

MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 2, Issue 4: April, 2008

Mark your calendars!

April 10:
Minnesota City
Historical
Association
(MCHA) Monthly
Meeting; Riverway
Learning
Community,
115 Iowa Street,
Minn. City,
6:30 p.m.

April 17:
Minnesota City
Community Readers;
Riverway Learning
Community; 6:30
p.m. The book is
Staggerford by Jon
Hassler.
(see the website
minnesotacity.org)

Upcoming Events

May
May 8: Minnesota
City Historical
Association Meeting
and Board Member
Elections

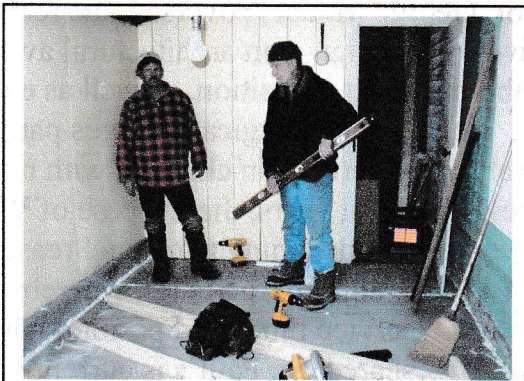
May 16 (tentative):
Winona "Capital for
a Day" Observance

May 17:
Minnesota City Day

May 17-18:
St. Paul's Anniver-
sary Celebration

Construction Begins on Minnesota City Historical Association Archives Rooms at First Baptist Church

Construction began on the renovation of the two rear rooms of the Historic First Baptist Church in Minnesota City on March 7th. The sub floor has now been completed and rewiring of the area by Kevin Ferden is in progress. Ceiling and walls will be replaced with lumber donated by Dallas Denzer at Denzer Pallets. Brian Campbell has agreed to work on bat eradication and Jim Schoen will be resurfacing one of the entryway areas. Walls will be insulated. All workpersons are local residents. Concurrently being constructed by Hoffman Signs is a reader board which will be placed in front of the church to communicate Historical Association and First Baptist Ladies Aid news and events. The renovation is being achieved with grant monies from the State Sesquicentennial Committee, the Experiment in Rural Cooperation, and solicited monies, donations, and labor from members and friends of the Association. This cooperative effort of the two groups, Minnesota City Historical Association and the Minnesota City First Baptist Ladies Aid group is designed to assure the preservation of the significant history of the Minnesota City area.



Jim O'Grady and Marvin O'Grady lay out materials for floor replacement in the future archival storage area of the Church.



Kevin Ferden begins process of installing electrical wiring, sockets, switches for the work area.

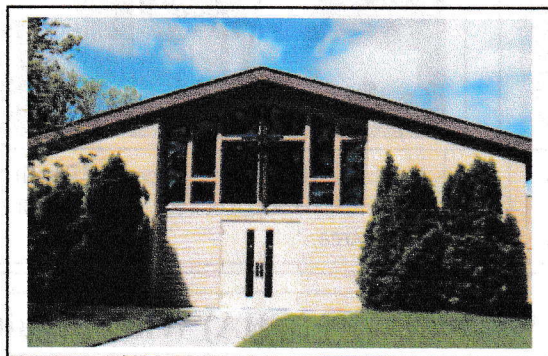
Minnesota City Historical Association (MCHA) Will Recruit New Board Members

Since the origin of the MCHA, the work of the group has been organized and executed by a very small group of individuals who regularly attend monthly meetings. According to Association Bylaws, elections are held in May. In the interest of involving more people in the work and lessening the work load of those who are currently involved with a number of projects, current officers will be soliciting names of potential board members from Minnesota City and the area who are currently Association members or persons with interest in our work and are willing to serve on the board. A description of the board duties will be presented to these individuals. In summary, board members work to realize the goal of studying, preserving and promoting the history of this area. Anyone interested in serving on the board should contact the association prior to the May meeting.

St. Paul's Catholic Church Celebrates History

On Saturday and Sunday, May 17th and 18th, 2008, St. Paul's Catholic Church in Minnesota City will be holding an anniversary celebration. In 2009, the parish itself will be 75 years old, and this year marks 50 years since the current church building was erected.

