

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instruction in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Passenger Depot--Pella  
other names/site number Pella Depot; Rolscreen Museum

## 2. Location

street & number Main & Oskaloosa Streets  not for publication  
city, town Pella  vicinity  
state Iowa code IA county Marion code 125 zip code 50219

## 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: Advent and Development of Railroads in Iowa: 1855-1940 Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

## 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheets.

[Signature] June 3, 1991  
Signature of certifying official Date  
State Historical Society of Iowa  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

## 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:  
 entered in the National Register. Entered in the National Register  
 See continuation sheet. 7/22/91  
 determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.  
 Removed from National Register.  
 Other, (explain:)  
[Signature] Signature of the Keeper  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
TRANSPORTATION/Rail-related

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
RECREATION AND CULTURE/Museum

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)  
No Style

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

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walls Brick

---

roof Asphaltic shingles

---

other Wood brackets & trim

---

Stone lintels

---

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See Continuation Sheet--Attached

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally       statewide       locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

1906-1941

Significant Dates

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See Continuation Sheet--Attached

See continuation sheet

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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See Continuation Sheet--Attached

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

<input type="checkbox"/> preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested	Primary location of additional data:
<input type="checkbox"/> previously listed in the National Register	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State historic preservation office
<input type="checkbox"/> previously determined eligible by the National Register	<input type="checkbox"/> Other State agency
<input type="checkbox"/> designated a National Historic Landmark	<input type="checkbox"/> Federal agency
<input type="checkbox"/> recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Local government
<input type="checkbox"/> recorded by Historic American Engineering Report # _____	<input type="checkbox"/> University
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Specify repository:
	<u>Chicago Pacific Corporation, Chicago, IL 60604</u>

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**10. Geographical Data**

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Acreage of property Less than one acre

**UTM References**

A	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>1</u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>5</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>5</u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>0</u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>7</u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>1</u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>0</u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>0</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>4</u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>5</u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>8</u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>2</u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>7</u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>6</u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>0</u>	B	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u>	D	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>  </u>

See continuation sheet

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

All of Lots 4, 5, and 6 north of the railroad tracks in South Pella Addition, Pella, Iowa.

See continuation sheet

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**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries include all of the land historically associated with the resource except the land south of the railroad tracks which presently is occupied by a modern factory building.

See continuation sheet

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title <u>W. C. Page, Public Historian</u>	date <u>September 1990</u>
organization _____	telephone <u>515/243-5740</u>
street & number <u>520 E. Sheridan Avenue</u>	state <u>IA</u> zip code <u>50313</u>
city or town <u>Des Moines</u>	

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The Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific Passenger Depot in Pella, rehabilitated in 1985 to serve as a museum, appears to have been built from a standard Rock Island design. Constructed in 1905-1906 at a cost of \$4,596, costs included mechanical systems for the building as well as a dug well, brick platform and cinder platform, and a non-extant coal and oil house. The depot is highly visible to the automobile traveler because it abuts Oskaloosa Street (Highway 163) at a major intersection in Pella. Located in an industrial area of the South Addition of Pella, the surrounding buildings include the Rolscreen Company's corporate headquarters and factory and the Pella Municipal Electric Company.

The depot is rectangular with a bay window on the facade. The facade faces southwest to the railroad tracks which run northwest to southeast. The depot measures approximately 76'x20' and contains 1,224 square feet. The building has a concrete foundation, solid brick walls, and a hipped roof which flares at the eaves. The roof is covered with asbestos shingles. There are two brick chimneys, one near the northwest hip and one near the southeast hip of the depot's roof. Wide over-hanging eaves are supported by large angle braces which have stone bases. The building has a bay window on the facade which pierces the main roof and is covered with a hip roof conforming to the bay's footprint. Between the main roof and the bay roof, there are three inset panels fashioned in brick which echo the window cavities below them. All windows have stone sills. The masonry walls are laid in running bond.

The building has one freight door located on the facade at the southeast. This wooden door is original to the building. The depot has two passenger doors which flank the bay window on the facade. The facade has two additional windows which flank the passenger doors. The rear of the building (which faces the highway) has three paired windows. Each end of the building has one set of paired windows. All windows in the building have double hung sash, 1/1, except the window to the baggage room on southeast end which is fixed. Windows are replacements custom manufactured for the depot by the Rolscreen Company. Fabricated with metal cladding over wood, they are designed to conform to the original windows of the building. The passenger doors are replacements, constructed of oak and appropriate to the building's design. The baggage room double door is, as mentioned, original.

A brick platform stands in front of the depot's facade. This platform, a reconstruction dating from 1985, replicates a brick platform which stood originally next to the depot.

The interior contains six rooms. Before the adaptive reuse of the building, these rooms served as depot office, waiting rooms, rest room, and baggage room. They are all now used for museum exhibits except the rest room which acts as a slide projection area and the baggage room used for storage. The baggage room has a small storage room in the northeast corner. A present-day floor plan of the interior is attached.

