



Preston Historical Society

PO Box 138
Preston, Minnesota 55965

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

NEWSLETTER

March 2023

Volume 17 Issue 1

President's Notes

By: Sheila Craig

2023 is starting off to be a banner year for the Preston Historical Society!! Exciting things are happening on several different fronts. Positive progress is happening with the Historic Campus Planning/Development plan – see preliminary concept drawings (page 8); a new collaboration with the Preston Public Library has been awarded a \$7,000 grant; and progress is being made on the repainting of the Milwaukee Road historic boxcar thanks to the Facilities Committee!

Library Collaboration Grant

The Preston Public Library reached out to the Preston Historical Society to jointly apply for a Community Collaboration Grant. This \$7,000 grant was just awarded to the project of collecting over 30 new interviews of Preston residents! If you know of some special people that should be interviewed, please let us know. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed so they will be available in digital and printed form.

This will be a great accompaniment to the 47 interviews that were conducted in 1978. See the Collections Committee Report on how to listen to or read those interviews.

Richard G. Petsch

By: Sheila Craig

We are sad to announce that Dick Petsch, Past President of the Preston Historical Society passed away on December 16, 2022.

Dick was instrumental in many of the railroad endeavors taken on by the Society.

He was one of the crew who assisted the restoration of the elevator, helped secure the boxcar, and went to Mauston, Wisconsin to select the caboose.

He volunteered many hours to the Society from serving on the Facilities Committee and Tractor Ride Committee including taking the tractor pictures for the first nine years of the ride.



Dick, on the left is shown with Don Duxbury and Gordon Kimber at the unveiling of the Milwaukee Elevator designation on the National Register of Historic Buildings

Committee Report

By: Joanne Hall, Committee Chair

Donations Accepted by the Collections Committee in January 2023 include:

- Preston & Preston/Fountain School Library collection of 45 yearbooks (annuals) (ranging from 1929-1993) saved from the discard pile by Gary Feine. This collection is missing the following years: 1930-1932, 1934-1938, 1941-1947, 1949, 1950-1951, 1953 & 1955)
- 1943 Preston High School graduation invitation and program-Sue Grooters.
- 1949 and 1950 PHS Football team photos; 60th class reunion book of Class of 1951; 1984 Fillmore County History Book-Shirley Larson Jertson estate
- Box of various Preston business pens, three different Preston business directory phone book covers, undated Preston Chamber button-Arlene Staupe.
- Apple Berry Farm pen and various photos of Trout Day parades, and a photo of the Preston Historical Society dedication of the Richard Nelson plaque-Diane Johnson

Oral History Project

The Collections Committee has continued the project of making the 1978 Oral Histories available to the public, both digitally and in transcription form, through the Preston Public Library. Diane Johnson has taken the lead on this project. Funding from the Preston Area Community Foundation was used to convert the original cassette tapes to a digital format and are now available on a thumb drive for listening on your computer.

Membership Update

By: Sheila Craig

A new member has joined the Preston Historical Society since our last newsletter. We welcome Eileen Linden, Preston.

Raffle 2023

By: Sheila Craig

Dan Christianson, F & M Community Bank has again agreed to support the Preston Historical Society raffle with a \$1,000 match (\$1 for each of the 1,000 tickets sold). The Society is currently collecting items, cash donations and gift certificates to include on the raffle ticket as prizes.

Tractor Ride for 2023

By: Sheila Craig

The Tractor Ride committee is currently working on plans for the 10th annual tractor ride to be held on Saturday, September 16 and Sunday, September 17. The ride will again feature two round-about rides from the Fairgrounds in Preston. A people wagon will again be available for those who do not have a tractor to drive, but just want to see the beautiful scenery of bluff country at a slow pace. After more plans are in place, we will be sending out an 'opportunity' list for how you can help assist with this major PHS fundraiser. Many volunteers are needed to make this happen!

Goals for 2022

1. Increase revenue through raffle, city contribution, & tractor ride.
2. Continue scanning and physical filing of photographs and posting photos on website and Facebook. Preserve paper artifacts in vertical files
3. Preserve history by recording oral histories and photo documentation of current Preston streets and businesses.
4. Continue monthly meeting "History Moment".
5. Public Relations: more caboose open houses and other events in the community.
6. Monitor maintenance on assets, especially the boxcar and continue exploration of long-term facility options.
7. Continue tractor ride with limit of 100 tractors.

