



Preston Historical Society

Post Office Box 138
Preston, Minnesota 55965

A 501C/3 Non-Profit Corporation

NEWSLETTER

March 2017

Volume 11 Issue 1

President's Corner

Sheila Craig

Direction for PHS in 2017

Members attending the January meeting participated in a goal setting activity to help determine the direction of PHS in 2017.

Many great suggestions were offered. Key among the ideas was a need to concentrate on the maintenance of existing items (elevator, boxcar, caboose, schoolhouse).

The procurement of the Riverside Center (formerly the Dairy & Farm building) tops the list of museum concerns. This project is still awaiting mitigation of the soils by Dairy & Farm before the area can be purchased by the City. Other museum concerns listed were to develop a collection program and organize the donated pictures.

Typical of all organizations, fund raising was on the list including continuation of the raffle. This successful event generates \$3000 each year. Last year the tractor ride added almost \$5000 to the budget. The goal this year is to increase participation.

Looking to increase the Historical Society's presence in the community is also one of the goals. Having the caboose and schoolhouse open more will aid in this endeavor.

And finally a goal to include more 'history' in the monthly meetings was suggested. This involves a new activity of having a "history moment" at each meeting. We will try to share these with you. See article

elsewhere in this newsletter sharing the story of the Charles & Ann Sparks home!

Tractor Ride - September 16 & 17

Elaine Maust

We have had one early meeting to decide the route and cost of the ride. The ride on Saturday will leave Preston and go to Mabel and on to the Stateline Rest Area and back to Preston.

On Sunday we will leave Preston about 9:15. Anyone wanting to see the parade of tractors can be at the IGA corner to view. We will go on to Spring Valley and Forestville and back to Preston.

We will continue to charge \$105.00 for the ride through August 15th when it will be raised to \$120.00 with final registration due September 8th. The charges for the dates are so we can know the number of drivers to plan for food and T shirts. The cost for those who drive Saturday only will be \$60.00 and Sunday only \$50.00. An extra rider (tractor or people wagon) will be \$60.00 each for 2 days or \$30.00 for one day.

We hope to have many past drivers and meet many new drivers .

Plaque Project

Sheila Craig

The Preston Historical Society has maintained a plaque project for several years. The plaques provide recognition for donors in three levels of giving. The levels

were named for the items at the Trailhead in Preston: the elevator, boxcar and caboose. There has been confusion that donors have wanted to give to a certain item, but the 'level' of giving didn't reflect the donation. The names are just the name of the level of giving and do not have to have the funds spent for that item. (Perhaps we should have named the levels: gold, bronze, and silver...) A donor can request that their donation be used to a specific project.

Since last listed in a newsletter the following 'plaque' donations have been received: \$100 from Preston Equipment, S & S Sanitation, In Memory of Max & Beah Nuesse, and In Memory of Grace Bluck. \$300 from NAPA-Root River Hardware and Janet S. Scheevel.

Membership Update

Sheila Craig

Since we last published a list of Lifetime Business members of the Preston Historical Society, we would like to recognize the following businesses that have joined: Preston Service Plus – Jones & Bond, POET, Major & Company, S & S Sanitation, and the Preston Chamber of Commerce.

Likewise, the following individual and family lifetime members have joined the Preston Historical Society in the last couple of years: Gary & Joyce Hellickson, Linda O'Connor, Donald & Wenonah Berkland, Will Mensink, Greg & Cheryl Dornink, Michael & Lisa Bjorkman, and Patty Hilzendeger, and Darwin & Genny Smith. Welcome to all!

Days I Remember

Bob Maust

This is the sixth installment of this history trip around Preston. The story continues:

We left off in the last issue at Charlie Barnes Sinclair Station.

70 years ago there were 7 gas stations in Preston. We'll begin with the P.O.P. DX Station on the North side of the south bridge. The DX Station was also a bulk fuel supplier to the community and surrounding area. They received their fuel by rail to fuel tanks located by the old mill by the river. They would receive gasoline, fuel oil and kerosene. Walt Drier and Abe Leutink were the bulk delivery men. This business was operated by Lloyd and Bob Berry for many years. It was then sold to Roger Halweg and later Bob Conlan and then Les Hellickson.

Then we will come up to the Standard Gas Station on the south corner of Fillmore and St. Anthony Street. The Standard Station, operated by Ralph Fairbairn, was supplied fuel from the Chris Evenrud bulk plant located by the railroad tracks just east of the elevator. Chris also delivered bulk fuel to the surrounding community.

Our next station will be the Mobile Station, operated by Duffy Lewis, on the north corner of Fillmore and St. Anthony Street. This station was across from the Tibbetts House and was where Jerry Ostrem started his body & fender business.

