

New Home For Edgar Title Firm



THE EDGAR COUNTY TITLE CO. is settled into its new home, in offices at the Ken More Building on East Wood, third location since the abstract service was established

by Max Williams in 1977. Assisting Williams are, standing from left, Melody Ann Weir, Jane Ann Taylor, and Mrs. Martha Williams. (Beacon-News Photo)

Editor's Note: The following is another article by the Beacon-News in cooperation with the Paris Chamber of Commerce to acquaint residents with business and industry of the community.

Indirectly, Carolyn Wenz was responsible for the Edgar County Title Co.

The firm which provides abstract search and title insurance services, is owned and managed by Max Williams, and grew out of an interest developed when

Williams was a student at Paris High School.

Recently it made the firm's third move since being established in 1977, and is now located in the Ken More Office Building in what originally was the office of the Postmaster. The office was selected for its big two-story fireproof vault, im-

portant to safeguard the important abstract records and deeds, Williams explained.

Back to the decision that started Williams on a nearly-lifetime career:

"Miss Wenz (high school principal and teacher) got me a part-time job with the Nelson Title Company back in 1937," Williams recalls. At the time the job was part of one of the first "work-study" high school programs in the area, the forerunner of what developed into the extensive vocational education programs under various titles of diversified occupations, distributive education, office occupations, etc.

"I worked with such men as Dick Shelledy, Atch Lycan and C.E. Scott, who later owned the company," Williams recalls.

In 1939, the abstract and title business along with most other economic activities slowed, and Williams had to find other work. "Mrs. Merkle gave me a job at the Merkle Broom Co., one of the hardest—cleaning broom corn, but it was a job." After World War II military service and a stint at soil testing with the Farm Bureau and Edgar County Seed Co. Williams rejoined Nelson Title & Trust in 1951 at the invitation of Mr. Scott. He remained with this

historic organization until leaving in July, 1977 to establish his own abstract service at 110 South Central.

"There seemed to be a demand for at least two firms offering this service in the county," Williams said. "In the past we have had as many as four abstract services here."

The business later moved to the former Fleener building on West Washington, and then this summer to the Ken More offices. Williams is assisted by his wife Martha, with an office staff of Melody Ann Weir and Jane Ann Taylor.

Change is inevitable in any business including an abstract and title service, Williams observed. "The loan companies used to be the 'bread and butter' of the abstract business," he said. "Property is still changing hands, although at a slower rate. But unfortunately, in recent years much of it is due to bankruptcy or foreclosure, rather than voluntary sale."

Williams is particularly pleased with the fact that his work is concentrated in Edgar County, and at the Edgar County Courthouse. "We work closely with realtors, local attorneys, and the county clerk's staff, and enjoy cooperation here that you don't find everywhere," he said.