

MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 7, Issue 1: January, 2013

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

Mark your calendars!

January 12: Monthly MCHA meeting; 9:30 a.m.; Former Minnesota City School Building, 115 Iowa Street

January 12: MCHA By-Laws Meeting; 10:30 a.m. ; Former Minnesota City School Building, 115 Iowa Street

January 17: Minnesota City Community Readers; 6:30 p.m.; Former Minnesota City School Building; Selections: *UNorthodox: The Scandalous Rejection of My Hasidic Roots*, Deborah Feldman and *Winter Wheat*, Mildred Walker.

Saturday, May 18
Minnesota City Day

Go “Green”!

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

December 8 Community Caroling a Joyful Event

Depending on when one heard the sounds emanating from the First Baptist Church during the caroling event on December 8, one might have recognized solo organ, soprano carolers, the somber solo “Coventry Carol,” recitation, resounding audience tones, guitars, a remarkable one stringed instrument (Canjo) performance, and finally, the voices of the community of Minnesota City—children, their



Nora Butenhoff, Kate O’Grady, Vanessa Butenhoff, Don Evanson, Rebecca Weiss, Camden Church, Will Krageschmidt, read at Dec. 8 Event. (Mike Butenhoff photo)

parents, their grandparents. Persons familiar with the history of the First Baptist Church would have recognized in the event the hallmarks of the ecumenical earliest holiday celebrations in Minnesota City—performances, children’s gifts, and community presence. Jean Gardner called it a “Norman Rockwell painting in action, a true Americana scene.” A particularly moving sensory experience was the turning off of the electric lights, leaving the church illuminated by the oil lights and filled with the sounds of Silent Night sung by the audience, accompanied by Jean Gardner on the 1880 organ. Thank you to Susan Althoff and Mike Butenhoff for contributed photos.

For more photos of the caroling event, please view the MCHA website www.minnesotacity.org.



Rebecca Weiss and Kate O’Grady entertain on Canjos; Don Evanson and Will Krageschmidt listen. (Mike Butenhoff photo)

MCHA is especially grateful to all persons who attended the event; to the Maus family for providing the horse drawn wagon rides; to all performers who gave time and contributed ideas and talents to the evening’s entertainment; to Debi LaFee and Donna and Betsy Friesen for decorations; to Debi LaFee and Richard Karnath for removing decorations; to Lynda Brzezinski and Rebecca Weiss for childrens’ gifts; to the O’Grady family for many efforts before, during, and after the event.

!!Needed: Calendar Keeper for the MCHA Newsletter!!

Since the initiation of the MCHA Newsletter, Marvin O'Grady, David Eckert, Andrea Church, and Susan Althoff have been the caretakers of the website. We all value their work. At this time, Susan Althoff, who has been a long keeper of the calendar has agreed to help any person willing to take this task over to learn how to accomplish the work. This is 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 Susan (689-2281) or Marv (689-2440) if you can help with this work.

Newsletter Readers

Watch for MCHA membership renewal information in the mail in January

Minnesota City Kwik Trip First To See Compressed Natural Gas

The December 13 edition of the *Winona Daily News* carried the front page story of the Minnesota City Kwik Trip sale of compressed natural gas. The gas, whose production is described in detail in the article, is substantially less costly and less polluting.

Garvin Brook Disaster Relief Fund (GBDRF) Reviews Progress at Annual Meeting (Information from GBDRF Newsletter with permission)

At its annual meeting on December 6, GBDRF reviewed the group's projects completed since the 2007 Flood.

- Winter clothing drive, Minnesota City, Dec. 2007
- Free book coupons for children who lost their reading books in the flood, Dec. 2007
- Community meals in Stockton and Minnesota City monthly in 2008
- April shower for household goods, CUMC Winona, April 2008
- Welcome back plants as residents were able to return to their homes, Minnesota City and Stockton, 2008 and 2009, last one in 2010
- Garden & Landscape show, Stockton, June 2008
- Gardening supplies and plants were free to those attending.
- DVD production of the flash flooding with presentation to local schools, museums and historical societies. August 2008
- One year Celebration, La Canne Park, Goodview, August 2008
- Landscaping project, Gunderson Addition homes, June 2009
- New Bridge Dedication and Parade, Minnesota City, August 2010
- Dad's Belgian Waffles, Minnesota City Day, benefit for Youth Baseball program, 2011 and 2012
- Built new picnic shelter, Minnesota City, May 2011 in memory of Jaye Fritz and Ray Denzer
- Trees and bench at green space in Stockton in memory of the Micheels, Oct 2012.

Additionally the group participated in training for its members through the United Way of Greater Winona and the Whitewater Watershed Project. The Board of Directors of GBDRF under the leadership of Bryceson Maus is to be commended for its activities that have directly and indirectly aided the entire Minnesota City area and its residents.

MCHA Extends Sympathy:

- The family and friends of Margaret Rothering, 80, Stockton, who died at her home on December 5.
- The family and friends of Shirley Rock Speltz, 87, Rollingstone and Winona, who died in Winona on December 14. Burial at Holy Trinity, Rollingstone.
- The family and friends of Opal McElmury Overing, 98, Stockton, lifelong area resident, who died in Winona on December 15. Burial in Oakland Cemetery, Stockton.
- The family and friends of Stanley Smith, 86, Minnesota City, who died in Winona on December 19.
- The family and friends of Stockton native Randy Merchlewitz, 53, who died in Winona on December 29.

