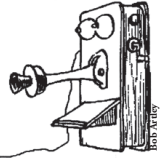


Peoria Partyline



connecting the extended Peoria community

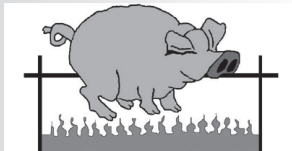
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December 2010

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An Old Barn's Story

Think back, if you will, to a Monday in July. Do you recall a lengthy groan, moan, or loud "OUCH" echoing through Richland Township and wondering, "What was that?" On that day the old red barn on the Jon and Doris Nibbelink farm was once again made straight with the world. The plumb line proved it—a move to the east of approximately nine inches.

Unfortunately barns don't speak English or for that matter, Dutch, but they do have stories to tell. So it is up to us to discover and share what they have to say.

Tax records show the Nibbelink barn to be 150 years old. (The farm became a century farm in 2008.) Doing the math and realizing it was built around 1860 seems to capture its real age. Abraham Lincoln was elected that year. Slavery had not yet been abolished and Iowa was a young state—only 13 years old.

A tour of the barn speaks to a time when things were built to last. It was constructed using wooden pegs instead of nails. Sturdy beams were hewn from cottonwood trees, and the brace poles were made from oak. It is interesting to note that Dominie Scholte (founder of Pella) used the same construction techniques in 1847 when he built the mansion he had promised his wife.



Sturdy beams and wooden pegs give strength and stability.

Limestone, 20 inches thick was used for the foundation. Although some softer soapstone—now crumbling—was incorporated in the walls, the foundation has stood the test of time.



The foundation is still doing its job after 150 years.

The Nibbelink barn can be referred to as a "basement" barn, because the basement is an exposed story. This is the area in which animals were housed over the years. Jon remembers cows and stanchions on the east side, with horses and their gear to the west. The original pegs that once held the horses' collars can still be seen.

A cement floor was added in 1948 by Jon's father, and Jon himself stored soy beans on this level at one time.

The second level is of interest because of a dirt approach on the north side. It allowed horses to walk right in the barn with a load of hay, where it could be unloaded *inside* using a rope and fork. Unique and different from what many of us remember about hay coming in through a huge 2nd story hay mow door.

Climb the ladder to the third story and there you find hay—old clover hay probably 50 to 60 years old. "I admit to having fed some to my cattle a few years back," says Jon, "and it still has quality, but the smell of sun-dried hay is a distant dream." Looking around he also points out twelve ventilators which allow air to enter. "They were instrumental in curing the fresh hay," he shares. Spaced logs—that make up the floor of the mow—also encouraged air to circulate through the area.



Spaced logs allowed for hay mow air circulation.

The old barn was not leaning because of neglect—its age attests to that. In fact it has been painted numerous times over the years—a feat in itself because of the towering south side. "In 1968 I began to notice that the barn was leaning more and more," said Jon, "so I anchored three heavy pipe braces in cement on the west side." This undoubtedly slowed the effects of gravity's pull.

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The Holy War in Granville

In the 1800's, information and communication were quite limited in rural Iowa—there was no Twitter, email, Internet, or satellite/TV news. Education was, for the most part, limited to country schools, and newspapers and magazines were not all that available to the common resident. As a result, one of the primary means of gaining information was lectures and debates held in town halls, school buildings, and churches. And what were the issues often being discussed? The age-old topics of politics and religion!

Granville—a now-defunct town that was in the northeastern corner of Richland Township—was just a stone's throw from Prairie Township. Platted in 1851 by Peoria's founder, Theodrick Spain, it was a town even older than Peoria. He had purchased the 80-acre tract of land for a total price of \$100 from his brother-in-law, Sanford Haines.

In the early 1880's, Granville was a thriving community, in some respects even outpacing Peoria—its neighbor to the southwest. Because of that, Seventh Day Adventists set their sights on Granville as their next mission field.

The Seventh Day Adventists (SDA) group was a small denomination in Iowa, being dwarfed by mainline denominations such as the Methodists and the Presbyterians. But what they lacked in size, they made up for in enthusiasm as they eagerly sought converts in areas where there was no SDA presence. As the name implies, Seventh Day Adventism promoted Saturday, the 7th day of the week, as the day designated for the Sabbath. Knoxville had a long established SDA church, and there was a group located in Washington County. Henry Nicola—a member of this latter group—was determined to spread the

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**Neighbors are much more than just names!
Grab a cup of coffee and let's meet Travis Blom.**

Driving through the river bottom—along the south Skunk River on 155th—one soon comes to the Buckley Creek bridge. Just after the bridge there is a newly built house on the right. Travis Blom invited me in to visit. Inside it looks more like a cabin. Through the glass door I can see the river flowing lazily by. Just a few steps out the door and Travis can enjoy his favorite pastime: fishing. He even spends his vacation that way. Once a year he goes to Canada with his dad and friends, just to fish.

