



**Preston
Historical
Society**

Newsletter

President's Notes

By: Sheila Craig

The Preston Historical Society has just met up with the 'Hare' from the "Hare and the Tortoise" and moved into FAST gear! The group is definitely on fast forward! We have so many people involved in all of the efforts, especially related to the building of the DMRC (Depot Museum and Riverfront Center)! We have an overall DMRC committee, a Building Committee, a Fundraising Committee, and a Collections Committee! Everyone is so engaged and giving their all with time and talents as well as monetary contributions.

Other articles in this newsletter are a picture collage to show and tell all the progress that has been made on the building since contractor, Phil Eickhoff, got started with the demolition and now reconstruction at the former Dairy and Farm Building on Fillmore Street, across from the Elevator.

Hang on to your hat (not just from all the wind that we have been having) with all the activities that are going on. As Jon DeVries says "All Aboard". Thanks to EVERYONE for all of your engagement and participation!

Sheila

Construction Begins!

The Preston Depot Museum and Riverfront Center construction began on April 1, 2025! As of this newsletter, the interior has been completely demolished, and reconstruction has begun. All aboard! See more photos at the end of this newsletter.



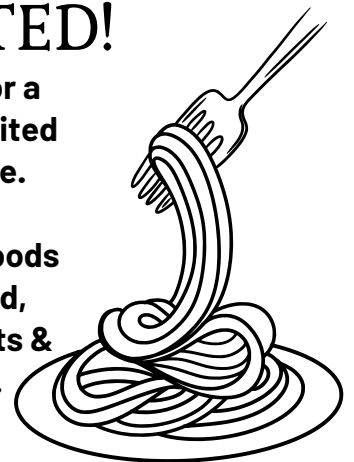
Coming Soon!

YOU ARE INVITED!

Join us on Thurs., May 15, 2025, for a Spaghetti Dinner at the Preston United Methodist Church from 5pm-gone.

Freewill donation.

The meal is prepared by Preston Foods & includes spaghetti, salad, bread, cookies, coffee & water. Take-outs & gluten free spaghetti available.



Raffle tickets & brick sales information will be available. Celebrate the start of Trout Days & the DMRC construction while helping to raise funds for our ongoing work!

Tractor Ride Update

By: Sheila Craig

Plans are coming together for our 12th annual 2-day round about Tractor Ride in beautiful Bluff Country. The ride this year will be held on Saturday and Sunday, September 13 and 14. Day 1 on Saturday will start at 9 a.m. in Preston with travel to Henrytown for the morning break. From there it is on to Mabel for a lunch stop at Mabel 1 st Lutheran. The afternoon will bring us back to Preston with an afternoon break at Selvig Park in Harmony. Saturday evening participants will enjoy a smoked pork chop dinner and a silent auction.

Sunday finds the group enjoying the traditional sausage, egg, pancake breakfast before heading out to North Prairie church for their morning break. From there it is on to the American Legion in Peterson where the Legion auxiliary will be feeding the group. The afternoon will find the tractors heading back to Preston with a stop in Highland.

New this year will be a registration deadline on August 29. There will also be a cap of 100 tractors. We currently have 29 tractors registered. If you don't have a tractor, but you would like to tour Bluff County at a slow leisurely pace, we have a wagon available for those interested in riding for one day or both days – but you must be pre-registered. The registration form is available on our website.

As a Preston Historical Society member, we will be looking for some volunteer help from each of you. This is our largest fundraiser of the year!

Raffle Update

By: Debbie Thompson

The PHS raffle is underway with the raffle drawing occurring on August 7, 2025. Tickets are \$5 each.



Permanent Advertising: A Brick Campaign Update

By: Alison Leathers

Thanks to the brick sales project spearheaded by Kerry Soiney and the work of our members, our brick campaign continues to pick up sales and support the cost of our brick patio and construction. Sheila Craig has been going around talking to various Preston businesses about our brick campaign, and someone shared with her that, "this is permanent advertising!". How wise is that statement! A customized, engraved brick in the DMRC patio is permanent advertising for any Preston area business. It is also a permanent memorial or honorarium to someone special in your life. Consider buying a brick today - and be sure to spread the word to your family and friends with Preston connections. Be a part of Preston history!

- \$100 = 4"x8" brick
- \$200 = 8"x8" brick
- Order forms are online, at F&M Community Bank, and various Preston businesses.

This is the first time PHS is conducting a cash raffle. There are only 1,500 tickets being sold with \$3,000 in cash prizes, so chances of winning a cash prize are good. F&M Community Bank is donating \$1 for each ticket sold.

\$1,000 - Grand Prize

2 - \$500 Prizes

2 - \$250 Prizes

2 - \$100 Prizes

6 - \$50 Prizes



Must be 18 or older to purchase ticket or win prize. Winner responsible for any applicable fees or taxes.

