

PROCLAMATION

I, STUART N. SMITH, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF AMES,
IOWA, DO HEREBY PROCLAIM THE FOLLOWING HISTORY
OF THE CITY OF AMES, IOWA, TO BE DESIGNATED BY THE
CITY COUNCIL AS A TRUE AND FACTUAL HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF AMES, IOWA.

Stuart N. Smith
STUART N. SMITH, MAYOR
CITY OF AMES, IOWA

ATTEST:

Louise Whitcome
LOUISE WHITCOME, CITY CLERK
CITY OF AMES, IOWA

HISTORY OF AMES

Ames was founded in 1864 during the last six months of the Civil War while many of its local men were participating in the War between the States. Railroads were rapidly crossing the country and bringing better transportation and an improved economy with them. The Cedar Rapids and Missouri River Railroad had already reached Nevada by July 4 and negotiations were in progress to purchase land near the Iowa Agricultural College as a railroad station for that area. The College, at this time, was still in the formative stages and no real settlement existed at the site, although the land had been acquired.

Ames was laid out and platted on December 17, 1864. The original town of Ames, consisting of approximately twelve blocks, was located north of the railroad's right-of-way, and between Duff Avenue on the east, Burnett Avenue on the west, and Eighth Street on the north. This land was originally purchased from the government by Mrs. Cynthia O. Duff. On November 26, 1864, this property was deeded by Mrs. Duff to the John I. Blair Land Co. On January 18, 1865, this was filed for official record at the County Court House.

John Blair, head of the Cedar Rapids and Missouri River Railroad, desired to immortalize the name of his friend, Oakes Ames. Therefore, the settlement was named Ames.

Oakes Ames (1804-1873) was an American manufacturer, financier, and politician who invested heavily in the 'Union Pacific Railroad' project.

The first church was erected in Ames by the Congregationalists. Because it was the first church, it was the recipient of the gift of a church bell by Congressman Ames. This bell was also a birth gift to the town.

Along with the birth of the little village, the land west was also showing signs of activity. The national land-grant act of 1862 finally assured permanence and material support to the new college. After a preliminary preparatory term, the regular collegiate work was inaugurated on March 17, 1869. Iowa Agricultural College was now a going concern, with A.S. Welch as the first president.

Transportation played a tremendous part in the development of both the town and the college. The greatest single factor in the beginning of the parallel development was the construction of the Ames and College railroad, called "The Dinkey."

In 1869, Ames had 650 residents. Thirty of these citizens petitioned the Circuit Court of Story County to hold an election upon the question of incorporating the Town of Ames. The election was held on December 18, 1869, the vote being eighty-one for incorporation and twenty-five against incorporation.

Thus, the Incorporation of the Village of Ames occurred in the

year 1870. The first election of officers was held on January 8, 1870, at which time William West was elected mayor.

The town continued to grow and prosper. Three factors are responsible for this growth: 1) the industrious people who settled and built the early Ames and the Iowa Agricultural College, 2) the prospect that there would soon be a railroad through town, and 3) the fertile farm land in the surrounding area.

By 1885, the population of Ames was 1,276. The Ames Independent School District listed 418 of these as pupils.

In 1886, the first Town Hall was built. The cost was \$1,285 and was paid for out of the general fund of the city. The land had been purchased earlier for \$250. The first use of the Town Hall was the election in March, 1887.

1887 was the year of the big fire. "The fire destroyed practically all of the business district. This was the time when the city officials begged the railroad for the privilege of connecting a single hose to the road's water tank which stood at the Douglas crossing. This marked the first attempt at furnishing public service to the little pioneer village.

By 1891, the first waterworks system was established. It consisted of a wooden tower and tank with a water main and hydrants only on Main Street. In 1906 a reservoir pumping station and 50,000 gallon elevated steel tank were built at the present

water plant location. In 1924, the City began to furnish water to residents of the University area, who had previously been served by the University water system. (The city manager system was created in Ames in May, 1920. Money for the salary came from the general, electric and water budgets.)

Major additions at the present site have consisted of a 1-million gallon reservoir (1924) and a filtration (1927) and softening (1932) plant, all still in use. In 1954, a 2-million gallon ground storage reservoir was added. During 1962, the treatment plant capacity was doubled and a new high service pumping station was built.

