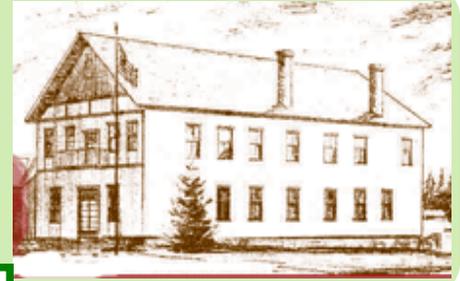


Preserving our  
Historical Heritage



# Price County Historical Society Newsletter



[www.pricecountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.pricecountyhistoricalsociety.org)

Volume 35, No. 2 Fall 2017

President: Etola Foytek, Phillips

Vice-President: Dr. Peter Dahlie, Phillips

Secretary: Lorraine Pilch, Phillips

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Director: Deborah Sales, Fifield

Director: Arlene Morrison, Park Falls

Newsletter Editor: John Berg,

Wisconsin Rapids

## Another successful season comes to a close at the Price County Historical Society.

Why is the Price County Historical Society successful?

Whether they live in a place or visit it, generally people are curious and want to know something about the place. Here the answer lies in the understanding that people share in preserving and maintaining the history of Price County through the mission of the society. The means to do this are primarily through membership in the Society and participating in the various activities offered throughout the year. The dues of varying levels paid by the members are used to maintain and keep access to structures, archive documents and photographs, and inform the public of events and museum activities.

EACH MEMBER'S contribution, whether through dues, volunteering in the Society's activities, or involvement on the board, IS ESSENTIAL to the successful fulfillment of the Society's mission. The general public also provides essential support through their visitation to the museum and fundraisers, attendance at the annual meeting, and interest in Price County history. Many



Interior of the Greenfield School Museum housed on the grounds of the Price County Historical Society in Fifield. Schools like this were located throughout Price County in the late 1800's through mid 1900's. Many people began their education in one room schools.

citizens have come forward with donations of photographs, documents, and artifacts during the many years that the museum has been housed in the Old Town Hall at Fifield. The generosity of the all who see the Society as a vehicle for preserving these priceless artifacts can not be overstated. EACH PERSON who expresses interest is essential to preservation of Price County's history!

**Speaking of opportunity for the public at  
Price County Historical Society**

**The 2017 Annual Meeting of the Society  
features the development and relationship  
between “New” Pennington and  
Prentice.**

Prentice sits at the junction of the present Canadian National branch lines heading east and west between Ladysmith and Rhinelander, and the Ashland Sub from Prentice north to Ashland. Originally the Wisconsin Central Railroad built north from Menasha to Ashland from 1871-1877. The Minneapolis, St. Paul and Sault Ste. Marie Railroad built east from Minneapolis to Sault Ste. Marie in 1884. Prentice is where the two railroads crossed paths. West of Prentice was a siding named Morrison, which was chosen as the site for the “New” Pennington. Built as a new division point between Weyerhaeuser and Rhinelander in June, 1898 but now a “ghost town.” Changes in motive power led to “New” Pennington’s demise. Price County residents and PCHS members will enjoy the insights of Dale Heikkinen’s history of early Prentice. The Heikkinen name is one that has long been synonymous with Prentice’s industrial development. Dale is a life-long resident of Prentice. His family were significant inventors and machinists whose development of hydraulic

log handling equipment transformed logging during the early truck hauls of the 1940s and 1950s. Dale has been collecting information and organizing it into an excellent visual record of Prentice’s history. John L. Berg will complement Dale’s work with a presentation of Pennington.



Dale Heikkinen, partner and past President of Multitek Inc., along with extensive knowledge and experience in community development will be the main presenter at the annual meeting of the Price County Historical Society. Dale is considered an expert on the history of Prentice and has agreed to share his vast knowledge of the area in both a visual and interactive presentation. In 2004 Dale was presented with the Friends of Education Award by the School District of Prentice.

**October 29 is a “bye-week” for the Packers and the Badgers  
play on Saturday the 28th. So come on down and learn about  
Prentice and Pennington! The public is welcome admission is free  
and refreshments will be served!**

Sunday, October 29, 2017 at 1 p.m. at the Fred Smith Studio ,  
Wisconsin Concrete Park on Highway 13 south of Phillips.

