

MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 14, Issue 5: June 2019

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

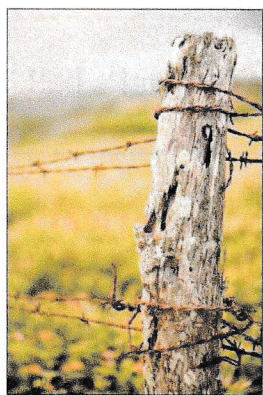
MARK YOUR CALENDAR

June 8: Saturday, 9:30 a.m. Monthly MCHA Meeting; Historic First Baptist Church; 140 Mill Street

June 27: Thursday, 6:30 p.m. Minnesota City Community Readers; Minnesota City City Hall; Selection: Cheri Register: *Packhouse Daughter.*

“Go Green!”

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



Answers to some old questions in May 18 speeches (Rebecca O’Grady Weiss)

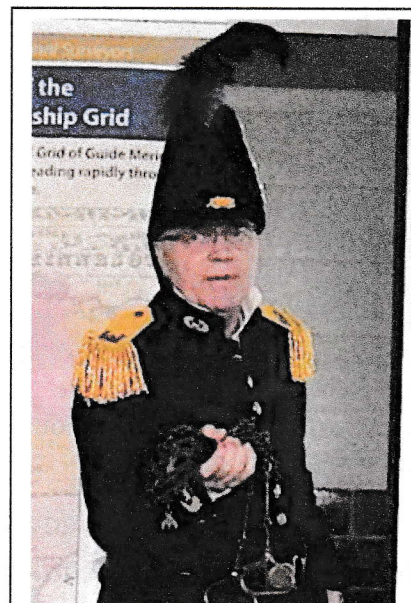
Saint Paul's Church was the site of a small but engaged group of people who gathered on the 18th of May, 2019 to learn about the early surveying and the barbed wire fences that divided previously undocumented land.

Hosted by the Minnesota City Historical Association, the afternoon presenters were Don Borcharding and Tony Blumentritt. Don, personifying Captain Andrew Talcott, led the group up the river as a well dressed presidential appointee of the Army Corps of Engineers tasked with surveying the land north of what is now the Iowa/Minnesota border.

Using a solar compass to make astronomical observations, the project unfolded with Talcott determining the parallel latitudes first in the early 1850's and following with the longitudinal lines to divide the area into townships that are six miles square (more or less)! Due to "conversion", the north-south lines are not parallel.

This causes "double corners" which were corrected by jogs in the road. "Talcott" related encounters with Wabasha's tribes and the designation of half-breed tracts in the area from present day Redwing to Sand Prairie. He also noted that land sections numbered thirty six were always designated for schools.

**Continued on page 2:
See May 18 Speeches**



Don Borcharding offers “surveying chain” for audience viewing.



Don Borcharding, Don Evanson, and Marv O’Grady examine materials related to plats.

May 18 Speeches (continued from page 1)

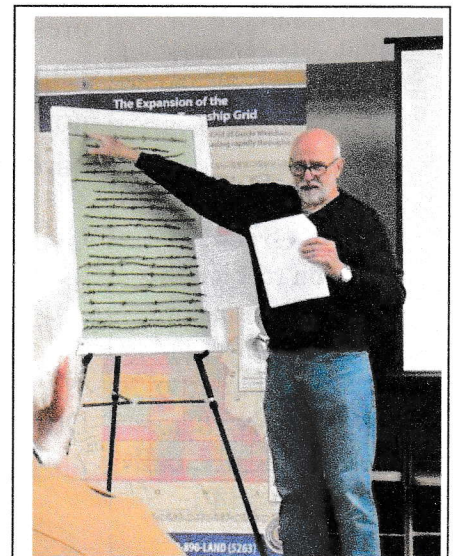


Don Borchering locates "the center" of Robert Pike's famous Minnesota City map.

Using his power point presentation, Don was able to overlay contemporary maps for comparison with original surveys of the Minnesota City area. Questions from the attendees demonstrated a familiarity with much of the historical information about the location of the earliest land patents related to current land titles and landmarks.

After a break for refreshments provided by Janet Seabern, Clare Denzer, Kate O'Grady and Becky Weiss, the group resumed to learn more about the division of land that barbed wire enables led by local fence collector and Winona County surveyor Tony Blumentritt. In lumber rich geographical areas such as Minnesota City, the advent of barbed wire fencing is perhaps a convenience compared to the plains west or southwest where it was considered a necessity to divide property.

