

MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 8, Issue 7: August, 2014

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

Mark your Calendars!

August 9: Saturday; MCHA Meeting; Historic Baptist Church, 140 Mill Street; 9:30-11:30.

September 7: Sunday; Lydia Singer’s 100th Birthday Party; Winona Veterans’ Center, 302 E. Sarnia St.

September 21: Sunday; Annual Service; First Baptist Church, 140 Mill Street, Minnesota City; 2:00 p.m.

September 25: Minnesota City Community Readers; 115 Iowa Street; 6:30 p.m.; Selection: *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy.

October 19: Sunday; GBDRF Community Wedding Celebration; Elks Lodge, 4540 N. Service Dr. Goodview; 3:00-7:30 p.m.

“Go Green!”

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

Community Invited to Lydia Singer’s 100th Birthday Party

Family members of Lydia “Pearl” Singer have invited Minnesota City Newsletter readers, neighbors and friends to a birthday party in her honor on Sunday, September 7. The Party will be held at the American Legion Post 9 and Winona Area Veterans’ Center, 302 E. Sarnia, starting at noon. No gifts are requested; cards are welcome. Lunch will be served around 12/12:30 and continue all afternoon. Guests are asked to bring photos, stories—anything on Lydia—to the function.

Pearl’s family, the Leerkamps, lived on what is now Lake Street in Minnesota City in the neighborhood of the Vills. Pearl and Joe Singer farmed and raised their children on land two miles north of Minnesota City, land now owned by Pearl’s grandson, Jay.



Pearl Singer explains barn machinery to Riverway students in 2002.

GBDRF Sponsors Re-creation of 1941 All Star Wedding Event, a Memorable Minnesota City History Event

Garvin Brook Disaster Relief Fund is sponsoring an event that will combine a mock wedding celebration recalling the Minnesota City Men’s All Star Wedding in 1941, featuring contemporary music, food, photo opportunities and history. The public is invited to the event which will be held at the Elks Club in Goodview on Sunday, October 19, from 3:00 to 7:30. Efforts have been made to contact persons who participated in the original event or who have connections with those individuals. September and October newsletters will contain additional details of the event. **Anyone who wishes to be contacted with additional information at this time** can email oldhouse73@hbc.com, joannz@rconnect.com, or phone Susan Althoff at 689-2281. Timely submission of reservations is critical to the organization for food planning, photos set ups and other details. Attendees have the option of participating in the “wedding,” eating, listening to the Misty Mountain Boys music, and visiting with friends and neighbors, Minnesota City connectedness being one goal of the event. Additional details will be included in the September and October newsletters.

Garvin Brook Disaster Relief Fund (GBDRF) has been a contributor to Minnesota City and area community connections since its organization following the 2007 flood. These connections have included community meals, contributions to resettlement, and waffle breakfasts to benefit local organizations. Minnesota City flood victims, Ball Teams, and First Responders have benefited from the fundraisers.

Goetzman Century Farm Designated at Winona County Fair

MCHA member, Gayle Goetzman, whose farmland is known to many as Big Valley Ranch, received a Century Farm designation at the Winona County Fair on July 10. Gayle's grandparents quarried the rock for their building foundations from their own hillsides and used trees for their heating needs. From the family owned farm of about 170 acres, 158 acres were enrolled in the Minnesota Land Trust in 2005. This ensures limited development of the land. (Information from Gayle Goetzman in Winona Post, July 20, 2014). The Land Trust permanently protects Minnesota's land heritage. "A legal document called a conservation easement identifies the conservation assets of the property and permanently protects it from development that may harm those assets. It is legally enforceable and remains part of the chain of title for the property forever." (Minnesota Land Trust; www.mnland.org.) A file of material has been provided to MCHA by Gayle and is available at the archives.



Gayle Goetzman speaks at Winona County Fair on July 10.

Winona County Fair Award Acknowledges Significance of Minnesota City History

Gen O'Grady

On July 10, I was recognized at the Winona County Fair as a Winona County Outstanding Senior Woman. The description presented for the award included qualities and data that emerged related to my work with the Minnesota City Historical Association. I am grateful to all the persons involved in this award—some from the Association, some from my family, and some from friendships. In the comments I made in response to the recognition I acknowledged that in these senior years where I have actually thought about what I am doing, I have come to greatly value connections—the presence of people in situations where they can and do tell their stories. Some of these will be sad stories, others will be joyful. All will be informative. MCHA has provided opportunities for people to do this; I am grateful.

MCHA Extends Sympathy

- To the family and friends of Wendy Olson, 52, Minnesota City, who died on June 27.
- To the family and friends of Dolores Gallagher, 100, who died in Winona on June 6. Dolores and her husband Vernon were longtime Minnesota City residents, active in church and school community, who owned and resided on land frequently connected with the name of O.M. Lord, a first Minnesota City settler.
- To the family and friends of Cheryl Ann Kirk, 59, Minnesota Street, who died on July 15 at her home. Cheryl's partner is Bob Russert, a Minnesota City Native.
- To the family and friends of David Kleinbach, 75, Minnesota City, who died on July 12 in Winona. Dave was a Minnesota City businessman (Dave's Truck Repair), an Oakland Cemetery Board Member, and a City Council member for 32 years. (see Minnesota City Historical Association Newsletter interview December 2012 www.minnesotacity.org.)
- To the family and friends of Henry Leerkamp, 93, former Minnesota City resident, brother of Lydia Singer, and POW in the Korean War, who died in Washington State on July 18.

