

MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 8, Issue 11: November, 2014

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

Mark your Calendars!

Sat., November 8:
Monthly meeting
MCHA 9:30 a.m.
Former Minnesota
City School, 115
Iowa Street

Thurs. November 20:
Minnesota City
Community Readers:
6:30 p.m. Former
Minnesota City
School, 115 Iowa
Street. Selection: *A
Place in the Woods:
Hoover*

Thurs. November 20:
Minnesota City Book
Shelf Open Hours.
6:30 -8:00 p.m.
Former Minnesota
City School

**December 13:
Saturday;
Community
Caroling; First
Baptist
Church/MCHA
Archives; 140 Mill
Street; 6:00 p.m.**

“Go Green!”

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



MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR

DECEMBER 13 6:00 p.m. HOLIDAY EVENT
140 Mill Street



Although the particular events of the annual caroling event at First Baptist Church/Minnesota City Historical Association Archives have not been determined, attendees can count on the usual hayrides, music, Yule Log procession, food and conversation.

❖ Please invite family and friends ❖



Archives Welcomes Wallace Burley III

On Friday, October 10, a Minnesota City person “with connections,” Wallace Burley III, spent time sharing family information with archival personnel and searching for information on his ancestors here, the renowned Burley family. The Burleys, arriving with the first Western Farm and Village Association members, worked and lived on the land later owned by the Denzer family, and now owned by Chris Roberton and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Dept. A particular interest of Wallace Burley III was maps indicating the Burley land lines. As a D. Q. Burley descendent (Wallace I was the grandson of D.Q. Burley and Ann Rowney) Wallace III has possession of a number of D. Q. Burley’s artifacts including his musket used in the Civil War. Burley contributed copies to MCHA of the many papers from the Civil War service of Daniel Burley and his son Francisco. Burley and Marvin O’Grady viewed the former Burley land on October 24.



Wallace Burley III stands in front of the “Burley Maples” atop Mississippi River Bluffs overlooking Burley/Denzer land, (now riverland) and marking O’Grady and Denzer property lines. (M.O’Grady photo).

1941 Historical Event Reenactment on October 19.

Thanks to efforts of Garvin Brook Disaster Relief Fund (GBDRF), guests enjoyed good food, entertainment, and conversation on October 19 at the All Star Wedding II event at the Elks Club in Goodview. Congratulations to the GBDRF Board of Directors and to all others who produced and participated in this Minnesota City Event.

Three persons on the 1941 original photo were in attendance: Howard Volkart, Argene Tschumper, and Lester Spaag. Audience members enjoyed the humor of the mock wedding “vows.”

References were included to clothing (white sport coat, blue suede shoes, pink carnation, etc.) and to local businesses and experiences. The wedding couple (Sharon Nako and Bryce Maus) were asked if they promised to join the Minnesota City First Responders, the Fire Department, and Bingo on Sunday nights, sell tickets to the chickenque and waffle breakfast.” A special coincidence was the 68th wedding anniversary of Howard and Gladys Volkart. MC for the production was Dave Dicke, HBC. Steak Shop catered food was enjoyed by all. Twenty some



Persons with connections to persons on 1941 photo: Jean Gardner, Catherine Erpelding Slaby, Gladys Church Volkart, Howard Volkart, Lester Spaag, Argene Tschumper, Sharon Andersen Nako, Susan Whetstone Althoff, Harriet Jesse Engler, Jenny Church Werner, Dawn Church Webster, Nancy Volkart O’Malley, Maxine Church Spaag, Leland Morris, Beverly Riedemann Tschumper, Janice Tschumper Drazkowski, Gale Hill, Janet Hill Seabern, Claire Rader Denzer, Sharon Gallagher Clark, Charlene Kowalewski Egge, Donna Spaag Friesen, Dallas Denzer (R. Weiss Photo)



Committee for All Star Wedding: Susan Althoff, Duane Hutton, Bryce Maus, Sharon Nako, Coleen Peterman, LaVern Fritz, Dallas Denzer (R. Weiss photo)

wedding photographs were displayed for enjoyment and identification. Gen O’Grady won the identification exercise; the prize was a wedding cake.

