

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" on the appropriate line or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name EAST AMSTERDAM SCHOOL

other names/site number Amsterdam School

2. Location

street & number 1010 198th Place N/A not for publication

city or town Pella vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Marion code 125 zip code 50219

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant (nationally statewide locally). See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Patricia C. [Signature] 05/17/00 10-27-00
Signature of certifying official/Title 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 for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is :

- entered in the National Register.
 - See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 - See continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register.
- Other, (Explain)

Edson H. Beall 12/1/00
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

East Amsterdam School
Name of Property

Marion County, Iowa
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many lines as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one line)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION & CULTURE/museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone
walls Wood
roof Asphalt
other Glass
Brick

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

East Amsterdam School
Name of Property

Marion County, Iowa
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" on one or more lines for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" on all the lines that apply)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION

Period of Significance

1882-1950

Significant Dates

1882

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Bootsma, Teunis & Co.

Narrative Statement of Significance - (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

9. Major Bibliography References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- previous determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Record
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historical Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository

East Amsterdam School
Name of Property

Marion County, Iowa
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 1.6 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 | 15 | 503530 | 4581300 |

Zone Easting Northing

2 | --- | ----- | ----- |

Zone Easting Northing

3 | --- | ----- | ----- |

Zone Easting Northing

4 | --- | ----- | ----- |

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title William C. Page, Public Historian; Joanne R. Page, Project Associate

organization Pella Historical Society date February 1, 2000

street & number 520 East Sheridan Avenue (Page) telephone 515-243-5740; FAX 515-243-7285

city or town Des Moines state Iowa zip code 50313-5017

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs - Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items - (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Pella Historical Society

street & number 507 Franklin telephone 515-628-2409

city or town Pella state Iowa zip code 50219

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018). Washington, DC 20503.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1

CFN-259-1116

East Amsterdam School, Marion County, Iowa

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

This is a 1-story, rural schoolhouse of wood frame construction clad with narrow clapboard siding. Completed and first occupied in 1882, it features a stone foundation, facade gable roof, and architectural detailing influenced by Late Victorian styling. The integrity of this building is very good. It is sited on a rolling tract of land between the floodplain of the Des Moines River and prairie uplands.

SCHOOLHOUSE

Roughly speaking, the footprint of this school consists of a rectangle, which measures 26' x 18'. The building faces northwest. A partially enclosed porch is situated on the facade of the building, and a small wing is situated at the rear. The porch measures about 17' x 8' and the rear wing about 8' x 10'.

Exterior

The schoolhouse rests on a limestone foundation laid in irregular courses of rubble. Because the topography of the site slopes to the southeast, a portion of the foundation at the rear of the building is exposed. The foundation near the front of the building is barely visible. A small portion of one rear corner of the foundation has been braced with a poured concrete buttress.

Corner posts are situated at each corner of the building. Each of the building's long sides possesses three windows. The window surrounds feature arched lintels.

The facade gable roof is steeply pitched and covered with asphalt shingles. A brick chimney is situated along the ridge of the roof about 8' from the facade line. The building possesses one entrance, located on its northwest.

The front porch rests on a poured concrete slab. It is enclosed on all but the southwest side and is covered with a shed roof, clad with asphalt shingles.

The lean-to wing at the rear of the building is an addition. It is of wood frame construction, clad with vertical wood boards, and covered with a shed roof with asphalt shingles. The lean-to is accessed by a solid wooden door on its southwest elevation. It currently houses ground maintenance equipment. Its original purpose was probably multiple, including storage for coal during the winter. The lean-to was constructed in 1942 or thereafter. A snapshot, dated 1942, does not picture it. (See Continuation Sheet 7-12.)

There is no running water in the building. The building was originally without electricity, but electrical service is now present.

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East Amsterdam School, Marion County, Iowa

Interior

The East Amsterdam School features a single room on the interior. Its walls are finished with tongue-in-groove boards painted white, and its ceiling is also finished in wood. The floor is of soft wood in a natural finish.

There are two flues. One is situated near the entrance to the building and features a full floor-to-ceiling chimney. A cast iron stove is situated next to this chimney, and a metal pipe ties into the flue near the ceiling. A second flue is situated at the front of the room. This flue is canted outward about midway up the wall. This flue is now nonworking, its exterior chimney having been removed at some time in the past.

The school also possesses some historic furnishings associated with the building. They include a stove, about 30 school desks, and blackboards, which are fixed across the front of the room. The school also features other interior furnishings appropriate for a late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century rural schoolhouse, such as books, penmanship samples, a globe, kerosene lamps, an upright piano, a clock, a coal stove and fire tools, and portraits of United States presidents.

One former pupil described her recollections of East Amsterdam School as it appeared in the late 1930s:

You asked me if I remembered the color of the [interior] walls. I think they were painted a light green at one time. I recall there were some years when our family was hired to give the schoolhouse a good cleaning before school started in the fall. I also remember that reddish colored sweeping compound that was sprinkled over the bare wood floors, presumably to absorb dirt and grease before sweeping. (Vera Baughman Horman)

There was a change some years ago to the interior floor of the school. Marie Vanderhart, a former teacher in the building, requested that a new floor be installed. Prior to this time, the teacher's desk was situated on a raised platform at the front of the room. When the new floor was installed, this platform was removed.

Evolution of the Building

Two additions have been made to the East Amsterdam School. Each of these should now be considered integral to the historic fabric of the building and preserved as such. The first, the open porch, was built prior to circa 1905. This porch was enclosed on two sides sometime between circa 1905 and 1942. The second, the lean-to at the rear of the building, was built in 1942 or thereafter. The porch provided students with shelter from the elements and is pictured in a circa 1905 photograph of the building. (See Continuation Sheet 7-10.) As noted, the lean-to provided storage for coal.

