

MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 2, Issue 12: December, 2008

“Minnesota City: A Past that we honor; a Present that we give meaning; a Future that we build together”

Mark your calendars!

December 11:
MCHA Caroling
/Lighting
Organizational
meeting for the
December 13 event

December 13:
Caroling and
Lighting Contest
Event: 6:00 p.m.,
First Baptist Church,
140 Mill Street

Note: No December
Community
Readers Meeting.
Next meeting,
January 15, 2009,
Riverway Learning
Community.
Selection: *The Road.*

Minnesota City Historical Association and Garvin Brook Disaster Relief Fund Sponsor Caroling and Lighting Event

For the past two years the Minnesota City Historical Association has sponsored Community Caroling at the Historic First Baptist Church in Minnesota City. This year, at 6:00 p.m., Saturday, December 13, teamed up with Garvin Brook Disaster Relief Fund and with a team of horses of Edwin and Judy Maus, the occasion is being expanded to include a lighting contest and caroling in a horse drawn wagon, historical information, and refreshments. Additionally, Emily Brom will entertain with a flute solo.

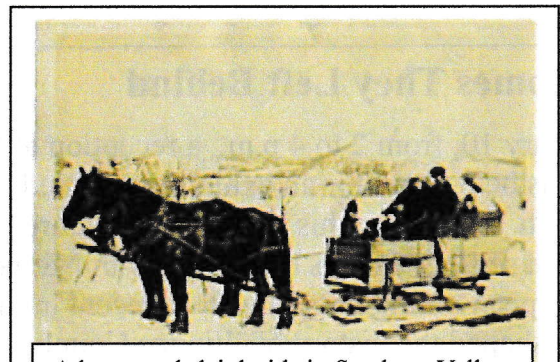
Sleigh riding and bright lights were notable in Minnesota City in 1900. A *Winona Daily Republican* story on January 18, 1901, read “...if we do have some snow, sleighing parties ought to be numerous... one party of young people from Winona have already promised their patronage.” In the same article, it is noted that “Minnesota City is probably the best sidewalked and the best lighted place of its size in this vicinity. The council has just added ten new gasoline lamps located conveniently.” An 1898 *Argus Record* reads, “Mr. H. M. Pierce and Mr. Ed Beebe took two loads of the young people for a sleigh ride to Winona on Monday evening to witness the cantata at the Central M. E. Sunday School.”

In 2008, The Minnesota City First Baptist Ladies Aid, owners of the historic Minnesota City First Baptist Church, contracted with Kevin Kearney for the repair and relining of the church chimney, permitting the first use in many years of the 1875 stove. Burning of yule logs, part of the lighting customs of early

eras, can now be added to the caroling celebration. Additional historical information about the introduction of lights into the holiday celebrations will be narrated at the caroling event.



Carolers return to the Church for refreshments after 2007 caroling event



A horse and sleigh ride in Stockton Valley on the August Jilk Sr. Farm (circa 1925)

Flyers for the lighting contest have been distributed to Minnesota City area homes and businesses. Winners will be determined by judges on December 12 and will be announced at the Community Caroling on December 13. Only registered “lighters” will be judged. For information, contact 689-4103, 689-2440, 689-2344, or 689-2281. All newsletter readers are invited to this community celebration and are asked to invite their friends and family members.

Minnesota City Historical Association (MCHA) Membership and Donors Numbers Increase

MCHA acknowledges a debt of gratitude to the following persons who became members of the Association through the membership fee, who have donated materials or funds to the Association, who have read our materials, or have attended our sponsored events. These numbers have increased from thirty in 2007 to seventy in 2008. This is a remarkable increase of support. 2008 has been a memorable year for the Association, marking the establishment of the archival site in the historic First Baptist Church on Mill Street. During the holiday season, frequently a gift giving occasion, friends of the Association are invited to contribute gift memberships (\$15.00) to support the Association goals and to inform their friends about the ever increasing community connections in Minnesota City and the surrounding area. The Association is grateful to the following members and donors:

L. Susan Althoff, Kirk and Pamela Aune, Bob Bambenek, Dorothy Brom, Erik and Jodi Brom, Fred and Jean Brust, Robb and Lynda Brzezinski, Ed and Nora Butenhoff, Brian Campbell, Andrea Church, Roger Church, Russell Church, Francis and Arlene Cisewski, Richard and Aloha Denzer Davis, Darlene Decker, Neil and Clare Denzer, Dallas and Corinne Denzer, Thomas and Bernadette Di Mauro, Hollis and Lori Donehower, Brian and Jenny Ebbinger, David and Brenda Eckert, Agnes Evanson, Donald and Sandra Evanson, Kevin Ferden family, LaVern and Jaye Fritz, Jean Gardner, Sydney Hughes, Duane and Linda Hutton, Faith Ann Jackson, Scott Jensen and Kate O'Grady, Leo and Barbara Jilk, James and Mary Johnson, Reid and Arlas Johnson, Kevin Kearney, Dave and Joyce Keller, Walt Kelly, Robert Kierlin, Mary Burcher, James and Donna King, LeRoy Kohner, Steve Kohner, Chuck and Mary Kosel, Laurie and Fred Krause, Greg Kuehntopp, John Lockwood, Marianne Mastenbrook, Minnesota City First Baptist Church Ladies Aid Society, Janet Mlynczak, James O'Grady, Joseph O'Grady, Marv and Gen O'Grady, Gerry and Barb Okland, Sarah Quinn, Mark and Shirley Schmidt, Jim and Kathy Schoen, Lester and Maxine Spaag, Jack and Lynn Stansfield, Catherine Todd, Byrle and Edith Tschumper, Grace Tschumper, Kathy Streng Twite, Howard and Gladys Volkart, Dawn and Ian Church Webster, Rebecca and Brent Weiss, Ron Wenzel, Joanne and Lyle Ziegeweid, Rollingstone Township, City Council of Minnesota City, Riverway Learning Community, Experiment in Rural Cooperation, Winona Foundation, Minnesota State Sesquicentennial Committee.

The Homes They Left Behind

On January 10, from 2 to 4 p.m., a reception at Winona Public Library is being held for an exhibition entitled "The Homes They Left Behind." This exhibit will feature photographs of American settlers' homes beginning with Native Americans and European immigrants as well as recent immigrants whose cultures shaped the history of Winona County. The exhibit's architectural focus will reflect the changes in buildings that reflected the new and old environments of the immigrants. Minnesota Historical Association families whose photographs have been included are Jilk (Maracova/Jilk) from Dolni Dobrouc, Czechoslovakia and Evansons (John and Randi) from Norway. Mary Nilles was the contact for these submissions.

Minnesota City Archival Site needs the following item at the 140 Mill Street location:

a desktop copier/printer for use in copying newspaper clippings.

Please call 507-689-4103 or 507-689-2440 if you or someone you know has this item and is willing to donate it to the Historical Association.

Thank you.

Association Closes the Account on Minnesota Sesquicentennial Grant; sesquicentennial year nears end.

Work on the collaboration of the Minnesota City Historical Association and the Minnesota City Baptist Ladies Aid Society to preserve Minnesota History in the Historic First Baptist Church funded by a \$1000.00 grant from the State Sesquicentennial Committee has been completed. All reporting to the State Sesquicentennial Committee has been completed and notification from the state to MCHA verifies the closing of the project. The state monies were used to partially assist payment for the fireproof file, plaster and paint and floor preparation. As the sesquicentennial nears its close, the website www.mn150years continues to operate, currently encouraging the purchase of commemorative license plates to raise funds for the State Capitol restoration. The sale of plates had been suggested to fund the sesquicentennial, but development of the project was delayed, and now the plates will be available for the next three years. Additionally, Sesquicentennial *Welcome to Minnesota* signs can be purchased at the Sesquicentennial State Office or the MNDOT. The Native American blog on the website, authored by Griff Wigley, continues to provide prolific interesting information about historical and contemporary Native American issues.

MCHA extends sympathy to

Lori and Hollis Donehower on the death of Lori's mother, Lorraine Schott Kulack who died in Lewiston, Minnesota on November 11.

