

Preservation Update

Historic Pella Trust, Inc.

Preserving Yesterday with a Vision for Tomorrow

A non-profit preservation group
founded in 1994

Historic Pella Trust is a group of responsible men and women who have dedicated their time and talents to the preservation of historic buildings in and around Pella. These visionaries know that once a structure is destroyed, it is gone forever.

The goal of Historic Pella Trust is to protect and preserve Pella's heritage by preserving historic building sites, so that future generations will continue to honor the time and talents of our forefathers.

2007 Board Members

Davis Folkerts, President
Wayne Stienstra, Vice-President
Dody Boat, Secretary
Bob Klein, Co-treasurer
Robert V. Klein, Co-treasurer
Ellie Gosselink – Newsletter Editor
Sally De Reus, Past President
Harold & Wilma Den Besten
Liz Epperly
Eunice Folkerts
Ralph Jaarsma
Duane Rempe
Ron Rietveld
Harold Schnedler
Jack Thomassen
George Wesselhoft
Lisa Zylstra

The Historic Pella Trust Office at 615 Main Street is open most Thursday evenings and Saturday mornings. Call first!

(641) 628-8003

Volume 5 - Spring, 2007

A Letter from your President

March, 2007

Dear Members,

Crocus, Daffodils, Forsythia, Magnolias, Pelicans on Lake Red Rock, and the rapidly greening grass could *almost* allow us to forget how recently we were battling the snow and ice! But spring has sprung, and with the returning warm days it is again time to think about our annual Preservation Day and the accompanying activities planned by your Historic Pella Trust board.

Preservation Day is Monday, April 16! Here's what is planned: Our Preservation Day Program (Historic Pella Trust's Annual Meeting) will take place at 7:00 p.m. at the Pella Opera House starting in the Theater (upper level). Some entertainment on the Barton organ and by the Central College Chamber Singers will kick off the evening. One featured speaker will be Jack Porter, a preservation consultant from the State Historical Society of Iowa. Mr. Porter has encouraging and inspiring thoughts on ways to fund preservation projects. There are grants and sources available you have probably never heard about! Then John Vroom will show and tell about some of his great collection of old photographs of Pella. This is always fascinating and delightful. Of course, there will be the annual presentation of awards. Liz Epperly will represent the committee that chose this year's buildings to be recognized as historic Pella landmarks. We recognize and honor the efforts of those who preserve and maintain them.

Following the program in the theater everyone is invited to the Great Hall to see displays on the art walls, and to visit more personally with Jack Porter, John Vroom, and members of Historic Pella Trust. The Den Bestens will again staff the membership table. And while you browse and visit, there will be refreshments to enjoy. Don't miss this exciting and valuable event!!

Sincerely,
Davis Folkerts, President, Historic Pella Trust

Recent Activities of Historic Pella Trust

1. As a co-sponsor of the Cultural and Entertainment Districts project HPT was proud and pleased to attend the recognition celebration of Pella's three Cultural and Heritage Districts. Pella is among is unique among the five cities awarded this designation in 2006 in having three such districts named. (See article)
2. Documentation for Fair Haven recognition at the state preservation level is complete.
3. We are soliciting members to have our office open on Thursday evenings and Saturday mornings beginning in May. (Sign up at the membership table at the Annual Meeting!)
4. Progress continues on the preparations for listing 1110 Washington Street on the National Register of Historic Places.
5. The HPT Board welcomed a new member, Ron Rietveld, who will be a valuable addition when he returns to live in Pella following his retirement from teaching in California this spring.

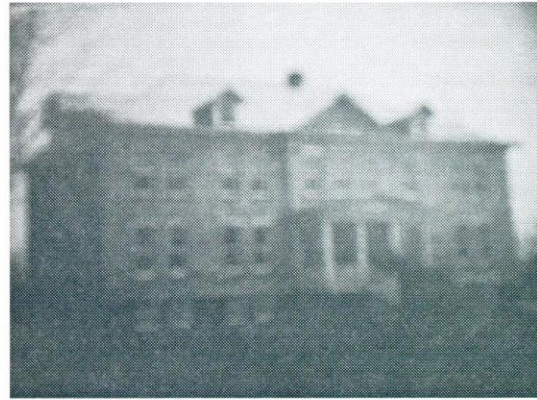
HISTORY OF FAIR HAVEN - HOME FOR THE AGED BUILT IN 1907

By Ellie Gosselink

During the early months of 1907 three leading citizens of Pella observed a community need for low cost housing for citizens in the sunset of their lives. John Dykstra, T.T. Bakker and P. G. Gaass created an organization known as the Christian Benevolent Association. They envisioned a gracious home where couples, widows, and widowers could live in comfort and dignity. A fund drive was started and \$20,000 was raised. Soon construction began on Pella's *Home for the Aged*, now known as Fair Haven West.

