



Preston Historical Society

PO Box 138
Preston, Minnesota 55965

A 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Corporation

NEWSLETTER
November 2019

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President's Notes

By: Sheila Craig

What an exciting summer for the President Historical Society. Highlights included the dedication of the new sign at the trailhead north of the caboose, dedication of the newest addition of a Motor Car on the tracks south of the boxcar, a successful raffle fundraiser, and great tractor ride. In addition, access to the Dairy & Farm Building has allowed the Society to move most items that were being kept in various locations to be stored in one location. And finally members have volunteered generously to have the O'Hara Schoolhouse open during the County Fair and the caboose open during each of the three "Rhythm on the River" events and also during "Taste of the Trail".

Tractor Ride – 2019



Photo By: Bob Smock

The seventh annual 2-day Tractor Ride was held on September 14 and 15. Eighty-three tractors participated on Saturday and 68 on

Sunday. Also in addition to the tractors and drivers another 35 people participated as riders on special seats on the tractors or in one of the three "people wagons". Final monetary results are still being calculated, however it is looking like another very successful event.

Please help PHS thank our Tractor Ride sponsors for their donation of \$100 each.

- Bauer Built Tire & Service, Preston
- Branding Iron Restaurant, Preston
- F & M Community Bank, Preston
- Fillmore County Ag Society
- First Southeast Bank, Canton and First Southeast Bank, Harmony
- First State Bank, Fountain and Root River State Bank, Chatfield
- Gehling Auction Co, Inc, Preston
- Gregory M. Davids Insurance Co, Preston
- Hammell Equipment Company, Chatfield
- JailHouse Inn, Preston
- K & R Equipment, Inc., Fountain
- Kelly Printing & Signs, Preston,
- Keune Family Farm, Preston
- Oak Meadow Meats, Harmony
- POET Biorefining, Preston
- Preble Farmers Mutual Insurance Co., Lanesboro
- Preston Dairy & Farm, Preston

- Preston Equipment Company, Preston
- Recovery Room Upholstery, Preston
- Ristau Farm Service, Preston
- Sweet Stop & Sandwich Shoppe, Preston
- Teri Klaehn CPA, Preston
- Trailhead Inn, Preston
- T W Milk Haulers, Preston,

Preston Historical Society Announces 2019 Raffle Winners

By: Sheila Craig

The Preston Historical Society conducted the drawing for the winners of the recent raffle fundraiser at their August Society meeting. Proceeds from the raffle will be used for Historical Society projects. Raffle prizes were valued at over \$1400.

The Society would again like to thank F & M Community Bank for providing matching funds of \$1000 (a dollar for each ticket sold). Preston businesses and individuals, listed below were also gracious to provide the many prizes followed by the winner.

Titleist Golf Bag– Greg & Bonnie Davids (\$200 value) Holli Wingert, Preston.

America State Quarter Collection – First State Bank Fountain (\$190 value) Allan LaFleur, Rushford

Handmade Lap Quilt – Merilly Dale on behalf of Quip & Sew Quilters (\$179 value) Roxie Knies, Preston.

Nike Golf Bag – Mark Seaquist (\$130 value) Rita Wilson, Preston

Gift Certificate to 4 Daughters – Dick & Linda Wolfe (\$100 value) Pam Ristau, Preston.

Products & Gift Certificate – Sally’s Hair to Dye For (\$100 value) Fred O’Connor, Preston.

Gift Certificate to Preston Motor Mart, Rich Irish (\$100 value) Dawn Ristau, Preston.

Alliance Putter – Greg & Bonnie Davids (\$100 value) Josh Krage, Preston.

Lap Quilt Train Theme – Ann Sparks (\$75 value) Sharyol O’Connor, Preston

2 Tickets to Commonweal – KFIL (\$75 value) Greg Davids, Preston

Oil Change – Preston Service Plus (\$55 value) Matt Quanrud, Preston

Pro-VI Golf Balls – Greg & Bonnie Davids (\$50 value) Marilyn Duxbury, Preston

Gift Certificate – Sweet Stop & Sandwich Shoppe (\$50 value) Roxie Knies, Preston

“Boots & Badges: Honoring Fillmore County Veterans” Book – Fillmore County Journal (\$49.95 value) Tracie Mensink, Preston.

MN Viking Tied Fleece Blanket – Sheila Craig (value \$45) Naomi Fruechte, Caledonia Gift Certificate, Urban Artifacts of Preston (value \$35) Keith Larson, Preston

3M Products Basket – Joel & Barb Mielke (\$35 value) Greg Davids, Preston

Garden Hod – John Carlin (value \$30) Gerrie Daley, Preston

4 Gift Certificates to Branding Iron, Aaron Fox & Bob Mayrand (\$25 value each) Bruce Dornink, Preston; Mike Schultz, Preston; Bob Smock, Preston; and Susan Mandelko, Preston

2 Pork Gift Certificates good at Harmony, Preston or Rushford Foods– Gulbranson Farms (\$25 value each) Deanna Kurth, Spring Valley and Kyle Chiglo, Peterson.

