

# MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 12, Issue 2: February 2017

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

## **Mark your Calendars!**

**February 11:**  
Saturday;  
MCHA Monthly Meeting: City Hall, 149 Mill Street; 9:30 a.m.

**February 23:**  
Thursday;  
Minnesota City Community Readers: City Hall, 149 Mill Street; 6:30 p.m.; Selection Jane Smiley: *“A Thousand Acres.”*

**May 20:**  
Saturday;  
Minnesota City Day; 165th anniversary of founding of village in 1852.

## **“Go Green!”**

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

## **MCHA plans for Minnesota City Day, 165<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of 1852 Founding**

At the January monthly meeting of MCHA, attendees discussed possibilities for observance of Minnesota City Day on May 20. An exciting addition to traditional Minnesota City Day has been offered by Susan Althoff. Susan has developed plans for a Stand Still Parade. Persons familiar with this event at Whalen, Mn and other sites appreciate the community connections it fosters and the enjoyment and fun of traditional parades. The novelty of this event is that the parade viewers do the parading while the units of the parade stay in place. Althoff has received approval from the Minnesota City City Council and is finalizing details of location, units, vendors, etc. Additional information will be in future newsletters and local media. Persons familiar with Althoff’s leadership of the Garvin Brook Disaster Relief Fund, the Bridge Dedication observance, and other events anticipate another successful event.

Other possible events of the day include plaque placing at two historic sites for which research has been accomplished—The Church Store and Ellsworth Mill. Information sheets related to other historic Mill Street and nearby sites will be available. The historic First Baptist Church will be open and attendees discussed open archives of MCHA. Local businesses, institutions will be invited to MCHA meetings to do additional planning of possibilities that can highlight their operations.

Other meeting discussion included spring programming possibilities and involvement of other Minnesota City groups in observance of Minnesota City Day.

## **Correspondence Notes:**

Janet Hill Seabern communicates with Geraldine Werner, former –way former—resident of Minnesota City about the possibility of her attending this anniversary celebration in May. The last time Geraldine was here, we think, was for the school reunion in August, 2011. Werner attended the Maybury, 1938 school building at Minnesota City.

MCHA Member and donor Darlene Reps Becker writes from Flint Michigan: “Thank you so much for my letters—The information brings back many memories - some good, some bad, but I’m always grateful to hear the news. I’ll be 88 this year, so I remember pretty far back. Many blessings to all of you. Darlene”. Darlene has previously donated photos of threshing on the Ray Church Stockton Valley Farm, photos taken between 1925 and 1928.



Darlene Decker at MCHA archives with drawing of Lucy Bates contributed by the Roger Church Family

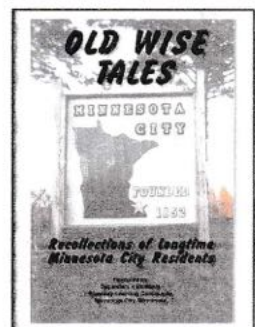
## Deer Do Chase People and other Interesting Stories

Deer stories are the stuff of mythology, invented and staged, remembered and retold. British playwrights and Irish folklore often included hunter deer and hunted deer. No less engaging, hunters of our area have told their share of tales at special Deer Hunters Mass breakfasts, around campfires, and in the after-hunt hours.

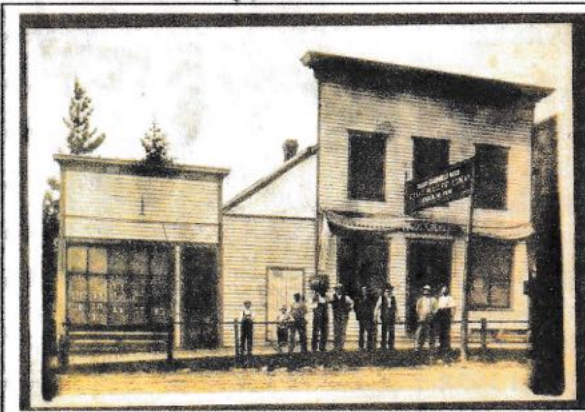
In recent conversation with Jean Kalmes at her brother's December visitation (Dave Reed died on December 17), discussion of the Reed Family land ownership north of Minnesota City included her telling the story of another brother, Richard, being chased by a deer while hunting in that location. The Reed family are good story tellers of interesting stories, but for us to "get it right for passing on" we checked the Daily News Index where Jean said the story had been told in "The Voice of the Outdoors." Dave's mother, Peggy, had sent in the story. "Here is what she writes: 'Richard Reed, 16, junior at the Winona High School, shot a large buck (eight points) Saturday afternoon while hunting in the hills near the Whitman dam. He was tracking a doe which he wounded when the buck appeared. To make a long story short, the slug used on the buck was his last one. The animal charged him from about 50 yards and Dick went up the nearest tree but before he was entirely out of reach the deer struck him very slightly, breaking the skin on his leg above the foot. The deer circled the tree awhile and then fell down. Another hunter who chanced to hear the shot came up and shot the still kicking deer again and helped to dress the deer out. It weighed 249 pounds after this and with loss of blood, too. We figured it went 300 pounds before dressing.'" *Winona Daily News*, Nov. 24, 1948. Those who knew Dave can imagine him telling this story of his brother Richard who lives in Montana. *Voice of the Outdoors*, a once very popular column was written by Lefty Hymes for whom the Memorial Deer Park on Prairie Island was named. Hymes died in 1974. [www.prairieislandcamp.com](http://www.prairieislandcamp.com).

