

MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 6, Issue 11: November, 2012

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

Mark Your Calendar

November 15:
Community Readers; 115 Iowa Street, Former Minnesota City School Building; 6:30 p.m.;
Selection: *The Rich Part of Life*

November 22:
THANKSGIVING

December 8:
Caroling Event;
First Baptist Church;
6:00 p.m.; Music,
Horse Drawn Wagon Rides

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

MCHA Plans for Saturday, December 8 Caroling Event Mark Your Calendar. Invite Family and Friends

**Horse drawn wagon rides * Community Caroling
Lighting of the Yule Log* Individual performances
Gift bags for children * Refreshments**

Music, horse drawn wagon rides, and refreshments will again be the ingredients of the MCHA sponsored Community Caroling Event at First Baptist Church, 140 Mill Street on December 8. The event will begin with the carrying in and lighting of the Yule Log at 6:00 p.m. Attendees at this event have the opportunity to imbibe the atmosphere of the historic church complete with heat from the original stove, oil lamps, 1875 organ sounds mixed with the energetic voices of children and adults. The atmosphere parallels that of Christmas gatherings at the church since its establishment as an ecumenical gathering place in the village as early as 1875. Last year the event format was enlarged with the addition of a number of musical performances and recitations by individuals. **All individuals or groups whose talents can be shared at this event are invited to contact the Eckerts (689-4103) or the O’Gradys (689-2440).** Many individuals are hesitant to announce their own talents; if you know someone that you think might participate, please, as good friends, with permission, send their names on to us and we will contact them.. Music and recitations, original or “used”, will be appreciated. There is no charge for the event and the public is invited.

MCHA Reviews Association Bylaws Saturday. Nov. 3, 10:30 a.m.

At its monthly meeting on October 13, members of MCHA decided to review Association Bylaws in committee meetings at 10:30 a.m. following monthly meetings. The intention is to spend approximately a half hour each month until changes are accomplished. Because growth of membership and activities of the group has augmented greatly since the organization’s beginning, a review of organizational documents is timely. **Persons with interest in the structure of the organization are invited to attend, whether or not they attend the monthly meetings.**

MCHA Expresses sympathy

-to the family members and friends of Kaitlin Smith Bakker, 28, Minnesota City resident, who died on Tuesday, October 16, 2012 in Rochester, MN.

-to the family members and friends of Jean Bruss, 83, who died on October 23. Jean was an election judge in Rollingstone township.

Marianne Mastenbrook 75th Birthday



Family members of Marianne Mastenbrook hosted a gathering at Holzinger Lodge on October 5 to mark her 75th birthday. Refreshments were provided and neighbors and family members visited.

Marianne Mastenbrook and granddaughter Tamara at October 6 celebration of Marianne's 75th birthday.

Minnesota City Organizational Activities on Website

The numerous organizations in Minnesota City are invited to send news of their activities for publication in the newsletter to mgoigrady@embarqmail.com. Because the newsletter is distributed in the first week of the month, it is helpful to have articles available for incorporation by the end of the third week. Newsletter readers are encouraged to use the website www.minnesotacity.org to learn the news of a number of organizations with existing links: GBDRF, Oakland Cemetery, Churches, Fire Department, City Council, First Responders, Readers Group, Youth Baseball and some businesses.

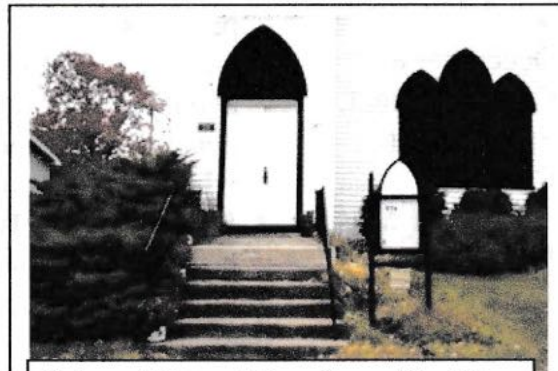
MCHA

Thanks

Donna and Betsy Friesen for continuous beautification of First Baptist Church Grounds and for continuous provision of refreshments for meeting days of MCHA at the archives (see photo).

Congratulates

Howard and Gladys Church Volkart on their October 19th 66th wedding anniversary.



Betsy and Donna Friesen Care of Baptist Church Grounds Provides Fall Beauty.

Saehler Drive Home and Community Options Facility Serves Persons with Developmental Disabilities

When Garvin Brook Disaster Relief Fund (GBDRF) sponsored their summer (2012) Garden Tour, one of the tour sites was the Saehler Drive Home and Community Options facility. For some of the garden tourists, it was the first time they knew the purpose or ownership of this home. According to HCO spokesperson Suzanne Horstman, the non-residential facility provides support and services for teens and young adults with developmental disabilities. The goal of the services is to enable participants to use their abilities to live as accepted members of their communities. Horstman indicated the organization's appreciation for the community's support of these efforts for their clients. More information about the services provided is available at the website <http://www.hco.org/> or persons can call at 507-452-1048.



