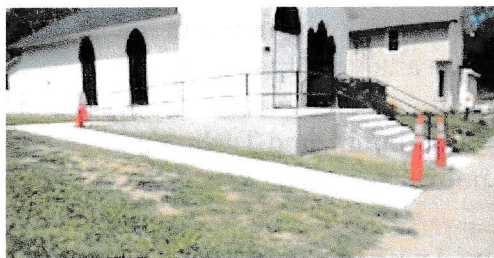


MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 13, Issue 5: August 2018

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

Annual Church Service at First Baptist Church Building



With building access improvements now complete, the First Baptist Ladies Aid will host their annual summer service at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 26. Hymn singing, words of inspiration, and organizational information will be included in the service. The public is invited.

(Christine Ferden Photo)

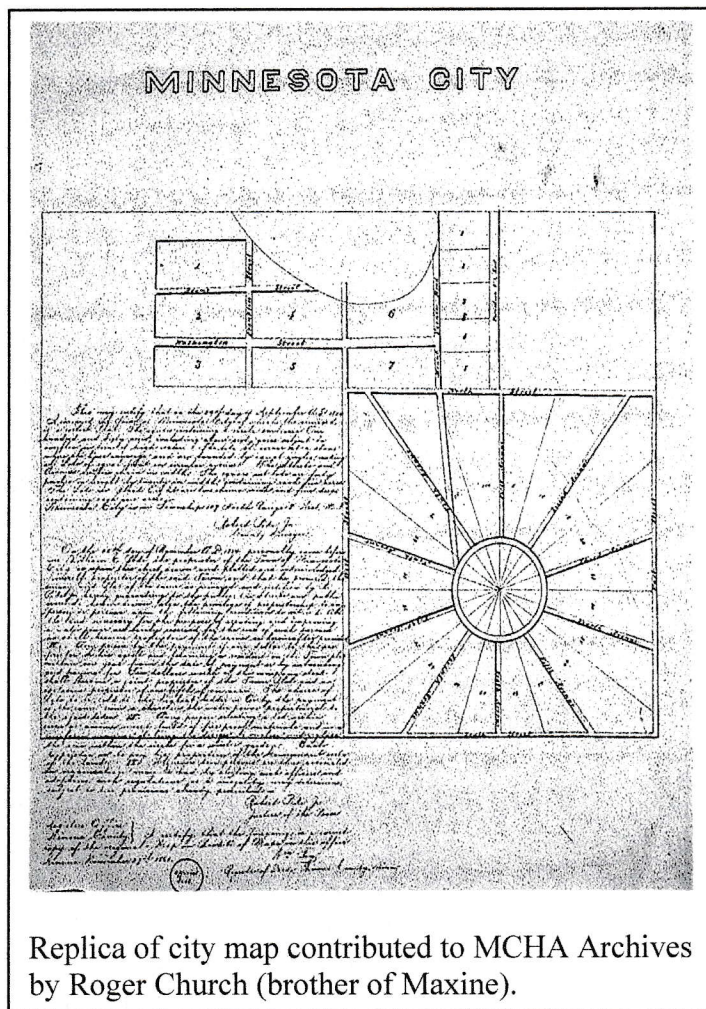
Reporting the Beginnings

Reports on the beginnings of Minnesota City and area Settlement are as different as the number of reports one accesses. Maxine Church Spaag recently mailed a handwritten account of undetermined origin that outlines one history of the beginning.

“Minnesota City, a small village, was to have been a Utopia, the dream of a group of New York mechanics known as the Western Farm and Village Assn. The story of this colony is one of the most tragic in Minnesota History.

In 1852, groups of eastern immigrants paid steamboat captains at Galena, Illinois to carry them to Rollingstone City. When told that no such place existed, they produced an illustrated map of the metropolis. The steamboat men who knew every inch of the river were amazed to see the map of a beautifully planned city with a glass enclosed winter house, with streets and homes. This map has been drawn by a group of mechanics who had formed an association to obtain free government land on which to settle. (Roger Church (dec.) contributed a replica of the map to the Archives where it is displayed). Each member was to draw by lot a village home and a farm up the valley. The steamboat captains finally figured out the site to be a few miles north of the scattered huts on Wabasha Prairie later to become Winona. There they unloaded the colonists and their goods and left them to reach their non-existent homes as best they could.

From the start, the venture was doomed. The advance committee had mistaken a shallow slough for the main channel of the river, actually several miles away. The settlers and their goods had to be transported over a long rough trail and across dangerous fords. But it was too late to check the flow of land seekers from the East. By the end of May, the community numbered 400. The city dwellers knew nothing of farming. Women and children crowded into a community tent, while the men slept in gopher tents whose sloping log sides were covered with grass. Many died, especially children. It wasn't until the middle of June that word of the situations reached NY and the exodus was halted. Some of the survivors went back to NY—many settled at Winona and other neighboring communities. A few moved on to other farms and are still there.”



Replica of city map contributed to MCHA Archives by Roger Church (brother of Maxine).

Mark your Calendars!

