

MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 4, Issue 10: October, 2010

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

Mark your calendars!

October 9: Minnesota City School Reunion Meeting; Riverway Learning Comm. 115 Iowa St.: 9:30 a.m.

October 16: MCHA Monthly Meeting; MCHA Archives, 140 Mill Street; 9:30 a.m.

Note change from 2nd Saturday (this month only)

October 21: Minnesota City Community Readers; Riverway Learning Community; 115 Iowa Street; Discussion of *Sister Carrie* (Dreiser); 6:30 p.m.; Library copies available

October 24: Dean Klinkenberg book signing and slide show at Minnesota City Historical Association Archives, First Baptist Church; 140 Mill Street, Minnesota City; 2:00 p.m.

Dec. 10: Horse Drawn Wagon: Holiday Caroling at the Church

Go “Green”!

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

Book Signing and Slide Show at MCHA Archives/First Baptist Church on October 24

Dean Klinkenberg, author of two published travelogues featuring the Mississippi River environs, *Lansing to LeClair* and *Quad Cities*, will hold a **book signing and slide show** for his third book at the historic First Baptist Church, 140 Mill Street, Minnesota City, **on Sunday, October 24 at 2:00 p.m.** Klinkenberg’s next volume, *The Driftless Area: Along the Mississippi River from Hastings to Lansing*, includes a chapter on Minnesota City that will give an overview of the town’s history, and entries for the **Minnesota City Historical Association**, Lock and Dam 5, the canoe trail accessed from the Verchota landing, and the Bass Camp Resort. Klinkenberg’s website is www.travelpassages.com; it demonstrates his familiarity with and affection for the river cities he visits. Books will be available for purchase at the signing. Please invite family and friends. There is no charge for this presentation.

Minnesota City School Reunion Planning Meeting October 9

Any persons interested in helping to plan an all Minnesota City Schools reunion will meet at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, October 9 at Riverway Learning Community, 115 Iowa Street. This meeting will focus on identification of photographs from the Minnesota City Historical Association archives and **attendees are invited to bring their own photos for identification.** If agreeable, these photos will also be scanned for the Association archives.

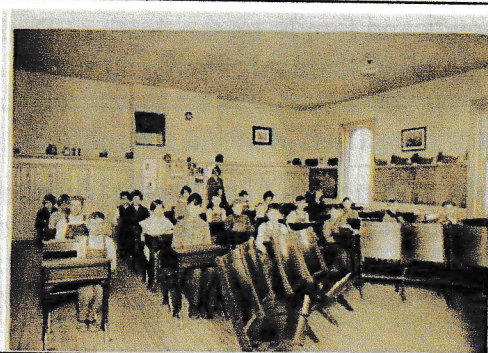


Photo of school room in Minnesota City in the 1920's contributed by Bill and Rose Saehler (2002)

Minnesota City residents opened the first school in Winona County in 1852. J. Denman was a pupil of the first school at Minnesota City. He wrote “It was what was called a subscription school, and conducted for a term of three months in the fall of 1852. Miss Ann Orton was the teacher, the attendance about 20 pupils.” He further wrote that “the school was held in a building just across the road from the home of Mr. Thorp, and I believe had been used at one time by him as a blacksmith shop.

The old Thorp home was located next door to the old Cotton home, in later years known as the Kennedy farm, and is a quarter to a third of a mile east of what is known as the old O. M. Lord home.” Therefore the school was located near the old highway about midway between the brick residence of George Whetstone and the old Kennedy home, now painted yellow, and occupied by the Peterman family. The above description locating the site on which the first real school in Winona county was held, is, we believe, printed here for the first time, and much credit is due J. L. Denman for remembering the location of the school he attended over three-quarters of a century ago. (School Days in Territorial Minnesota, Old Settler’s Scrapbook, p. 145, published in 1928).

MCHA extends sympathy to:

-friends and family of **Steven Kukowski**, Minnesota City, age 50, husband of Nancee, and son of Ed and Delores Kukowski (also recent deaths). Steven died on August 29. He was buried at St. Paul's Cemetery in Minnesota City.

-friends and family of **Alice Kleinbach**, age 96, mother of David Kleinbach, Minnesota City, who died in LaCrescent on September 9.

-friends and family of **Ronald Keller**, age 70, Maplewood, Mn who died on Sept. 8. Ronald attended Minnesota City School, was the son of Chris and Alice Keller and brother of Loran, Lois, Sharon, Robert, Steven and David. He was the President and Co-Owner of Keller Construction, Hudson, Wisc.

