

The History and
Restoration of the Old
Victorian Home at
205 West Bridge Street
in
Elkader, Iowa



by
Larry W. Gamble

Re-discovering My Childhood

During the summer of 2004 I visited my old hometown of Elkader, Iowa. It is a small community of 1,465 citizens located in northeastern Iowa about twenty minutes from the Mississippi River. Elkader is the county seat of Clayton County and that fact alone makes it a little more important than many small Iowa farming communities. Rural farming towns in the area are generally small. Some are progressive and vibrant; others are not because they have no major industrial base or plan for growth. Young people move away in search of jobs. And some communities just plain don't want to grow...and so they ultimately grow smaller and smaller. I had no idea whether Elkader was the former or the latter. For me, Elkader was a town filled with childhood memories and nostalgia of my youth. I was only five when my family moved to Elkader and ten when they moved out west to California. But I remembered the town as being friendly and compassionate. I knew the town and its' people were a living connection to my childhood.

My father, Adrian Gamble had been Iowa State's Extension and Farm Bureau Director for Clayton County. They called him a "county agent." I had been born in Postville in 1943 and had lived a short time in New Hampton before moving to Elkader in 1948. Five short years later we moved to Modesto, California. But during the time I was there, I explored every nook and cranny of that town. For five glorious years, Elkader was my world to explore, discover, and learn about frogs, marbles, popsicles, steam locomotives and life in general.

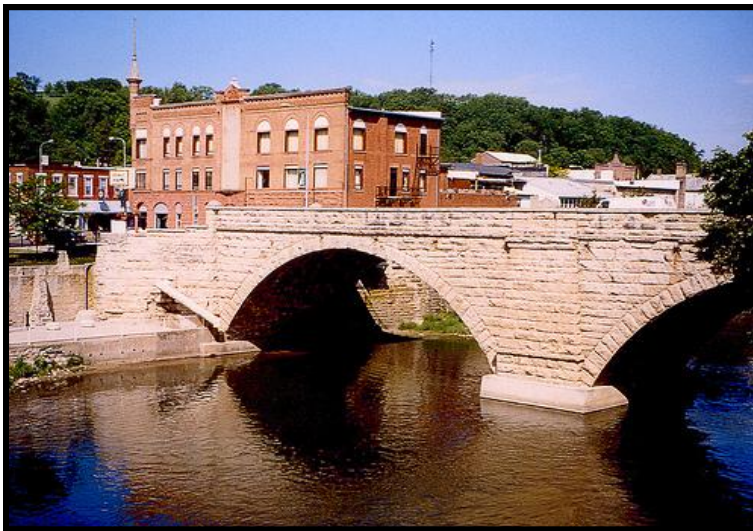
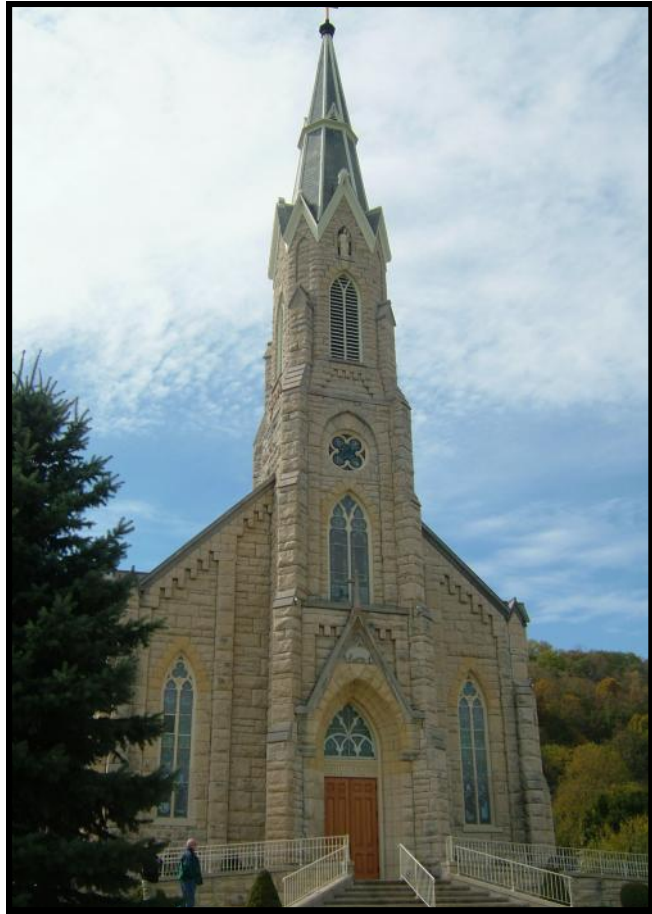
I hadn't been back to Iowa very often since leaving as a child. Many of my Iowa relatives were gone. Those who were still living were far removed both physically and mentally from my adult life in California. After attending Elkader's Central School, kindergarten-third grade, I had been educated in California schools. After graduation, my wife and I lived in Madrid, Spain, then returned stateside teaching seven years as a college professor in Michigan and New Mexico. Since 1982 had become a business executive. Now, at the ripe old age of 63 I was about to sell my business, limit my part-time college teaching and was looking forward to retirement. Visiting Iowa in the summer of 2004 was a passing fancy at best and a brief chance to re-discover a part of my youth. I think that is what happens when you grow old. You want to go back to another time and place. I had very fond memories of living in this small community with my family. My parents had both passed away years ago, but the memories remained. I really wasn't sure why I was being pulled back to Elkader, but I was. It was a strange attraction after so many years, but I went with the flow.