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East Amsterdam School, Marion County, Iowa

The Pella Community School District acquired the East Amsterdam School in 1958, as a part of school consolidation occurring throughout Iowa. In 1960, East Amsterdam School ceased operations as a country school. Throughout much of its working life, the building also served as a neighborhood meeting place in addition to its function as a school. In 1968, the Pella Historical Society acquired the schoolhouse for \$1,500.00, the appraised price of the building and soon thereafter launched a fund-raising campaign to preserve the building as an historic property.

Present Condition

The East Amsterdam School has been well maintained since its construction and possesses very good integrity. Sometime in the 1950s the building's original 6/6 double hung sash were replaced with 3/3 double-hung sash, as documented in a 1961 photograph, which shows the replacement windows installed. The rear chimney has been removed above the roof line of the building.

PRIVIES

Two privies, counted as noncontributing resources in this nomination, are situated at the rear of the schoolhouse and separated from it by about 70 feet. Each privy is of wood frame construction with footprints each measuring about 5' x 5'. Each privy features double occupancy. Although the dates of the privies' construction are presently unknown, they are at least 40 years old, being extant at the time the building ceased operations as a school in 1960.

OTHER AMENITIES

In addition to these improvements, the site possesses several other amenities. They include three pieces of playground equipment, a wooden fence (which separates the property from the road), a flag pole, and a pump well.

The playground equipment consists of a swing set, a merry-go-round, and a double teeter-totter apparatus. All this equipment is of metal construction. The merry-go-round was erected on the site in 1999.

The fence runs the full length of the property along its boundary with the Pella-Knoxville Road. The fence features a pedestrian entryway, constructed of two wooden posts with a crosspiece at the top with the words "Amsterdam School." This entryway is situated directly in front of the facade of the building. The fence ends 37' short of the northwest corner of the property. The remaining footage is unimpeded and provides a vehicular entrance to the property. The flagpole is situated directly in front of the schoolhouse, between it and the road.

A well is situated about 20' southwest of the school. The well is covered with a wooden platform, and an iron pump stands in the center of it. The whereabouts of earlier wells on the site are undetermined,

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East Amsterdam School, Marion County, Iowa

but they undoubtedly existed. The present well platform and an antique pump were installed in May 1999.

All the playground equipment, the fence, and the flagpole are of modern construction. These amenities are taken together and counted as one noncontributing resource. All are unobstrusive. The equipment is situated a distance from the building, the fence does not obstruct the passerby's view of the schoolhouse, and the flagpole and the well platform and pump are inconsequential in terms of their size.

SITE

The East Amsterdam School stands on an 1.6 acre parcel of land located about two miles southwest of Pella on the Pella-Knoxville Road, also known as 198th Place, a county road. The topography of this site is rolling. The floodplain of the Des Moines River is situated nearby to the south. The upland prairies, on which Pella is located, begin nearby to the north. Because of this terrain, the Pella-Knoxville Road makes frequent curves; and, because the facade of the schoolhouse faces this road, the building is laid out askew to the cardinal points of the compass. The site slopes downward to the southeast. The schoolhouse is situated about 12' from the road.

This parcel of land forms the approximate shape of a right triangle. (See Continuation Sheet 7-6.) Its north-south property line measures 319.44'. Its east-west property line measures 246.18'. These two lines stand at right angles to one another. The other property line is formed by 198th Place.

The site features several mature, deciduous trees. The surface of the site is covered with lawn. The surrounding area is wood and rolling countryside. At the time the school was built, this area was rural. Although this area remains unincorporated, it has now become a part of suburban Pella.

The site of the East Amsterdam School is an integral part of its historical significance, as discussed in Section 8 of this nomination. The site also impressed itself on pupils in other ways:

In trying to think of things that were unique to our school I remember studying despite the noise of the coal trucks that every day hauled loads of "steam" coal from the mines across the Des Moines River to the Pella "light plant". The hill outside was long and sloping. The trucks had to shift gears and pull hard to get up it. But when the miners went in with their last load in late afternoon I knew our school day would soon be over also. (Vera Baughman Horman)

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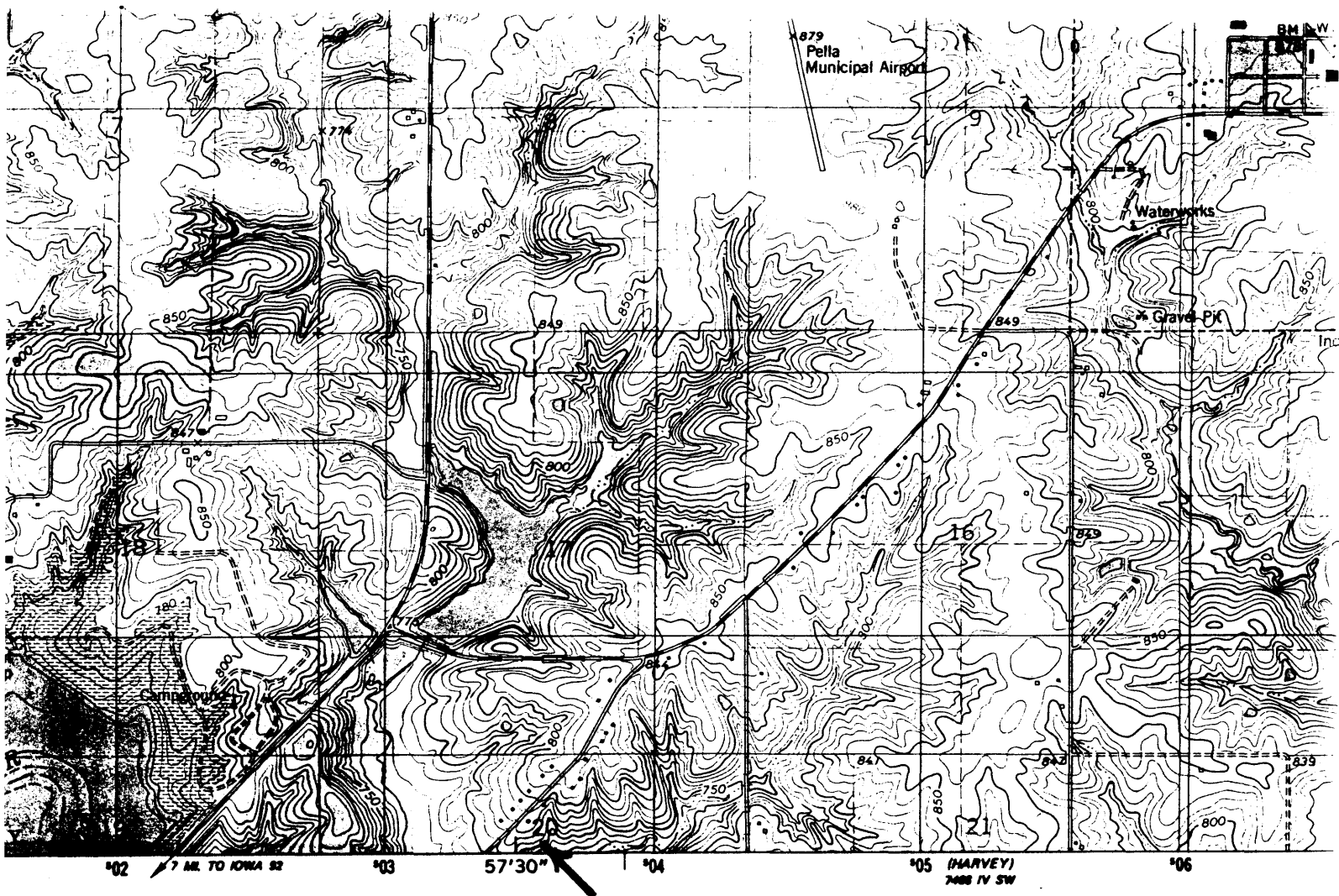
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East Amsterdam School, Marion County, Iowa

