



Preston Historical Society

Post Office Box 138
Preston, Minnesota 55965

A 501 C/3 Non-Profit Corporation

NEWSLETTER
October 2018

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President's Corner

By: Sheila Craig

This newsletter is filled with many happenings that have taken place since our last edition, from our two major fund-raisers (the raffle and the tractor ride), to the acquisition of a long-awaited section car! Many people devote large amounts of time to helping 'keep history alive' in Preston. Our thanks to all of them!

New Section Car

By: Bob Maust

The Preston Historical Society secured a Milwaukee Road section car that was originally made in Fairmont, Minnesota by Fairmont Industries with a Fairmont motor. The society was very fortunate to have Ila Mae Olstad supply the funds to acquire and restore this vehicle in memory of her late father who worked for the Milwaukee Railroad for more than 40 years managing and working with different section gangs. With a lot of help from another historical society member, Mike Schultz, we acquired this car from his cousin in Lawler, IA. Solberg Welding did the mechanical work and EZ Fab sandblasted and painted it.

It now sits on the rail track next to the boxcar and caboos by the Elevator.

Tractor Ride a Big Success

By: Elaine Maust

Our 6th annual tractor ride was a great success. 90 tractors drove on Saturday and

Sunday. The weather was beautiful on Saturday when we traveled from Preston to Greenleaf and on to Lime Springs, Iowa for lunch. In the afternoon we went to Wykoff for a break and back to Preston for a smoked chop dinner.



Sunday was an equally beautiful day and found us traveling once again from Preston to Fountain when a picture of driver and tractor was taken and all were able to tour the Fillmore County Historical Society. Then on to Fillmore at Denny's Trailer Sales for a break and to the Chatfield Park for a picnic lunch returning to Preston for the trip home.

We had many favorable comments from our drivers and some were wondering if we for sure would have a 7th annual. A lot of hard work was put into our ride and we had a lot of volunteers both on duty and making treats for breaks but after a day of rest, I think a lot of us are looking forward to next year!

**2018 Sponsors of the Preston
Historical Society Tractor Ride**
Please help us thank our sponsors!

- American Family Insurance Company, Jeff Ellingson Agent
- Bauer Built Tire & Service,
- Branding Iron Restaurant,
- F & M Community Bank,
- Fillmore County Ag Society,
- First Southeast Bank, Canton and Harmony
- First State Bank, Fountain and Root
- River State Bank, Chatfield,
- Gehling Auction Co, Inc.
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- Hammell Equipment Company
- JailHouse Inn
- Kelly Printing & Signs
- K & R Equipment
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- POET Biorefining
- Preble Farmers Mutual Insurance Co
- Preston Dairy & Farm,
- Recovery Room Upholstery,
- Teri Klaehn CPA,
- Trailhead Inn

Volunteers
Make Tractor Ride Happen

It takes many many volunteers to plan, organize and work at the tractor ride in various capacities. Many give up the entire weekend for the event. Total time spent by the volunteers is way too much to calculate!
Elaine Maust, Bob Maust, Norma Vogt, DeWayne Vogt, Aaron Fox, Bob Mayrand, Linda Wolfe, Dick Wolfe, Dick Petsch, Charlie Sparks, Ila Olstad, JoAnne Hall, Steve Hall, Norm Craig, Sheila Craig, Cheryl Dornink, Andy Craig, Heidi Young, Trevor Young, Mike Schultz, Rosalie Bjorkman, Linda O'Connor, Darwin Smith, Genny Smith. (Apologies if someone was omitted.)

There were also food donations!

Contributors included the following:
Diane Johnson, Flossie Schultz, Carole Bond, Aaron Fox, Linda Wolfe, Cynthia Hokenson, Kate Feine, Gerrie Daley, Mary Zimmerman, Sheila Craig, Gabby Kinneberg, Norma Vogt, Cheryl Petsch, Donna Dreier, Sharyol O'Connor, Genny Smith, Joyce Hellickson, Deb Dols, Cheryl Dornink, Joanne Hall, Karen Quanrud, Nancy Dahly, Ila Olstad, Rita Wilson, Barb Meilke, Linda O'Connor, Elaine Maust.