Wastewater Collection and Treatment System in Place - Lori Donehower, City Clerk

The Garvin Brook Flood of 2007 was over five years ago but Minnesota City is still feeling the effects. You may have noticed the construction within Minnesota City which began in the summer of 2011. The City now has its own municipal wastewater collection and treatment system. While the project construction and street and right-of-way restoration is basically complete, there will still be the connections from individual properties into the main lines continuing throughout 2013. As of the end of November of 2012, there are 24 properties connected for a total of 28.2 ERUs or Equivalent Residential Units. Each ERU is one household. Several multiple family homes or commercial buildings have a rating higher than one ERU. When all the current properties within the City limits are connected, there will be approximately 100 ERUs.

This project was first proposed after the State Legislature offered grants to some communities after the flood of August, 2007. Minnesota City was listed in that MN Flood Recovery Program and was offered a grant of \$1,274,049.00 for a wastewater system in 2008. Bonestroo Engineering in Rochester (now Stantec) was hired as the engineering firm to determine the feasibility and options. Additional and invaluable assistance was given by Sheila Craig from Preston who is the Community Wastewater Facilitator for the Southeastern Minnesota Wastewater Initiative. With her help, Minnesota City was able to accept the initial Legislative grant and obtain two additional grants to help pay for this project. One grant was from the Wastewater Infrastructure Fund (WIF) and that was for \$228,963.00 and the other grant was TMDL or Total Maximum Daily Load funded through MN Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and the Public Facilities Authority (PFA) and that was for \$1,006,480.00. In short, Minnesota City was able to obtain \$2,509,492.00 in grants on a total cost projected to be \$3,226,811.86. Those three grants amounted to over 75% of the total project cost.

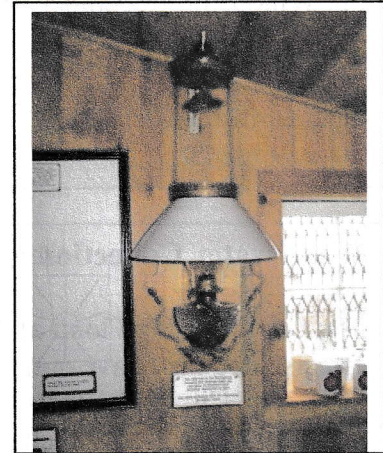
After careful consideration and several public meetings, Mayor Don O'Neil and the members of the City Council - Brian Ebbinger, Richard Hohensee, David Kleinbach, and Kelvin Penrod - voted to proceed with a gravity collection system and a recirculating sand filter treatment plant with UV disinfection. The balance of the cost is a loan financed through the Public Facilities Authority (PFA) and was added as a special assessment to the properties within Minnesota City on a 20-year loan at 2.095%. The assessment can be paid off early if the owner so chooses. Property owners are responsible for the costs of their connection to the wastewater system and then for monthly user fees which are \$36 per month per ERU.

New Old Things in the Archives: Lamps and Land Documents

Given to the Minnesota City Historical Association in 2011, the oil lamp from the Rollingsstone Township Hall has been hung in the MCHA archives. It was stored disassembled in a box. MCHA member Marv O'Grady assembled, cleaned and oiled the mechanisms. Howard Volkart remembers it hanging in the Township Hall but never recalled it being used. It was admired by many visitors on December 8. Historical material about these lamps has been placed on the display cabinet in the Archives.

Manufactured by Manhattan Brass Company of New York which operated from 1865 to 1926 and gained their reputation making brass "student lamps," this lamp is similar to a Bradley and Hubbard lamp, from the 1880s. The pulley system has a stamp - PAT'D AUG 25, 1885, which is a patent for a spring suspension. The lamp has a suspension system that allows it to be raised and lowered easily for lighting and cleaning. The lamp has an opaque dome shade, and a detailed brass framework.

Other items now displayed in the Archives are a framed copy of the Troost Mill property deed, given to the Archives by Judith and Edwin Maus in 2009, and a framed copy of the registration of Robert Thorp (1852 settler), No. 1 in the register of Western Farm and Village Association members. This copy was obtained from the Winona County Historical Association. Thorp history is included in *History of Wabasha and Winona County, 1884*.



Rollingsstone Township Hall Hurricane Lamp in the MCHA archives. (O'Grady photo)



Mr. and Mrs. Robert Thorp
(Paul Thompson photo)

"Robert Thorp is living on the farm chosen for him on his number drawn. It adjoins that of Mr. Drew. Mr. Thorp's family lived in Minnesota City about two years before they moved to their present location. To hold the claim and prevent others from jumping it while Mr. Thorp was absent working at his trade as a blacksmith, he built a small shanty, which Mrs. Thorp sometimes occupied temporarily.

Mr. Thorp is now occupying his comfortable stone cottage and broad acres of cultivated fields, for which he abandoned

his blacksmith shop in New York City. He has held the office of treasurer of the town of Rolling Stone, in which he lives, for the past fifteen years.

Although Mr. Thorp brought to the colony a large supply of material, stock and tools, he never opened a shop in Minnesota City. He left his family there in a comfortable hewed log house about 14'x16', and went down to Galena, where he worked a part of the years 1852 and 1853. When he moved on his farm he built a small shop in which he sometimes does blacksmithing for himself or to accommodate a neighbor." *History of Wabasha and Winona County, 1884*. Coincidentally, Walt Bennick, WCHS, has included Thorp information in the Society's January issue of the *Argus*.

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.

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 Marv O'Grady and David Eckert for keeping the website updated.