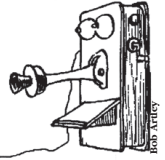


Peoria Partyline



connecting the extended Peoria community

Volume 5. No. 4

December 2009

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The Peoria Inventor

A few clippings and stories from bygone eras refer to a washing machine factory once located in Peoria. Is this true, or just one of those tales from the past? While the exact details will probably never be known, historical documents indicate that Peoria did play host to a small role in the development of the washing machine.

Pioneer women had long been accustomed to the drudgery of doing laundry by hand, which was accomplished by boiling water in large kettles and using a wash-board. In the mid-1800's the first wooden washing machine was introduced. It imitated the motion of the human hand on the washboard by using a lever to scrub clothes between two curved, ribbed surfaces. Soon thereafter came a flurry of patents for improvements on this much-desired invention. By the year 1900, over 2000 patents for washing machines had been recorded.

Around 1860, James and Sarah Dunwoody moved from Ohio to settle near Peoria. Twelve years later their son Grant married Mary Spain, the daughter of Peoria's founder, Theodrick Spain.

Grant and Mary started out married life in the village of Granville, north of Peoria, where Grant worked as a carpenter. While later census records show that he also farmed, his interest in building things must have prompted him to begin tinkering with improvements to a washing machine. This led him to file for a patent in 1883—with approval coming in 1885. One of the unique aspects of Grant's machine was a mat with rubber fingers on the bottom of the tub—known as the suds box. Similar fingers were on a mobile part that moved when a crank was turned. As the laundry was rubbed and massaged with the fingers, the clothing came clean. Grant also attached a soap box near the top of the suds box so it could capture any drippings that might slosh out while the crank was turned. The drippings were then returned to the suds box.

At the time Grant's patent was approved, the Dunwoodys were living just east of Peoria, likely on a rented farm. They also owned 4 lots in Peoria—where the feed mill is now located. Could the production of washing machines have taken place in that area? If it did, it was short-lived, because a year later the property was sold for \$100. Then records indicate the Dunwoodys moved to Nebraska.

Over the years the Dunwoodys returned to Iowa and lived in a variety of places—Poweshiek County, New Sharon, Marshal County, and finally the town of Zearing. Their hearts must have always remained in Peoria though because they were both laid to rest in the Peoria Cemetery.

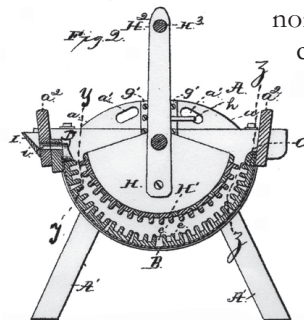
What an interesting story, but the question still remains: What would have happened to Peoria had Grant Dunwoody's washing machine been successful? One only needs to look at what Frederick Maytag's invention did for our neighbor to the north, for a possible answer!

-Calvin Bandstra

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

GRANT DUNWOODY, OF PEORIA, IOWA.

WASHING-MACHINE.

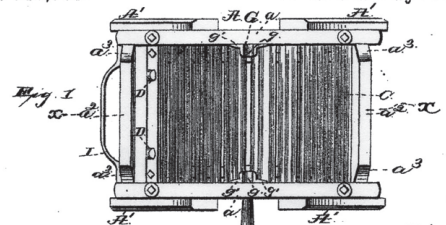


(Model.)

G. DUNWOODY.
WASHING MACHINE.

No. 318,709.

Patented May 26, 1885.



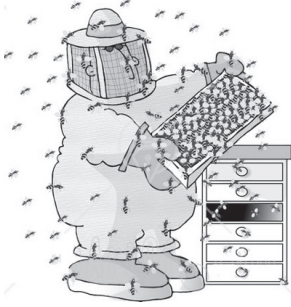
The Beekeeper and His Wife (Part 2)

Continuing the story . . . John enjoyed his new Van Tine home until hard economic times forced him to relinquish it. Undeterred, he expanded his bee shop to include a 3 in 1 room cabin. It had a bedroom, living room, and kitchen all in a space of approximately 12x18 feet.

