

Williams-Taylor Block [No. 219 & No. 217]

1874 – Augustus F. Williams & Charles W. Taylor

Williams & Son Grocery, formerly located on the corner of 1st Street and 2nd Avenue, had been destroyed by the fire in 1873. He and his son, George, re-opened in their new building before the end of 1874 and continued in business until 1883 when they decided to move to the Dakotas. Frank Delany then transferred **Oak Hall Grocery** to this location until 1887. After a brief hiatus as a clothing store, the building housed **Cobb & Cobb Grocery** owned by Albert S. and Harry L. Cobb from 1895 to 1903.

Following their tenure, L.W. Goen, owner of the ***Independence Conservative***, decided to move operations to this building in 1904.

It remained here until 1910 when ownership of the newspaper changed hands. Sadly, Goen suffered from severe depression following the accidental death of his daughter, Rose, in 1908. He committed suicide by hanging in 1913.

A five-and-dime store owned by Frank Hale set up shop in No. 219 in 1911. **Hale's Emporium**, as it was called, remained until 1921.

No. 217 continued its long history as a hardware store. **Taylor Hardware** also reopened before the end of 1874. Facing financial difficulties, Taylor relinquished his interest in the business in 1878. It then changed hands several times until, in 1882, Franklin B. **Bonniwell**, Irwin H. **Cobb**, and R.F. **Stewart** became the proprietors. Cobb left the business in 1883 and five years

later, Bonniwell sold his interest to James Cooke. **Stewart & Cooke** shared ownership until 1892 when Cooke retired. **Stewart Hardware** continued until 1901 with Stewart selling the business to I.C. Plane.

Gates Hardware, another well established business founded in 1895, moved to this location in 1904. O.R. Gates purchased his own building in 1917, bringing the long tradition of hardware to a close. From then until 1924, Harry H. **Bickenbach's Variety Store**, formerly located at No. 215, leased the building.

A long string of attorneys kept offices on 2nd floor over the years from 1874 into the early 1900s. In 1909, **Dr. E.M. Sheehan** opened a dental office in the east side with **Dr. E.A. Schrader** in the west. In addition to his dental practice, Schrader was an

instructor at the University of Iowa School of Dentistry for a time. Later, he began developing dental tools and opened an instrument manufacturing business above No. 219 in 1918.

Judy Olsen – May 2021