

# Threshers Chaff

Midwest Old Threshers Association  
Mount Pleasant, Iowa



April 2013

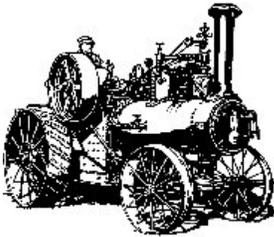
Volume 39, Number 3

## Welcome to the New Threshers Chaff

Welcome to the new, online *Chaff*. We realize this is a big change for most of our subscribers. Over the last several years, subscription numbers have fallen making it difficult to produce the quarterly news magazine in a cost effective manner.

It is our hope that by switching to an electronic version, we will be able to disseminate news and happenings in a more timely and efficient manner to the thousands of visitors who visit the Midwest Old Threshers web page.

As always, story ideas are welcome. If you would like to submit stories or photographs, our email address is [info@oldthreshers.org](mailto:info@oldthreshers.org). Or they can be mailed to 405 E Threshers Rd, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa 52641.



## Smoke from the Stack

Greetings from Midwest Old Threshers,

Winter appears to be reluctant to leave this year. The less-than-spring-like weather has many folks chomping at the bit to get their lawn mowers ready and start gardening. But, warm weather will be here soon and the Old Threshers Reunion will be here in less than no time. I can hardly believe how quickly the “days left until the 2013 reunion” click by on the website.

We have several projects that will keep us busy this year. Our Log Village will have a long awaited building constructed just south of the Public House. The structure will house a modern restroom and shower facility making it much nicer for our volunteers and visitors during the Old Threshers Reunion and other special events in the village. The project will be totally funded with financial support from the Old Threshers Foundation, the Enhance Henry County Community Foundation, the William M. and Donna J. Hoaglin Foundation, and private donations from volunteers and friends of the Log Village.

The Old Threshers Foundation has also made a significant investment in our Midwest Electric Railway operation. The financial support will make it possible for our volunteers to repair and upgrade a section of the mainline track at the north end of the loop. The old track has been removed and the base entire section will have a drainage system installed before the track is replaced. In addition, two motors from one of our open bench cars have been taken to Des Moines to be reworked.

All of these projects are scheduled to be completed well before the Old Threshers Reunion. We are all excited about these new projects because they will make very positive improvements to two vital parts of our nonprofit organization.

Midwest Old Threshers is truly blessed by the support received from our dedicated volunteers. We are all working hard so we can play hard at the 2013 Old Threshers Reunion coming up (quickly) on August 29 through September 2. I look forward to seeing you at our celebration.

I Remain as Always,



*A Financial Support Organization for Midwest Old Threshers*

## Foundation Providing Support Since 1986

Since it was founded in 1986, the Foundation has transferred \$849,523.61 in earnings.

Thanks to all of you who have supported the Old Threshers Foundation with your charitable contributions throughout the years. Last year's net income of \$68,385.89 was the largest amount of earnings in our Foundation's history. This amount was transferred from the Foundation following our annual meeting in November to Midwest Old Threshers for their financial support in 2013. Only the earnings are transferred; the principal amount of your contributions remains invested in the permanent endowment.

During 2013, the Foundation's earnings are helping to fund two major projects at Old Threshers: (1) trolley and track maintenance for the Midwest Electric Railway; and (2) new restroom and shower facilities being built in the Log Village. Completion of both of these projects will enhance our visitors' experience during the 2013 Reunion.

Currently, 15 members serve on the Foundation's Board of Directors. They review the financial statements and investment results at each of their semi-annual meetings. In between Board meetings, the Investment/Financial Committee of the Board meets to review the investment policies and investment portfolio results. They periodically meet with representatives from the USBank Trust Department, which manages the Foundation's endowment fund. The Board also appointed an Income Distribution Committee, which reviewed the Articles and Bylaws and proposed guidelines to help the Foundation evaluate requests for financial support.

Providing this financial support to Midwest Old Threshers is the sole purpose of the Foundation. to provide financial support to Midwest Old Threshers. These earnings represent the interest and dividends received from our trust account plus rental payments received from the Illinois farm and earnings received from the Granaman Trust, both of which were bequeathed to the Foundation.

