

THE OTTUMWA PRESERVATIONIST



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WELCOME

Welcome to the first newsletter of Ottumwa's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)! Our goal in developing a regularly published newsletter is to better inform the community about Ottumwa's rich historic resources and develop opportunities for collaborative efforts amongst all our citizenry in the preservation of these historic resources.

The HPC is comprised of five community volunteers appointed by the mayor with the consent of the city council. Current commissioners are Dennis Willhoit, chair; Cara Galloway, John Ohlinger, Mary Stewart and Rick Woten.

Our tasks as outlined in the city code are to 1) Promote the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the public through recognition, enhancement, and perpetuation of sites and districts of historical and cultural significance; 2) Safeguard the city's historic, aesthetic, and cultural heritage by preserving sites and districts of historic and cultural significance; 3) Stabilize and improve property values; 4) Foster pride in the legacy of beauty and achievements of the past; 5) Protect and enhance the city's attractions to tourists and visitors and support and stimulus to business thereby provided; 6) Strengthen the economy of the city; and, 7) Promote the use of sites and districts of historic and cultural significance as places for the education, pleasure, and welfare of the people of the city.

Indeed, these are challenging tasks, but we are confident that in collaboration with Ottumwa's many history enthusiasts, we will continue to celebrate and build they city's historical legacy.

Dennis Willhoit, Chair



The Daum House

Left: 1966 Lemberger Collection

Below: Ottumwa Courier 2.7.2020

HISTORIC OTTUMWA HOUSE AMONG IOWA'S MOST ENDANGERED

BY ZACH SIMONSON

In February, Preservation Iowa designated nine properties across the state for the 2020 Most Endangered Properties List, including the historic Daum House at 513 N Court in Ottumwa. The house at 513 N. Court was built in the early 1880s for W.R. Daum, President of the Electric Street Railway Company. The house is a contributing structure to the Court Hill Historic District, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1998. The home is a unique example of brick Italianate style with segmented arches of cream-colored brick, cream-colored brick quoins and decorative cornice brackets.

As the result of fire damage and neglect, the property is currently placarded by the Health Department as unfit for human habitation. As this property remains vacant, its condition continues to deteriorate. In its present condition the property continues to have a negative catalytic effect on the rest of the historic district. The City is pursuing legal action under Iowa Code Sec. 657A to take title to the abandoned property. Supporters of the house and historic district are hopeful that the City could redirect the property to a party interested in restoring the house. If a buyer could be found, the City Planning Department would provide technical assistance and leverage outside funding opportunities to assist in a rehabilitation of the property.

Preservation Iowa started the Most Endangered Property program in 1995 to educate Iowans about the special buildings and historic sites that are slowly and gradually slipping away. In the past 25 years, Preservation Iowa has designated over 150 homes, churches, archeological sites, landscapes, commercial buildings and a variety of other properties. The Daum House is the first Ottumwa property to make the list. For more information about the Most Endangered Program, check out Preservation Iowa's website at www.preservationiowa.org or contact Preservation Iowa at info@preservationiowa.org.



HPC VIRTUAL GUIDED TOUR

BY CARA GALLOWAY

The HPC commission has created an interactive tour to allow the community to learn more about the rich history of the Ottumwa Historic Neighborhoods and other National Registered items in Ottumwa.

The [virtual tour](#) uses Google Maps and allows citizens to enjoy a nice drive or get your steps in with a walk around town to each district.

When you go on your tour make sure you have the [Ottumwa Historic Treasures](#) also open on your phone to find more detailed information about the districts and items in the districts.

The tours and supplement document can be found clicking the links above or by visiting our website at <https://www.cityofottumwa.com/preservation/>.

The Ottumwa Preservationist



NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICT



RAILROAD
ESTABLISHED 2011



NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICT



N. FELLOWS
ESTABLISHED 2010



NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICT



CEMETERY
ESTABLISHED 1995

COMING SOON TO HISTORIC DISTRICTS

BY DENNIS WILLHOIT

Signage designating each of Ottumwa's seven National Registry Districts will be placed along the historic district streets in the coming months. The HPC worked with graphic designer Sara Statema-Johnson to first identify architecture representative of each of the districts and then coordinate them for a common theme amongst all the districts.

"The signs will be a good way to remind residents that they live in a nationally-recognized historic district, and they will welcome our visitors, encouraging them to explore," said Dennis Willhoit, HPC chair. "We want to promote pride in our community's historic districts and tell the story of what makes Ottumwa unique."

The historic signage effort is being coordinated with other wayfinding signs in Ottumwa with the help of Bradley Grefe from the Area 15 Regional Planning Commission. Mr. Grefe and HPC members walked the neighborhoods in August and determined final placement of the signs with hopes that the signs will be installed by the city's engineering department this autumn.

HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

BY MARY STEWART

"Tradition! Tradition!" The familiar lyric from Fiddler On the Roof is fitting in the case of a beloved community tradition we hope to revive and expand. The Historic Preservation Commission hopes to revive this holiday tradition and to bring some light to our historic neighborhoods. Vogel Place historic district was first listed on the National Registry of Historic Places in 1995. With its brick-paved and shaded street, Vogel Place is a charming collection of various styles of architecture and friendly neighbors. It is also a place of tradition.

When you think of Vogel, people often think of over-the-top celebrations of Halloween with hundreds of out for a treat on beggars' night. Another Vogel tradition that was a treat for the community was the tradition of Christmas lights and luminaries. A turn onto Vogel in the week before Christmas always brought smiles to faces. The two blocks of Vogel were lined with luminaries that illuminated the neighborhood with a gentle glow. The tradition began approximately 25-30 years ago and was a group effort contributed to by many but spearheaded by some of Vogel's long term residents, Dick and Sandy Guiter, Jim and Ila Fox, Bob and Ann Wilkerson, John and Janet Richards and dozens of other families over the years. The children of Vogel Street families helped with the lighting each year and the luminaries remain fond memories for the Guiter and Fox families daughters. In addition, the neighborhood was a fantastic display of holiday light and color from all the Christmas decorations in every yard. Some homeowners in fact went "over the top" in a very positive way, as the famous star and lights at the top of Bob and Ann Wilkerson's large pine tree were testimony to.

Tradition! HPC is all about creating a brighter future while honoring the past and our traditions. Last year the lights on Vogel were lighted for one evening and the community response was very positive. HPC is interested in reviving the Vogel Place luminary project to include the full Historic district and to expand it to the other historic residential districts in the community. It is our hope to bring this tradition back in a way that will brighten all our holidays while being easy on our pocketbooks. Planning takes time so we are beginning now. This year is a perfect time to bring joy and light to the holidays as an expression of our perseverance and our hope. If you would be interested in participating in any way, please contact us at HPC by phone at 641-680-3260.