SITE MAP

ARROW LOCATES PROPERTY



Source: U.S.G.S. Map (7.5 Minute Series), Pella Quadrangle, 1980.

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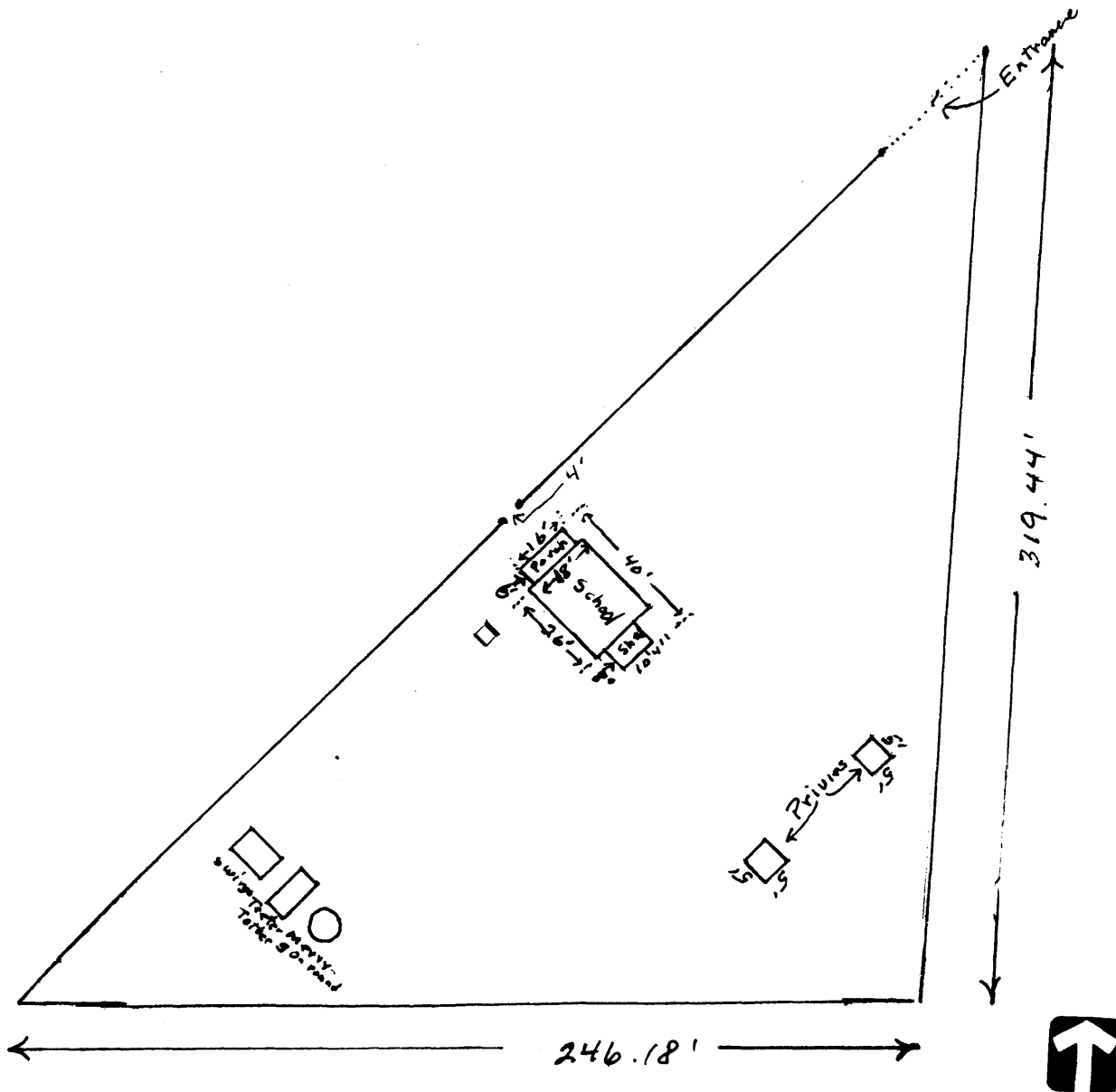
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East Amsterdam School, Marion County, Iowa

