

MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 3, Issue 3: March, 2009

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

Mark your calendars!

March 6: MCHA monthly meeting (note change from 2nd Thursday); 6:30 p.m.; Riverway Learning Community

March 10: Minnesota City Day Planning Meeting; 6:30 p.m.; Riverway Learning Community

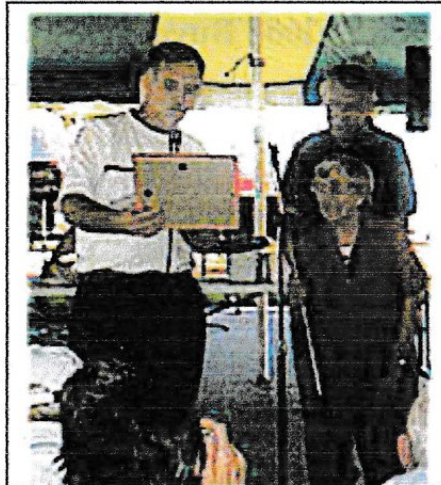
March 12: Public Meeting on Sewer Planning Grants; 6:30p.m.; Riverway Learning Community

March 15: Bob Bambenek Presents on Abstracts; 2:00 p.m.; Riverway Learning Community

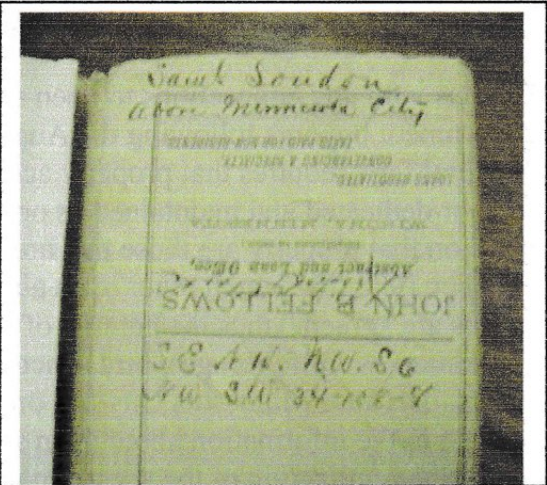
March 19: Minnesota City Community Readers discuss Fred Kohlmeyer’s *Timber Roots*; 6:30 p.m.; Riverway Learning Community

Abstract Questions: County Recorder Presents on Land Changes in Minnesota City

On March 15, at 2:00 p.m., Robert “Bob” Bambenek will discuss abstracts related to Minnesota City and area. The presentation, free and open to the public, will be at Riverway Learning Community, 115 Iowa Street, in Minnesota City. Bob invited area residents to submit abstracts and questions of their own to him in advance of the March 15 presentation, in an attempt to focus more definitely on people’s interests. At this time, residents from several Minnesota City areas have submitted abstracts—Harbor Drive, South of Highway 61, central village, County Road 23 south of the village, and Highway 61, north of the village—assuring a comprehensive consideration of landscape changes. Bob will be drawing information and questions and his answers from these abstracts among others. The recent land changes in the area because of flooding, road repairs, bridge building, and the on-going changing of property ownership encourage government regulations and response to these events.



Bob Bambenek, historian of many area topics, presents a centennial farm plaque to Agnes Evanson.



Samuel Loudon’s name on O’Grady abstract from Section 34; Loudon is a civil war veteran buried in Oakland Cemetery.

Rollingstone Township Annual Meeting March 10 at Township Hall

Polls will open at the Township Hall on County Road 23 from 4 to 8 p.m. on March 10 to elect officers--two supervisors and a treasurer. The township Annual Meeting will begin at 8:00 p.m. and will be followed by the Regular Meeting. Agenda for the annual meeting includes road reports, setting of the tax levy, authorization of monies for commemorative events and non profits, and setting time for the next annual meeting. Immediately following the Annual meeting will be the regular township meeting where officers are elected, meetings scheduled, newspaper and posting locations designated for publications, bank designation, discussion of a blacktop plant, review of the AWIR plan, town books, township ordinances reviewed, and consideration of other topics placed before the board.

Planning Meeting for Minnesota City Activities on March 10

A number of City organizations have been invited to send representatives to a meeting at **Riverway Learning Community on March 10, at 6:30 p.m., to begin the coordination of times and events for programming on Minnesota City Day, May 16.** In 2002, following the sesquicentennial, a small group of individuals decided to celebrate Minnesota City and area—the place and the people of the past, present, and future-- on the third Saturday in May of each year. Since that time, the Historical Association (MCHA) has organized and sponsored this event. Each year, more groups and individuals have expressed interest in the event and have organized their own fundraising and community events for this day.

