

MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 9, Issue 2: February, 2015

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

Mark your Calendars!

February 6: Winona Area Public School Superintendent Coffee; Bonnie Rae’s Cafe, Rollingstone; 7-9 a.m.

February 8: Open House; Winona County Historical Society; 160 Johnson Street, Winona; Noon-4 p.m.

February 14: MCHA Monthly Meeting; 115 Iowa Street, Former Minnesota City School; 9:30 a.m.

February 14: Open Book Shelf; 115 Iowa Street, Former Minnesota City School; 9:30-11:00 a.m.

February 26: Minnesota City Community Readers; 115 Iowa Street, Former Minnesota City School; Selection: *The Art of Racing in the Rain*. Stein; 6:30 p.m.

February 26: Open Book Shelf; 115 Iowa Street, Former Minnesota City School; 6:30-8:00 p.m.

“Go Green!”

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

MCHA Exhibits at Winona County Historical Society February 8 Open House

Minnesota City Historical Association will host an exhibit table at the Winona County Historical Society Open House at the museum at 160 Johnson Street in Winona on February 8. MCHA makes available brochures and historical information for visitors and a table display of artifacts and materials from the Association archives. MCHA members supervise the exhibit. Hours of the exhibit are from noon until 4 p.m. Readers are invited to check the County Website www.winonahistory.org for a listing of the museum offerings of this interesting free family friendly event, and stop by the MCHA exhibit.

Winona School District Superintendent Visits Rollingstone

“The public is invited to meet informally with the Winona area Public School Superintendent Dr. Stephen West.

“Coffee with the Superintendent” opportunities give the public a chance to have a discussion about Winona Area Public Schools and share your thoughts and ideas about the future direction of the public schools.

A coffee talk is scheduled for Friday, February 6 from 7:00 am to 9:00 am at Bonnie Rae’s Café in Rollingstone.” (Winona Radio, January 12.)

Focus on Minnesota City Business: Winona Moving and Storage

Winona Moving and Storage is located in Minnesota City at 26190, Hwy. 248, at the junction of Highway 61 and County Road 248. According to website information, the business provides moving and storage services. They assert the most affordable rates for storage and moving and provide private and self-storage units.

Among items that can be stored are boats, campers, collectibles, computers, furniture, televisions, and pianos. Open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, convenience and experience are hallmarks of the facility. The business provides a lengthy list of services, including crating, hauling, insurance, packing, shrink wrapping and others. Readers are invited to access the website (www.winonamoving.com), to find more information about this local and long distance mover located in our area. Phone 507-689-4252. Information printed with permission from Darin Salisbury.



Please Note:

We have learned that some persons have not been receiving their on-line newsletters. If you hear of anyone who has not received their copy, please notify mgogrady@embarqmail.com or call 507-689-2440. Computer issues may account for loss of some listings. PLEASE let us know.

MCHA Thanks

- Minnesota City City Council for a \$300.00 donation. This money will be used to continue to fund the Association website (minnesotacity.org). We are grateful. Newsletter readers are invited to examine the website for information about many aspects of Minnesota City life including history, people, organizations, activities, and government. The newsletter is also archived at the site. Suggestions for the site and information are always welcome. Marv O’Grady is the principal executor of the site, with church information provided by David Eckert, and additional information provided by GBDRF and City Council.

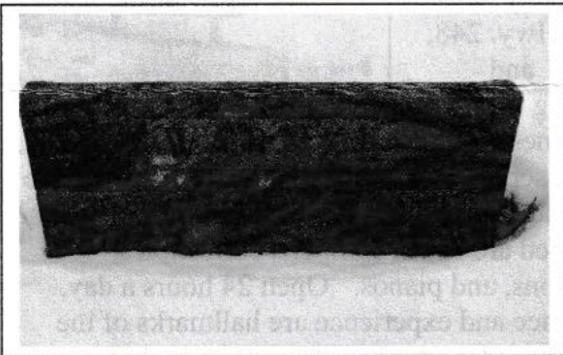
MCHA Expresses Sympathy

- to family in Holland and friends in Winona of Maria “Gonny” Grootens, 87, Minnesota City, who died on January 8, 2015 at Winona. Maria was born in Medemblink, Holland. She was buried in St. Paul’s Cemetery. She was the secretary of St. Paul’s Church for some twenty years, retiring in 2011.
- to family and friends of Anna Verdick Brand, 96. born and raised in Stockton Valley, died in Lewiston, on January 14.
- to family and friends of Jack Gockley, 78, Minnesota City who died on January 12 at his Minnesota City home.
- to friends and family of Earl Fakler, 70, Winona, former Stockton Valley resident, who died on January 19. Earl participated in the 2010 Minnesota City Day event where woodcarvers demonstrated their work. In 1959, as a high school student, Earl won an industrial arts prize at the state fair for his entry; Stan Ledebuhr was his teacher.



Howard Volkart, Earl Fakler, and Stan Ledebuhr discuss their woodworking projects.

Buried in Oakland



Winona Daily News. February 16, 1966.

Mrs. Hattie Warnke, 82, died Tuesday night at Community Memorial Hospital, Winona. She had been ill one year. The former Hattie Kalk, she was born March 23, 1883, in Wisconsin, but had lived in the Minnesota City area most of her life. Her husband, Paul died in June, 1964. Survivors are three sons, Alvin and Edward, Minnesota City, and Walter, Wausau, Wisc.; two daughters, Mrs. Ernest Brink, Winona and Mrs. Ethel Chedester, Fountain City.funeral services were held at

First Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Rev. Larry Zessin officiating. Burial was in Oakland Cemetery.