Membership Update

By: Sheila Craig

We welcome two new business life members to the Preston Historical Society: Andrew Bunge with Bunge Construction and Cottage House Inn (Alison Leathers). Patricia Scanlan from Oro Valley, Arizona has also joined us as a Life Member. New Family Members joining us in the Fall of 2024 included: Pam Mensink; John and Gabby Kinneberg; and David Garner as a new Individual Member. We are so appreciative of your membership!



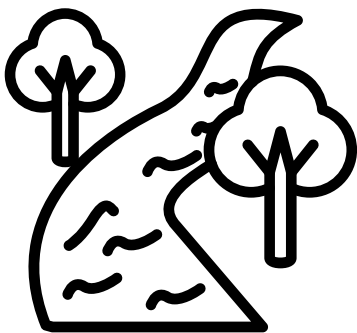
Collections Committee Highlights

By: Joanne Hall

A huge "Thanks!" to Ron Scheevel! We were able to vacate the final large pieces of farm equipment from the former Dairy and Farm building! He has donated his time and equipment to move some large collection pieces to temporary storage during reconstruction. We also thank those who have volunteered temporary storage space as well.

We have limited our acceptance of donations to individual circumstances. Gordon Tindall was a Lanesboro resident who moved out of state this spring. He was a former maintenance worker for the Milwaukee RR and owned several maintenance tools. He offered the tools to our Society as they would have been part of our Motor and Trailing car equipment. We also received a lamp from Society member, Vernon Wiegand. It was owned by his grandfather, August Wiegand, who lived in Preston until his death in 1934. It will find a home in the completed Depot Museum.

We have offers of other Preston related items that the owners are willing to keep until our doors are open. Our Collection group is working with a consultant to develop an Interpretive Plan for our museum displays. This will be a guide for exhibit designs that tell our stories of Preston, our river, the railroad, and agriculture to future visitors.



River



Railroad



Agriculture

University of Minnesota Planning Underway - Preston to Forestville State Park Trail

By: Jon DeVries

The Preston Historical Society was approved for participation in an Empowering Small Minnesota Communities (ESMC) program with the University of Minnesota (U of M) and has formed a three-community committee – Preston, Lanesboro, & Harmony – to collaborate on plans for completion of the Preston to Forestville State Park Trail.

Through the Minnesota Design Center (MDC) and the U of M Extension Services, the ESMC program provides expertise on design options, funding sources, construction costs, state resources, environmental impacts and development strategies for local projects.

The work kicked off with an ESMC tour in February of the Preston riverfront and Root River valley trail areas including meetings with PHS committee members, Forestville State Park staff, and local river experts including Mel Hayner, owner of Driftless Fly Fishing in Preston. Attending from ESMC were Andi Sutton, Exec. Director – Southeast Regional Sustainable Development Partnership, U of M and Ursula Lang, Research & Design Fellow, MDC.

The planning will complement the Preston Historic Campus & Riverfront Masterplan, identify feasible routes from Carimona to the park, coordinate with DNR trail engineering (Preston to Carimona), include Historic Forestville plans, and gather community and landowner input. Consideration of environmental impacts, tourist visitation, economic spending, and recreational benefits are included.

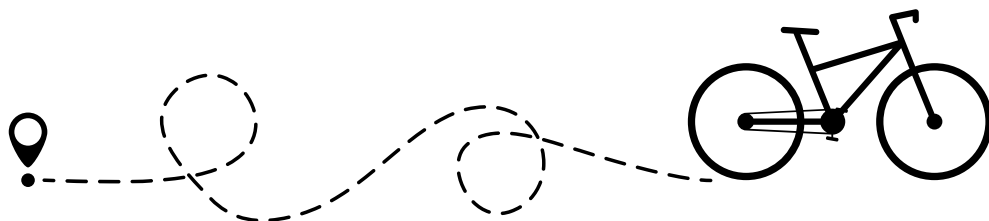
PHS members Sheila Craig, Dan Christianson, Chuck Aug, Kerry Soiney, Alison Leathers and Jon DeVries have met with DNR leaders to coordinate efforts. Study completion is anticipated in 2025 and the final report conclusions and recommendations will be shared and reviewed with the public, local governments, state agencies and legislative representatives to facilitate cooperation, approvals, and funding for trail completion.



Pictured left to right: Andi Sutton, Mel Hayner, Kerry Soiney, Ursula Lang, Sheila Craig, & Alison Leathers.



Pictured left to right: Alison Leathers, Kerry Soiney, Ursula Lang, Bob Storlie (Forestville State Park), Matt Eidem (Historic Forestville), & Andi Sutton.



History Moment - Clarence P. "Tim" Grebin

By: Diane Johnson

Clarence P. "Tim" Grebin was born in Preston on January 30, 1895, to Roman & Helena Grebin. He was born in the living quarters of the restaurant and confectionary business that his parents operated on lower St. Paul Street. He was the second of nine children. In his 1978 interview, Tim said that his father was famous for his milk shakes. He would take ice from the river, shave it, add milk and chocolate, then shake it.

When he was younger, Tim skipped school frequently. He decided to quit but after a few days of doing field work with horses, he decided school wasn't so bad after all. Eventually he got interested in sports. He played basketball upstairs at the Opera House. He remembered going by bobsleigh to a game in Harmony. It was very cold; it took three hours to get there and another three hours to get back.