Each of you is an important asset to Midwest Old Threshers. We appreciate your attendance to our events throughout the year, we value your volunteerism and we are always appreciative of any gifts received, whether in the form of cash, stocks or deferred giving. We hope to see you at the 2013 Reunion!

Alan D. Huisinga, Development Officer  
Midwest Old Threshers

## Threshers Visitors Favor Historic Open Cars

By Phil McMeins

It was Friday September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1965 and visitors were arriving by the car load in Mount Pleasant for the annual Old Threshers Reunion.

At the same time, a group of energetic railroad enthusiasts stood patiently watching as a ship arrived at the 30<sup>th</sup> Street Pier in Brooklyn, NY. Sitting on the deck of the ship were ten streetcars that just arrived in the US from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. A sister ship was also on its way with the remaining two cars in the 12 car purchase and arrived a few days later, September 17<sup>th</sup> at Pier 19 in Staten Island.

Two of these cars would eventually call Mount Pleasant their new home.

An order was placed to the St. Louis Car Company for 25 streetcars for Rio de Janeiro in 1908. This was the first and only purchase of fully assembled streetcars from the US to Rio. In 1909, the Rio de Janeiro Tramway, Light and Power finished its first home-built 13 bench, double truck streetcar. After several months of tests showed success, Rio built all remaining streetcars in their own shops, with parts and electrical equipment coming from the states, while the bodies were

built, and cars assembled in Rio. By 1912, the city had built and put into service 345 of this style of streetcar.

In the narrow streets of Rio de Janeiro in the summer of 1912, these cars were still relatively new to the city. The tropical climate in Rio owes a great deal to the design and choice for the cars that operated here. The average minimum temperature is 70°F with the maximum yearly average of 81°F. Knowing this, the only acceptable choice for the design of a streetcar needed for the city transportation was the open sided car. The streets became full of 8, 10, 12 or 13 bench open cars, with the majority being either a 10 or 13 bench car. There were no semi-closed or full closed cars in service.

The open cars continued their daily service for over a half of century, transporting riders around the city.

In Rio, there was a large surplus of cars, as the late 1950s had taken its toll on the operations and ridership levels. Automobiles were now clogging the narrow streets, and streetcars became harder to operate and more dangerous. More streetcars were taken out of service to make additional room for the growing number of automobiles on the roads.

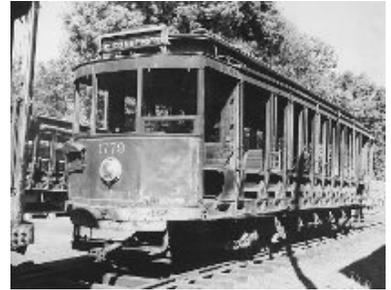
As museums across the US were looking to purchase or acquire out of service equipment, several locations were considered.

After a representative from the Association of Railway Museums visited Brazil in 1964, a deal was in the works to purchase some of these now out of service cars from the city.

In 1965, after several negotiations, a price of \$100.00(US) was agreed upon as a purchase price which included the trucks and traction motors. This did not include the cost to load the cars, transport them, un-load them, insurance, customs paperwork costs, legal requirements, and the logistical issues and costs to get them to their new homes, as they were being spread out to museums from the west coast to the east coast.

The streetcars finally arrived and on August 18<sup>th</sup> made the manifest of the Loide-Honduras cargo ship. There was a miscalculation previously of the space available, and only 10 cars were able to fit. The remaining 2 cars were loaded on the Loide – Cuba cargo ship days later. The car bodies were separated from the trucks, with the bodies sitting on the deck of the ship, while the

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Built in St. Louis, MO, in 1909, Car 1779 served many years in Rio de Janeiro, coming to the United States in 1965. It made its way to Old Threshers in 1975.



Car 1718 was built in St. Louis, MO for operations in Rio de Janeiro.

## Calendar of Events

May 3 – **Old Threshers School Tours** – May is the month for School Tours! Throughout the month, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders from around the area make the trip to Old Threshers to learn about our rich agricultural heritage. Volunteers are needed to help with the important program, call the office if you are interested.