-friends and family of **Gilbert Stewart**, age 72, who died on Sept. 5. Gilbert, the son of James and Gertrude Martin Stewart, was a lifelong resident of the area, born in Minnesota City. He attended Minnesota City School, belonged to First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Minnesota City, and was employed by Winona Ready Mix and Modern Concrete. In addition to this work, he worked on the home farm with his brother David. Gilbert's wife, Barbara, lives on Highway 248, opposite the Rollingstone Town Hall; his sister, Joan Denzer and his brother David survive him. A son, Ricky, preceded him in death. Gilbert was buried at Oakland Cemetery.

-friends and family of **Gloria Woodard Denzer**, age 88, who died on September 11. Gloria was married to George Denzer for 64 years at the time of his death in 2005. In 2002, Gloria and George were awarded a certificate at the sesquicentennial lecture on education for their friendship and care of Lillian Holland, a Minnesota City teacher, following the death of her husband, Merrill. Gloria was a member of the First Baptist Ladies Aid in Minnesota City for seventy years. Daughter Corinne lives in Minnesota City. Gloria was buried at Oakland Cemetery. Lola Denzer, the wife of recently deceased Ray Denzer, is a sister of Gloria.

-friends and family of **Raymond Ledebuhr**, age 92, who died on Sept. 12. He was the father of Rolland Ledebuhr and grandfather of Lori Ledebuhr of Minnesota City. Raymond lived in Stockton, Minnesota.

-Byrle Tschumper, Winona, and all Tschumper friends and family on the death of Byrle's wife for sixty one years, **Edith Einhorn Tschumper**. Edith died in LaCrosse on September 27.

October in Minnesota City News (All news articles from Winona Republican Herald)

October 13, 1951. "At the October meeting of the Minnesota City Parent-Teachers Association Tuesday evening at the schoolhouse, it was voted to serve hot lunches to the school children. Two movies were shown, 'The Sun Goes North' and 'The Sixth Chair.' Lunch was served by Mr. and Mrs. Harry Jessie, Mr. and Mrs. George Gilsdorf, Mr. and Mrs. Leo Jilk, and Mrs. John Kaslo."

October 16, 1951. "Mr. and Mrs. F.X. Bucholtz, Minnesota City, were surprised at their home Saturday evening by a group of friends and relatives in celebration of their 30th wedding anniversary. Mrs. Bucholtz was the former Sophie Bernatz. They were married in Winona October 12, 1921, at St. Stanislaus church by the Rev. John Misiak. They have four children, Mrs. Lambert Sadowski, Mrs. Ralph Rodgers, Winona, John, Minneapolis, and James, a radioman in the Navy...The couple received a purse of money, cards and telegrams."

October 15, 1897. "Hon. Waterman has gone to the northern part of the State duck hunting with H.C. Shepard of St. Paul, formerly of Winona. He will probably remain long enough to kill a few deer too.

Mike Schultz has resigned his office as town constable and as we have no village marshal, the town is without a peace officer. We are so good we don't need one. County Supt. Wilber visited our schools Wednesday and found Mr. Loomis and Miss Schermuss doing good work. Rev. John Festersen of St. Charles preached at the Baptist church Tuesday evening. The Baptist people may conclude to engage him."

Aunes Visit Archives and MCHA Members on September 26

On Sunday, September 26, Kirk and Pamela Aune, Granger, Indiana, visited the MCHA archives at 140 Mill Street, and later visited with several MCHA members at the home of Marv and Gen O'Grady. The O'Grady land borders Denzer land purchased from D.Q. Burley. One property line is marked by "the Burley Maples" -- trees planted by D. Q. Burley.

Pamela Stansfield Aune is the great great granddaughter of Daniel Q. Burley, a Western Farm and Village Association member who settled in Minnesota City. She connected in 2006 with some Minnesota City Historical Association members at the home of Lynda and Robb Brzezinski on Denzer Road; Brzezinski's home was previously owned by a Burley family member. At that time, a number of new connections were made with family histories through the experiences and information of Allen Whetstone and Neil Denzer. Following that visit, Pamela presented the extensive history of the Burley family at an MCHA meeting in March of 2008. Pam contributed a copy of her research to the Minnesota City Historical Association archives.

An animated Lynda Brzezinski story set the tone for a lively afternoon of information gathering and sharing with Gen O'Grady, Pam Aune, Don and Sandy Evanson and Marv O'Grady and others. (Aune photo)



Flood Damaged Ball Fields Back in the Running For Fun and Sport Experiences

(Submitted by Scott Fritz and Steve Heftman)

Minnesota City Youth Baseball is a developmental/instructional program. We have been playing baseball for over forty years in Minnesota City in our current format as a member of Winona County Youth Baseball. Contrary to popular belief, we are a NON-tryout program and we do not practice year round. What we are is a very hard working group of people who come together four months out of the year to teach our kids the right way to play baseball and to not only respect the game but also the people we play the game with and against. We teach our kids how to win graciously and how to lose with dignity and class.

