

Lake Preston's past revisited in history book

By Kerry Drager

There is more than 140 years of history in Lake Preston. Generations of peoples, hundreds of businesses and thousands of stories to be told. This trove of information and history is what the people of the Lake Preston Museum Board are trying to preserve, and they hope to help achieve this with the creation of their new book "The History of Lake Preston, People and Places."

Museum board members Paulette Field and Mary Rockino played a significant role in the creation of the book, but the idea that sparked its creation happened on accident. What began as an inspiration for a timeline to follow along the walls of the new museum became something much more complicated.

"Originally, I didn't think about a book," said Field. "When we were moving from the old museum to the new museum, I found all these boxes of the local newspaper. I thought that it was a wealth of history. There was so much information. Too much for a timeline."

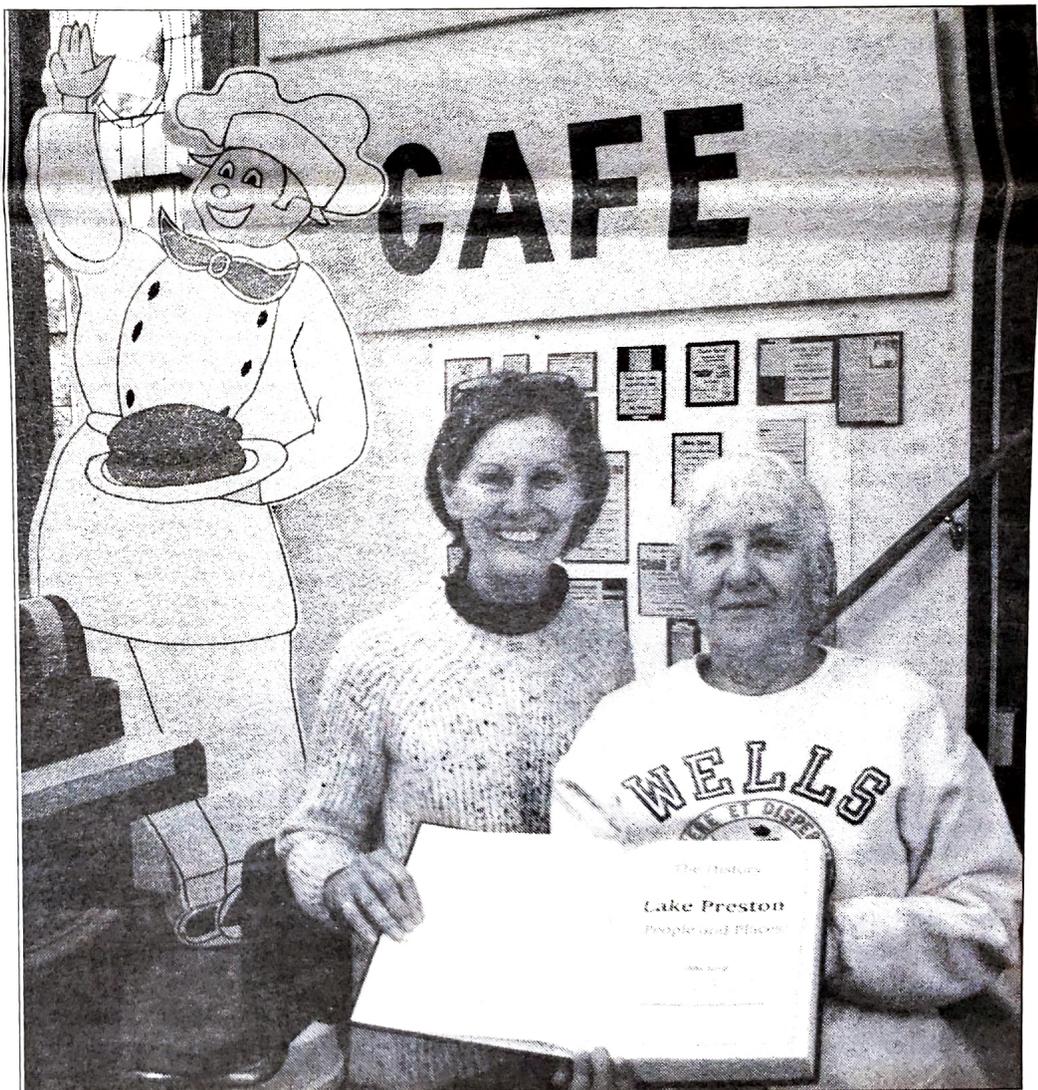
With the realization that all the exciting and important history of Lake Preston would simply not fit on the museum walls, the inspiration for the book was born.

Field got to work. She dove into the stacks of newspaper the museum had before eventually finding her way over to the *Lake Preston Times* to go through its archives, which ended up being a valuable resource for the research needed for the book.

"The *Lake Preston Times* is the town's oldest remaining business," said Field.

Being not only the oldest standing business but also simply because of the nature of the newspaper meant that there was hidden information to be found. Hours of looking through newspapers and microfiche from the Dorothee Pike Memorial Library, Field came away with heaps of notes.

For every event uncovered from



History book

Museum board members Paulette Field, left, and Mary Rockino proudly announce the publication of the "History of Lake Preston, People and Places." The history book is filled with several stories of the businesses and the people of the area, including Oliver and the hamburgers served at Susie's Cafe.

the dust of time, more unanswered questions and missing pieces were left to be discovered. Field and the museum board needed the community's help to assemble the puzzle that was Lake Preston's past.