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### REHABILITATION

The depot was retired from railroad service in 1973. The Rolscreen Company of Pella purchased the depot and proceeded to rehabilitate it after the resource was faced with demolition by the Rock Island railroad. Today Rolscreen maintains a museum of the firm's history in the depot. Exhibits document the growth of the company's window products and business from its founding in 1925 to its present position as a leader in its industry. The museum also presents memorabilia of railroad service to Pella including historic photographs and railroad equipment. The museum is open to the public regularly Monday through Saturday.

The rehabilitation respected the exterior fabric of the building. The roof was resingled. Metal clad windows with wood core replicated the original, deteriorated windows. Although several of these windows feature stained glass in the upper sash (a feature not present in the original depot), the sash themselves conform to the originals. Although many changes were made in the interior, the original floor plan of the depot was retained. Softwood flooring was installed and covered with carpet. Walls were drywalled and oak wainscoting installed. Oak woodwork is new. A forced hot air furnace heats the building and air conditioning cools it.

Although the interior changes were extensive, the Pella Depot remains sited on its original location in spite the fact that the area is heavily industrial and property value high. The building benefits from integrity of location, setting, and association. Changes to depots' interiors are not unusual and the alterations at Pella do not outweigh the building's integrity.

### RELATED NON-EXTANT RESOURCES

When the depot was constructed in 1905-1906 (replacing an older, frame depot), a combination coal and oil house was also built. Measuring 10'x22', this structure stood until 1961 when it was retired and dismantled. This resource was located about 60' south of the southeast corner of the depot and on the other side of the railroad tracks from it.

A water tower stood about 60' west and a little south of the depot. This resource is documented in historic photographs, Sanborn maps, and railroad inventory files. It is not known when this resource was removed.

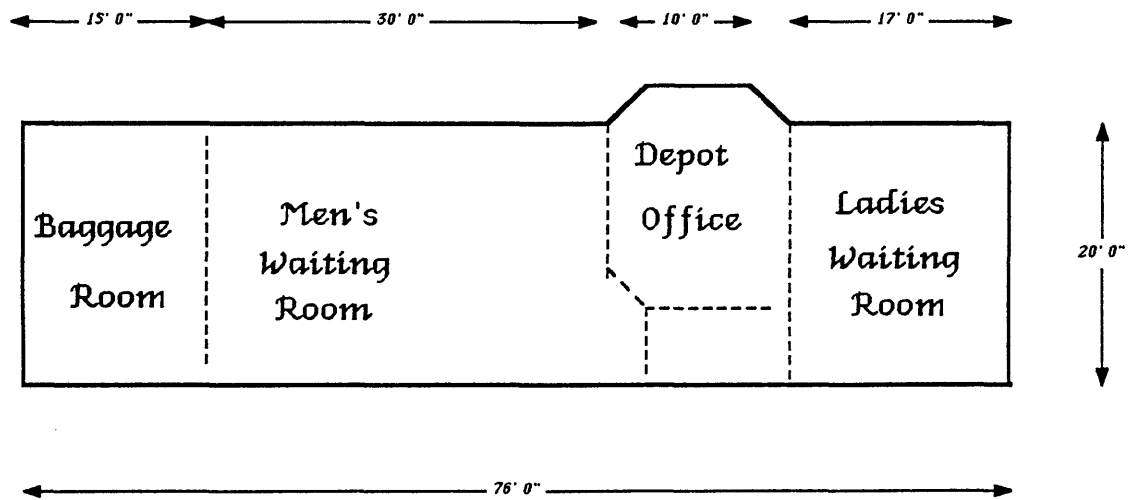
Documented on a Sanborn 1911 map, a freight house stood adjacent the tracks east of East 1st Street. All other structures related to Rock Island operations like the stock yards are also non-extant. The Passenger Depot is the only remaining Rock Island resource.