Revenue from water customers pays all costs of the water utility, including the new construction costs.

The sewage treatment plant was completed in 1950. This plant serves both of City of Ames and Iowa State University. It replaced two obsolete, overloaded plants which were being operated separately.

Citizen demand for better lighting brought about a franchise to an Illinois company for a light plant in 1895. When no action was taken by this company, the town fathers presented a bond issue for \$12,000 for a municipal plant. The land, still the site of the present plant, was purchased for \$250. By borrowing an additional \$5,000 from the general and water funds the plant was built.

A year later arc lights were furnished to the campus of Iowa State College. In 1897 street lights were installed in downtown Ames and paid for by the merchants. Onandago Street, now Main Street, was the first to be lighted.

By 1901 approximately 175 homes in downtown Ames were furnished with electricity. Transmission lines to residents in Campustown had increased to 350 by 1904. By 1965 this number had increased to 7,000.

Plans for updating the street lights began in 1955. In 1961 a financing plan was established on a five year basis. The cost of the street lighting has all been carried by the Utility.

In 1964 plans for the expansion of the electric utility began. The \$7.5 million addition began June 22, 1966 and was in operation in 1968.

Captain Wallace M. Greeley presented the Mary Greeley Memorial Hospital to the City in 1916 in memory of his wife, Mary Victoria. Erected at a cost of \$80,000, he added \$3,000 for furnishings after the building was completed. These early furnishings were mostly purchased as a need arose.

The first addition to the hospital came in 1937, at a cost of \$155,000. This was financed by a bond issue of \$60,000 and a P.W.A. grant. The addition in 1961 added 75 beds, new surgical and obstetrical space, laboratory, X-ray and central supplies

areas; kitchen, laundry and power plant. This addition was financed by a \$600,000 bond issue; federal matching funds (Hill-Burton Act money) and pledges.

The first library association was formed in 1892. In 1894 the residents were asked to vote a mill levy to establish a municipal library. The first members were entitled to circulating privileges of the library for one year and thereafter on the payment of \$1.00 per year. Non-members were charged \$1.00 a year. The association maintained a contract with a library bureau in Chicago for its books.

With no permanent home for the library, it appeared to be a step-child of the City. It was variously housed in a drug store, a jewelry store and in a new depot. The first part of the present library building was acquired through the City and the Carnegie Foundation.

The building was started in 1903 and completed in 1904. The Carnegie plan provided for an outright gift of \$1,000 for each \$1,000 of annual maintenance pledged by the community. Tax levies producing \$1,000 a year were approved at the polls, so \$10,000 was given by the Foundation.

The library was so popular that it was soon apparent that the building was too small. Voters again went to the polls and approved a further levy of \$600 annually and the Carnegie Foundation promptly added \$6,000 to the original gift.

An addition in 1938 increased the library size by two-thirds. This is the library as it stands today. Part of the land upon which it stands was a gift of Mary Greeley. Additional land was purchased to complete the addition.

The nucleus of the present Ames cemetery was formed in 1870 soon after Ames was incorporated as a village. That early burial ground consisted of about 50 lots lying at the east edge of what is now known as the old cemetery.

The cemetery was originated and maintained by the Ames Cemetery Association and was transferred to the City in 1917. In June of the same year the City purchased from George Henry Maxwell what was known as the Oakwood addition.

The cemetery was enlarged to its present area of 52 acres in September 1929.

The municipal court at Ames was established November 1, 1928 to relieve congestion in district court at Nevada. In its first year the court handled more than 760 cases. Governor John Hammil appointed John Y. Luke as the first judge to preside over the court.

The town marshal at first had control of the sole fire extinguisher. In 1871 a committee was appointed to get "hooks, poles and ladders" for fires.

By 1891, the City had volunteer firemen and a hose and cart

was bought for \$503. Today (1968) the Fire Department has two fire stations and a staff of 35 men.

The town marshall was solely in charge of the police department for a long period of time. However, just what he did with any prisoners remains somewhat of a mystery. In 1874 the City Council began thinking about a "site for a lock-up." It was not until 1887 when the town building was constructed that a "prisoner cage" was provided.

Today (1968) the police department is staffed by 34 men. Iowa State University also maintains a law enforcement staff.