I visited the places where my parents had once lived. My dad's family had moved to Story County from Indiana in 1856. They had farmed successfully for three generations around Maxwell, Iowa. Then the depression struck and the land was lost. We used to drive to Maxwell to see where the farms had been, to lay flowers in the cemetery and visit those relatives still living. My mother's family had farmed around Vinton and Urbana. They too lost their farm and never quite recovered from the financial disaster that gripped so many farmers in the early thirties.

As I drove into these northeastern Iowa towns in 2004, those memories filled my mind. My thoughts were good thoughts of when my dad would take me on his business trips. He drove down country roads to visit farmers or into towns that were not much more than a general store, a few houses, and a majestic church with steeple. I used to imagine the sacrifices the townspeople must have made to construct such magnificent tributes to their faith.

Now, fifty years later, many of those towns were nothing more than ghost towns. Yet as I drove the highways and country roads, after all those years, I would still feel a sense of familiarity. Landmarks would loom in my consciousness such as bridges over rivers, stores along a main street or the name of a farmer on a rural mail box. I remember this place or that and I would recall distant images of being there as a child.

In Elkader there is a pipe railing along the sidewalk on Bridge Street adjacent to the Central State Bank building. I used to rub my hands along it after crossing the bridge. It is still there and even today, I can't cross the bridge without running my hands along that same pipe. Strange what kids do and what they remember after over 60 years.



When I first arrived in Elkader in 2004, my senses rekindled the past in many ways. The taste of fresh bread or “long johns” from Pedretti’s Bakery along main street; the sound of the bell atop the County Court house tolling the hour; the noon day siren; the sight looking up the river from “little dam” toward the keystone bridge, the smell of the Turkey River and the Sunday morning bells nearby calling the community to worship at

St. Josephs; all of these sensory sensations were indelibly etched in my mind.

We lived on Mulberry Street where Dave Beck lives today. That was the house where I hid my B-B gun purchased from Dee Walke's Hardware and placed it in the attic under the floorboards so my parents wouldn't find out. My mother would say, as all mothers are want to say, "you'll shoot your eye out." Challenging and sometimes circumventing "authority" is a flaw in my personality that haunts me even today. My parents found out years later of my fiasco and thought it somewhat humorous. But I knew my dad would have canned me at the time. I reclaimed it years later when I was grown. The owners of the house were nice enough to give it back to me. I still have my trusty, and now rusty Daisy Red Ryder BB gun.

That house on Mulberry Street was where, on a cold, cold day in 1949, when it was 40 degrees below zero outside and the winds were blowing as only Iowa winds can, I inadvertently pinched the fur of my dog Toby and he bit my lip open. Old Doc Hummel told my mother to put a band aid on it and "bring him down to the office when it warms up." I never did get it stitched up and a mustache covers that scar today. Our home sided to the back of Gust Olson's house on Second Street where Ed Olson's mother, Ada would invite me for cookies and milk...enticing me not to allow my dog Toby to chase her cats! It usually worked.

