paynes, W.O., History of Story County, 1911

## Volunteers & Visitors

### 4Hers Contribute Service Hours

On Wed., June 30, five 4-H club members attending the state conference in Ames helped out for the morning.



That day, hundreds of 4H young people spread out all over Ames to do community service. Our workers filed house plans after entering the address and other information in a database. Pictured above are Kali Short from Ames, plus Rhonda Lee, Kamryn Kronschnabel, Valarie Hernandez, and Kayla Knepper attending the 4-H Youth Conference from other Iowa communities.

### Martin Family Visits Ames

Martin family members gathered July 5<sup>th</sup> at Ames Historical Society headquarters to view archival material and artifacts associated with the family. Their grandparents were Archie and Nancy Martin, who, with John and Nellie Martin Shipp, were the earliest black families to arrive in Ames in 1915 and 1916 respectively.



Family artifacts, donated beginning in 2005, form the core of a collection documenting the African-American presence in Ames. A meaningful display now honors their father, Paul, who served in France during World War I and received the Croix-de-Guerre given by the French government to black troops. A customized PowerPoint presentation was enjoyed later in the day at the curator's home, followed by a reception featuring the first donation, the family's elegant punch bowl set. From left are: Joe Mancuso, Ruth Martin Riffe, Mary Martin Carr, Marie Martin Mancuso, Pauline Martin, Jerry Martin, and Barbara Martin Crawford. A note from the family read, "Thank you for a wonderful day of information and entertainment. You are indeed a blessing to the community of Ames, Iowa! Our family will be speaking about our visit for years to come."

# Society News

## Our New E-Mail Address

Please note: [mail@ameshistoricalsociety.org](mailto:mail@ameshistoricalsociety.org)

## Ask for a 2009 AHS Annual Report

A comprehensive overview of the Society's 2009 activities, finances, donors and volunteers is available in a printed annual report. We would be happy to mail this report to interested members. Just call 515-232-2148 or e-mail [mail@ameshistoricalsociety.org](mailto:mail@ameshistoricalsociety.org).

## Adopt A Mayor!

In the last newsletter, we put out a call for people interested in "adopting a mayor"! Two volunteers have so far answered the call and more are welcome. A meeting will be scheduled in August to review the best resources available for finding mayor information. Our goal is to profile each of our 40+ mayors to create a display for City Hall. This project was instigated by a request from former Ames mayor, Ted Tedesco and City Council-person, Riad Mahayni. Call Peggy Baer at 515-232-7576 to express your willingness to adopt!

## Seeking People for Oral Histories

Late last year, the Ames Historical Society received a major grant from Wells Fargo Bank. A portion of the money has funded the purchase of audio and video recording equipment to be used specifically to gather oral histories. We ask Society members to please contact us if they have ideas about people who should be interviewed.



recording equipment to be used specifically to gather oral histories. We ask Society members to please contact

Board members Rollie (above) and Willie Struss are coordinating the process. They can be reached at 515-232-0865 and would be happy to answer questions.

The equipment is set up and initial interviews are already being conducted. The most urgent priority is to capture stories from people with failing health or others with declining memories whose stories may be lost.

Of special interest to us are stories from the WW2 era, both front lines and home front, but many stories about Ames people and life in Ames can and should be gathered. Families may make arrangements to come down and interview other family members, or the interviews can be conducted by Society volunteers.

(For a compelling oral history story, see the article on page 6 titled *Ames Remembers World War II*)



## Hoggatt School Open until Aug. 29

Summer hours for Hoggatt School are 2 to 4:30pm on Saturdays and Sundays through August 29. The school house museum is on Meeker School's playground at 18<sup>th</sup> & Burnett. Visitors are advised to use 18<sup>th</sup> Street off Grand Avenue, as 20<sup>th</sup> Street is under construction.

Visitors to the school can discover what school was like during the Civil War Era and examine school artifacts.

