

# MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 11, Issue 8: October, 2016

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

## **Mark your Calendars!**

**October 5:**  
Wednesday; William Yake, Ellsworth Mill Family descendant, Olympia, Washington, visits area.

**October 8:**  
Saturday; MCHA Monthly meeting; 9:30 a.m.; Historic First Baptist Church; 140 Mill Street

**October 27:**  
Thursday;  
Minnesota City Community Readers; 6:30 p.m.; Minnesota City City Hall; Selection: *Detours to the Good Stuff*, McGillis.

**December 10:**  
Saturday;  
**Community Caroling;** 6:00 p.m.; Historic First Baptist Church; 140 Mill Street

### **“Go Green!”**

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

## **Minnesota City History Recalled With Visit of Ellsworth Mill Descendents**

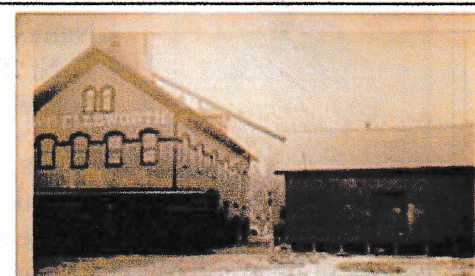
When Amos Dolbier Ellsworth dedicated the completed mill in Minnesota City, in October 1867, how satisfying it would have been to know that almost 150 years later his great grandson, Bill Yake, would stand at the site of this significant contribution to Minnesota City history.

Bill Yake has connected intermittently with MCHA since 2007 and has provided us with information on the Ellsworth Mill, current site of Bunke’s Canton Mills, which the Association is in the process of marking as one of the locations for the walking/driving tour of the Minnesota City area. He has sent photos, research material, and now, Bill Yake and Jeannette Barreca are coming to visit on October 5-7. MCHA members will attempt to connect during their time here.

Don Evanson’s research on the Ellsworth Mill includes these findings:

- 1863: Henry Bancroft acquires upstream flowage right for a mill pond of a ten foot dam, from the Pikes, Jones, et al.
- 1866: Bancroft deeds the mill site, site power, and rights of overflow to Henry Miller via mortgage.
- 1866/67: Work begins on mill dam and mill foundation, by the co-partnership of Henry Miller, A.D. Ellsworth, and H. Rowell (Amos Ellsworth came to this area in 1862, after being involved with the grain trade at Waupun, Wisconsin. Rowell had been the millwright instrumental to the construction of Minnesota City's other mill, the Troost Mill. This Miller & Ellsworth Mill is the tenth mill that he has built.) Building is designed by renowned architect C. G. Maybury (also the architect for the 1912 Minnesota City School).
- 1867: The dedication of the completed mill. Three “runs of stone”, meaning grinding stone sets, with a total capacity of 200 barrels of flour per day. A barrel is 196 pounds, so about 20 tons per day. The machinery had been made by the Phoenix Iron Works of Winona, W. M. Hurlbert, owner.
- 1879: Miller and Ellsworth dissolve their partnership.
- 1880: Miller sells to Ellsworth.
- 1887: Ellsworth has mill at 225 barrel capacity, employing 13 men. Owns three warehouses westward on the Winona and St. Peter railroad. Mill production and seed and grain business here reported to be \$500,000 for the year in round numbers. **CONTINUED** (See Ellsworth page 2)

Current Canton Mills Site



**Ellsworth** (continued from page 1)



Amos Ellsworth Jr.,  
founder of Ellsworth Mill  
in Minnesota City in  
1867

1890: Ellsworth dies at Winona. His obituary reports, "Of late years he has been doing business alone, confining his business chiefly to the management of his flouring business at Minnesota City and a large wheat farm at Wahpeton, S. D."

Names that follow in the history include M.N. Reed, Wm. Calbick, Frank Calbick, H.J. Willis, A. R. Klavetter and J.S. Sutcliff.

Amos married Elizabeth (Lizzie) C. Schmidt. "...an attractive, intelligent girl, Lizzie Schmidt who I was always told by my father was of Pennsylvania Dutch extraction. She was a kindergarten teacher in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She married my



Elizabeth (Lizzie) C.  
Schmidt

grandfather around the age of twenty-five and spent the years until her death at thirty-five bearing children and watching them die." - remembrances: Barbara Ruth Ellsworth/ Yake ( Family Notes).

Ellsworths are buried in Oakwood Cemetery, Utica and Woodlawn Cemetery, Winona.

Photo contributions: Bill Yake

**First-rate Harvest in Minnesota City in 1882**

From the correspondence of Elder Ely with *The Winona Republican* June 20, 1882: "I may say a few words about the prospect of the crops of this year, having observed them every year since 1852 (the founding year of Minnesota City). I can say that unless the eye is very much deceived there is a heavier and more vigorous growth of vegetation than I have ever seen before. Unless there is a great change for the worst in the next sixty or ninety days, the coming harvest will prove this random assertion. There will be a very large yield of small fruit, such as strawberries, blackberries, raspberries and grapes. Apples will be at least a half crop. If the farm of O. M. Lord is a fair sample of the county of Winona, Southern Minnesota will pass in first rate crops the coming season." (What? No mention of plums?)

**On Fields O'er Which the Reapers Hand has Passed**

Henry David Thoreau

On fields o'er which the reaper's hand has pass'd  
Lit by the harvest moon and autumn sun,  
My thoughts like stubble floating in the wind  
And of such fineness as October airs,  
There after harvest could I glean my life  
A richer harvest reaping without toil,  
And weaving gorgeous fancies at my will  
In subtler webs than finest summer haze.



