



HERITAGE GROUP NORTH

HGN is an all-volunteer non-profit organization dedicated to preserving community history and identity through various projects, programs, and displays. Among HGN's most visible works are the restored railroad depot, the caboose, the historic fire-engine display, and HGN's walking tours. If you enjoy history and are supportive of community development, please consider donating or joining HGN. The modest dues are \$10 a year for general membership. HGN also seeks volunteers.

Heritage Group North, P.O. Box 266, Pine River, MN 56474

PH 320-492-1357

October 2018

LOCAL SPOTLIGHT – THE CREAMERY

- In the last issue, I indicated there would be a piece about the Pine River Creamery. Since then, I have heard from several people and realized there are many, many stories to be told. So stay tuned for more. It is very possible the creamery and possibly the armory will be the focus of a community event next summer!

From - REMINISCENCES AND RECOLLECTIONS BY BILL BURNSON

“Footsteps, then flames in the night” Nine miraculously escape 1944 fire at hardware store

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By Opal Houg Johnson (note: Opal resides at the Good Samaritan Home in Pine River. She will be 109 years young December 21, 2018)

The second floor or upstairs of the Gardiner Hardware building at that time occupied by Zella Kater, Opal and Arvid Johnson, Lelah Goble and two small children, and Frank and Maude Anderson, all living in apartments. Don Lundrigan, lawyer; Lester Severeid, insurance, Dr. Roy Dingle, dentist all had offices and Lelah Goble had her beauty parlor on that floor.

It was time for my husband Arvid Johnson to turn over the township books because we had moved out of Gail Township. Arvid, as treasurer, wanted to go over all the records. It was midnight when we retired. Shortly after, all lights were out in the building. Lelah Goble and I independently of each other, became curious about some footsteps we heard ascending the stairs and going around the stairs with the sound of a door opening. Lelah was so curious she went to the head of the stairs to see if anyone was there. She saw no one. Sensing no fear; neither did I. (Lelah had taken her little boy to the public toilet which we all used.) At 2 am Mrs. Frank Anderson got up to treat a very sore throat which came upon her and when she went to turn on the light she could see no light because the smoke was so dense. She screamed, “Fire, Arvid!” We awakened with a start. As Arvid opened our hallway door the heavy smoke rolled in. My brother Bud who was staying with us said, “We can’t make it!” Arvid suggested we soak Turkish towels and cover our head and face because we couldn’t see anyway. My brother found his way to Lelah Goble’s apartment next to us. She had her two children by an open window trying to get some air. My brother grabbed her two children, one in each arm and headed in the direction of the stairs. I thought I was going to die because it was as if someone was pouring lye down my throat. I couldn’t find the stairs and got over to Dr. Dingle’s door, which was red hot. Zella Kater, right beyond the stairs, accidentally hit the garbage can and sent it rolling. She was the first down ahead of us gropers and she put in the fire alarm. When my brother followed with the two little ones, opening the outside door must have lifted the smoke so I found the stairway railing. Where Arvid was I didn’t know but the fire was very near. I saw the ceiling of the post office beneath us all solid flames glowing and the molding burning

when I got to the outside door. I think the Andersons, both elderly, chose to remain by the window. I'm glad Mrs. Anderson wasn't overcome by smoke. (The stairway was about three or four feet from the burning dental office.)

The fire department responded immediately and fought like mad. I can still see young Paul Gardiner on that ladder fighting to save the family store. Our apartment farthest from the fire was badly smoked up. My dishes in closed cupboards were brown; likewise, our clothes. Lon Fields had an empty bedroom upstairs in his barbershop. He told Arvid and me to sleep there. My brother Bud must have gone to the hotel. I don't know how the others managed.

I remember long flames coming out of either Severeid office or Anderson's apartment. The north end of the building was a blackened shell but the stairway didn't burn. That shows how fast the fire department fellows responded and worked.

We were all thankful that we escaped with our lives and aware of what a close call this had been. Tragic and different except for some good luck, some quick thinking and the fact that none of us panicked. Zella Kater's apartment was close by head of the stairs so she was able to get out quickly and not only knew where the fire alarm was but had the presence of mind to turn in the alarm. Mrs. Anderson's cry of "Fire" awakened all of us instantly. Had she slept another 20 or 30 minutes it may have been too late to save lives or this landmark building, which had been built in 1917.

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NOTE: At the time of this dramatic fire we were local residents living out west of town on what we now call the Golf Course Road. Business brought me into town on a daily basis and on that first morning the coffee shop was buzzing with talk of the fire which had driven the residents out in the night. Even so, it wasn't then regarded as a big event because the prompt action of the fire department had put out the fire before it had noticeably damaged the exterior of the building. Also, the story didn't get into the Journal. Reason: the war was at a critical stage and the Journal had suspended publication for the duration because publisher-founder Grant Bergstrom had been called into war service. There was no local radio to report this news and of course there was no television. Thus, it was that this story lingered in limbo and in the memories of those who so narrowly escaped into this inferno of smoke and fire. For these reasons we are particularly grateful to Opal Johnson for writing this story which otherwise would have been forever lost to the history of Pine River.

