

# MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 9, Issue 1: January, 2015

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

## Mark your Calendars!

January 10: Saturday; MCHA meeting; 9:30 a.m.; 115 Iowa Street, Former Minnesota City School.

January 10: Saturday; Book Shelf Open; 9:30 a.m.; 115 Iowa Street, Former Minnesota City School.

January 22: Thursday; Minnesota City Community Readers; 6:30 p.m.; 115 Iowa Street, Former Minnesota City School Building; *Reading Lolita in Tehran*

January 22: Thursday; Book Shelf Open; 6:30 p.m.; 115 Iowa Street, Former Minnesota City School.

March 10: Tuesday; Rollingsstone Township Annual Meeting; 8:15 p.m.; Township Hall.

May 16: Saturday;  
**Minnesota City Day**

### **“Go Green!”**

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

## **Caroling Event Brings History, Good Food and Good Conversation.**

The December 13 event at the historic First Baptist Church was a meeting of old and new friends to enjoy the ambience of the historic site as well as delightful entertainment by children and adults, and enjoyment of traditional caroling. In a church beautifully decorated by members of the Ebbinger, Karnath, and LaFee families, on Maus family horse drawn wagon rides, and with

enjoyment of refreshments provided by attendees, the community of carolers passed two hours of pleasant holiday observance. Children performed with some atypical age aplomb the history of Wilson Bentley, the Snowflake Man. Jean Gardner and Maxine Spaag presented a reading about differences of Santa Claus and Jesus. Vanessa Butenhoff and Rebecca Weiss, with more than a bit of humor, discussed MCHA food, music, and name choices, ending with their own letter to the MCHA newsletter readers. Audience joined with guitarist Brian Ebbinger in singing “I’m Dreaming of a White Christmas”.



A filled church audience listens as Kate O’Grady introduces the December 13 Program.



Jean Gardner and Maxine Spaag present a Christmas reflection on Jesus and Santa Claus.

Although holiday observances differ for many, as MC Kate O’Grady pointed out, Christmas remains a time of emotional connections; events that help one recall these or feel new ones have value. First time attendees from Minnesota City were appreciative of the new experiences. **MCHA thanks all persons who participated in preparations, presentations, and attendance at the caroling event.** Special thanks to decorators, to gift bag preparers, Sarah O’Grady, Rebecca Weiss, and Lynda Brezinski, all presenters, the child performers and parents, the musicians, artists, carolers, and the Maus family.



## Sleigh Bells Ring through Minnesota City History

Newspaper history of winter in the Winona area including Minnesota City contains a number of stories on sleigh rides that make their way to or from Minnesota City. The Maus family has contributed to this history, making wagon rides part of the observance of community caroling for several years.

“A ‘straw ride’ out to Minnesota City, thence to Stockton and back over the hill, was the fun which a party of fourteen had on Monday evening.” (*Winona Republican Herald*; January 19, 1889).

“A sleighing party was given last evening by the In For-Fun club. The party drove out to Minnesota City hall, where dancing was enjoyed until midnight. Light refreshments were served and the evening was in every way enjoyable.” (*Winona Republican Herald*; Jan. 30, 1897).

“In response to an invitation issued by the Christian Endeavor Union, the local Society will hold a Christian Endeavor Rally at Minnesota City, Friday evening, January 19. If the weather is favorable, the Endeavorers will go in sleighs.” (*Winona Republican Herald*; January 20, 1917).



Contributed Photo from Brenda Edwards

“The sleigh ride to Minnesota City was successful from all points of view. Two sleighs were used to carry the forty Endeavorers to the city and was made merry with cheers and songs. After reaching Minnesota City and warming toes and noses, the gathering was called to order and program was given... Winona Endeavorers are still talking of the good time they had at Minnesota City.” (*Winona Republican Herald*; January 27, 1917).

Persons with their own stories of sleigh rides or wagon rides are invited to send them with or without photos to [mgograpy@embarqmail.com](mailto:mgograpy@embarqmail.com). Does anyone recall Bill and Bev Mastenbrook hayrides? Wagon rides? Any photos of these?



