

# MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 9, Issue 5: May, 2015

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

## **Mark your Calendars!**

May 9: Saturday;  
MCHA Monthly Meeting & Open Book Shelf;  
9:30 a.m.;  
115 Iowa Street,  
Minnesota City.

May 16: Minnesota City Day (163 years);  
8:30-12:00 a.m.;  
Various times and venues (See enclosed schedule).

May 16: Garvin Brook Disaster Relief Fund Belgian Waffle Breakfast; 8:30-11:30 a.m.; St. Paul’s Church Hall; 132 Anderson Street.

May 28: Thursday,  
Minnesota City Community Readers & Open Book Shelf;  
6:30 p.m.; Former Minnesota City School Building;  
selection: *The Glass Castle* by Walls,  
115 Iowa Street.

### **“Go Green!”**

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

## **Historic First Baptist Church Engages Restoration Project**

Monday, April 20, will be entered as an historic date in the books of the First Baptist Church of Minnesota City. The deterioration of the foundation of the building has been marked and carefully observed as church proprietors (First Baptist Ladies Aid) have sought artisans for the repair work. R.J. Jurowski Construction, Whitehall, WI began the work on Monday, April 20.



Jurowski Co. employees work on First Baptist Church

All Minnesota Citizens should recognize the significance of the maintenance of this historic structure, the first church in Winona County, which now houses the archives of MCHA. The historic church is a fitting repository for area historical records. First Baptist Ladies are to be applauded for determination and persistence in execution of this project.

## **May 16...Minnesota City Day**

### **In the Beginning**

At the Minnesota City site chosen for settlement by the Western Farm and Village Association in 1852, there were people and promises and problems—and churches and schools and governing groups soon formed to regulate all of these in helpful ways. Minnesota City Day 2015 will give attention to three churches that have sustained followings and have been significant in the village’s early and continuing history. First Baptist Church, 140 Mill Street, St. Paul’s Catholic Church, 132 Anderson Street, and First Evangelical Lutheran Church, 141 Mill Street. All will all have open house events on May 16 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. The three churches are currently the foci of the reflections of many: St. Paul’s possible transition to an oratory, First Baptist Church restoration, and the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of First Evangelical Lutheran.

### **First Evangelical Lutheran Church**

A Minnesota City Day open house will be held at the church on Saturday morning, May 16, from 9:00-11:30 a.m. Coinciding with Minnesota City Day is the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the First Evangelical Lutheran Church. The congregation will celebrate with a special service on May 17 at 2:00 p.m. Pastor David Ponath, pastor of the congregation from 1961-1965, will be the speaker for that service. An open house will be held beginning at 1:00 p.m. and continue after the service.

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## **Minnesota City Day (continued from page 1)**

### **First Baptist Church Open House**

Because of church restoration work, First Baptist Church will possibly move their observation of open house (9:00-11:30) to the Former Minnesota City School where they will show a promotional video for the church. Filmed in the church, the video highlights the building's artistic features. As the oldest church in Winona County, the building represents the long history of the community/area as well as of the religious community. The work on the church foundation can be viewed in a drive-by at the Mill Street location.

### **St. Paul's Catholic Church Shares History With Archival Materials**

In addition to generous sharing of their kitchen for the GBDRF Belgian Waffle Breakfast on Minnesota City Day, St. Paul's will display some of their historical artifacts during their open house hours: 9:00-11:30 a.m. Available for viewing will be the 2008 film featuring parish history—buildings and people—from the beginning in 1925 to the present. Other materials on display will include a collection of Sunday bulletins published by a former pastor, Rev. Joseph Frisch, featuring photos of parishioners and parish events, the recently published History of the Diocese of Winona which features St. Paul's Church, and additional print materials related to the church.

### **Garvin Brook Disaster Relief Fund (GBDRF) sponsors Belgian Waffle Breakfast to benefit Minnesota City First Responders and GBDRF Causes**

The opening event of Minnesota City Day and the most popular draw of the day for some is the Belgian Waffle Breakfast held in St. Paul's Church Hall and sponsored by GBDRF. This year's breakfast runs from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. Proceeds will benefit Minnesota City First Responders and GBDRF goals. The Garvin Brook Disaster Relief Fund was started in December of 2007 in response to the flooding of August 18-19 in SE Minnesota. Its mission is to aid and assist families and individuals in the community and surrounding area. First responders are those individuals who arrive in the early stages of an incident/accident and assist in providing care. (Chad Larson at 507-689-4361 or Tim Neyers at 507-459-3831).

### **Cotton to Genealogical Research? A Session for You.**

Although the phrase "cotton to" was in use in the early 1800s, Samuel and Sarah Cotton may have been perusing legal printed documents for Samuel's work in the community, rather than genealogical resources. On May 16, however, Barb and Gerry Okland, Thief River Falls, MN will team with Andrea Church, Winona, to demonstrate a genealogical search using contemporary technology. Church, who works with Ancestry.com and other resources will demonstrate a genealogical search that can motivate listeners to begin their own ancestral searches. Okland will present information on his great great grandparents, the Cottons, who were among the very first 1852 Minnesota City settlers. Newspaper accounts are plentiful about Samuel who became a respected judge as well as the performer of many other "civic" duties that affected the new colony. Sarah, as judged by her obituary in the October 30, 1893 Winona Daily Republican, was an outstanding person. "The entire community was greatly moved at her departure.....a noble Christian mother, with her six stalwart sons and one daughter, rising up to call her blessed was followed by the large audience in tears. Seldom does any person win the esteem and love of an entire community as did Mrs. Cotton." MCHA archives include information about the property Cotton owned, later owned by Val and Charlotte Kowalewski and Gary Denzer. Andrea Church, with her father Roger, compiled a Church family history which will be available for event attendees as well as the history of the Burley family presented for MCHA by Pamela Aune and the Maus family history compiled by Edwin and his sister Delores Maus Felsheim. We will now add the Cotton Family History to these, and hopefully a number of attendees will begin work on their own families. Attendees are invited to bring their laptops for work with Andrea.