According to a family member, the Warnkes lived on Denzer Road in Minnesota City. Any readers having information about deceased persons are always invited to contribute (mgogrady@embarqmail.com) to add to the community aspects of the individual’s history.

History and Love Combine for Historical Accounts

Valentine's Day Origin Stories Vary

According to History.com, the Catholic Church recognizes at least three different saints named Valentine or Valentinus, all of who were martyred." One of these was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men. Valentine defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death. Another "history" is that the day was originated to Christianize the pagan feast of Lupercalia, a fertility festival of Roman history. The handmade valentines of Americans in the 1700s were exchanged for mass produced valentines in the 1840s. American school children observe this holiday, and the number of cards sent in America is second only to those sent at Christmas.

(1973) Mastenbrooks named 'Sweetheart Couple' at First Baptist

"Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Mastenbrook, Minnesota City, were crowned the 'Outstanding Couple' at First Baptist Church here. ... The church annually makes the award near Valentine's Day. The couple was chosen on the basis of their faithful participation in the life of the church and for their consistent Christian living. Mastenbrook is employed by Winona Ready Mix Concrete. He has served as deacon in the church and is a member of the Board of Christian Education and is an usher. Mrs. Mastenbrook is superintendent of the Sunday School, secretary of the Women's Mission Society, a member of the chancel choir, president of the Minnesota City Ladies Aid and representative to Church Women United. The couple has two children, Leonard Jr., 11, and Nancy 9. They have been members of the church for more than eight years." (Winona Daily News; February 13, 1973).

Estelle Mastenbrook died in 2003 and is buried in Oakland Cemetery. Len currently resides at Lake Winona Manor. In Minnesota City, the Mastenbrooks lived on Denzer Road.

Minnesota City School (1949) Gives Patriotic Program

A patriotic program was given by pupils of the Minnesota City school on Friday morning. The song, 'America the Beautiful,' sung by the school with Marilyn Gallagher as accompanist, was followed by a play, 'The King's Valentine,' given by the fifth grade pupils. In the cast were the king, played by Wayne Buswell; the queen, Genevieve Jilk; Jack, Arthur Nuthak Jill, Patricia Newman; Lamb, Dean Singer and the cook, Jack Simon. A poem, 'Valentine's' was given by Sonia Simon.

The remainder of the program by the upper grade children was organized by a student committee composed of Katherine Sandstede, Virginia Witt, and Judy Gilsdorf. Katherine Sandstede announced the program which included a poem 'My Flag and Your Flag' by Marilyn Gallagher, Cecilia Jilk, and Judy Gilsdorf; a play entitled 'A Surprise for the Little Cook' with the following cast: Betty, Katherine Singer; mother, Faith Ann Schmidt; Robert, Edward Ellis; Liza, Delores Butenhoff; and Washington, Donald Kowalewski; a poem 'Washington' Edward Butenhoff, Anthony Jilk, and Glenn Burt; a poem, 'Lincoln,' Beverly Stewart, Ardyth Schneider, and Antoinette Tlougan; a talk, 'George Washington,' Jerry Denzer, and a talk, 'Lincoln,' Edward Ellis. The program concluded with the showing of a film, 'The Boy,' a story of Abraham Lincoln. (Winona Republican Herald, February 12, 1949).

Hill Family Military Engagement Spans Wars

(Given to the Archives by Gale Hill) "This photo was taken at our cabins near Whitman Lock and Dam # 5 of the Mississippi river," according to Gale Hill. Gale also gave the Archives a booklet titled "Blood and Fire, Victory in Europe" which had been presented to the 63rd Infantry Division, Gale's Division. The text begins: "For 125 days in 1944 and 1945, units of the 63rd Infantry Division were in contact with the German enemy in France and Germany. When their relief was completed at noon Sunday, April 29, nine days before victory in Europe, they had been in the line continuously since Dec. 22, except for three days between the Siegfried Line breakthrough and the Rhine crossing." The booklet contains signatures of Gale's companions who are from many states of the Union.

*Gale and his sister, Janet Seabern, are members of MCHA, Janet being one of the first, who with her husband Cliff, now deceased, helped with the original events. Their family owned cabins on the Minnesota side of the Mississippi between Minnesota City and Minneiska.



Robert A Hill, b.1918, in Army Uniform and son, Gale R. Hill, b. 1941, in Army Uniform.

Minnesota History Features Putnam Gray's Castle.



MCHA Archival Photo (Putnam and Sarah Gray)

The Winter, 2014-15 issue of Minnesota History carries a photo and brief article on Putnam Gray's riverside home near Minneiska. It is entitled "Crazy Man's Castle." MCHA featured Grays' castle in the July 2008 issue. Gray (1832-1921) is credited by some as the inventor of the ferris wheel. His grave is located in the Minneiska hillside cemetery, and two huge cottonwood trees which lore indicates mark the location of castle still stand south of Minneiska on the Mississippi River bank.

Standing Invitations:

- to attend regular meetings of MCHA. These meetings are held at 140 Mill Street. In cold weather months, generally October to May these are at the former school building.
- to respond to newsletter content. Please send additions, corrections, suggestions, calendar information (meetings, reunions, birthdays, other significant dates) etc. to mgogrady@embarqmail.com.
- **Writers of regular columns would be welcomed.** These might include monthly columns on area businesses, churches, schools, organizations or other relevant topics on the area and/or our history.