

MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 7, Issue 5: May, 2013

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

Mark your Calendars!

Saturday, May 18:
Minnesota City Day
(See page 4 for events and locations).

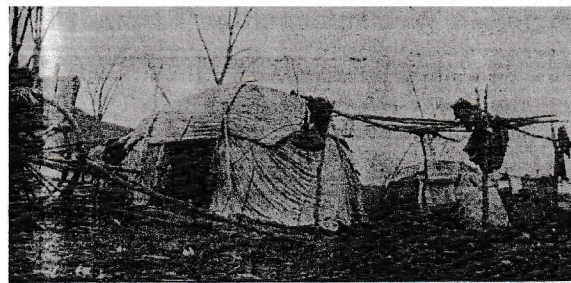
Thursday, May 23:
6:30 p.m.; 115 Iowa Community Readers; Street; Minnesota City Selection: *Ordinary Grace* by William Kent Kruger.

Mark Your Calendar ! Invite Family and Friends! PLEASE attend one or all of the Minnesota City Day Events. Waste Water Treatment Plant Tours, Sandy Erdman Presentation, GBDRF Waffle Breakfast, First Baptist Church Open House, MCHA Archives Open House. See Schedule. Page 4. All events free except Waffle Breakfast.

Saturday, May 18: Familiar Blend of Facts, Friends, and Food

Historical information, current developments with people and events, and good food will again be key elements of the annual MCHA (Minnesota City Historical Association) Minnesota City Day on Saturday, May 18. Tours of the newly completed wastewater treatment plant will be conducted by City Council member **Kelvin Penrod**, **Sandy Erdman** will present on antiques, and displays of glass retrieved during wastewater excavation will be viewed.

First Baptist Ladies Aid will host open house at the First Baptist Church on Mill Street, **Garvin Brook Disaster Relief Fund** will sponsor a Belgian Waffle Breakfast, and **MCHA** will hold open archive hours at the Mill Street site.



This Ho-Chunk (Winnebago) camp near Minnesota City was photographed around 1898. Ho-Chunks were pushed west and north by settlers in Wisconsin.

(Photo: Winona County Historical Society)

When the Minnesota City Historical Association (MCHA) was established following the 2002 sesquicentennial, members decided to commemorate the 1852 settlement of the village in future years on the third Saturday of May because this date would most closely align with the first settlers significant dates. The following description of the history of the May events in 1852 is taken from *The History of Wabasha County, 1884*.

“The Western Farm and Village Association, as organized in the city of New York in 1851, was transferred to Rolling Stone in 1852 under the same officers and with the same laws governing its members....

- The first regular meeting of the Association held in the colony at Rolling Stone was on May 6.... At this meeting fifty-two responded to their names when the roll of members was called. Some of these were young unmarried men, but a majority of the members present were men with families.
- At a general meeting of the colonists on Sunday, May 9, the name of Minnesota City was given to the village of the colony. The name was unanimously adopted by a viva-voce vote. Prior to this the locality was only known as Rolling Stone, and afterward it was the most familiar name to the early settlers.
- At a meeting held on May 19 the question of making application for the establishment of a post-office was considered and a choice for postmaster made by ballot. Robert Pike, Jr., received a majority of votes.”

With the Belgian Waffle Breakfast and the Sandy Erdman presentation being delivered on the very site of first Winnebago settlements, Minnesota Citians may engage the realities of historical change.

Sandy Erdman presents on Treasures And/Or Trash

Sandy Erdman will speak in the former Minnesota City School building at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 18. Sandy is a weekly columnist in the Rochester Post Bulletin, Rochester, Minnesota writing



Sandy Erdman (photo contributed to RADISH , Post Bulletin Co. 2012)

on vintage antiques and collectibles. Sandy first started writing and exploring the world of antiques in 1968, while writing an article about antiques and was struck by the history of each individual piece. Sandy is now a collector of many other items as well as a speaker and appraiser.

Sandy has been featured on public television, radio, local newspapers along with USA Today relating to antiques and collectibles as well as vintage aprons. She has also been called upon as an expert consultant on the business of self-appraisal, buying and selling of antiques. You may also know Sandy as council person in the City of Goodview, Minnesota. There is no charge for Sandy's presentation.