SITE SKETCH



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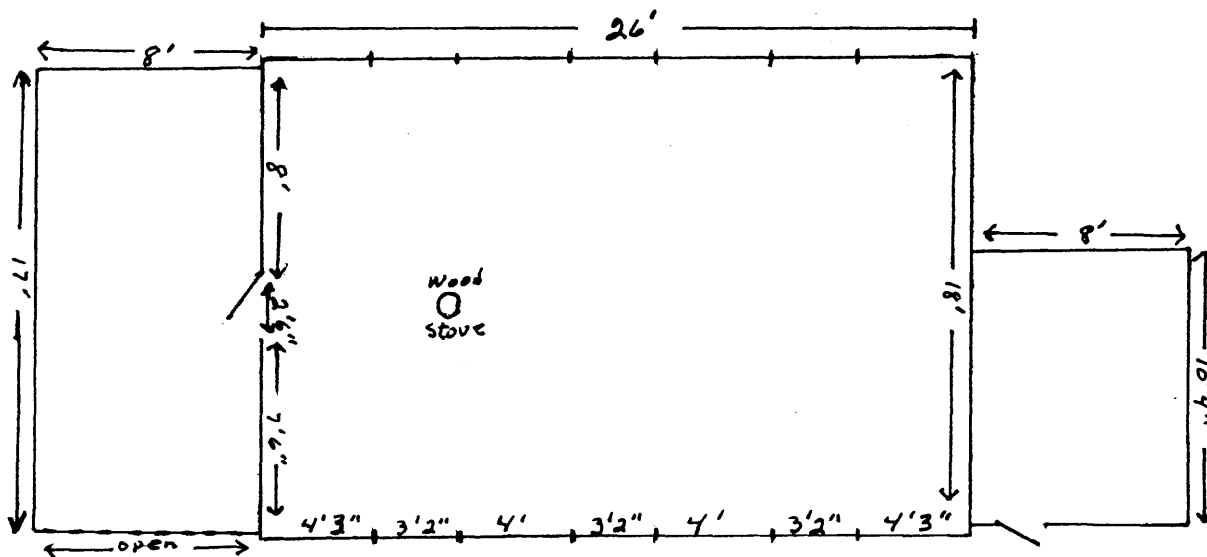
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East Amsterdam School, Marion County, Iowa

FLOOR PLAN



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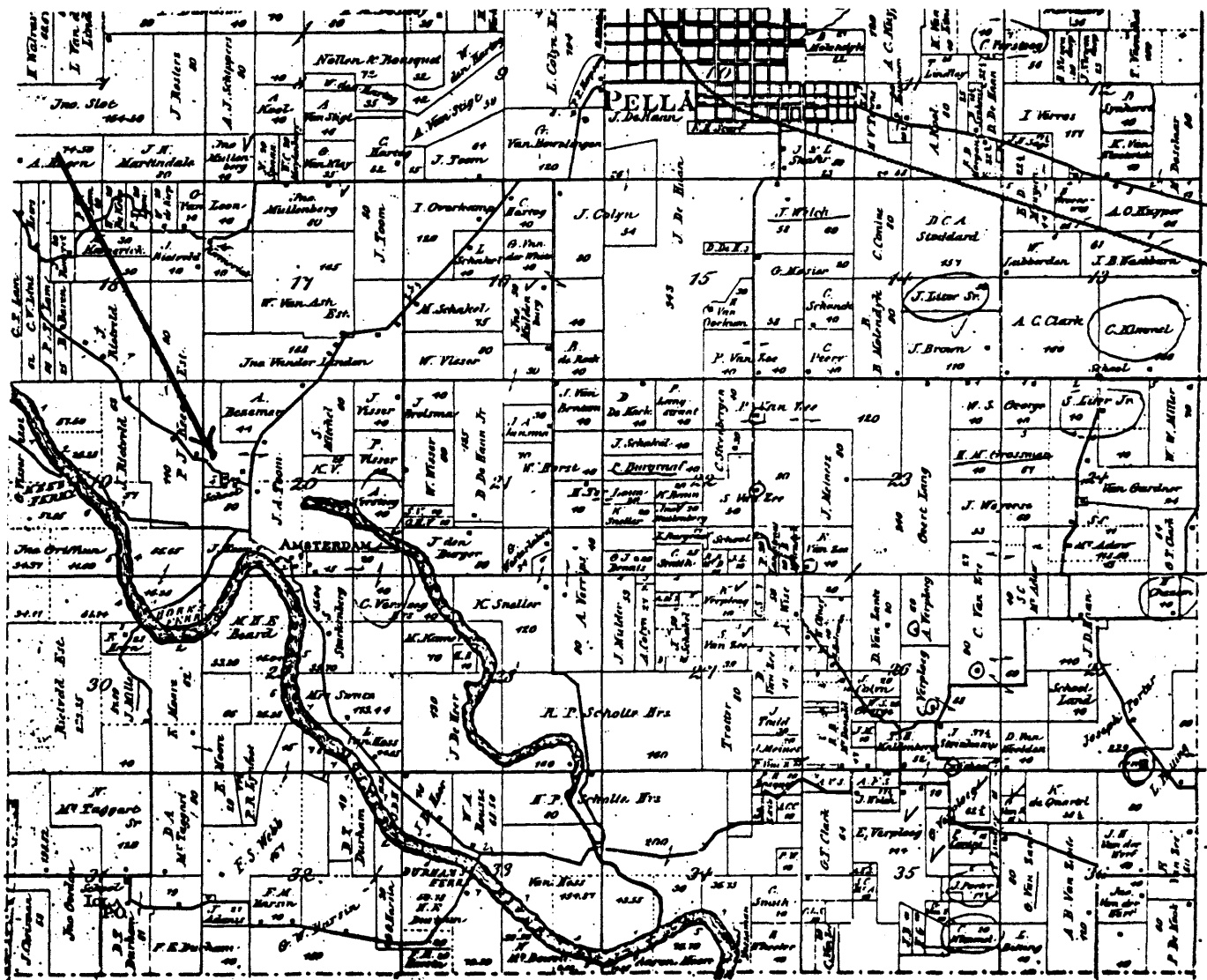
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East Amsterdam School, Marion County, Iowa

