

# Preservation Update!

## Historic Pella Trust, Inc.

*Preserving Yesterday with a  
Vision towards tomorrow!*

*Historic Pella Trust is a non-  
profit preservation group  
founded in 1994*

*The goal of Historic Pella Trust is to protect and preserve Pella's heritage by preserving historic structures in and around Pella. Once a historic structure is destroyed, it is gone forever and thus changes Pella's historic landscape. It is important that Pella's unique Dutch heritage does not disappear. Historic Pella Trust is made up of volunteers who value saving the historic architecture of structures built by our forefathers who settled in Pella in 1847.*

### *2009 Board Members*

*Wayne Stienstra, President  
Ellie Gosselink, Vice-President  
Davis Folkerts, Secretary  
Bob Klein, Co-treasurer  
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Sallie DeReus  
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Eunice Folkerts  
Ralph Jaarsma  
Duane Rempe  
Ron Rietveld  
Harold Schnedler  
Liza Zylstra*

*Historic Pella Trust Office:  
615 Main Street  
Pella, Iowa 50219  
Ph: 641-628-8003*

*Web site:  
[www.historicpellatrust.org](http://www.historicpellatrust.org)*

## Letter from the President of Historic Pella Trust

Dear Friends of Historic Preservation,

After another colder and snowier than normal winter, it is good to have a few sunny and warm spring days to get us excited about outdoor projects that we have been planning in the dead of winter. Whether it is getting out into the yard, the garden, or a project to fix up your house, spring seems to give us renewed enthusiasm to improve where we live until, when fall arrives, we are ready to put away our mowers, rakes and paint brushes for another season.

For Historic Pella Trust members, spring means our Annual Meeting and Historic Preservation Day on April 21<sup>st</sup>, at 7:30 at the Pella Opera House. One project we have been working on this winter has been the new self-guided architectural tour of early historic Pella. This booklet will showcase approximately 40 architecturally significant structures that are from early Pella, or have been awarded placement on the National Register of Historic Places. It will point out to visitors to Pella, the architectural influence of the early settlers from Holland. This booklet highlighting Pella's rich architectural history was a long term goal of HPT. Membership support helps make this project possible. The booklet will have its debut at our annual April meeting, where Des Moines historian Will Page will speak on Dutch architecture, from the period of the early settlers. The meeting will also recognize the preservation efforts of some individuals and honor selected historic structures with a Pella Landmark Plaque. Refreshments will be served afterwards.

To update some of our projects: We now have 1110 Washington Street on the National Register of Historic Places, and we will continue to do some of the restoration as we hope to find a buyer of the property. Through a member's donation, the old City Hall will be on the National Register of Historic Places in a few months. Historic Pella Trust was instrumental in placing a conservation easement on the property to protect the exterior from non-historic changes, and thus let the dogs remain in perpetuity; waiting for their master. The new owner has already started revealing the beautiful tin ceiling above the drop ceiling in the old city hall offices, in the basement.

Starting in May we plan on having the Historic Pella Trust's office at 615 Main open from 6:00 - 8:00 P.M. on Thursday's; and 10:00 to Noon on Saturday morning's.

We invite each of you to stop by!

Sincerely,  
Wayne Stienstra.

Available now:

Historic Pella Trust  
Invites you to a Self-Guided

Architectural Tour of Early Historic Pella  
Pella, Iowa – Founded in 1847

Outlined are three color-coded tours, highlighting the architectural history of these homes and businesses.

The Self-Guided tour booklet is free to anyone. Historic Pella Trust is appreciative of donations that can be either sent to our post office box, (P.O. Box 1) or left at our office at ‘the old gas station’, 615 Main St., Pella.