So it was indeed a fateful day in the summer of 2004, while reminiscing these memories that I walked along Front Street. I stopped to look at the pictures of real estate at Voss Realty. I was shocked at the prices. They seemed so low compared to California...but I guessed relative for each economy. The business climate was different in Iowa. With so many of the family owned farms now corporate entities, the local families I had known and who had farmed for generations were now out of farming or



moved away. It seemed there were not enough large anchor employers to grow the economy of Elkader. The population was nearly the same as it had been in 1907. Not only was it slow growth; in some instances many Iowa communities had no growth or reverse trends. Some small communities were nothing more than relics of the past. But Elkader seemed to have something going for it. Perhaps it was John Patrick Moyna's E-Ject Systems fabrication plant; or Adam Pollock's Fire Farm lightning company. Maybe it was the quaint bridge; the historic designations and museums or the renovated Opera House and theatre; possibly

the hospital or school system or just maybe it was the attitude of people who called it "home." Whatever it was, it appealed to me. So just for the "fun of it, I inquired about a home listed for \$25,000. I stopped in and asked Myra Voss to show it to me.

Myra and I set out to explore the old brick home. When I first saw 205 West Bridge, I could see nothing but work and a large investment of time and money. Nothing functioned in it and the years had taken a toll on this once beautiful house. At the time I had little money and no time. So I declined to make an offer and forgot about having a vacation home in Elkader. I later learned the home had been sold and it was taken off the market. I immersed myself in my



broadcasting work with the hopes that someday soon I would sell my business interests and retire. I had been managing the business for nearly twenty five years and it was beginning to effect my health. Soon after, I did indeed sell the radio stations and my health and outlook immediately improved!

In the early winter of 2005 I, quite by chance, looked at the Voss Realty site on the internet. Sure enough, there was “my” Bridge Street home listed at \$25,000...“as is.”

Without consulting with my wife, I decided to have some fun by making

an offer on the internet (“they would never accept”). I offered the sellers \$15,000. in cash. “No,” the sellers said, but dropped the asking price to \$22,500. I raised to \$18,000. and they countered with \$20,000. I was ready to walk, but gave them a final offer of \$19,000. and prepared to leave the bidding. They Accepted! Oh no!!

You remember my neglecting to tell my parents about the BB gun years earlier? Now I needed to break “the good news” to my wife whom I had neglected to bring into the negotiations. That took nearly a week...finding the right time, the right way. I learned there is never really a “right time” or “right way.” She had just had surgery on her eyes. The skin around the eye was pitch black and blue. The whites were actually red with off white areas highlighted by strange yellow lines!



She looked akin to a Kabuki warrior and I'm afraid I was about to be her next victim. I started the conversation with "guess what? I had the funniest experience bidding for Iowa real estate on the internet." That was when her eyes began to narrow and she said, "you did what, where?" Then, as I explained, her eyes grew larger becoming more black and blue, more red with much more of that strange yellow hue. I'm sure Mount Saint Helens was serene before she blew. Remembering the aftermath of that explosion, I hastily prepared to leave and mumbled, "OK...so I guess you're as excited as I am about my Iowa purchase eh? We'll talk more about it when I get home tonight. Isn't that exciting news though? See ya later!" I ran for the door.

Getting Down to Work

The close of escrow came in March of 2005. I flew back to Iowa and delivered the check to Myra's office in person. I also had a chance to meet the sellers: Jim Foxwell and John Cairns. They filled me in on their original plans to renovate the home, but then decided to put it back on the market and renovate two other properties they had purchased in the neighboring town of Elgin. I knew "our" new Iowa home needed work and lots of it; after all I had purchased the home "as is." I wanted to learn what it took to completely restore a home to its' original condition. Perhaps I could learn enough to help my son and his wife who live in Santa Monica, California find a home to renovate.



And so with little fanfare, I began to formulate my plans. In a town of 1,635 people, word traveled fast. "That crazy guy from California is going to try and restore that old eyesore." It's hard to keep a secret in a small community. At the time I was not



aware of the little house's close call with its' imminent demise. The city's Planning Board had come very close re-zoning the land from residential to commercial thus losing this historic home in the process. Reasonable minds prevailed. So in my naivety, I jumped into the process of restoration with hammer in hand and visions of sugar plums dancing in my head. This restoration stuff was going to be a snap!