Gift Certificate – NAPA Preston & Root River Hardware (\$25 value) Steve Cremer, Harmony

Gift Certificate Preston Floral – (\$25 value) Taylor Case, Preston.

2 Gift Certificate B & B Olympic Bowl (value \$20 each) Mark Ruen, Lanesboro and Alisson Leathers, Preston.

Gift Certificate at Preston, Harmony & Rushford Foods (value \$20) Krista Thompson, Byron.

Cecil Cook Photos, Preston and Mabel, MN, 1953 - 1954 and Preston, MN 1975, Milwaukee Road

By: Jon DeVries

Cecil Cook, speaker at the dedication of the new sign at the Trailhead, provided photos for the sign. He also had several other negatives of rail photos of trains traveling through Preston and buildings associated with the railroad. These negatives have now been developed and are in the possession of the Preston Historical Society.

- Milwaukee #1018, Preston Roundhouse, 1954
- Preston, MN. Roundhouse, 1954
- Milwaukee #1022, Mabel, MN, 1954
- Milwaukee #1022, Mabel, MN, August 1954
- Milwaukee #1022, Mabel, MN, 1954
- Milwaukee #1022, Switching, Mabel, MN. 1953
- Milwaukee Engine #1022
- Preston, MN Depot, 1975
- Preston, MN Roundhouse, 1975
- Preston, MN Roundhouse, 1975

Membership Update

By: Sheila Craig

The Preston Historical Society welcomes new lifetime business member, Hindt-Hudek Funeral Home, Preston. We also welcome two members who have transferred their membership from yearly status to that of lifetime members: Preston Eye Clinic and Steve and Joanne Hall, Preston.

Preston Lions Turn 75 years old

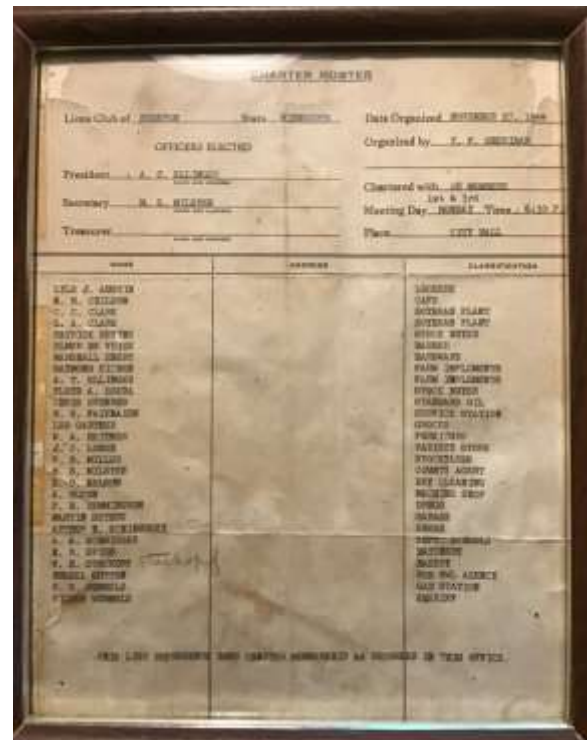
By: Linda Wolfe

The Preston Lions Club is inviting the public to our 75th anniversary

celebration. The public is invited to Christ Lutheran Church community room on November 22, 2019.

Come and view historical items from the 75 years and learn about all the programs your members participated in. Do you remember the Trout Trot? How about the Friendship Train or the radiothon? We will be happy to answer questions about our club now and from the past. Join us anytime between 5:00 and 8:00 p.m.

Below is the original charter and you may recognize many of the names.



Following is a second 'history moment' shared by Steve and Joanne (Simonson) Hall

"Memories of Teens of the '60's" Jr. -Sr. High School Highlights (1961-1967)

We attended grades 7-12 at the “new school”, now the Fillmore Central Elementary School in Preston. The “Jr. High wing” and “Sr. High wing” designations provided the upper classes a degree of separation from the 7th & 8th graders racing through the halls to their next class location. Moving between classrooms in a period of three minutes was a new experience for us!

Homecoming was a big week filled with tradition! Football was the only fall sporting event, Homecoming buttons were a must purchase item, the King and Queen were crowned on Thursday evening in a suspense filled ceremony, which was followed by a huge bonfire held in the school parking lot! Each class provided a float for the Friday afternoon parade and the Friday night football game was followed by a dance in the HS gym.

The 7th & 8th grade party was another major social event for us. There were also Sock Hops, “hootenannys” and Sadie Hawkins dances.

Freshman initiation was a big event- usually dreaded by freshmen. The sophomores assigned us embarrassing skits to perform during an evening presentation. **Sophomore year** provided the opportunity to be a waiter/waitress at the Jr./Sr. Prom **Junior year**-we ordered Class rings (mine cost \$17.95); we presented the Junior Class play, “Afraid of the Dark”; planned the Junior Prom; and completed Drivers training and hoped to get a driver’s license!!