Sandy has informed us that attendees are welcome to bring one of their "treasures" or its photo from their homes or outbuildings for her identification or information from neighbors. Anything from teacups to soapboxes will be of interest. She will recommend resources on these objects. MCHA hopes to photograph attendee's objects, and will welcome contribution of any of them with Minnesota City connections for loan or retention by the Archives.

GBDRF (Garvin Brook Disaster Relief Fund) Sponsors May 18 Belgian Waffle Breakfast at St. Paul's Church

Belgian Waffles will be served at St. Paul's Church Hall, 132 Anderson Street in Minnesota City from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Adult tickets are \$7.50 and Kids 4-12 are \$5.00. Children 3 and under are free. Proceeds from the breakfast will benefit GBDRF and Minnesota City Youth Baseball.

Tickets can be purchased from youth baseball players and GBDRF members. These include Bryceson Maus, Susan Althoff, Dallas Denzer, Sharon Nako, Joann Ziegeweid, Hollis Donehower, Duane Hutton, Connie Greethurst, and LaVern Fritz.

Fifield Artesian Well Information Expanded

Information about the Minnesota City Fifield Well has expanded with MCHA purchase for the MCHA archives of *Geology and Underground Waters of Southern Minnesota*, the 1911 Publication from the Washington Government Printing Office. Readers are welcome to request use of this manual which details analyses of a number of water sources of the area. The *Winona Republican Herald*, Nov. 20, 1906, carried this account of the analysis: "When the flow was first secured, Mr. Fifield realized that he had a well of remarkably good water, but it was not until some time later that he was convinced that it was the best well in this section. He had the water sent to the University for analysis and the report that came back showed that the water is as good as that of any well in the county and on a par with wells that have a very wide reputation."

MCHA extends sympathy to friends and family:

- of Martha Christopherson, 86, Vining, Minnesota, who died on April 12. Martha and her husband "Lee" Christopherson, pastor of First Baptist Church in Winona from 1968 to 1981, were friends of many in the area.
- Of Daniel Woyczik, 60, Minnesota City, who died at his home on April 16.
- Of Elijah Adam Feine, Stockton, infant son of Cassandra Dambach and Landon Feine, who died on April 18, 2013.

Minnesota City Wastewater Treatment Plant Tours Celebrate May 18 Minnesota City Day

In February of this year (2013), New York City papers carried stories of romantic dates on Valentine's Day in a heretofore unexpected location—the Wastewater Plant in Newton Creek. This is the second year that the Plant has offered free tours of New York's largest wastewater treatment facility. A lot of embellished rhetoric described the experiences of the romantics attending. It was an opportunity to do something definitely different, an opportunity for persons interested in city infrastructure to have a close up view of processes, and an opportunity for plant employees to share their work environment (*New York Times*, Feb. 9; *New York Daily News*, February 9).

For all these reasons, Minnesota City Historical Association (MCHA) has asked the Minnesota City City Council to provide tours for visitors of the newly completed Wastewater Treatment Plant. On Saturday, May 18, from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m., Minnesota City City Council Member Kelvin Penrod will be at the plant to explain the process of the new gravity collection system and the recirculating sand filter treatment plant. Penrod plans two tours: 8:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. Gates to the plant site will be open at 8:00 a.m. to permit driving to the site at Garvin Brook in Minnesota City. A photo display of the project from the beginning of the construction in 2011 will be exhibited. The May 18 date for the tours is not Valentine's Day, but a significant historic occasion for Minnesota City—the 161st anniversary of the founding of the village. For Minnesota Citizens, like New Yorkers, this will be an opportunity for persons to understand this infrastructure of Minnesota City and an opportunity for appreciation of the City Council execution of this project. Council members at the time of approval of the project included Mayor Don O'Neil, members Kelvin Penrod, Richard Hohensee, David Kleinbach, and Brian Ebbinger. City Clerk for the inception and duration of the project was Lori Donehower.