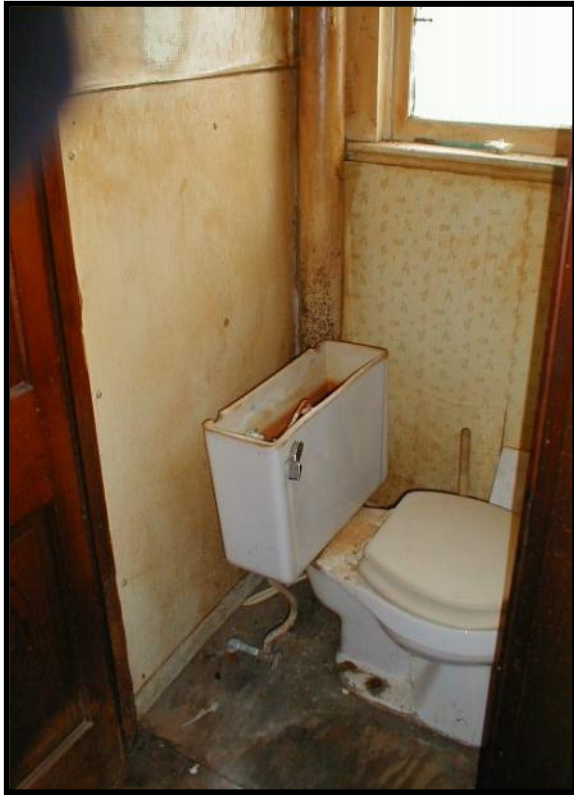
On a cold and dreary Tuesday morning in March of 2005 I closed escrow, got the keys and unlocked the front door to take a closer look at what I had purchased. There was a dead mouse on the stairway to greet me. The downstairs oak floors were warped from water draining into the house from the roof. The plumbing didn't work;



the electrical lines were original turn-of-the-century wiring and I was advised not to turn on any circuit breakers; windows were broken; doors were split; the basement pipes were cracked, the heater didn't heat and the radiators didn't radiate. Wallpaper hung from the ceilings and the listing kitchen floor created vertigo. The rooms were ice cold and I could see my breath as I walked from room to room. It was somewhat like Dr. Zhivago in the country cottage winter scene. However, much less romantic. Yet, I didn't see the home as it was; I saw the home as it could be and as it had once been. I knew the restoration job would be a major investment of time and money. But I was determined to accept the challenge beginning in earnest during the summer of 2005.

I arrived in June and rented an apartment over the local Subway sandwich shop along the downtown main street. Lee and Diane Akin were my landlords. They had just completed restoring the old Elkader Theatre. They also owned several other buildings in Elkader and had renovated them as well. We talked a lot about who could do such and such job and what kinds of costs might be incurred. Though there are many dedicated and qualified people from whom to select, I ended up hiring Steve Bena and crew for demolition and construction; Karl Knospe for concrete and stone work; Harley Reichert for plumbing; Lyle Gregarson for electrical; Gary Willie for finished woodwork and Dan Beck for painting. These companies and their employees became the core of my restoration team.





Phase One was grueling. Out of the eight weeks in the summer of 2005, five of them were dedicated to removing “stuff.” Bin after bin was removed from the ally. Rotted wood, warped flooring, plaster and lathe; I couldn’t believe I was having fun. It seemed like such hard work!! Dirt, dust and cobwebs. I thought it would never end.

I was delighted to discover the “bones” and foundation of the house were actually in quite good condition. The bricks were sturdy and the walls were straight. The basement was dry and the limestone foundation was stable and sound for its’ age. We estimated the house to have been built between 1897 (assessor’s office) and as late as 1913 (insurance maps); about one hundred years ago. Because of its’ age, we basically stripped the house down and started all over. United Building Center was contracted to replace the

roof. Most interior doors had to be replaced, but were saved in the basement. After twelve weeks in Iowa, I returned to California to teach part-time at our local community college. I was tired, but confident that the restoration job was progressing nicely.

I came back to work during the winter of 2006 on Phase Two (the upstairs) and again in the summer of 2006 for Phase Three (the downstairs). When the summer days became too hot to work, I would research the history of the home. I studied old newspapers at the library on Front street or on Thursdays would look at photographs at the Elkader Historical Society’s “Carter House Museum.” By doing so, I learned much about the community, the city’s rich history and the home. It is so interesting and informative to learn about Elkader’s early pioneers.



Researching the Past

The Abstract records indicate between 1846 and about 1860 the property was simply used as grazing land. Sometime before 1871 two structures were added; a two story brick house and a barn along the alley. From the beginning, the property was subject to extensive speculation. Prices for the land ranged from \$120.00 to \$1,600. Dates of various sales were: October 2, 1854, April 2, 1866, January 4, 1859, October 10, 1859, October 27, 1862, February 28, 1863, September 7, 1863, October 14, 1863, November 16, 1864, October 6, 1868 and April 17, 1874. Then on January 15, 1887 the home and property were sold to **James T. Partch**. He owned, not only this home, but a building on Front Street (the current J-N-J Pizza location) and the octagonal shaped Universalist Church building on upper East Bridge Street. (No longer in existence). In the Carter House Museum I discovered the house I bought was different than the original home constructed on the site. An 1871 Elkader lithograph shows the original two story brick home. But by 1913 the original home has disappeared and current home exists. The exact transition date is not recorded, but pictures exist of the original house until after the turn-of-the-century. In that house Julia Lucinda Day-Carter is believed to have been raised as a child. She was orphaned and later, raised by her uncle, E.V. Carter in the Carter House.