We have a very popular program that continues to grow! At our yearly sign-up meeting that we hold each spring we sign up all of the Minnesota City kids first. We then sign up all returning players and their younger siblings from the previous season. If we need any additional players we take them on a first come first served basis. In 2010 we had 8 teams with 86 players ranging in age from 7 to 16. We had a very successful year on the field with all of our teams. One of our 8u teams and one of our 12u teams won their respective league titles. There were many 1st, 2nd and 3rd place finishes for all of teams in the 22 tournaments that our teams entered into.

The devastating flood that hit the region in August of 2007 completely destroyed both of our fields. Kelvin Penrod has worked tirelessly to rebuild our fields. We have been back playing at our big field for the last two seasons. Our big field originally was home to our 12u and 14u teams but has been shared by all of our teams for the past two years. We have also played many games at both the Goodview and Rollingstone Elementary fields since 2007. Work on the small field should be completed later this year (weather permitting). If not for the dedication by Kelvin and the support of the Minnesota City City Council baseball in Minnesota City would have been forever washed away!



Youth baseball in Minnesota City

Our program is 100% funded through fund raising, donations, our outfield fence sign program, grants and the small registration fee (\$35) that players pay each year. Our annual chicken-q is our primary source of revenue. In 2008 we were selected by the Minnesota Twins as a recipient of the Minnesota Twins Field for Kids Grant Program. Since that time the Twins have used photographs of our field on their literature and on a special they played during a 2010 Twins game on the Fox Sports Network. The use of these photographs illustrates how beautiful our field is and how lucky the area kids are to have such a great home field! (Check for additional photos and information on MCHA website, www.minnesotacity.org, youth baseball link).

Western Farm and Village Association Members: "We Want the Money"

Minnesota History, the quarterly publication of the Minnesota State Historical Association, in its Winter, 1984 issue carried an article called *The Rollingsstone Colony: Labor Rhetoric in Action* authored by Christopher M. Johnson. (Johnson is the son of former Winonans Curtis and Alice Johnson). Much of the information of the article is familiar, but the context of the presentation, the link to labor agitation in the east provides new insights for some readers into characteristics and motivations of the first settlers of Minnesota City, the members of the Western Farm and Village Association. According to Johnson, their effort was based on "their conviction that life on the Minnesota frontier could restore to them the lost American virtue of independence. In their view, the true worth of a man depended upon his ownership of land, and they believed that all should have the opportunity to attain agrarian independence." The hope to improve their economic and social position depended on the goal obvious to them of acquiring public government land. Achieving the goal of independence is a familiar idea to many, but because life in frontier days is viewed by few as a road to riches, this analysis of Johnson's forces an examination of the connection the settlers saw between life in New York City and life in Minnesota City.

THE FIRST ISSUE of the *Advocate* spelled out the motives and goals of the group; it also recapitulated in a general way the actions taken by the association during the course of the previous fall. Of particular significance were the definite steps the association's leadership took to separate themselves from what they saw as more radical Utopian schemes and doctrines. Johnson writes: "The most prominent idea held out in the 'Western Farm and Village' Movement, as in most other organizations for improving the physical condition of man, is the *acquisition of wealth*. This is the governing consideration with a large majority of those who engage in such enterprises. Divest our organization of this feature, and it would probably fail of being successful. There are, indeed, other considerations and advantages to be derived from it, but these of themselves would be insufficient to induce men to break the ties of association, affection and interest, and seek out new objects in a strange land. It requires a stronger stimulus than merely intellectual or moral considerations to effect an abandonment of old and perhaps remunerating pursuits for the prosecution of enterprises that are new and possibly hazardous; **and that stimulus is found in the probability or certainty which exists in any given enterprise for the accumulation of riches, and thereby the means of independence**" (*Rollingsstone Colony: Labor Rhetoric in Action*", Minnesota Historical Society, Winter, 1984, p. 142).

Johnson's article which includes a diagram of the plan for the village can be read and/or downloaded from the Minnesota State Historical Society website; it is also in the MCHA archives; see Rollingsstone File. In a recent phone conversation with Christopher Johnson, he recalled his impressions from his research in New York of the dynamic members of the Western Farm and Village Association.

Check Out The Website:
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.*