The spot where Travis' house stands is where Calvin Schmidt used to live in a trailer. After Calvin moved into the house of his grandfather—the late Earl Boyd—Travis started building this place last fall. Heath Van Gorp helped him a lot, and even though some finishing touches are still needed, he moved in this past spring.

Travis grew up in Pella in a house near where the present Catholic church is. He attended the Christian schools in Pella, and during junior high moved with his parents, Terry and Cindy Blom, to Cordova Ave. Travis was familiar with this place along the river because of several camping trips when he was younger.

-Barn Story continued

As you well know, one doesn't just wake up one morning and decide that this is the day to straighten the barn. It's not like painting a fence. Straightening a barn is a process. It takes a good deal of thought—dreaming, imagining, studying, predicting, and some engineering know-how. And don't forget the magic word, "work." It gives new meaning to the old saying, "Where there's a will, there's a way."

Over decades both the east and west walls began to lean to the west. "To correct this problem," Jon said, "my idea was to roll the west wall back in place by using eight push boards that would press against the upper part of the stone foundation and against the barn's 10x10 plate. I also had to remove both dirt and concrete from inside the barn to allow the base of the west wall to pivot back into position." Eight hydraulic jacks were used to slowly and steadily orchestrate the straightening plan. Interestingly, the east side of the barn was 10 inches beyond the leaning east foundation. Railroad ties and boards now support this area awaiting another chapter—rebuilding the east foundation. "There is still a good deal of work to do," says Jon, "but 'straightening day' was a success beyond our most hopeful expectations."

Although it is great to travel and see the "wonders" in our country or those in far away lands, the old Nibbelink barn is a treasure right here in Richland Township. Don't be afraid to stop and take a look or even ask for a tour. Once again, if barns could talk, I'm sure you might hear, "From the bottom of my basement to the rafters in my loft, thanks a bunch."

-Wilma Blom



After graduating from high school, Travis started working at Precision Pulley; and he has stayed there for the last 14 years.

Besides working and fishing, what does Travis like to do? He enjoys trapshooting and target shooting, plus coyote hunting with his friends in the winter.

During the floods this past summer, Travis could not get to his house. For the first time in living memory, flood waters went over the Buckley Bridge. Even the insurance company did not think this would happen. The floods reached the foundation of Travis' house, but no higher. During this time Travis stayed at his parent's place.



A gun on display in Travis' home.

It's great to have you in the neighborhood, Travis! We hope you enjoy your new home.

-John Gorter

Loving Life in Lunt School

Our rural school series continues with some wonderful memories from Marilyn Vander Linden.

I attended a one-room country school from kindergarten through 6th grade. It was located down the hill from where Mark and Julie Roose now live, and since the farmland surrounding the school belonged to the Lunt family, it made sense to call it the Lunt School.

I recall five teachers. When I was in kindergarten, Elizabeth Goulog taught us. She was a compassionate lady who took me on her lap once when I was crying. She also allowed her boyfriend to visit occasionally during noon hour which inspired the older boys to hoist each other up on their shoulders to look in the window. I never did hear a report on what they observed!

My second teacher was Lowell Robinson. He was young and quite strict, but a memory that really stuck with me was that he and his wife lost their first child. The pain and sorrow of that loss really affected me as a young child.

Esther Olson stayed at Lunt for three years and most days walked from her parents' home—located north of where Dennis Blanke lives today—to teach. That was a long walk! In the winter, her first task was to get the stove going. She was a tough little lady and a fine teacher.

Next came Kathryn Fleming. As a fifth grader, I thought she was quite glamorous. She wore her hair in a page boy style and had stylish clothes—I thought so anyway!



My last teacher in Lunt school was Janet Hol. Since her family lived on the Lunt farm at that time, all she had to do was walk down the hill.

I was quite intrigued by the fact that her boyfriend worked for her father and also stayed with their family. I wondered, would they go out on dates since they saw each other every day anyway?

We had four girls in my class, which was unusual as most classes were made up of just one or two students—three at the most. My older sister Jan went all the way through elementary school as the only one in her class.

One room schools had only one teacher. Since he/she taught all the grades, the students were pretty much on their own except when it was their turn to go to the front of the room for their various classes. That suited me just fine as my goal was to get all my work done before the first recess and read library books the rest of the day! We had a good selection in our library.

