

**Wheels Across the Prairie Museum**

PO Box 1091 • 3297 Hwy. 14  
Tracy Minnesota 56175  
www.wheelsacrosstheprairie.org



Wheels Across the Prairie Museum

# The Waggin Wheel

P.O. Box 1091 • 3297 Hwy. 14 • Tracy, MN 56175 • (507) 626-1949 or (507) 829-5145

Fall 2017

www.wheelsacrosstheprairie.org • info@wheelsacrosstheprairie.org



Open Weekends in May 1-5 p.m.; June 1 – Sept. 30 Wed. thru Fri. 1-5 p.m., Weekends 10-5; Oct. Weekends only, 1-5 p.m. Weather permitting.

Board Members:  
Jon Wendorff – President  
Jane Muedeking – Vice President  
Priscilla Muske – Secretary  
Billie Jo Lau – Treasurer

## Tracy 1921

It's that time of year again, the humming of the combines in the fields, change of season happening all around. A "busy – busy" time for many of us! It is also a busy time at the museum as we prepare the grounds and work on projects with hopes of completing before winter.

It has been a busy awesome summer for us as well. We appreciate all your support and comments. An interesting read which was shared to us by; Carol Johnson Talley written by her great-great grandmother, Mary Hoag Donaldson, wife of George W. Donaldson was the great grandmother of Dick Donaldson and Carol Johnson Talley's mother, Marian Donaldson Johnson, and the grandmother of Dale Donaldson. She was born in 1844 and wrote the following in 1921 when she was 77 years old.

Wheels Across the Prairie Museum 2017 Fall Newsletter

### Tracy 1921

Written by Mary (Hoag) Donaldson

The Southeast township of Lyon County is Monroe, and within its borders lies the striving city of Tracy, ranking 2nd in size among Lyon County towns. It is situated in the Southeast corner of the county, being but one mile from the Redwood County line and 2½ miles from the Murray County line. It is the division point of the Northwestern Railroad and the eastern terminal of the Dakotas.

Tracy is a prosperous, progressive city and presents an attractive appearance. It has broad, paved streets, lined with substantial business blocks and handsome modern residences. All the improvements to be found in Minnesota towns of its size are in Tracy. It has an excellent water works system, electric light plant, telephone system, cement works, two large school houses: a grade school and a high school, with all modern facilities, with a superintendent and profs and teachers unexcelled in the state, and seven churches. Two new churches have been built during the year 1920 and 1921: Methodist and Catholic, and the streets were well lighted by the white way. The City of Tracy

had its origin 50 years ago this summer.

The first schoolhouse was built in 1873 at Lynd and cost \$700. The first Supt of Schools was Mr. G. M. Durst. The first school taught in the county was by Miss Lydia Cummins during the spring of 1869 in a log building in the town of Lynd. The first religious services were those conducted by the Rev. C.F. Wright in 1868 and the first church built in the county was a Methodist at Lynd in the fall of 1873, although the Presbyterians built one in the town of Lyons in September of the same year. The first marriage in the county also occurred at Lynd. The contracting parties being Henry Nichols and Ida Hildreth., The first death in the county was that of Mrs. Bowers which occurred in the fall of 1868.

When the W & ST. P Railroad was built in 1872, the town site of Marshall was located and the village of Marshall was laid out during Aug. of 1873. The southeast Township in the county of Monroe (sic) includes all of congressional township No. 109 settlement was begun in 1871 by David Stafford, E.W. Healy, Rees Price and George White. The village of Shetek was laid out in the fall of 1874 on land owned by the railroad company. The first store was a small frame building moved onto the site by H.N. Joy in the fall of 1874 from the farm of E.L. Starr. It stood on the corner of Front and 3rd St. The first hotel built was the Commercial, begun the same year by H.H. Welch who kept it until November of 1879 when he sold it to M.D. Gibbs who kept it till the fall of November 1891 when it was destroyed by fire. The hotel at that time contained 20 guest rooms and two parlors and could accommodate about 50 guests.

The growth of the village was small until the year 1879 when the Dakota Central was finished to Volga, S.D. From that time, the village grew rapidly. A depot was built and a roundhouse, furnishing employment to a large number of mechanics.