We do know that a Mr. and Mrs. James T. Partch (see biographical references) lived in the home from 1887 to 1899. He created a Will in 1890 leaving all personal and real property to his wife and other family members. He deeded the land and house with a value of \$1,000 exclusively to wife, Lucy Partch. Unfortunately, she preceded him in death. Lucy died on January 5, 1896; James later died in March of 1899. County assessments and insurance records show that a new two story brick home (replacing an existing brick home with a unique roof line) was constructed on the property perhaps as early as 1897, (while Partch was living) but more likely between 1903 and 1913. (after Partch died) Fire insurance maps show the original two story brick structure occupied the space until about 1903. Then in 1913, the current structure is shown. Between those two dates the original two story brick house was either burned or demolished to make room for the current house. There are documented photographs of both homes in the Carter House Museum files.

Following Partch's death in 1899, an action in equity was filed between family members: eleven Plaintiffs and twenty-two defendants seeking equitable settlement of the property. Referee's Kramer, Branch and Quinn are ordered by the court to sell the property. The high bid price of \$750 submitted by a local farmer, **Hugh McKeller, Jr.** was accepted on April 3, 1900. He was probably the builder of the current house although he may never have lived in it as he had a farm and family acreage in Highland township. *A local couple was known to have rented the current house in 1905. McKeller, Jr. died in 1916 without a will, but leaving heirs. Here we go again.

*Elkader Newspaper: "Wednesday, March 1, 1905: Hugh McKeller has moved back onto his farm in Highland Township. M. L. Himes are moving into McKeller's house."

The heirs Ella Adams, Chester Adams, Merle Adams, Margarite Adams and Bessie Adams, et al, Elkader, Iowa, minors, all being grand-children. A Petition in Equity was filed against the children by Plaintiffs Bessie Kissell and A.G. Kissell, Plaintiffs against the heirs. The Court then ordered an estate appraisal and subsequent sale. On December 21, 1922 the real estate was sold to Ed Krauel for \$5,000. The Krauel family lived in the home until his death on October 7, 1943. The home was then purchased on April 25, 1944 by George J. and wife, Carrie Hochhaus. They sold the home on October 31, 1946 to Phyllis Hand who presumably used the home as a rental. (Phyllis also owned the large Victorian home next door). Phyllis kept the home until her death on April 30, 1969 and willed to her sister and brother-in-law, Florence and Max Gerber who sold the home to Erland S. and Joyce A. Hauge. They raised a large and loving family in the home until their passing. On January 30, 2004, the Hauge family sold the home to James L. Foxwell and John M. Cairns who planned to renovate the Victorian era home, but never did. They in turn sold the home to us, Larry W. and Sylvia A. Gamble on March 23, 2005.



The Construction Phases of the Restoration Process

From 2005 to 2006, the major restoration of the home continued. In Phase One, I worked on the house from May through August with a demolition crew from Steve Bena Construction. Completed work included: removing the inside plaster-lath walls facing the outside; removal of first and second floor ceilings to expose for electrical wiring and insulation; removal of the downstairs 1/4 inch hardwood floors that were warped due to extensive water from the roof; removal of all old electrical wiring as well as plumbing and fixtures. All windows were also removed. A foundation pier was replaced and the floor was selectively reinforced. The north bedroom ceiling beams were extended and new attic flooring and access stairs were installed. The house was completely re-wired by Gregerson Electric. Exterior doors and windows were replaced with dual pane windows; the exterior wooden window frames and decorative



elements were primed and painted with two coats of latex paint by painter Dan Beck; the exterior brick was cleaned and sealed; a new Lennox heating and



cooling unit was installed by Elkader Plumbing and Heating (Harley Reichert) along with a new water heater, water softener and sump pump. Bathroom fixtures were installed including a new shower enclosure, Jacuzzi bath-tub, old fashioned toilet and sink. A sink and toilet were also replaced beneath the stairs on the main level. On the second level the bathroom was moved from the hallway across the hall and reconstructed in the smallest bedroom. The original hallway bathroom was made smaller by

expanding the closet in the master bedroom. The hallway space was then converted and plumbed for an upstairs washer and dryer. Most doors were replaced with new doors. The original doors, although damaged, are stored in the basement. All interior walls and ceilings were insulated with fiberglass; drywall was replaced by Hoth Construction. I then primed and painted everything I could reach; I left the hard parts for Dan Beck who didn't complain at all.