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## DEPOT FLOOR PLAN

CAPTIONS REFLECT HISTORIC ROOM USE

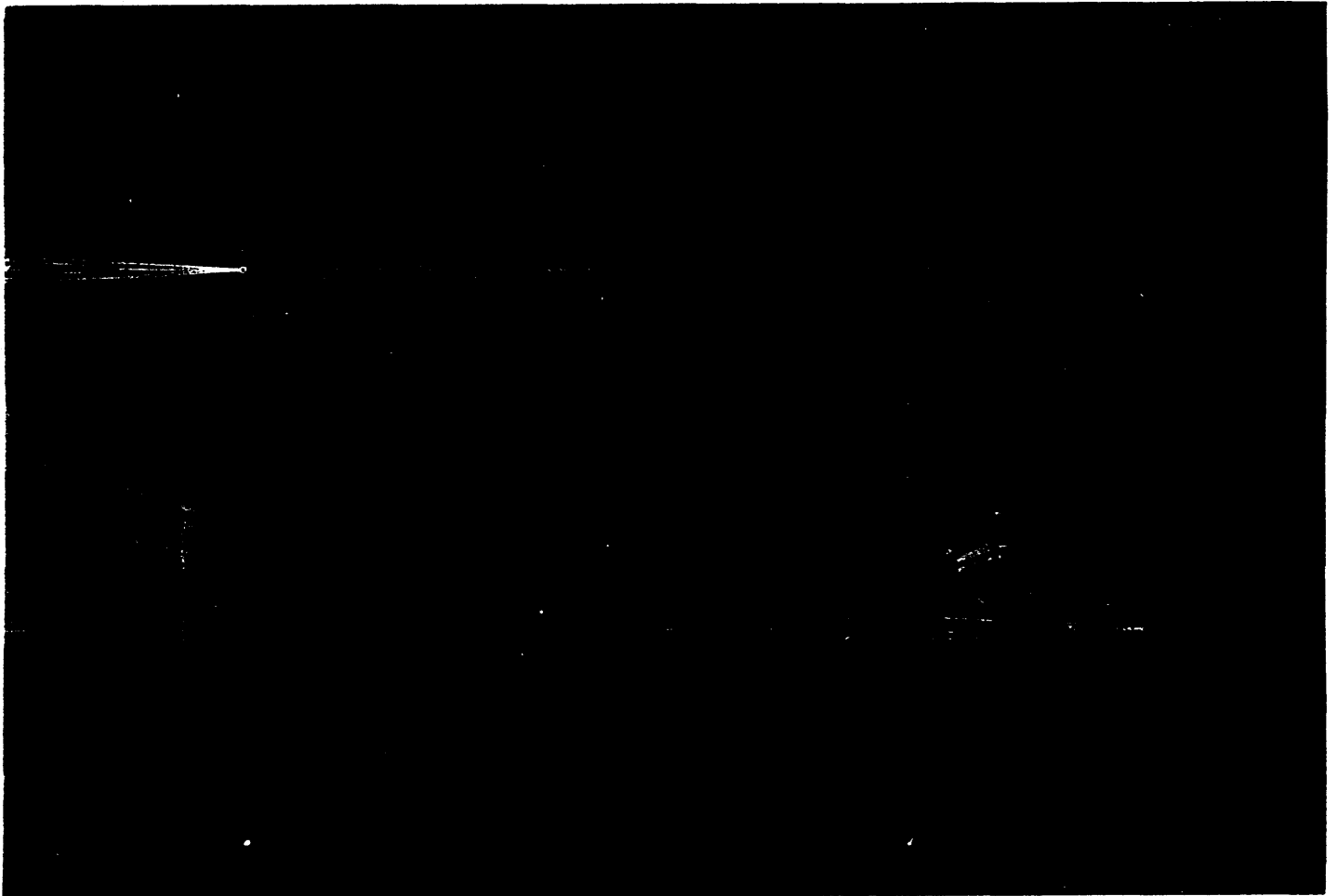
Baggage Room Currently Used for Storage  
Uncaptioned Hall used for Video Projection Room  
Other Rooms Used for Exhibits

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**PELLA DEPOT CIRCA 1910 LOOKING NORTHEAST.**



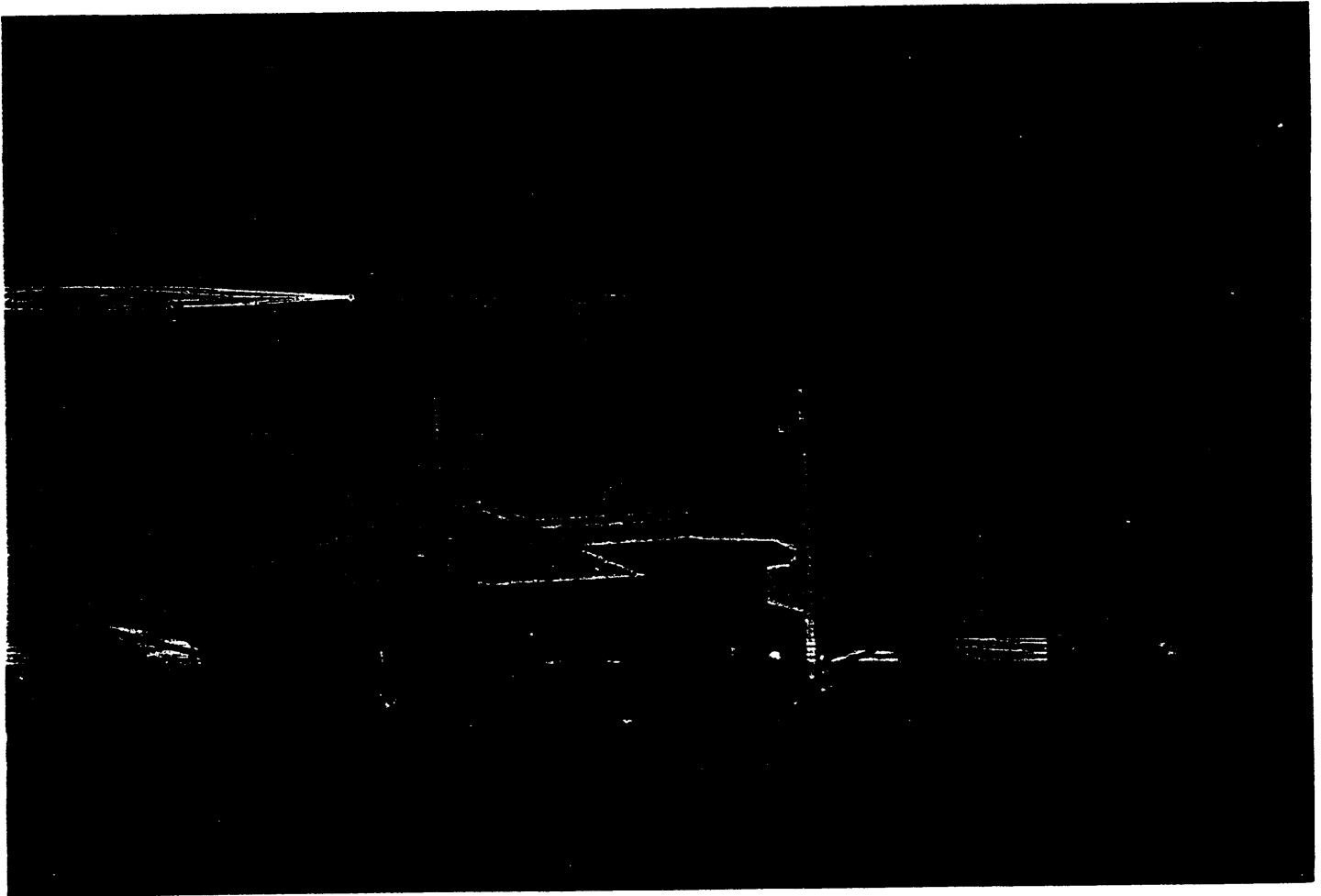
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**PELLA DEPOT CIRCA 1916 LOOKING NORTHEAST.**