The village was incorporated under the general laws of the state and approved by M.L. Bohamon, J.M. Wardell, D.H. Evans, E.O. Brauns and M.D. Gibbs. The first election was held at the Commercial Hotel on March 15, 1881, 40 years ago. The judges were John Craig, W. L. Moses and I.E. Segur and the following officers were elected: J.M.

### Curator's wish list:

The fence line cleaned up, trees trimmed along the south property line.

## Membership

It's what helps us 'keep rolling'

Dear Wheels Across the Prairie Museum Members and Friends...

The Wheels Across the Prairie Museum appreciates your support of the educational services, exhibits, and programs provided by the museum. Many exciting things continue to happen at the Wheels Museum and we want you to be a part of them. We look forward to your continued interest and support in the coming year.

At this time, we ask that you sustain your membership, or join if you are not already a member. The categories are listed below. Please mail your membership coupon to:

WHEELS ACROSS THE PRAIRIE MUSEUM  
PO BOX 1091 • TRACY, MN 56175

Thank you for your membership and believing in preserving our past for future generations.

Sincerely, Wheels Across the Prairie Board Members

## Wheels Across the Prairie 2018 Membership

PO Box 1091 • Tracy, MN 56175

Benefits include free admittance to the museum & two newsletters per year. The Wheels newsletter is also posted on our website.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

### LEVELS OF MEMBERSHIP

(Due annually on May 1)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Individual – \$20
- \_\_\_\_\_ Couple – \$25
- \_\_\_\_\_ Family – \$35
- \_\_\_\_\_ Business – \$100
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other – \$\_\_\_\_\_

Our Mission at Wheels Across the Prairie Museum: To collect, catalog, preserve, display, and interpret relevant historical artifacts, and to provide information to visitors.

Wardell (as) Pres., Peter Iverson, Nathan Beach and Bohannon (as) trustees. The Post Office at Summit was removed to Tracy, which was then called "Shetek". In 1877, the name was changed to Tracy. The first postmaster after the removal was H.M. Joy and the office was located in his store. A fine two-story brick school building containing four rooms, costing \$6,000 was built in 1880. The first school in the village was taught in the Presbyterian Church by Stella Cleaveland, during the summer of 1875. In the fall of 1874, the Presbyterians organized under the ministry of the Rev. Ransom Waite, who became their pastor. The congregation (Congregationalists?) also organized under the ministry of Rev. J.H. Jenkins with seven members. They built a church about the same time as the Presbyterians. The Methodists organized about a year later under the ministry of Wm. Henning. The first boy born was that of George White, born June 19, 1872. The first girl was Jessie Moses.

Several other enterprises were started at Shetek during the summer of 1875. Gleyand Brauns opened a general store. J.P. Davis opened a third, and J.M. Wardell established a lumberyard and sold furniture and farm machinery, Mr. Mathews conducted a harness shop and David Stafford, a hardware store. Also, two new churches were established. In June 1876, the name of the town was changed to Tracy and although several business houses had been started, Shetek was still a small station, and when the census was that year, the population of Monroe Township including the village was only 181. During the year 1876, the grasshopper plague was a thing of the past and many new settlers located in Tracy. The village was full of life with new improvement going on, sidewalks being built, which were much needed. Among new enterprises in '78 were: a hardware store by K.K. Evans, a general store by Iverson & Thurin, a meat market by E.L. Starr, a store by Beach & Co, a grocery store by Mr. Warren and machinery depot by Ole Rialson & Co.

Early in the year 1879, news came that a railroad was to be built from the village west into Dakota. The effect on the struggling village was magical. The town was soon filled with strangers looking for farms and business places, and 14 frame buildings were erected that spring. The town was lively and there was a steady increase in population. The census in 1880 showed a population of 322. During this period, a U.S. land office was established. The village incorporated under state laws Feb. 5, 1881. The commissioners to act in the new village were M.T. Bohannon, J.M. Wardell, D.H. Evans, E.O. Brauns and M.D. Gibbs. The first election was held at the Commercial Hotel, March 15, 1881 when 103 votes were cast. The first President of the village council was J.M. Wardell.