Another story teller of deer tales was August Jilk Jr. who lived and hunted in Stockton Valley (and elsewhere). When Riverway students visited him in 2004 he regaled them with stories of his hunts, of the history of deer in the area (he knew they were first known here in the rectory garden of Father Tibesar in Rollingstone), and in concluding the interview he said "I could write a book on all the deer hunts I had". Fortunately a lasting project of Riverway Learning Community, the book "Old Wise Tales," a collection of interviews with Minnesota City area residents, included a number of Jilk's stories.

Persons interested in obtaining a copy can call 689-2440 or stop at any event at the archives. A \$10.00 donation is appreciated. Copies will be available at Minnesota City Day. Persons interviewed, many of them now deceased, included: Roger Church, Gerald Cisewski, George and Gloria Denzer, Mildred Jessie, Delwin Tschumper, Dolores Gallagher, August Jilk, Ray and Lola Denzer, Eleanor Whetstone, Ralph Evanson, Jean Gardner and Dorothy Brom, Lydia "Pearl" Singer, Gladys and Howard Volkart, Kateri Mueller, Beverly Mastenbrook, Neil and Clare Denzer, Margaret Kowalewski and Ruth Mrozek.



## "Minnesota City, Minnesota



The photograph above [left] is from the late 1800's and shows a street scene of Minnesota City, Minnesota. Depicted are 3 boys and 6 men standing on the boardwalk in front of a saloon named *The West End*. The sign on the saloon reads *Drink Grain Belt Beer, The West End, Makenzae, Prop.* Proprietor's name might also read *H. KRENZKE* and is hard to make out."

MCHA personnel (us) had once linked this photo to the Witt /Church Brothers Store—because sources locate Martin Shoe Store as toward the creek from here. Any reporters?

## Minnesota City “off the road” Mention in Stever Memoir

Kent Stever, a Winona focused memoirist, in his 2014 book *Kinder, Gentler Ways*, includes Minnesota City in the detail of a chapter entitled, “Eagle Bike Ride.” Like other writers, he “skirts” the village. He is able to include details because he has experienced them as a native, even though the fit with his present narrative isn’t included. We don’t learn how he learns about the bar sign. He writes: “Our bike trek circles around the bluff to avoid the five-hundred foot climb up Stockton Hill, instead taking County Road 23 through the flat alluvial valley. We’ll again skirt Minnesota City, the Oaks Supper Club and the famous highway sign of the bar on Highway 61 that offered ‘Ham on Rye-We stack it High!!!’ to again end up back at Goodview.” Stever has written earlier under the title *Growing Up on the Mississippi*.



On the road sign; MCHA photo, 2017

This book is available in the archives and can be checked out during any open hours or events at the site. Readers who have a long Winona history will enjoy a comparative kind of remembering of shared details which often happens with memoir. Stever currently lives at Lakeville, Minnesota.



Off the road sign;  
Winona Daily News, March 2, 1967

## MCHA Expresses Sympathy

- to the family and friends of LaVern J. Scherbring, 69, of Rollingstone who died Thursday, Jan. 12, 2017 in Winona.
- to the family and friends of John Irwin Meyerhoff, age 86 of Winona who died, January 3, 2017, at his home. He was born October 4, 1930, in Gilmore Valley.
- to the family and friends of Mary Ann King, 69, Minnesota City, born on January 20, 1948, died on January 14 2017 in Winona.
- to the family and friends of La Verne (Lovey) Brudwick, 83, of Minnesota City who died Monday, Jan. 2. Brudwick was born in 1933.