These photographs, taken by John L. Berg in the summer of 1991 when it was owned by the Wisconsin Central Ltd., show the well-worn 1898 “New Pennington” depot at its current location in Prentice. Moved to this site in 1903 by the Soo Line Railroad, this building has seen countless trains haul passengers and freight past its portals over the past 119 years. This depot, and the depot at Park Falls, are the only remaining structures in Price County directly tied to the Wisconsin Central Railroad and the Soo Line Railroad.



**Prentice Depot**

Wide angle photograph showing the train depot while looking west along the original Soo Line Railroad tracks at the Wisconsin Central Ltd. Prentice Depot, Summer, 1991.

Photo by  
John L. Berg.

**Venison Road to  
Bradley**

The Wisconsin Central Ltd. hauls pulpwood east on the original Soo Line Railroad tracks at Venison Road to Bradley Station. For the past 133 years wood products have been a mainstay of the railroads operating in Price County. October 5, 1996

Photo by  
John L. Berg





## Prentice Depot

Looking west along the original Soo Line Railroad tracks at the Wisconsin Central Ltd. Prentice Depot, Summer, 1991.

Photo by  
John L. Berg

Still interested in owning a piece of Price County history and you missed your chance while the museum was open? We still have a deal for you!

As was noted in the Spring Issue, several books covering various aspects of Price County's History are available for sale at the Museum bookstore during the summer. Many of these books may also be ordered directly through the Price County Historical Society.

To order, please visit our website at: [www.pricecountyhistorical society.org](http://www.pricecountyhistorical society.org) and click on our gift shop link to see the selection. Some titles are also for sale at the Chamber of Commerce offices in Phillips and Park Falls.

The proceeds of the sale of each book goes directly to the finances of the Society to support operating expenses. The individual purchasing these books receives two great values at one price; the enjoyment of owning a part of county history and the satisfaction of supporting the Price County Historical Society! Such a deal! In addition, local

historical books make great birthday, special occasion and Christmas presents!

Price County Historical Society has recently purchased for sale more copies of the Phillips Fire Centennial book. This book, published in 1994, documents the Great Phillips Fire that wiped the city off the map on July 27, 1894. Profusely illustrated with S.A. Johnson's superb photographs that have been excellently copied and printed, this volume is a must for those collecting books on Price County history! This book is available through the Price County Historical Society and the Price County Telephone Company office for the very affordable price of \$12.50! Get yours today!

"The very air seemed to explode and burn. No power on earth could have stopped it."

*The Phillips Bee August 1, 1894; excerpt taken from "Phillips Fire Centennial 1894—1994."*

## Price County Historical Society Annual Meeting

Sunday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016

### Fred Smith Studio/Wisconsin Concrete Park-Phillips

President Foytek called the 2016 Annual Meeting to order on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 at 2:00 p.m. at the Fred Smith Studio, Phillips. After the Pledge of Allegiance, a Moment of Silence was observed in honor of those departed: Gaye Du Monte, Ritta Jonett, Ruby Nolan, Ruth Olson, and Marvel Toby.

Motion to approve the Agenda-Karen Baumgartner/Rich Eggleston. Carried.

Foytek introduced members of the PCHS Board of Directors: Peter Dahlie, Vice-President, Jo Gibeaut, Treasurer, Annette Setterman, Secretary, Arlene Morrison, Laurie Pilch, Deb Sales-ab, Edith Burant-ab, Bonnie Salm and John Berg.

Motion to approve the October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015, Annual Meeting Minutes, which were previously mailed to all board members. Peter Dahle, Jo Gibeaut Carried.

Gibeaut distributed the treasurer's current report for 2016. Income total- \$56,448.53; Expense Total-\$63,160.08: Cash on Hand checking and savings- \$23,515.06. Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report (subject to audit). John Berg/Peter Dahlie Carried.

**Membership:** Pilch- 230 members. New members are always welcome.

**Newsletter:** Pilch-The newsletter's purpose is to let members know what is going on at the museums.

**Photo:** Gibeaut-Photo committee is working toward bringing the history of Price County up-to-date by compiling a computer inventory of photos donated to the museum. Eventually we will put the photos with descriptions on-line for everyone to view.