There was no difficulty in selecting a site, because four acres, known as East Market Square, had been bequeathed to the community for just such a project by Henry P. Scholte in his last will and testament. Construction was started on the sturdy brick building with its large windows and imposing four pillared front porch. Twenty-five spacious rooms were designed to provide comfortable, affordable living for the elderly in Pella.

On Thursday, December 19, 1907, the doors opened to a crowd of citizens gathered to honor this event. The home was open all day to visitors who were welcomed with heat, light, and refreshments, at a nominal fee to help swell the funds being raised for the benefit of those who were taking up residence. This money was used to supplement the \$1000 fee required to secure a room. Many of the new residents did not have the means to pay this fee, so money was donated to help defray this cost. The Board of Directors of the Old Peoples Home respectfully asked that all of Pella's stores and businesses close for the opening ceremony, that was held from one o'clock until three.



An old photograph of the original *Home for the Aged*

An additional gathering was held that evening at the First Reformed Church. It was noted by John Dykstra, President of the Board of Directors *"that they were there to celebrate the opening of the old people's home, an event which should be the turning point in the minds of all the people of Pella, that is, to never let their selfish moods control them, but always do good to others."*

Religious services were held each morning. A physician was also provided to administer health care to those who lived there. In 1922 Fair Haven was enlarged to sixty rooms and new features were added. In 2003 a grand scale renovation took place. The interior was gutted and 29 new apartments were built, in what is now known as Fair Haven West.

INTERVIEW WITH IVAN MULDER, MANAGER OF FAIR HAVEN WEST

By Ellie Gosselink

Walking down the hall towards Ivan Mulder's office, the strength and loveliness of the 100 year old Fair Haven West is apparent everywhere you look. Sunlight streaming through the tall windows added a welcoming warmth to the cold March day. When I mentioned this, Ivan smiled and said that it wasn't always this way. The lovely old structure had fallen

into a sad state of disrepair. These were dark days in the history of this stately old building. Thankfully it was found that the Christian Benevolent Association along with Pella Regional Health Center (PRHC) qualified as a sponsoring organization for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Section 202, Supportive Housing for the

Elderly Capital Advance Program. After two and a half years of pursuing all the necessary paper work, HUD approved two grants, one issued in 2003 and the second in 2004. These grants were needed to rehabilitate the building, preserving the historic landmark while resurrecting it as a senior living facility to provide housing to low income elderly. An additional grant was received from the Federal Home Loan Bank, with the assistance of Marion County State Bank of Pella. With these grants in place, Ivan was able to set to work rebuilding Fair Haven West.

The structure was sound and so the building was gutted and rebuilt into 29 spacious apartments that meet all of HUD's qualifications to help low income seniors have comfortable and beautiful independent living apartments. Other amenities for the residents include a beauty/barber shop (for a fee) and the availability of noon meals that can be ordered from Fair Haven East.

Ivan and his wife, Ruth, have lived in Pella for 35 years, having moved from northwest Iowa in 1972 when Ivan accepted an invitation to teach Biblical Studies at Pella Christian High School. Sixteen years after they had moved their young and active family to Pella, Ivan retired from the High School to accept a

position as Ministry Coordinator at First Christian Reformed Church. Then in 1995 he became the Manager of Fair Haven West.

Ivan looks back on all his efforts to restore and maintain Fair Haven West with pride. The new apartments provide comfortable housing to Pella's Senior citizens and, at the same time, the integrity of saving the outer shell of this historic 1907 building is an example of what is possible when concerted preservation efforts are put forth. An important icon of Pella's history will now endure. Ivan smiled as he leaned back in his chair and said he will always be grateful for the support and encouragement of Historic Pella Trust during the critical days of working to obtain the grants needed to save this 100 year old building.

There is no doubt that without Ivan's foresight and perseverance, Fair Haven West would not stand proudly restored as it is today.

There are a few vacancies at Fair Haven West and anyone interested in talking to Ivan to receive information can reach him at 641-620-9163. He welcomes all inquiries.

BLOMMER'S ROLLER MILLS

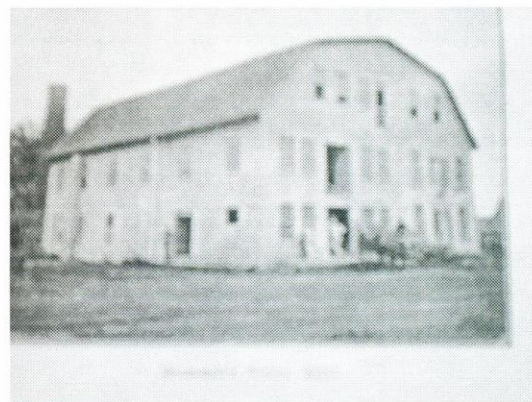
by Bob Klein

This building was located on West 1st Street (at the corner of West 1st and Columbus) on the west side of the street on land that was originally one-half block in size. It was built around 1865 by Mr. G. Thomassen, (great-grandfather of Jack Thomassen), as a woolen mill. After a few years he converted it to a grain mill and it was called Pella Roller Mills. It was the first mill built in Pella using steel rollers instead of the stones that were usually used for grinding. Steel rollers were invented by an Oskaloosa man and ground finer flour.

