

MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 7, Issue 9: September, 2013

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

Mark your Calendars!

September 21: Saturday: (Note change from second Saturday)
Regular monthly MCHA meeting;
Archives, 140 Mill Street; 9:30 a.m.

September 26: Thursday: Minnesota
Community Readers; 115 Iowa
Street, former Minnesota City
School; Selection: *Don Quixote*
(See Leo Jilk Review, Page 2); 6:30
p.m.

September 29: Sunday: Annual
Church Service; Historic First
Baptist Church, 140 Mill Street; 2:00
p.m.

October 20: Sunday: Film: *Jerry
Apps: A Farm Story*, Wisconsin
Public Television; Archives, 140
Mill Street; 2:00 p.m.

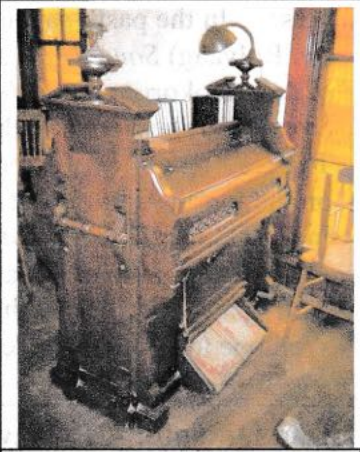
“Go Green!”

If you receive this letter in paper
“hardcopy” and would like to receive
it electronically, please call 689-
2440.

September 22 Annual Service at Historic First Baptist Church

Pastor Dennis Hudson, First Baptist
Church in Winona, will conduct the
annual summer service at the Historic
First Baptist Church in Minnesota City.
**The public is invited to this 2:00 p.m.
service** which includes music, using the
historic church hymnals and
accompanied by Jean Gardner on the
historic organ. The June 14, 1875
newspaper account of the dedication of
the church reads: “The new church is
a very neat structure and has been
erected at a cost of about \$800.00.
It will accommodate easily about one
hundred people. Although built by the Baptist people it is
understood that the edifice is to be open to all Evangelical
denominations when not used by the Baptists.” (*Winona Daily
Republican, June 14, 1875, p. 3*).

The First Baptist Ladies Aid Members who own the church
provide refreshments; they continue to maintain the church since it
was returned to them by the Winona County Historical Society.
The Minnesota City Historical Association (MCHA) Archives are
located in the rear area of the building.



Organ at First Baptist
Church 140 Mill Street

Minnesota City Historical Association Meeting Plans Film Showing: “Jerry Apps: A Farm Story”

The August 10 meeting of the MCHA agenda included discussion of the fall presentation and of possible equipment purchases. On Sunday, October 20, a film produced by Wisconsin Public Television and narrated by Jerry Apps will be shown at MCHA Archives, 140 Mill Street. Apps, born and raised on a Wisconsin farm, is Professor Emeritus at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the author of more than 30 books, many of them on rural history and country life. His nonfiction books include: *Living a Country Year, Every Farm Tells a Story, When Chores Were Done, Humor from the Country, Country Ways and Country Days, One-Room Schools*. He has also authored children’s books and has produced an audio book.

All MCHA programs are without charge; donations are always welcomed. The October newsletter will contain details for this event. The August Association meeting also included discussion of purchase of a screen, projector and sound system for use at the Archives or at other sites of presentations by the Association. Don Evanson is procuring information and estimates.

Minnesota City Community Readers Invite New Members

Minnesota City Community Readers have been meeting monthly since 2005. The group presently includes these regular attendees: Lori Donehower, Donald Evanson, Leo Jilk, Judith Maus, Brenda Eckert, Gen O'Grady, Marv O'Grady, Judith Kleinbach, Kate O'Grady, Jean Gardner, and Barbara Pierce. These individuals' many interests and reading backgrounds suggest the books for reading from ones they have read themselves, have had recommended to them, or have heard about in the press. In the past year selections have included *Ordinary Grace* (Kent Kruger), *The Immigrants* (O. Rolvaag) *Some Hats, Some Women, and Hitler* (Kantor), *Unorthodox* (Feldman) *The Rich Part of Life* (Kokoris) *The Odyssey* (Homer), *State of Wonder* (Patchett), *Lord Jim* (Conrad), *Cutting for Stone* (Verghese) and others.

The reading group is extending an invitation to all readers to join the discussions which take place on the fourth Thursday of the month at 6:30. This month's selection is *Don Quixote*. (See below). In a 2002 list, *Don Quixote* was cited as the "best literary work ever written" (Wikipedia). The discussions of the group are wide ranging and open ended, making it possible for persons to participate whether they have read the text or not, and whether or not they attend meetings regularly. We hope to see new readers at the September meeting at 6:30 p.m. at 115 Iowa St., Minnesota City.