On Sunday, August 1, Hoggatt Curator Carol Phillips will again host the popular Game Day, featuring schoolyard games from the Civil War era. Below, two boys compete in a game on a slate board using real slate pencils.



For information or to arrange special tours, contact Carol at 515-232-0595 or by e-mail at [caphill@mchsi.com](mailto:caphill@mchsi.com).

Pitching cards into a hat is a lot harder than it looks! June's Game Day was rainy, so indoor games were played by visitors.



## Visitors, Mail and E-Mail

### Frohning-Deppe Elevator Artifact

Our fourth lecture in the 2010 series featured Ames resident, Bob Deppe and the dramatic tale of the burning of the obsolete Frohning-Deppe grain elevator in downtown Ames. The fire was set as a practice session for area firemen. Bob visited in May (below, right) to donate the elevator's escape ladder, used if the



"man-lift" failed to operate and a worker couldn't get down from the top. At 25 feet, it allowed a person to get down to the roof of the adjacent building.

As a side note,

Bob said he tried to donate the ladder to Des Moines' new primate center, but the caretaker said the gorillas would eat the hemp rope!

### Noted Musician Visits

On May 20, Dick Schory (second, right) and Phil Parsons and their wives stopped for nearly an hour and a half to visit and reminisce. They are Ames High graduates from the

1950's. Dick told many interesting stories of growing up in Ames. He is a noted percussionist and recording artist who played with the Chicago Symphony, toured as a performing percussionist, appeared on TV, directed radio and TV commercials and was advertising manager and educator for Ludwig Drum Company.



### Wish For Continued Success

This e-mail arrived on June 15 from John Midgorden, "I recently attended the Ames High School 1950 Reunion. Dennis Wendell and Alan Spohnheimer's presentation of "Ames in the 50's" at our banquet was outstanding! My wife and I appreciated the tour of your facilities the following morning. Your work to preserve Ames' history is certainly a very worthwhile endeavor and we wish you continued success."



### That Was My Father!

We received this e-mail from Vicki Hubby: "Regarding a picture that was in the Ames paper a few weeks back: it was a picture of a house being moved to make room for the Goodyear Store on Lincoln Way in 1957. There is a young police officer in the picture directing traffic. That police officer was my father, Clifford Ball. I was sure it was him because of the way he had his hat tipped but I called my mom and we looked on the website to get a better look and sure enough, it was my Dad! Several members of my family were police officers in Ames, for both the city and university forces. I have asked my mother if she would look at some of your pictures of police officers from the past to see if she could help identify them and she agreed. She told me she also has a list of officers from the past that might interest you. She and my father were born and raised in this area and may have a wealth of information for you!"

### Great Sign Added to the Collection

The Society has acquired a number of noteworthy signs from long-gone Ames businesses. A Board member was recently in campustown and spotted a sign that came to light during the renovation of a storefront at 120 Welch Avenue. Curator Dennis Wendell and volunteer Jerry Litzell immediately went to negotiate for the sign, an



artifact left from Bledsoe's men's store, a business that apparently lasted only a couple of years in that location (1969 or 1970-71). Bledsoe's had a long-time store at Main Street and Burnett in downtown Ames.

**Interesting Proposal** One response to the special letter sent to all members earlier this year, "When I read the Tribune article about the Library Board's rethinking of their building plan, I immediately thought of the Historical Society using the historical portions of that building. When your letter came today saying you indeed were the "interested party" referred to in the article, I wanted to cheer! Just wanted to go on record as being very much in favor assuming the details can be worked out. It seems like the perfect fit to me." Margaret Vance, Ames

# Visitors, Mail and E-Mail

## A Passion for the Movies!

In March, Sharon Hugen, of Lawrence, KS, wrote, "I received your wonderful package of photographs of the old Collegian Theater, postcards, newsletter and copied material. It was, as my old friend use to say, a red letter day!