**Fundraisers:** Foytek/Salm-2016 fundraisers included: Spaghetti Dinner in the spring, Plant Sale, Short Cake Fundraiser, Victorian Tea, and the Chili Supper. Trivent gave money for food for the spaghetti dinner. Looking to have a Style Show in 2017.

**Displays:** Dahlie-New displays included an undertaker's table and placement of the organ in storage at the Old Town Hall.

**Building and Grounds:** Foytek-A generous donation led to the painting of the Old Town Hall (\$37,500 for repairs and painting). Rain gutters and a new entrance door were added. Some painting was also done at the schoolhouse. Our next project will be the inside of the Old Town Hall and heavy gauged plastic is planned for the floor of the basement to prevent moisture from reaching inside the museum. This will help with our mold problem.

**Election of Directors:** Peter Dahlie, John Berg and Jo Gibeaut, who have three-year terms expiring in 2016, have consented to stay on the board for another term to expire in 2018. Annette Setterman is leaving the board. Nominated for a new term is Eric Tollefson. Motion to accept nomination. Jerry Brillhart/Karen Baumgartner Carried. Motion to cast a unanimous ballot for recommended board members was made by Ginny Bosse and seconded by Grace Kielsmeier. Carried.

**Open Forum:** Karen Baumgartner-Activities included: Fourth Graders visiting the German Settlement in Spirit, Barn Dance, and Potluck Picnic. Rich Eggleston- Fitchburg has a folklorist coming in and there is a new Dane County book highlighting history on Lake Mendota.

**Adjournment:** President Foytek adjourned the meeting at 2:40 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Annette Setterman, Secretary

Following the meeting historian, John Berg, spoke on Lugerville.

**A Life Well Lived:** by Lorraine Pilch

It began with an e-mail and phone call from Cecelia Rogers, who was a few years older than me when we rode the same school bus and went to the same schools together. She informed me that she was the trustee of her late brother Walter L. "Len" Hilgart's estate. She explained that it was his wish that his dress Air Force uniform be donated to the Price County Historical Society and was wondering if we would accept it. We were very honored to receive his uniform. Cecelia then made arrangements to send it up from Florida with friends where it arrived in Park Falls and was then delivered to the museum by brother Bob Hilgart. After seeing the uniform and accompanying documents those of us working on displays were inspired to design a Military display on the stage of the Old Town Hall Museum. Len's dress uniform is now at the center of that display along with other WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam and other uniforms showcasing decades of military service of men and women from the Price County area who gave of their time and some of their lives to serve our country.

Along with the uniform was copies of some of Len's service records and other documents and pictures. I took them home with me to read and found that they told a story of a boy that was born on October 5, 1922 in Park Falls and attended grades one through four at the Greenfield School, moved to Fifield with



Len Hilgart enlisted on Dec. 12, 1942

his family and graduated from Fifield High School in 1941. As a young man Len enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Force. He then served overseas in the Pacific as a P-38 Fighter Pilot. He flew 22 combat missions before the war ended, and flew over Hiroshima and Nagasaki after the atomic bombs were dropped. He flew the "last mission" of WWII, where he flew fighter escort top cover in his P-38 for the Japanese surrender delegation on their trip to sign the terms of surrender. Len returned to civilian life in 1946 but decided to re-enter the Air Force in 1949. Len served overseas during the Korean and Vietnam Wars retiring as Chief Master Sergeant, and from the Reserves as a Lt. Colonel with 26 years of service.

Len then became a teacher and taught industrial arts for 16 years earning his Master's Degree in 1987. After retiring from teaching Len continued to substitute teach until the age of 90. Len passed away at the age of 94 on October 30, 2016 and is buried at Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell Florida. It was truly inspiring and humbling reading the story of this man. It is plain that he had accomplished much in his life and was loved, respected and admired by his family, neighbors and students that he had taught. As his nephew Kirk Nauman wrote "He was literally a living and breathing book of American and World history for the 20th Century." His papers are now part of the Society's archives. Copies have been made and are in a binder on the stage for all to read. I never knew Len, as he was older than me. I wish I could have met and known him. However there isn't a time that I don't walk into the Greenfield School or look at the Fifield School Memorial or the display on the stage without thinking of him. Even though he is no longer



Walter L. "Len" Hilgart in his dress uniform.

alive his story and the life he lived continue to impress and inspire me. As a Florida neighbor said "Walter was more than a neighbor; he was a true friend, a mentor and someone you looked up to, he was the complete package!