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IT IS STORIES LIKE THIS THAT WE LOVE TO BE ABLE TO SHARE !!

From the editor:

In my 68 years I have been to Duluth only a few times. Recently we made the trip to ride the train from Duluth to Two Harbors, then spent a day around the harbor. Being involved with Heritage Group North over the past year or so helped me to put this in a different perspective. The Duluth area is so rich in Minnesota history, I know a person could spend years trying to absorb it all. The town and area should be very proud of how they have preserved, displayed and maintained so much information for everyone to enjoy.

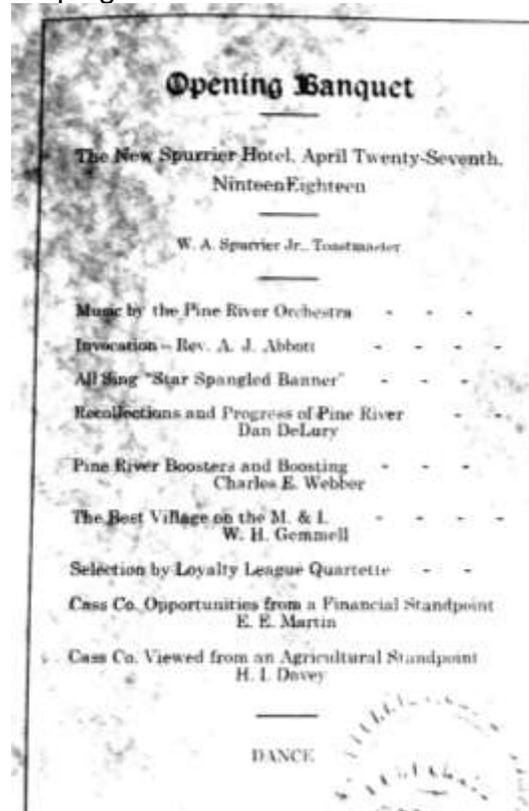
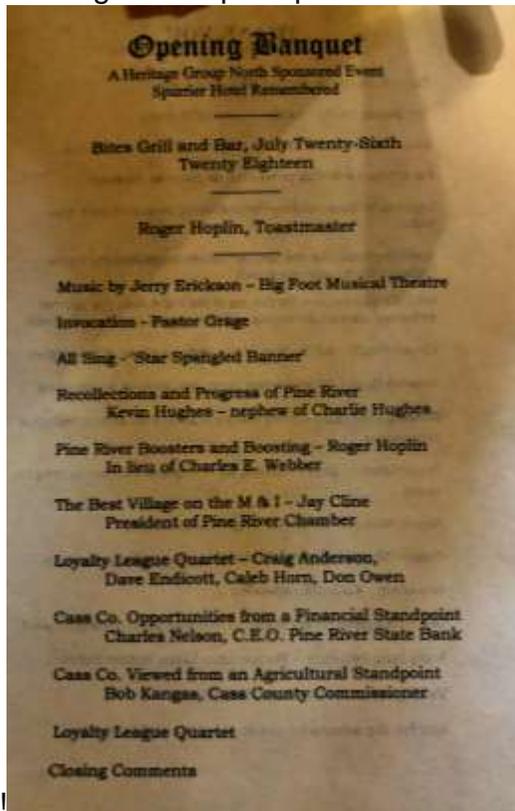
For us at Heritage Group North, we know we have our work cut out for us and realize even our "small town" history takes many hours and many hands, not only to preserve, but to make it available for generations to come. This makes seeing established museums and historical buildings much more appreciated.

My personal goal is to do "as much as I can", "while I can". We have many things in progress for the upcoming year and hope to have more and more opportunities for community participation.

- Annette Houg

TWO HUGE EVENTS THIS SUMMER FOR HERITAGE GROUP NORTH !!

What a tremendous community event held July 26, 2018 at Bites Grill and Bar. The focus of the event was "The Spurrier Hotel Remembered". The 1918 menu was re-created and the program followed the 1918 program featuring all male participants as seen in the 2018 and 1918 programs below.



Bites Grill and Bar was packed and the meal was awesome. Many people from the community contributed to make this a memorable evening.