Home and Community Options Facility, 253 Saehler Drive

Civil War Origins of Thanksgiving Day Commemoration: President and Governor Proclaim in 1863

It wasn't until 1863, in the midst of the Civil War, that **President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed** a national Thanksgiving Day to be held each November. (History.com articles: *Thanksgiving*).

While Lincoln issued the proclamation, credit for making Thanksgiving a national holiday should go to Sarah J. Hale, the editor of Godey's *Lady's Book*, a popular magazine for women in 19th century America. Hale, who campaigned for years to make Thanksgiving a nationally observed holiday, wrote to Lincoln on September 28, 1863 and urged him to issue a proclamation. Hale mentioned in her letter that having such a national day of Thanksgiving would establish a "great Union Festival of America."

Lincoln wrote a proclamation, which was issued on October 3, 1863. The northern states celebrated Thanksgiving on the date noted in **Lincoln's proclamation, the last Thursday in November, which fell on November 26, 1863.**

By the President of the United States: A Proclamation

"The year that is drawing toward its close has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever-watchful providence of Almighty God. ...Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defense (the Civil War) have not arrested the plow, the shuttle, or the ship; the ax has enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than heretofore.... I do, therefore, invite my fellow-citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next as a Day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens, a day for enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility, and union.

(*About.com: 19th Century History*).

In 1863, **Minnesota's Governor Henry Swift also produced a Thanksgiving proclamation.**

"Prior to 1863, it was at a state's discretion when (or whether) there was a day of Thanksgiving. The Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) has several such proclamations as part of its gubernatorial collections. Now, the MHS has acquired Governor Henry A. Swift's 1863 proclamation, which follows suit with Lincoln's. In it, Swift highlights contemporary events—the Civil War, the 1862 U.S.-Dakota War, immigration, drought — in language that, to the modern reader, may seem occasionally brusque or even insensitive.... Swift's proclamation now serves as documentary evidence to that perspective yet remains available for ongoing interpretation and analysis."

(*Christopher Welter, Collections Assistant Minnesota State Historical Society*).

Newspaper Election News in Minnesota City: Familiarity Seems to Satisfy

Stories about November Elections in the Winona papers with Minnesota City datelines or headlines covered the village elections; votes for County, State, and National issues and people were included in other stories. A brief search of Minnesota City stories does not produce information about issues. The Minnesota City names for periods of time include election or reelection of repeated names. *Minnesota City Plans Election November 5; Filing Deadline Near*. This story recounted the village change of election day from December to coincide with the general election. This election was for a mayor, two justices of the peace, two constables, and two trustees. (*Winona Daily News; October 17, 1957.*)

As elections go, the November, 1965 day was probably pretty exciting when John Reinke and Glenn Alleman tied votes for mayor. "In accordance with the law following a canvas of the votes," council flipped a silver dollar, and John Reinke was elected mayor. (WDN, Nov 4, 1965). Other names in this election were Ed Verdick, James King, George and Elmer Church, all re-elected to positions. (*Winona Daily News; Nov. 3, 1965.*)

A 1966 headline, *Minnesota City Renames Village Clerk, Trustee*, informs that "Leo Richter, trustee, and John Kaslo, clerk were reelected with opposition only from scattered write-ins. Also reelected were Donald Russert, justice of the peace, and Donald Valentine, constable." Other names of electees or write ins included Melvin Hohensee, Glenn Alleman, Herbert Witt and James King. (*Winona Daily News, Nov. 9, 1966.*)

In the Archives:

Minnesota History

Minnesota City Historical Association subscribes to *Minnesota History*, the monthly publication of the Minnesota Historical Society. Because many readers are not in the archives regularly, it would be possible for area readers to start a rotation for reading of this very informative journal. This month the magazine carried the tragic story—the authors call it the "complex land swindle now known as the tragedy of White Earth"—as the feature story. Every issue of the magazine contains lengthy reviews of books that provide readers with an historical overview of many topics. The magazine is received at the Archives address (Eckerts); it is then passed to O'Gradys who then place it in the archives. Anyone who wishes to be next on the reading list, please call 689-2440.

The Family History and Life of Maxine Helen Church Spaag



Maxine Spaag

Many newsletter readers last saw Maxine Spaag impersonating her grandmother at the Oakland Cemetery Walk on September 15. Now readers can connect again with Maxine in her auto-biographical contribution to the MCHA Archives. Compiled and written in the summer of 2001, the pages of material provide Maxine's personal life history, details about her families of heritage (Church and Kloetzke), information about her children, her in-laws, her husbands, her many travels, and of particular interest to area readers, stories about school, home, and community life in Minnesota City, Stockton (the home area of her husband Lester Spaag), and Winona. Future editions of the newsletter will carry information

from the autobiography. Written primarily as a history for her own children, the material reveals Maxine's knowledge of her own family history, how education and community shaped her life, and particularly the appreciation and understanding of the significance of family in several generations.

Readers are encouraged to consider the volume as one model for the kind of history that will be meaningful to generations for historical and personal purposes.