A few years later the mill was run by John Blommer and his brother Ben using steam power until the 1920's. It was a large building and a very busy place as area farmers hauled their grain by horse and wagon to the mill to have it custom ground. Blommer's also sold their own Wizard pancake flour for many years which was a very popular brand.

In my early school days I liked to stop at Dokkie Sent's store (at the corner of West 2nd and Columbus)

and then stop at the mill to watch the great 15-horse power steam engine puffing away, as it ran the mill. The mill had its own pond which allowed it to have its own water supply. The pond was located west of



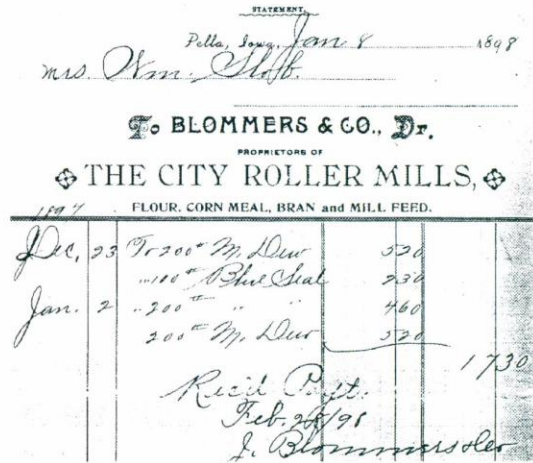
the mill in an area now built with houses. It was truly a great landmark for me and it was an unhappy time when it was demolished. Today, this site is occupied by an apartment house and homes.

The statement shown at the right is an 1898 bill and shows the price of the grain in those days and the name of the mill. For clarification, the following is what is written on the invoice:

Statement

Pella Iowa, Jan 8, 1898

Mrs. Wm. Slob		
Dec. 23	For 200# M.Dew	\$5.20
	100# Blue Seal	\$2.30
Jan 2	22# Blue Seal	\$4.60
	200# M.Dew	\$5.20
	Rec'd Payt.	\$17.30
	Feb 28/98	
	J. Blommers	



PELLA'S CULTURAL AND ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICTS

By Davis Folkerts

It all began with an inspiration that came to Tilly Woodward through her contacts with Iowa's Department of Cultural Affairs in 2005 when she attended Cultural Advocacy Days in February of that year. Recognizing many values, including community building, partnership in creating events and activities, and even tax incentives, she embarked on a quest, a labor of love, which would consume more days and hours than can be counted. She established a steering committee of nine members, who together, thrashed out the details required to achieve unique recognition in Iowa.

The criteria for establishing and managing Cultural and Entertainment Districts are (quoted from the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs):

- Each cultural district is unique and should reflect the specific cultural, social, and economic needs of its area.
- Planning for a cultural district should be part of wider cultural planning for the community at large.
- Activities in cultural districts should be comfortably accessible to all people.
- Cultural district management requires careful coordination among diverse groups.
- Cultural districts must be part of a package of many strategies to revitalize a community.
- Cultural districts must be welcoming to all people.

- Cultural districts must have appropriate signage and marketing.
- Cultural districts must have dedicated management resources (staff, board and budget).

Historic Pella Trust's involvement included providing a financial umbrella for the CED Steering Committee. At no cost to HPT this provided a channel through which funds could be collected and dispersed. Wayne Stienstra represented HPT on the CED Steering Committee. Other members of the committee were Bill White (Pella Opera House), Pat Moriarity (Union Street Players), Annie Wilkinson (Pella Shakespeare Festival), Susan Canfield (Central College), Bonnie VerBerg (Pella Historical Society) and Jill VandeVoort and Kat Witzenberg (Pella Chamber of Commerce).

Iowa is a leader in the establishment of Cultural and Entertainment Districts as the second state to implement this program. This is the third year the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs is recognizing communities in this way. Other communities recognized this year are Cedar Rapids (Czech Village/New Bohemia Cultural District), Elkader Cultural District, Perry Cultural District and West Des Moines (Historic Valley Junction Cultural District). There is a copy of the map of Pella's three Cultural and Entertainment Districts on display in the Great Hall of the Pella Opera House at our Annual Meeting. Congratulations to Tilly and her committee on this valuable accomplishment for our community.