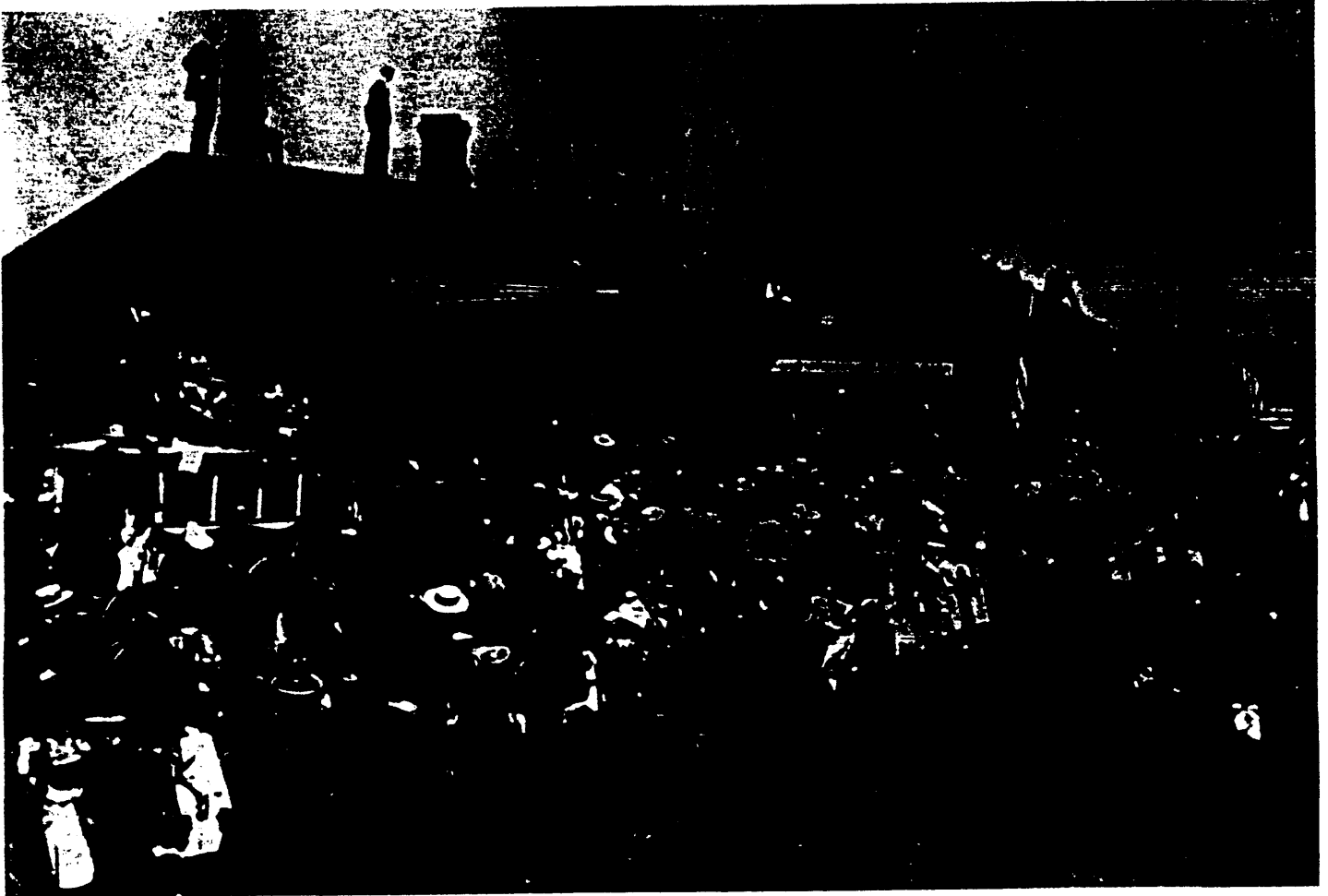
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OLD PELLA DEPOT LOOKING NORTHEAST.