The School Newspaper was the **Bluejay Bugle**. We read Senior profiles, sports news and other important information such as who were current “couples”!

The Maple Leaf Conference provided rivalries with teams from Harmony,

Chatfield, Lanesboro Wykoff and Spring Valley. The longest team road trip was 15 miles!

In **1965 & 1966, Preston was the District One Basketball champions**. 1929 was the last time that had happened, so the whole town was excited! The Rochester Post Bulletin came to town to take pictures and interview players, coaches and community businessmen when that happened. As students, we were photographed at the ball games in the hysteria of victory and agony of defeat!

The **High School band** was led by Don Trembley during our high school years. We marched for football games, the pep band played for basketball games and we presented formal concerts during the school years. In the summer we presented town square band concerts on Friday evenings and marched in community parades. The summer parade invitations required marching band practice during the summer evenings, when we often marched around town practicing our routines and basketweave corners! Our band earned many state honors during those years. We played at the MN State Fair and were invited to the Rose Bowl parade, but cost prohibited accepting that invitation!

We also had a **Dress code**: no slacks for girls and skirts had to touch the floor when we kneeled; no jeans for the guys-dress slacks and button shirts; all the male teachers wore suits and ties-it was very easy to identify faculty from students in those days!

The summer included fun activities such as swimming, town ball games and Harmony “Record Hops”. We also earned some spending money by babysitting, mowing lawns (Steve mowed 23 at \$1 each), helping local farmers with haying and threshing, working in local businesses, such as the

Preston Bakery, the Packaging plant and riding a milk route.

Our Senior year was what we had all anticipated! We enjoyed being “the seniors” and anticipating graduation. Band, chorus, the Sr. Class play, sports-our activities kept us busy! We achieved graduation on June 2, 1967 and have held a class reunion every 5 years since then.

Historic events during our high school years included:

- John Glenn orbited the Earth 3 times and returned safely in 1962!
- JFK was assassinated on November 22, 1963 and it is likely each of us remembers exactly where we were when Mr. Scanlon, the Principal, made that announcement.
- Medicare was created in 1966 and it is also likely none of us gave it a thought then!



Liberty Loans

From: Gabby Kinneberg

Are the Preston boys fighting in Germany or France here?

Neither! This picture shows a Whippet Tank

which was brought to Preston on April 16, 1919 to encourage the purchase of Liberty Loans. The tank, while on maneuvers in the city, tore down the walls of the old Tibbetts House barn, as part of a demonstration.

A Liberty bond (or liberty loan) was a war bond that was sold in the United States to support the allied cause in World War I. Subscribing to the bonds became a symbol of patriotic duty in the United States and introduced the idea of financial securities to many citizens for the first time.

The Root River Power and Light Co.

By: John Carlin

You may ask yourself what has this got to do with Preston History? January 1912 A. H. Hanning was Superintendent for the Village of Preston running the Steam, Water and Electric Plant. At the time Preston had a steam plant, giving service only from dusk to midnight and none on Sunday. Harmony and Canton had no electricity. Mr. Hanning had ambitions to own a light plant.

Early in this century power Pioneers located a unique loop in the North Branch of the Root River located north of Lanesboro that offered falling water to turn a power turbine if they tunneled through a third of a mile of limestone.

That is a story for another time...

Well that is were in June 1914 they constructed Transmission lines that connected the power plant on the River to Preston. There were 230 customers in Preston.

March 1915 the current was first turned on and it was a surprise to a good many when they saw that even when the street light were

turned on the other customers still had very bright lights!

They made a 5-year contract with Preston for electrical energy on a commission basis. They were getting 60% of the money collected for the electricity. The Council set the price of the current at 10 cents a kilowatt for the first 30 kwh and over that at 8 cents a kwh.

It was also in 1915 that a building was purchased in Preston and used by the company as the main office. In 1917 the load has increased to such an extent that they were running short on water power.

The company purchased land in Preston and built a building in which to put a gas engine and generator. In 1917 the company put in 4 Minneapolis Steel Machine Company 100 horsepower engines connected directly to a 165 KVA Minneapolis electric Machine generator.

The land and powerhouse cost about \$4,000 and the engines and generator about \$12,000. The load soon built up so that the engines had to run a great deal of the time.

They were replaced with Chicago Pneumatic Semi-Diesel 200 horse power engines which cost \$16,000. This was a very satisfactory engine. The company sold out in 1928.

The Preston Historical Society toured the Preston Power Plant for their 'history moment' on September 5 with Scott Wilson, manager, as tour guide.

Booth at Preston Expo

Several PHS members organized and staffed a booth on behalf of the Society for the Preston Fall Expo. Norma Vogt, Joanne and Steve Hall, Ila Olstad, and Elaine Maust all helped with the event. A special bird house

with an additional "Preston Fall Expo 2019" logo was given as a door prize and won by Jessica Hershberger.



Photo By: Steve Hall

Ila Olstad staffs the PHS Booth at the Preston Fall Expo

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