

# MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 5, Issue 12: December, 2011

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

## **Mark your calendars!**

December 10:

MCHA Holiday  
Caroling Event.  
140 Mill Street,  
Minnesota City,  
6:00 p.m.

December 16:

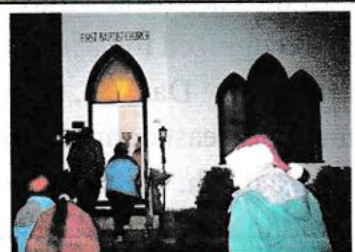
Minnesota City  
Community Readers  
meet at Riverway  
Learning Community,  
115 Iowa Street,  
Minnesota City;  
Selection: *The Book  
Thief*; 6:30 p.m.

## **Go “Green”!**

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



**December 10**



Carolers return to the church.  
(MCHA file photo)

**Minnesota City Historical  
Association Holiday Event at 140  
Mill Street, 6:00 p.m.  
Entertainment, Refreshments,  
Children’s Gifts, Caroling,  
Horse Drawn Wagon Rides.  
Please Invite family and friends!**

## **Music, Wagon Rides, and Refreshments at Minnesota City Historic First Baptist Church December 10 Event**

The holiday program, 6:00 p.m. on December 10 at the historic First Baptist Church, 140 Mill Street in Minnesota City will be an opportunity for persons of all ages to enjoy entertainment, food, friendships, and the horse drawn wagon rides.

Although the program boasts two tenors and a bass rather than three tenors, the quality of entertainment for the annual holiday caroling event in Minnesota City has not been scaled back, but rather, has been augmented by the introduction of talents new to the event. It will feature the customary horse drawn wagon rides provided by the Maus family, and traditional and contemporary musical and rhetorical expressions of

the holiday spirit that will entertain all ages. Children will find mementos under the tree to connect them with the traditional sounds and images of Christmas.

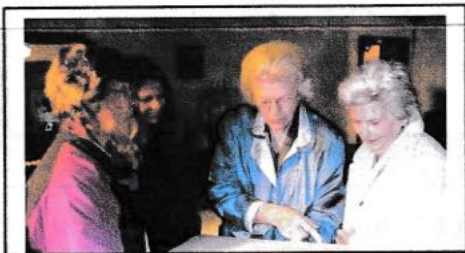
New talents for the event include singers, writers, instrumental and vocal performers. With the theme of “Bon Hiver,” “Good Winter,” the pageant pieces will provoke humor, reflection, and holiday spirit. The burning of the Yule Log in the historic church’s stove will begin the program. Will Krageschmidt will read an original work on “Bon Hiver” and play a guitar solo. Kaitlyn Ebbinger will perform a sax solo. Lynda Brzezinski and Becky Weiss will provide the weather forecast. All newsletter readers are invited to attend and to invite their friends. The public is invited to this celebration in the first church of Winona County, First Baptist, 140 Mill Street, Minnesota City.



## Michigan MCHA Friend Visits Archives

Darlene Reps Decker, visiting from Flint, Michigan, with her daughter, Amy, and friend, Sarah Denzer, visited the Archives on November 15.

An early and continuing supporter of MCHA, Darlene's visit to the historic First Baptist Church was a particularly significant one; she found her name on a number of documents in the archives including church "Sunday School" records, on a quilt designed by the First Baptist Ladies Aid in 1981. She found posted photos she had mailed from Michigan of the Raymond Church family farm harvests, and photos of Church Family relatives. She immediately recognized the Maybury School Building photo—she attended this school-- on display at the archives. Darlene, whose mother died when she was very young, is a sister of Russell and Olive Church (deceased) and of Gladys Church Volkart. She lived with Elmer and Ella Church after her mother's death. A delightful occurrence was



Sarah Denzer, Kim and her mother Darlene Decker view Decker's name in the Sunday School record book.

Darlene's identification of the framed drawing (contributed by Andrea and Roger Church) of Lucy Bates Church, her great, great grandmother. She spoke of her memories of the General Store operated by Elmer and George Church, of its abundant inventory and she recalled her friendship and work with Curtis Church.

Donna Friesen had notified Marv and Gen O'Grady of Decker's visit to the archives; the visit was particularly meaningful to them. "It was like meeting an old friend." These connections of persons

with Minnesota City History continue to give meaning to the MCHA motto: "A past that we honor; a present that we give meaning; a future that we build together."

## Rusdon Torbenson Makes Return Visit to Minnesota City Archives

Sometime in July, Rusdon Torbenson, Minneapolis, visited briefly with Marv and Gen O'Grady at the Archives in Minnesota City. He was biking through the city and had stopped to pick up a newsletter from the Literature Drop Box in front of the archives (First Baptist Church). He talked about his interest in small towns and issues of oppression, exploitation, and diversity, and the possibility of incorporating in the future some of his acquired material into a written document. On this return visit,



Torbenson was given copies of a number of archival documents including the *History of Minnesota City*, written by Erik Brom, *The History of the Settlement at Minnesota City* included in the Winona County History of 1913, and an undesignated author's *History of Minnesota City* written by a student for a class in Professor Blegen's class at the University of Minnesota (although not recognized in the book credits). Since the visit, Torbenson has been provided with websites for Jeremy Nienow, a University of Minnesota doctoral student who spoke to the MCHA audience in 2006, about the ghost towns of Southeastern Minnesota, and of the document in the archives of the Minnesota State Historical Society,

*The Rollingstone Colony: Labor Rhetoric Action*, authored by Christopher Johnson, a former Winonan now in medical consultation and practice in Santa Fe. Anyone who has interest in the topics listed by Torbenson might contact him at [rusdonkerntorbenson@yahoo.com](mailto:rusdonkerntorbenson@yahoo.com).