The advancement of Tracy was rapid during the early '80s and soon it became the largest village in the county. The causes of the prosperous time in 1883 was the action of the railroad company making the town a division point and making many railroad improvements. Then, adding to that, excellent crops caused a boom to the village. The census for 1885 gave Tracy a population 1210 and it had 224 more people than Marshall.

In 1890 its population numbered 1400. Then came a blow that checked our town for a season. That was a disastrous fire in the fall of '91, Nov. 29. The most destructive fire that ever occurred in the county. For a time, it appeared as though the whole town would go, but the flames were finally checked after a loss of two hotels, post office and several stores and saloons, barns, including all the buildings on the Front Street side between 3rd and 4th, 26 in all. The total loss was

estimated at nearly \$50,000. The following year, a system of water works and supply fire protection was provided for. Also, an electric lighting system and a part of the burnt district was rebuilt, and since that time, Tracy has had a steady growth and has developed into a prosperous little city. In 1905, its population numbered 1687 and in 1910, 1876. As the population increased, more school buildings were needed. In the meantime, an organization under the Independent Dist. Plan was effective in 1888. A high school was established in charge of Supt. Klepper and the first class graduated in 1890. In 1893, a school was erected across the track which accommodated the children in that part of the town, and Miss Belle Potter taught the school several years.

In the spring of 1895, the town decided to erect a high school building. Bonds were sold and the brick building now standing on Rolland and Harvey St. was erected at a cost of \$30,000. The lower grades occupied the central school building and higher grades the new building. The central building was destroyed by fire in Feb, 1912 with a loss of \$10,000 covered by \$7,000 insurance. The pupils were located in different buildings wherever a vacant room could be found and plans were at once laid for the erection of a new high school building. In 1914, after much discussion and time spent on deciding where the new building should be located, it was voted at a special election to use the same site where the school building was burnt and in the year 1915, a beautiful two-story modern high school was erected at a cost of \$45,000. The total enrollment of the high school at the present time is 871.

During the World War, Tracy had her share of patriotic work. Many of her young men enlisted and the Red Cross was active along their line of work.

It's stories like this that make working at the museum fun and rewarding. One can get lost when a treasure is found or received like this! :) Getting lost happens quite a bit at the museum you can become so involved in a project when a hidden object or picture will fall into your lap.. then off you go on to a different story! It happens before you know it! For what? All in the name of history.

## In Memory of...

### DORTHEY PAMP

We had a wonderful day in July when KEYC tv came to do a short clip for their news channel! It was great to honor Dorthey Pamp for her many years of dedicated service to the Wheels. Her dedication all those years ago, can be seen in many areas of the Wheels today. We are forever grateful to her! In her memory we renamed the "Car barn" the "Dorthey and Bill Pamp Farm Barn". Blessed be her memory.



Dorthey Pamp – one of the Wheels founders at her interview with KEYC TV 12 out of Mankato at the Wheels

# Other Wheels News

- Our season was filled with many highs and a few lows. Visitors from far and wide have visited the museum this season, leaving behind wonderful comments, letting us know they will be back, as well as, telling their friends and families to visit the museum.
- We had some major rains this season! Saying it has been a wet season is an understatement! Thankfully, inside all buildings were dry. Repairs to a broken tile are underway.
- Our Schoolhouse got new windows and a new door, plus electricity was installed in a few more buildings making cleaning so much easier, as well as, giving some much-needed security to our buildings.
- Our Mr. Ron Boje was super busy this season a wonderful gem for us! He is so talented in the blacksmith shop and always eager to help out when the call for help is put out! Thank you, Ron!
- A bigger than we thought project was started this last February. Due to storage space being needed in our second floor of the main barn, we decided the negatives from "Stassen's Photography" and "Hanephal's Photography" should go back to families. All are sorted by last name at this time. Some of you probably have gotten some delivered to you already! It is like an early "Christmas Present" to get these! Negatives of historical value are in the archives. If you or your family (The family member doesn't have to be living to have pictures in our archive) had pictures taken in Tracy when these businesses were open, contact one of us we would be happy to look for you. Jon Wendorff (507) 626-1949 or Norine Hanson (507) 217-1163
- It has been fun to do some research for families and even more fun when they come to tour the museum to look at info we have and pictures, along with looking for info for class reunions, a note to future class reunions; we do have some "Tracers" papers in our archive and "Tetons" available. We are missing a few "Tetons". Please, remember the museum when you are cleaning. Ever wonder why our annuals are called "Tetons"? Recently on one of our Facebook groups called "if you grew up in Tracy remember when?" the question was asked. The answer "Teton" means Prairie dwellers and as Tracy is on the prairie and we all dwell here, that is the name our annuals should be. Now you know why the "Teton" is the "Teton".

