

MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 4, Issue 5: May, 2010

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

(print 1,4,2,3)

Mark your calendars!

May 8:
MCHA Monthly Meeting; 9:30 a.m.; Riverway Learning Community

May 15:
Minnesota City Day; 11:00-4:00; Various locations in Minnesota City

May 20:
Minnesota City Community Readers; 6:30 p.m.; Riverway Learning Community; Tatiana de Rosnay's *Sarah's Key*

Go “Green”!

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

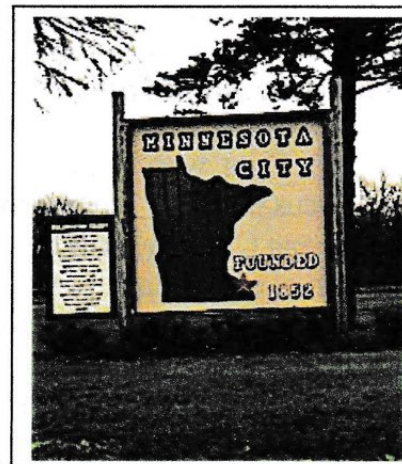
May 15 Minnesota City Day Plans Feature Entertainment, History, and Food

Minnesota City Day is observed on the third Saturday of May each year, commemorating the day listed as the original landing of Western Farm and Village members at this site in 1852. This year, the day will also commemorate the tenth year of Riverway Learning Community's history. The combined activities of the two groups feature a wide range of activities to attract the interest of many. **Please watch local media for sites and times as they are confirmed. A schedule will be sent to readers who receive their newsletters through email.**

Riverway will begin Minnesota City Day with a **community wide potluck** at 11:00 in their auditorium. Everyone is invited to attend and, if they wish, to contribute a potluck item. There is no charge for the dinner: donations will be appreciated. Riverway's day will include Environmental Learning Booths, information on the charter school, and some fund raising activities.

Minnesota City Historical Association (MCHA) which sponsors Minnesota City Day, as part of its mission, will **mark an historical site, the City Nite Club**, now the home of Brian and Lynn Campbell. Earlier this year, Brian presented the dynamic history of this building, its flamboyant activities and owners.

Andrea Church will facilitate **two work sessions on genealogical research**, using Riverway Learning Community Technology. Andrea and her father, Roger, have presented their own research on the Church family. Andrea will focus on free web search sites. MCHA member Howard Volkart and several other **woodcarvers will demonstrate their carving skills** at Riverway from 11:00 – 1:00. The **archives of MCHA** will be open as will as will the **historic First Baptist Church**. Janet Hill Seabern and Cliff Seabern will host an hour of **visitation time from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Oakland Cemetery**. Visitors who have not contributed biographical information on family and friends will be encouraged to do so.



Musical offerings of the day include the **“Take Note,” women’s chorus** (MCHA member Lynda Brzezskinski is a member), which will perform in the Riverway Learning Community auditorium. From 9:00-10:00 coffee and donuts will be available in the St. Paul’s Parish Hall. Free will offering will be appreciated.

An historical DVD about **St. Paul’s** will be shown, and from 10:00 – 10:30 a **sing along with Mark Roeckers** is scheduled in the church; Songs will be religious favorites. From 10:30 to noon, the Historical DVD will again be shown. Quilters at St. Paul’s will be available to receive new squares for the second heritage quilt.

Other events include a 10:00-10:30 time to meet with LaVern Fritz for all persons interested in a Minnesota City **all school reunion celebration**. Bob Bambenek plans to engage the Winona County Fair Organization to host a booth.

Archival Resources Provide Beginnings of Research

Minnesota City Historical Association (MCHA) archives contain an amount of information on a number of topics that have been the subject of individual or Society interest during the years since the Association was formed. This information has been placed in folders for perusal by researchers. The organizational level of these is varied, as is the amount of content. Donations of family research have enriched the collection. Notebook subjects at this time include:

Burley Family in America: Massachusetts Bay Colony to Early Minnesota Statehood
Burley; Biographies: Daniel Q., Naomi Rundlett, Anne Rowney
Church Family History: Descendents of Octavius Church in Winona County
Ellsworth Family and Mill History
Floods in Minnesota City: 1873 +
History of the City Nite Club
History of Winona County; pages from 1853 accounts
Oakland Cemetery: Establishment Documents, Biographies of Interred, Military Personal, Riverway
Learning Community Research
Minnesota City Swinging Bridge
Robert Pike Information

Visitors to the archives are invited to peruse these collections on May 15. These materials may be signed out.