Historic Pella Trust thanks Carol (Ver Steeg) Manussier for sending us the following letter:

Dear Historic Pella Trust,

*I look forward to the Preservation Update, especially since what shows up is so familiar to me. I love Pella, and my childhood includes fun memories about two of the articles in the recent issue – the Vogelaar home and the old livery stables (in Bob Klein's great reminiscence of the Swank cabin). I'd like to share my memories.*

*My folks, George and Margaret (Grundman) Ver Steeg brought the Boland house at 1001 Main for \$6,000 in 1941. The back yard adjoined the elegant house of Gary and Wimp Vogelaar. They had little yappy Pomeranian dogs, so I wasn't inside often, but the back yard had a wonderful LARGE fish pond. We had a very much smaller one, enough for tadpoles, but the Vogelaar's was too tempting to ignore. My twin brother Carl and I believed we could use it for a swimming pool. You could push off and take several strokes, keeping mouth and eyes closed to avoid all the muck. What fun, and I'm not sure what ended the madness. Wimp Vogelaar was always gracious, but if there were fish, they hated our intrusion. It's one of my most vivid memories and though we spent every day at the real swimming pool that was too tempting to pass up.*

*The other memory – the livery stable. May baskets were very important and we gathered violets and other spring flowers to add to candy and home-made construction paper boxes with handles. Why we were in the stable that night I don't know! Nancy Van Maanen (niece of Elbert Van Maanen of the Siam-display fame) had a horse there so we stopped off to finish assembling our baskets. What we didn't realize was that someone had added "road apples" to our treats – they were plentiful and at all stages of deterioration, so no smell alerted us. We followed the May Day tradition – ringing doorbells and running into the bushes to hide as the baskets were discovered. And, "oh no" we heard the screams. "Horse manure!" Horror or humor, or lots of both. We then dumped the bad stuff before finishing our run. By then it was hilarious—and memorable 50-60 years later. Pella memories—hooray!*

*Carol (Ver Steeg) Manussier*

### Volunteers wanted for HPT's Photographic Archival Project

Historic Pella Trust would like to enlist a group of interested volunteers to be trained on the software, and to commence this fascinating project. If you, or anyone you know of, would like to volunteer, please contact Robert Klein at 641-628-3092 (work) or 641-628-3661 (home, or drop a note to P.O. Box 1, Pella, Iowa

### New! Self-Guided Architectural Tour Booklet on Historic Pella

In January the Historic Pella Trust Board voted to create a historic walking tour booklet that would showcase structures from early Pella. The historic architecture is outlined in the description of the home or building and showcase buildings that are on the National Register of Historic Places.

The booklet is comprised of three tours, which will simplify viewing of the designate buildings and homes. Each tour starts from the Tulip Toren on the square.

All three tours are color coded, (red, blue or green) to match the center fold map, with an assigned number for each structure. There is a photo of the home or building along with a brief description of the architectural history of the building.

The Self-guided Architectural Tour booklet will be unveiled at our April 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting to be held at the Opera House, starting at 7:30 P.M. and are free for the taking. The booklets will be available at several business location, as well as at our office at 615 S. Main Street.

HPT's committee that designed the self-guided booklet is: Wayne Stienstra, Bobby Klein, Ellie Gosselink, Liz Epperly and Harold Schnedler

### Pella Community Foundation Awards Grant to Historic Pella Trust

Historic Pella Trust was awarded a grant of \$1989.00 by the Pella Community Foundation in January. This grant is for the Historic Pella Trust Photographic Archival Project, which will preserve for posterity photographs of historic buildings, sites and individuals from Pella's past and present. This project will address the fear that many old photographs disappear every year due to neglect, disposal, deterioration, and other reasons.

In addition to the many photographic images we are aware of that must be preserved, we envision individuals answering the call for their old photographs to be scanned for posterity. It is anticipated that a collection of 10,000 images, or more, can be established in time. With the software to be acquired, HPT will be able to share its collection with libraries, other historical organizations, authors, etc. In addition, Photoshop CS4 software will allow for embedding of identification information, captions, context, and other information with the digital image.

The grant monies will cover the cost of the following components: a Microtex i800 high resolution scanner; Photoshop CS4 software for photo editing and cleanup; PastPerfect 4.0 collection management software; and an external hard drive for off-computer storage and backup.