- Roger & Wendy Hoplin and BITES Grill & Bar
- The Gearey family – for the original 1918 menu
- Doug & Esther Birk – for their diligent collecting of materials
- Pat Johnson and HGN committee for planning the event
- Logsleds to Snowmobiles – for publishing invaluable Pine River history
- Ron Folkeringa – for the Spurrier homes baseboard and digital copies of the Spurrier postcards.
- Bill & Carol Johnson – for the use of the hotel desk, the Spurrier embosser used on the menus and the ink well also from the hotel
- Cleone Hoplin – for the loan of her wedding gift from the Hughes
- Annette Houg – for invitations, programs, displays & slide show
- Renee Givens - Cass County Historical Society for sharing historical information
- Travis Grimler - Echo Publishing for newspaper articles covering the event
- Naomi Horn and the Barber Shop Quartet singers
- Colleen Moser and Mody Gardiner for information and stories
- Ben Aberg – KLKS radio interview
- Deb Gunderson – Great Northern News for press release of event
- Mary Jane Peterson – Recipe from Lakes Region Hotel
- Videographers – Dan Rohr, Deb Atkins
- And wonderful public response and support!



The evening ended with the Barbershop Quartet singing Good Night Ladies and the ladies of the committee responded by marching through the restaurant demanding the right to vote. (Women were given the right to vote a year after the Spurrer Hotel opened)



AND THEN THERE WAS THE “TEA”

September 6, 2018 – “Hats off to the Depot”

Another full house as the Miss Pine River Royalty helped to serve the tea and goodies! Just look at those hats!



2018 Tea Committee

Colleen Cromett Moser: Menu selections & food preparation

Ginny York Frush: Food preparation, centerpieces and table runners

Pat Johnson: Food preparation, raffle, faux hat pins

Lynda Weiss: Food preparation and ticket sales

Agnes Shamp Farnam: Food preparation, setup and greeting

Annette Patenaude Houg: Invitations, programs, slide show and hat display

Bev Kramp: Tables and setup assistance

Servers: Miss Pine River Royalty

Ellie Smith – Miss Pine River

Shayna Moore – 1st Princess

Ally Anderson – 2nd Princess

Grace Rivers – Miss Congeniality



AND THE WINNER OF THE TEA PARTY RAFFLE:

Susan Znameroski from Minnetonka. She invited everyone sitting at her table to attend! It was held September 28th at Agnes Farnam's home with all of the guests enjoying a lovely setting and food prepared by the HGN Tea Committee

AND JUST LOOK WHAT WE HAVE IN STORE FOR 2019 !!



GET YOUR STORIES READY! GRANDMA'S BROACH, MOM'S BEADS ????



ALL ABOARD CHRISTMAS IS COMING TO THE DEPOT THIS YEAR

December 8th, in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce Parade of Lights

Watch the Chamber calendar and website and Heritage Group North Facebook page to confirm details

Tentatively – 2 p.m. a few John Rohr Pine River winter clips
2:30 – Movie: Grumpy Old Men
- Free popcorn

Parade at 5 p.m. After parade, Grumpy Old Men costume contest

judging at the depot.

The depot will be open beginning at noon to visit and enjoy our interior all decked out for Christmas.

The mission of Heritage Group North is to preserve and share Pine River area history. To accomplish this, we are asking for your help. We welcome donations of items from individuals that represent the area history. This could be an old postcard, menu or other items from local businesses. It could be a snapshot of a town event. It could be an old tool used by a blacksmith or many other things you may happen to have and would like the history to be preserved. Please contact us!

HGN's WISH LIST

Digital Film & Slide Scanner - \$250

Locking glass display cases

Any \$ amount towards archival storage boxes

6' folding tables

Current Officers: President: Dennis Houg; Vice President: Bev Kramp; Treasurer: Agnes Farnam;
Secretary: Pat Johnson
Board Members: Annette Houg, Alison Stephens, Kasey Helms, Joan Helms, Betty McAllister,
Henry Kramp, Alan Johnson, Lynda Weiss, Jerry Peterson

HGN 2019 MEMBERSHIP

To join or renew your membership:

NAME(s) _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____ EMAIL _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

Annual Fee is \$10.00 per person, \$20 per family

AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____ ADDITIONAL DONATION (strictly optional) _____

Mail / Make Checks Payable To:
Heritage Group North, Inc.
PO Box 266
Pine River, MN 56474-0266

Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs)

When planning your IRA withdrawal strategy, you may want to consider making charitable donations through a QCD.

A QCD is a direct transfer of funds from your IRA custodian, payable to a qualified charity. QCDs can be counted toward satisfying your required minimum distributions (RMDs) for the year, as long as certain rules are met.

In addition to the benefits of giving to charity, a QCD excludes the amount donated from taxable income, which is unlike regular withdrawals from an IRA. Keeping your taxable income lower may reduce the impact to certain tax credits and deductions, including Social Security and Medicare.

See your personal financial advisor or tax preparer for how you can donate to Heritage Group North!