

MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 10, Issue 9: October, 2015

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

Mark your Calendars!

October 4: Sunday,
2:00 p.m. ;
Indigenous Foods and
O.M. Lord; St. Paul’s
Church Hall, 132
Anderson Street

October 10: Saturday,
9:30 a.m.; MCHA
Monthly Meeting and
Open Bookshelf;
Former Minnesota
City School Building,
115 Iowa Street

October 22: Thursday,
6:30 p.m.; Minnesota
City Community
Readers and Open
Bookshelf; Former
Minnesota City
School Building, 115
Iowa Street;
Selection: Bill
Bryson’s *A Walk in
the Woods*

December 12:
Saturday, 6:00;
Community Caroling
Event; First Baptist
Church, 140 Mill St.

“Go Green!”

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

Indigenous Foods and O.M. Lord

Sunday, October 4, 2:00 P.M.

St. Paul’s Church Hall,
132 Anderson Street
Minnesota City

Speaker: Jonathan Damery, U of M
No charge event

Damery Invites Information Sharing on Indigenous Foods

Damery, researcher of indigenous foods, writes “When European explorers first entered the land neighboring the Mississippi River, they sent back reports on the landscape, natural resources, and indigenous cultures that were living there already. Almost all—as good travel writers do—made note of the food, and among the wild cornucopia, most mentioned plums. One explorer, traveling in the early nineteenth century, described an ‘abundance of the most delicious plums I ever tasted.’”

“When O.M. Lord arrived in the area of Minnesota City in 1852, he too found plums that he considered so delicious that after his career of Minnesota City “firsts”—superintendency of the Winona County schools, blacksmithing, mail delivery, state legislative service, and lumber production—he began propagating them and he called his variety the Rollingsone plum.” Damery will invite attendees at the October presentation to contribute their stories of indigenous foods of their family or local traditions. Many area residents recall staples of diet including “wild” fruits, watercress, dandelion greens, hazelnuts, elderberry blossoms. Long before popular farmer markets, Minnesota Citians were harvesting multitudes of foods for their own and others consumptions. The discussion of October 4 promises interesting shared and unique experiences. MCHA is appreciative of the use of St. Paul’s Catholic Church Hall for this event.

O.M. Lord’s Daughter Speaks His Praises

When reading the catalog like listing of the accomplishments of the early Minnesota City settlers, some wonder about their abilities or time to be family members. The daughter of O.M. Lord, Hettie Shoemaker, memorializes her father in *The Minnesota Horticulturist* of January 1907. Lord had died in 1906 at the age of 80.

See page 2: **O.M. Lord**

O.M. Lord (continued from page 1)

The following excerpts are taken from Hettie's account for *The Horticulturist*. Both she and the society secretary acknowledge that Lord's activity as an exceptional horticulturist developed in later years of his life. Hettie conveys his exceptional person in her comments.

"A few days before his death, he said to me, 'I have lived a long life, and have tried to live well, to do my best...Nothing counts in this life but truth and doing right. I have tried to do right.'

He was a man honored among men because of his practical knowledge of things worth knowing which are helpful to the world as well as to nearby friends and neighbors. His mind was stored with useful knowledge from good reading. Though naturally reserved, and not a 'great talker', he was ever ready to answer questions on almost any subject of general interest concerning the home, the state, or nation.

As a young man at home, he was not only helpful on the farm and in the shop, but the special caretaker of an invalid mother whom he worshipped. He willingly learned to do 'woman's work' in order to help his mother, thereby adding much to the comfort and happiness of his future home. He knew how to 'do things.' And a boy kind to his mother will be helpful to his wife. Father was certainly a model husband ever kind and considerate. In case of sickness or necessity he could cook a meal as well and quickly as a woman.

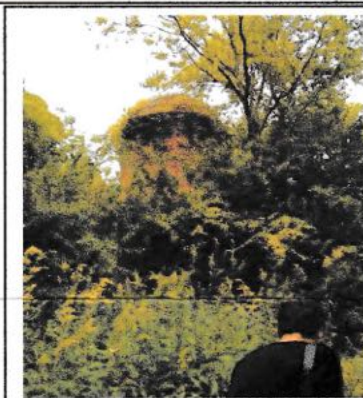
Father and Mother were married at Oxford, Mich. in 1848, and had my mother lived a few months longer, they would have celebrated their golden wedding. (A poem follows written by Orville about his wife). Although the lines were written in an hour of sadness and extreme loneliness, they expressed in language I cannot the loving loyalty of my father for the wife of his young manhood, and when left 'alone' in old age, how he missed her."