Raffle Winners Announced

Thanks to all of the members who sold raffle tickets. \$3,000 was again raised through this activity with \$2,000 in raffle sales matched by \$1,000 from Dan Christianson, F & M Community Bank. Over \$1,400 in prizes were donated by local businesses and PHS members. The item, donor, value of the item and winner are noted below:

Oak Bench – Darwin & Genny Smith (\$200 value) Sandy Amundson, Preston
Mizuno Golf Bag– Greg & Bonnie Davids (\$200 value) Carrie Sparks, Rochester.
Handmade Lap Quilt – Quip & Sew Quilters (\$100 value) Genny Smith, Preston.
Gift Certificate to 4-Daughters – Dick & Linda Wolfe (value \$100) Christy Maust, Prior Lake.
JailHouse Inn Teddy Bear & Gift Certificate - Marc & Jeanne Sather former Innkeepers (value \$100) Eric Scheevel, Preston
Oil Change at Preston Service Plus (value \$65) – Phil Whitacre, Harmony
2 Gift Certificates to Preston Motor Mart, Rich Irish (value \$50 each) Darrel Ray, Preston and Eric Scheevel, Preston
Gift Certificate to B & B Olympic Bowl – from Aaron Fox & Bob Mayrand (\$50 value), Andy Craig, Houston
Pro-VI Golf Balls – Greg & Bonnie Davids (\$50 value) – Ramon Hernandez, Preston

Gift Certificate – NAPA & Root River Hardware (\$50 value) - Robert Maust, Preston
 MN Viking Tied Fleece Blanket – Sheila Craig (value \$40) – Anne Kohila, Harmony
 2 Twins vs. Oakland Tickets (8.25.18) – KFIL (value \$40) – Mike Frauenkron, Decorah
 Garden Hod – John Carlin (value \$30) – Donna Scheevel, Harmony
 Holiday Table Runner – Ann Sparks (value \$30) Barry Tienter, Winona
 Gift Certificate, Urban Artifacts of Preston (value \$30) – Tara Craig, Houston
 2 Gift Certificates – Sweet Stop & Sandwich Shoppe (value \$25 each) – Geraldine Williams, Spring Valley and Shelly Hanson, Canton
 Golf Putter – Greg & Bonnie Davids (value \$25) – Shannon Smith, River Falls WI
 2 Pork Gift Certificates good at Harmony, Preston or Rushford Foods– Gulbranson Farms (value \$25 each) - Alice Cummings, Preston and Scott Winslow, Fountain
 Gift Certificate Preston Floral – Mike & Flossie Schultz (value \$25) - Mary Jane Glaser, Preston
 Gift Certificate – Sweet Stop & Sandwich Shoppe, Mike & Flossie Schultz (value \$25) – Sammi Bakke
 2 Gift Certificate B & B Olympic Bowl (value \$25 each) Mark Maust, Prior Lake and Ramon Hernandez, Preston
 Gift Certificate - Preston Floral (\$25 value) Patty Hilzendeger, Van Meter, IA
 2 gift Certificates for 6 Pork Chops at Preston, Harmony & Rushford Foods (value \$15 each) – Jordan Arnold, Fountain & Dan Dornink, Harmony

Membership News

Veteran friendly membership for new members is now available to support the Preston Veteran Friendly community

initiative. Veterans will now have a \$10 discount for individual and family memberships and a \$25 discount for a lifetime membership.

Other new members since the last newsletter include:

Steven & JoAnne Hall, Preston, family
 Andy & Tara Craig, Houston, family

Another initiative was offered this year. A one year membership to anyone who was a participant in the tractor ride was available for \$10. We welcome 2 new members from this venture:

Brian and Julie Hageman, Decorah, IA
 Dennis & Judi Walvatne, Hawkeye, IA.