**MCHA congratulates:**

-Angela Zierfus and Kyle Bronk on their marriage, November 22. The wedding was held in the Historic First Baptist Church, which has a long history for the Denzer family. Angela is the daughter of Corinne Zierfus and the granddaughter of George and Gloria Denzer.

-Candi Kohner, who received an Outstanding Alumni award from Minnesota Southeast Technical College. A long list of her accomplishments includes serving as office manager for the City of Goodview, serving as Treasurer of Winona Health Auxiliary, and previous work with Women In Business. Together with her husband Steve, she shared the title of Harbormaster for Steamboat Days in 2005.

**MCHA thanks:**

The Denzer/Bronk wedding families for leaving their beautiful decorations in the Historic First Baptist Church for MCHA use at the December 10 caroling event.

**MCHA extends sympathy:**

-To the family of Eileen Sonsalla, wife of Michael Maher, who died in Minnesota City on November 25.

-To the family and friends of Kenneth J. Peterman, age 79, who died on Friday, November 4, 2011. Ken's family was one of the "old families" of Minnesota City, owners of large tracts of land along Wenonah Road for many years. Until recently, siblings, Ruth Mrozek, Margaret Eliot, and Darrell Peterman resided in the area.

-To the family and friends of Lloyd Tibor, 70, who died on November 1 at his Minneiska home. Together with his brother, Tom, Lloyd has been a long time area farmer.

-To the family and friends of Daniel Wicka, 70, who died on November 6 in Needles, California. Daniel was the brother of Sandra Evanson.

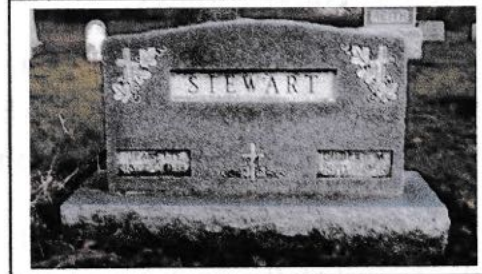
**Standing Invitations:**

- to attend meetings of Minnesota City Community Readers. All individuals are invited whether or not they have read the monthly selection. The website ([www.minnesotacity.org](http://www.minnesotacity.org)) includes a brief review of each month's choice, usually posted by mid month.
- to attend regular meetings of MCHA. These are held at Riverway in cold weather months, generally October to May. Other meetings are held at 140 Mill Street. There is some correspondence between interesting meetings and the number of persons attending.
- to respond to newsletter content. Please send additions, corrections, suggestions, etc. to [mgograzy@embarqmail.com](mailto:mgograzy@embarqmail.com). **Writers of regular columns would be welcomed.** These might include monthly columns on area businesses, churches, schools, organizations.



**Buried in Oakland—Janette Turner Stewart 1872-1932  
(Winona Republican Herald, Dec. 21, 1932)**

Janette Turner, the youngest child of William Turner and Elizabeth Hall was born at Bethany, Minn., October 14, 1872. In the year of 1877, the family moved to Minnesota City, and on September 13, 1899, Miss Turner was married to Gilbert M.



Stewart. They made their home on the old Stewart homestead where Mrs. Stewart resided until her death on December 16, 1932. She was survived by her husband; three sons, James Gilbert, Frank Drew, and Edward Marvin and five grandchildren all of Minnesota City; a brother, Thomas Turner and three sisters, Mrs. Mary Burley, Mrs. Annette Hoffman and Mrs. Ida Whetstone. Mrs. Stewart was educated in the public schools of Winona County and the Winona State Teachers College. She taught for a number of years in this county. She joined the Baptist church at Minnesota City in 1890 and was an active church worker, serving as Sunday school teacher from 1916 until the time of her death.

**Archives Acquires Poster Storage Display Unit**



Visitors to the archives will find helpful a new storage unit purchased by MCHA. Some bulletin boards prepared for MCHA presentations have been retained in the archives, but have taken up needed space, and have been inconvenient for visitor viewing. The panels on the display board are a quick way to view a number of topics of Minnesota City History. Selwyn's in England produces the unit.

**Membership Letters Mailed to Readers**

In a separate mailing, newsletter readers, friends and supporters of Minnesota City Historical Association, will receive notice of the Association's intention to request renewal of all memberships during the month of January. This change will simplify bookkeeping for the Association secretary and treasurer. Readers should know that membership monies are used to promote a number of goals, as indicated in the membership renewal request letter, but is not essential for receiving the newsletter. The newsletter is the most significant vehicle for communication of Minnesota City history and current topics; any interested persons are invited to receive it.

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.*