The original white pine woodwork was left natural, sanded or simply cleaned and a coat of high gloss polyurethane was applied.

Sylvia joined me in Iowa during the last two weeks of August to complete the preliminary work, but the house could not be occupied until January when I returned to Iowa...in the middle of winter!



In January, February and March of 2006 I worked on the interior of the house living upstairs while working downstairs. The downstairs floor was replaced with new 3/4 inch oak and varnished with polyurethane. All rooms received their final coats of paint using colors of the period from which pigments were found in the home. Fragments of wallpaper dating from the 1930's and 1950's was extracted and saved.

Phase Three occurred during the months of August, September and October

in 2006. The aging chimney at the rear of the house was found to be structurally weak. The exterior portion was removed by Hoth Construction to just below the roof line. The salvaged bricks will be used as yard walkway pavers and ornamentation. The kitchen floor was braced and leveled; the interior walls were removed; utilities from the alley were placed underground and a new main electrical panel was installed in the basement; all electrical wall wiring and receptacles were replaced; insulation applied to the ceiling and exterior walls with a combination of two inch foam and fiberglass; new hardwood and ceramic tiles floor replaced the original linoleum floor in the kitchen. It was also finished with new cabinets, sinks and faucets. Ducting for heating and cooling was also installed. An electric fireplace was installed. A period mantle from Out and About Antiques in Garnavillo was placed in the front room and became the center of interest.



That is pretty much it. The restoration process was far from being a snap! I am exhausted. And I know, I could never have done it without the professionalism

and dedication of my crew. Special thanks to everyone.



Especially the girl on the bike who abruptly stopped along the sidewalk one hot and discouraging afternoon as we neared completion and said, “wow, mister. I never saw that house before you started working on it. That really looks cool!” That comment made my day!

People ask if I found anything interesting while doing the renovation. Not really. A few old, moldy newspapers from the 1930’s and five layers of

wallpaper with patterns from the period under the paint. We did discover where an old interior wall had been. What I refer to as the “Lincoln Dining Room” because of the

Lincoln picture on the wall was formerly a separate room with a diagonal hallway between it and the front room. The walls had long ago been removed, but on the sub-floor, we discovered where the original walls had been. I painted that room with a shade of dark green I found under the layers of wallpaper. The sub-floor had originally been painted gold, then later, dark brown.



The rear kitchen extension to the home was

added early in the twentieth century. I was able to scrape inch by inch the plaster that covered the original brick exterior of the house making the inside kitchen wall very rustic. I sealed the bricks and added area lighting to emphasize work areas. The floor has tile around the sink area and hardwood in the kitchen eating area.

Researchers at the University of Wisconsin have indicated that this style of period home is reminiscent of the “Polish-American architectural style” found in central Wisconsin near Amherst. One element is the exterior limestone stairs to the basement potato storage. The original stairs now lie beneath the newer wood stairs. Sometimes even in a small town one will find duplicate house plans. There are no other brick homes in Elkader that reflect this exact style of architecture thus making it somewhat unique.



Finally, the exterior of the home was addressed. The enclosed porch at the front of the house was removed. New columns and balustrade installed in the same style shown in original early photographs. Research in the Carter House Museum turned up photographs taken around 1910. It is possible to discern the open porch with pillars and balustrade. It appeared that the original columns were made of concrete, but other than the brick column supports, we could not find the columns. New columns were purchased and installed.

I did take the liberty of adding a “widows walk” to the very top of

the house. It was pure whimsy on my part. I believe it finishes the house and adds a visual accent. One can access the roof through a hatch in the attic. That character Ollie Bruns said she would walk around up there just for the fun of it if Bob Anderson would put her picture on the front page of the newspaper. Bob hasn’t replied. Guess it isn’t news.



Bright red paint on the porch and lower brick face was removed and surface sealed restoring their



natural color. The wooden floor was sealed and urethane painted on the unfinished wood surface with non-skid texture sand. Fencing and landscape will be complete by the summer of 2007.

The interior furniture and photographs are for the most part, reflective of how the home would have appeared at the turn-of-the-century. The home presents as a period piece. I acquired many exquisite pieces of furniture at local auctions. Much of the furniture is from

the homes of Clayton County’s early residents. Among some of the more interesting pieces are a rope bed and brass lamp from the estate of “Red” Possehl; a Duncan-Fife dining room set from the estate of Ferne Bennett; a 1912 Elkader Yearbook; a cigar box from Stebor’s Cigar Company; various black and white reproduction photographs of early Elkader in the 1800’s reproduced with permission of the Carter House Museum; an authentic 1865 lithograph of Abraham Lincoln and his family; a period oak fireplace mantel and many other unique, collectibles from northeastern Iowa.