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.

MCHA congratulates

- Allison Mastenbrook who was one of thirty-four students from WSHS who performed with the Big Nine Music Festival Select Band in Owatonna in May. Allison participated in the choir performance.
- Tim O'Brien who was recognized on May 27 by the Winona County Board of Commissioners for his 29 years of service as a deputy sheriff. Tim is the son of Marianne Mastenbrook.
- All area Spring graduates of area schools. These include Camden Webster who graduated from St. Mary's University.
- Gayle Goetzman for the celebration of the Century Farm Status of her property.
- Minnesota City Cardinals for several awards including first place at the June Jimmy Olson Annual Baseball Classic in Onalaska and the Holmen Coulee Diamond Classic Tournament and the Minnesota City 12U team win at the Winona County Baseball League tournament.

OTHER NEWS NOTES:

The June 29 edition of the Winona Post carried a photo of Bryce Maus, president of Garvin Brook Disaster Relief Fund, awarding a check for \$1000.00 to the Minnesota City First Responders. The money was the result of the Belgian Waffle Breakfast sponsored By GBDRF and First Responders on May 18. Maus acknowledge the residents of Minnesota City for outstanding support.

Rebecca O'Grady Weiss, Bloomington, Mn., a frequent contributor to MCHA presentations and projects, has been featured in recent publicity related to the COMPASSION PROJECT of the LaCrosse Publication Education Foundation and the Pump House Regional Art Center. Weiss' daughter, Elisabeth, Viterbo University student, worked as an intern on the project which involved the production of 6000 tiles interpreting compassion through art and writing.

Winona Daily News of June 29, in a feature entitled FACES OF THE PAST, included a photo of George Church and Helen Saheler in front of the Church Brothers Store in Minnesota City; the store is called a landmark. MCHA has this photo at the archives.

Oklahoma Reader Asks for Photos

In June, Sherry Havener, longtime newsletter reader, wrote: "I just read about the many pictures that were present at the anniversary celebration for the settling of Minn. City. It may be too late to ask but do you know if there were any pictures of my Great Great Grandfather, William Haddock, the original founder of the farm association that formed the colony. If anybody knows if there are any photos would you consider putting a request in one of your newsletters to see if anybody has any pictures. Thank you." Sherry Havener

If any newsletter readers have Haddock photos, please send them to MCHA through the mailing address, MCHA, P.O. Box 21, Mn. City or email to mgogrady@embarqmail.com.

I indicated to Havener in return email that MCHA has not given Haddock the attention he merited as an early settler, in part because he was here a very short time. He was very significant in that he chose the site for the settlement. He will be included in future Newsletter information.

Gardner Reunion Draws Interstate Visitors

The rain did not limit the activities of the Gardner family reunion attendees on June 15. Jean Gardner wrote "The reunion turned out well despite the rain. We were in my garage which made it quite "cozy." We had people from St. Louis, Denver, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, as well as many from Minnesota. My cousin took several out on the river in his pontoon which they enjoyed. Some stayed over in their motor homes and took in Steamboat Days. My cousin from Idaho stayed over on Monday and we went to the Historical Museum and the MN City Baptist Church... he (this cousin) is a retired English teacher, photographer, and film maker. I told him all about the MN City Church and we went out to see it. He was very impressed, especially for the display boards. Anyhow, I think he is going to make a video for us ...He made one of our last year's reunion which I will send to you. I think it is so artistically done. Brenda heard us singing "Bringing in the Sheaves" as we were leaving."

The Denzer family reunion was on June 29, and the Jilk Family reunion was on July 26. MCHA values reporting of these gatherings as testimony to the long lives in the area of a number of families.

Stockton History Outlined in Mother's Letter to her Children

On a recent visit to Vi Benicke's Olde Tyme Shoppe in Stockton, in addition to a requested photo of the Stockton Roller Mill for a former Stockton resident, Vi had located a five page document "An Open Letter To My Children" written by Florence Veraguth Dambach to her children in 1976, the bicentennial year of the United States. "It seems to me there could have been no other century in history that has known more inventions and discoveries than the second century of America's life," wrote Dambach. She details the businesses on Stockton Main Street including stores, blacksmith shop, a broom factory, a Creamery (this building still stands). She recounts the building of the first cement road, the pool hall activities, the appearances of cars. The descriptions date most of these around 1920.



Samuel and James O'Grady at Vi Benicke's Antique Shop in Stockton, Mn. in July, 2014.

The Stockton Roller Mill was well known in Winona and area. They manufactured and shipped out wheat, graham and rye flours. "The Mills Self Rising Wheat and Buckwheat-Pancake Flour graced many a breakfast table." She tells of a retired school marm who brought her yellow roses on her birthday and another lady who always hurried to bring flowers to every new born baby because she said "A baby's first gift should always be flowers."



Stockton Roller Mill Photo from Vi Benicke Antique Shop in Stockton (undated).

Florence's father was a blacksmith. She describes her help in his shop. "One of the tasks my sister or I had to do in the shop for my father was to turn the blower on the forge. Steady heat was needed when sharpening the plowshares and drag teeth and the blower kept the right degree of heat to do the job. The only thing I like about turning the blower was the 'sizzle' of hot drag teeth when they were dipped into the water to cool after they had been sharpened."

The several pages, now at the Archives in the Stockton file, are a blend of fact and feeling, a remarkable document for the children of the author, and a significant gift to our archives from Vi Benicke.