

## History of Collins

Collins began a mile northeast of its present location, about 1875, in the store of James Chapman who established the first post office, Jan. 20, 1879, which he named Colline Centre. The store was across the road from Center school which was located in the center of Collins township.

Almost three years later, in 1881, the Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway line passed through the southern half of the township. The railway officials chose the present site as a central location for the market point of the surrounding country. Henry and John Angelo sold an east and west forty acres to the railway company. The east forty was not used, although both were platted and recorded.

The town was laid out, and the land was set apart for public highways, avenues, streets and alleys by the Milwaukee Land company. On February 1, 1882 the plat was presented to the town and the town of Collins was dedicated.

Soon after the depot was built, regular train service was begun between Marion and Omaha, Nebraska, making it the connecting link between the east and the west. F. W. Cole was the first depot agent. Later the depot was destroyed by fire and replaced by the modern building which is so well cared for by the present day operator, W. H. Robinson. M. E. Jensen is the night operator.

While the railroad was being constructed several temporary buildings were erected where the people expected the town to be. One was "Mrs. Murphy's Boarding House" which was built to accomodate the men who were building the railroad. It was located north of the railroad and later moved to the west end of the lot, known as Vasey's pasture, where John Thompson built a shed on each side of the building and used it for a horse barn.

There was a saloon on the west side of the road north of the track, and William Hidy operated a little store to supply the needs of this new centre. It was located on the east side of Highway No. 65, north of the tracks.

The second building erected was a house built by C. W. Etherton on Lot 13 Bl. 17, the corner of 1st street and Third avenue. Here the first trees of Collins were planted. Later Clark Campbell had the house moved and built the residence now owned by the Collins school and occupied by Supt. Jackson.

About the third building was Hidy Brothers' two-story frame building on the southeast corner of Main and Railway street. The early store was operated by the following people: A. H. McNall, A. W. Nowels, C. R. Neal, Robert J. Belt, M. S. Poorbaugh, A. C. Daniels, Josiah Poorbaugh. The store was destroyed by fire and the present brick building was erected by Vasey Bros. which is now used for storage of Collins school busses. On the west end of Hidy's lot facing Railway street was a blacksmith shop operated by Joseph Baxter. North of Hidy's general store on Main avenue, (Lot 3, Bl. 10), Theodore Hampton erected a store. In 1886 John Thompson and his son Walter acquired the store. After Walter was appointed postmaster in 1893, the post office was moved to the northeast corner of Thompson's store.

Two years later Thompson and his son Walter opened a private bank in the southwest corner of the store. This frame building was destroyed by fire in 1901, and the banking business was carried on in front of the Lingenfelter's store, until the new two-story "Collins State Bank" was completed. Walter Thompson operated the bank until he retired in 1930.

Adjoining the Hampton building on the north was Canada Wood's store. It was later operated by the following owners: Lemuel Neal, J. M. Hall, I. W. Poorbaugh, I. H. Pulis and J. F. Lingenfelter. The fire destroyed this frame building, too, but Mr. Lingenfelter was completing a two-story brick building on Main avenue, so the merchandise that was saved was carried across the street to the new location which was the present Ryan Furniture store.

On the northeast of Main and First street the Ozmun Brothers erected another two-story frame building where they operated a general store on the first floor and the hall above was used by the Masonic lodge. This building was destroyed by fire at the same time that all of the other buildings in the block burned. On this lot today is the Standard Service Station on the corner facing Main, operated by H. E. Southern.

In the middle of the lot, facing First street is M. R. Rice's Ford garage. At the west end of the lot, facing First street is the telephone office, a part of which was the old shoe shop of Oscar Anderson.

Across First street on the corner of Main avenue is the only frame building on the original site in Collins today. It was the first building in the block built in 1882 by Fred Leonard and his wife Amanda. They operated a hardware store until ill health caused them to retire about 1921. Mr. Leonard was an energetic promoter of the early town of Collins. This is the present location of Hank Frerich's pool hall.

James Chapman erected a two-story frame building on the southwest corner Main and First street. The postoffice was moved into the new general store and on December 9, 1881, the name was changed from "Collins Centre" to Collins. Later Silas Shearer bought the store and he and Elias were the following postmasters. The next appointment was A. P. Edgar in 1885.

Adjoining Chapman's store on the north on Main avenue was William White's two-story frame building. This early store was known as "Libby White's Millinery and Dress Making shop."

John B. Kline built the first blacksmith shop on the corner of First street and Third avenue during the fall of 1882. It was opened for business on New Year's Eve, 1883. Gus Hay's home now occupies this corner.

In Allen's History of Story County, I found an interesting comment on early Collins lumber dealers: "W. R. Benson has a fine lot of lumber and it is still coming every day. He expects to have one of the finest lumber yards in the county" (Nov. 29, 1882), and again from the same History under "Collins Directory" (1886-7) "Lumber Dealers-Rush Bros." In 1896 S. A. Rush built a new lumber yard on the corner of Main and Railway street. This yard was acquired by Vasey Brothers before the lumber was moved into the new building. Later Vasey Bros. bought the Biddick and Holman Lumber company which joined them on the west. Charles and Arthur operated this business until the '30's when it was purchased by Spahn and Rose Lumber Company. The present manager is Claude Ballard.

The most important line of business was grain and livestock. There were two large elevators. The first was the Kansas City Grain company operated by John Ozmun. The grain was elevated by horse-drawn power. Since J. E. Hale purchased the elevator in 1905 and he has added a large storage annex and installed modern equipment for handling the grain. His son Harold is the present manager.