Then we will go north one block on St. Anthony Street to the Charlie Barnes Sinclair Station. This station was supplied fuel from Ernie Wubbels bulk fuel service. His bulk tanks were located by the west side of the railroad tracks on the east side of the old football field. Now we will proceed out to Highway 52.

As we come to Highway 52 the first station on the north side of 52 was Brownlow's Phillips 66 which is now the S & A BP Station. It was owned by Don Brownlow and was operate by both Don Brownlow and by Ray Lafreniere. Brownlow also operated a bulk delivery service with their bulk tanks on the west side of the railroad tracks next to the Sinclair bulk tanks. After Brownlow's early death his family sold the station to Lyle Simonson and he sold it to Dairy & Farm and they in turn sold it to S & A.

Then we proceed west on 52 one block and there was another Sinclair Station where KBS is now located next to the new B & B Bowling Alley. Fuel was supplied to this station again by Ernie Wubbels. This station was built right after World War II by Don Chilson and Lloyd Livey.

We will proceed west again on 52 and on the corner was Soffa's Standard Station operated by Frank Soffa.. The fuel supplied to this station was again by Chris Evenrud bulk service. Soffa sold to Al Drogemuller and it was later owned by Curt Hareldson. In later years there was another station which I will cover in the next issue along with other businesses on the north side of town.

Isinours Update

Jon B. DeVries

The tentative timing is still to have the sign about Isinours installed this coming 2017 summer. This will be near the current parking lot and in proximity to the "Ibach" house. It will include the story of the role of this location as a carriage connection between La Crosse to Austin passenger trains and Preston and then a direct rail connection to Preston in 1903. The Isinours to Preston line hosted multiple passenger and freight trains daily for decades and then

declining to weekly service until abandonment in 1977. Several Preston residents, including Donna Ibach, were interviewed for the Isinours history.

A second sign will be located where the remains of the turntable are still extant between Isinours and County Road 17. This is where locomotives were turned before returning to Preston. The turntable sign is going to be installed once a viewing platform can be constructed. This will enable trail users to see the turntable foundation from the trail elevation.

Craig Blommer, Regional Trails Supervisor, is working out the details. Once the platform is installed the sign should follow shortly after. Both signs will also include pictures of railroad signage and activities obtained from Walter Dunlap and others. A map showing the railroad alignment between Isinours and Preston from rail historian John Luecke is also hoped to be included.

Preston Historical Society Officers

President: Sheila Craig (507.273.1481)

smeercraig@gmail.com

Vice President: Sam Halverson

Secretary: Elaine Maust

Treasurer: Charles Sparks (507.765.4785)

Box 138, Preston, MN 55965

charlessparks@mediacombb.net

Newsletter Editor: Sheila Craig

Web Master: Beth Anderson

Website: prestonmnhistory.com

E-mail:

prestonhistoricalsociety@gmail.com

Mailing: Box 138, Preston, MN 55965

A History Moment
Charlie & Ann Sparks Home
412 St. Anthony St. N
Charlie Sparks

This home was built around the turn of the century for R. E. and Anna Thompson.



Richard Enos was born in 1857 to Iver and Cecilia (Walder) Thompson in Fillmore County. His parents were from Norway and were married in Chicago. R. E. was educated in the common schools of Newburg, Institute of Decorah, and the State Normal School in Winona.

From 1874 to 1879 he taught school. He studied law in the office of Judge H. R. Wells in Preston and was admitted to the bar in 1881. Gray & Thompson Law Firm was formed in a partnership with A. D. Gray.

R. E. served as a deputy clerk of court, Representative of district 1883 to 1885 and

was re-elected. In 1894, he was elected to the State Senate for 4 years.

Mr. Thompson, along with his brother A. W. Thompson, was also in the abstract business for Fillmore County. Thompson Brothers had the original and only set of abstract books and tract index of Fillmore County. He was also a Master Mason.

R. E. married Anna (Ann) in 1884 and they had 2 children. Victor was born Sept. 26, 1885, and Inez was born May 13, 1891. R. E. died in 1926 and Anna lived in the home until her death in 1951.

Alton and Doris Olson owned the house from 1952 to 1959. Orilee & Vernon Kleimenhagen bought the house in 1959. Orilee rented boarding rooms until she sold the home in 1979 to Donald & Retha Grewe. Many single people including several teachers lived in the house when it was a boarding house. The interior of the house was not changed while it was a boarding house.

Charlie & Ann Sparks bought the house in 1987 raising their 3 children, Carrie, Will, and Peter there. Charlie and Ann are still in the home at this time.

As a side note, his brother, A. W. Thompson built the home of David and Cythnia Hokenson at 309 St. Paul St. NW.

Information was gathered from various history books of Fillmore County and Preston.

Preston Historical Society
P.O. Box 318
Preston, MN 55065