May 4-5 – **Steam School** – Participants learn how a steam engine works and how to safely operate a traction steam engine. The class is full this year, if you are interested in participating next year, call the office and get your name on the list.

May 27 – **Heritage Museums open for the season**, 8:00am-4:30pm, \$5 admission.

May 31-June 2 – **Old Threshers Heritage Camporee** – Join scouts from the Mississippi Valley Council and surrounding councils as they earn belt loops and merit badges and further their journey through the ranks.

June 22 – **11<sup>th</sup> Bussey Doll Event** – “Looking Backward in Milady’s Mirror” is the theme for this year’s Doll Event and will feature fashions from the 1860s-1960s as well as children’s sewing machines. Proceeds will benefit the Bussey Doll Museum. To register call the office or Doll Museum, Curator Glenna Voyles at 319-367-2614.

June 27-29 – **Ladies of Letterpress** – The Ladies of Letterpress invite you to join them at their first Regional Wayzgoose held in Printers’ Hall. The event will include demonstrations and workshops for beginners and experienced printers. Go to [www.letterpressconference.com](http://www.letterpressconference.com) for more information.

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trucks were stored in the lower cargo holds. Any extra space above and between the trucks was filled with bags of coffee beans being shipped.

The Loide-Honduras was unloaded in Brooklyn, and the Loide-Cuba unloaded at Staten Island. The 10 cars in Brooklyn were placed back on their trucks and transported to museums via the Pennsylvania Railroad. The two cars in Staten Island were unloaded back onto their trucks, and moved to the Magee Museum in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania.

These 2 cars, numbered 1718, and 1779, after restoration work operated at the Magee Museum until a hurricane flooded the park out, and damaged

the operation permanently.

Midwest Central Railroad (MCRR) was looking at adding an electric streetcar line south of the grounds in 1965. After purchasing a car from the Southern Iowa Railway, they contacted Magee about their cars. On July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1969, representatives from MCRR went and purchased car 1718 from the museum and transported it back to Iowa. Virgil Coonrod transported the car to the Iowa Terminal Railroad shop at Emery, Iowa for restoration.

In 1973, MCRR returned to Bloomsburg, purchased car 1779, and brought it back to Iowa. The following year, in April, the streetcar operation was acquired

by Midwest Old Threshers and the loop around the campground was completed. The line was named the Midwest Electric Railway.

When restoration of car 1718 was finished (painted green and numbered 1) Coonrod brought the car back to Mount Pleasant where it operated with sister car 1779 for the first time at the Old Threshers

Reunion in 1975.

Returning visitors wanting to ride, whether it is a warm sunny afternoon at the Old Threshers Reunion, or a cold, bitter trip around the Haunted Rails, stand patiently waiting for one of the open cars to arrive. Sometimes letting several people go in front of them saying, “I’ll wait for the open car.”



## 11th Annual Bussey Doll Event

Planning is well underway for the Bussey Doll Benefit, scheduled for June 22.

The focus this year is on our American clothing history. We will begin our journey "Looking Backward in Milady's Mirror" with fashions modeled from the 1860s through the 1960s. Children's sewing machines will be added to the displays, some quite old along with a few newer examples.

There will be a "From Ragbag to Runway" presentation of members' personal dolls with wardrobes, featuring a variety of different eras. Some reflect the more modern artist's creations, which are truly breathtaking. These depict the human styles, both domestic and high fashion, in doll-sized form. Some dolls are children and others are adult, female dolls.

Hawkeye Doll Club members are busy making and collecting wonderful things to contribute to the event! Some of our faithful Old Threshers Volunteers will be called upon soon to help spruce up the "darlings" for your viewing. As always there will be food, fun, friends, finds, and maybe even some frolicking!

The door prizes and helper gift lists are growing as are the number of vendors. There will be a couple of new faces on the sales floor this year which should add greatly to your shopping pleasure.

As always we hope to see you at this our 11th Annual Doll Day. What fun it is to see other excited collectors, share information, attract new people to the doll world and of course showcase our wonderful Bussey Doll Collection!