As a youth, Tim was a pitcher with Preston and Houston teams. He also played football. In those days they had no protection — no helmet or shoulder pads. He took an old pair of shoes to the shoemaker and got cleats put on them. Tim was a member of Preston's high school football team that was crowned the "Champions of Southern Minnesota" after they beat Grand Meadow in November of 1912.

He graduated from high school in 1915; he was 20 years old at the time. He had failed one year because he didn't finish and then skipped a couple of years. After graduation he worked for area farmers. He also operated a wholesale honey company, called the M. V. Facey Company, where he bought, sold, and packed honey.

Tim served in the infantry in the Army in France during World War I from 1917 to 1919. On September 14, 1926, Tim married Genevieve Celestine Mayer from Bayport, Minnesota. They raised two sons - Thomas and Jerome (or Jerry).

Tim was active in civic and community affairs. He was Village Clerk from 1933 to 1959 (wages were \$50/month). When the light plant was built in 1935, he became the secretary and clerk of the Village Utilities for another \$25/month. Tim also served on the school board from 1932 to 1938. At one time, he was the Fillmore County unemployment serviceman. He was also a member of the Lions Club and served on the Civil Defense Board during WWII. Many people considered him to be Preston's unofficial historian.

After retiring in 1959, Tim went to work at the golf course and stayed for 10 years. He decided that they should have grass greens instead of sand greens. Tim was involved in building the local ballpark and skating rink. He also enjoyed woodworking; he made spinning wheels, tables, clocks, etc. and also refinished antiques.

Tim died on May 1, 1987, at the age of 92 at the Preston Care Center. His funeral was held at St. Columban Catholic Church; he is buried in the church cemetery.



History Moment - My Mother Evie

By: John Carlin

Evelyn Teresa Carlin Marzolf was born on October 3, 1917, to Thomas and Mary Carlin. Thomas Carlin, Evelyn's father, was born in 1889 in the Pine City area of Minnesota. At age 10, his parents died and Thomas and his brothers and sisters were placed in orphanages. Thomas was placed in an orphanage in Owatonna, Minnesota. Thomas was brought from the orphanage to Fillmore County by the Thomas and Maggie Crowe family. When Thomas was 25, he married Mary Elizabeth Maloney.

Thomas and Mary had 10 children: Thomas, Mary, Evelyn, Irene, Raymond, Joseph, Rose, Helen, Gladys, and Patricia. All of this family has died. There are 335 descendants of this family.

Evelyn was in a lot of sports in High School and after Graduation. She started working after graduation in St. Mary's Hospital in housekeeping. I was born on January 20, 1941, when Evelyn was 24. In 1945, Evelyn married Bob Marzolf, and we moved to the Marzolf farm south of Preston on County Road 17. The farm was in the estate of the Marzolf Family. Harlan and Evelyn Marzolf lived on a farm west of us. Sheila lives on that farm now.

Our farm did not have running water or electricity, and we had a crank phone on the party line. We had a windmill that pumped the water to a cistern. The milking was done by hand, and the milk was strained and put in milk cans to be picked up by the milk truck to be brought to the Preston Creamery.

In 1949, we moved from the farm into Preston and lived in an apartment above Bickelhaupt's Hardware Store on the corner of Main Street and St. Paul Street. The phone exchange was next to our apartment. Evie started working at the Victory Café which was owned by Harlo and Donna Ibach. Evie also worked at Austin Lockers which was next to Gartner's Grocery Store.

In 1953, Evie and Bob were divorced, and we lived with my Grandpa in his house on the corner of River St. and St. Anthony. I think they named it River Street because about every ten years the Root River would flood and run down River Street about four feet deep and flood us out. That area is now known as Goose Flat park.

I have read that in early history they called that area Goose Flat because of all the geese that were raised in the area. In 1955, Evie started working at Gartner's Grocery Store. Later they moved into the Pontiac Garage. In 1968, Vern and Shirley Dahl bought the store and called it Dahl's IGA. In 1993 the Dahls gave Evie a plaque for 25 years of service. Evie was 76 at that time. Evie worked for the Dahls until she was 83 years old. In 2000, Evie made it a point that if you came into the store more than twice she wanted to know all your kids' names, where you lived, and who you were related to. Evie wanted to be able to talk to all of her customers.

Evie loved to bake, and she had stacks of cook books and was always trying new baked goods on me. I could drop off anything and come back a little later for the pie or cake. Evie was 93 and was baking bars on Saturday and died on Sunday at St. Mary's Hospital with her family at her bedside. Her old heart just gave out.



Preston Depot Museum & Riverfront Center Updates

Photos submitted by Steve Hall



The interior demolition of the building is complete, and reconstruction started on April 14, 2025. On April 16, 2025, some exterior tin was removed and new plywood and window openings were constructed on the exterior.

Preston Depot Museum & Riverfront Center Updates

Photos submitted by Steve Hall



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