August 11: Saturday; MCHA monthly meeting; 9:30 a.m.; City Hall, 149 Mill Street.

August 23: Thursday; Minnesota City Readers; 6:30 p.m.; City Hall, 149 Mill Street; Selection: *The Master Butchers Singing Club* by Louise Erdrich

August 26 : Sunday; 2:00 p.m. First Baptist Ladies Aid Summer Service, 140 Mill Street.

“Go Green!”

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

MCHA Thanks

- Beverly Reidemann Tschumper, Bloomington, Mn. for archival materials related to the Minnesota City Tschumper family, and especially her deceased husband, Argene (2015). The materials include many memorabilia of his school and church experiences as well as photos of his family. Included is a replica of a 1908 Sears Roebuck Catalogue. At a future open house at the archives, the materials will be available for viewing. The Reidemann family lived in the house on the corner of Iowa and Mill Street now occupied by Ledebuhrs, and Tschumpers lived in the house on Mill Street, now occupied by Ferdens.
- Kathy Streng Twite and Doug Twite for the contribution for archive use of an overhead projector. Kathy is a daughter of Phillip Streng, the son of Billy and Bertha Streng. The Twites live in East Grand Forks; they attend a number of MCHA events.
- Maxine Church Spaag for an article of undetermined origin, one retold in a number of early histories of the area. Roger Church (Maxine’s brother) presented MCHA archives a framed copy of the city diagram designed by Robert Pike and others; it hangs in the archives.

MCHA extends sympathy to the family and friends of

- George Moudry, 90, who died in Minneapolis on June 8. Moudry was the pastor of St. Paul’s Church in 1974 and had the church remodeled to conform to Vatican II (1962-1965) directives. Appropriate liturgical changes paralleled the structural changes; the design won architectural awards placing St. Paul’s “in the news” as a national model. “Inclusive” is a word used in one tribute to Moudry related to his work with LIFEWORKS in Minneapolis. It would describe Minnesota City congregation members’ recollection of experiences with George that included many Sunday breakfasts in the homes, home Masses, settling, deer hunting, baptisms, weddings, among others, and the always dramatic presentation of liturgy—the LUMEN CHRISTI in the darkened church on Easter Eve.
- Violet Schell, 96, Stockton, MN, who died on July 1, 2018, at Sauer Health Care, Winona. Violet was born in Winona to John and Anna (Daniel) Mueller and was raised on a farm on Garvin Heights. She enjoyed sharing many wonderful memories of the farm and her upbringing there. Violet married Anthony Schell on Sept. 8, 1941. They lived at Stockton.
- William L. Borger, 68, of Minnesota City, MN, who died on June 30, 2018, at Gundersen Health System in La Crosse, WI.
- Kurt "Buff" Albert Stark, age 51, who died on July 2, 2018, at his home in Winona, MN.
- Bonnie Jean Woodford who died at her home on July 6, 2018. Bonnie was born February 1, 1944, in Winona, MN.

Denzer Family Reunion

The descendants of Christian Denzer celebrated their 94th reunion on June 2, 2018, at Farmer's Community Park located near Stockton, Minnesota. 64 people attended from 30 families. A silent auction was held. A potluck lunch was served with hamburgers and hot dogs on the grill. All officers were returned. There were four deaths, five marriages and four births. The oldest was Jackie Denzer and the youngest was Callie Denzer. The longest travelers were Cierra Denzer from Whitehall, WI and Allyshia Carlson of Lake City. (Information from Clare Denzer).

The Denzer family descends from Christian Denzer who was born in Dannerfels, Germany on April 25, 1802. He married Barbara Englebercher on February 23, 1824. In the early spring of 1836 the couple left their home with their seven children, traveled by wagon to LaHavre, France and sailed to New York. They then went by wagon and canal to Dover, Ohio, arriving on July 11, 1836. In the spring of 1856 their son Christ and wife Margaret traveled by boat down the Ohio River, then up the Mississippi to Minnesota City, then west to Rollingstone and laid claim to several hundred acres by homesteading. There they had five more children.

Son Fred married Barbara Amos on March 13, 1881, traveled to Casselton, North Dakota to homestead land. Later they went back to Rollingstone and resided on a farm in Minnesota City. Their son John was born in Casselton, North Dakota, but came to Minnesota City. He married Esther Whetstone on October 20, 1909 and resided on a farm just north of Minnesota City.

Sugar Loaf June Lighting Honors Denzer Family

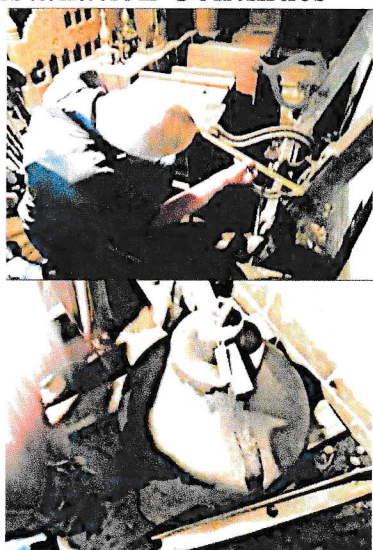
Many newsletter readers are familiar with the sponsored lighting since the mid-sixties of the Sugar Loaf Winona landmark to honor persons' memories.