- P.G. Kelly sweet shop once located in the Masonic building and on South Street in the former Dr. Horn's building. We received some canisters from his shop this fall. The canisters are now on display in the recently created "Ray's Cafe" area featuring the "Skandia", "Welu's Palace Cafe", Ray's and the "Friendship Cafe".



West Central Minnesota Historical Association meeting.

- We welcome your feedback, your support, and any help you can give us any day!
- We hosted the West Central Minnesota Historical Association fall meeting on October 16th. 10 counties had a representative from historical societies or museums. The day was spent sharing round table ideas and events that work for others, questions answered and a time to learn about running a museum. Special Thanks to Mary Sanow and Joyce Greely, Mary Jo Babcock, Priscilla Muske, Billie Jo Lau, Jane Mudeking for making the day an AWESOME DAY!
- Our Sympathy to the Bill Bolin family, a great teacher, a community leader and very interesting man to listen talk about the area he called home. Southwest Minnesota has lost a great treasure, he will be missed by many.
- Thank you to all those who have donated monetarily throughout the year. Especially, thanks to Tracy Marathon Card Players for their generous donation. These donations help keep the lights on! It was much appreciated.
- We appreciate all of our members immensely! Without your memberships, we would have no reason to keep the doors open! The founders of "Wheels Across the Prairie" are so proud, as they look down from the heavens to see what you helped CONTINUE at Wheels! Thank you for your continued support!



Jon Wendorff presenting on the history of the Wheels museum.

## Thank you to all our volunteers!

Without your help, when the call is made, the museum would not be so clean and delightful! Your dedication is beyond words! Thank each and everyone of you!

### Volunteer Wheels Across the Prairie Board of Directors:

Jon Wendorff – President

Jane Muedeking – Vice President

Priscilla Muske – Secretary

Billie Jo Lau – Treasurer

Marcy Schramm – Historian

Volunteer Wheels Across the Prairie Board Members: John Meyer, Jeff Meyer, Ron Boje, Jim Julien, Muriel Coulter, Jim Babcock, Seth Schmidt, Dave Tiegs, Eric Muske.

### RED CINNAMON RIPE CUCUMBER PICKLES

(Donated by Jane Muedeking – Vice President of Wheels Across the Prairie Museum. This recipe is an old Alabama recipe from Jane's cousin Connie Ragsdall. Jane was raised in Alabama)

- Step 1: 10 pounds of ripe, large cucumbers, cored, sliced and peeled. Soak Cucumbers for 24 hours in one cup pickling lime and enough water to cover in a large plastic canister
- Step 2: Rinse and soak in ice water for 3 hours.
- Step 3: Mix 1 cup vinegar, 1 large bottle of red food coloring, 1 TBLS Powder Alum and enough water to cover in large kettle with the cucumbers. Heat and simmer for 2 hours. Drain.
- Step 4: Mix 3 cups of vinegar, 3 cups water, and 15 cups or 1 ½ 5lb bag of real sugar (not a typo it is 15 cups), 8 sticks of cinnamon, or ½ tsp pickling spice (Jane always uses the stick cinnamon) 8 ½ ounce bag of "Redhots" cinnamon candy melts. Boil mixture until the candy melts. Pour hot mixture over the cucumbers and let set for 24 hours. Pack and seal pint jars. Always put in warm water bath to insure the jars seal. (Optional step, Jane uses is: Boil the mixture then pack and seal into pint jars. Put jars into warm water bath to insure they seal. Put jars in fridge over night to chill well before serving. Makes a pretty holiday pickle served on a white pickle dish.)