The Ames Municipal Airport is one of the newest City acquisitions under municipal enterprise endeavors. In 1942 the City bought land southwest of Ames and a municipal airport was started. By 1945 the Airport was ready for use; lighting in 1952 and paving in 1957.

AMES, IOWA

LOCATION - In Story County, close to Geographical center of Iowa, 33 miles north of the State Capitol (Des Moines).

ALTITUDE - 922 feet above mean sea level (5th St. & Kellogg Ave.)

AVERAGE ANNUAL PRECIPITATION - 31.42 inches.

AVERAGE ANNUAL SNOWFALL - 30.1 inches

AVERAGE ANNUAL TEMPERATURE - 48.9 degrees F.

THE MAYORS OF AMES

William West	1870-1871		
C. E. Turner	1871-1872		
Walter Evans	1872-1873		
I. L. Smith	1873-1874		
W. D. Lucas	1874-1875		
Wm. Clark	1875-1877		
George A. Underwood	1877-1879		
E. R. Chamberlain	1879-1880		
George G. Tilden	1880-1881	F. H. Schleiter	1924-1934
Henry Wilson	1881-1883	W. L. Allan	1934-1938
John Watts	1883-1884	Frank D. Paine	1938-1942
Parley Sheldon	1884-1886	H. B. Manning	1942-1946
M. C. Jones	1886-1888	Clinton Adams	1946-1948
W. M. Greeley	1888-1890	W. L. Allan	1948-1953
Parley Sheldon	1890-1894	J. P. Lawlor	1954-1957
Henry Wilson	1894-1896	Pearle P. DeHart	1958-1966
M. K. Smith	1896-1897	Donald Newbrough	1966-1968
L. C. Tilden	1897-1898	Stuart N. Smith	1968-
Sovarro Cramer	1898-1899		
Thomas Thompson	1899-1902		
Parley Sheldon	1902-1908		
Galen Tilden	1908-1910		
Parley Sheldon	1910-1916		
George E. Baker	1916-1918		
E. H. Graves	1918-1920		
T. L. Rice	1920-1924		

AMES POPULATION

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>University Enrollment</u>
1870	656	188
1880	1,153	252
1890	1,276	336
1900	2,422	1,062
1910	4,222	1,562
1920	6,270	3,584
1930	10,261	4,318
1940	12,555	6,567
1950	22,898	8,135
1960	27,003	9,726
1965	34,874	14,000 (Fall)
1970	44,200 Estimated	

AMES CITY PARKS

<u>Park</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>When Acquired</u>	<u>How Acquired</u>
BAND SHELL - 6th and Duff	2.6	1889	Dedication
EAST BROOKSIDE - 6th & Brookridge	17.0	1925	Purchase
WEST BROOKSIDE - 6th & Brookridge	65.0		Leased
INIS GROVE - 24th & Duff	42.0	1949	Gift
EMMA McCARTHY LEE - Ross Road	35.6	1949	Gift
O'NEIL - 3rd & Oak	2.5	1941	Gift
FRANKLIN - South Franklin	4.5		Leased
SQUAW CREEK - South Hwy. Commission	12.0	1955	Dedication
MOORE PARK - South Beach	2.0	1964	Gift
ADAMS PARK - East 2nd & Borne	1.0	1964	Leased
14TH & DUFF - 14th and Duff	.5	1942	Gift
HUTCHISON - Toronto & Delaware	.4	1963	Gift
CARR WOODS - Carr Drive	18.5	1964	Purchase
GUNDER WOODS - East of Skunk River	58.0	1966	Purchase
CARR PARK - Carr Drive	4.5	1965	Leased
NUTTY WOODS - East of Skunk River	24.5	1966	Purchase
13TH STREET - 13th Street	78.0	1963- 1964	Purchase
McDONALD WOODS - Izaak Walton Rd.	9.0	1967	Leased
RAILWAY PARK - S. State St.	10.5	1967	Purchase
AMES MUNICIPAL HOMEWOOD - 20th Street	69.5	1967	Purchase
TEAGARDEN PARK - Teagarden Add.	.5	1967	Gift
 Total Acreage for Park Purposes	 458.1		
Acres Owned by Park Commission	374.1		
Total Acres Leased	84.0		

The Board of Park Commissioners was established by ordinance in 1926.