The Military display at the Old Town Hall Museum. Left is the uniform of Carolyn Lovell Weatherford who served in the US Army Nurse Corps. Right are uniforms from various branches of service representing WWI, WWII, Korea and Vietnam.



## 2017 In Review

As we close out the 2017 Season, Price County Historical Society provides some information of past year's activities.

**Museum Attendance:** 430. This was similar to 2016, when we had attendance of 438.

**Fundraisers:** We experienced great success this year as attendance at our Spaghetti Dinner was tremendous with 103 plates served. The Pie Social in July was also a blockbuster as all pies sold out. No take homes that day! Our Strawberry Shortcake Day in August was also well attended, as was our first annual Chili Dinner held in October, 2016. All in all there was a higher level of attendance at each special event this year. This is very pleasing to see such a turn out by Price County's citizens, friends and local visitors.

**Displays:** New displays for 2017 included a Military display located on the stage; The Storm, showing photographs and newspaper accounts of the July 4 Downburst that hit Phillips in 1977; Art work of world renowned glass artist Gary Beecham, who as a young man was raised in Price County and graduated from Phillips High School; Art and craft work of Edith Burant; Collection of newspapers regarding WWI and WWII; A panoramic 1916 photograph of "Wards and Park Falls High School," which was hung in the Greenfield School. Various enhancements to other displays at both the Old Town Hall and Greenfield School were also completed. Four mannequins were purchased, of which two were of special military style quality. Grant funds received from The Wisconsin Historical Society Mini-Grant Program and the AnnMarie Foundation were received to purchase powder coated adjustable, moveable archival quality shelving to store our ever expanding collection of artifacts. A big thank you to both entities for their generous contributions!

**Book Sales:** Books reprinted this past year included "100 Years on the Flambeau" and "The Storm." In addition, we purchased additional copies of "Phillips Fire Centennial 1894-1994" for resale. Book sales of the "Lake Shore and Eastern Railroad" by John L. Berg were brisk this year. Berg also was available for book signings at the Pie Social in July and the Price County Fair in August. "The Storm" and "100 Years on the Flambeau" were also popular and sold well.

**Photograph Project:** Eric Tollefson, Jo Gibeaut, Laurie Pilch and Etola Foytek continued the archival work and scanning of these precious images. In the future the plan is to be able to have the public view them online. The photograph identification display at the Old Town Hall resulted in identification of some of the previous unknown people, events and places in Price County. These identifications serves to enhance and make more meaningful our photographic collection.

**Museum Improvements:** Painting of the staircase hallway and upper opera house room including their ceilings of the Old Town Hall Museum and installation of a rubber matted moisture barrier in the museum basement were the priorities this year. In the future the stenciling around the walls of the upper story will be completed to restore it to its original appearance. The east side of the Greenfield School along with other exterior painting touch-ups were completed. The brick plaza in front of the Fifield School Monument will be expanding in the future to include the names of more individuals who attended, worked for, or had other connections to the Fifield School. This project is being coordinated by Doug Severt. Brick sales began in 2017 and so far 31 bricks have been sold.

**Membership:** In 2016 we ended our year with 230 members. Our current membership as of October 1 stands at 233 members, which is an increase of three members from last year. In 2017 we had 17 new members join our ranks; Seven members chose not to renew their membership; five members sadly left us as we learned of their passing. Two members have an unknown status as we do not have an updated address for them. New members this year were: John and Renee' Aherne; Anne Collins; Kerry Collins; Martha Hilgart; Robert and Patricia Hilgart; Lori Jansen; Sally McFadyen; Monica Nauman; Mary Ann Ortmyer; Norman and Renee Prescott; John and Carol Severt; Catherine Stanke; Donn Turzenski. Members, which we will honor at our Annual Meeting who passed away this year are Edith Burant; Phyllis Harschutz; Jane Illich; Ruth Schumann; Scott Reinhard.