NEIGHBORHOOD IN 1875

ARROW LOCATES THE BRICK AMSTERDAM SCHOOL (NONEXTANT)



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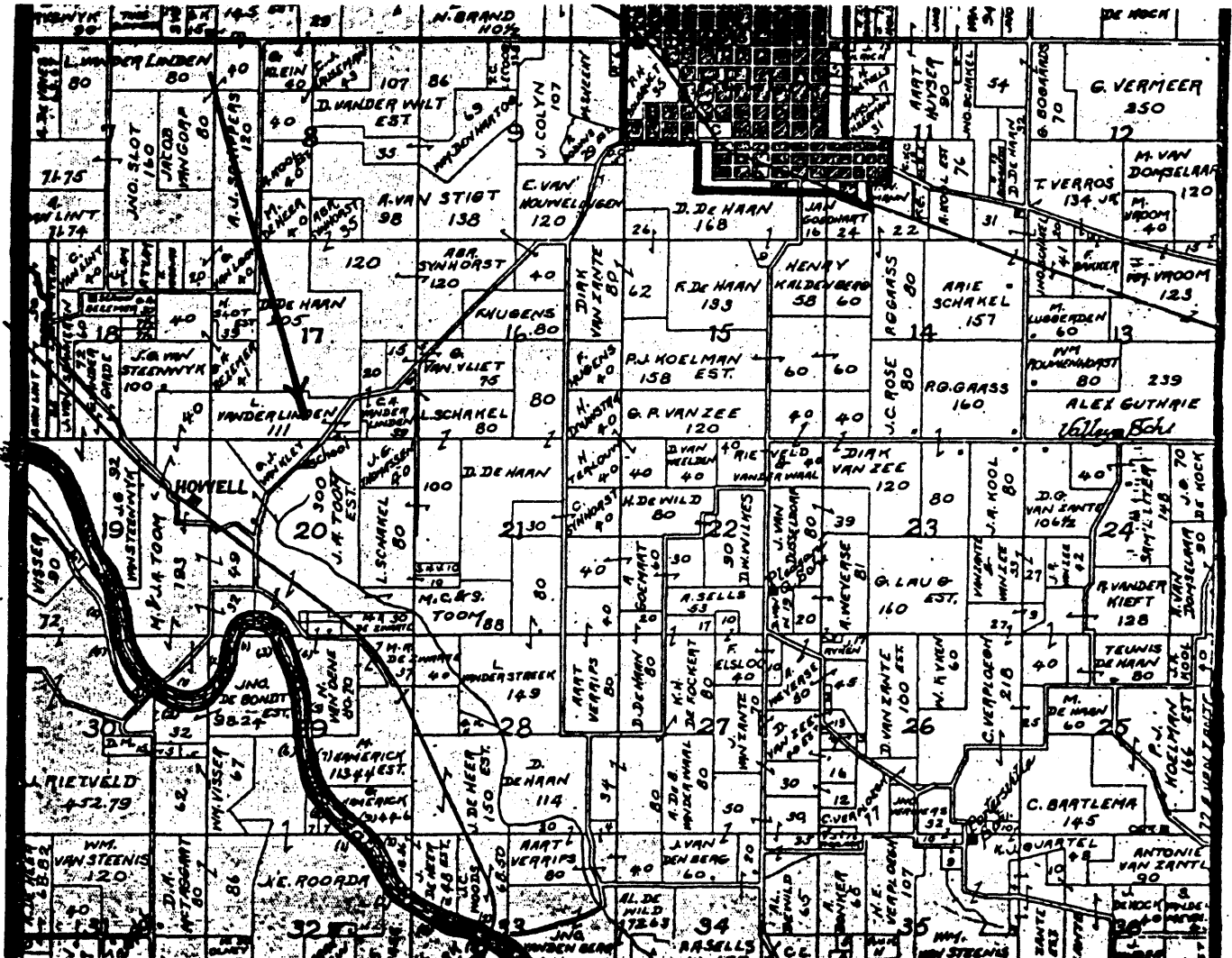
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CFN-259-1116

East Amsterdam School, Marion County, Iowa

NEIGHBORHOOD IN 1901

ARROW LOCATES EAST AMSTERDAM SCHOOL.
NEARBY "HOWELL" IS A STATION ON THE WABASH RAILROAD.



Source: Atlas of Marion County, Iowa, 1901.

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East Amsterdam School, Marion County, Iowa

EAST AMSTERDAM SCHOOL

CIRCA 1905



Source: Pella Historical Society.

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East Amsterdam School, Marion County, Iowa

EAST AMSTERDAM SCHOOL

1929

East Amsterdam 1929



Source: Pella Historical Society.

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East Amsterdam School, Marion County, Iowa

SNAPSHOT OF SCHOOL IN 1942



*East Amsterdam School
1942*

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East Amsterdam School, Marion County, Iowa

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

Completed and first placed into service in 1882, East Amsterdam School is locally significant under National Register Criterion A because of its associations with the former Independent School District of Amsterdam and its efforts to provide public education and safety for its children. In 1882 the Wabash Railroad undertook the construction of a new line through the area. Its projected route necessitated the demolition of the district's only school house and divided the district in two. To resolve these matters, the school district engaged in public debate and held a referendum, resulting in the construction of two new schools--East Amsterdam School and West Amsterdam School. These actions obviated the danger of children crossing the railroad tracks. Of these two buildings, only East Amsterdam School remains extant today. Historic school board minutes are also extant and tell the story how this rural community resolved matters of public concern through the democratic process. The survival of these minutes and their detailed documentation is, in itself, unusual in Iowa and of historical significance for that reason. East Amsterdam School continued in service until 1960, when the Pella Community School District, which had consolidated the school in 1958, closed it. Today, the building has become a museum, owned and operated by the Pella Historical Society.

