

MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 5, Issue 9: September, 2011

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

Mark your calendars!

September 10:

Monthly MCHA Meeting at 140 Mill Street, 9:30 a.m.

September 11:

Annual Church Service at First Baptist Church. 2:00 P.M. Public is invited.

September 15:

Minnesota City Community Readers. Riverway Learning Community 6:30 p.m. Selection: *The Brothers Karamazov* (Dostoyevsky).

October 15: Monthly MCHA Meeting at 140 Mill Street 9:30 a.m. NOTE CHANGE IN DATE.

October 16: MCHA

Fall Presentation: Gordon Fredrickson, author, farmer, teacher presents at First Baptist Church 2:00 p.m.

Go “Green”!

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

Annual Church Service at First Baptist Church September 11

Many readers know that the First Baptist Church at Minnesota City, owned by the First Baptist Ladies Aid, is not an “active church” in the conventional sense. The events in the building, however, keep it far from being inactive. In addition to several functions sponsored in the building by Minnesota City Historical Association and the presence in the building of the Association Archives, the First Baptist Ladies Aid, church owner, sponsors an annual church service in the building that is open to the public. This is an opportunity for visitors to see the building, the oldest church in Winona County, and to acknowledge its historical significance, and well as to observe or to participate in the religious service.

This year's service will be held on Sunday, September 11 at 2:00 p.m.

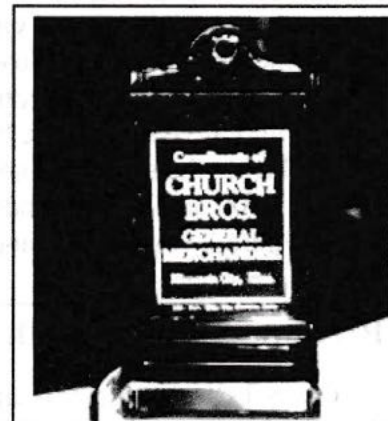
“Preserving Farm Heritage”

Minnesota native Gordon Fredrickson, will speak at MCHA Archives, (Historic First Baptist Church) 140 Mill Street on October 16 at 2:00 p.m.

Fredrickson, a former cattle and grain farmer and high school English teacher, has authored ten children’s books about life on the farm. He is committed to preserving the experiences of farm life for current and future generations. Fredrickson’s presentation is a multimedia approach. He will discuss farm heritage and the commercial publication of books about farming. The show is aimed at adults, but the author says “interested children with their parents will also enjoy the show.” Books will be available for browsing or purchase. The October newsletter and local media will carry additional details.

In the Archives—Church Brothers Promotional Matchholder

This item was recently given to the archives by Beverly and Argene Tschumper. It was distributed by Church Brothers Store on Mill Street, and is a promotional item like many of those given in business places during holidays or open houses. Matchbox holders such as these were present in many houses in the early 1900s. Matches fed into the trough on the front for use. This one was manufactured in Newton, Iowa, by a company that is still making novelty items—mugs, pens, and others. No match holder was advertised in the current online catalog.



Minnesota City Community Readers Resume Meetings

Anyone interested in reading or book discussion is invited to join the Minnesota City Community Readers as they resume meetings on September 15 with a discussion of *Brothers Karamazov*. The group welcomes new members. One need not have read the books to attend discussions. Selections for upcoming months include *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *The Book Thief*.

Acknowledgements:

-MCHA extends sympathy to the family of Ray Johnson, Minnesota City. Ray was 72; he died on August 20. Ray's brother is Reid Johnson who also farms in Minnesota City.

-Rick Martin: The death of Rick Martin on July 26 occurred just before the mailing of the August newsletter. We conveyed to Rick's family our opinion that he was a "consummate" Minnesota Citian, recalling for many of us his extensive memory of much Minnesota City lore. Some readers will know that Rick was the son of Adolph Martin, the owner of the historical "shoe store" in Minnesota City, the site of Rick's home.

-MCHA extends sympathy to the Roger Fort family on the death of Roger's sister, Lorraine Hodgdon-Mentgen, 91, who died on Sunday, August 28.

-Congratulations to Lester and Maxine Spaag who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on August 12. They were married in the Little Brown Church in The Vale, Nashua, Iowa in 1961.

-Congratulations to Minnesota City coaches and 8U baseball team which took 1st place at the 2011 County Tournament in Lewiston on July 30.

-Apologies to Minnesota City City Council for this delayed acknowledgement of their 2011 generous financial support of the Minnesota City Website and MCHA. Always, we are grateful.

-Apologies to the family of Joanne O'Reilly for misnaming her in the remembrance in the September newsletter (Nancy is another acquaintance in Winona).

-Thanks to Becky O'Grady Weiss for donation of office materials for the archives.

-Thanks to Anah Nelson Munson for Minnesota City student photos for the archives. Munson attended the July school reunion.