During this time Ruth entered the picture. Her home was in Keokuk and one day, while John was visiting there to make some connections for selling his honey, he chanced to meet her while riding in a streetcar. A courtship developed and Ruth consented to become the beekeeper's wife.

Beekeeping was a tough job requiring a good deal of knowledge and expertise. Wearing a beekeeper's garb—which included a hat with a veil and heavy clothing to protect against stings—must have been suffocating on hot, sultry, summer days. Although bee stings were no more than an annoyance to John—supposedly he had become immune to the stings over the years—more often than not his bees became “ornery” and formed a swarm on the hottest of days. That meant a careful, precarious climb up a ladder to retrieve the bees so he could move them and start a new colony.

John not only knew and understood honeybees; he was also a lover and observer of nature. He knew the songs of birds and was knowledgeable about plants and animals of the area. According to him the wrens arrived on his April



birthday each year. Although he enjoyed their songs, he fretted when he thought their singing and scoldings were excessive. Neighborhood children were sometimes invited to take a walk, sit on a log near the river, and listen to the frogs sing. John always had a nature topic in mind, and they were enriched by his lessons.

John was also impetuous, eccentric, and maybe even “odd,” but we didn't notice. He had a good stash of home remedies, and one of his cure-all's was kerosene. He shampooed his hair with it (good for the scalp), would rub it on his arthritic knees, and some mixed with honey would take care of a cough. When an idea hit him he didn't spend much time pondering but went into action. He once decided that his “42” Plymouth maroon coupe needed a bit of a make-over. With paint and a paint brush he gave his car a coat of paint. He followed with a coat a varnish to give it a shine. Probably not his best idea!

John was also ingenious and resourceful. Since they did not have a telephone they used ours when needed, but John wanted a connection with our family. Somewhere he found and purchased small, green, square telephones and ran a line between our home and their cabin. With a push of a small black button we were connected...some of the time. If the phones malfunctioned he could not rest until the problem had been resolved. “By Jinks, (a favorite expression) I think I've figured it out,” he would say, and he always did . . . sooner or later.

There's a lot more colorful details to this story, so check in for Part 3 in the next issue!

-Wilma Blom



Peoria's New Business

It all began as a discussion around the family dinner table over the course of several years. Ron “Nuper” Nunnikhoven and his three sons, Isaac, Levi and Lance had logged almost 30 years of post-frame building construction experience between them and they were considering starting their own business—pursuing a common passion that would allow them to work together and provide for their families. The discussion became a reality in the fall of 2008 as the Nunnikhoven family took a “leap of faith” and established the NuMark Building Corporation.

Ron is the president and sole salesperson. As a “roll up your sleeves and help out” kind of man, he has a strong passion for sales and passionately believes in taking care of his customers. Isaac works as jobs estimator and order processor for inventory. He has a key role in satisfying customers and getting the proper materials ordered/delivered on time.

Levi, Lance and Ray Welch serve as crew leaders. They strive for start-to-finish professional work and total satisfaction—resulting in raving fans all around the state!

NuMark Building Corp has sixteen employees—divided between three crews—and specializes in serving Iowa with customized agricultural, equine, suburban, residential and commercial buildings. Recently NuMark purchased Peoria Truck and Farm Repair which is now a location for receiving materials, cutting and preparing building packages, and serving as a meeting point for crews each morning. The company office is located in Pella.

Interested in building? Call or visit the web at www.NuMarkBuildings.com



Clean Up—for What?

Have you noticed that someone is working at sorting/cleaning up the Gerrit Slykhuis property in Peoria? Are there changes/plans for this spot? The Peoria Partyline is on the story. Watch for details in the next issue!