In 1925, a Diocese of Winona appointed priest, Rev. Anthony Hennekes, organized a mission parish in Minnesota City. The church was petitioned by Catholics of the area who were going to services in Winona by horse and buggy. Hennekes purchased a frame store building and the land upon which it stood. The building had also served as a dance hall and as a jail. The building was remodeled to serve as a church. This building, vacated in 1957, is now the home of Jim and Kathy Schoen. As a mission parish, the congregation was attached to St. Thomas Pro-Cathedral in Winona. Three of the church's pastors have become bishops: George Speltz (1946-1947); Frederick Freking (1951-1953); and recently, Michael Hoepfner. Other pastors were diocesan chancellors and college personnel. Among these were Julius Haun, Francis Klein, George Moudry, Richard DeGrood, and Joseph Frisch. In 1955, the parish was given land in the will of Nicholas Meyer, a former congregation member. The land was sold and the fund designated for the church construction. Alvin and Sylvester Kohner donated the land for the construction site. The trustees at the time of the construction were Edward Verdick (Minnesota City resident) and Edwin Butenhoff. Several Butenhoff family members remain congregation members. Rev. Francis Klein oversaw the construction of the new church, a pre Vatican II Church. In 1974, then pastor, George Moudry, oversaw the remodeling of the church to conform to Vatican II directives; the design won architectural awards. These changes altered placement of the crucifix and tabernacle, altar position, as well as enlargement of the sanctuary for a stronger, simpler effect. Appropriate liturgical changes paralleled the structural changes. In later years, some of these changes were again changed with return to more traditional placement of sanctuary pieces. In recent years, the Diocese of Winona, for financial



The current St. Paul's Catholic Church,
132 Anderson Street

and declining personnel reasons, adopted a cluster design for parishes, whereby cooperation about service times and pastoral administration is shared. St. Paul's is currently "clustered" with Holy Trinity Parish in Rollingstone and St. Mary's Parish in Minneiska. Rev. Donald Lovas is the current pastor. Minnesota City Historical Association congratulates St. Paul's Congregation on this milestone.

(See Page 4 for anecdotal notes)

Rollingstone Township Contributes to Historical Association Fund Drive

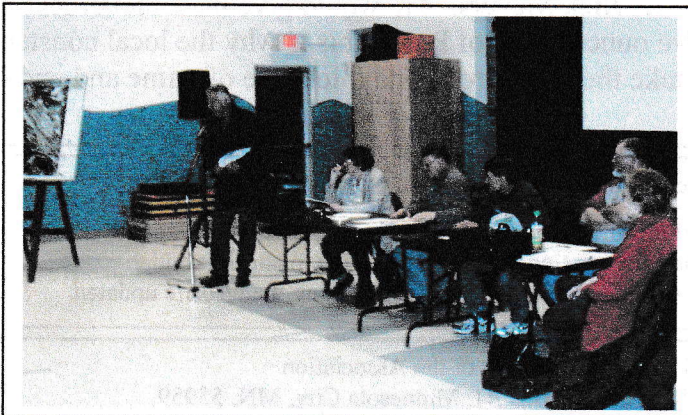
At the annual meeting of Rollingstone Township on March 11, 2008, Gen O'Grady requested a donation from the Township General Fund for the fund drive currently underway by the Minnesota City Historical Assn.. The group has begun the renovation of two storage rooms at the Historic Baptist Church which will house the Association Archives. O'Grady advised attendees that the Association is working to preserve the area history of the Rollingstone Colony as well as Minnesota City History. The membership moved to contribute the requested \$250.00 to the fund to be used in whatever way the Association found most helpful.

Garvin Brook Disaster Relief Fund (GBDRF), adds Board Members

At a meeting at Riverway Learning Community on March 17, GBDRF enlarged its board to ten members. New directors include Brenda Edwards, Duane Hutton, Bryce Maus, Jeri McCarthy, Steve White and Joann Ziegeweid. Previous members are Susan Althoff, Chair, Nancy Beach, Vice Chair, Jaye Fritz, Treasurer, and Gen O'Grady, Secretary. Members volunteered for standing committees: Finance, Membership/Board Development, and Fundraising, and for Special Committees: Minnesota City Day, Flood Anniversary Celebration, Community Meals in Stockton and Minnesota City.

Annexation Discussion Draws Large Crowd

The Auditorium of Riverway Learning Community was filled on Wednesday, March 5, for the meeting whose announced purpose was the consideration and discussion of annexation issues with Goodview. The Rollingstone Township board, led by moderator Greg Kuehntopp responded to questions and listened to a large and varied number of concerns of township residents. Both residents in the flood zones being considered for annexation in the Saehler Drive Area and the Gunderson Addition and those township residents not in the flood zone acknowledged the seeming inevitability of annexation, and individuals from each of these groups questioned the data that has or has not been supplied to residents. Township residents not in the flooded zones received no information until the announcement of this meeting. Advantages for flood victims were outlined by Kuehntopp. These include sewer and water hookups funded by the Goodview MFPA grant.* Don Evanson urged a no vote on annexation to indicate dissatisfaction with the process that has been followed by Goodview and to give the Township board leverage to bargain with greater effect. Kuehntopp and Bruce Speltz, township negotiator, expressed satisfaction with the Goodview proposal. Kevin and Jean Kronebusch, Sherry Drive residents and flood victims, expressed conflicting realities of valuing annexation for themselves, but expecting equitable financial settlements between Goodview and Rollingstone Township. In the interest of community building rather than division, Gen O'Grady requested division of Evanson's motion, if forwarded, to separate support for flood victims wanting to be annexed from a separate motion to express dissatisfaction with the process that has been followed. Kuehntopp's position was that the evening's meeting was intended to be for providing information. The call for adjournment of the meeting came from Bruce Speltz. Sandra Evanson, township clerk, announced the township annual meeting which will be at the Township hall, with voting for township board members from 5-8, and the annual meeting beginning at approximately 8:15. *note: Since this meeting, the Township meeting has occurred and a meeting of Goodview and the Township is scheduled for April 2 at the Winona Elks Lodge. Adjusted proposals have been carried by the local media.