The Arrowhead is Back

Bridge Street travelers are aware of the replacement of the Arrowhead Marker of Garvin Brook. In the 2007 flood, one marker was washed away and probably washed downstream, covered with silt, and will likely never be found. The other was set aside during the bridge construction, according to Don O'Neil. Thanks to contributions of the city and donated time of Kelvin Penrod, the remaining marker is repaired and, once again, in place on a concrete slab. Any individuals with information about the original carving of the arrowhead shapes are invited to inform newsletter editors (mgogrady@rconnect.com).

According to Kelvin Penrod, there have been reports that the bridge construction in 1940 (one of eight bridges constructed in this state project) was done at costs under bid, and some remaining money was used for landscaping which included the arrowheads and the pine trees along Bridge Street. Similar, unshaped stones are located at the site of the former Swinging Bridge (marked by MCHA with a commemorative sign). The brass plaque on the arrowhead was not damaged in the flood. Anyone wondering why replacing the stone is noteworthy will want to know that Kelvin estimated the stone to weigh somewhere between 7000 and 8000 pounds. Persons who contemplate history and ideas of closure value the efforts of Kelvin Penrod, Don O'Neil and the City Council to restore the Arrowhead Garvin Brook Marker, a significant image for residents.



Garvin Brook Marker at Bridge Street

Riverway Partners with Minnesota Conservatory for the Arts

Riverway Learning Community, 115 Iowa Street, has entered into a dance and music programming curriculum with the Minnesota Conservatory for the Arts, a St. Mary's University affiliate in Winona. Riverway students will attend workshops at the Conservatory in October and December, 2011, and in February and April of 2012. Both organizations applaud the addition of arts curriculum to student programming, according to Christine Martin, Conservatory director, and Laura Krause, Riverway director. At the time of the occupation of Riverway's building, Evanson and Evanson were asked to install flooring in the auditorium that is more resilient than concrete; this was accomplished, but space limitations among other aspects of school development resulted in very limited use of this special feature of the building. The partnership with the Conservatory restores the significance of arts for Riverway student development.

Jilk Family Reunion at Farmers Community Park



Mary Jilk, Agnes Jilk Evanson and Sister Marielouise Jilk S.Sp. S. sit with relatives for a family photo.

Again meeting at the site where their family had gathered for many years previously, the descendants of August Jilk and Sophia Kilian Jilk celebrated family on July 30, 2011.

Special features of this year's reunion included the posting of genealogical material developed through software by Rosemary Evanson Boezi, of the location by country, county, state and city of the descendants of Augustyn Jilk and Sidonia Moravac. Additionally, photos of deceased family members' gravemarkers were posted, and videos were viewed of previous family gatherings. The arrowhead collection of Leo Jilk and other family members was displayed; most of these artifacts were found on land north of Minnesota City. Among other

activities, attendees used the horseshoe pits and children especially enjoyed the creek. From a family of fourteen children, three daughters of August Jilk and Sophia Kilian Jilk (Stockton Valley residents) survive; Agnes Evanson (Winona); Mary Jilk (Winona) and Sister Marielouise (Margaret) Jilk, S.Sp.S., (Techy, Illinois). These three were present at the reunion. Additionally, the wife of Albert Jilk, Lillian Lewandowski Jilk, lives in Kenosha. A Jilk family photo has been hung at the MCHA archives, as well as a poster including their contributions to the 2009 Library exhibit *The Homes They Left Behind*, which features a photo of the Jilk heritage home in Dolni Dobruc, Czechoslovakia and the Evanson heritage home in Norway.

Taking and Giving Makes Neighborhood News Columns, Not Headlines

"Fred Metzner, who was arrested by Officer Miller at Plainview, September 9, for stealing a cow from Mr. Rich of Minnesota City, an account of which appeared in these columns at the time, gave bonds this morning in the sum of \$200, and was released from jail." *Winona Daily Republican, Sept. 23, 1881*

"Ed. Wright says if the party who stole his walnuts in the sacks will return the sacks they are welcome to the nuts." *Winona Daily Republican, Sept. 18, 1896*

"Sam Miller got sick of wearing a silver hat and gave it to Hans Norby. We thought Sam would repent." *Winona Daily Republican, Sept. 10, 1896*

"Your special of September 10 tells about Sam Miller's silver hat that I gave to Hans Norby. I have a Bryan button yet, and a gold hat and a McKinley button. If Mr. Thomas wants a hat I will give him one. I have nothing to repent for that I know of. Yours Truly. S. Miller." *Winona Daily Republican, Sept. 12, 1896*

Henry Pederson, 19 year old Rochester youth, pleaded guilty this afternoon before Judge C.E. Callaghan in Winona county district court to a charge of grand larceny in the second degree in connection with the theft of automobile tires from the garage of Wockenfuss and Cisewski at Minnesota City the night of Sept. 4....Peterson was at once connected with the case by Sheriff George Huck. The car in which he was riding contained a large number of tires which he later confessed to Sheriff Huck had been taken from the Wockenfuss and Cisewski garage. *Winona Republican Herald, Sept. 20, 1922.*

Summer Construction on Area Roads Continues

Persons living near or driving through the bridge replacement site on County Road 25 (between the Pierce and Church farms) will be relieved to read the permit sign near the construction which states that Minnesota Department of Natural Resources permit to work in the Bed of Public Waters expires on December 31, 2011.