Don Quixote: A Review by Leo Jilk

The Minnesota City Readers Group selected *Don Quixote* for its summer read. As the group does not meet during the summer months it's an opportunity to tackle something longer and more challenging. At over 900 pages and a plot that is very different from our usual fare, *Don Quixote* forces the reader to adopt a patient approach.

Carlos Fuentes, the prominent Mexican writer who died last year, referred to *Don Quixote* as "the ambassador of reading." The character Don Q has seemingly read all the books of the medieval Golden Age of Chivalry and now sets out with Sancho Panza (a village peasant), his squire, to live the life that he has learned in his reading. Their adventures are alternately comic and tragic. Dostoevsky called *Don Quixote* "the saddest book of them all," and those who find their way through both books (the first published in 1605, the second in 1615) may agree. One begins to feel a kinship with Don Q and Sancho and wishes that the journey and adventures could go on forever.

For many critics who discuss the history of the novel, *Don Quixote* is regarded as the starting point. To appreciate it fully, it may be helpful to have some understanding of the period in which it was written. Spain was in decline as a world power. The Counter-Reformation was in full swing. The printing press, invented in the mid-fifteenth century was making information accessible to a much larger population. The background against which the story is set is a changing one and Cervantes presents us with a tale that challenges us to ask questions about the relationship between what we read and real life, between truth and madness. Those questions arise early in the novel and are restated throughout the work.

When we meet to discuss *Don Quixote*, I would encourage anyone, whether you've read part of the novel, all of it, or are just considering reading it, to come and share your thoughts and ideas.

(Leo Jilk, currently a Winona resident, a member of MCHA, and a member of Minnesota City Community Readers, is a prolific reader and poet. His childhood and teen years were lived in Deering Valley north of Minnesota City. His recent review of *Gods of the Mississippi* is posted on the Amazon Book site).

Minnesota State Historical Society August Issue features Winona stories.

The Summer 2013 edition of the *Minnesota History Quarterly* magazine contains two articles that will interest many local readers. "Downsizing the Public Realm: Building and Razing Winona's Grand Post Office," by Greg Gaut and Marsha Neff, describes the contention related to replacing the old building. S.J. Kryzsko, campaigning for the new building wrote: "The question was whether Winona should "work to achieve the clean fresh look of a modern city" or instead rest on past laurels with an array of old fashioned monuments." Authors summarize the proponents' position: "Although business leaders campaigned hard for a new post office, they had little interest in its design and made no speeches about how its architecture represented something about their community." Charles Maybury was the superintendent of the construction project for the "old" post office. (Maybury designed the first Minnesota City School.) Lewis Younger campaigned for the preservation of the old building. (As head of the Winona County Historical Society, it was Younger who obtained and later returned the historic First Baptist Church at 140 Mil Street. He also found the beautiful lights in the attic which were reinstalled in the church and are now lighted for the December annual caroling event).

A second article of interest is the story "Long Remember" Minnesota at Gettysburg and Vicksburg. Included is the reprinting of a section of the diary of Mathew Marvin, a leather shop clerk from Winona who served in Company K of the first Minnesota and was wounded at Gettysburg. He writes: "We had not fired a musket and the rebs were firing rappedly. I droped to the ground with a wound some whar. I picked my self up as quickly as possible when I saw blod on my shoe the heel of which was tore out. I thought it a slight one and run to ketch up thinking that no rebel line could stand a charg of my regt. And if the Bayonet must be used I wanted a chance in as it was free to al. I had just ketched up again when I fell a second time to Faint to get up. I drank some Water and put some on my Head and rists then I tried to wak to the rear was to week for that so after resting again I tried the hands and kenees. I got to the rear of our batteries when I divested myself of guns and equipment and knapsack. I have got all the pain I can stand." (page 230) The participation of Minnesota troops in this Civil War battles is frequently recalled. Frances Edstrom, Winona Post, recently described her family visit to Gettysburg, and last year, Minnesota City residents, Hollis and Lori Donehower visited this site.

Current and previous copies of the *Minnesota History Quarterly* are on display at the archives.

MCHA Caroling Performer Writes for Haake Poetry Contest

Will Krageschmidt, a Minnesota Citian until recently, performed twice at the annual MCHA caroling events, including renditions of his own compositions. This year at Senior High School in Winona, he was a winner in the Paul Haake poetry contest. His poem was entitled *Variations on Modern America*. This writing experience and competition is sponsored annually by Haake, a WSHS alumnus, to honor his father. **Will has given us permission to post the poem on the Community Reader's bulletin board at the former Minnesota City School.** In September, Will will be attending Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa, planning to major in vocal music and political science.