## History of Pella's Oak Grove Nursery And Victorian Farmhouse

By Ellie Gosselink

Diane and Jim Nelson graciously welcomed me to their beautiful historic home, located at 1002 Monroe Street in Pella.

Their classic Victorian farmhouse has been restored with accuracy to the era it was built in. Jim gave his architect an old picture of the original home and asked that he restore the house to its original design. You can see from the top two photos on the right that the architect accomplished this beautifully. Not only has the outside been restored to its original plan, but all the rooms have been beautifully decorated to reflect the Victorian era.

When the Nelson's moved in, there was a small summer kitchen attached to the outside walls. Originally this had been used as a potting shed. Jim and Diane removed the outer wall to the summer kitchen and turned it into a laundry that led to the back room that they remodeled into a modern kitchen. On the outside they installed a sturdy wooden deck where brick had been laid to the garage. On the outside wall next to the kitchen door, they hung the original Oak Grove Nursery sign that was placed at the corner of W. Washington Street and West Second Street, directing visitors to the nursery's location.

Oak Grove Nursery came into existence in 1865 through the efforts of the owner, James Buis, and ended 101 years later with the death of his grandson, Andrew Verploegh. James Buis married Matje Lubberden in 1864. They had six children, but only their daughter Mattie lived to be an adult. She married Abraham Verploegh, the manager of a local canning nursery business. In 1897 the canning factory was sold, and Abe and Mattie built the "nursery house" in a grove of oak trees at West Second and Monroe Streets. James Buis, the nursery's founder, died in 1909. In 1922 Andrew Verploegh, the youngest of Abe and Mattie Verploegh's five children joined his father in business. In addition to their nursery stock, they sold fruit and plants, until Andrew's death in 1966 when the nursery closed.

On the corner of the Nelson's lot is a 'grave stone', as Jim laughingly calls it. Engraved on it, is the following:

Oak Grove Nursery  
1865 - 1966  
James Buis  
Abraham Verploegh  
Andrew Verploegh.

The nursery may be gone, but the legacy of its time is still captured in the original Victorian farmhouse that sits proudly restored to its original beauty by the Nelson's.

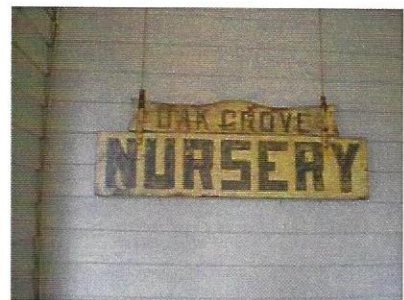
Entering the house by the kitchen door, I stepped into a modern kitchen that was decorated as it must have looked when it was built. Jim did add a bay window that looks across their lovely garden. Most mornings they enjoy watching the small wild life and many birds and butterflies that can be seen from their kitchen table.



Original farm house.



Jim and Diane Nelson's home today.



Original nursery sign.



Plaque on the corner of the Nelson's yard.

## Oak Grove Nursery and Home – continued

Walking from the kitchen into the sitting room, there is a beautiful stained glass window hanging in the large original picture window. This stained glass window came from the Second Reformed Church when the church was torn down in 1966, to be replaced with the current church building. This room is decorated with comfortable furniture and artifacts from the Victorian age, making you feel like you have stepped back in time, yet with all the modern comforts. Between the sitting room and the front parlor, Diana pointed out two pocket doors that had twelve clear window panes in each door. This gave good light into the center of the home, even on a cloudy day.

Moving on into the front parlor, your eyes are immediately drawn to the unique large square bay window that is filled with lovely ferns and other indoor plants. Next to the bay window is a faux fireplace that showcases this room with charm and interest. Next to the fireplace is an antique child's stroller from the early 1900's. Made of wicker, its unique design enables one to extend the seemingly small stroller into a full size stroller. The parlor is decorated to reflect the original era of the home and welcomes one to sit in the comfortable furniture and enjoy a social evening with friends and family.