Going to the movies with my mother was the most thrilling part of my young life. I skipped all the way from Crawford Avenue anticipating the "moving pictures" with a story.

I only remember that the building was big and beautiful and I never wanted to leave. The years would have been



1944-45 when I was five years old and I had started school at Beardshear.

The images I most remember were those with

beautiful people in beautiful costumes dancing and singing - songs my mother and I would sing together on our way home. Many musicals were made during that time and I still remember many of them. I am the one friends call to find out movie trivia! I learned everything at the movies! I became a graphic designer with a lasting passion for movies - that began in Ames, Iowa. I enclose a check for the photographic prints and postage.

I had not been in Ames since I was five years old and at seventy years old last year, I went past the bandshell where I had sung "Mairsy Doats" and directly to the house on the corner without missing a turn. The homing pigeon found her way home without a map!"

## Ames Remembers WWII

Several years ago, the Society's staff member, Cynthia Bennet, interviewed a number of Ames residents about their experiences during WWII. The project was called, Ames Remembers WWII. As time allows, a volunteer has been transcribing the tapes and copies are then sent to the interviewees.

In July, we received a response about the package that was sent to the surviving spouse of John Lowenberg. It consisted of an audio recording of the interview and a typed transcript. Lowenberg had died since the interview and we knew that he had remarried just a decade or so before he passed away. We hesitated, wondering if we should send the tape to his widow but thought that she might enjoy hearing the interview.

She wrote, "I'm delighted to receive the transcript of John Lowenberg's memories of WWII. The tape arrived on what would have been the day before his birthday, a year after his death. That was the first I'd known he had participated in the project. I looked forward to honoring his birthday by listening to the interview on his day. Hearing his voice was such an uplift - like a voice from beyond. Someone said a person is not gone until his name is no longer spoken. The Society's history project definitely keeps our loved ones here & present."

## Dairy Barn Hay Fork Arrives



Prior to the demolition of ISU's old dairy barn, the Society's staff had a chance to look around. They never expected to be able to acquire a significant artifact from that structure, but the hayfork arrived in March. Craig Grimm and Chris DeBoom, were pleased to make the delivery.

## Society Benefits: Experience Works

Experience Works is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to improve the lives of people through training, community service and employment. Founded in 1965, the organization helps adults develop the skills and confidence they need to secure employment while providing valuable community services. Sponsored by this program is Mike Schuster, an Ames man who spends four hours a day with us doing a variety of tasks.



# Curator's Report: Items from Dennis Wendell

## Collection highlights from the first half of the 2010:

### Society is Recognized "First Responder"

After several decades of growth we are in the enviable position of being recognized as the "first responder" to historical questions about our city. Recent clients have included The Tribune, The Sun, ISU Daily, Associated Press, city departments, schools, organizations and individuals.

### Bledsoe's Sign

Here's a bit more about the Bledsoe's sign on page 3 - Bledsoe's had their flagship clothing store on Main Street in the 1950s; the Welch Avenue location was a surprise. The campustown building was being remodeled and the sign was exposed. Some "wheeling and dealing" was needed for its acquisition.

### Welch Avenue Club

Records from the Welch Avenue Club were long thought to be lost but turned up when an unidentified donor presented them to the library's information desk. The Society has gratefully received records from several other neighborhood organizations, now disbanded, and would be pleased to accept others.

### Nightcrawlers

An aluminum club plate reading "Nightcrawlers / Ames Iowa / C.T.A." was recently donated. Nightcrawlers was a 1950s era club of car enthusiasts; the logo was designed by former Ames resident, Ted Kooser (known more recently for his two-year appointment as the US Poet Laureate).

### Ames High Class Reunion Donors

The following Schory, Holmes, Clem, Hanley and Erickson donations came as a result of the Ames High School class reunions. These gatherings are always a rich source of recollections and memorabilia.

