

MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 8, Issue 12: December, 2014

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

Mark your Calendars!

Saturday December 13: 6:00 p.m. ; Community Caroling Event; 140 Mill Street (First Baptist Church, MCHA Archives).

December 13: No December MCHA meeting: Because the Community Caroling Event is on Saturday, December 13, there will be no regular MCHA Meeting.

December 18: 6:30 p.m.; Minnesota City Community Readers; 115 Iowa Street; Sinclair Lewis, *Arrowsmith*.

December 18: 6:30-8:00; Minnesota City Book Shelf Open Hours; Former Minnesota City School, 115 Iowa Street;

May 17, 2015: Minnesota City Day (163 yr. of founding)

“Go Green!”

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

Saturday, December 13

6:00 P.M.

140 Mill Street, Minnesota City
Historic First Baptist Church

Community Caroling
*Horse Drawn Wagon Rides, Caroling, Music,
Children’s Performance, Refreshments*
Please attend! Bring a friend!

Saturday, December 13 Community Caroling Event Includes History, Wagon Rides, Confections and Conversation

MCHA is sponsoring the annual Community Caroling Event which will begin at 6:00 p.m. in the historic First Baptist Church on Saturday December 13. The Maus family will again provide the wagon rides, a big attraction of the event. Six children will entertain with the historical narrative of the life of Wilson Bentley, the individual who first verified through photography the uniqueness of individual snowflakes. Carols will be sung, historical and contemporary holiday commentary will be delivered. Attendees are invited to bring a refreshment to share (not mandatory!) and any stories that go with it. (Few people know the origin of the



Rebecca Weiss and Vanessa Butenhoff: “community traditionalists.”



Child bell ringers accompany Jim O’Grady with Yule Log presentation. (2013)

name divinity for the popular candy: “The origins of the name are not clear. The most popular theory is simply that when first tasted, someone declared it to be, “Divine!” and the name stuck”.) *Wikipedia*. Cider and hot chocolate will be available. Musicians will accompany caroling. Maxine Spaag and Jean Gardner will present a reading that relates differences of Jesus and Santa. The annual event expands the holiday connectedness in the community and beyond. Invite friends; come and enjoy an evening of casual entertainment.

Book Giveaway Successful Distribution

On Sunday, November 16, books were given away at the former Minnesota City school. Advertised in the local papers and announced at area church services, the event drew readers who collected books for personal reading and reading by family and friends. Contemporary fiction, cookbooks, and children's books were among favorites. Books were contributed by Minnesota City Community Readers, MCHA members and others. The public is invited to select books from the shelves at any times when events are occurring in the building. A number of large print books have been contributed. If anyone knows someone who needs/would use these, notify us at: (450-0201). Also, if you are in any groups where books would be a contribution at the site, notify us. At this time, it is our plan to have another advertised open giveaway on Minnesota City Day, May 17, 2015. Thank you for all contributions to this effort, including space in the school.



November 16 Book Giveaway at Former Minnesota City School. (O'Grady photo)

Moonlight Sleighride

To Minnesota City.

Will be Given Under the Auspices of the Epworth League

Friday Night, Jan. 31st.

Sleighs leave Pythian Hall and the residences of Rev. Benj. Longley and M. P. Hanson at 6.30 p. m. sharp.

TICKETS for Round Trip 25c. Refreshments and Entertainment at Minnesota City, 10c.

All persons desiring to go will please leave their names at S. W. Morgan's Jewelry Store before Wednesday night.

Winona Daily Republican, Jan. 28, 1896

Epworth League

The Epworth League is a Methodist young adult association for individuals ages 18–35. It traces back to the founding of the organization by the United Methodist Church's predecessor denomination, the Methodist Episcopal church, formed in 1889 at Cleveland, Ohio, by the combination of five young people's organizations then existing. At its conception, the purpose of the league: the promotion of intelligent and vital piety among the young people of the Church. (Wikipedia).

This Month in History:

December 26, 1862: Thirty eight Dakota men, convicted of crimes committed during the U.S. Dakota War, are hanged by the federal government in Mankato, the largest mass execution in American history.

December 8, 1941: US Enters World War II. Following the unprovoked Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor yesterday the United States entered World War II as Congress declared war against Japan. (*The People History*).

Newspapers Reveal the Give and Take of Holiday Season in Minnesota City History

Firemen Give Minnesota City PTA Tape Recorder.

At the December meeting of the Minnesota City PTA Tuesday evening at the school, a tape recorder was presented to the school by the Minnesota City firemen. After the business meeting, Christmas carols were sung and Mrs. Sherman Mitchell accompanied by Mrs. William Ferguson performed "Gesu Bambino" and "O Holy Night". There was an exchange of gifts and lunch was served by Mr. and Mrs. Albert Volkart, Mr. and Mrs. George Gilsdorf and Mrs. and Mrs. Merrill Holland. (Winona Daily News, Dec. 16, 1955).

Sentencing of 2 Youths in Theft of Corn Withheld

Two youths from Minnesota City and Stockton were arraigned after they pleaded guilty when arraigned before District Judge Karl Finkelburg here today on a charge of second degree grand larceny in connection with the theft of 38 bushels of corn....Authorities nabbed the two as they were driving toward Winona with the stolen corn. Following questioning by the sheriff the two admitted they had stolen quantities of corn from Winona County farms stating that they had sold much of it in Winona (Winona Republican Herald, December 17, 1943).