From the parlor we stepped into a spacious front entrance that led to stairs taking you up to the three bedrooms on the second floor. Each bedroom reflects the early years of the home. Hanging in the large stairwell is a lovely old quilt made by Diane's great-great-grandmother. This beautiful quilt fits so well in the home that it is hard to imagine it not hanging there since 1897. Jim installed an UV window in the stairwell to protect the quilt from any daylight damage.

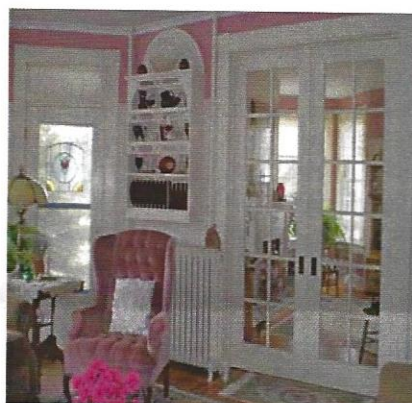
Going back down the stairs and through the entrance way, you come to the dining room. Sitting next to the round oak table was an old radio from the 1930's. It does not take any imagination to picture a family sitting around this table, enjoying some of the old radio shows of that era such as; Fibber McGee's Closet; Baby Snooks; The Amos and Andy Show, etc. Here again were beautiful ferns and indoor plants as would have been seen in many homes in the late 1800's.

We returned to the kitchen, and I thanked Diane and Jim for sharing their lovely home with me and the readers of HPT's newsletter.

*Historic Pella Trust wants to thank Jim and Diane Nelson for their dedication to preserving their home in the original architectural style of its era. Diane mentioned that at one time, someone was interested in buying the lot and was set to tear down the grand old Victorian farmhouse. Fortunately the buyer did not purchase the lot and home, and those who followed shared the same interest in keeping the house in its original design.*



Sitting room w/ stain glass window



Pocket doors leading to parlor



Square bay windows in parlor



Great-great-great grandmother's quilt.

## Pella's Dutch Street Organ

by Bob Klein

I would like to relate to you something about the Netherlands, namely the Dutch street organ.

Listening to the music of the old time mechanical street organs playing on the street corners, or in the park, was always one of my favorite activities when I visited Holland. It is about the only place you will find large street organs playing in the street. Street organs were originally built by the Dutch in Belgium, in an area called Flanders. The business was then moved to Holland, where the "modern" street organ evolved in the 1920's, with the particular sound that is now so typical of the Dutch street organ. All you have to do is wake up in the morning and hear the Dutch street organ playing its distinctive music on the streets below your hotel for a real thrill.

From the early days of Tulip Time, those of us in the Pella Historical Society were very interested in acquiring a typical Dutch street organ. Unfortunately, they were either way too high priced for us, or they were not in good enough condition to play music consistently.

In the 1960's, we had a street organ that belonged to the Orange City Tulip Time committee, that they were able to acquire from a troupe of Dutch entertainers touring this country. Orange City was having a great deal of trouble keeping it in working order, and we made an agreement that we would work on it during the off season to keep it running, if they would share the use of the street organ with us, to which they agreed. So the first year we brought it down to Pella, everyone took a shot at it, but it was just almost impossible to make it run, as they are very technical instruments. This sharing arrangement ended after a few years, when it was determined it was just too hard on the street organ to transport it back and forth to Pella each year.

Beginning in the early 1970's, on several of my trips to Holland, I took the time to call on the dean of the street organ industry, a gentleman by the name of Guys Perlee. He had been in the street organ business for 75 or 80 years and knew everything there was to know about them. I tried to get one that he had available, but he had nothing available except a couple of them that he wanted \$35,000 a piece for. Of course we couldn't afford that price, so we finally gave it up, and decided it was not for us.