## Time to Register for the 2013 Sweet 16 Program

These young ladies serve as the official hostesses of the Reunion and help things move along smoothly by guiding guests and answering questions. The contestants are judged on hospitality and volunteerism and can be seen in the Harvest Parade, riding a ground train, at the Carousel, at souvenir stands and at headquarters. If you are interested in learning more about the Miss Sweet 16 Contest during the Reunion, please contact Midwest Old Threshers at 319-385-8937.

## Obituaries

### Dora Pauline Carroll Shepp

Pauline Shepp, 96, of Mt. Pleasant, died Monday, January 28, 2013, at the Park Place Long Term Care Unit in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa. Pauline was born September 20, 1916, in Keosauqua, Iowa; she was the daughter of Herbert and Bessie (Dundore) Carroll. She graduated from Keosauqua High School in 1934 and spent the first year out of high school helping her father in the news office where he was owner and editor of the Keosauqua Republican. She graduated from Iowa Wesleyan College in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, as an English major in 1939.

Pauline's first teaching job was in Sperry, Iowa, where she taught high school English. During WWII she served as Assistant Dean of Women at Iowa Wesleyan College while teaching

English, typing and business classes. Many years later she returned to teaching at Humpty Dumpty PreSchool in Mt. Pleasant, a position she held for twelve years.

Pauline met her husband, Robert Thompson Shepp, while they were both students at Iowa Wesleyan College. They married on July 8, 1943, and celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Both Pauline and Bob were long-time volunteers at Midwest Old Threshers. Bob managed ticket sales at the North Depot for the MCRR and Pauline worked in the Red Caboose Gift Shop and the Methodist Church food tent.

She was a member of the First United Methodist Church and the Grace Circle of the United Methodist Women. Pauline also volunteered as a

third grade Sunday school teacher. She joined the Pi Beta Phi sorority while a student at Iowa Wesleyan and was recognized as a 75-year member in 2011. She was also a member of the Henry County Health Center Auxiliary and volunteered at the HCHC information desk. She was a member of the PTA, served as a Girl Scout co-leader and as an officer of the Fortnightly Club.

Survivors include one daughter, Melinda (Alan) Huisinga of Mt. Pleasant, Iowa (formerly of Carlisle, Iowa), one granddaughter, Kristin (Adam) Sieren of West Des Moines, Iowa, along with one great grandson, Lincoln Lennon Sieren. She was preceded in death by her husband and one grandson, Chad Michael Huisinga.

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## Obituaries **con't** from page 5

**Merlynn Berdell Sorrenson**, 89, Iowa City, died Nov. 20, 2012, in Iowa City.

Merlynn was born Oct. 24, 1923, to Andrew and Abbie Gronlund Sorrenson, south of Maskell. He attended Lime Grove grade school and Maskell High School, graduating in 1942. He attended Wayne State Teachers College before entering the Marine Corps, serving in the Pacific and China during WWII from 1944-1946. He married Joyce Wohlman June 29, 1947, at Trinity Lutheran Church, Hartington. He farmed in the Hartington area before returning to Wayne State and graduating from the University of Minnesota in 1963 with a degree in Mortuary Science. He served apprenticeships in Yankton, S.D.; Osceola; and Fort Dodge, Iowa, before joining the University of Iowa Pathology Department in 1968 as an assistant pathologist, retiring after 18 years.

He was baptized and confirmed in the Lutheran faith and was a member of the Iowa City Zion Lutheran Church.

He was a hobby apiarist, an electrician and enjoyed woodworking, gardening and crafts.

He was a member of the VFW Iowa City, the IOOF Lodge, the Eastern Iowa Bee Association and the Isaac Walton League. He also volunteered at Mt. Pleasant Old Thrashers.

He is survived by two daughters, JoLynn and husband, Arley Phillips, Kuttawa, Ky., and RoZella and husband, Lee Grabin, Oxford, Iowa; one grandson, Patrick Phillips, Kuttawa, Ky.; and one sister-in-law, Loretta Wohlman,

Hartington, and her four children and families.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brother, Arnold and his wife, Evelyn, and their children Patricia and Jay, California; and brother-in-law Merle Wohlman, Hartington.