East Amsterdam School is of architectural interest as a representative example of a Late Victorian, rural schoolhouse in Marion County. Its small size, steeply pitched roof, arched window jambs, and heating system--exemplified in its two brick chimneys--are characteristic. Although it cannot be said that the Dutch heritage of the school district's settlers is discernible in the building's architecture, its name indicates their homeland. Teunis Bootsma & Co. was the builder.

The period of significance for East Amsterdam School is 1882-1950, the time when the school district solved the problem caused by the railroad and the building remained in service as a school. Significant dates within that time include 1882, the year the building was first put into service; circa 1905, when the open porch was built; and circa 1942, when the lean-to was constructed.

The property contains four resources for this nomination--the site, the schoolhouse, and two privies. The site, which is classified as a site, and the schoolhouse, which is classified as a building, are each counted as contributing resources. The privies, which are classified as buildings, are each counted as noncontributing resources.

DANGER! RAILROAD CROSSING

East Amsterdam School is historically significant in Marion County, Iowa, because it calls attention to public education and democracy at work. The building shows how the Independent School District of Amsterdam responded to the encroachment of the Wabash Railroad upon its existing school facilities and to the railroad's injection of a safety hazard into the community. The public debate and local referendum, which subsequently ensued, is carefully recorded in board minutes. These documents show how the board studied and resolved this matter through the democratic process for the betterment of public education and safety in the district. As a result, the district decided to construct two new buildings--East Amsterdam School and West Amsterdam School--each at a cost of \$500.00.

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East Amsterdam School, Marion County, Iowa

Background

Amsterdam was a village situated near the Des Moines River, founded with the intention of serving river commerce to and from the hinterlands of Iowa via the Mississippi River. Surveyed in 1848, the plat of Amsterdam featured 60 city blocks divided into 490 building lots. It was situated on the north side of the river's floodplain. Several ferries were established to assist crossing the Des Moines River at this point.

Then, in 1856 an addition to Amsterdam was laid out adjacent to it on the north. Known as North Amsterdam, this plat possessed 204 building lots. John A. Toom established a brick kiln in this area. Toom later added a lime kiln to his operation. The John A. Toom House remains extant today, although somewhat modified, located on 198th Place. This brick house was owned for many years by Walter Koopman and has been featured in numerous newspaper stories about the Amsterdam community.

In spite of these improvements, a severe flood in 1851 raised serious questions about the prudence of this location for permanent settlement. An outbreak of cholera in 1854 further ravaged the village, and its low-lying situation was blamed as a breeding ground for mosquitoes and conducive to disease.

Most of the settlers in this part of Marion County were immigrants from Holland. They centered in nearby Pella, Iowa. When railroad transportation eclipsed river navigation in Eastern Iowa, the prospects for Amsterdam's growth declined. This decline was further accentuated when the Wabash Railroad, which built a line along this stretch of the Des Moines River in 1882, established its own depot stop--Howell--at a nearby location. (See Continuation Sheet 7-9.) A town site was laid out for Howell, and a general store soon followed to provide imported provisions to the surrounding countryside. All of these events restricted the growth of Amsterdam and North Amsterdam, so that they remained paper towns for all intents and purposes.

Independent School District of Amsterdam

The villages of Amsterdam and North Amsterdam were originally included in the Lake Prairie School District. Then, in May 1874, the Independent School District of Amsterdam separated from that jurisdiction. The newly created Amsterdam School District embraced about eight square miles of land located between the Des Moines River and Pella, Iowa.

The new district proceeded to erect a schoolhouse. The board of directors chose J. A. Toom to provide bricks for the building, and it was completed in 1874. This schoolhouse was located about three-quarters of a mile to the northwest of Amsterdam. (See Continuation Sheet 7-8.) The building served public education in this rural area for about eight years. The building also provided a facility for Sunday school and preaching services, as well as a community center for the surrounding farm families.

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East Amsterdam School, Marion County, Iowa

In 1882, the Wabash Railroad sought to build a new line connecting Des Moines, Iowa, with St. Louis, Missouri. The railroad chose a route along the north side of the Des Moines River. The right-of-way of this route ran through the property that the Amsterdam district had improved with the brick school in 1874.

Upon hearing of the railroad's intent, district officials began planning their response. Many issues were involved: the future of the brick school, the dangers represented by the railroad's route, the possible location or locations of a new school or schools, and the method to finance the improvements.

On February 20, 1882, at a special meeting of the board of directors of the Independent School District of Amsterdam, the board voted to hold a referendum on March 13, 1882, concerning the following matters:

The following proposition Should be proposed to the Electors at the annual election March 13, 1882.

- 1st Shall the Board sell the school house.
- 2nd Shall a school house tax of seventy (70) dollars be levied to procure two school house sites.
- 3rd Shall one or more new School houses be built.
- 4th Shall bonds be issued to the amount of one thousand (\$1000) dollars to build two new School houses.

(Amsterdam School Board Records)

The school district issued a notice to the electors of the district, dated March 1, 1882, for the upcoming annual election to be held March 13, 1882. The wording and the order of the ballot had changed somewhat in this notice from that stated in February, now reading:

- 1st Shall the Board sell the school house.
- 2nd Shall one or more School houses be built.
- 3rd Shall a school house tax of seventy (70) dollars be levied.
- 4th Shall bonds be issued to the amount of one thousand dollars to build two new School houses. (*Ibid.*)

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East Amsterdam School, Marion County, Iowa

This was a complicated matter, for the board was asking the district's electors to decide on a series of questions not necessarily compatible with one another. By the wording of the ballot, the board of directors gave those among the electors favoring the construction of new school facilities only one choice--to finance the construction of two school houses. It also appears that only those possessed of property in the district were qualified to vote at the "Annual Election of Electors."