Historical Committee:

By: Norma Vogt

The members of the historical committee, Linda Wolfe, Dick Petsch, Norma Vogt, Aaron Fox and Ila Mae Olstad met. Dick Petsch and Norma Vogt were appointed co-chairs. The meeting was held to discuss the duties of this committee: archiving all items that come into our possession, which is being done by Linda Wolfe; listing where everything is being stored; the scanning of pictures and documents and researching information. It was discussed that items that are given to the Preston Historical Society need to have a history to Preston. Committee will be meeting on a regular basis.

New Web Page Coming

By Gabby Gatzke

A new arrangement for the PHS web page is being worked on with the help of Preston Chamber of Commerce and Preston Tourism. Our current site content will be added to the gethookedonpreston.com website to help draw more traffic to PHS and so that Gabby can easily update content as needed. We will

continue to use our domain (www.prestonmnhistory.com). When people go to the site it will just simply display our website within the www.gethookedonpreston.com website. Gabby will work on transitioning items over and update us on the project.

At each monthly meeting we have a 'history moment'. Some of the presentations follow!

Preston Iron Works

By: Norma Vogt

In 1853 a John Vail from Pennsylvania was the first man to locate a claim in what became the village of Preston. In July of 1855 a blacksmith shop was operated by C. Rappe. He bought out a former blacksmith who is said to have established his forge shortly after John Vail arrival. The site of the forge was in the general vicinity of where the Preston Ironworks of 1980 was located. Mills Street.

In the 1800's a man by the name of Cramer was the owner of the business known as the Wagon Works. At that time a Mr. Homer S. Popple from New York who was a carriage maker worked for Cramer. Later he bought out the business in about 1892 (other source 1896) and Elmer H. Cummings who was his son-in-law later became a partner in the business with Popple. It then became known as Popples & Cummings and later on the Preston Iron Works. They had two assistants and were equipped with lathes, saws, drills, planners. They were well known in this part of the state to be equipped to do difficult repairs. They were the builder of the water cooled Preston Gasoline Engine (1910). Their name was cast on this engine which was built in its entirety in Preston along with the Preston Jack which had 3 strokes and fit any pump.

Tony Olsen, of Brookings SD, purchased the business in 1937 and upon retiring Vern Runnigen purchased the business to keep the Preston Iron Works going. He kept on the same employees who ran the business: Don Trende, Gerald Wubbles and Roger Hovey. DeWayne and Norma Vogt purchased the Preston Iron Works in December 1972. DeWayne added on in the late 70's and eventually sold the location to the surrounding elevator in 1984 and moved the business to its present location on Hwy 52. Under DeWayne's ownership he specialized in custom fabrication, ran a complete machine shop and welding service and a full line of parts.

DeWayne semi-retired in 2003 and sold the business to Sheldon Kinneberg and is known as the Preston Iron Works and Truck Repair.

My Country School

By: Elaine Maust

High Grove, District 169, was organized in 1871. ½ acre of land was bought for \$12.50 and the school house was built for \$5.60 plus some donated materials. Both of my parents along with all 6 of my sisters & brothers plus many aunts and uncles attended school here at one time or another.

In 1950 there were 28 children 17 and under in the district and today there are only 3 not counting the Amish. I attended all grades from kindergarten thru 8th. I had only 2 teachers for all 8 grades. I was the only pupil in my class. When I was in 8th grade I spent a lot of my time reading to and teaching the 1st and 2nd grades. In 1952 I moved on to High School in Preston.

As a young girl I rode my pony up to school as my parents lived just on the next farm to the south and my Dad took him home and

returned for me. As I was older we had to walk ½ mile to school and ½ mile home.

Water was brought to school in a pail by whichever family was designated for the week and put in the Red Wing cooler. The pledge of allegiance was recited each morning to begin the school day. Classes were held, which usually only had 1 or 2 students in each age. Classes in reading, arithmetic and spelling were held each day. Penmanship class was one day a week which all children had at the same time as well as history.

During recess, games like hide & seek, London Bridges, & Blind man's bluff were played. In the winter, children brought their sleds and recess was spent sliding on a hill near the school.