**Joyce Elaine Sorrenson**, 86 of Iowa City died Monday April 8, 2013.

Joyce was born August 26, 1926 on the family farm east of Hartington, Nebraska to Stephen and Mabel Pearson Wohlman. She attended Branch grade school and graduated from Hartington High School in 1944. She attended Wayne State Teachers College, Wayne, Nebraska before teaching for 10 years. She taught in the Cedar County country schools of Spring Valley, Branch, Mayflower and Golden Prairie, and Mission Hill, South Dakota and Fort Dodge, Iowa. She also taught in her church's Sunday school and was active in 4-H as a participant and a leader.

She was Baptized and Confirmed in the Lutheran faith and was a member of the Iowa City Zion Lutheran Church.

Joyce married Merlynn Sorrenson June 29, 1947 in Trinity Lutheran Church, Hartington, Nebraska. They farmed in the Hartington, Nebraska area for several years. They lived in Laurel, Nebraska, Yankton, South Dakota, Osceola, Nebraska and Fort Dodge, Iowa before moving to Iowa City in 1968. She worked as head of Chart Control in the Urology Department and the University of Iowa Hospital, retiring in 1986.

She enjoyed bowling and was on

several teams in Nebraska and Ft Dodge and Iowa City, Iowa. She also enjoyed crafting and crocheting. She has given crocheted afghans to Ronald McDonald House, the Domestic Violence Center, the VA Hospital, Emergency Housing, and to the Kuttawa Dialysis Center, Kuttawa, Kentucky.

She and her husband belonged to Coast to Coast Travel Club, Royal Parks International Camping Club, Mississippi Adventurer Resorts and the Good Sam Camping Club. They were members of the local Good Sam Camping Club the Herky City Sams. She served as the Iowa state Good Sam historian from 1996 to 2003. Since 1987 they have spent winters in their RV throughout various southern states from Florida to Arizona.

Survivors are her two daughters, JoLynn and her husband Arley Phillips, grandson Patrick Phillips all of Kuttawa, Kentucky and RoZella and her husband Lee Grabin, grandson Adam and wife Jeri and two great-grandchildren, Wesley and Hannah all of Oxford, Iowa and one sister-in-law, Loretta Wohlman, Hartington, Nebraska and her four children and families.

She was preceded in death by her parents, husband Merlynn and brother, Merle Wohlman.

The remains of Joyce and her husband, Merlynn will be buried at the Obert, Nebraska Cemetery on June 24, at 10:00 AM. Memorials may be given to Johnson County Humane Society or Dogs for the Deaf, Inc or to the memorial of your choice. Online condolences may be sent for her family through the web [www.gayandciha.com](http://www.gayandciha.com).

**Harry Jay Hograbe**, 88, Cedar Rapids, died Sunday, Feb. 10, 2013, at Cottage Grove Place.

Harry was born on June 30, 1924, in Waverly, and lived in Plainfield until age 17, when he moved with his family to rural Dows. He graduated from Dows High School, attended Iowa State University and served his country in the U.S. Navy in World War II.

Harry married Gladys Birdeen Leymaster on June 1, 1948, at First EUB Church in Cedar Falls. They farmed in rural Dows until moving to Cedar Rapids in 1951 when he went to work

for Collins Radio. Harry retired from Collins in 1986.

Harry had an abundant curiosity and was constantly tinkering to make things better. He went from building radios at home to working on radios that went into space and to the depths of the ocean. He will be remembered for his many volunteer activities to make the world a better place: Charter Member of Lovely Lane United Methodist Church; 55 Alive Instructor and Coordinator; Crescent Masonic Lodge AF & AM; Commandery; "Happy Harry" in the Jolly Jokers clown unit of El Kahir Shrine; Hospital Dads; Old Threshers

Reunion, Mount Pleasant; safety committees; and disability rights.

Harry is survived by his wife of 64 years, Gladys; daughters, Linda Osburn (Paul Hardenberg) of Garrison Minn. and the Rev. Ruth Hograbe (the Rev. Duane Lookingbill) of Annandale Minn.; two grandchildren; brother, Robert (Shirley) Hograbe of Sheffield; brother-in-law, Ralph Leymaster (Mary Rouselow) of Waterloo; honorary grandchildren; and friends of all generations.

Memorials may be directed to Lovely Lane UMC.