

MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 11, Issue 6: August, 2016

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

Mark your Calendars!

August 13:
Saturday;
MCHA meeting;
9:30 a.m.; First Baptist Church, 140 Mill Street;
Agenda:
Marking Historical Sites

August 25:
Thursday;
Minnesota City Community Readers; 6:30 p.m.; City Hall, 120 Mill Street;
Selection: *The Greenlanders* by Jane Smiley.

September 10:
Saturday;
MCHA meeting;
9:30 a.m.; First Baptist Church, 149 Mill Street;
10:30 a.m.;
Woodcarver **Michael Maher presents** on Native American sculptures.

“Go Green!”

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

Woodcarver Michael Maher Will Discuss Native American History and Carvings: Saturday, September 10, 10:30 a.m. First Baptist Church, 140 Mill Street

Wenonah Road resident Michael Maher will discuss and exhibit his carvings of some Native American Leaders at the September 10 MCHA meeting at First Baptist Church, 140 Mill Street. Following the regular meeting, Maher will present at 10:30. He will explain his carving process and the individuals he has represented who include Sitting Bull and Geronimo. Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse were two of the chiefs who defeated Custer at the Battle of the Bighorn in Montana 140 years ago. Minnesota City’s connection with Native Americans is an interesting and rich history, with newspaper accounts of deaths, ritual customs, trade, and finally exit of the area. Items from Winona newspapers include these: “An Indian dance took place at Minnesota City last night by ‘Big Fires’ band of Winnebagoes. They held an incantation over the medicines of their great medicine chief, ‘Old Charlie,’ who arrived from Wisconsin to minister to the sick” (1883). Elder Ely, corresponding with the *Winona Republican* wrote: “Mr. Wright was one of the most active and useful of the early settlers. He went several times to Prairie du Chien to get flour to give the Sioux Indians to keep them quiet till the treaty should be ratified which hung for a long time in Washington.” An archival binder of collected articles related to Native Americans in Minnesota City will be available at the meeting.

Family and Friends Fete Jean Gardner

July 4 is the birthday celebration of U.S. independence, and it is also the birthday of Jean Gardner, who this year is 90 years old. Her independence is also long, as evidenced by the many involvements of her life represented at the recent afternoon celebration at her home in Goodview. Nephew Erik Brom and his wife Jody hosted the gathering. Erik’s mother Dorothy Gardner Brom was the sister of Jean. Stockton Valley friends, (The Gardner farm in the valley is one of the first recognized Century farms of Winona County-acknowledged in 1976), Daughters of the American Revolution, Winona County Historical Society members, Minnesota City Historical Association, First Baptist Ladies Aid members, First Baptist Church members, neighbors, friends, and family were among the many people gathered to wish Jean more years of health and happiness. The day was a fitting tribute to a remarkably accomplished individual who graciously continues to contribute to the many lives and situations she encounters.



Jean Gardner Celebrates 90th Birthday with Family and friends Donna Friesen, Betsy Friesen, Emily Brom Smithley, (Jean Gardner’s great niece) and Jean. (Erik Brom Photo)

June MCHA Meeting Included Discussion of Meeting Formats

Discussion focus at the June 11 meeting of MCHA included the topic of monthly meeting organization. Persons present agreed to a possible format of one hour of necessary regular detail work (reports, budget, etc.) to be followed by an hour of discussion on a particular topic. The August meeting will include discussion of the walking/driving tour of Minnesota City that will be possible as more sites are marked.

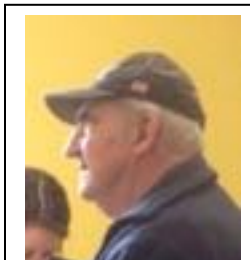
Former Minnesota City Resident on Collegiate Synchronized Skating Team

Zoe Krageschmidt, a senior at Minnesota Virtual Academy, merited a place on the Synchronized Skating Team of Adrian College which she will attend in Adrian, Michigan. Krageschmidt is the daughter of Dale and Susan Krageschmidt now living in Dakota. She was honored this spring by the U.S. Skating Association for her high school personal and team achievements. She plans to major in exercise science and pre-athletic training. (*Winona post, May 14, 2016*)

While living in Minnesota City, Zoe constructed a binder of photos and research/commentary on the 2007 flood; she contributed this material to the Archives. Written and photographed three years after the flood, the material is positive in tone: "The Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and nature have done a lot to repair Garvin Brook in my neighborhood... These are some photos I have taken that show how Garvin Brook and the area have recovered." Two poignant photos are one of the Garvin Brook Bridge Marker lying flat on the ground and one of a set of front steps to a house, the house having been washed away. This one Zoe titled "Steps to Nowhere." The interesting collection of photos can be viewed at the Archives.