Four Photos taken by Ron Regan can be purchased by contacting Susan Althoff oldhouse73@hbc.com. They may be viewed at <http://www.reganphotography.com>. after which choices should be relayed to Susan who will make the final order which must be placed by November 15. 8x10 photos will cost \$10.00, of which \$5.00 goes to GBDRF. MCHA will construct a panel of event photos to display at the archives at 140 Mill Street.

MCHA expresses sympathy to

- Friends and family of Roger Church who died in Winona on October 7. (See Page 4)

Minnesota City Bookshelf: Books Available for Give Away

Contributors have filled the shelves of Minnesota City Book Shelf. Currently the book shelf is only open for giveaway at times when other events are occurring in the former Minnesota City School. We now have an abundance of beautiful significant books that we would like placed. **If you know of any group—group homes, public facilities, or individuals that would appreciate books, please call 450-0201, and someone will come to the school to make the books available to you. Reminder: there is no charge for the books, and they do not need to be returned.**

Additions to the Archives

In the last month we have received additions to the archives. These include District 31 textbooks from Dawn Church-Webster, newspaper clippings from Maxine Church Spaag, a cache of materials discovered in the wall of their home by the Rolland Ledebuhr family (we will describe these in a future newsletter) and the following materials from Wallace Burley III:

- Civil War information on Francisco Burley, son of Daniel Q. and Anne Burley
- Material on the Civil War Minnesota Volunteers 7th Regiment, the regiment of Daniel Q. and Francisco Burley
- Photos of the firearms of Daniel Burley

Local media carry announcement of open archive hours. Persons wanting to visit the archives at other times may call 450-0201 (O'Grady). Thank you to all contributors.

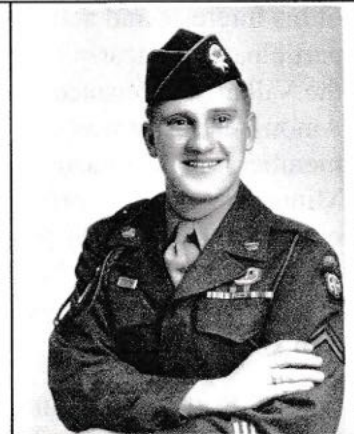
Arnold "Arnie" Cisewski details World War II Experience

Conversations with Roger Church included the story of his Freedom Honor Flight experience. Howard Volkart, Al Berndt and Gale Hill also participated in this privately funded endeavor which promotes trips of veterans to view the monuments that honor their experiences in World War II and the Korean War. In World War II, Minnesota Citian Arnold Cisewski recounted for his family his landing in Germany in the midst of conflict. MCHA received this account from his niece, Sally Yaun, in 2002 for the Minnesota City Sesquicentennial. It was written to his brother Gerry. The newsletter will carry the story in installments as space permits. Arnie's handdrawn map, with sites indicated, will be included in a future newsletter.

"Gerry, It was the 60th anniversary of the 17th Airborne jump at Wesel, Germany that I made on March 24, 1945—so I thought I would give you a thumbnail sketch of what my first day was like. Love, Arnie"