However, there was a gentleman by the name of Tom Fretty in Manly, Iowa, who ran a display center, showcasing all types of musical instruments, and he had dabbled in street organs. He had one, which was a pretty nice looking instrument, and we were able to get him to agree to a price of \$12,000, which, of course, we had to raise because we didn't have \$12,000. So, as happened many times, our great friends Stu Kuyper and his sister Joan Farver contributed the money to buy the street organ.

It had played in Manly, but not very well. But a gentleman, Allen Sefton, who lived in Pella at the time and worked for Van Gorp Mfg, was a technician who had a very good understanding of Dutch street organs. He helped us the first year, but he later moved to Manly and worked for Tom Fretty. So the first year, we had the street organ running and playing pretty well. It was not the way we wanted it, but we had time to work on it later on. Allan continued to travel to Pella for many years to work on the street organ, until he was no longer able to travel. After that, Burt Linhart, who had worked with Allen in Manly, would come and work on it.

Let me explain a little bit about how street organ's operate. They are very unusual and extremely interesting, but very difficult to maintain. They operate somewhat like a player piano and work on paper rolls. However, the street organ works by reverse air, and each set of instruments has its own bellows. The bellows are leather and are in the bottom of the case of the instrument and they are synchronized so that they produce a constant stream of air. It has many manual controls to operate different notes, and there's a great deal of skill in arranging the music so that it will play the Dutch street organ music the way it should be played. It also has many consoles and ranks of notes, so that you have the violins and all the other instruments that furnish great combinations. It really is remarkable.

.....Continued on Page 8

## Pella's Dutch Street Organ - continued

When the street organ was at Tom Fretty's, he did send it to a firm in South Dakota, which dealt with pianos and they worked over many of the contacts so that it played fairly well except it just wasn't like it was in Holland.

Fretty had tried to revamp it so it played on an automatic sequence. In other words, using an endless paper music book, which would operate automatically if you fed it quarters. However, he was not successful in his efforts, and therefore an attendant had to be always be present to play it for visitors. This led to him being willing to sell it to us.

Our street organ was born a band organ, which meant that it was a stationary organ. It wasn't on wheels so it didn't play on the streets. Instead it was placed inside a dance hall and furnished the music for dancing. It was somewhat like the carousels we used to have in this country. I understand it was used this way in Holland for many years. However, the dance hall that used this organ for music had a fire, and this organ was practically consumed by the fire. All the fancy turnings and trim and a lot of the instruments were destroyed. So it was taken out and you might say put on a junk pile.

A gentleman from Texas who was procuring and selling street organs and band organs for people in this country, went to an auction where it was being sold for a very few dollars. He bought it and had it shipped to Texas. He worked the organ over, reproduced a lot of its parts, and used parts salvaged from junked street organs. Allen Sefton also made replacement parts out of selected woods after we acquired it. If you look at the street organ carefully you will not be able to tell the difference. Also, the paint had been redone after the fire, but a few people on our committee decided it would be nice if we repainted it. This was done by Sally DeReus and Tim Sadler. So when you look at the street organ at the historical village, you will see all the beautiful painting that they did to make this a very gorgeous instrument.

I attempted to further research the origin and any detail about this organ but to no avail, because the gentleman from Texas who purchased it for his collection died, and his whole collection was sold at auction. Fretty bought this organ at the auction. We are very grateful that we were able to acquire this street organ, and hopefully it will remain in fine working condition for many years. Very few of these are available anywhere in the country, and it is with a great deal of pleasure that I listen to it playing in the Historical Village every Tulip Time.