**Memorial Board:** The Memorial Board is displayed in the entrance of the Old Town Hall Museum. For a minimum donation of \$25.00 a name plate can be purchased that will be engraved with the name of your loved one. This is a wonderful way to honor and memorialize family members or friends. This year the following names were added to the board: Elyn Blomberg; Enid Carlson; Edith Burant; Isadore Hilgart; Katherine Hilgart Cestkowski; Lawrence R. Hilgart; Katherine Hilgart Cestkowski; Walter "Len" Hilgart; Edward V. Trojak; Gaye L. Du Monte.

**Hosts:** We simply could not function without our hosts. They are the people that literally keep the doors open. We thank each and everyone of you for your commitment and assistance. This year our hosts at the Old Town Hall Museum were: Therese Trojak; Maureen Trojak; Marie Fojtik; Arlene Morrison, Lakota Peissig, Donna Bubenic; Grace and Arlyn Kielsmeier; Karen Baumgartner; Rich and Laurie Pilch; Susan Heizler, Dennis Kronberger; Etola Foytek; Pete and Connie Bartelt; Mark and Lenore Hoffman, John and Louise Berg; Dan and Jean Patenaude; Suzie Boyle; Les and Barb Alm; Kathy and Bob LaPointe; Nate Nez; Al Barkstrom; Joe and

Juanita Oskvarek. Hosts at the Greenfield School Museum were: Margaret Barbelin; Virginia Bosse; Bev Brayton; Melanie Eklof; Diane and Harlon Falstad; Carol Forward; Etola Foytek; Steve Gustafson Susan Heizler; Virginia Heller; Amy Hulbert; Sandy Kennedy; Dennis Kronberger; Ann Liebelt; Virginia Luoma; Madlyn Rein; Lucy Ross and Annette Setterman.

A special thank you to Etola Foytek for arranging the Saturday hosting schedule, Therese and Maureen Trojak for the Sunday schedule and to Carol Forward for arranging the hosting schedule at the Greenfield School. Also a special thank you to Carol Forward for all the extra hours she put in to keep the Greenfield school and its displays in beautiful order.

**Donations (monetary):** This year we had many fundraisers and received many donations for the interior painting project at the Old Town Hall Museum. Price County Historical Society would like to thank the following for their generous donations: Alan and Diane Barkstrom; Jim and Dee Hintz; Karen Baumgartner; Therese Trojak; Ockers Acres; Joe's Auto Glass; Wheel Way GM; Jon's Auto Werks; Napa Auto Parts of Park Falls; McGriff Family; First National Bank of Park Falls; First National Insurance Agency; Mary Jo West; St Francis Sodality; A.C. Carpet Plus; Deb and Scott Stein; Jessica Loewe; AJS Bar and Dining; Harold Hoffman II; Western Fraternal Life, NADEJE Slovanu Lodge #236; Wisconsin Antiques Dealers Association; Canasta Club. In addition the Society has plans to re-print the book Fifield Hilltop School History and would like to thank Carol Koenig for her donation toward that project. Thank you to Therese Trojak for her donation to include family member's names on the Memorial Board.

**Donations (artifacts) and more:** Thank you to Cecelia Rogers for the donation of her brother Walter L "Len" Hilgart's Air Force Military uniform, service information and hand made Hilgart sign given in memory of Walter L. "Len" Hilgart. In addition, Cecelia generously donated monies toward the purchase of mannequins and a donation to add many of her family member's names to the Memorial Board.

