

MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 7, Issue 10: October, 2013

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

Mark your Calendars!

Saturday, October 12: 9:30 a.m.;
Regular MCHA meeting,
MCHA archives, 140 Mill Street.

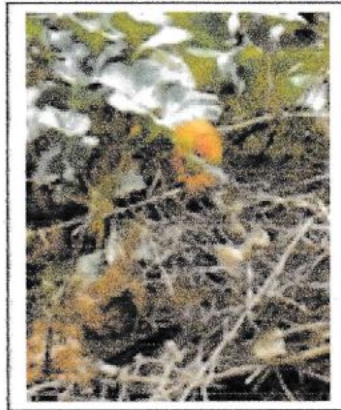
Sunday, October 20: 2:00 p.m.;
MCHA Fall presentation: PBS
Film Showing, Discussion: Jerry
Apps “A Farm Story.”, First
Baptist Church, 140 Mill Street.

Thursday, October 24: 6:30 p.m.
Minnesota City Community
Readers, Former Minnesota City
School, 115 Iowa Street.
Selection: Louise Erdrich, *The
Round House*.

Saturday, December 14:
6:00 p.m. MCHA Annual
Caroling Event, First Baptist
Church, 140 Mill Street.

“Go Green!”

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



A volunteer(?) pumpkin grows
on the brush pile across from
Oakland Cemetery.

We are hoping many of our readers will attend:

**Jerry Apps’ PBS Film *A Farm Story*
Film Viewing and Discussion of Rural Life Legacy**

**Sunday, October 20, 2:00 p.m.
140 Mill Street (First Baptist Church)
MCHA presentation**

No Charge Invite friends

MCHA Sponsors Jerry Apps PBS Film Showing: *A Farm Story* on October 20

The public is invited to a showing of Jerry Apps narration of life on the farm in Wisconsin in the 60’s. The film will be shown at the First Baptist Church/MCHA archives on **Sunday, October 20 at 2:00 p.m.** Please bring your friends. During and following the film, viewers will be invited to contribute their own stories of farm experiences or the experiences of family. **All persons with rural backgrounds or information are especially invited to share their own insights about the aspects of farm life that have changed or ended.** “Jerry shares stories about the party line telephone, the one-room schoolhouse, the routine of work and chores and community of those family farms that built America into the agricultural center of the world. *A Farm Story* with Jerry Apps deeply resonates with viewers with rural roots, many who left the farm but who recognize that the experience made them who they are and can feel a kinship with Jerry when he says, ‘Today I’m as proud as proud can be of having experienced what I experienced, and I wouldn’t change it for anything’ (Apps weblog).”

The **Maus** family publication *The Farm* from Rollingstone Township, and the recent publication of **Gordon Fredrickson, *Farm Family Harvest*** containing the Stockton Valley Jilk children’s photo, will be available to view, as well as a number of other farm/agricultural related materials. The Apps film is divided into sections including home, work, school and others. The Apps Farm is located in Wild Rose, Waushara County, Wisconsin – about middle of the state. The town has about 700 people. Apps is a faculty emeritus of the University of Wisconsin. All interested persons in rural life legacy, and the history of people and places are invited to attend.

September 29 Baptist Church Service

September 29, the sounds of Baptist hymns echoed a past of Sunday School lessons, community gatherings, preaching and praying at the historic First Baptist Church, 140 Mill Street in Minnesota City. The occasion was the annual summer service at the church, organized by the First Baptist Ladies Aid who own and maintain the property. Jean Gardner spoke at the service, citing some group history, including the information that Gladys Church Volkart has been the group treasurer for thirty five years. Jean told the group about efforts to have some assessment of church structural problems. She thanked Matthew Zierfus for repair on the church steps, the O'Grady family for flowers for the service, and Donna and Betsy Friesen for lawn care.