The Minnesota City Historical Association has invited a number of Minnesota organizations to send one or more representatives to a meeting on March 10 at 6:30 p.m. at Riverway Learning Community, 115 Iowa Street. The purpose of the meeting is to have a shared discussion of Minnesota City Day (May 16) activities, food, and possible presentations

On May 16, MCHA will be celebrating the formal opening of its archival site at the historic First Baptist Church on Mill Street. The site will be open for tours on that day. Open hours for work and conversation in the archival area will be announced for the months of May through October. Additionally, Garvin Brook Disaster Relief Fund expects to release the DVD produced to commemorate the 2007 flood. In previous years, other events have included city-wide garage sales, pancake breakfasts, dessert-conversation events, craft sales and others.

Persons who want additional information may call or email: 689-4103; 689-2440;
www.minnesotacity.org

Open Spaces May Become Green Spaces in Flood Buyout Properties

Persons with any connections to open spaces that resulted for themselves or friends and neighbors from government buyouts following the August 2007 flood may have heard about their possible uses. “Federal Law requires that property acquired under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program must be forever dedicated and maintained as open space. Consequently the only structures communities may build on that property are those that are compatible with open space.” *Open Space Management*, October 1998. Although other open air possibilities, kiosks, etc. could be constructed, many uses of the spaces are “green,” thus the naming of them by some as greenspaces. These have included wetland restoration, wildlife refuges, bird sanctuaries, environmental and ecological education centers, among others. Because Minnesota City has only one such property (located across from the Post Office), interest in the information about open spaces may be minimal, but some residents will watch with interest the utilization of the spaces in neighboring flooded areas, especially where adjoining properties permit larger projects. Although small compensation for lives altered by the flood, nevertheless, the projects may promote some positive imaging.

Riverway Student Visits Washington D.C. in Leadership Program

Rebekah Cranor, Riverway Learning Community student, has been selected to study leadership and visit monuments and sites in Washington D. C. from March 23 to March 28 as part of the People to People World Leadership Forum. Cranor was selected because of scholastic achievement, civic involvement and leadership potential. In addition to well known sites, including the Gettysburg National Military Park, the students will visit the International Spy Museum and other places to examine the United States development of programs to respond to both challenges and successes of the country. Students will examine how leaders “develop strategies, make decisions, build consensus, and foster change.” (*Winona Post*, February 4)

Minnesota City Public March 12 Information Meeting for Wastewater Treatment

In a public meeting on Thursday evening, March 12 at 6:30 at Riverway Learning Community Auditorium, 115 Iowa Street, the findings of the U of Mn survey and feasibility study will be presented. The decision to accept or decline the \$1.27 million in grant money from the Mn Public Facilities authority will be discussed. Mayor Don O'Neill and the City Council will be present. The meeting will be conducted by Sheila Craig from SE MN Wastewater Initiative. Representatives from Bonestro who conducted the study and have the wastewater treatment options to present as well as Doug Malchow from the U of Mn. will be present. A representative from MPCA and several Winona County personnel have been invited. This meeting directly affects persons who live within the city limits of Minnesota City. Decisions are not related to Rollingstone Township issues or annexed Goodview properties. Persons interested in how this information/planning may affect them are encouraged to call Mayor Don O'Neill at 689-2016 or Clerk Lori Donehower at 689-2344.

Dolores Gallagher Celebrates 95th Birthday on February 15

Longtime Minnesota City resident, Dolores Gallagher, celebrated her 95th birthday on February 15. Until she moved to Winona several years ago, Dolores and her husband, Vernon, lived on the property earlier owned by O.M. Lord, a historic figure of the community, and they lived in the Lord house for 25 years before building their own residence. During this time, they rented out rooms and provided meals for depot agents and railroad workers. The Gallaghers farmed about forty acres of land, at first owning cattle, later renting out the land. Dolores was a busy homemaker, a crafter and reader. She told Riverway students in 2002, "I read a lot. I enjoy cooking and baking and people coming in for coffee." The Gallaghers were active members of St. Paul's parish in Minnesota City and of the public school, District 29. MCHA wishes Dolores Gallagher good health in the years ahead.