## Ten Hagen Cottage Named to the National Register

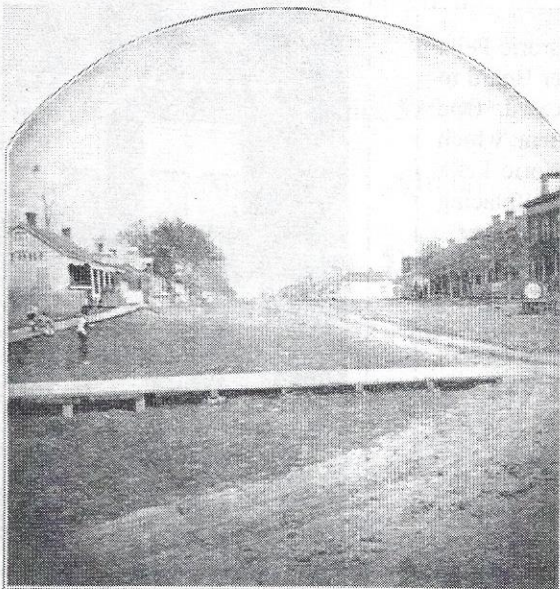
In February, 2009, the ten Hagen cottage at 1110 West Washington Street in Pella, was accepted for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Built in circa 1857, by A.J.C ten Hagen, the house was saved from demolition in 2006 by Historic Pella Trust, which acquired it.

According to the nomination documentation, the ten Hagen cottage illustrates how the Pella colonists employed native timber in erecting frame dwellings. With mortise and tenon joints, the heavy wood frame illustrates construction techniques brought by the dearly Dutch settlers to Iowa, from their homeland in the Netherlands. The wood siding on the south side is native walnut. Some of the flooring of the house is of 20" wide planks. Several of the windows are original and exhibit the influence and design of windows used in Holland in the 1800's.

In the early days, West Washington Street, was more of a commercial district than it is today. Indeed, in 1876 the ten Hagen cottage was acquired by G. F. Stegeman, who enlarged it and turned it into a store.

This is an important heirloom structure that has been preserved for future generations by the generous contributions of members of Historic Pella Trust.



West Washington Street looking east from the old store and cigar factory. This street was once the finest in Pella. It is a beautiful street today. Many of the old buildings may still be found on this thoroughfare.



The ten Hagen cottage, as it appears today. Accepted for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places in 2009.

This 1880 photo from the 1922 book *Souvenir History of Pella*, shows a view looking east on Washington Street from its intersection with West Fourth Street. On the left is the ten Hagen cottage, with 'STORE' painted on the side. On the right are what's known today as the Strawtown buildings (where at one time there was a cigar factory).

## Old Soul Sleeper Church National Register of Historic Places Placement of Award Plaque Ceremony

On May 19, 2008, the State Historical Museum in Des Moines presented Historic Pella Trust with a certificate that placed the First Christian Church, also known as the Old Soul Sleeper Church, on the National Register of Historic Places.

This building now houses a used Book Store as is located at 824 Franklin Street, Pella.

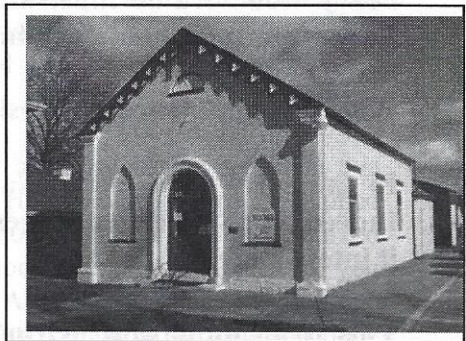
Will Page, noted historian prepared all documentation to enable this historic building being placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

On Monday, March 23 the official award plaque was placed on the outside of the building to the right of the front door.

**Ziel-Slapert Kerk**  
(Soul Sleepers Church) c. 1860  
Site of Maasdams' First Christian Church prior to 1860.  
In 1880s served as Pella's YMCA  
Only remaining church building in Pella constructed by early Dutch pioneers.  
Acquired by the Historic Pella Trust in 1995  
Placed on the National Register of Historic Places by the United States Department of the Interior in 2007

On March 16, 2009 this plaque, on the historic Soul Sleeper Church, at 824 Franklin Street was placed and dedicated by Historic Pella Trust. The church was acquired and preserved through the generous contribution from members of Historic Pella Trust.