"After spending a month and a half in the 'Battle of the Bulge,' the 17th Airborne Division was given a rest at Chalons-Sur-Marne, France to regroup and get replacements. We spent about a month there and on the night of March 20th, we were secretly loaded into 40 x 8 boxcars and a train took us on a two hour ride to our fenced-in and guarded 'marshalling area' in preparation for the 'Rhine Jump.' We were in the marshalling area on the 21st, 22nd, and 23rd of March. On March 23 at about 3:30 p.m. we saw a sandtable layout of the area that we were going into and received maps and our missions info. We also heard "Axis Sally" say on the radio "That the 17th Airborne could leave their parachutes at home because the Germans would have a stepladder of flack waiting for them." That wasn't good to hear after all the secrecy that we were going through. At 4:00 a.m. we were awakened and served a real good steak dinner (for breakfast). Before we were taken to the airfield, about ½ mile away, at about 8:30 a.m. to load up, well, our C-47 plane had engine trouble and one engine was leaking oil, so we unloaded from the plane and our 17th Airborne flight took off without us. We were walking across a field going back to the "marshalling area" when an army truck came racing after us. They said they found another C-47 and even though we missed our 17th Airborne Flight, we could fly in behind the British 6th Airborne (the red Devils Day). So we took off and after about a 1 ½ hour flight we passed over Wesel, Germany and were dropped about 3 miles north of Wesel. Only 28 men from Recon were picked to jump out of the Seventh. Over 100 men in Recon. I was one of the 28 picked. My little map shows where I went after that.

I I landed in a pasture about 11:00 a.m. and was being shot at immediately. The first think I saw was a little small deer with tiny horns and about 16" tall. It was as frightened as I was and was running around. I took off running towards a railroad track embankment. This wasn't the area that we were told we would be dropped into at all—about three miles away. (CONTINUED IN NEXT NEWSLETTER)



Arnold Cisewski, Former
Mill Street Resident
Deceased (February 2010)

Roger Church 1922-2014

Genevieve O'Grady

During his recent residence at Lake Winona Manor, Roger Church still expressed the hope that he would match the longevity of his father George, who died at age 100. In spite of health issues, Roger enjoyed life and although the activities of it changed as the years went by, there was reason for him to want to carry on. He remained animated in conversations and appreciative of friendship. The funeral service at First Congregational Church in Winona highlighted some of his interests and activities. In Minnesota City, he participated in nearly every organizational aspect of the Village that ensued during his lifetime there. Among these, he was a fireman, a school board member, the postmaster for thirty years. When the Minnesota City Historical Association (MCHA) was organized, Roger was one of the first persons to express great interest in it as a vehicle for preserving information that he cared about. **He was enthusiastic about Minnesota City; that was the long and short of it.**



Roger Church and Maxine Church Spaag tour the "old school" following the school reunion in July, 2011. (archival photo)

One of Roger's first contributions to the Association was an enlargement of the image of the grandiose original plan for the city developed by Robert Pike in 1856. This framed plan hangs on a wall in the archives. Archival file photos include pictures of Roger at nearly every MCHA sponsored event beginning in 2002, often with his daughter Andrea, who shares his interest in Minnesota City history. An especially poignant photo is with his sister, Maxine Church Spaag, walking through the halls of the 1938 school building during a Minnesota City all school reunion (above). We are thankful that Andrea intends to carry on with the history interests of her father. She has already been a contributor with her workshops on technology, genealogy, and other presentations. Roger's memory of detail was superb. Speaking to students in 2002, he recalled the number of mailboxes when he was postmaster, dates of family events and others. "The post office was established in Minnesota City in 1952. My dad had it for 41 years, and I followed him. When I took over, it was in the old store. There were 116 boxes on the rural route. Over the years there were more and more because everything was building here from Winona. There were over 400 when I left. That didn't include the Hidden Valley Trailer Court." (*Old Wise Tales*, p. 16). Roger's Church family is part of the history of many Minnesota City realities: early farm homesteading, "the store," the schools and others.

At the memorial service for Roger, I thought about Roger's role in the development of MCHA. He was one of that group of "old-timers" who genuinely loved Minnesota City enough to argue for and promote the accurate passing on of its historical events, sites, and people. If MCHA had a Hall of Fame for these individuals (perhaps we should have), he would be in it along with Celia Lejk Cisewski, Dorothy Gardner Brom, Allen Whetstone, Neil Denzer, Delwin Tschumper and others readers would add --who genuinely savored the reclaiming of information about their homeland. Although their death sites varied, they are joined again in our memories as persons who valued heritage—and Minnesota City is part of theirs and ours.