

MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 3, Issue 5: May, 2009

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

Mark your calendars!

May 7: Baptist Ladies Aid Meeting

May 11: Rollingstone Township Board; 8:00 p.m.

May 14: MCHA Meeting; 6:30p.m.; Riverway Learning Community

May 16: Minnesota City Day; Various sites; See Page 4 for details

May 21: Minnesota City Community Readers; Riverway Learning Community; 6:30 p.m.; *Castle Nowhere Lake-Country Sketches*

Go “Green”!

If you receive this newsletter in paper form and would prefer to receive it electronically, please call 689-2440.

The Minnesota City Historical Association (MCHA)

Invites You To Attend the

Dedication of the Archival Site

at the Historic First Baptist Church at 140 Mill Street

Saturday, May 16, 10:00 a.m.

This Historic Event Will Include

Honoring of the First Baptist Ladies Aid Members

Who Have Maintained the Church since the 1980s;

Historical Skits;

a Minnesota City Walking Tour taped by Arnold Cisewski;

Barbershop Led Community Sing Along;

Traditional Strawberry Shortcake and other events.

MCHA gratefully acknowledges all individuals and groups, especially members of the Association, who have contributed ideas, dollars, time, and efforts to support this Historic Event.

Minnesota City Organizing For Full Day of Celebration on May 16 (See Page 4)

Several organizations have been meeting since March to coordinate the events for Minnesota City Day on May 16, 2009. Planning groups have included Minnesota City Historical Association, Riverway Learning Community, Ladies Aid of First Baptist Church, St. Paul’s Church, Garvin Brook Disaster Relief Fund, Minnesota City 16 and Under Baseball, Minnesota City City Council, Minnesota City Fire Department, and other interested individuals. The groups have coordinated times and places for events beginning at 8 a.m. with a community free-of-charge pancake breakfast at Riverway Learning Community and continuing through the 3:00 p.m. screening of the Garvin Brook Disaster Relief Fund produced DVD, also at Riverway. Activities at St. Paul’s Church will give visitors an opportunity to see the newly installed church doors and windows.

See Newsletter Page 4 for a complete listing of events, times, and places.

Historical Information is Subject of Dedication Ceremony Readers Theatre/Skits

In an effort to casually inform visitors about some famous Minnesota City persons and events, members and friends of MCHA will perform in adapted Readers’ Theatre/skits format at the Dedication event on May 16 at the Archival Site, 140 Mill Street. Persons portrayed will include O.M. Lord, Charles Bannon, Albina Drew and others, and issues considered will be women’s work, settlement issues and the First Baptist Ladies Aid. The mini production is entitled “Food for Thought and Thought for Food.”

Robert Pike Jr. Musical Composition Will Be Featured in May 16 Minnesota City Day Celebration (Winona Post May 2)



Robert Pike, Minnesota City 1852 Settler

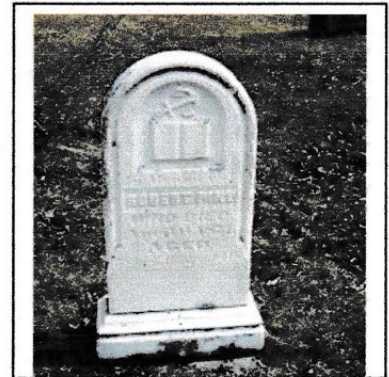
Composed for the 1852 Fourth of July celebration in Minnesota City, a vocal composition of Robert Pike Jr., "Minnesota," has been researched by Minnesota City Historical Association (MCHA) and will be part of a community songfest at the dedication of the Association archives on Minnesota City Day, May 16. Area barbershoppers, coordinated by Duane Hutton, will be featured at the songfest and will lead community singing at the Historic First Baptist Church, 140 Mill Street.

Pike was one of the Western Farm and Village Association members who arrived in Minnesota City in 1852, already reputed elsewhere as eccentric, utopian, a teacher, writer and farmer. His business card in the 1856 *Winona Daily Republican* reads: "Robert Pike who writes this ditty, Lives at Minnesota City, Is Postmaster, Magistrate, Buys and sells Real Estate, Conveyancer and County Surveyor, The City's small and needs no Mayor, Sectarian rules he

dares resist, and Thinks Christ was a Socialist. Loving Mankind and needing dimes, He waits to serve them at all times."