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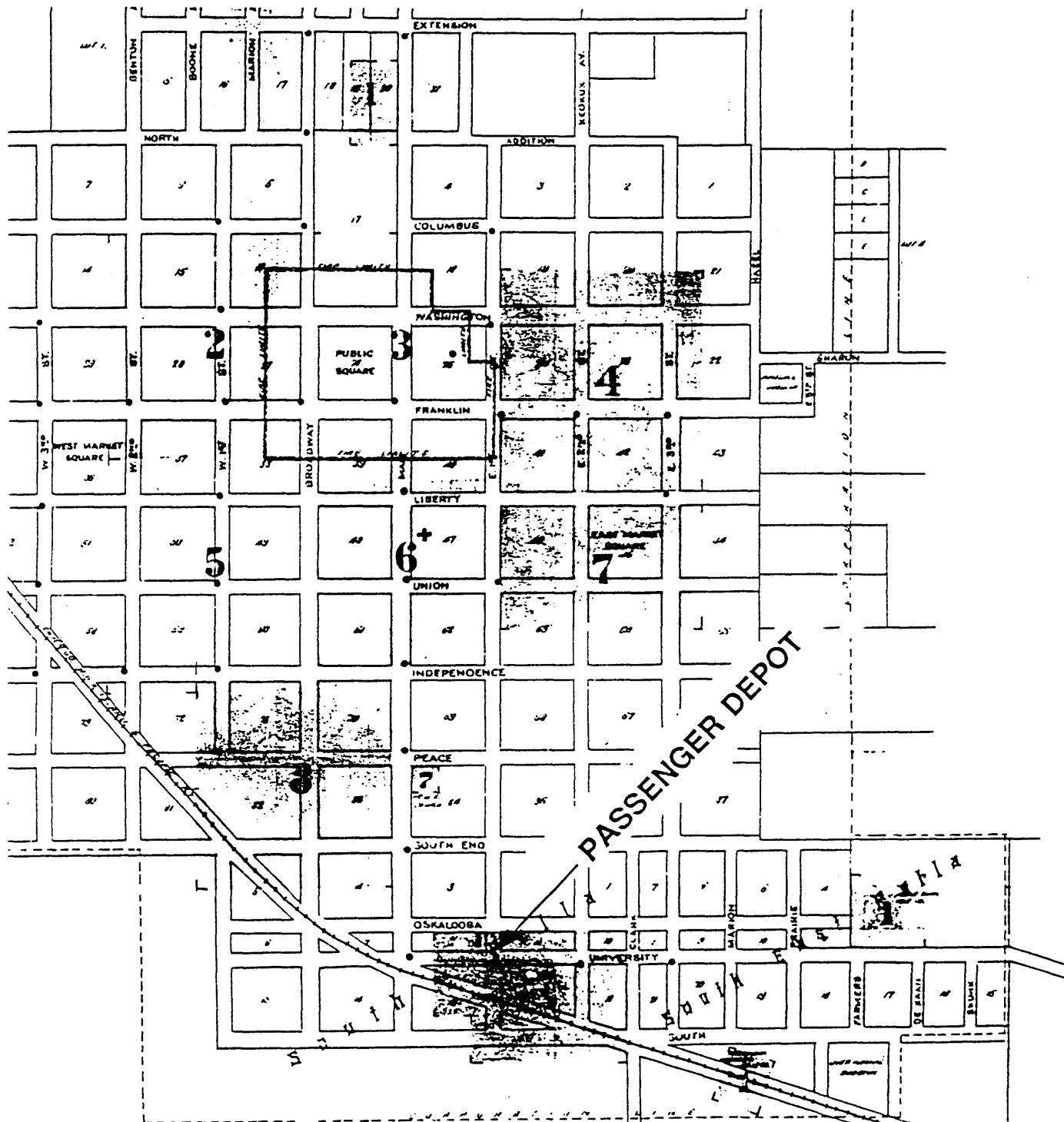
An Old Residenter. One of the First Trains on the K. D., Also the  
Old Depot

Source: Souvenir History of Pella, Iowa, p. 229.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