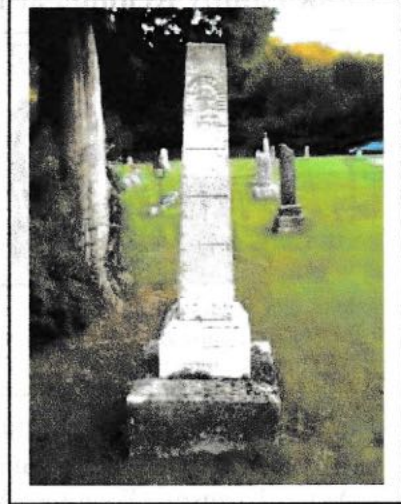
Road work on 248 continues, which includes pavement reclamation and resurfacing from Altura to Highway 61. "Pavement reclamation is the process of milling off part of the existing road surface, grinding the remaining pavement and a small layer of the underlying aggregate, injecting oil into the mixture to rebind the material and compacting it back into place. An asphalt overlay will be placed on top of the stabilized, reclaimed surface." (*Winona Post*).



Construction of County Road 23 Bridge

Buried in Oakland--Hiram Campbell- 1813- September 27, 1867

In 1852, when the first settlers came up the river on the *Nominee* on May 19, Vermont born Hiram Campbell, his wife Mary and three children were on the boat. The boat carried a large herd of cattle, the largest number of them belonging to Hiram Campbell--oxen, cows, and young stock. Campbell settled on a village lot and built a house, which he occupied with his family for several years. With this residence, he made a claim and preempted a homestead that included some village lots of the colony. "With other branches of farming, the Campbells took a great deal of interest in the cultivation of fruit particularly of different varieties of apples, which they were very successful in growing..." Campbell was elected a road commissioner for the colony and helped initiate the first movement toward the building of good wagon roads in the county. In 1861, Private Campbell was one of a long list of men from Winona county who enlisted in the First Battery Light Artillery, participating in the siege of Atlanta. He mustered out on June 30, 1865. On the tombstone in Oakland are listed three children, Frank, Willie, and George, children of Hiram and Mary Campbell, all who died by age 14. Mary is not buried in Oakland.



In written and oral accounts of Minnesota City History, one of the "claims to fame" is always the mention of the first horticulture experiment in the County, the planting of apple trees by Hiram Campbell. In researching information about Hiram Campbell, these two variant accounts of the horticultural contribution emerge.

From the 1913 *History of Winona County*: Hiram Campbell was a member of the Western Farm and Village Association, first settlers in Minnesota City. "When David Densmore and John Shaw came to Rollingstone, they brought with them a large supply of apple seeds which they procured from Maine. These seeds were planted on their village lots. Both David Densmore and Mr. Shaw died early in the summer of 1952, and their lots passed into other hands. Mr. Campbell assumed charge of the lot of Mr. Shaw and started a nursery of fruit trees from the seed sown on it. From this little nursery, started by Mr. Campbell on his own claim, sprang some of the finest varieties of the apples that have ever been known in Minnesota." (p. 172). From a Winona Daily Republican Article, July 10, 1869. (Hiram Campbell died in September 1867). "Many, even of the old residents of Minnesota, have long doubted whether we should ever be able to raise apples in this State. This season now bids fair to dispel the doubts of the most skeptical...let him go to the old pioneer ground of Minnesota City and he can see an orchard of 250 trees, nearly every one loaded with fruit. The best orchard of seedling varieties of the apples belongs to Mrs. Harvey (Hiram) Campbell, one of the old pioneers of the Farm and Village Association. Seventeen years ago, Mr. Robert Shaw, planted a quantity of apple seeds on one of the lots of the Minnesota City town plat. Mr. Shaw died before the seeds came up. The spot was neglected for some years until Mrs. Campbell, about ten years ago (1859), transplanted about 300 of the small trees to an orchard. These trees have been growing and bearing each year an increasing quantity of fruit. They have been trained and cared for by Mrs. Campbell in person. Nearly all of the original trees have lived, and this year the yield of fruit is variously estimated at from four to eight hundred bushels. There is great variety, both in quality and size of the apples. ...The only question Mrs. Campbell now has in regard to her growing fruit is how to protect it till it shall be ripe and ready for market. For years past, more than half her apples have been destroyed and carried away by men, children and Indians, both by night and day. Various ways have been proposed to keep thieves from her orchard. Many advise her to protect her apples in the same way that farmers protect their corn fields from birds—with the shot gun. To Mrs. Campbell belongs the honor of having the largest if not the best orchard now in the State of Minnesota. Her care, toil, and forethought are about to be rewarded, not only with a great abundance of the best fruit, but with the consciousness of having proved that apples will successfully grow in Minnesota. This is better than voting!" *Winona Daily Republican, July 10, 1869, Page 2.* * *The Equal Rights Amendment, giving women the right to vote passed in 1920.*