

Donation of the Month

Adding Machine Stand



2007.8.1
Donor: Jackie Humbarb

Every once in a while, an unusual piece of furniture crosses our path; this table is just such a piece. It has four solid legs and a rounded seat that folds out and is braced on a rung between two of the legs. The top is rectangular with raised edges and there are two leaves that fold down from the sides. This mysterious stand was meant to hold an early adding machine and is thought to have been used in the Benton County Courthouse.

According to the label on one side, the stand was made by the Dorsey Printing Company of Dallas, Texas.

In 1884, brothers James A. and Henry Dorsey started a printing company and office supply store in Dallas. Despite two fires in its plant between 1884 and 1900, the company still managed to become a success as one of Dallas' major businesses of the time. In 1902, the Dorseys built a new six-story building that became one of the city's largest downtown commercial structures. During the early twentieth century, the Dorsey Company advertised itself as "The Business Man's Department Store" and offered printing and office supply services. Branches of the company were opened in Houston, Texas, and well as Muskogee, Oklahoma, and salesmen traveled the country. The railroad played a large part in the company's prosperity as a way of shipping more products more quickly.

By the 1920s, the Dorsey brothers had died and Henry Dorsey, Jr., took over the company. As the Great Depression took hold, businesses had to make do without most of the products the Dorsey Company sold and as a result, the company faltered. In 1940, Bowen Williamson took a job there, and moved up through the ranks to become Vice-President and member of the board. The Dorsey Company was divided in the 1960s into a separate printing company and a separate office supply company. Williamson eventually bought the printing division and changed it to Williamson Printing Corporation, which still exists today.

This particular piece of office furniture is now a part of the Museum's collection. According to the donor, her husband, Jay Dee Humbard, acquired the adding machine stand from the Benton County Courthouse. Humbard was an employee there; he served on the Benton County Fair Board as an Agricultural Extension Agent for many years as well as working for the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service in Benton, Madison, Logan, Yell, and Franklin counties.

Despite the company history, there is not as much information about the adding machine stand itself. If anyone has any other information related to this stand, the Rogers Historical Museum would love to hear from you.

CREDITS

"Our Story: The History of Williamson" from the Williamson Family of Companies website at <http://www.twpc.com/story.shtml>. Donor information courtesy of Jackie Humbard, 2007, part of Collection Donor file.