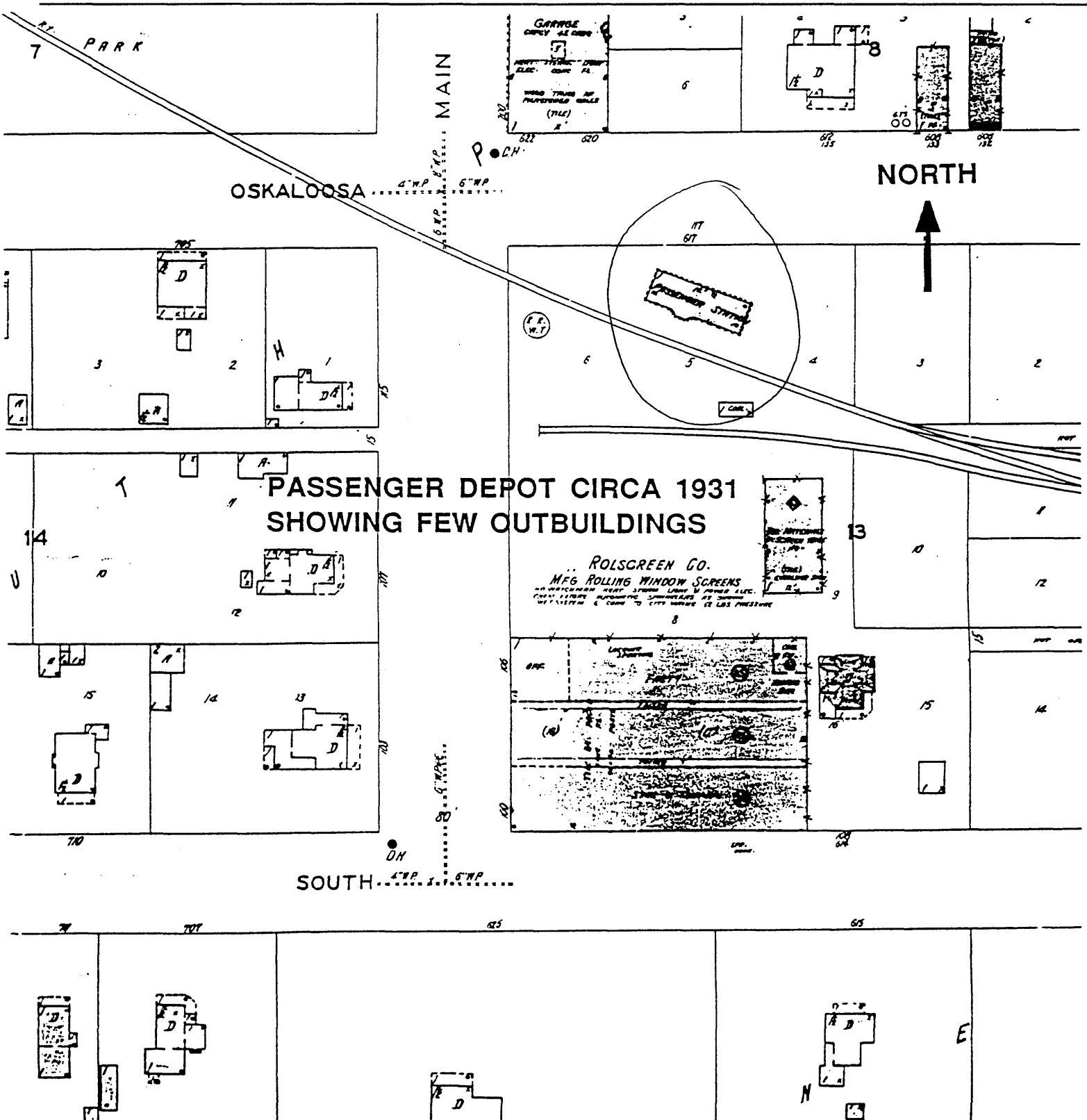
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The Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific Passenger Depot at Pella, eligible under Criterion A, calls attention to the importance of railroad transportation for the community, particularly as it encouraged the growth of local manufacturing. Built in 1906, the passenger depot at Pella is the last surviving example of a railroad building or structure extant in the community today. While other structures, like the freight house, would call more direct attention to the importance of the railroad for industry, the depot is the only extant historic rail resource in the city. The period of significance for the building is 1906-1941. Although the railroad's importance for the economic well-being of the community continues up to the present time, the period of significance for the depot ends in 1941, the 50-year cutoff date for the National Register.

#### HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Pella Depot calls attention to the importance of the railroad for Pella. Although the Rock Island line provided export possibilities for the community agricultural products, the railroad also enable local industries to grow and prosper. Availability of rail transportation has played a key role in the development of Pella's strong local economy. Since railroads first arrived in Pella in 1865, they have provided unbroken service to the community's industrial base. These manufacturing concerns included grain mills and elevators, the Garden City Feeder Company, and, most importantly, the companies which continue to provided keystones to the Pella economy today--the multi-national Rolscreen Company (with its corporate headquarters and workforce at Pella of 2,000+) and the Vermeer Manufacturing Company.

Pella was founded in 1847 by a group of colonists from the Netherlands who had emigrated to America seeking religious freedom. The Dutch, always oriented toward commercial enterprise, showed early understanding of the need for transportation. Domine Henry Scholte, founder of the Pella colony and Abraham Everadus Dudok Bousquet, the community's early economic developer, attempted, without success, to establish a port on the Des Moines River. Bousquet also promoted a plank road project which likewise failed.