Baptist Women Complete Projects

Projects completed by the Minnesota City Baptist Sunday School auxiliary this past year included 15 scrapbooks made and sent to the Gillette Hospital for Crippled Children; several hundred rolls of bandages were made for White Cross to be sent to missionaries; eight quilts were made and given to needy homes; quilt blocks sent to a mission school, and eight lap robes and 25 pillows sent to the Winnebago Baptist Rest Home. A special collection was taken at the December meeting for Winona County Historical Society and the Minnesota City Baptist Church Fund. Hostesses were Mrs. Henry Whetstone, Mrs. Glenn Whetstone and Mrs. Robert Althoff (Winona Daily News; Dec. 15, 1967).

Minnesota City Theft Reported

Mrs. William Emmons, Minnesota City, reported Sunday that half a tank of gas and possibly a transistor radio had been stolen from their garage Thursday. She told the sheriff that the gasoline was drained from a car parked in their garage and that the transistor, with its leather case, was missing from a workbench in the garage (December 7, 1964).

MCHA expresses sympathy

To family and friends of Helen Gehres, 94, active Stockton Community member, who died on November 8.

To family and friends of Patricia Swanson, 80, Rollingstone, who died on November 15.

Congratulations to Pamela Althoff McNeill, a Minnesota City native, whose latest album, "Hurtsville, USA," was reviewed in Rochester Post Bulletin on November 1. The review by Jay Furst concludes: "There's no doubt she's a major talent, maybe on the brink of something big."

Arnold "Arnie" Cisewski Details World War II Experiences (Part 2).

Part I of this story was in the Minnesota City Historical Association Newsletter, November 2014. Conclusion and accompanying map will be printed in January 2015, Newsletter. For continuity, we encourage readers to keep installments together.

"At the R.R. I saw two foxholes of 6th Airborne Paratroopers. They were all wounded and pretty well beat up. Then I went to the top of the R.R. Embankment and joined about 8 other paratroopers from my recon unit. We shot it out with some Germans that were in the field in front of us.

(3)The German 88 Artillery was at (4) location shooting direct fire at gliders that were coming in on the pasture area and also shot two shells at us on the RR tracks. Sgt. Segars loaded up a bazooka and fired at the 88 gun, but it was some distance away and it fell short of the 88. The next bazooka shell hit the 88 and started a fire in that area and some of the German artillery shells started exploding. Then we started to draw heavy machine gunfire and small arm fire. (5) I then took off across a field of beautiful blooming tulips towards a farmhouse. As I was running through the tulip field I could see the tulips being clipped off by bullets fired at me. (6) I made it to the farm house and we cleared the house finding some civilians in the basement saying "Don't shoot"— we had driven out quite a few Germans. They had a field kitchen with food cooking, soup, etc. We spoiled their lunch. (9) I ran over to a small woodshed and was crouching behind a stack of clay roofing tile that was piled up at the shed. Then machine gun bullets started ripping through the corner of the shed and splinters of wood hit me in the face. Then a B-24 bomber that was dropping supplies to us flew over us on fire and crashed at location (7) and one of the plane crew bailed out. They were too low for the parachute to open and he landed at location B and was dead.

(10) I then ran down a small apple orchard and a German shot at me with his Schmirser machine gun from a second story window of another farmhouse. He sprayed bullets all around me. The guys behind me said later that they could not see me because the bullets raised so much dust. They thought that I was killed. But he missed me. I dove behind a pile of railroad wood ties that were stacked up about 6 feet high and the German with the Schmirser was chipping wood off the ties as he tried to hit me. (10) Then a German peeked around a small brick milkhouse type building and I took a shot at him, hitting the brick wall near him. I could see the brick dust fly. Then he started waving a red cross flag. He was a medic. I let him come out and look at the two Germans that were on the ground in front of me. The medic looked at them and shook his head and went back behind the milkhouse building. Then two B-24 bombers, on fire, flew over us. They were dropping supplies to us—one B-24 bomber crashed at Location (10) We proceeded to clear that farmhouse. We cleared other areas and proceeded to a small wooded hill to dig in for the night. (11) (12) We had 12 paratroopers in our bunch and we didn't have enough men to form a full circle defense around the hill—we wound up with a U shaped perimeter defense. I was in a foxhole with a sgt. at the end of the U. The Germans were looking for us all through the night. We could hear them in the woods all around us. At about 2:00 a.m. in the morning a mortar shell landed about ten feet from my foxhole and buried me and the sgt. in dirt (almost filled up the foxhole) and a large tree branch that was blown off fell across our foxhole. We continued to get small arms and mortar fire the rest of the night.

One funny thing I remember. About two hours after we landed we saw a German officer's car with top down come down the dirt road towards us. We were ready to start opening up and one of our guys said "Don't shoot." We saw why. There was a 17th Airborne paratrooper with a tommy gun sitting in their back seat and a German driver and a German officer sitting in the front seat. The paratrooper was smoking a cigar and waved at us as they sped by us. He had captured them and had his own chauffer—little did he know how close he came to getting blasted. Then a day later we heard tanks (3 tanks) approaching our group and we all took positions in the ditches along the road. We thought German tanks were coming and that was never good news. But to our surprise, it was three British Churchill tanks that broke through to us from the other side of the Rhine River. We were grateful to see them instead of German Tiger tanks. "