Kelvin Penrod (l) explains the tanks of the Treatment Plant to Marvin O'Grady

Janet Seabern Contributes Hill Family History to Archives



Business card of Robert and Zrada Hill, parents of Gale Hill and Janet Hill Seabern

Janet Hill Seabern recently contributed to the archives an information packed description of her family's life north of Minnesota City. The Hills (Robert and Zrada) operated *Camp Rest-a-While* five miles north of Minnesota City. The site had five cabins and six cottages. According to Janet, "it was a lot of work there, but all of us kids helped with it. Mom would say 'we can do it with God's help' and we did." Previous to the cabin site, the Hills lived in Lewiston. The cabins were kept full all summer and there were places for tents. There was a large lawn so people could park anywhere. "In the winter time the folks had people from Whitman Dam stay there and also a lot from Winona would

come and stay—a getaway they said. Our place was all furnished, heated by wood stove, outside bathroom. Water had to be carried in; no electricity, all oil lamps. We had to do everything by hand. Dad would go to the farm and bring back chicken and Mom would can chicken, vegetables, pork and beef for winter time. We had a garden and what we had all winter was what Mom canned. The Lloyds lived next door. We got our milk from them. They had seventeen kids in that family. We got electricity at last. Dad got Mom a washer; it was a gas one. That sure helped a lot. We got our first telephone. It hung on the wall. It was to be used only by the folks or cabin people. Us kids were hands off as they say. When the folks were gone, us kids would see who called and listen. The folks stayed there until 1946; they had to sell as Highway 61 was going to be four lane, so the folks moved to Lewiston in town, but once in a while Mom and I (Janet) would drive down to Minnesota City to be with the Ladies Aid. We both missed them a lot." (more details about friends, neighbors, and family in future newsletters).

MINNESOTA CITY DAY SCHEDULE

SATURDAY, MAY 18

8:30 A.M.: TOUR I - WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT
(Wenonah Road and Plant Site parking)

8:30-11:30 A.M.: GBDRF WAFFLE BREAKFAST
(St. Paul's Church, 132 Anderson Street)

9:00 A.M.: TOUR II - WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT

9:00-12:00 noon: OPEN HOUSE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
(140 Mill Street)

9:00-12:00 noon: OPEN HOUSE MCHA ARCHIVES
(140 Mill Street)

10:00 A.M.: SANDY ERDMAN WORKSHOP AND
PRESENTATION "MERE JUNK OR TREASURE"
(Former Minnesota City School, 115 Iowa Street)

(ALL EVENTS FREE OF CHARGE EXCEPT WAFFLE BREAKFAST; DONATIONS WELCOME.
COFFEE AVAILABLE AT ALL SITES)

Mailbox Returns on March Newsletter

Several readers responded to March newsletter stories. Eliciting the most responses were the stories on the F.A.M.W. bottle and on the Box Social. About the bottle. The first response came from Bill Yake in Washington State (Bill's family is connected with the Ellsworth Mill). "FAMW CO is apparently is an abbreviation for FIEFIELD (or, more likely, Fifield) ARTESIAN MINERAL WATER COMPANY. A USGS publication titled "Geology and Underground Waters of Southern Minnesota" (Water Supply Paper 256, published 1911) [searchable on-line as a Google ebook] refers to a well owned by George Fifield "about 3 ½ miles above Winona ... only 280 feet deep. The water, known as 'Fifield's Artesian Mineral Water,' is sold in the city and shipped to other points." **MCHA has purchased the USGS 1911 book**, and will continue research, hopefully with membership assistance, on the Fifield Artesian Well. According to a July 10, 1937 Winona Republican Herald, "Mr. Fifield had a well drilled on his farm. The water obtained from the well was unusually clear and palatable and after a chemical analysis was made, he placed the water on the market and founded the Fifield Artesian Mineral Water Company...Equipment was purchased and a regular trade was established here. The business grew and gradually developed into the manufacture of soft drinks. Constance Denzer also reported information that Edwina Fifield, a quilter (Minnesota Quilt Project has one of her quilts), was listed as the owner of the Artesian Mineral Water Company.

Readers also had information on the 'Mary Anns' of the box social sales. From Jean Gardner: "I have inquired about the 'Mary Anns'. The only ones I can think of are rectangular in shape, (about the size of a Spam can) and frosted with a white glossy frosting. Dorothy (Brom, Jean's sister) thinks they were sold at Church Brothers store." From Susan Althoff: "I did a little checking on the internet and got these recipes for 'Mary Anns'. One of them is like my 'Aunt Sally' cookies."

MARY ANN COOKIES

1 c. white sugar
1 c. brown sugar
1 c. lard
1 c. sour cream
2 eggs
2 tsp. soda
Flours, for a soft dough (4 ½ c.)
Vanilla

Add ingredients together and roll out cookies and bake. Frost if you wish.