Pastor Dennis Hudson gave contemporary interpretations of life situations using scriptural quotes. Genevieve O'Grady, speaking for the Minnesota City Historical Association whose archives are housed in the rear rooms of the church, thanked the Ladies Aid for continuing their combined use of the building. She invited attendees to view the new shelf in the archives which will be reserved for contributions to the archives from research or mementos contributed by the public related to the First Baptist Church. Because September 29 is the birthday of Donna Friesen, O'Grady particularly thanked her and her daughter Betsy for their lawn care at the church and for refreshments provided for monthly MCHA meetings. "When we come in and find coffee, desserts, and copies of the Saturday paper, we feel like honored guests in the building." Pastor Hudson led the Happy Birthday singing for Donna Friesen.



First Baptist Ladies Aid Auxiliary
(l to r) Jean Gardner, Betsy Friesen, Lori Donehower, Nancy Volkart O'Malley, Gladys Church Volkart, Susan Whetstone Althoff, Maxine Church Spaag, Corinne Denzer Zierfus, Norma Grausnick, Donna Spaag Friesen

Jean Gardner Participates in Commemoration of Constitution Signing

MCHA member Jean Gardner was one of the recent presenters for Winona Mayor Mark Peterson's signing of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) proclamation commemorating the 226th anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution. Celebration of the signing according to the *Winona Post* is a tradition begun by the DAR. DAR's aims 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
- To encourage the study of the historical events which led to the framing of the constitution in September, 1787.

According to Jean Gardner, The Wenonah Chapter of the DAR began on February 13, 1898. The Daughters of the American Revolution has a membership of more than 167,000 worldwide. They are a patriotic organization and among many other services, promote historic preservation within local communities. Through their efforts Congress passed a law in 1956 that set aside Sept. 17-23 as Constitution Week.

"In 1948 the future of Sugar Loaf was uncertain," said Jean, "and the Wenonah Chapter of the DAR purchased it and gave it to the city of Winona for a park." The DAR participated in the donation and dedication of the flag when it was replaced at the former Minnesota City School in 2000.

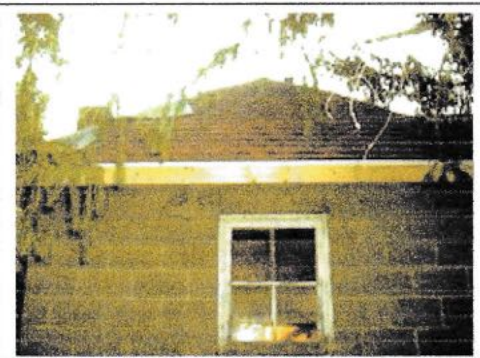
Susan Whetstone Althoff Maintains Buildings and Memories

A previous newsletter (June 2012) contained information about the tuck pointing process executed by Scharmer Construction Company on the Harbor Drive brick building home of Susan Whetstone Althoff. Now Althoff is having repair work done on the milkhouse/ wellhouse on her historic property. Whetstone land was settled in 1856 and became Whetstone Family property in 1882. In a 2006 tour provided by Allen Whetstone (dec. 2007), Susan's uncle, Whetstone talked about two tornadoes, one in 1935 and one in 1937. The 1935 tornadic winds took down the barn. In 1937, the roof of the house was torn off. Whetstone showed the group the hole in the cedar shingled roof of a cement block pump house. His father and brother had taken refuge here from the tornado. Allen, carrying ice for the milkhouse, ran to join them. Just as he got in the building, a two by four was driven through the roof and came down between him and his father and brother. "How we survived that I'll never know," Whetstone commented. Another two by four had been driven into the ground a short distance from the building -- "so far in, because of the velocity of the storm" Whetstone said, "that the three of us could not pull it out by hand."

This is the history of the building being repaired. The Whetstone home is on land originally settled in 1856 by Hiram and Mary Campbell who were members of the Western Farm and Village Association. They are credited with having the first apple orchards in Winona County. The home site was purchased by David and Nancy Parker Whetstone in 1882. Susan Althoff and Robert Althoff purchased the home in 1973. In 2008, the home was marked with a historical plaque by the Minnesota City Historical Association (MCHA).



Allen Whetstone in front of damaged milkhouse.



