



Preston Historical Society

Post Office Box 138
Preston, Minnesota 55965

A 501C/3 Non-Profit Corporation

NEWSLETTER
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President's Corner

Sheila Craig

2017 was a busy year for the Preston Historical Society. We again held a successful raffle fund-raiser and a very successful Tractor Ride. Work continues to try to raise funds for the bagging shed addition to the elevator and to find a permanent home for PHS displays and storage. Work on obtaining a home has been slowly moving forward as the Preston City Council is poised to purchase the former Dairy & Farm site near the Trailhead. The plans are still to have the building include a home for PHS along with the Tourism Center and the National Trout Center.

A grant written to the Minnesota Historical Society for funding to reconstruct the bagging shed was denied. State Representative Greg Davids continues to work with the Society to find funding for this building.

For exciting news about the cleanup and signage at Isinours, please see the article elsewhere in this newsletter.

We want to thank Don & Dorrie Besse who are again donating the use of a storage unit to the Preston Historical Society for 2018. This is a very welcome contribution to PHS to have a location to store historical items and ongoing supplies for events.

We have continued with the "History Moment" at each monthly meeting.

A summary of one of the recent presentations is included in this newsletter!

Preston Expo

Each fall the Preston Chamber has been holding a "Preston Expo". As members of the Chamber, PHS offers a display for the event. Organized by member, Norma Vogt, the display featured the artifact that was used for recording the tickets at events. Also on display were our bird houses, books, t-shirts, and a poster with pictures from the tractor ride.

Tractor Ride

The 5th Annual fall Tractor Ride was very successful with over 70 tractors participating. We also had a wagon full of those who enjoyed the ride but didn't have a tractor.

Over \$5,000 was raised for the PHS general fund.

Plaque Project Update

We have received several recent donations that are being recognized on our commemorative plaques. We have now filled our first "\$200 Plaque" with a donation from Wayne & Patricia Marzolf. We have 24 names on that plaque and are now starting our second plaque with a donation from Jerry & Nancy Gartner and Evelyn Christianson.

New \$100 donations since our last update include those from Aaron Fox & Robert Mayrand, In Memory of Paul Mathison, Clifford & Rita Sackett, and Ann Ott.

We send a sincere thanks to all of our donors.

2017 Raffle Winners

Sheila Craig

We again sold 1000 raffle tickets to raise money for the Preston Historical Society. F & M Bank again contributed \$1 for each ticket sold with a \$1000 contribution. We also thank the many donors who contributed all of the prizes.

This year's winners included the following.

2-Night stay at Crestwood Country Cabin, Preston– Darwin & Jenny Smith (\$220 value)
Erv Tienter, Preston
Nike Method Putter – Greg & Bonnie Davids (\$200 value) Mike Odenbrett, Preston
Handmade Pieced Lap Quilt – Quip & Quilt Guild (\$150 value) Taylor Case, Preston
Gift Certificate – 4 Daughters – Dick & Linda Wolfe (\$100 value) Dan Schmidt, Wykoff
Metal Trout Sculpture – John Carlin (\$75 value) Dave Mensink, Preston
2 Commonweal Theatre Tickets – KFIL (\$70 value) Diane Rudd, Preston
4 – tractor-themed crates – Darwin Smith (\$65 value each) Oliver Crate, Jana Boyum, Rushford; John Deere, Donna Dreier, Preston; Case, Bonnie Davids, Preston; Allis Chalmers, Susie Hager.
2 pkg. Nike golf balls – Greg & Bonnie Davids (\$58 value each), Donna Ibach, Preston
2 Gift Certificates – Preston Motor Mart – Rich Irish, S & A Petroleum (\$50 value each), Taylor Fox, La Crosse; and Janice Barsch, Preston.
Golf Iron Cover, Dan Christianson & F & M Bank, Kari Broadwater, Preston
Gift Certificate – Branding Iron (\$50 value), Jerry Nash, Wykoff.
Gift Certificate – NAPA Preston & Root River Hardware (\$50 value), Robert Maust, Preston
Gift Certificate – Sweet Stop & Sandwich Shoppe (\$50 value), Steven Duxbury, Wykoff.

Gift Certificate to Branding Iron – Greg & Bonnie Davids (\$50 value), Carl Bakalyar, Preston

MN Gopher Tied Fleece Blanket – Sheila Craig (\$40 value), Shelly Hanson, B & B Bowl Jailhouse Stories book & 2 coffee mugs – JailHouse Historic Inn, Innkeepers, Jeanne & Marc Sather (\$35 value), Joyce Hellickson, Preston

Holiday Table Runner – Ann Sparks (\$30 value), Heidi Hanson, Chatfield

2 Pork Gift Certificates good at Harmony, Preston or Rushford Foods – Gulbranson Farms (\$25 value each), Bob Maust & Jen Pickett, Preston

Gift Certificate – Preston Floral – Mike & Flossie Schultz (\$25 value), Kyle Chiglo, Peterson

Gift Certificate - The Club (\$25 value), Pat Gartner, Preston

Gift Certificate – B & B Olympic Bowl – Mike & Flossie Schultz (\$25 value), Barry Tienter, Winona

Gift Certificate – Preston Floral (\$25 value), Elaine DeVries, LeRoy.