The beginning, or the End?

This restoration project is coming to an end. People ask me if I will move to Iowa and live in the house. Or will I rent it? Or will I sell it? I don't know the answers to these questions. I recently started another small business in California, but it only requires minimal effort on my part to keep it in operation. At most I probably work two days a week and I can afford to leave it on automatic pilot for weeks on end. What a great business eh? Will I renovate another *house* in Elkader? I doubt it, but I never know what might challenge my creative juices.

While recently perusing the Voss Realty web site, I happened upon a sales listing for Elkader's American Legion Hall. Yup...I recently bought that too. It is in much better shape than the Bridge Street home and I am formulating some very interesting plans for it. But that is another story for another day.

If you happen upon our little home in Elkader, Iowa and see me watering the flowers in the front yard, stop in and say hello. I give home tours at the drop of a hat and you may even see Ollie on the widow's walk!!





Exterior porch column



Kitchen dining area



Master Bedroom



Old fashioned toilet

James T. Partch

***James T. Partch** is numbered among the honored early pioneers of Clayton County, where he settled when the land was wild and bore little promise of the great future in store for it. For a number of years he devoted himself to the pursuit of agriculture, improving and bringing under good cultivation a valuable farm. For nearly forty years his home has been made in Elkader, and during that time he has been prominently identified with all progressive and public movements of this place. Coming to Iowa almost without means, Mr. Partch by reason of his industrious qualities and good financial methods was soon enabled to acquire a competence, becoming well-to-do and influential in the history of the county.

The birth of our subject occurred in the town of Hinesburgh, Chittenden County, Vt., March 8, 1817, and of that county, his father, James Partch, was also a native. His death occurred in the Green Mountain State, when his son James was still an infant, and his wife, who was in her girlhood Tamar Hayes, also died in that state when her son was quite young. The paternal grandfather, Thomas Partch, was a native of England, and coming to America, settled in Connecticut in an early day. The boyhood of our subject was passed uneventfully in his native state, where he learned the details of farm work and attended the common schools. After he came to his majority he learned the carpenter's trade, at which he worked for a time. In 1839 he removed to Pennsylvania, where he carried on a farm and also worked at his trade.

It was in 1848 that our subject decided he could improve his fortunes by going further west, and he therefore came to the new state of Iowa to grow up with the country. Settling in Clayton County when but few improvements had been made within its limits, he successfully carried on a farm until 1856, since which time he has been partially retired from active life, though he still oversees his farm which is yet in his possession.

In 1839 Mr. Partch married Miss Lucy Barnum, who was also born in Vermont and is a daughter of Russell E. Barnum, a prominent man in Vermont. His father, Ebenezer Barnum, did valiant service in the War of the Revolution. The wife of Russell E. Barnum was, in her girlhood, Rosanna Palmer, her birth occurring in Vermont and her death in Pennsylvania. When eight years old Mrs. Partch went with her parents to the Keystone State, where she received her education. At a very early day in the history of this county her father removed with his family here and became one of the pioneers. Both Mr. and Mrs. Partch have been witnesses of the development and gradual prosperity which have come to this section as the result of the efforts of the early settlers. The step-mother of Mrs. Partch, whose name before her marriage was Deborah Blakesley, was educated with a view to going to India as a missionary, but finally became a missionary among the Indians. She was a talented woman and started the first Sunday-school in Clayton County. Mr. and Mrs. Partch have never had any children of their own, but their hospitable home has been open to many, as they have reared several children, giving to them their kind and tender love and care. They are devoted members of the Universalist Church, and have the warm love and friendship of all who have had the pleasure of making their acquaintance. Mr. Partch is known to be a man who is just and honorable in all his relations with his fellow-men, and the confidence and respect of his townsmen are his in an eminent degree.

Hugh McKeller, Sr. and Jr.

Hugh McKeller, Jr. late the owner of the fine old homestead farm upon which his father established the family home more than sixty years ago, maintained his residence there from the time he was a lad of five years.