Repaired roof of the Whetstone-Althoff milkhouse (Susan Althoff photo)

Archive Visitors Request Information:

Visitors to the archives at 140 Mill Street on August 22 requested information on two topics. Anyone with information on the "service station" located east of the current post office, probably on baseball field site area and readers with information on the Duncan family, very early Minnesota City residents, are asked to call 689-2440. The information will be communicated to those requesting it.

Archives Florida visitors: Edward Ellis, former Minnesota City Resident and Edna Ellis, Sarasota, Florida visited the archives on September 26. The Ellis Family resided on Minnesota Street. The children attended school in the 1938 building where their mother, Mrs. Dorothy Ellis taught.

Cat Forecast of First Frost - Nahmad, *Catspells*, p. 77.

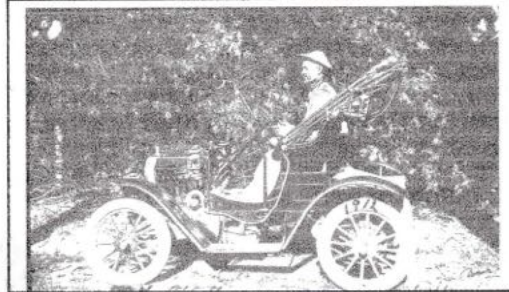
"When puss sits with her back to the fire as though she were a little statuette, except for the very tip of her tail which twitches as though she were watching for a mouse, that foretells a hard frost, which will fall after midnight, and breathe a hoar of white crystals where'er it creeps."

Press Reports on Early Octobers In Minnesota City

“Voters of Winona County RALLY FOR THE UNION. Political Notices list Lincoln and Johnson Union meetings (Andrew Johnson was the war Democrat who became Lincoln's second vice presidential running mate in 1864) in Winona County including “Minnesota City, Pike’s School House, Tuesday October 18.” **Winona Daily Republican, (October 18, 1864).** This date being 12 years after the founding of Minnesota City, the list of sites for union meetings is surprisingly extensive and includes Beaver, Elba, Utica, Homer, Pickwick, Wilson, New Harford, Hart, Mt. Vernon and a number of other sites. The ad states that Union men in the localities named are responsible for all necessary arrangements for the meetings; no women are named.

From the **Winona Daily Republican (October 15, 1897):**

Ben Waterman has gone to the northern part of the State duck hunting with H. C. Shephard of St. Paul, formerly of Winona. He will probably remain long enough to kill a few deer also. (*photo at right contributed in 2002 by unknown donor. Please notify us if you are that person).



Ben Waterman (*Contributed photo)

Mike Schultz has resigned his office as town constable and as we have no village marshal the town is without a peace officer. We are so good we don't need any. ... Uncle Riley Stewart has finally got started on his long contemplated trip. His first stop will be at Red Wing, whither he goes with his daughter-in-law, Mrs. Jas. Stewart, who, with her little son, has started for her home at Irene, S.D., after several weeks visit with relatives in this vicinity. “Uncle” is 81 years old, but is hale and hearty and talks of walking from Stillwater to West Superior prospecting for gold and timber. We hope he will have a nice trip.

MCHA PLANS TECHNOLOGY PURCHASES

At its regular monthly meeting on Saturday, September 21, the MCHA agenda action item was the purchase of a projector and screen for Association use. Don Evanson has done extensive research on the items. David Eckert, Marv O’Grady and Evanson have conferred on best options, and on Saturday, MCHA members approved Evanson’s projected purchase of these items. Future research and approval will focus on a sound system. When membership renewal letters are sent in January, an appeal will be made for contributions to the cost of these items. The items will provide necessary equipment for presentations in the archives (First Baptist Church), the former Minnesota City School, and other sites. Member donations will be used to fund these purchases, and the solicitation will accompany the January Membership letter.

Standing Invitations:

- to attend regular meetings of MCHA. These meetings are held at 140 Mill Street. In cold weather months, generally October to May these are held at the former school building.
- to respond to newsletter content. Please send additions, corrections, suggestions, etc. to 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.