Welcome New Members

We welcome Aaron Fox & Bob Mayrand and the Preston EDA as Life Members of the Preston Historical Society!!

Early Days of Preston and Fillmore County 1853

Researched by John Carlin

- In 1853, the title to the lands held by the Indians were extinguished. A few settlements were made in 1853.
- The first naturalization papers in Fillmore County were issued on the 11th of October, 1853 to Knut Olesen.
- Up to 1854, Fillmore County was made up of the counties of Houston, Winona, Fillmore and parts of Olmsted County. In 1856, Fillmore County was divided by the setting off of the counties of Houston and

Winona. Chatfield was designated as the capitol of the county.

- On the 7th of April 1856, the City of Preston received the largest number of votes at the election held to determine the county seat. On the 25th of April 1856, the Board of Supervisors ordered that the records and furniture of the County Office be removed to Preston.
- The first record of marriage in Fillmore County was in July 1856 when Mr. David M. Everette of Illinois was married to Miss Jerissha E. Denny of Fillmore County.
- At their meeting on the 17th of September 1859, the Board of Supervisors took up the matter of a county court house. In File B3, they found that there had been placed individual bonds together with deeds and leases from citizens of Preston. This resulted in the conveyance of 36 lots and 4 half lots in the village of Preston to the County. The conveyance of these properties was conditioned upon the requirement that the county erect a Court House in the village of Preston at a cost not less than \$6,000 within two years from the date of conveyance.
- In 1866, the county gave the city of Preston \$200 to aid in the building of a bridge across the south branch of the Root River at the foot of Fillmore Street. This funding required that the bridge be worth at least \$1,000.
- In 1868, the Commissioners passed a resolution to erect a new county jail for the safe keeping of prisoners.

Events of the Times as recorded in historic documents and newspapers

Historic language in the region was dramatic and flowery. We've recorded a few selections that we found interesting. We've

italicized phrases that we thought especially interesting or unusual. These excerpts are taken from obituaries, newspaper references and other historic documents which were used in the creation of a centennial history of Fillmore County.

1859--Fell over the Precipice

On the 2nd day of June, a boy named Seeley 12 or 14 years of age fell over the high precipice on the opposite side of the river below the Preston mill and into the river below dislocating his hip and otherwise injuring his body. After reaching the water he was barely enabled to save himself from drowning by taking hold of the willows and bearing himself up until assistance reached him. The boy escaped very luckily for the fall was frightful one and but a few feet either right or left *would have landed him upon rocks or crags dashing his brains out or disfiguring him beyond recognition.*

1865--Swept Away

On the 25th of February, Mr. McDonald of Newburg Township in attempting to cross the branch of the Root River at Preston with a two horse team at the ford was swept by *a flood of ice and water.*

1865--Child Killed

On the 10th of June an insane woman, the wife of Mr. John Long living 2 miles west of Preston struck her granddaughter, a girl of 13 years of age, a blow on the side of her head with a club. The child was not considered at first as being dangerously hurt but on the day following *while attending her usual duties suddenly fell down in a spasm and died within an hour.*

1875--Death of Joel S. Sawyer.

He was an early settler a valuable and faithful man. *Thus one by one the Pioneers drop out of sight. The debt of mortality in his case was cancelled on the 24th of May at Chatfield.*

1876--Death of George W. Sawyer.
He was suddenly removed from active usefulness here on the 29th of March 1876 at the age of 42 years.

Silver Currency

In May, silver began to take the place of fractional currency. The reintroduction of silver after about 15 years of banishment was a matter of curiosity particularly to the raising generation a majority of whom eighteen years of age could not remember ever having seen a silver quarter or dime and as the bright emblems of light and truth came in sight the local press bubbled over with enthusiasm.

1879

In December, a band of Winnebago Indians were in Lanesboro. They got up an exhibition under the patronage of Dr. Powell and realized almost \$50. Was this the start of the Buffalo Bills Wild West Show?

In 1879

Fillmore County produced 1,491,937 bushels of wheat; more than any other county in the state except Goodhue. The same year, Fillmore County produced 1,297,976 bushels of oats more than any other county in the state.

1880

Total value of real property in the county was \$6,767,773. The average value of land is placed at \$12.52 per acre.

The 36 inch gauge railroad from the Mississippi to Preston is said to be one of the best paying feeders to the trunk lines that is owned by the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Company.

We hope you've enjoyed these historic tidbits!

Isinours Update

Two new interpretive signs are now installed at Isinours on the Root River Trail

by DNR - one featuring the "lost depot" and one the historic "turntable" whose remains are now visible. The signs include pictures of the Preston to Isinours freight train and the Preston turntable - a sister to the Isinours one. The signs include remembrances from several members of the Preston Historical Society who had railroad family ties - including Donna Ibach and Bob Maust. A visitor platform is scheduled to be added at the turntable site by the end of October. The turntable was rediscovered by PHS member Jon DeVries in 2015 and the DNR has been working on establishing an historic site in this area.



Preston Historical Society members Bob & Elaine Maust, Jon DeVries, and Sheila Craig toured the site in October with DNR staff.

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