- Dick Schory CD: *Live and In Concert* (2009)
- Rita Bappe Holmes: Bappe family letter and clippings, 1929 *Arbor Day manual for Iowa public schools* from Lincoln School, *Scripts* 1959 booklet from the Ames High School Creative Writing Club
- Deanna Clem – photo of Central 9<sup>th</sup> grade homeroom with Alice McQuilken
- Mary Farley Hanley: photos of 1937 Grand Ave. underpass construction, among other items
- Steve Erickson – 1949-50 photos of Lincoln School 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and 1952-53 5<sup>th</sup> grade, 1956 Central football team, among other items

### Don Faas Collection

Don Faas was the quintessential Ames collector. His years of collecting were concentrated on antique bottles (he had the definitive collection of Iowa bottles), toys, WWII memorabilia, Ames memorabilia, ISU memorabilia, "Thingamajigs and Whatchamacallits" and Collegiate Manufacturing Company Personality Pets. The Society is the beneficiary of the last four of the collections listed.

Mary Atherly, Eleanor Ostendorf and I spent several days packing and transferring the remainder of these collections to headquarters. They consist of hundreds of items and will require many months to process. We are indeed fortunate to receive them and thank Tim Faas and the entire family for this gift. As per a verbal agreement with the family, the material is to be kept as a named collection, "The Donald F. Faas Collection." The Personality Pets (117 items), Ames telephone books, and school yearbooks have already been inventoried and processed; other artifacts are being inventoried by Mary and Eleanor.

### Sheldon-Munn Hotel

Sheldon-Munn Hotel items were received, including a 1953 Gideon Bible, Syracuse china in the hunter green wave pattern, a time clock with leather carrying case [used by maids], a twin bed headboard, floor lamp, floor model ashtray and awning crank.

### Recent History

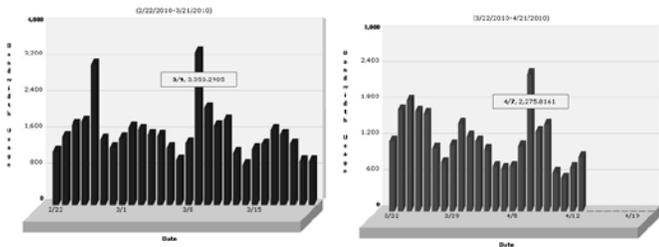
We were able to gather memorabilia from the Furman Aquatic Center grand opening on May 29, 2010 including a t-shirt with imprinted text and a toy yellow rubber duck.



On July 7, Society staff helped Ruth and Farwell Brown celebrate their 70<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Pictured (l to r) are Ruth, daughter Mary Howard, son Ken Brown and Farwell.

## Neva Morris: USA's Oldest Resident

The Society maintains a page on its website about Neva Morris, the Ames woman who lived to be 114 years old. Neva had the distinction of being the nation's oldest resident for about two months. She died on April 7 this year. Many news outlets used our website for information about Neva and we fielded many calls from national news organizations. In one day, 8,100 visitors viewed our primary Neva Morris page! We often see spikes in our traffic when national blogs use one of our photos but traffic was greater this time. Below are two graphs showing spikes in our website traffic aligning with (left) the day Neva became the oldest in the USA (our all-time highest traffic day) and (right) the day Neva died. There probably won't be many times when we again have something of such intense national interest!



## Check Your Label!

Is your membership renewal due? To check on your status, please read the fine print on your mailing label. If your dues are due, please use the form below to mail in your 2010 membership.

Memberships fund the day-to-day operations of the Society, allowing us to continue to be a valued community resource. We thank you!

### Renew Your 2010 Membership Now

Renewals are due on the one-year anniversary of last year's payment. See this newsletter's label 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>Sustaining Plus</b>	<b>\$101-500</b>
<b>Family</b>	<b>\$40</b>	<b>Benefactor</b>	<b>\$500</b>
<b>Friend</b>	<b>\$50</b>	<b>Patron</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>

#### Additional amount for:

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

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