New Babies in the Area



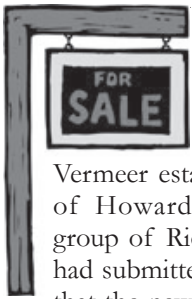
Rick and Karin Harrill adopted a baby boy last month. (This was a planned adoption.) They were able to be present during the birth and were able to take him home a week later. His name is Karson Andrew Harrill. He was born on August 1 in Sioux Falls, SD, and weighed 7 lbs. 3 oz.



Jeremy and Glenda Van Wyk had a little girl—Gillian Kathryn—on October 3. She weighed 9 pounds 12 ounces and was 20 1/2" long.



Dennis and Susan Veenstra are new parents to Trevor Wesley who was born on October 28. Big sister Jocelyn welcomed her brother home.



Land Sells

220 acres near the Skunk River Bridge—from the Anthony Vermeer estate—recently sold to two of Howard Westerkamp's sons. A group of Richland Township farmers had submitted a bid, but lost. Word is that the new owners are looking for a renter for next year.

Trail Ride

Occasionally travelers heading north out of Peoria will come upon a large group of people riding horses. Whether they are unloading trailers and saddling up on Donnie Vander Hart's farm, riding across open fields, or slowing down traffic, it's always a head-turning event.

The group—the Monroe County Saddle Club—has been doing a Richland Township trail ride for the past ten years, thanks to Don and his wife Debbie who are members of the club. "We host the event in April and November," says Donnie, "because that offers us the most open land to ride on—and hopefully good weather."

"For the Peoria ride, usually 15 to 20 riders show up," adds Debbie, "but we've had as many as 40. It will start in the field behind our house, circle to the west, and then work its way north and east. We wind through fields and on and off the road." After 3 to 3 1/2 hours the group circles back to the Vander Hart farm, takes care of their mounts, and then eats supper together. Each family brings a covered dish and the Club furnishes something to drink.



This active club has a ride scheduled every Sunday from the last of March until the snow flies—or the ground freezes solid. When the horses can no longer get solid footing then the season is over. "I try to make most of the rides," says Donnie. "That means loading my horse and gear and parking them

in the parking lot while I attend church in Oskaloosa. After church I go directly to the ride. People joke that my horse has been to church more than any other horse!"

"Our trail rides are a safe and fun activity that the whole family can take part in," continues Donnie. "The biggest problem is usually trying to get a new horse to cross a stream and sometimes a horse might throw off its rider if startled by a

-continued on page 4

A Stockyards Story (Part I)

Just below the now vacant Peoria Feed and Grain complex stands another building with a story to tell. Although dark and abandoned, at one time it bustled with business. It all began in 1946 when two men—Casey Boerfyn and Jake Vander Molen—got tired of what they were doing and decided to make a switch. Casey went into farming but Jake bought a new truck in Pella and launched a trucking business.



Mel Deur and Jake Vander Molen—the two who started it all.

it often does. Jake, along with his friend Melvin Deur, took advantage of the flooding to go out and try to catch fish with their hands. This practice was known as "hogging" and

It was a successful venture and soon another truck was added as well as a hired hand—Jake's brother Bill. Over time Bill moved up to become a partner and the name was changed to Vander Molen Brothers.

With the arrival of spring, the Skunk River went out of its banks as

it seems rather fitting that these two men would—that day—decide to form a partnership known as Vander Molen and Deur. Their vision would develop, over time, into a business that would buy and haul many of the hogs raised in the area—up to 180,000 per year.

In the beginning the hogs purchased were weighed in Sully, but later ground was purchased in Peoria and a building with a scale was erected. Besides buying hogs, the business also sold Rath feeds and bulk molasses. Otto Vos, who would later start Peoria Feed and Grain, did most of the on-farm milling. The firm also did on-farm corn shelling. When their first sheller burned, another one was purchased.

In December 1952 the business changed its name to Peoria Stockyards, bought its first tractor-trailer for \$12,500, and began to haul cattle (both feeders and fats) in addition to an ever growing number of hogs. A few years later Mel's brother Junior ("Jup") became a partner, and the group invested in their first of several "possum belly" trailers—now commonly called "pots."



One of the early "possum belly" stock trucks.

