

## **William Merrell Vories and Omihachiman**

William Merrell Vories (1880–1964) was an American-born architect, businessman, and Christian missionary who lived and worked in Omihachiman for the greater part of his life. Vories left a rich legacy that remains conspicuous in the city today. He first came to Omihachiman to work as a missionary while teaching English at a local high school, and he later took up architecture, publishing, and medicine sales to finance his religious activities. His strong commitment to public service also led him to establish several schools and medical facilities.

More than 20 buildings designed by Vories remain standing in Omihachiman, and his contributions to local life are fondly remembered. A statue of Vories stands in front of the offices of the Omi Brotherhood, the company he founded to sell medicine, and his life and achievements are commemorated in Vories Memorial Hall, which is housed in his final place of residence.