

# MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 5, Issue 4: April, 2011

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

## **Mark your calendars!**

April 9: MCHA Regular Meeting; First Baptist Church, Mill Street, Minnesota City; 9:30 a.m.

April 9: 9:30 School Reunion Mtg. Steve’s Anchor Inn

April 28: Minnesota City Community Readers: *Over the Earth I Come*; Riverway Learning Community; 6:30 p.m.

**\* May 21\***

Minnesota City Day: Dad’s Belgian Waffle Breakfast 8:00-12:00 Riverway by GBDRF

**\*July 15-16\***

Minnesota City School Reunion

## **Activity Coordination Begins for Minnesota City Day 2011**



Planning for Minnesota City Day, May 21, 2011: Gen O’Grady, Lori Donehower, Brian Campbell, Susan Althoff, Kevin Kearney, Clare Denzer, Hank Vogel, LaVern Fritz, Don Evanson

Several activities for Minnesota City Day 2011 were announced at a meeting at Riverway Learning Community in Minnesota City on March 12. GBDRF (Garvin Brook Disaster Relief Fund) will be sponsoring a Belgian Waffle Breakfast to benefit Youth Baseball and the dedication of a memorial shelter near the village ball fields. Kate O’Grady et al will present a variety of skits, poetry, historical information, an

music in a program called “Hardwoods Home Companion.” MCHA will present a plaque to Brian Campbell’s historic home. Rivertown Antiques will display a selection of historical items from Rivertown Gallery, “High Notes,” a show tunes choir, will perform at First Baptist Church, and Kevin Kearney will present information from a number of his community liaison areas of expertise. Other “usuals” will include open house at the First Baptist Church, the Minnesota City Historical Archives, and visits to the local cemeteries. Any individuals with ideas for possible activities are invited to contact MCHA at 689-4310 or 689-2440 or through the website [www.minnesotacity.org](http://www.minnesotacity.org). Local media as well as the May MCHA newsletter will carry additional information. The next organizational meeting will be at the MCHA meeting on April 9.

## **Bambenek Presentation of 2010 Census Numbers and History Informs on Minnesota City and Rollingstone Township**

County Recorder Bob Bambenek interested and informed attendees at the March 20 presentation on Censuses and Native American Land Grants. A topically constructed research of census data related to both Minnesota City and Rollingstone Township provided a context for readers to peruse local information integrated with media reports for Minnesota and the nation. Reduced numbers in both Minnesota City and Rollingstone Township resulted in part from the Goodview City annexation. Additional census responses in the county achieved through extensive efforts of census workers that reached diverse population groups resulted in an overall increase of Winona County numbers, rising from 49,985 in 2000 to 51,461 in 2010.

## **GBDRF Sponsors Dad’s Belgian Waffle Breakfast during Minnesota City Day**

Dad’s Belgian Waffles are coming to Minnesota City on Saturday, May 21, during Minnesota City Day. Serving will be from 8:00 to noon at Riverway, 115 Iowa St. Proceeds will be given to Minnesota City Baseball League for additional needs for the 10 and under field. Pre-ticket sales are \$7.00 for adults, \$5.00 for children 6 to 12, 5 and under free. Adult price is \$8.00 at the door. Tickets are available from GBDRF Board Members and Minnesota City Baseball League. For tickets or information call Bryce Maus, 452-9689, Scott Fritz, 452-1299 or Susan Althoff, 689-2281.

## April 28 Minnesota City Community Readers Discuss Native American Issues

Minnesota City Community Readers issue a special invitation to anyone with interest (is that everyone?) in the Native American history of Minnesota to attend the **April 28 Minnesota City Community Readers meeting at 6:30 p.m. at Riverway Learning Community, 115 Iowa Street.**



*Over the Earth I Come*, authored by Duane Schultz, narrates the history of the Sioux Uprisings in Minnesota in 1862 and is the focus of the April discussion. The book jacket describes Schultz' work: "In this well-researched and insightful narrative, Duane Schultz uncovers the events and injustices that sparked the violent uprising. The Sioux of Minnesota, perceived as a peaceful tribe, harbored intense resentment over the lands appropriated by the whites, the disappearance of the buffalo, broken treaties and the lies and deceptions of the government and its representatives. In the summer of 1862, delayed annuity payments from land treaties and the refusal of traders to release food to starving Indians sparked the first of a series of wars between Indians and whites." In a one week rampage, the Sioux were engaged in the war which resulted in the hanging of thirty eight Sioux Indians in Mankato on December 26, 1862.

The history of the departure/removal of the Native Americans from Minnesota City includes some of the same details—no payments, different customs. Many cities in recent years have initiated reconciliation events, as has Winona, to examine the impact of the separations of the cultures resulting from this dramatic era in Minnesota History. Whether or not persons have read the Schultz narrative, they will be welcome contributors to the discussion on April 28. **According to sources, the camp in the photo is located on the Riverway Learning Community site.**

## Research for Family Name Uncovers More Interesting Story

Frances and Walter King, both now deceased, were long time Minnesota City residents living on Denzer Road. A search for information about Frances Marmsoler King, (to include in a short narrative about her gift of a shamrock plant to Florence Monahan Jilk, also a Minnesota Citian) (dec. in 1972), located the following story entitled *A Three Legged Pig*. "A three legged pig is now to be found on the farm of Walter King, (husband of Frances) at Elba, the place where the hen with the human face was discovered. The pig is only a few weeks old but it is declared that it will live. It has three normal legs and in place of the right front limb, claws like those on a gopher appear close to the body." *The Winona Republican-Herald; April 30, 1915.*

Additional efforts to locate the story of the hen with the human face were not successful.

