

place that people came from long distances to see. They also planted the walnut grove on the same premises and planted the first shade trees in and around the Garden Square.

THE STORM OF 1848

We have been unable to learn the exact date of this storm, but know that it occurred some time in the latter part of May. The first winter had been unusually mild and this storm was the first experience our colonists had of the climatic possibilities of Iowa. From all available accounts it must have been one of the most severe wind and electric storms that has ever visited this locality.

Coming about midnight, it caught the people entirely unprepared. Several houses in the course of construction were destroyed. Just east of the American House, where the express office stood in later years, a heavy farm wagon and a buggy had been left out on the street. These were both lifted bodily and carried over a high picket fence into the adjoining yard. On the corner across the street west from the G. Thomassen building on Washington street, Jacob van de Rovaart and A. Veenman had erected what at that time was a large building, which served these men as a wagon factory and cooper shop, and was also used as a residence. Mr. Veenman, who was unmarried at the time, was living with Rovaart and family. This building was entirely destroyed, but fortunately both Veenman and the Rovaart family escaped from the wrecked building without any serious injury.

The family of G. H. Overkamp, discovering the wreck of their neighbor's home, were promptly on hand to help them to escape from the ruins and took them into their own home. In the morning, when the news of the disaster became generally known, people came from all around to offer their help, with the result that a new and better building was erected within a very short time. Thus early in our history we have a manifestation of the helpful, neighborly, community spirit that today remains one of Pella's outstanding characteristics.

AMSTERDAM

The original townsite of Pella was platted early in May, 1848, and hardly had this been accomplished, when the hope of improving the transportation facilities of the colony led to the platting of Amsterdam. The townsite was located on the south half of section 20, township 76, range 18. This land later formed part of the farm owned by J. A. Toom.

As the only means of transportation at that time was the old State Road, and all the merchandise as well as the products raised in the colony had to be hauled by wagon a distance of 116 miles to Keokuk, it was considered of great importance to develop water transportation via the Des Moines river. For this reason there was great enthusiasm in regard to the "Port of Amsterdam" that the Hollanders hoped would in time grow into an abridged edition of the Amsterdam of their native land.

In 1850 a store opened at Amsterdam; many people bought lots and built houses; while two brick kilns and a lime kiln gave the appearance and promise of an important future industrial center. But in the midst of this enthusiasm came the memorable floods of the spring of 1851, which convinced the promoters that their dream of an important industrial and shipping point would never be realized.

However, steamboating on the Des Moines river continued to appeal to the pioneers of Iowa, and several boats succeeded for a time in navigating the uncer-