### MCHA expresses sympathy to

- To family and friends of Steven Fort, 57, who died in Stockton on September 3.
- To the family and friends of Oest William Weinmann, age 89, Winona, who died September 16, in Winona.
- To the family and friends of Phillip Keller, age 73, Winona, who died September 22 in Winona.
- To the family and friends of James J. "Jack" Duellman, age 81, of Winona who died on September 22 in Winona.

### MCHA Thanks

- Michael Maher for his gratis presentation.
- Don Evanson for Ellsworth Mill research.

### Daughters of the American Revolution Proclaim Constitution Week

Any woman who is a descendent of a patriot of the American Revolution can be a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Jean Gardner is one of the members. The resolution to celebrate the Constitution became a public law in 1956. According to the Winona Post (September 14), "The aims of the celebration are to emphasize citizens' responsibilities for protecting and defending the Constitution, preserving it for posterity; to inform the people that the Constitution is the basis for America's great heritage and the foundation for our way of life; and encourage the study of the historical events which led to the framing of the Constitution on September 17, 1787." *Winona Post (Sept. 14)* readers will have seen the photo of Jean with Helen Neavill, presenting Mayor Mark Peterson the proclamation for the City Council.

### Minnesota City Community Readers Feature Local Author

Minnesota City Community Readers invite interested persons to the October 27 discussion of *Detours to the Good Stuff* self published by Minnesota City author Vickie McGillis who writes: "Set against the backdrop of small-town Minnesota life in the 1960s, this is an incredible TRUE story of a young single mother's journey to find peace and happiness for herself, as well as her four small children, against all odds." (From McGillis's *Linked In* description). Persons who follow the Winona Post or Winona Daily News may have read Lori Donehower's message of invitation each month. The group meets at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall, 149 Mill Street in Minnesota City. All readers are invited whether or not they have read the book. Copies of each month's selection are handed out at the meeting and are to be returned at the next meeting. The readers' group always welcomes new readers, and because of the local author, readers may find this month's discussion especially interesting.

### Morning Walk Surprise in Minnesota City

Joan Albrecht had an early morning walk surprise on Saturday, September 17. Joan, who lives on Mill Street, is accustomed to morning creatures—rabbits and the like—but she was greatly surprised recently to see a horse coming down the street right toward her. Goodview police appeared shortly and the errant animal was "taken into custody."

Other details can be augmented by Joan. This will be an oft-told story.



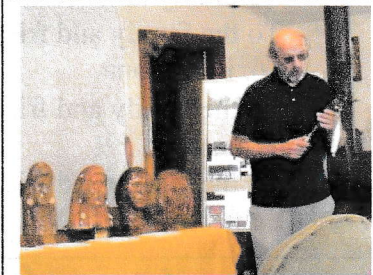
Mill Street Visitor on Saturday  
September 17<sup>th</sup> (Joan Albrecht photo)

## Michael Maher Discussion of Carvings Promotes Interest in Native American Matters



Michael Maher speaks about his carvings of Native American Chiefs

On Saturday, September 10, an audience of local and area persons heard Michael Maher discuss the history of Native American presence in this area and in other areas of the United States. He featured seven carvings, among them: Little Crow, Geronimo, Crazy Horse, Decorah, and Joseph, and provided details on those to listeners. Maher's work has immersed him in the history of these and other figures which he intends to give to



David Eckert explains the Talking Stick. Maher carvings in background.

the tribes of the chiefs' origin, and he will go on to sculpt others. The details of the woodwork and the remarkable beauty of the wood personalized the discussion of the individuals. Maher's interest in his work and connection with the subjects is obvious to onlookers.

Attendees discussed and viewed with interest: three cases of artifacts from the Jilk site north of Minnesota City, three unusual arrowheads from Peterman property in Wenonah Road area—found by Kenneth Peterman (deceased) and brought to the event by Coleen Peterman, sweetgrass braided by Carl Lacher, Samuel and James O'Grady items from Pipestone, a dreamcatcher given to the archives by Gerald Okland, (Minnesota City Samuel Cotton descendent), and a panel of information including newspaper clippings and photographs. Also of interest, maintained by David Eckert, a talking stick, which he explained as a mechanism used in many tribes for achieving respectful group conversation. "Talking Sticks are a respectful way to give each tribe member the opportunity to speak uninterrupted. The stick is passed in a circle and the holder is encouraged to speak honestly and from the heart -- the others must listen carefully and without judgment ." (Wikipedia)

Mailbox notes: Susan Althoff could not attend the presentation and emailed that she has some stories passed on by her family about the Native Americans here when her family moved to the Whetstone farm. Pamela Aune (Burley Family) emailed her interest in Michael Maher's topic.

### Standing Invitations:

- to attend regular meetings of MCHA. These meetings are usually held at 140 Mill Street.
- to respond to newsletter content. Please send additions, corrections, suggestions, calendar information (meetings, reunions, birthdays, other significant dates) etc. to [mgogrady@embarqmail.com](mailto: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.

Anyone who wishes to 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. Separate or additional donations may also be sent to the above address.

### Check Out The Website:

[www.minnesotacity.org](http://www.minnesotacity.org)

Continue to check the website periodically. New information is constantly being added. Remind family and friends and former Minnesota City residents to check it out! Thank you to Marv O'Grady and David Eckert for keeping the website updated.