The 1913 *History of Winona County* records that before his arrival in Minnesota City, "Mr. Pike had been engaged for several years in teaching and lecturing on a system of mnemonics, which he had cultivated and on which subject he had published a book." Minnesota State Historical Society has the original of the Pike Fourth of July Song, as well as the correspondence that narrates its development and first performance at a picnic in Minnesota City. In a letter to the Society, Pike is described by letter writer Mame Bundy, a participant at the 1852 celebration, as a "fine man and one of the kindest I have ever known." She writes further... "we came to Minnesota from Michigan in the Spring of 1852 and father built us a log cabin at what was called Minnesota City... As the song says, it was a beautiful valley, the people were lovely, and the fruit was plentiful. Berries, plums, grapes and crabapples grew in every grove and what a carefree summer we spent fishing, bathing and gathering the fruit."

Pike and his wife, Sarah, and other Pike family members are interred in Oakland Cemetery at Minnesota City. Their burial sites will be marked in Oakland Cemetery on May 16, where Cliff and Janet Hill Seabern will welcome visitors. Times and places for May 16 events and places will be confirmed as they are established.



Robert Pike grave in Oakland Cemetery

Relatives are Coming! Descendents of Early Settlers Plan Minnesota City Day Visit

When the website first went on line in May, 2007, the second newsletter issue carried a brief story on Samuel and Sarah Cotton, earliest Minnesota City settlers, members of the Western Farm and Village Association. Within the month, an email was received from Gerald and Barbara Okland in Thief River Falls, who communicated that Gerald was the great-great-grandson of the Cottons. The Oklands became members of the Minnesota City Historical Association. Now they hope to arrive in Winona on the 15th and participate in festivities on the 16th. In December of 1852 (the settlement began in May), Samuel Cotton was one of five men from the Rollingsstone Colony to go to LaCrosse to pick up supplies that had been left by the Nominee, the first settler's ship. Cotton purchased land from E.B. Drew in 1857. After the collapse of the Association, Cotton made a claim of eighty acres and preempted the village lots as a homestead. Samuel Cotton was the chairman of the meeting in 1887 that formed an association for the purpose of procuring and holding lands to be used exclusively for a cemetery for the burial of the dead (Oakland Cemetery). To coincide with the Okland visit, the graves of the Cottons will be marked in Oakland Cemetery for easy location of Cemetery visitors on that day.

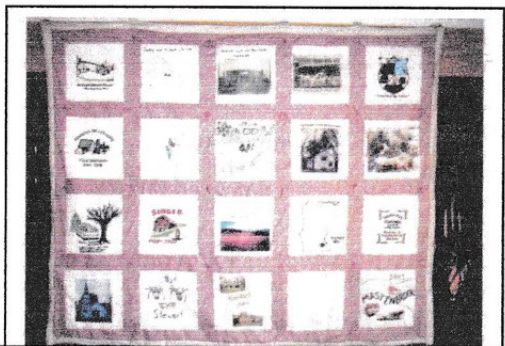
Flood Record DVD and Commemorative CD Release Planned by Garvin Brook Disaster Relief Fund (GBDRF)

Riverway Learning Community, 115 Iowa Street, will be the site of the screening of the DVD recounting the 2007 flood experiences and impacts. The project was financed by a Winona Foundation grant awarded to GBDRF. Taping of interviews of local and area residents was conducted in Minnesota City, and stories represent the experiences in several of the flooded areas—Gunderson Addition, Saehler Addition, Sunny Acres, Stockton, and Minnesota City. The DVD is being distributed as a resource to area schools, libraries, and museums. Copies of the DVD can also be purchased. Following the DVD screening, Pamela McNeill will release the CD “Waiting for the Tide,” composed to commemorate the flood. Some CDs will be available for sale, with proceeds going to production costs, and remaining profits to GBDRF which continues flood recovery efforts in this area. McNeill is the daughter of Susan Althoff.