The school closed due to consolidation in March of 1957. The building was sold in 1958 to Paul Lunde and moved to his building site below the hill in 1962. It was renovated as a guest house. Pete Lunde, his son, now owns the farm and has further restored it and added a bathroom. He has also restored the old merry-go-round that was at the original site.

Preston Tigers..... "We Eat 'Em Alive!"

By: Darwin & Genny Smith

129 Fillmore Street W. was known as the Grand Opera House in the early 1900's, the upstairs with its wide stairs, was the center of cultural activities, traveling movies, political meetings, dances and indoor athletic events of which Indoor Base Ball was played by the Preston Tigers.

Indoor Base Ball was born by chance on Thanksgiving Day, 1887 when several

members of the Farragut Club of Chicago were boxing in the gymnasium of the clubhouse. One of the members, in pulling off a boxing glove, threw it in a spirit of fun toward a spectator at the opposite end of the room. Another member struck at the flying glove with a broom he held in his hand, and the sport of indoor baseball was born!

George Hancock conceived the idea of a new sport from the collision of the broom and boxing glove and won for him the title of "Father of Indoor Base Ball". That first encounter concluded with a score of 41-40. Later, proper equipment was introduced and the game spread beyond the confines of the upper Midwest. By 1891 there were Rules of the Game—bases were 27 feet apart, and with larger than usual ball, crude bat, and absence of gloves, indoor baseball was not unlike what we now call 16 inch or "Chicago softball".

From 1895 – 1897 Preston, MN enjoyed the distinction of having the best indoor baseball team in Southern Minnesota. They had a record of 15 games played, 12 won, and 3 lost. Area teams that played against Preston were Winona, Stewartville, Mabel, Caledonia, and Wykoff.

In the Spring of 1897, word was put out that it was time to get moving and prepare for the upcoming winter season. The old team had broken up, but most of the players were in town, and by getting together and selecting the best available material, a team could be organized that would keep the neighboring towns guessing! A meeting was arranged for November, 1897, to take measures to organize a winning team—for fun and glory—with hearty support from area citizens.

By 1904, Preston was playing Indoor Base Ball against teams such as the YMCA team

of St. Paul with about 700 people witnessing the game. Preston Tigers Indoor Base Ball team became known as “the team that made our city famous” and included members Clinton Kerr, B. Johnson, Fred Love, David Ploff, Walter Foote, Herb Vickerman, Ed Schoenbaum, Tom Garratt, E. Joseph, and A. Kerr.

Considered the 2nd best Indoor Base Ball team in the United States.....they played the



Chicago Spaldings in 1905 at Preston. The Spaldings won the series 2 games to 1. Up to 1,000 spectators crowded into the Grand Opera House for each of the

games! The Spaldings were the only team that could beat us!

Special trains took the Tigers and their enthusiastic fans to games on the road. In 1904, when the Tigers were still unbeaten, The Preston Times newspaper proclaimed: “The Tigers stand ready to play any team between oceans and, until they are defeated, we consider them invincible!” Indoor Base Ball games were at their peak and the special trains took the ball players and spectators to every game. The trains would just wait at the game town for the end of the game, and then it would return with its passengers. The Tigers, Preston’s unbeaten team, placed a banner alongside of the

passenger coach with their name and the slogan, “we eat ‘em alive!”

A few years later, Outdoor Baseball replaced Indoor Base Ball as the town’s favorite sport. In 1910, a world championship series was held at the Preston Fairgrounds between two “Negro teams”. The Leland Giants of Chicago and the Colored Gophers of St. Paul were widely acknowledged to be the greatest “colored teams in the world.” The Giants won 3 games over the Gophers, claiming the title, as well as the \$800 purse.

Preston’s Sesquicentennial, commemorating 150 years, was in 2005. The city celebrated the Preston Tigers by putting together a group of players dressed in vintage baseball uniforms to emulate the famous local team of the late 1890’s and early 1900’s. A baseball game between the Rochester Roosters and Preston Tigers was arranged as part of the town’s celebration.

In closing, the Preston Tigers undoubtedly, a momentous part of “Preston History”.... should be a main ingredient of “Preston Pride” for today!

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