The first railroad to Marion County, the Des Moines Valley Railroad (Keokuk and Des Moines Railway Company after 1874) reached the Pella in 1865. The line reached Des Moines in 1866. This was a big boost to the local economy as Pella enjoyed a position as the only railroad stop in Marion County for ten years. The city became the shipping center for Marion County and also for parts of Mahaska and Jasper Counties. The 643 carloads of livestock shipped from Pella in 1873 gives some idea of quantities involved. In 1875, however, a competing railroad, the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy, reached Knoxville, county seat of Marion County and diverted a large part of this trade from Pella. In 1878 the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad Company leased the Keokuk and Des Moines Railway Company lines laid through Pella. The "Rock" provided service to Pella until 1980.

The Rolscreen Company provides a graphic example of the railroad's contribution to the industrial development of Pella. The company began in Des Moines, Iowa in 1925 but quickly

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changed ownership and was relocated to Pella in 1926. Already in 1931 (if not before), a railroad spur had been constructed to serve the Rolscreen Company. This spur joined the main track about 200' east of the depot and thence ran westerly about 325'. Rolscreen expanded their line of products in 1934 with the Pella Venetian Blind, a window treatment which featured a concealed operating mechanism. In 1937 the firm entered the wooden window casement market. Rolscreen continued to enlarge and improve its plant in Pella. During World War II, the company manufactured many thousands of wood windows for various war plants and defense installations, including all of those used in the huge and secret atomic energy complex at Oak Ridge, Tennessee. During all this time, the Rock Island line was integral to Rolscreen's success. The railroad supplied raw materials to the factory and provided delivery service for product distribution. The Rolscreen plant in Pella today covers more than 1,300,000 square feet. The company also maintains plants in Carroll, Iowa, and Panningen, Province of Limburg, the Netherlands.

#### CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

That a railroad continues today to serve Pella is a story of modern business planning which can legitimately be compared, favorably, with the early settlers' plans for transportation. Prior to the internal combustion engine, the railroad provided the community with its most important link to the outside world. Even today, in this "Age of the Semi-Truck" and with America's railroads in decay, the railroad continues to provide Pella's manufacturers a vital link to markets.

In the 1970s, Pella manufacturers were faced with decaying rail lines and service. The Rock Island railroad had operated and improved the line in Pella, Iowa and the Midwest throughout the Nineteenth and first half of the Twentieth Centuries. Post World War II America turned its back on the railroads and after many years of operating losses, the Rock Island line filed for bankruptcy protection in 1975. Liquidation of its remaining assets began in 1980.

To solve this transportation problem, the Pella business community allied themselves with other manufacturing interests on the railroad line between Pella and Altoona. In cooperation with the Iowa Department of Transportation and the Rock Island Railroad, the Altoona-Pella Shippers Association financed improvements on these tracks. Governor Robert D. Ray dedicated the opening of the new tracks in Pella on August 7, 1979. Arrival of the first locomotive was a highlight of the ceremonies. The name of that engine, "The P. H. Kuyper," provided tangible evidence of the close relationship between railroad and industry in Pella and the importance of the Rolscreen Company's Chairman Emeritus and the company itself in the community.

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The Rock Island continued to provide freight service on these tracks. After liquidation of the "Rock" began in 1980, the Chicago and North Western Railroad took over shipping operations. These operations were later provided by the Iowa Interstate Railroad.

The Passenger Depot was faced with demolition in the late 1970s and early 1980s after the Rock Island sought protection under bankruptcy laws and the fate of its property was uncertain. The Rolscreen Company, whose headquarters are directly adjacent to the depot, obtained title to it and undertook a rehabilitation project to preserve the depot and adaptively use it as a museum for local Rock Island history and to showcase the Rolscreen Company's history.

The Iowa Interstate Railroad uses, today, the railroad tracks directly south of the depot for freight trains. This fact adds considerable interest to the depot as the site is visually connected with a working railroad.

#### **RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY DOCUMENTATION FORM**

A Multiple Property Documentation Form addresses Iowa railroads and related resources. This document provides historic context for railroad organization and development in Iowa and places the depot at Pella into a statewide perspective.

According to this document, the Pella Passenger Depot can, as a property type, be classified as a *Depot/Passenger Depot (Local)*. In point of fact, the MPDF cites specifically the Pella depot as an example of this type (p. F-8).

Registration requirements for areas of significance under Criterion A of this MPDF are: "Depots associated with a railroad that had a major influence in the growth and development of the community; depots associated with railroad division points or other key locales historically important in the operation of a railroad line" (p. F-11). As indicated in the opening paragraph of this Statement of Significance, the railroad's historic and on-going importance for Pella's industrial base is difficult to overstate. The Pella experience corroborates the MPDF's conclusion that "almost every extant depot [in Iowa] is significant at the local level" (p. F-10).

