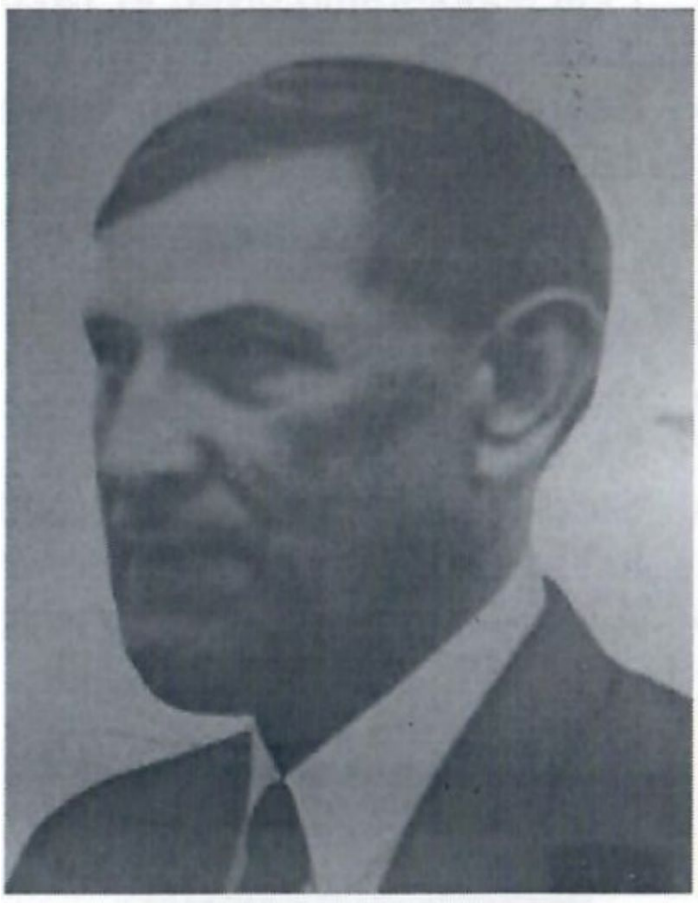
William Henschen was born July 11, 1893 in Garner and was an only child. He died on July 10, 1969. His parents were Louis J and Lena (Roswag) Henschen. His father was a custodian at the Hancock County Courthouse. William was a member of the Zion Evangelical and Reformed Church in Garner. William graduated from the Garner School. He attended Iowa State University where he majored in Civil Engineering. He taught in Hancock County schools before beginning a 51-year career as the Hancock County drainage engineer. During this span, it is estimated he was responsible for the creation of three-fourths of Hancock County's drainage ditches. On December 5th, 1956, William married Ida Meckstroth. They had no children. Ida preceded him in death, passing on Sept 26, 1961.

One of William's hobbies included earning and investing money. He preferred investing in stocks and bonds, as he lost money that was deposited with banks during the Great Depression. He was a member of the "Old Timers" band. William was described by others as: frugal, conservative, quiet, solitary, good memory, likable, small statured, and devoted to caring for his mother. William owned two vehicles during his lifetime - a Model A Ford and a 1950 Chevrolet. One of his "Life Beliefs" was a desire to walk everywhere he went, as he believed that people who walked lived longer.

William was very supportive of young people receiving a good education. It was this core belief that led him to establish the William Henschen Scholarship Fund. The first scholarships were distributed in 1970, funded with an initial endowment valued at $1,138,300. To date, the William Henschen Scholarship Fund has distributed 8,373 scholarships.