MCHA Members Local Parade Leaders

Ed and Judy Maus, MCHA members and providers of the caroling horse drawn wagon each December, were the Parade Grand Marshals for the Winona Steamboat days Parade on June 19. Subsequently, also announced as grand marshals were Richard Adank and MCHA member Gale Hill representing Winona VFW.



Gale Hill
(MCHA photo)

Gale Hill was born in Wyattville in 1925. He attended grade school in Deering Valley, one of the first area schools. In 1943 while at Senior High, he was drafted into the US Army and deployed to France. Gale was in the Battle of the Bulge and was awarded the Combat Infantryman Badge and the Bronze Star for Valor. Gale and his wife Bonnie Hinkley, who died in 2008, had two children. Gale worked for Coca Cola, Home Gas, and the U.S. Postal Service. Gale lives in Lake City. He volunteers at the Wabasha County Historical Society and has been active there as a board member. Gale attends many MCHA presentations, has contributed some Archival photos and mementos of the "old Minnesota City"

area. He is an interesting conversationalist. (*Some material from Winona Post, June 15, 2016*)

Richard Adank was a former Minnesota City School principal.

Whalen's Cove Hosts Friendship Wagon Train June Stop at Minnesota City

Jim and Virginia Whalen, owners of Whalen's Cove in Minnesota City, hosted the Friendship Wagon Train riders, who started their 28th 110 mile journey at their facility. The group rides through Minnesota for one week in the summer going from city to city soliciting money to help fund Camp Winnebago. The Winona Lions provided breakfast for the group. The Whalens hope the group will make this a stop on next year's tour also. The group funds Camp Winnebago, a summer camp for children with disabilities.

Janice Tschumper Drazkowski Contributes Photos to Archives

Former Minnesota Citian Janice Drazkowski has contributed several photos to the archives. They include this much sought after “proof” of the Gas Station in the location of the current Post Office. The station was run by Roy Tschumper who is in the photo; Janice believes the photo was taken around the mid nineteen thirties.

Other photos contributed are of Mill Street near the Catholic Church with the bell tower and another of a baseball team with identification of individuals. These will be added to appropriate files. Janice wrote: “ Roy was my father and Elsie Witt Tschumper was my mother. I spent a lot of time at the station. My mother was a crafty person and she decided to put her talent to use for profit. She had painted wooden lawn decorations for lawn and gardens and used the station as her ‘workshop’. Dad would use the saw and cut out the figures (Dutch boy and girl, animals, flowers and other designs.) He would then put a metal stake in them and Mom would paint them. Sometimes she would let me do some painting. She would place them in the ground around the station with a for sale sign. They were a hit!”

Also about the gas station, Janet Seabern wrote “Bob Fleming lived at our cabin with us for six years and ran our store (across from current Whitman Dam area). Then Dad got Uncle Bob a job at Roy Tschumper’s gas station.

Bob stayed with us until they found a place, then moved by the City Nite Club in that green house for a while. Then Bob got into carrying the mail until he got ill and went to the Watkins Home. He liked the gas station very much, saw a lot of people and loved to talk. It was close to his home so he could run over for coffee. He always said us kids would go and set with him a lot. He also liked the mail route.”



Roy Tschumper in front of the Gas Station which in the 1930s occupied the current Post Office Site.

Winona County Century Farms Reflect Agricultural History of Area

Every year the Winona County Fair and other agencies honor farms which have had continuous ownership by one family for 100 years or longer. The farms must be fifty acres in size. Familiar to many newsletter readers are these locations and the years of the presentations. Gardner- Brom, 1976. Russell and Edith Smith Church, Reid and Linda Church, 1976. These were two of the first honorees. Others include Ed and Judy Roper Maus, 1998; Ed and Nora Becker Butenhoff, 2002; Jim and Shirley Yarolimek Speltz, 2002; Agnes Jilk Evanson, 2004; Gayle Goetzman, 2014.

