

FLOYD GILBERT SMITH

Downtown suicide horrifies bystanders

A 76-year-old man who had lived in Grinnell since 1985 took his own life Thursday afternoon behind McNally's Foods when he sat near a dumpster, put a 20-gauge shotgun barrel into his mouth and pulled the trigger. *April 16, 1987*
Authorities said Floyd Gilbert Smith of 90 Fourth Ave., Apt. 303, left no suicide notes and had given no other

indication that he was planning to kill himself. Police Chief Jim Ahrens said Smith had purchased a box of shotgun shells shortly after noon at the Big Bear store here, and earlier in the day had made the final payment on his pre-paid funeral arrangements at the Smith Funeral Home.

The incident horrified nearby construction workers and

customers at the supermarket. Two of Smith's relatives, a sister-in-law and her son-in-law, work at McNally's, and Smith earlier had talked with them near a rear entrance to the building, the police chief said.

Members of the construction crew said Smith had watched them work for about an hour before going to his car, which was parked near the west end of the McNally's lot, took out the shotgun and one shell, then walked to the rear of the building and sat down next to the trash dumpster.

No autopsy was performed, and the body was cremated later Thursday afternoon.

"He had moved to Grinnell from Burlington in 1985," Ahrens said. "He didn't seem to exhibit to friends or relatives a lot of depression, but apparently he was extremely lonely."

He was the son of Samuel and Cora Kibbee Smith and was born on Nov. 10, 1910, in Brooklyn. He lived in the Anamosa area for a few years and moved to Burlington in 1950 where he worked for 16 years at the Burlington Basket Factory as a stockman.

Survivors include a daughter, Doris Coleman of Manvel, Texas; one brother, Cleo Smith of Grinnell; and a sister, Lucille Pimlott of Portland, Ore. He was preceded in death by his parents, one brother and one sister.

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