Will Krageschmidt at caroling event at First Baptist Church

Stockton Valley Children's photo in Fredrickson book, Harvest Time on the Farm

When Gordon Fredrickson spoke at the Minnesota City Historical Society Fall presentation in 2012, he and co-author Nancy Fredrickson asked for contributions of farm photos for their next book, *Farm Country Harvest*. Observing the MCHA panel of agriculture in the Archives, they requested a photo of children on the August and Sophia Kilian Jilk farm in Stockton Valley, a century farm in Winona County (purchased in 1902). Jilk children were photographed in a shocked grain field. MCHA has purchased a copy of the Fredrickson book. Fredrickson, whose interest is in portraying the intergenerational aspects of farming, is now searching for photos of silo filling for the next Fredrickson book. Readers are invited to contact **Gordon W. Fredrickson, 8855 Cantor Lane, Lakeville, MN 55044** for more information.

Mail Responses to August Newsletter From Gerald Okland, Thief River Falls: More on the Dredge, etc.

“Every year the flowers, Spring, Summer and Fall are on a continuum. We start out with Sweet Rockets , then Descending Trilliums, Canada Anemones, Prairie Smoke , and Birds Foot Trefoils (which we have now). The flower I don't like to see is Closed Gentian. That means cold weather is next. Our weather lags two weeks earlier for Spring and Fall compared to SE Minnesota. If anyone is interested in more information on the Walking Dredge, in Google, put in Patent # 1270763. This is the actual patent that can be read. Also, in most any search engine put in “Bay City walking Dredge # 489” to see the dredge that is on display at Collier Seminole State Park South of Naples, Florida. This Walking Dredge helped construct the Tamiami road (Tampa to Miami) through the swamp. Barb and I have visited Collier Seminole State Park and I have walked on the dredge. With Anderson’s patent it eliminated 2 crew members leaving only the crane man and engine operator. Floating Dredges were steam ; Walking Dredges were kerosene/gasoline. The sound that the walking dredge engine made was pop pop chuga chuga chuga pop pop . Like the sound of a turn of the century farm utility single cylinder engine.” Gerry also wrote that U Tube has videos under “Walking Dredge.”

Don Evanson inquired about the Marfield Mill named in the August news items. The August 11, 1883 *Winona Republican Herald* contains this information about Marfield: “Mr. O.L. Marfield arrived home this morning from a trip to Chicago, and on Monday will assume the position of General Manager of the Winona Mill Company. Mr. Marfield commenced milling and grain dealing in 1862 at Chillicothe, Ohio, and has been engaged in the business every since, having for the past two years held the responsible position of manager with the L.C. Porter Milling Com. in this city. “ His name frequently occurs in the *Grain Dealers and Shippers Gazateer*, produced by the Chicago and Northwester Railway, among others. One location of the Winona Mill Company is listed as SW corner of Front and Market. A lengthy newspaper account of a fire of the mill is filed in the archives (see MILLS).

MCHA extends sympathy to the family and friends of Elaine Streng Smith, 87, who died on August 21. Elaine, the daughter of William and Bertha Streng, lived her early years in Minnesota City (Stockton Valley) and attended the Maybury school.

Congratulations to the Minnesota City Youth Baseball Team

According to the Winona Daily News, (August 17), the 10 and under grey baseball team took first place in an Altura tournament on July 20. Excellent pitching, great defense and timely hitting were listed as reasons for victory.

!Calendar Keeper Needed for the Website!

Please check the website, www.minnesotacity.org, for MCHA information, Minnesota City area information and dates, times and details for upcoming events.

Please help! We are in need of someone to take over as the calendar keeper for the site. This will be a valuable contribution to Association efforts. Many dates are “fixed”, some are received from the newsletter, and some are contributed to the calendar keeper as they occur (birthdays, meetings, reunions, etc.). The calendar can be viewed on the website, www.minnesotacity.org, linked from Calendar. Please notify mgogrady@embarqmail.com or call 507-689-2440 if you can help with this work. Previous calendar keepers will help initiate a volunteer.

Standing Invitations:

- to attend regular meetings of MCHA. These meetings are held at 140 Mill Street. In cold weather months, generally October to May these are held at the former school building.
- to respond to newsletter content. Please send additions, corrections, suggestions, etc. to mgogrady@embarqmail.com.
- **Writers of regular columns would be welcomed.** These might include monthly columns on area businesses, churches, schools, organizations or other relevant topics on the area and/or our history.