The Church Family, on the death of Olive Church Buswell (sister of Gladys Volkart and Russell Church) who died at Sauer Memorial Home in Winona on November 16 at the age of 95. Olive was buried in Oakland Cemetery.

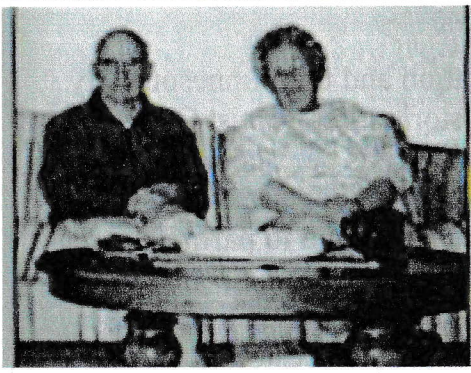
MCHA extends congratulations to

Julie Evanson Nagorski, former Denzer Road resident and daughter of Don and Sandy Evanson, who passed the Minnesota Bar on October 31, 2008. Nagorski is a graduate of the University of Minnesota Law School.

MCHA thanks

Darlene Deckert, Flint, Michigan, who sent a donation for the purchase of technological equipment at the Archival Site. Darlene wrote: "Reading about the Church family brought back many memories. My mother was Gladys and Russell's sister, and after she died, I lived for a few years with Elmer and Ella Church. I also worked in the store when I was very young. I even worked in the post office. I don't know if there were that many regulations then! Curtis Church and I were great friends, even though I was younger. We did a few inventories in the store. It was so much fun, because we had everything from buttons, material and celluloid collars (which were out of date) to harnesses and some small farm equipment. I went to the two room school house and watched with great anticipation the building of a new school. It was so modern and wonderful to us! May God continue to bless you and all your efforts to keep these memories fresh."

Howard Volkart Celebrates 90th Birthday



Howard and Gladys Volkart in 2002

If young means active, then readers who saw the “Forever Young” birthday photo caption for Howard Volkart’s picture in the November 23 Winona Daily News, had no difficulty in bringing their own active images of Howard to the fore. In his interview with Riverway Learning Community students in 2002, Howard revealed some of his very energetic active life’s experiences. “As a young person in Minnesota City, Howard hunted and fished, also played baseball and basketball. For three years during World War II, he was a mechanic and then a pilot in the Air Corps. The Volkarts (Howard married Gladys Church) had a busy life caring for children and animals.”

Holidays were important for the family and children and grandchildren celebrated with them. The three Volkart children are Bruce, Greg, and Nancy. The Volkarts are well known as successful farmers of the area. “I have farmed all my life except for when I was in the service.” Howard told the students. In 1934 when the Volkarts moved to Minnesota City, they did not have electricity. In 1939 a line was brought from Lewiston to Silo and down into Stockton Valley. The Volkart family was the last farm on the line. Howard remembers harvesting ice used for ice boxes and milk tanks. Electricity promoted milking machines and silo unloaders. The farm was a dairy farm. Howard was a Boy Scout Master for about fifteen years, and the Gladys and Howard Volkart names are liberally evident in the records of Minnesota City School and PTA activities. Howard reported that they belonged to the PTA before they had children in the school. He was in one of the PTA plays that was performed in Minnesota City and put on in Houston and Altura. “You could feel like you were part of the community.” Minnesota City Historical Association wishes Howard Volkart more years of good health and activity.

Riverway Sponsors Community Thanksgiving Meal



Over 150 people eat at the Riverway Learning Community Thankful Meal (Don Evanson photo)

On Monday, November 24, Riverway Learning Community held its third annual Thankful Meal, where Learning Community members and area residents gave thanks and ate a traditional Thanksgiving Meal. This year was notable for the community’s ability to prepare most of the food from basic ingredients, (scratch) as described by Cook Dave McKern.



Len Mastenbrook, Marie Berg, Sandra Evanson, and Agnes Evanson enjoy food and conversation at the Riverway Thankful Meal (Don Evanson photo)

Students also raised money with sales of craft items at the fest to fund various class trips. It was very much a family Thanksgiving from food to comraderie.

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.