With the decline in the numbers of farms, the local “Family Night on the Farm” in Winona County has drawn increasing numbers providing opportunities for persons with no family farm connections to still observe where milk comes from and how corn grows.

MCHA Extends Sympathy

- To the family of Theo Nash Hudson, son of Brad and Vanessa Hudson of Winona who was born silently on Thursday, June 9, 2016. Maternal grandparents are Jim and Kathy Schoen.
- To the family and friends of Kevin Berhow, 58, Minnesota City, who died on June 30 in Winona. Burial was in Oakland Cemetery.

Congratulations

- To the Minnesota City 8-U baseball team which surpassed Goodview Red, St. Charles and Goodview Grey to win the Rollingsone 8-U tournament on June 26 in Rollingsone. (*Winona Post, July 20, 2016*)

Belated Thank You

- To County Recorder Bob Bambenek for assistance with securing materials related to the Ellsworth Mill Research. Bob’s name was inadvertently omitted from the listing in the June newsletter.

Denzer Family Reunion

The 93rd annual Denzer Reunion was held June 26, 2016 at Farmer's Community Park with 58 persons from thirty families in attendance. A silent auction was held. A potluck meal was served. Games were played by the children. The oldest person in attendance was Lola Denzer; the youngest was Avery Bloom. There was one death, six births and two marriages since the last reunion.

The Denzer family descends from Christian Denzer who was born in Dannerfels, Germany on April 25, 1802. He married Barbara Englebercher on February 23, 1824. In the early spring of 1836 the couple left their home with their seven children, traveled by wagon to LaHavre, France and sailed to New York. They then went by wagon and canal to Dover, Ohio, arriving on July 11, 1836.

In the spring of 1856 their son Christ and wife Margaret traveled by boat down the Ohio River, then up the Mississippi to Minnesota City, then west to Rollingstone and laid claim to several hundred acres by homesteading. There they had five more children.

Son Fred married Barbara Amos on March 13, 1881, traveled to Casselton, North Dakota to homestead land. Later they went back to Rollingstone and resided on a farm in Minnesota City. Their son John was born in Casselton, North Dakota, but came to Minnesota City. He married Esther Whetstone on October 20, 1909 and resided on a farm just north of Minnesota City. Son Neil was born on September 24, 1927 and married Clare Rader on November 18, 1950. The line of descent is Christian, Christ, Fred, John, Neil. (Claire Denzer submitted this information).

July 30 Jilk Family Reunion at Arches Community Park

Family members of August and Sophia Jilk, Stockton Valley, held their annual reunion on July 30. Two of the fourteen children of the couple survive: Agnes Jilk Evanson, Winona, who is 103, and Sister Marie Louise, S.Sp. S., Techny, Illinois who is 94. Lillian Lewendowski, wife of Albert (deceased) lives in Kenosha, Wi. Family patriarch August Jilk was one of the petitioners of the Winona bishop for the establishment of the Catholic Church in Minnesota City in 1925. He was also active in School affairs. Sophia died in 1933, the result of cancer. The Stockton home site, occupied by Nora Becker Butenhoff and Edwin Butenhoff Jr., the son of Sophia Jilk Butenhoff and Edwin Butenhoff, was named a century farm in 2002. Since that time, ownership was transferred to Michael and Vanessa Butenhoff; Michael is a son of Nora and Edwin. Each year a different family hosts the picnic. Hosts this year were Butenhoffs—Edwin (Nora), Delores (Wittenberg), Robert (Joanne), Gerald, Theresa (Siebenaler) and Patricia (Verdick). One Butenhoff sibling, Mary Ann (Van Ripper), has died. The reunion picnic aspect most enjoyed by many young people of the group is Garvin Brook Creek which runs through the park.



Margaret (Sr. Marie Louise) Jilk on her 8th birthday in 1929 by Jilk Homestead farm bridge.

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 and David Eckert for keeping the website updated.