On the prescribed day, the election took place. (Because it was held "at the school house," we know the 1874 Amsterdam building remained extant at that time.) The minutes of this March 13, 1882, meeting record what happened:

The question of building two new Schoolhouses was then in order. The Secretary advised [line cut off] distance which some of the children had to go, the danger caused by the railroad being so near the ditches cut for the construction of said road, the danger caused thereby as being deep and full of stagnant water, the unhealthiness caused thereby, etc. Whereupon he moved to build two new School houses in the district at more healthier and convenient places. Motion seconded, and open for debate upon a thorough discussion for and against Said Motion, Said Motion was voted upon by the electors with the following results

in favor of motion thirty four votes
against motion one vote

The chair declared motion carried. (*Ibid.*)

Thereupon, the board decided upon the following course of action:

On motion of L Van der Linden it was resolved to appoint a Committee of five to select two Site for schoolhouses, Motion Carried Unanimously. On Motion of G. van Loon, Sr., J. de Bond, J. A. Toom, L. Van der Linden, A. Kiekveld, and A. van Lint were appointed Such Committee. On Motion of M. Kamesick the Board of Directors was empowered to dispose of the present school house and site to the best of their ability. Motion Carried unanimously. The question of raising funds for the erection of two new schoolhouses was then in order. Where upon Mr. L Van der Linden moved to issue Bonds to the amount of one thousand (\$1000) dollars, Said Bonds to run not more then ten years and bearing interest not exceeding Seven percent annually redeemable at the pleasure of the Board of the district. After considerable discussion on the Subject the Meeting proceeded to vote on the motion. With the following result amount of Ballots cast thirty five/in favor of Motion twenty nine/against Motion--six. Where upon the Chair declared the Motion adopted to raise Seventy dollars of School house tax on the taxable property of the district for the year 1882. Carried unanimously. On motion of J. G. van Steenwyk the Committee selected/to select/two School house Sites were empowered to purchase Same and build school houses on the Same and act according to the best of their knowledge and ability in the name and behalf of the district. (*Ibid.*)

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The vote was fairly close with a margin of only six in favor. At the regular meeting of the board on March 20, 1882, the board voted to sell the existing schoolhouse for a sum not less than \$200.00 and to empower the site selection committee to proceed. (*Ibid.*) Subsequently, the board selected Teunis Bootsma & Co. to build both schoolhouses. (*Ibid.*:July 15, 1882)

ARCHITECTURE

East Amsterdam School is of architectural interest as a representative example of a Late Victorian, rural schoolhouse in Marion County. Its small size, steeply pitched roof, arched window surrounds, and heating system--exemplified in its two brick chimneys--are characteristic of that influence.

The East Amsterdam School possesses a stone foundation. The presence of this architectural element indicates the quality construction of the building. As one architectural historian has pointed out, later rural schoolhouse construction often lacked this feature:

Most, if not all, early schoolhouses were built without basements. By the turn of the century, communities were changing from wood or coal stoves to a furnace system. This created a need for a basement to hold the furnace. Unfortunately, many of the school basements built were not structurally sound, and in their later years, settled unevenly causing much damage and expense to repair the buildings. (Johnson quoted in Sherman:11)

The East Amsterdam School conforms to a typology of rural schoolhouses developed for Winneshiek County, Iowa, by Steve Johnson. (See Continuation Sheet 8-20.) This typology and accompanying descriptive text and line drawings, provide points of comparison with the East Amsterdam School. These points include overall size of the building's footprint, fenestration, entry, roof design, chimney placement and heating arrangements, and floorplan.

According to Johnson:

From measurements, it appears that the [floorplan] formula was consistently in the range of 18-24 foot widths and 28-32-foot lengths for the schools into the 1920s. (Johnson:12)

Johnson's typology and accompanying drawings show how the basic rectangular footprint of a schoolhouse could be expanded with the construction of a front porch and how the building's gable end roof lent itself to a variety of chimney placements.

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Date of Construction

The date of construction for East Amsterdam School--the year 1882--is documented by a number of sources. The minutes of the board of directors of the Independent School District of Amsterdam possess the most probative force.

REPRESENTATION IN OTHER SURVEYS

Darlene J. Hodges of Knoxville, Iowa, compiled a listing of one-room schoolhouses in Marion County, Iowa, for the 1998 publication of *Iowa's Country Schools, Landmarks of Learning*. This survey documents the fact that the East Amsterdam School is an uncommon survivor of a rural schoolhouse in the county. Hodges' list included 14 rural schoolhouses, among which five have been converted to homes, three are not-in-use, and some of the others are used as farm outbuildings. Hodges identified ten of these buildings by name. One of them, Pleasant Grove School, has been relocated to the Marion County Park in Knoxville, where it, along with a collection of other relocated buildings, has been restored. Hodges does not list East Amsterdam School by name, and it is unclear if this school is included among the three not-in-use buildings or the list of 14 extant properties.

POTENTIAL FOR HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

The site's potential for archaeological significance is, as yet, unevaluated, but the potential for archaeological discovery exists. According to one Nineteenth Century local history:

The town of Amsterdam is situated near the Des Moines River at the upper end of a long lake which extends for two miles. Between Lake Prairie and the river lies an extensive and beautiful prairie. (Unascribed Source, Archives of Pella Historical Society)

Another Nineteenth Century further describes this environment:

On this prairie were once a couple of beautiful springs that were resorted to by the Indians of the village nearby, and attracted the attention of the settlers by their peculiar appearance and character. They were from ten to fifteen feet wide and one of them of unknown depth, filled with a very light sediment, through which no solid bottom could be reached by sounding with the longest poles. The water would rise and fall, and from the subterranean depths would occasionally come a sound resembling thunder. The Indians called it Thunder Spring. (Wright:I-111)

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According to yet another source:

Parties of Indians were frequently seen passing and respassing along their long frequented routes up and down the Des Moines River valley, visiting the trading houses and returning to their villages. These villages were little better than camps, consisting of huts and tents built without regularity for streets or alleys, each family putting up their portable dwelling on whatever locality suited their taste of convenience. Hunting and fishing were the principal occupations of the inhabitants of these villages; and should game become scarce in the neighborhood of a village, the people could easily gather up their houses and load them, and all their baggage on ponies, and dogs and women and move to some more plentiful locality, leaving no traces of the deserted town, except a few stakes and poles that had made the scanty framework of their huts.

