

Preface

The Ames family tree is densely populated with interesting characters, careers, and adventures. In this book are sketches of five remarkable people: Charles Gordon Ames, first Ames on the family tree; his wife, Sara Jane Daniels Ames; their son, Charles Wilberforce Ames and his partner, Mary Lesley Ames, for whose descendants this book has been prepared; and Elizabeth Ames Jackson, the beloved “Aunt Betty” of recent times.

Had there been time, we could have added many more interesting life stories. It would have made a very fat book! The primary resources used were the letters, diaries, and other papers accumulated over one hundred years on the third floor of 501 Grand Avenue, St. Paul. That address was the family home--first for Mary and Charles Ames and their children, and then for Betty and Norris Jackson and theirs. After both the Jacksons died in 1990, we brought all these materials to Boulder to form the Ames Family Historical Collection. Over the last six or so years, Dr. Karl J. Stone has been employed in sorting and cataloguing the more than 20,000 items, dating from the late 18th century to the present. This work is almost finished, making research at last possible.

The collection is among the most voluminous and complete family historical collections in the United States. It will ultimately go to a well-established historical society or similar library active in serving scholars of American family and community life.

In preparing this book, we also consulted collections at the Massachusetts Historical Society in Boston, the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, and the Minnesota Historical Society in St. Paul, as well as standard references and history books. We are grateful for the detailed materials on Mary Ames and Elizabeth Jackson prepared by Leila Poullada.

Our work has acquainted us with a fascinating array of people, of whom all descendants can be very proud. It has been a pleasure, a labor of love.

Mary Lesley Ames Wolff & Ed Wolff, Boulder CO, June 15, 2001