The June lighting this summer (2018) was contributed by Linda and Roger Horner, to honor Lester, (dec. 2012) Joan (dec. 2012) and Wayne Denzer (dec. 2008). Lester was a son of Fred Denzer, a son of Christian. The Denzers farmed in Middle Valley among their other occupations. All were members of First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Minnesota City and are buried in Oakland Cemetery. Joan was the sister of MCHA member David Stewart.



Joan, Wayne, Lester in 1963
(contributed photo)

Planning on Maybury Bell Installation Continues



Wallace Burley checks measurements on the Maybury Bell at the Bunnell House storage location. (July 6, 2018)

Jilk Family Reunion

Descendents of August Jilk and Sophia Kilian Jilk gathered in Farmer's Park, Stockton, on July 28. Hosts were the Evanson family, children of Elmer and Agnes Jilk Evanson. Of the fourteen children of August and Sophia, Sister Marie Louse (Margaret) is the last living member. She resides at Techny, Illinois. One daughter-in-law, Lillian Lewandowski Jilk (wife of Albert Jilk) lives in Kenosha, Wisconsin. The Jilk family origins are in Dolni Dobrouc, Czechoslovakia. The father, a tailor and later a shoemaker, immigrated to the U.S. in 1870. August, the first son was born in Chicago in 1875. The family moved to Winona in 1876, and in 1902, August married Sophia Kilian, one of fifteen children of Nicholas and Anna Hammering Kilian, who farmed in Winona County. The Kilian parents had immigrated from Darmstadt, Germany. August and Sophia Jilk farmed in Stockton Valley and were the parents of fourteen children. The family was active in church, school, and community affairs.

Gale Hill's Unforgettable World War II Experience

The front page of the *Lake City Graphic* for May 24, 2018 carried some of the detailed WWII experiences of MCHA member Gale Hill. Written by Wayne Quist, the narrative is particularly significant for those persons who know the ever lessening numbers of WWII veterans. Quist believes there are about a dozen living in Lake City, Gale's current address.

Gale, born in Wyattville, Minnesota, was ordered into active service in 1944 before his high school graduation. After training was completed he went to Le Havre, France, one of 101,646 arrivals there in 1944. On Christmas Day in 1944, Hill spent his 19th birthday in a foxhole along front lines facing the German soldiers. "This turned out to be the biggest battle on the western front during the war in Europe. More than a million soldiers on both sides participated with over 80,000 casualties and an even greater number of German casualties. The battle raged for over five weeks from start to finish and the Americans slowly choked off the 'bulge' in Eisenhower's long line, driving the defeated German army back into the Siegfried Line along the German border with Belgium and Luxembourg." Gale remembers "white hot shrapnel ripping and falling almost everywhere... He remembers carefully crawling on his stomach to drag communications wire from the company command post to the edge of the front lines when blistering shrapnel sliced through his sleeve and cut the leather sling on his carbine. He soon realized that his faithful rifle was missing; it had been torn away from his shoulder..."

Many newsletter readers know that veterans of these difficult experiences often kept them private. As the Freedom Flights began and as persons with varied perspectives on war began to write about their own or other experiences readers have become more familiar with stories of realities of wars. Quist, who authored the Hill article is a retired Air Force colonel. He has been writing for over fifty years on topics of military history.

Much media attention is being given the war recently, and interested persons have access now to many movies and books about it. *Gathering Storm* and *Dunkirk* are two of these movies. Another aspect of the war that has garnered attention because of the immigrant crisis has been the imprisonment in the U.S. at the time of U.S. citizens of Japanese descent. In *Old Wise Tales*, the student produced collection by Riverway School students of biographies of Minnesota City persons, Delwin Tschumper narrated this interesting memory. "I was standing out in the yard and a car came down the road. It was a 2 seater coupe. There were two guys pushing the car. They were not speaking English; they were speaking German. There was a prisoner of war camp (for German soldiers captured in Africa and Italy) at Whitewater State Park. Farmers could go up there and borrow prisoners to work. They wouldn't try to escape; they had it too good up there, and they would have been caught. They were pushing the car because the car ran out of gas. Gas rationing caught them."

Request for Information

This email was received by MCHA this week. If readers have any knowledge of these names, please respond to mgogrady@embarqmail.com. "I collect Minnesota Postal History. I have a manuscript cancelled Ladies cover from Minnesota City during territorial times. The small cover was sent by a L. Kniffin from Minnesota City to a Joseph Lamb in Dryden, Michigan. I have not had any luck finding information on either person. L. Kniffin is very likely a woman as the embossed envelope is a type typically used only by women. This was likely sent between 1855 and 1857."

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.

MCHA invites readers to submit

dates for the newsletter of family reunions, milestone birthdays, and other events about which readers wish to share information.

Check www.minnesotacity.org or use the QR code. Submit information to (mgogrady@embarqmail.com)