-continued on page 4



... heard about it on the partyline ...

■ Business Services



Van Dyke Repair Inc., General repair on tractors and combines. Wayne Van Dyke, 641-625-4146.

Skunk River Restoration Repaint all makes of tractors. Jim De Bruin 641-780-6114.

Peoria Trailer Sales, Dennis Rozenboom is now selling H & H and Calico Stock Trailers, 641-780-1886.

■ For Sale

For Sale: Hay, grass/alfalfa mix. Large rounds and small square bales. 625-4122.

Upcoming Events



Youth Candlelight Service - Peoria Church, December 20 - 6:00 p.m.



Christmas Day worship Service - Peoria Church, December 25 - 9:30 a.m.



End of the Year worship service - Peoria Church, December 27 - 6:00 p.m.



New Year's Day worship service - Peoria Church, January 1 - 9:30 a.m.

- Stockyards continued

Many young men in the area worked for the Peoria Stockyards, and in those days there was plenty to haul since most farmers raised hogs and a few cattle. All in all the business had a good reputation and it was a busy place. Farmers knew you could always count on a fair deal from the three owners.

The Stockyards also sponsored a local fast-pitch softball team, and many long time residents of the area can probably find utensils in their kitchen drawers with the inscription: "Peoria Stockyards - Jake, Mel, Jup."

At the height of its success Peoria Stockyards experienced some changes. Watch for Part 2 in the next issue.

-Warren Van Wyngarden



- Trail Ride continued

flying bird or an unusual noise." The worst incident the club has seen was when a rider was thrown off and knocked unconscious. She was flown by Life Flight to Des Moines where she was treated and released.

One of the most unusual rides for the club was when they joined a search team in the Sigourney area. They spread out across the fields in an attempt to find a missing person.

"One of our youngest riders has been a four year old," says Don, "and the oldest is 77. She is a regular rider as is her 75-year-old sister."

Donald really enjoys riding horses and the interaction he has with club members. He would encourage any one that likes to ride to join their club. Dues are only \$10 a year.

-Terry Bandstra



**Neighbors are much more than just names!
Grab a cup of coffee and let's meet the Pleimas!**

Let me introduce the Pleimas to you. Dustin and Cheryl live at 1458 Bayard Avenue, a mile north of the G5T highway. Approaching their place you'll be impressed with the scenic rolling hills all around, sloping down to heavily wooded creeks. Ringing the doorbell produces a canine duet. Katie, a Jack Russel terrier, sings a high pitch staccato, with an occasional growl. Copper, a red tick hound, sings the mournful baritone of a hound.

In May 2008 Dustin and Cheryl moved from south of Pella—where they had rented his grandparents' house—to a new one in Richland Township. They built their home—which is much more fuel efficient—to use geothermal heating and cooling. "We are still finishing the basement and look forward to planting a salsa garden," says Cheryl. "That's a garden where you grow the ingredients for salsa: tomatoes, peppers, onions, etc. Then you use them to make homemade salsa. It's something we really enjoy."

This move was a homecoming for Cheryl, as they bought an acreage from her parents, Ed and Wilma Van't Sant. Their property is part of the family homestead where Cheryl's grand-

mother grew up. When she was a child, Cheryl went to the Lower Grove church and attended Calvinettes (now GEMS) at the Peoria church. She attended school in New Sharon. Cheryl likes living where neighbors know each other.

Dustin grew up in Pella and went to school there. He enjoys trapping with his buddy, mainly for raccoons. He met Cheryl a number of years ago when boating on Lake Red Rock. She needed help starting her jet ski, and he was only too happy to help! They both work at Pella Corp. Dustin is a production manager and Cheryl works in the customer contact center.

Dustin and Cheryl spend a lot of their time at home taking care of their son Landon, who turned one year old in August. He enjoys riding the lawn tractor. The family also has season tickets to the Iowa Speedway. And yes, I think they have time to relax and sleep too.

It's great to have you as neighbors. We hope that you will have many happy and healthy years here. -John Gorter