This historic church currently houses a Used Book Store



## Conservation Easement Preserves Pella's Old City Hall

Pella's City Council took a big step for local preservation on December 2, 2008 when a conservation easement on Pella's former City Hall at 717 Main Street was approved.

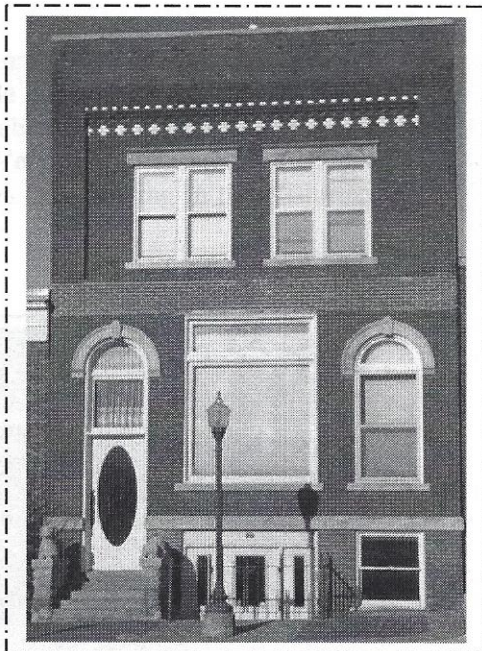
This easement was the result of efforts by city staff, council, and the Historic Pella Trust. The process began with City Council asking the Community Center Board to study what should be done with the old City Hall building the city had vacated. One of the recommendations was to sell the building with a conservation easement, which would preserve the historic exterior of the building. The non-profit Historic Pella Trust was chosen as the easement holder, as the Trust has undertaken placing easements on a number of local historic structures previously.

Historic Pella Trust decided to further aid in the preservation of the building by beginning the process of having the building nominated for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. This will allow for federal investment tax credits, eligibility for federal grants for rehabilitation, and possible state tax benefit and grant opportunities. The \$3,000 cost of this nomination was donated to the cause and was made possible by the generous contributions of the members of the Historic Pella Trust.

On Jan. 20, 2009 the conservation easement was signed and recorded with the Marion County Recorder's office. As the easement is perpetual, the historic exterior of the building will always be protected.

Following a request for bids, the successful bidders were Neil and Angela Wilson, who plan on converting the building into a ministry center. Although some city council members were concerned the conservation easement would deter potential bidders for the property, Neil Wilson stated that the easement on the property was never a concern to him, as he never considered changing the historic exterior of the building.

This important preservation effort was the result of a public/private collaboration on the part of Pella city government and HPT. The Historic Pella Trust is very appreciative of the proactive role played by members of Pella's city government which resulted in the perpetual preservation of this Pella landmark.



Pella's Old City Hall – Built 1905

# Why your membership is Important!

Please renew your membership today! We eagerly look forward to new members joining us in our quest. Your support is important. Without you we could not continue our vigilance to see that old historic homes do not get destroyed. Still, under our watchful eye old historic homes are torn down in Pella. Since January two homes have come under the wrecker's ball.

Your support helps us to keep the public aware of structures we have helped save. We also try to save what historic structures when we can. Our motto reminds us every day, that:

**"We must be ever vigilant to insure historically significant homes or buildings are not destroyed!"**

Clip this portion and send it along with your check to: Historic Pella Trust  
P. O. Box 1  
Pella, Iowa 50219

- (1) Membership monies are used to protect historic structures in Pella.
- (2) Receiving our newsletter.
- (3) Your Invitation to our annual meeting every April,
  - a) Where we invite speakers knowledgeable in the preservation of historic homes and buildings to share their expertise.
  - b) Awards are given to homeowners who have worked to preserve their homes in the era it was built.
  - c) Refreshments are served, and the whole evening is free!

Yearly General Membership: \$25.00

Family Membership: \$50.00

Senior Membership: \$10.00

Business Membership: \$75.00

Donation of your choosing: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: Optional \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail address: Optional \_\_\_\_\_