## Henry Leerkamp, Maybury School Student and Minnesota City Korean War Veteran Plans Visit in June

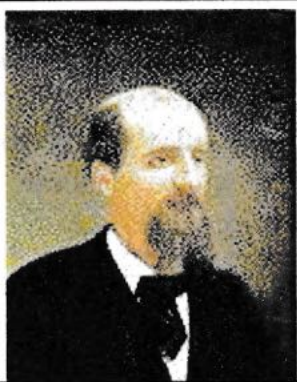
A question that is repeated when people examine the student photos related to the Minnesota City Schools, especially the Maybury building is "Is she still alive? Is he still living?" One of the individuals who attended the Maybury Building was Henry Leerkamp whose family lived in a home "across the creek," near the Oswald Vill home. Many area persons will remember the Leerkamp name, not because of the school attendance, but because Henry was a prisoner of war during the Korean War. Another Minnesota City man, Raymond Reed (brother of Jean Kalmes, Rollingstone) was in prison camp with Leerkamp, was freed with him, and still another Minnesota City man, Harold Diekmann, died while in camp. Reached by phone in Washington State where he lives, Leerkamp, who will celebrate his ninetieth birthday when he visits Minnesota in June, had quick recall of many Minnesota City names. His sister, Lydia Singer lives two miles north of Minnesota City; she is one of many relatives residing in the area. Because he will not be here for the school reunion in July, MCHA hopes to organize a small dessert/visit with friends/classmates of Leerkamp during his June visit.

### Maybury Designed School a Minnesota City Claim to Fame

As planning continues for the July 16-17 reunion for all former students in Minnesota City, the use of the name **the Maybury Building** has confused some who were not aware of the building at the same site as the 1938 building which is still standing, attached to the Riverway Learning Community Building. The photo shows the location of the Maybury building with the foundations of the 1938 building rising in the forefront. It is the latter building which still stands.



Photo of the 1938 Building under construction.



C.G. Maybury

C.G. Maybury was a New York born contractor and builder. When the firm he worked with was dissolved, he went into business himself. In 1856 he moved to Winona and became a successful architect and contractor. In 1865 he became a fulltime architect. In 1872, Maybury prepared plans for the two story brick building which would cost \$3000.00 and house 150 pupils. This school was used until the 1938 building construction was completed. Maybury also designed the Winona County Courthouse. (Note: The Maybury School was not the first Minnesota City School).

Three Maybury students, Jean Gardner, Roger Church, and Gale Hill attended the Bambenek presentation at Riverway on Sunday and visited about some history in the Maybury building.

### **MCHA Thanks:**

- Susan Althoff and Claire Denzer for Minnesota City archival materials including City Nite Club advertisements, Whetstone family photographs, and some school materials. Claire contributed photos given by Nancy Fritz, granddaughter of Gertie Denzer Lewis.
- Oklands, Cotton family descendents, for new information on Minnesota City early settlement. (more about this in future newsletters)

### **MCHA extends sympathy to:**

- to Pastor David and Brenda Eckert. David's mother, Arlene Eckert, 99, Saginaw, Michigan, died on March 10.
- to Robb and Lynda Brzezinski. Robb's mother Anna, 79, died on February 19.

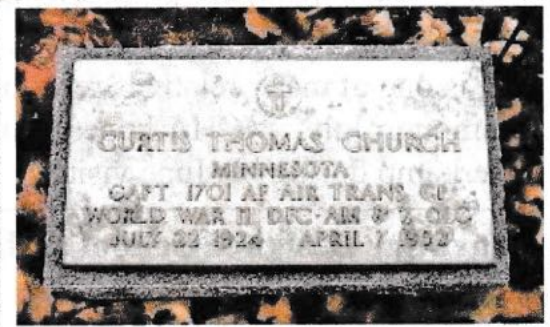
### **Buried in Oakland: Curtis T. Church 1924-1952**

Curtis Church was born in Minnesota City in 1924, the son of Mr. and Mrs. George O. Church. He attended Minnesota City and Winona Schools. He served as a navigator in a Flying Fortress with the 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force in Italy and Europe during World War II. He was discharged and in 1950 recalled to active duty. He attended navigator-radar school in Texas and was then

transferred to Vance Air Force Base, Enid, Oklahoma where he received his wings and became a pilot in January 1952. Church was an active member of the Air Force reserve unit here until his recall to active duty and addressed the local squadron during a visit home.

Captain Curtis Church achieved his wings just three months before he was killed in the crash of a Military Air Transport Service plane near Jefferson, Montana on April 9, 1952. Air Force searchers pushed through four-foot deep snow in an attempt to reach the wreckage of the plane and the bodies of its three crewmen. The four engine Douglas DC4 smashed into a nearby mountain while flying through a snow squall on a ferry flight from Great Falls, Montana to Oakland, California. The crash scene was about 120 miles from Great Falls.

Curtis Church was survived by his wife, the former Blanche Carlson of Houston, a son and a daughter, his parents, a sister, Maxine, and a brother, Roger. (Roger and Maxine both live in Winona at this time, 2011). Funeral services for Captain Church were at McKinley Methodist Church, the Rev. Allen Flohr officiating. Burial was in Oakland Cemetery where Masonic services were conducted and the American Legion conducted Military services.



Check Out The Website: [www.minnesotacity.org](http://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 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.*