Mr. McKeller Jr. was born in Tioga county, New York, on the 8th of October, 1848, and was a son of Hugh and Mary (McKuenan) McKeller, both natives of Scotland and representatives of sterling old families of the land of hills and heather. Upon coming to America, about the year 1842, Hugh McKeller, Sr., first located near the city of Albany, New York, and later established his residence in Tioga county, that state, where he remained until 1853, when he came with his family to Iowa and became a pioneer settler of Clayton county. He obtained a tract of land in Section 16, Highland township, where he reclaimed and developed a fine landed estate of two hundred and forty acres. He was a black smith by trade, and on his farm he maintained a well equipped blacksmith shop, in which he found ample demand for his services. He was one of the sturdy and upright men who contributed materially to the civic and industrial development and progress of the county, and he remained on his old homestead until his death, which occurred July 4, 1877, his widow having passed to eternal rest on the 22d of May, 1879. They became the parents of six children, concerning whom the following brief data are given: Archibald died in childhood; Peter resides at Elgin, Fayette county; Sarah is deceased; Hugh Jr., the subject of this sketch was the fourth in order of birth; Maria is the wife of Jerome N. Robbins, of Highland town ship; Roxie is the widow of John Service and resides at Elgin, Fayette county.

He to whom this brief review is dedicated (Hugh McKeller Jr). gained his youthful education in the district schools of Highland township, and the stage of his activities during the long intervening years was the old homestead farm on which he was reared from childhood and which now comprises three hundred and thirty acres. Mr. McKeller never wavered in his allegiance to the Republican party and, though he was loyal and liberal in his civic attitude, he was not imbued with any ambition for the honors or emoluments of public office. He affiliated with the Masonic fraternity, and at the time of his death, June 7, 1916, he was one of the highly esteemed citizens of the county.

source: *History of Clayton County, Iowa; From The Earliest Historical Times Down to the Present*; by Realto E. Price, Vol. II; page 265-266

Julia Carlton, orphan niece of E.V. Carter

The Carter House Museum gives visitors a glimpse into the lives of Iowans of 150 years ago. Built in 1855 as a "mirror" or double house for pioneer brothers Henry and Ernest Victor Carter and their families, it is a Neoclassic Greek revival mansion of 18 rooms now used as an historic museum to display furniture, clothing, and artifacts from the 19th and 20th centuries. An adjoining annex contains military uniforms from past wars, primitive farm tools, early fire-fighting equipment, and a display of 19th century drug store supplies. The Carters made their home in this house for 30 years. During that time, E.V. Carter served as a major in the Union Army during the Civil War, returning from the war in 1866 only to die at home, probably from "consumption" contracted during his army service. Brother Henry and his sons were bankers. Henry and his wife Harriet had eight children, three of whom died and are buried in Elkader. **E.V. and his wife had no surviving children, but raised an orphan niece, Julia Lucinda Carlton. (The Carter House Museum has a period picture showing the original Bridge Street home described in this paper as a home where Julia lived as a child).** The Carters were prominent in establishing Elkader's Congregationalist Church and supported the Abolitionist and Prohibitionist movements. In 1885, the surviving Carters, except for E.V.'s widow, moved to Ashland, Oregon.

Carter House Museum, Elkader Historical Society

Addendum:

In 1836 Caleb Day Carlton (born May 22, 1815 in Ohio) and Julia Hine (married March 6, 1839) moved to Clayton County. They had a daughter and named her Julia Lucinda Day Carlton (born in Elkader on December 15, 1848/died February 3, 1933). Upon the untimely death of Julia, her mother, (Caleb married Mary E. Strong on September 6, 1856) young Julia was raised by her "uncle," E.V. Carter (1810-1866). Julia Lucinda Day Carlton married W.A. Preston, (b: August 7, 1839/d: July 30, 1920 a local Elkader attorney on October 12, 1870. They had three daughters, Mary E. and Clara Carlton and Donna. Clara Carlton Preston married William Bonar Bell in September of 1906. They had two children: Julia C. Bell and David B. Bell.

E.V. Carter Will (April 17, 1866: "I will and bequeath to Julia L. Carter two thousand dollars when she becomes of age. Also the organ which she has ordered. I also desire her to attend school one or two years."

Pre-Restoration Exterior Stills



In Progress Construction
Entry/Living/Dining Rooms



In Progress Construction
Basement: original beam and new electrical



In Progress Construction:
Kitchen



In Progress Construction:
Upstairs Hallway/Bedroom



In Progress Construction:
Upstairs Master Bedroom toward Washroom



***In Progress Construction:
Upstairs Washroom Plumbing***



In Progress Construction:
Upstairs Bathroom



In Progress Construction\The Crews



In Progress Construction:
Downstairs Plasterboard