## THANK YOU

- To Minnesota City City Council for \$300.00 which is used by MCHA for their annual website fee. Through this domain name the newsletter is posted monthly on the site [www.minnesotacity.org](http://www.minnesotacity.org). Marv O’Grady is the webmaster. Kate O’Grady is the executor of layout. Readers are invited to check out the January issue on the site.
- To all members who continue to support the organization with dues (\$15.00 annually, due in January) and for many additional donations from members and other friends.

Anyone who wishes to donate to or be a member of the Association is invited to send \$15.00 to:  
MCHA, P.O. Box 21, Minnesota City, MN 55959 All monies will be used to support Association goals.

## Old Neighbors--New Structure in Minnesota City

Highway 61 drivers will have noticed the building being erected at the site of Lyle's Flooring and Horihan Insurance, the old sites of the Ziegeweid and Sachler homes/buildings. In response to email, Nick Ebnet, store manager provided this information which previously appeared in the Winona Daily News and Winona Post.

*"Lyle's Flooring America broke ground on Friday)*

*November 18th on a new 5000 square foot retail store.*

*This new space will be located next door to their current location and open April 1st of 2017. The new store will have an open floor plan and continue to serve our customers with their flooring and window treatment needs....Lyle's Flooring America is very excited about the new space and continuing to be involved in our community "*



*New Lyle's Flooring America Building (MCHA photo)*

Store owners are Creighton and Charles Horihan, store manager is Nick Ebnet. Continuing to use the Lyle's name is a good sign of more than a "good sign" for community interested persons. The Saehler and Ziegeweid families were more than ordinary neighbors; combining these people and sites is welcomed.

## Western farm and village Minnesota City Settlement: the Gamut of Human Experience in 1852

Persons interested in the settlement of the Minnesota City/Rollingstone/Stockton area have available many resources to pursue the interest. This narration is posted on the MN Genweb Project site entitled *Winona County History*. In a few paragraphs it offers readers consideration of the depth of human experience of the early participants. "A party of more than forty left St. Louis for Minnesota City on April 26, the captain of the Excelsior agreed to land them at the nearest point possible; May 2, reached Holmes' Landing, now Fountain City. There they made fast to a wood boat, and unloaded while steaming up the river; the party put all their goods into the wood boat, and just at dark, before supper, unfastened in the middle of the river. After five hours the party landed on the high table-land north of Minnesota City near the present site of Troost's Mill. A little shanty 7 by 12 built of stray boards found on the Islands was the only shelter, and that was not reached until nearly morning. The prospect was so discouraging that Dr. Childs and many others decided to go back to "America." They chartered the wood boat and started down the river, and landed near the "hotel," May 7. Mr. Johnson's hot biscuit and fat pork disappeared with remarkable rapidity, and the spirits of the party began to rise slightly. Mr. Johnson, anxious to obtain settlers, made them the offer of an acre each to such as would remain and build upon it. Several accepted. Dr. Childs chose the acre where the post-office now stands. Mr. Thomas the one where the city building is located and J. S. Denman the present site of Hill's block, etc... Fifty or sixty more of the Farm and Village Company, mostly from New York City, arrived on this day (May 9, 1852 Fountain City) bound for Minnesota City. They had all kinds of agricultural implements and seed, with clothing in abundance; also, pigs, chickens, canary birds, house plants, and some cats and dogs. As Johnson's Hotel would not accommodate them all, they chartered the wood boat upon which Dr. Childs came down, and proceeded to their destination, but even then the tent was inadequate to contain all. Many were discouraged and sick, and it would seem that some of the leaders did not appreciate the healthfulness of the climate, as it is recorded that on May 11, Mr. Haddock was laying out a 160 acre lot for a cemetery at Minnesota City (Oakland). The first party that started out in search of farms beyond the bluffs consisted of O. M. Lord, William Sweet, and Benjamin Williams. They landed from the old "Dr. Franklin" in the night, near Mr. Pentler's shanty, April 30. They afterward went toward the Sugar-loaf Bluff, mistaking it in the distance for a hay stack. They were compelled to camp on the open prairie until morning, when they proceeded to the West Rollingstone Valley. Williams and Sweet made claims about three miles from the head of the valley. Mr. Sweet was the first to make a claim beyond the bluff and the first death that occurred there was of his son, who was found a few rods from his house frozen to death. There were no tools to break the frozen ground, and the body was not buried until Spring."