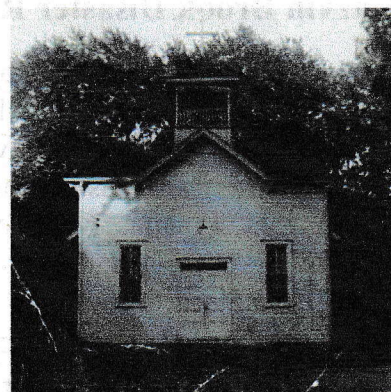


Kevin Kronebusch makes comments to the crowd at the Annexation Meeting. Township officers seated left to right: Sandra Evanson, Greg Kuehntopp, John Rogge, Bruce Speltz, and Diane Dingfelder.

About St Paul's Parish -- From the files:

From the Winona Republican Herald, January 2, 1929 : "3 Dead, One Survives New Year's Tragedy: Car Struck by Mail Train at Minnesota City"

"Emil Wockenfuss, Minnesota City garageman, was the first to arrive at the scene of the accident. He had been building a fire in St. Paul's Church at Minnesota City when he heard the train being brought to an abrupt stop so he went to investigate." The accident was at 6:10 a.m.



The 1925 St. Paul's Church Building,
153 Mill Street

From the St. Paul bulletin of February 9, 1975, authored by Harold Knoll

"If Leon Bronk Sr. had not objected to a ½ hour horse and buggy ride to Winona on Sundays, there might not have been a parish at Minnesota City. ... Leon found the ride to Winona for Sunday Mass tiresome. 'You had to get up and get the harness and harness up the horse. I wanted a church at Minnesota City.' Leon discussed this with a priest he knew, Father Anthony Hennekes, then pastor of Holy Trinity Church at Rollingstone. The priest looked around Minnesota City, pointed to the dance hall and suggested it as the place. The building was for sale for \$1500.00. Leon and several other area residents raised the money. These other founders, all deceased, included Leo Cisewski, Emil Wockenfuss, Charles Deering, August Jilk, and Isidore Daskowski... In 1925, the church was blessed by the Most Reverend Patrick Heffron. 'When the bishop came to bless the church the weeds weren't cut, and they were tall.' ... Every Sunday ice cream socials or card parties were held at parishioners' homes. During Mass the women sat on one side of the church and the men on the other. In all the years of its existence, the old church had no resident pastor, with priests coming from the cathedral or Minneiska to celebrate Sunday Mass."

From Gerald Cisewski autobiographical notes written for the Sesquicentennial in 2002

"Church—we went every Sunday, walked down the street to where Schoens live. That was a Catholic church at that time, once was the local pokey, years ago, before my time. We had three very active churches at that time. All had steeples and bells. When members of the church passed away, someone would ring the bell one time for each year the member had lived... Oh yes, the other active churches were Baptist and Lutheran. All had a large turnout for services. I recall the Baptists had the John Denzer family, the Blanchard Garner family, and many more members. But I can't recall them now. I do remember Miss Gardner won a new Chevrolet Auto at the State Fair in the late 1930s. Lutheran members as I recall were the Jim Stewart family, Adolph Martin. Not sure, but I think the Fred Denzer family, Harry Jessie, Louis Stephans family, the Ed Engler family and more, church going people, all hard working. They put family first. Catholics were the Bronks, Jilks, Cisewskis, Nick Meyers. He would give me a nickel for collection and sometimes I would keep it and buy a twelve ounce bottle of Pepsi; this is why the local constable, Ed Verdick had to keep an eye on me, so I didn't take the wrong road and into a life of crime and end up in the Big House."

Check Out The Website: www.minnesotacity.org

Continue to check the website periodically. New information is constantly being added.

Remind family and friends and former Minnesota City residents to check it out!

Thank you to Susan Althoff, Marv O'Grady and David Eckert for keeping the website updated.

Anyone who wishes to be a member of the Association
is invited to send \$15.00 to MCHA, P.O. Box 41, Minnesota City, MN, 55959.

All monies will be used to support Association goals.

Separate or additional donations may also be sent to the above address.