8. Membership: increase number and participation.
9. Work with Advisory Committee to complete SMIF grant
10. Partner with Fillmore County Historical Society for displays, news articles, etc.
11. Gather and share information and learning about the Minnesota Certified Local Government program for historic preservation.
12. Review and update as needed the PHS bylaws and approved policies document.

PHS 2023 Standing Committees

Finance – Vice President - Steve Hall, Chair

Treasurer – Charlie Sparks

President - Sheila Craig

Secretary – Elaine Maust

Membership – Lexi Pierce - Chair

John Carlin

Mike Schultz

Collections – Joanne Hall, Chair

Linda Wolfe

Joyce Hellickson

Diane Johnson

Sue Grooters

Sheila Craig

Facilities – Jon DeVries, Chair

John Carlin

Kerry Soiney

Mike Schultz

Bob Mayrand

2023 Ad Hoc Committees

Audit – Steve Hall, Chair

Lexi Pierce

Tom Hague

Sending Santa Off – Aaron Fox, Chair

Jon DeVries

Joanne Hall

Tractor Ride

Bob Maust

Elaine Maust

Sheila Craig

Norm Craig

Jim Keune

Linda Wolfe

Food Committee – Aaron Fox

History Moments

These remain a monthly feature of the Preston Historical Society meetings. Following are some of the recent featured topics.

Preston High School Blue Jays - Fillmore Central Falcon Football

By: Diane Johnson and Sue Grooters

The 2022 Fillmore Central Falcon football team, guided by head coach Chris Mensink, amassed a record of 11-1 before advancing to the state semi-final game at the US Bank Stadium. The Falcons faced a fast and big team from Minnesota. Down by 14 points at half time, the Falcons rallied scoring 13 points in the 4th quarter where they nearly pulled off a miraculous comeback win. Losing 28 to 27 after a failed two-point conversion, the game was attended by a huge crowd of Falcon supporters along with a good representation of alumni.

Going back 50 years ago to 1972, led by Head Coach Frank Jaszewski and Assistant Coach Dick Irish, the Preston Blue Jays completed the best season in the history of Preston High School. The Blue Jays, with a record of 11-1, swept the Maple Leaf honors, the District I title defeating the La Crescent Lancers and were State Runners-Up to Gaylord in the state playoffs having beaten Mankato Wilson 34-0 in the state semi-finals. During the season, the defense allowed below 10 points a game and not a single touchdown was scored against them in the air.

Gaylord with a 11-0 record sought the assistance of Winthrop's head football coach (Chuck Lundeen) who was touted to be the top football scout in the state to attend the Preston/Mankato Wilson game which led up to the state finals. He delivered his scouting report to the Gaylord coach which he felt could make the difference in the game. Lundeen informed the Gaylord coach the Blue Jays measured up to Gaylord in every respect.

Running backs Kelly Fitzgerald, Scott Hellickson, and Greg Hoff had plenty of running room thanks to the offensive line of Bill O'Connor, Scott Snyder, Paul Slostad and Steve Mandelko. Quarterback Mike Fitzgerald was able to open up a passing attack with Kiel Anderson, Ben Sikkink, Kelly

Fitzgerald and Jerry Hampel. Defensively, Bill O'Connor, Lynn Glaser, Ben Sikkink and Craig Mensink stopped the runs. Gaylord bested the Blue Jays 26-6.

The game was played at Gustavus Adolphus stadium in frigid conditions and a frozen ground unlike the Falcons playing on artificial turf under a dome.

Footnote: That same school year, the Blue Jays got their revenge in basketball by beating Gaylord in the State tournament! After beating Gaylord, they went on to claim the State Consolation Title by beating Windom. In that game they set a new tournament record by coming from a 26-point deficit to winning by 8 points.



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Other Elevators in Preston

By: Joanne Hall



Photo above was taken by Frank Bakey on an unknown date. The view is looking west on what is

Fillmore Street from the bridge just west of the Fairgrounds and shows the other elevator south of Fillmore Street



This photo was loaned from the Fillmore County Historical Society collection. Both photos are likely the McMichael elevator built in 1879.

Certified Local Government

By: Tom Hogue

This nationwide program helps local preservation groups transform themselves from grass-roots advocates to policymakers. A city, county or township with a qualifying heritage preservation ordinance and commission (HPC) may become a Certified Local Government (CLG) by applying to the SHPO.

The Preston Historical Society has set a goal for 2023 to “gather and share information and learning about the Minnesota Certified Local Government program for historic preservation.”

CLG status enables the local government to apply for federal matching grants to preserve historic properties. This local-state-federal partnership encourages the integration of historic preservation into local government policy.