Each day began with "Opening Exercises" which consisted of prayer by our teacher, and then group singing from a red song book, which I believe was standard in country schools. We sang songs like *Stars of the Summer Night*, *Flow Gently, Sweet Afton*, *O the Merry Bobolink*, *Where Have You Been Billy Boy?*, and my brother Dale's favorite, *I'll be a gay postilion with boots and spurs I'll go, I'll drive four dashing ponies, a golden horn I'll blow, Trala, Trala, Trala.*

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December Doings



- December 19 Youth Candlelight Service
Peoria Church - 6:00 p.m.
- December 25 Christmas Day Worship Service
Peoria Church - 9:30 a.m.
- December 26 Year-in-Review Worship Service
Peoria Church - 6:00 p.m.



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Early on the river bottom road went under. Day by day the water inched higher and higher until one Sunday it began lapping onto the pavement. Cordova Ave., north towards Van Ees, totally disappeared for a time.

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Memorial Day

On May 31, over 130 people gathered at the Peoria cemetery to commemorate

Memorial Day. After a short program—that included singing, special music, and a speaker who was soon to retire from the ational Guard—everyone visited over caramel or cinnamon rolls while the children tried to earn a treat if they could find a gravestone of someone who fought in the Civil War.

-John Gorter



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

-Lunt School continued

Dale's dream of "four dashing ponies" never materialized, although we did have one pony who occasionally "dashed" when she raced a vehicle passing her on the road!

The Bokhovens sometimes rode to school in a cart pulled by their pony. My Dad thought that might be a good idea for our family, so he got a cart and harness for our pony, Betty. We set out in our new conveyance, but Betty did not think much of the idea and arrived back home with the cart mangled and children left scattered along the roadside. No one was injured, but that was the end of that idea. Dale and Jan continued to ride Betty to school, but I preferred to walk with our neighbor girl, Elaine Vander Wilt. She was younger than me and—I assumed—needed someone like me to be her guardian.

Perhaps contributing to the decision to walk rather than ride was what I like to call my "handkerchief episode." Tune in to the next issue to find out the rest of that story!

-Marilyn Vander Linden/Doris Nibbelink

-Holy War continued

SDA message to the vast open territory between these two groups, which included Mahaska County.

Henry Nicola moved from West Virginia to Iowa in 1854. Initially he belonged to a German Baptist group known as the Dunkards, but at the age of twenty-four he converted to the SDA faith. He made it his life-long mission to spread the tenets of that religion, even though farming was his main occupation. His son LeRoy Nicola also took up the cause, and together they engaged in the ministry. It appears that one often stayed home to tend the farm while the other "hit the road."

Early summer of 1881, Henry Nicola headed west to begin a series of evangelistic tent-meeting-stops. His initial stop was



Montezuma, a small town just east of Richland Township. Then he moved his meeting tent to New Sharon and stayed for two months. While his stay there was not without controversy, he did have some success.

Following the holiday season, son LeRoy Nicola decided to tackle the village of Granville. While tent meetings worked well in the summer, they weren't very effective in the midst of an Iowa winter. It seems LeRoy thought of that too when he wrote, "We have secured a church building in Granville—a small town eight miles from New Sharon—and expect to begin a course of lectures this week. The place is noted as one where no minister can get an audience; we hope, however, to rouse them in the name of the Lord."

Did LeRoy get people to listen? If so, what did Granville's neighbor, Peoria, think about it? Watch for Part 2 in our next issue to find out.

-Calvin Bandstra

■ 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.

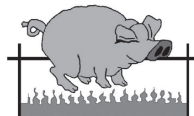
■ For Sale

For Sale: First crop grass and alfalfa round bales. 625-4122.

VBS Report

At VBS this year, 65 children—ages 4 through those completing 6th grade—enjoyed a fun-filled adventure at "SonCreek Junction."

During the week they enjoyed singing, crafts, games, Bible stories, and delicious snacks. Thanks to the children who attended and the many volunteers who made it all possible. -MDB



Hog Roast Report

No one left hungry on July 16. At the conclusion of the Vacation Bible School week, we enjoyed a hog roast on the parking lot of the Peoria Church. Julie Roose had prepared a scrumptious and satisfying meal: pulled pork BBQ, baked beans, potato salad, fruit salad, finger jello and ice cream. Over 270 people feasted and had delightful conversations with neighbors and friends. Thank you to the Peoria Church for being a good neighbor and hosting this meal.

-John Gorter

In Memory Of

Rosemary Dahm was born and raised in the New Sharon area, but attended Christian schools in Peoria and Pella before going on to Dorst College where she graduated with a degree in elementary education. Throughout her career she taught school—in Iowa, Arkansas, and Minnesota—worked at the Hilltop Manor in Pella, and later cared for many elderly patients in their homes.



Rosemary was involved in the Central Iowa Bible League, attended the Peoria Christian Reformed Church whenever her health permitted, and led a women's Bible study there for many years. She will be remembered as a true prayer warrior, an avid reader, and very knowledgeable about family history.

-MVW