Open House at Archives and First Baptist Church, 140 Mill Street, on May 15

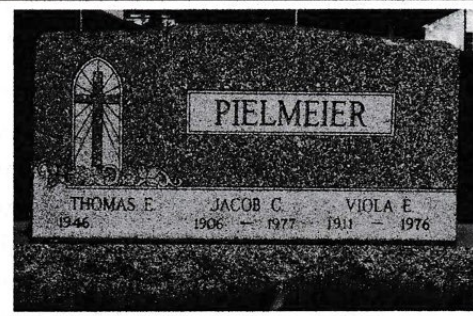
School Reunion Interest Group: Look for LaVern Fritz

La Vern Fritz, who helped with the execution of a successful Stockton School Reunion has agreed to be a focus point for any persons interested in a Minnesota City School Reunion. Visitors on Minnesota City Day will be asked to sign an interest sheet; a meeting of those signers will meet with LaVern at a later date. A number of resources have been identified to help plan at Minnesota City, including an alumni index from Winona Senior High School which is where many Minnesota City students attended following their Minnesota City graduations, and many photos contributed by teachers Doris Nichols and Lucille Blumnetritt at the Sesquicentennial in 2002. Historical documents detail the first school. J.L. Denman's account is in Winona County's "School Days in Territorial Winona," a Winona County Historical Association document. Denman writes: "I also was a pupil of the first school at Minnesota City. It was what was called a subscription school, and conducted for a term of three months in the fall of 1852." Mrs. Ann Orton was the teacher, the attendance about 20 people. He further writes that "the school was held in a building just across the road from the home of Mr. Thorp and I believe had been used at one time by him as a blacksmith shop. The old Thorp home was located next door to the old Cotton home, in later years known as the Kennedy farm, and is a quarter to a third of a mile east of what is known as the old O. M. Lord home." Therefore the school was located near the old highway about midway between the brick residence of George Whetstone and the old Kennedy home, now painted yellow, and occupied by the Peterman family. The above description locating the site on which the first real school in Winona County was held, is, we believe, printed here for the first time and much credit is due J.L. Denman for remembering the location of the school he attended over three-quarters of a century ago.

Check May 15 Minnesota City Day Schedule for Meeting Location

Buried in Oakland - Jacob Charles Pielmeier

Jacob Pielmeier was born on March 6, 1906 in Altoona, Pennsylvania. He was the son of German parents, Jacob Pielmeier and Mary Barbara Frischkorn. Jacob attended elementary school in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. On May 2, 1933, Jacob married Viola Emma Zunk at the parsonage of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in Winona. Rev. Froelke officiated at the ceremony. Jacob and Viola had three children, Melvin Edward, born on September 21, 1926, Kathryn Ruth, and Thomas Ear. Melvin lived in Minnesota City from 1969 to 1980.



Jacob worked at Froedert Malt Company in Winona. His hobbies included softball, volleyball, dancing, and gardening. Jacob loved to repair things and he fixed many items that Viola brought home from flea markets. Jacob also built the Pielmeier home. He belonged to the Minnesota City Boat Club and he was a member of Goodview Trinity Lutheran Church. The Pielmeiers frequently visited the Oaks. They spent their last four winters in Yuma, Arizona with their daughter Kathryn and her family. Jacob died on May 6, 1977 and is buried in Oakland.

1852: Western Farm and Village Settlers Came and Native Americans Left

The date for the celebration of Minnesota City Day annually commemorates the arrival at the location of the Western Farm and Village Association members in May 1852. When these individuals arrived at the site, the Native Americans departed in a poignantly dramatic fashion as recorded in the journal entries of Elder Ely, one of the first settlers. On May 21, 1852, he wrote. "This afternoon we had a visit from a delegation of Sioux Chiefs. They came to demand in the name of Wabasha, a barrel of flour, or its equivalent in money of everyone who had built upon their lands. They threatened to burn the shanties unless these demands were met. The high officials are 6 or 7 in number, and are determined to make trouble if they are not paid before night. They have letters from the Indian agents requesting the settlers to make some contributions to the Indians to help them live and keep them quiet till the treaty is ratified. They have secured no pay from the government for these lands and they don't consider them sold unless they get some pay. All the settlers who had not paid at an antecedent period now satisfied these chiefs, some with a barrel of flour and others with money. After this was done, they brought out their long pipes, smoked pipes of peace, shook hands and left. This was the last official act of the Sioux on the prairie. They then gathered up all their old tools and broken plows, farming implements and everything they considered of value. When all this was done they seemed ready to leave. As if they had forgotten something, a party went out onto the prairie, took away the fence around some graves, and leveled off the ground as if to destroy all signs that anyone was buried there. This little fence is said to enclose the graves of Wabasha's children." But the bones would later be sought by collectors, as is still the case today.