Bricks and Brickyards in Minnesota City

A result of the search for plums in the area has been finding information about Minnesota City Brickyards. The walkers observed an example of a brick silo on property formerly owned by Whetstone family members. In the book *The Brick Silo*, written by Forest Henry, Dover, Minnesota, (<http://www.mnbricks.com/brick-silos>) Henry writes "We need a silo that is strictly air-tight so constructed as to practically keep out frost and of such dimensions and form as to be best suited to the purpose....With the double walled brick silo, lined with cement, you have a silo strictly air-tight."

The source of the bricks for the silo is not known, but may well have been the Vill Brickyards in Minnesota City or a nearby brickyard. Henry writes "In 1865, Minnesota City was in its heyday. There were two hotels there then, a brewery, three general stores, a cooper shop and a brickyard which employed 22 men (*Winona Republican Herald*, April 12, 1947). Additionally, "There are five brick yards in the different valleys adjacent to Winona, having all they can do at an average price of ten dollars per thousand for their manufactures." *Winona Daily Republican*, May 25, 1868.

Like O.M. Lord, Otto Vill and his son Oswald had lives with many dimensions that merit further research.



Brick Silo at Minn. City

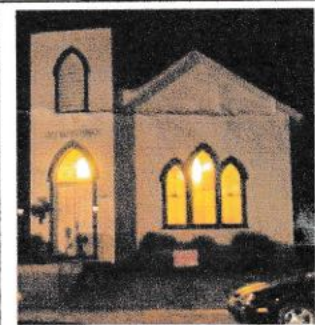
MCHA Extends Sympathy:

- To the family and friends of Jeanne Corcoran, 62, Middle Valley, who died on September 5 at her home.
- To the family and friends of Bradley Jonsgaard, 52, Winona, who died on September 12.

Factoid

“On the 14th day of October, Mrs. Wm. B. Bunnell of the township of Mt. Vernon, Winona County made from one day’s milk of eighteen cows, four of them two and three years old heifers—a cheese which weighed, when taken from the press 47 ½ lbs. The cows fed on ten acres of timothy grass. We recently had an opportunity of trying some of Mrs. B’s cheese, and can testify to its superior quality.”
Winona Daily Republican. October 28, 1862

Good News for First Baptist Ladies Aid



Stained Glass Windows in Historic First Baptist Church, 140 Mill St.

At the September monthly meeting of MCHA, attendees shared Jean Gardner’s enthusiasm about the recent visit at her invitation of Bill Reinarts to the First Baptist Church in Minnesota City.

After seeing the windows he informed Jean that he believes matching glass can be secured and restoration accomplished. A number of the Stained Glass windows, a prominent feature of the building, are in need of repair. Donations for church maintenance and repair can be sent to Historic Mn. City Baptist Church, P.O. Box 106, Minnesota City, Mn. 55959.

“A Bounty of Wild Bees”

The subject of much discussion in recent years has been the diminished number of bees essential for pollination. MCHA sponsored a presentation in March, 2014 on bees with attention to beekeeping and honey, and the need for appropriate bird and butterfly gardening to attract bees. In the July/August *Minnesota Conservation Volunteer*, Author Crystal Boyd writes: “Despite often being overlooked, all native bees play a large role in our ecosystem. In addition to supporting native plant communities, native bees pollinate food crops including apples, blueberries, cranberries, and much more. Bees also pollinate plants that prevent soil erosion and store carbon.”

Boyd’s article focuses on the role of bees in prairie and grassland conservation. It includes informative photos and charts. Persons interested can access the article at <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/mcvmagazine/issues/2015/jul-aug/minnesota-native-bee-survey.html>.

Copies will be available at the Indigenous Foods presentation on October 4 at St. Paul’s.

Standing Invitations:

- To attend meetings of MCHA. These meetings are held at 140 Mill Street.
- To join Minnesota City Community Readers – meetings on the fourth Thursday of the month.
- **Writers of regular newsletter columns would be welcomed.** These might include monthly columns on area businesses, churches, schools, organizations or any other relevant topics on the area and/or our history.

Anyone who wishes to 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.

Separate or additional donations may also be sent to the
above address.

Check Out The Website:

www.minnesotacity.org

Continue to check the website periodically. New information is constantly being added. Remind family and friends and former Minnesota City residents to check it out! Thank you to Marv O’Grady for keeping the website updated.

MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION PRESENTS:

INDIGENOUS FOODS and O.M. LORD



SPEAKER: JONATHAN DAMERY, U. of MN.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4 AT 2:00 P.M.

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH HALL
132 ANDERSON STREET
MINNESOTA CITY

NO CHARGE EVENT

507-689-2440