The west elevator was built a few years later by Amos Hanson. It was operated by steam power. Later it was consolidated with Armour, known as Neola. In the early '20's Wilder Grain company of Cedar Rapids purchased the elevator and added a large annex and modernized the machinery. C. R. Stone, the present manager, has been with the Company thirty-seven years.

#### Stock Buyers

Early stock buyers were Charles Mead and Charles Fish. From a newspaper clipping of Nov. 20, 1882, "Corn is 40 cents and hogs \$6.00, thanks to C. Mead for the raise." Today much of the livestock is sold direct from farm to market. Forrest Luig and Wes Borts handle most of the trucking business in Collins.

Charles Mead carried on much of the early banking business, for the community in his home until he and James B. Hanson opened a private bank in 1887. Mr. Hanson operated the drug store and was postmaster during the years between 1889 and 1893 in connection with the bank. In 1902 a corporation was formed and a state charter secured for the present Exchange State Bank of Collins, operated by the following people: Mrs. James Hanson, Mrs. Charles Mead, C. L. Fish, Wyatt Carr, George Hanson, A. J. Fawcett, F. A. Leonard and S. S. Hanson.

According to the records taken from the State Auditor's office, this bank is the oldest state chartered bank in Story county.

From about 1887, down to the present time, as far as can be determined Mrs. J. F. Stratton the oldest continuous depositor of the bank, a perior of over 60 years.

Present officers are: C. W. Kimberly, president; J. R. Witner, vice president; G. L. Kimberly, cashier; Calla B. Wood, assistant cashier.

After the building boom of 1882, the thriving business center was gradually moved northward on both sides of Main avenue.

#### Collins Fire Department

Collins first fire fighting equipment was a two-wheel hose cart and buckets. In 1928 a Chevrolet Truck was purchased and in 1947 a Ford V-8 fire truck with modern fire fighting equipment took its place. The truck is owned by Collins township. Thayer Derby is Fire Chief, Wes McWherter, Assistant chief and Ralph Vasey, secretary.

#### Collins Churches and Ministers

Methodist — Rev. Louis H. Joslin

Church of Christ — Rev. Derrold Hoffman

Evangelical United Brethren — Rev. George M. Talbott

#### 1953 Collins Officials

Mayor — L. W. Van Dran

Councilmen: F. G. Pritchard, H. C. Westcott, Harold Hale and R. W. Vasey

Marshall — Fred Elliott

American Legion — C. B. Kimberley

American Legion Auxiliary — Mrs. M. M. Noring

Postmaster — Walter Keagle

Fire Chief — Thayer Derby

Commercial Club Pres. — L. W. Van Dran

Evergreen Cemetery Society — Mrs. Fred Elliott

Garden Club Pres. — Mrs. Virginia Kilgore

Rebekah Lodge — Mrs. Betty Dodd

O.E.S. — Mrs. Barbara Kingman

P.T.O. Pres. — Mrs. Alta Kimberley

Masons — Stanley Mitchell

Boys Scouts — Robert Lawson

4-H — Mrs. George Kimberley and Mrs. Claude Ballard

#### Collins Township

Clerk — Ralph W. Vasey

Trustees — (51) L. D. Holland, (52) Wm R. Rumbaugh, (53) Granger Buck

Deputy Assessor — F. G. Pritchard.

HISTORY OF COLLINS, IOWA

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From the year 1953, there have been many changes in the community.

Ralph W. Vasey, local Insurance man and Realtor was elected Mayor and has remained in that office to this date in 1968.

The year 1956, we received our new addition to the local school. This addition was a great asset to our very good school system as several class rooms were added, along with a new gym and the conversion of the old gym into what is now our school lunch room with the class rooms directly above.

The years bring on changes in operations and in 1962 the local depot closed. The depot being the most active place in the towns operation was no longer needed due to the shift in transportation and the lack of passenger service. However, in the year 1964 the town drilled a new well to facilitate the additional needs. The town now has two very good wells.

1963 brought on new additions with Shrock building a fertilizer plant located just south of the railroad tracts on main street. The Post Office moved from its location in the Bank Building on the south end of main street to its present location on the north end of main street and located in the building formerly occupied by the Collins Hardware. Walter S. Keagle is Postmaster.

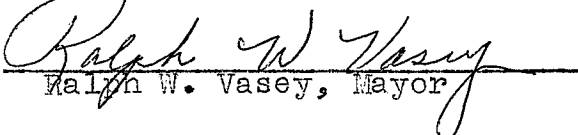
In 1965 Collins received another fertilizer plant built by the Sinclair Corporation, which is located on the site of the former Spahn & Rose Lumber Co., which had been removed. In 1965, the Collins Methodist Church constructed a new educational wing to the west of the sanctuary, at a cost of \$60,000.00.

1968 Collins will receive a new sanitary sewer. The contracts for the new sewer were let for construction on April 23, 1968.

Be it resolved by the Town Council of Collins, Iowa that the history as prepared by Ralph W. Vasey, in 1968, be the official history to be placed in the cornerstone for the new Story County Courthouse in Nevada, Iowa.

Ralph W. Vasey, Mayor  
Phyllis Derby, Town Clerk  
Thayer Derby, Councilman  
Grainger Buck, Councilman  
Richard Long, Councilman  
William Cochran, Councilman  
Wilferd E. Barrett, Councilman

Signed on this 23rd. day of April, 1968.

  
Ralph W. Vasey, Mayor