Concerning integrity, the Pella Passenger Depot remains on its original site. Its adjacent railroad tracks remain in place and serve a working railroad. The area surrounding the depot is mostly industrial. The building was rehabilitated in 1985 and now operates as a museum for the Rolscreen Company and for local railroad and community memorabilia. These conditions conform to the MPDF's registration integrity standards.



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### REPRESENTATION IN PREVIOUS CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEYS

In 1974 Stephen J. Stimmel conducted a windshield survey of Pella. He included the Passenger Depot in this survey. The building was photographed, located on a city map, given an inventory number, and an Iowa Site Inventory form was completed for it. The surveyor noted that the building was "being restored by Pella Rolscreen Company."

In 1978 the Central Iowa Regional Association of Local Governments (CIRALG) conducted a reconnaissance survey of Marion County, Iowa, including the City of Pella. This survey classified the Passenger Depot at Pella as one of 19 resources in the survey's Category 1. Category 1 indicated strong eligibility for nomination to the National Register.

In 1989 W. C. Page, Public Historian, of the Dunbar/Jones Partnership, conducted a reconnaissance and intensive survey of Pella's central business district (CBD) for the Community Development Committee of the City of Pella. This report concentrated on the CBD and created historic contexts to address commercial activity as a whole in the community. The primary historic context, "Development of Independent Nodes of Commercial Activity, 1847-1940 and Beyond," identified *Transportation vis-a-vis Commerce* as a major subcontext. Although the Pella Depot was not specifically mentioned, the railroad's historic importance emerged within this subcontext as vital to Pella's economic development.

### POTENTIAL FOR HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

The site is yet unevaluated for archaeological research. A number of other buildings and structures stood in the area. Some of these are described in Section 7 of this report and there may have been others as well.

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"New Depot Occupied;" *The Pella Chronicle*; 19 April 1906; p. 1 c. 3. "There is a strong probability of the Rock Island company making Pella a central station for power from which to operate an electric car line on their present road bed..."

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"The New Depot Tangle;" *The Pella Chronicle*; 18 May 1905; p. 1 c. 1.

"The New Depot;" *The Pella Chronicle*; 22 December 1904; p. 1 c. 5.

"The State Railway Commission Here;" *The Pella Chronicle*; 6 July 1905; p. 1 c. 3. Commission in Pella "for the purpose of investigating the matter in regard to the site for the proposed new passenger depot." Railroad officials had asked for condemnation proceedings to obtain appropriate site and price.

"Work on New Depot Started;" *The Pella Chronicle*; 19 October 1905; p. 1 c. 1.

"Work to Begin at once on New Depot;" *The Pella Chronicle*; 21 Sept. 1905; p. 1 c. 1.

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Letter of Correspondence; R. D. Igou, Property Records, Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad Co., Debtor, to Fred Meyer, Personnel Office, Rolscreen Company; 26 September 1983. "Passenger Depot, one story brick, ground area 1,200 sq. ft., cinder platform, 3951 sq. ft." "R[ock] I[sland] conveyed depot to Rolscreen Co. in 1973 so they might preserve this building as a historic landmark."

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Page, W. C.; "The Upbuilding of Pella's Town Center as a Commercial Node 1847-1941, (Reconnaissance/Intensive Architectural Surveys in the City of Pella, Iowa)." Photocopied report prepared for Community Development Committee of Pella City Council; October 1989; 276 pages. This Iowa Site Inventory Form repeats verbatim much of the text in the "Transportation vis-a-vis Commerce" historic context developed for this report.

"Pete Kuyper and His Company--A Hometown Success Story;" 4 pp, Wordprocessed Ms; January 1985; Advertising Department; Rolscreen Company.

Telephone Interview; Rebecca Conard w/W. C. Page; October 1989. Conard, a researcher with PHR Associates, Santa Barbara, California (805/965-2357) is preparing a context report for the State Historical Society of Iowa, Bureau of Historic Preservation, concerning the Illinois Central Railroad and concerning the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad in Iowa. She outlined four important conclusions from her research in the telephone interview: 1) It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the railroads in Iowa history, 2) Much of Iowa's railroad resources

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have already been lost, 3) Relocated buildings and structures are frequently encountered in Iowa and are a big problem for NRHP registration, and 4) Local conditions make many of the few extant, on-site buildings infeasible to preserve.

"The Pella Depot;" 2 pp., typewritten Ms; Undated, circa 1985; prepared by Rolscreen Company. Provides some specific information about railroad memorabilia in the depot and the dedication of the Rock Island's upgraded tracks between Altoona and Pella, Iowa.

"Welcome to the Rolscreen Museum, Pella, Iowa;" Rolscreen Company brochure; 1985. Visitor complimentary brochure.

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## PHOTO LIST

Chicago, Rick Island & Pacific Passenger Depot - Pella  
Main and Oskaloosa Streets

Pella, Marion County, Iowa

Date: November, 1990

Photographer: Will Page, Consultant

Negatives: 110 SW 5th Street, Des Moines, Iowa, 50309

View:

1. Looking NE
2. Looking SW
3. Looking SE
4. Looking NW