And Constance Denzer said "The 'Mary Anns' I believe refers to old fashioned molasses cookies." Terry Bormann, Minneapolis reader, enjoyed the article on the box socials, specifically, the description of Quimby Burley as 'good enough.' For those of us connected with the production of the newsletter, the feedback at various times keeps us aware of how much more information is out there about many topics, but also lets us feel 'good enough' about some of the connections established through the newsletter. All readers are invited to continue giving feedback.

Janet Hill Seabern Awarded Jefferson Medal

For the month of March, The Jefferson Medal, an award for Public Service to someone who has positively impacted their community, was awarded to an "original" MCHA member and an "original Minnesota City individual," Janet Hill Seabern. Janet attended Minnesota City School and Winona Senior High School. Janet, with her husband Cliff Seabern, now deceased, were some of the first members of the Historical Association. They helped lay out spaces for the craft market in the first years, they supervised the materials at the Oakland Cemetery visits for several Minnesota City Days, Janet helped with refreshments at MCHA presentations. Her many other contributions to the city were acknowledged with this presentation.



Janet and Cliff at a previous Minnesota City Day Oakland Cemetery event.

MCHA Extends Sympathy to:

-The family and friends of Margaret Masepohl Brabbit, Goodview, who died at age 77 in LaCrosse on March 13. The Masepohl family were Minnesota City residents during the 1940s; Marge and her brothers attended Minnesota City School.

-The family and friends of Ellen Berry, 104, Stockton, who died on March 16. *

-The family and friends of Dorothy Gardner Brom (Goodview), who died on March 16 in Winona. *

-The family and friends of Donald Elliot, longtime Minnesota City resident, husband of Margaret Peterman. Don, 81, died in LaCrosse, Wi. on March 26.

***Deaths of Special Friends**

The newsletter frequently carries notice of obituaries of persons known to some area persons and states their connection with the area, but the degree of involvement with these individuals varies greatly—some are only known by address, some by other family members, some by work associations and some in other ways. Some have endeared themselves to the area through their long time friendships and supportive and involved presence among us. Two of these women in our communities died on March 16—Dorothy Gardner Brom and Ellen Berry. Both women were gracious, graceful, appreciative and competent in their public demeanors.

Ellen has received attention in recent years as the oldest member of the Winona Old Settlers Association, attending this year's meeting on February 16. She has recounted for some, in addition to her early life experiences, her experience in the 2007 flood in Stockton including her need to evacuate from her home. Ellen worked at Winona businesses as well as at the Stockton Post Office and as an election clerk.

Dorothy, sister of Jean Gardner, lived an involved life in this area, beginning with her childhood in Stockton Valley, where the Gardner sisters retain property that was owned by their parents, Blanchard and Elsie. Dorothy was a teacher at Hart School. Her name frequently appeared in the local media connected with the DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution) and with the Winona Flower and Garden Club. She was a beginning and continuing member of MCHA, supportive of all of its activities, especially appreciative of the newsletter, responding with Jean to the inquiry about 'Mary Anns' in the February issue.

Unanticipated Connections with Ancestry at Dorothy Brom Funeral

Dorothy Gardner Brom and Helen Daskoski were classmates at the Maybury School in Minnesota City, and their friendship continued the remainder of their lives; they exchanged greetings on all holidays and birthdays. Helen died last March, and Dorothy died on March 16 of this year—an eighty year friendship. It was a serendipitous result of Dorothy's funeral that brought together grandchildren of people involved in another historic event of Minnesota City history.

In 1925, as the result of request by a "delegation" to the Winona bishop, Isadore Daskoski, Leon Bronk, and August Jilk, the Catholic Church building, now the Schoen home, was purchased in Minnesota City. At the Brom funeral, the grandson of Daskoski, Brian Norberg from Fargo, North Dakota, the granddaughter in-law, Eleanora Bronk (Gerald), Don Evanson, Ed Butenhoff, and Gen O'Grady, grandchildren of August Jilk, met each other. Also present at the funeral was Ruth Brom Wills, a granddaughter of Emil and Mary Wockenfuss, also early members/founders of St. Paul's congregation. Jilk, Daskoski, and Bronk were all landowners in Stockton Valley. In 1925, the First Baptist Church was an ecumenical meeting place in Minnesota City, but Catholics had been attending services in Winona.



Brian Norberg, Edwin Butenhoff, Genevieve O'Grady, Eleanora Bronk, Donald Evanson