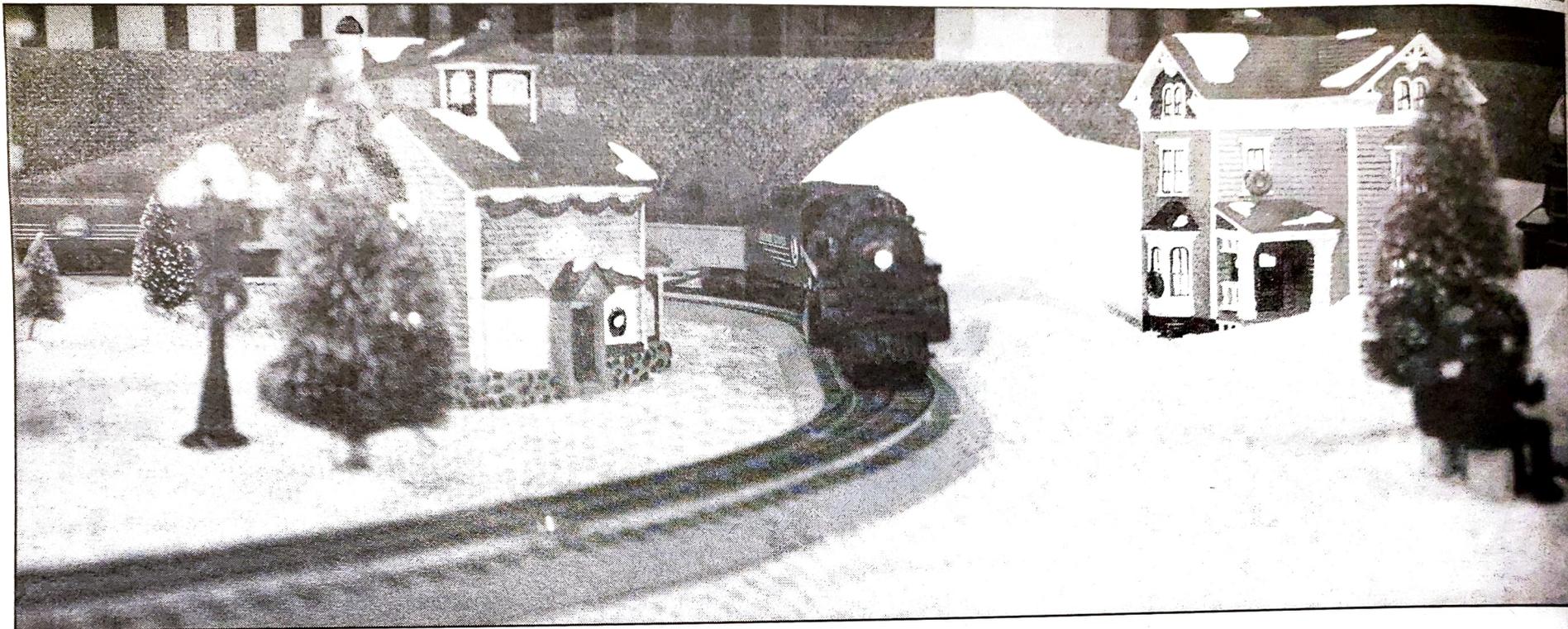
"A couple of good researchers helped us on getting stories for the book," said Rockino.

What wasn't in print that was vital to filling in the blanks were photographs. A picture provided a

visual to the story and the oral tales of the elders of our community. The submission of family stories, poems and photographs that have never been released to the public before helped fill the pages of the book.

"We were interested in family histories. The people were wonderful. They wrote and submitted such great stories," said Rockino.

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Train display

The Lake Preston Museum is getting into a festive spirit in preparation for Christmas in Our Town this year by decorating the museum with a tiny Christmas village and a train set. (Times photo by Kerry Drager)

History book

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Community involvement has always been a significant part of Lake Preston. From the city's water and sewer system to the community pool, it was the people and their selfless dedication to their town that made it a reality.

"It all happened because of Otto Thorsness. He put people to work, making the clay tiles for the city's sewer. He did so much for the city. He was a brilliant man," said Rockino.

Not unlike Otto Thorsness in the 1930s, these women of the muse-

um board put their minds together to make sure that Lake Preston's history was relived in this historical book. The collection of articles, piecing together timelines and events, uncovering forgotten mishaps and joyful reunions, bringing to light the personal stories of the people and the creation of the very foundation of the community all went into the book due to their ambition. It has not been the first time women in the community got things done.

"The ladies here in town, they raised money when it was very tight. They raised it for the community," said board member, Marlys Vincent.

The women of the museum board are hoping that the book will spark a renewed interest in Lake Preston and that the community will continue to support the museum and the wealth of information it harbors. The new building has some updates it needs to keep it safe from water damage and structural decay.

"We have some grand ideas for the museum, but we need income," said Field.

Additional volunteers are also needed. The board members are seeking new members that are younger, more able-bodied to help move heavy artifacts and provide other ideas on how to keep the

museum growing.

"We are an all-women's board," said Rockino. "We could use some masculine input."

If history has anything to say about Lake Preston, the community has always come together to get things done. From an opera house to Kingsbury County's first hospital, it has always been the people of this area that has made it happen.

"Lake Preston was built on hard work and determination. It was built by the community," said Rockino.