Only one Indian village was known to be located in Marion County. It was called Keokuk's town, and consisted of forty or fifty huts. It was on Lake Prairie, near Durham's Ford. Whether it was at any time the residence of the renowned chief is not known, for the place was abandoned soon after the whites began to settle in the neighborhood. It is possible that he had something to do with its location and possibly made it his headquarters. He had a son who died at Keokuk's village on the Des Moines River. The remains of the village were noticeable some time after it was taken away. (Donnel:145-146)

Given this Native American habitation of the surroundings, the potential exists for the discovery of associated artifacts at the East Amsterdam School site.

Although historical archaeological investigations may uncover traces of previous construction on the site--such as privies--other traces of Euro-American habitation are slim, given the fact that the schoolhouse was the first improvement on the site.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND REGISTRATION

As more is learned about rural schoolhouse architecture in Iowa during the Nineteenth Century, this information should be used to augment the history of East Amsterdam School.

As more is learned about Dutch building methods in Marion County, this information should be used to augment the architectural history of East Amsterdam School. Although it cannot be said that, at the present time, the architectural heritage of the school district's Dutch settlers is discernible in the building, further research might cast a new light on this subject.

The Independent School District of Amsterdam might provide interesting points of comparison or contrast between public education, as fostered by the rural Dutch settlers of Marion County, Iowa, with that of public education, as fostered by the same colony of Dutch settlers in nearby Pella, Iowa.

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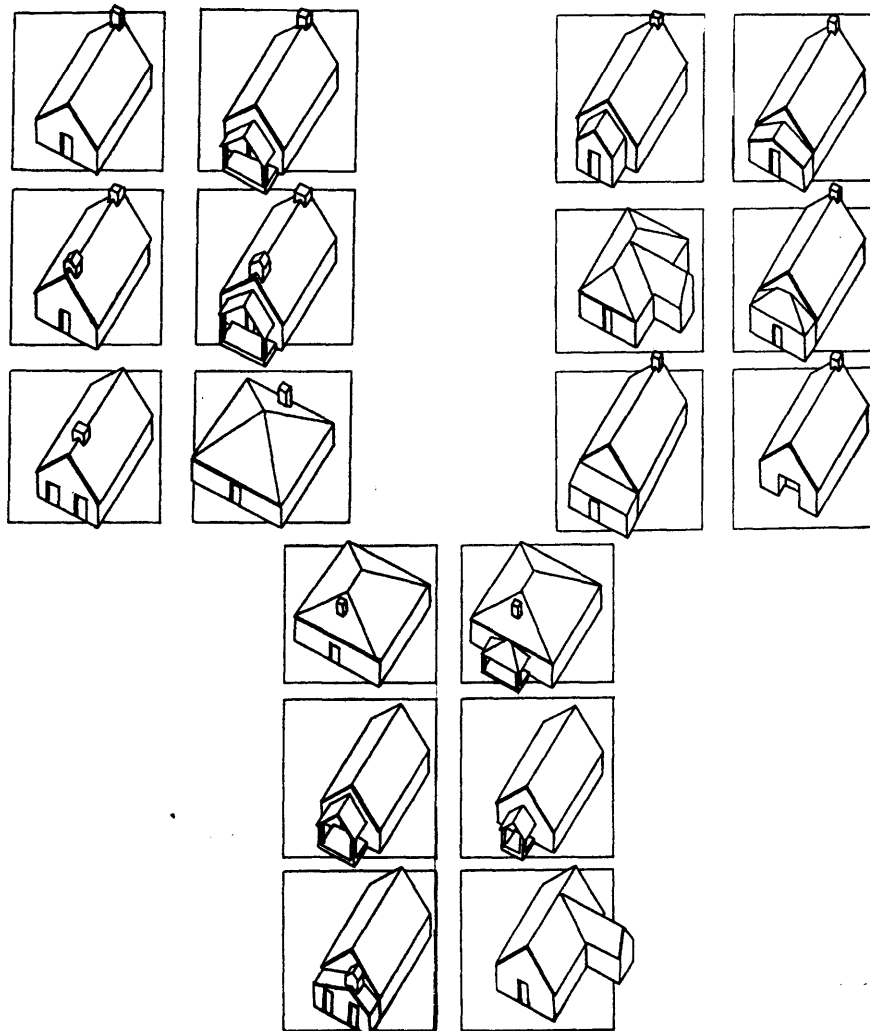
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TYOLOGY OF IOWA ONE-ROOM SCHOOLS



Source: Steve Johnson, "Architectural Styles for Iowa's One-Room Schools," in Sherman, p. 12.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

A part of the Northeast Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of Section 20, Township 76 North, Range 18 West of the 5th P. M., described as follows:

Commencing at a point 9 chains south of the Northeast corner of the above described tract of land, thence South 43 3/4 degrees West 4.71 chains, said line running along the South side of the public highway running from Pella to Knoxville, thence East 3.25 chains, thence North 3.35 chains, to the place of beginning and containing one-half acre, more or less, including the buildings located thereon.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

Contains all land associated originally with the resource.

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East Amsterdam School, Marion County, Iowa

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

1. East Amsterdam School
1010 198th Place
Pella, IA 50219
Looking northeast
Barry Johnson, Photographer
January 12, 2000

2. East Amsterdam School
1010 198th Place
Pella, IA 50219
Looking northeast
Barry Johnson, Photographer
January 12, 2000

3. East Amsterdam School
1010 198th Place
Pella, IA 50219
Looking north-northwest
Barry Johnson, Photographer
January 12, 2000

4. East Amsterdam School
1010 198th Place
Pella, IA 50219
Looking southwest
Barry Johnson, Photographer
January 12, 2000

5. East Amsterdam School
1010 198th Place
Pella, IA 50219
Interior looking to the front of the schoolroom
Barry Johnson, Photographer
January 12, 2000