Tony explained how the advent of barbed wire enabled or precipitated changes in cattle farming. He shared a timeline from the first patent of a single strand wire obtained by Lucien Smith in 1857. By 1877 Joseph Farwell Glidden had developed equipment to mass produce a double stranded fence that earned him the title of "father of barbed wire". Tony quoted statistics from Minnesota statute #344 concerning the spacing and specifics of line fence requirements. His personal collection was on display for the afternoon including a sample that was used specifically for sheep, containing special barbs that would not damage the fleece. Jim O'Grady lent his display containing a rare piece of hinged fence. Gale Hill also collected barbed wire pieces and his finds can be found at the County museum in Reads' Landing, MN. With over 570 patents issued by the year 1875, these are just a barb, prong or point of the entirety. MCHA thanks Don Evanson for procurement of the speakers and Don and Clare Denzer for securing use of St. Paul's hall.



Tony Blumentritt discusses his barbed wire collection.

NOTE: As is customary, there will be no Minnesota City Historical Association meeting, no Minnesota City Readers meeting, and no MCHA newsletter in the month of July. All will resume in August. Have a good summer.

Ring-necked Pheasant

Ring-necked pheasants were first successfully imported from China to the United States in 1881. Their first successful release in Minnesota came in 1916. The ring-necked pheasant is one of Minnesota's most popular upland game birds. It is a grassland-dependent species most commonly seen in rural areas near grassy fields and grain crops, such as corn. Pheasants eat insects, weed seeds and grain and can survive a relatively wide range of temperature conditions.

General description: The ring-necked pheasant is a chicken-like bird with a long tail found mainly in the agricultural lands of rural America. Length: 20 to 36 inches, including the tail. Weight: 2 to 3 pounds.

Color: Males (called cocks or roosters) have mostly reddish-orange body feathers, greenish black heads with a red eye patch and white neck rings. They also have a sharp spur on each leg which can be used to differentiate first-year males from older males. Females are mottled brown which aids in their camouflage when sitting on a nest. (Mn DNR.)



Pheasant on ridge land north of Mn. City (James O'Grady photo)

Tick-borne diseases on the rise: Anaplasmosis Transmission (CDC)



Anaplasmosis is a tick-borne disease caused by the bacterium *Anaplasma phagocytophilum*. Phagocytophilum is primarily spread to people by the bite of an infected tick. In the United States, the bacteria is carried by the blacklegged tick (*Ixodes scapularis*) in the Northeast and Midwestern United States and the western blacklegged tick (*Ixodes pacificus*) along the West Coast. Phagocytophilum has been spread by blood transfusion. Anaplasmosis is most commonly reported in the Northeastern and upper Midwestern states.

Jilk Stockton Grandchildren visit Racine

Several grandchildren of August and Sophia Kilian Jilk drove to Racine, Wisconsin on May 5 to celebrate the 100th birthday of their Aunt Lillian. Lillian, the wife of Albert Jilk, served as a nurse during World War II; she also nursed in Winona.



Weispenning continues important teaching

Ruthanne Weispenning, Minnesota Citian recently described her work as a Docent at the Marine Art Museum in Winona. This work was her choice following her retirement as a language instructor in the Winona School System. Thanks for all your contributions, Ruthanne.

Minnesota City School Bell: When will it sound?

As the planning stages of the Minnesota City School Bell installation designed by Wallace Burley move to conclusion, MCHA members begin to consider when and why the bell will be rung. An article in the Minnesota Historical Society in 1937 discussed early Minnesota Bells.

“Modern means of communication and of telling time make their summons seem superfluous. To the early pioneers of Minnesota, however, bells were important and their ringing was a welcome sound in the stillness....The ringing of bells has for centuries called people to action in time of danger, summoned them to public gatherings and signaled the reading of proclamations, the announcement of news. School bells have hurried the lagging feet of countless children. ...

The Minnesota Historical Society also has in its possession the bell of the Argo, which in 1847 (Minnesota City was founded in 1852) was running as a regular packet between Galena and St. Paul, making side trips to Stillwater. In the fall of that year it sank at the foot of Argo Island above Winona, and the following year its bell was salvaged and sold to citizens of Stillwater, who placed it on their schoolhouse. Thus it became one of the earliest school bells in Minnesota.”

MCHA newsletter readers are invited to remember bells sounds in their lives and consider appropriate ringing of the proposed installation.

Minnesota City Historical Association (MCHA) extends sympathy

- to family and friends of Lola Woodard Denzer who died in Winona on May 18, 2019. In 1940, she met Ray Wm. Denzer and married him Dec. 29, 1940. They enjoyed nearly 70 years of marriage before Ray's death in 2010.
- James R. Stiles, 76, of Winona who died on May 18, 2019, at the Whitewater Health Services in St. Charles, MN.
- Rose Ramin, 80, of Minnesota City, who died on December 13, 2018.
- David Schewe , 71, who died on May 15, 2019 in Port Richey, Florida.
- Dirk Nelton, who died on Nov. 11, 2018.



This photo is of Lola and Ray attending the MCHA presentation of Denzer family history in 2010.

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