St. Paul’s Church Quilters Will Construct Second Heritage Quilt; First Quilt On Display May 16 in Church Hall

In 2002, for the sesquicentennial celebration of Minnesota City, the Quilting group of St. Paul’s Parish in Minnesota City constructed a Heritage Quilt. In the years since, the quilt has hung in Riverway Learning Community and in the Minnesota City Historical Association Archives site at 140 Mill Street. On May 16, the quilt will be on display at St. Paul’s Hall at 132 Anderson Street from 10:00 a.m. until noon. The quilt is a visual history of historic families and institutions of the areas. Names included on the first quilt include Burley, Denzer, Jilk, Jessie, O’Grady, Evanson, Gardner, Singer, Mastenbrook and of institutions of the area—the Cisewski Wockenfuss Garage, churches and others. The variety of crafts used to fashion the squares includes embroidery, appliqué, photography and others. The quilt constitutes a valuable historical record. **On May 16, quilters of St. Paul will again have available quilt squares for anyone who wishes to be part of the Second Heritage Quilt.**

Persons interested in being represented on the second quilt will find the squares available in the Church Hall and will be able to return them to the church whenever they are completed. When a sufficient number of squares are received, the new quilt will be constructed. Individuals will again be able to select the manner in which they choose to design their square; the First Quilt provides some models. Persons who submitted squares for the first quilt are also invited to submit squares for this quilt. Quilting has a long tradition at St. Paul’s, where quilters have valued both their time working together and the contributions the quilts have been in people’s lives. Quilting is one of the most traditional American representations of comfort in literal and figurative senses.



Minnesota City Heritage Quilt Constructed in 2002 by St. Paul’s Church Quilters.

MCHA Extends Sympathy to the family of Arlene Cisewski, Minnesota City, who died on Friday, April 24. Francis and Arlene are Minnesota City Historical Association Members.

MCHA Congratulates Brian Campbell who has had an article published in the Master Carpenter section of *Fine Homebuilding*. *Sculpting a Radiused Crown Molding in Plaster* is the title of the article. He is listed as a finish carpenter living in Minnesota City.

MCHA Thanks

- Pamela McNeill for her contributions to the flood relief efforts
- Hollis and Lori Donehower for a TV/VCR for the Archives use
- Neil Denzer for paintings of historic Burley/Denzer buildings (these will be described in a future newsletter)
- Marianne Mastenbrook for archival materials

**MINNESOTA CITY DAY SCHEDULE
SATURDAY, MAY 16, 2009**

**At Riverway Learning Community
115 Iowa Street**

- 8 a.m.-10 a.m.** – Sponsored by Riverway:
Free pancake breakfast—a thank you to the Community
- 3 p.m.-4 p.m.** – Sponsored by Garvin Brook Disaster Relief Fund:
Flood DVD screening
Pamela McNeill CD release
Reception and refreshments

**At St. Paul's Catholic Church
132 Anderson Street**

- 10 a.m. -12:00 p.m.** – Sponsored by St. Paul's: Fiftieth Year Celebration DVD,
Sesquicentennial quilt display, juice and coffee refreshments
Sign up and quilt square distribution for next heritage quilt
View new windows and doors
- 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.** – Sponsored by Minnesota City Youth Baseball 16 and under:
Lunch fundraiser of walking tacos, hot dogs, etc.

At the Minnesota City Youth Baseball Field

- 1 p.m.-2:30 p.m.** – Sponsored by Minnesota City Youth Baseball:
Field dedication; Scrimmage game

**At the Historic First Baptist Church
140 Mill Street**

- 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.** Open House – Sponsored by Minnesota City Historical Association
Ongoing: Arnold Cisewski walking tour video
MCHA photo display
First Baptist history display
- 10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.** Historical skits; Dedication of Archives;
Certificate of Appreciation distribution; Memories of First Ladies Aid Members;
Archives hours announcement and volunteer sign up
- 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.** Refreshments: strawberry shortcakes and lemonade
- 12 p.m. – 12:30 p.m.** Barbershoppers and a community traditional songs songfest

At Oakland Cemetery

- 1 p.m.-2 p.m.** – Hosted by Cliff and Janet Seabern:
Pike and Cotton family graves noted, viewing of family information books,
family history gathering

**At the City Hall/Fire Station
149 Mill Street**

- 10 a.m.-1 p.m.** – Sponsored by the Minnesota City Volunteer Fire Department:
Fire truck display