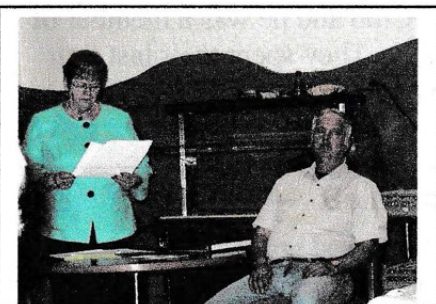
In Leaf No 49 of Rev. Edward Ely's Journal 1852-1853, for the Winona County Old Settlers Association Ely wrote: "During the latter part of the summer (1852) we had a visit from an English gentleman and his wife traveling in search of specimens of Indian skulls and lecturing on phrenology. They came down in a sail boat from St. Paul, stopping along the river to obtain skulls, if by any means possible they could be found... A little party was formed in connection with the English gentlemen and lady to search for skulls. A half-day's search was made without success in finding satisfactory specimens. There was one place where we knew there were graves, but the question was whether it was right to disturb these graves, said to be the children of Chief Wabasha. This question was referred to Dr. Balcome who was regarded as the oracle on all moral subjects. He declared that if it was kept secret from the Sioux who were still hanging about and occasionally visited the place, there would be no harm in opening those graves and taking skulls. After dark, with a lantern, we went to the spot marked by the graves. Mr. Johnson took a shovel and sank it in the length of the blade at the east end of the grave and struck the board coffin right over the head. The lady, eager for the coveted prize, after the dirt was a little removed from the top of the coffin, broke the boards and took out the skull in a moment and rolled it in her black shawl while her husband stood, frightened, watching lest some Sioux should send a bullet through his head. Thus we continued till we had secured three genuine Indian skulls that belonged to the royal line of sovereigns that had governed this prairie for ages..."

Denzer Presentation Includes Historical Information and Family Interpretation

A crowd of over sixty persons heard the significance of historical record keeping as Kay Denzer Vanderzee narrated, aided by a power point presentation, the dates of some eleven generations of Denzers. The foci for many local attendees were the families of Fred Denzer and John Denzer who have many members who have continued to live in the Minnesota City and nearby area; Many of these attended Sunday's presentation including children of George, Dale, Ray, and Neil, all sons of John. Vanderzee concluded her presentation with some personal memories of her grandmother, Esther Denzer. Dallas Denzer focused on the Denzer Pallet Company and the history of lumber/wood as a



Five Neil Denzer paintings of Denzer properties were displayed at the April 11 presentation and drew appreciative comments about this approach to historical preservation



Dallas Denzer listens as Kay Denzer Vanderzee presents Denzer genealogy.

longtime occupation of Denzer family members. He recalled his father (Ray) working with Dale to develop projects one or the other had envisioned. The Denzer mill completely burned in 1998. Cause of the fire was never determined, but because of insurance compensation, the mill was immediately rebuilt, and no orders were left unfilled.

A highlight of Sunday's presentation for many was the attendance of Ray and Lola Denzer. Ray has been in poor health for some time; it was an emotional moment for many, as he walked into the auditorium and recognized old relatives, neighbors, and friends.

Community Readers Announce Next Selections

At their April meeting, Minnesota City Community Readers announced selections for the next meetings. These are:
May 20, DeRosnay's *Sarah's Key* (a study of the annihilation of French Jews in World War II);
June 17, Stockett's *The Help*, a story of African American housekeepers in Jackson, Mississippi. The group does not meet in July and August. The fall selections are *Sapphira and the Slave Girl* (Cather), *The Lunatic Express* (Hoffman) and *Sister Carrie* (Dreiser). The group meets on the third Thursdays of the month.

Thank you:

- to Kay Vanderzee Denzer and Dallas Denzer and all Denzer family members who collaborated to present the Denzer Family History on April 11
- to Judy Hohensee for providing the squares for the second Heritage Quilt

Anyone who wishes to be a member of the Association is invited to send \$15.00 to MCHA, P.O. Box 21, 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.

New to the Archives:

These additions to MCHA archives were contributed by Roger and Andrea Church and from Mrs. Allen Tschumper (Grace Mildred Church):

- a family bible from Samuel Bates (with many Bates family member names/dates in it).
- An 1800's shawl worn by his wife Lucy Elizabeth (Hall) Bates--mother of Lucy Bates, wife of George T. Church. We have a photo of her wearing the shawl.
- An 1895 photo of the school by Stockton with several of George T. Church's kids sitting on the steps plus several other children from other farms nearby (and a horse and buggy school bus)
- A framed portrait of George T. Church, his wife Lucy and their children.