MCHA expresses sympathy to:

- the family and friends of Dr. Sydney Hughes, a Minnesota City Historical Association member. Sydney Hughes died at Community Memorial Hospital on February 21. He will be interred in the Spring at Woodlawn Cemetery.
- the family and friends of Edward Kukowski, Denzer Road resident. Ed's interest in things historical was well-known. He shared some of his gun lore at the sesquicentennial celebration when he exhibited part of his collection at St. Paul's Parish Hall. Mr. Kukowski died on February 22, at St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester.

MCHA Thanks:

- Marianne Mastenbrook for the extensive index she has provided for the archives for its 1913 two volume History of Winona County. This will provide easier access to information for researchers.
- the several persons who call or email regularly or occasionally or write to acknowledge enjoyment of individual items in the newsletter, or the newsletter itself.

Soar With the Eagles March 1st-March 31st in Wabasha Kellogg Area

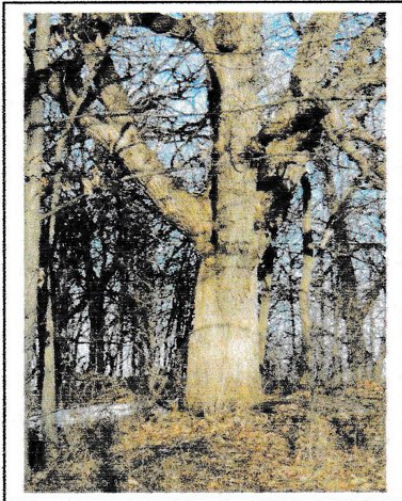
During the entire month of March, the National Eagle Center at Wabasha is cooperating with the Wabasha Kellogg Chamber to present four weeks of examination of the eagle and of the area. The foci of the weeks are *The Human Connection*, *The Flyway*, *The Eagle*, and *The River*. Interested persons will find information on the March calendar of the Wabasha Kellogg, www.nationaleaglecenter.org/soarWithTheEagles. Information on the website is comprehensive—anything and everything about Wabasha and Kellogg related to this month is included. The Eagle Center is open daily Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Friday to Sunday, 9a.m. to 6 p.m.

Arborglyphs, Witness Trees, Bearing Trees Occupy Important Role in Recording History

In examining old abstracts of the area, “witness trees” are indicated as markers of land boundaries. Poems, stories, battlefield descriptions, and now films, frequently include photos of or reference to these historic markers expanding their meaning in many different directions (many not directly related to land).

As petroglyphs are a rock record of history, so Arborglyphs are tree records, a term new to many tree lovers. Images, carved into trees, especially in Southeastern U.S., documented them as Witness trees. The carvings were/are the art forms of Cherokee Native Americans, soldiers, settlers, and other travelers, sending messages spanning the revolutionary war, the trail of tears, the war between the states and up to the present day. Natural causes—rain, storms, clear-cutting—have removed most of the important travel signs of routes and possession places from the remaining trees.

“Glyphs” most commonly recognized now are the heart shaped “Jon loves Mary” type, inscribed by young romantics.



Witness trees have been an assist to understanding early land distribution. They are sometimes protected by law, sometimes have had markers added to them, giving direction to property boundaries. Witness trees were often located in the middle of forty acre sections, and became the “sighting” marks for describing and surveying property.

In addition to their legal use, the term has also been applied simply to very large or very old or very interesting trees, and users of the term indicate that the tree has witnessed a long history of important events. Many property owners in rural areas have named a number of witness trees; they become known by location or tree type or event to family and friends—hence, “Sarah’s plum tree,” “the big oak by the end of the night pasture,” “the walnut at the cabin,” “the cedar by the edge of the field,” “the tree of six birches,” and so on. A family history is recalled in their naming. They witness human experience, but in the naming of them, one recognizes that humans have witnessed the tree’s status also.

The PLS (Public Lands Survey) in the United States started in 1847 in Minnesota, but was closed in 1908. At this time, the NHIS (Natural Heritage Information System), a section of Ecological Services in the Division of Fish and Wildlife in the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources contains computerized records of the bearing trees at the section and quarter section survey quarters. This group defines bearing trees as “a special kind of witness tree which the surveyors notched, blazed, and scribed in a standard way to facilitate the relocation of the survey corner should the wooden corner post or corner stone be lost or moved. Surveyors marked the “bearing” from the corner and applied its names.” Witness trees, according to the same source, is a broader term that “includes trees that were marked on lines or near the corner, generally without the required distance and bearing notes required of a true bearing tree.” (information on bearing trees from Minnesota Department of Natural Resources; <http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/nhnrp/brgtree.pdf>website)

Anyone who wishes to be a member of the Association
is invited to send \$15.00 to MCHA, P.O. Box 41, 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.