**Donations (artifacts) and more:** Thank you to the following for artifact donations: Lawrence Draxler for the panoramic photograph of “Wards and Park Falls High School 1916” and the “1913 Echo Year Book” from Park Falls High School given in memory of his grandfather John Draxler; John and Renee’ Aherne for the porcelain doll and doll carriage, 1920’s collection of tablecloths and corn grinder tool owned by the Janusik family of Fifield; Robert Franzen for four photographs pertaining to the former Harschutz Resort of Phillips; Lou Bishop for the collection of three watercolors painted by Alice K. Voss of Phillips, depicting the Phillips feed mill area and other buildings in Phillips. Frank Soul, historical papers; Bill Hoffman hand blown glass vases made by artist Gary Beecham; estate of Bette Black, articles of period clothing donated by her daughter; Dan Gallistel, typewriter from the Cheese Factory owned by Edwin and Ruby Larson located in Knox Mills (now Brantwood); Doug Severt for the hp LaserJet 2420d business class printer. Several other donations were either dropped off at the old office building or made anonymously. As of this printing several other donations are in process.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank the following: Bev Brayton for being our Community Outreach Coordinator. Bev handles all requests that come through the website, along with other requests that need follow-up. Bev spends countless hours tirelessly researching questions and finding answers. Bev is also instrumental in helping individuals that want to donate artifacts to the Society; along with assisting the board in projects and activities; Jerry and Gail Movrich for assisting with the Spaghetti Dinner; Bonnie Salm’s second cook Mario for all the assistance he provides for our Spaghetti and Chili Dinner; Sally Putnam for making sure the lighted sign gets updated with information for all of our activities and events; Terri Kaiser for helping with the gardens this summer, we appreciate her eye for color and landscaping ideas; Therese Trojak for taking the lead on getting the names engraved for the Memorial Board; Doug

Severt for taking the leadership role on the Fifield School brick project; All the individuals that brought bars and other baked goods for the Spaghetti Supper, along with those that baked pies for our summer pie social.



Jo Gibeaut, Treasurer, Board of Directors  
Price County Historical Society

Finally we want to thank Jo Gibeaut, our treasurer, office wizard, collections manager and board historian for all of her dedication to Price County Historical Society. Jo will be leaving the board and the area, as she and her husband Ed complete their move to Kenosha to be closer to their children and grandchildren. Jo has done an outstanding job with every project that she has taken on over the years. We especially appreciate her expertise in managing the Society’s finances and financial records. Even though Jo is moving, through the marvels of modern technology Jo has agreed to continue to help us with our collections management. We deeply appreciate her efforts and, although not present in person next year, she will be present in spirit. Thank you Jo, you will be missed very much!

ANNUAL MEETING  
OCTOBER 29, 1917

The Following Candidates are being presented to the members for election to the Board of Directors of the Price County Historical Society:

Tom Kaiser	Three Year Term	Expiring 2020
Lorraine (Laurie) Pilch	Three Year Term	Expiring 2020
Sally McFadyen	Three Year Term	Expiring 2020

**PRICE COUNTY MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL IS DUE JANUARY 2018**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

**MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES: PLEASE CHECK YOUR SELECTION:**

INDIVIDUAL MEMBER.... \$ 10.00  
BRONZE MEMBER..... \$ 25.00  
SILVER MEMBER ..... \$ 50.00  
GOLD MEMBER ..... \$ 100.00

Please write check to PRICE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
(designate MEMBERSHIP YEAR on check and on this form.)

I am paying for the year of \_\_\_\_\_. A membership term runs from  
January 1 through December 31.

Mail this form to: **Price County Historical Society, Membership**  
**P. O. Box 156**  
**Fifield, WI 54524**

- Check box if you want newsletter sent to the address on the membership form.
- Checkbox if we may send you your newsletter by e-mail.
- Check if you do not want newsletter.
- Check box if you would like an e-mail reminder of special events.
  
- Check box if you would like to volunteer. We will contact you.

The Annual Meeting of the Price County Historical will be held in the Fred Smith Studio at the Wisconsin Concrete Park on Highway 13 south of Phillips on Sunday, October 29, 2017 at 1:00 p.m.

**AGENDA:**

Call the Meeting to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Memorial Acknowledgement

Approval of Agenda

Introduction of Board of Directors

Secretary's Report: Minutes of October 23, 2016 Annual Meeting

Treasurer's Report: Current Financial Report for 2017

Committee Reports: Membership; Newsletter; Photo; Fundraiser; Display; Building and Grounds

New Business: Election of Directors for three year terms 01-01-2018—12-31-2020

Open Forum

Adjournment

Introduction of guest speakers Dale Heikkinen and John L. Berg.

Presentation on Prentice and Pennington. Refreshments!

# **Price County Historical Society**

Price County Historical Society  
Old Town Hall Museum  
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