CLG Responsibilities:

- Establish and maintain a qualified HPC.
- Maintain a system for identifying historic properties.
- Enforce appropriate legislation for the designation and protection of historic properties.
- Provide for public participation in the local preservation program.
- Play an expanded role in nominating properties to the National Register.
- Perform other agreed-upon functions delegated by the SHPO.

What's on Facebook!

St. Anthony Street Photo Series:

Posted December 12, 2022

St. Anthony Street Series! The first photo is circa 1900, the second and third were taken in the 1920's and 1930's.



The primary goal of participating in the CLG program is to strengthen the historic preservation program at the local level. The CLG program ensures that historic preservation issues are understood and addressed at the local level and are integrated into the local planning and decision-making process at the earliest possible opportunity. Historic preservation should be considered equally with other planning issues in a CLG and not be viewed as superfluous to decision-making. CLG status can bring pride and official recognition to a community that is committed to historic preservation.

Memorial Donations

Over \$300 has been donated to the Preston Historical Society in memory of Dick Petsch. A plate will now be engraved with his name and added to our \$300 Elevator plaque.

Other memorials have also been received in memory of Marilyn Duxbury.

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Preston Historical Society Officers

President: Sheila Craig (507.273.1481)
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Vice President: Steve Hall

Secretary: Elaine Maust

Treasurer: Charles Sparks (507.765.4785)
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website at www.gethookedonpreston.com.

Web Master: Gabby Gatzke Kinneberg
gkinneberg@prestonmn.org

A Series of Preston Business Christmas Ads
 Posted the week of December 19th, 2022



The Victory Café
 Posted January 11th, 2023

Check out this photo of long-time Preston business, the Victory Cafe (currently Urban Artifacts) from the 1960s! I imagine it was a fairly new restaurant at this time, after Gartner's Grocery moved over to the Snyder Motors building.



Preston's 1952 District One Football Champions!
 Posted February 16th, 2023



Preston's 1944 Basketball Team
 Posted February 9, 2023

Below is the 1944 basketball team. Please forgive (or correct) some of the names below, as I struggled to read them from the back of the photograph: Lyle Miller, D. Bolter, Rodney Langum, Naegle, Phil McElroy, Dale Rieskus, Jerry Grebin, Norman Jorgensen, B. Heitner, and Bill Bammert.



This is not a complete listing of our Facebook posts. To see more, visit our page at: www.facebook.com/prestonmnhistory

SMIF/PHS Historic Campus Planning/Development

By Jon B. DeVries

Great progress has been made by the Advisory Committee chaired by PHS President Sheila Craig. WiDSETH, has completed an initial concept plan – see Page 8. The committee has met with our state legislators and the Preston City Council – see below. We will schedule a 2nd *Community Engagement* event soon for public input. **Check out this video on the project funded by the Preston Area Community Foundation:**
<https://www.prestonmnchamber.com/preston-historical-society/historic-campus-masterplan/>



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On February 6th, 2023 Preston City Council convened to unanimously adopt the resolution below in support of the Historic Campus Planning/Development along with efforts for accessibility to Forestville State Park.

STATEMENT OF PARTICIPATION AND ENDORSEMENT, CITY OF PRESTON

The City of Preston supports continued collaboration to complete the planning work of the Historic Campus/Riverfront Masterplan Steering Committee, welcomes project funding support from the State of Minnesota, Minnesota Trout Unlimited (MNTU), Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF), Preston Area Community Foundation (PACF), and others, and is committed to being the fiscal agent and applicant for such funding as needed.

The City also looks forward to collaborating with all our local and state partners to undertake successful implementation of the Historic Campus/Riverfront plan to: (1) expand the campus as a permanent home for the Preston Historical Society and a public meeting location, history museum, visitor welcoming center, and holiday event venue and (2) to upgrade the Root River trail, stream, and park within the city limits as a regional visitor attraction complimenting the Minnesota DNR trailhead, improving our ecology and water quality, and providing a year-round outdoor recreational fishing, hiking, event and educational amenity for our citizens and all residents within the geologically unique Driftless Region.

We also stand ready to participate with and endorse complimentary efforts by our legislative representatives and Fillmore County to obtain state funding for the Preston-Carimona-Forestville Trail, replacement of the CR118 Root River Bridge in the Forestville Park, and improvement of County Road 12/118 connecting Preston and neighboring communities with the state park.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kurt Reicks", is written over a horizontal line.

City of Preston Mayor, Kurt Reicks