A Maus wagon ride at a MCHA Community Caroling Event

## Minnesota Citian Vicki McGillis Publishes Novel

Vicki McGillis, Iowa Street resident, has written and published a novel, *Detours to the Good Stuff*. McGillis is a graduate of area schools; her book is a true story that details the experiences of a single mother and four children. Set in the 1960s, the McGillis novel uses memories, historical realities, a large number of musical references, and the description of difficult life experiences of the main character to tell the story. The book is published by [www.outskirtspress.com](http://www.outskirtspress.com).

## New Year's Day A Federal Holiday

“The act of June 28, 1870, which was apparently prompted by a memorial drafted by local ‘bankers and business men,’ provided that New Year’s Day, Independence Day, Christmas Day, and “any day appointed or recommended by the President of the United States as a day of public fasting or thanksgiving [were] to be holidays within the District.” This legislation was drafted “to correspond with similar laws of States around the District,” and “in every State of the Union.” *Federal Holidays: Evolution and Application*. **Congressional Research Service: The Library of Congress**



### **MCHA Thanks for Archival Additions:**

- An unopened double deck set of playing cards with THE OAKS pictured on back sides donated by Mary Hadley, Rushford, Minnesota; Mary is a former Minnesota City resident
- Enlarged photo of the 1941 All Star Wedding displayed at the October 2014 All Star Wedding donated by Garvin Brook Disaster Relief Fund
- High School Class Photos, Newspaper clippings donated by Gale Hill, Wabasha, Mn.  
\*Gale Hill attended the Maybury School in Minnesota City as well as a small school in Deering's Valley, now Whitman-Deering Road, across from the Chad and Elizabeth Oness property. "In 1886 another district was formed in Deering's valley. These districts have cheap frame schoolhouses. There are at present enrolled in the Rollingsstone school forty seven pupils, in McLaughlin's Valley thirteen, in Deering's valley fourteen and ninety six in the Minnesota City school. The last named has a brick schoolhouse and two departments of school; the house, grounds, etc. being valued at \$6000.00." *History of Winona County, 1883, p.560.*

### **MCHA Expresses Sympathy to:**

the family and friends of Thomas Reuter, 77, Minnesota City, who died on Saturday, December 13, 2014 at his home.

### **Request for photos or Memory Confirmation**

In a recent visit with Gale Hill, he recalled a mural type of painting that he remembers being in the Sandstede Bar building following the infamous November 11, 1941 blizzard. Gale thought the painting included the saying "the day the ducks came.... the men died." He remembered boats at the bottom of it. If any newsletter readers recall this painting or have photos of it from photos of bar gatherings, Gale would appreciate having his memories of it confirmed. (Please call 450-0201 or email [mgogrady@embarqmail.com](mailto:mgogrady@embarqmail.com).) The Sandstede family was a large one; please ask any members or relatives who might have such photos. Additionally, if anyone has photos of the Deering Valley School, please notify newsletter editors. ([mgogrady@embarqmail.com](mailto:mgogrady@embarqmail.com)).

### **Technology Improves With Membership Monies**

Membership monies and donations make possible the production and mailing of the newsletter. Equipment has always been secured as needed for MCHA presentations, sometimes borrowed. Attendees at functions will be happy to know that the sound system equipment and computer projector used at the December 13 event are now owned by the Association, making presentations easier to facilitate.

### **Arnie Cisewski Map Locates Points of Interest in Letter to Family**

The November and December newsletters carried installments of a letter written to family members by Minnesota City resident Arnold Cisewski describing experiences in World War II. A close look at the included map reveals spots (9, 10, 12) where his life was greatly endangered. Readers are encouraged to view the map with the narration at hand. Other newsletter readers have had experiences in this war and have responded to the Cisewski material. Copies of the three newsletters will be sent to Arnie's niece Sally, daughter of Leonard Cisewski, who provided this material to the archives in 2008. SEE MAP ON PAGE 4

# Arnold Cisewski map included with narration of war experiences

\*Note: See November and December, 2014 newsletters for site story details

