

# MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 13, Issue 6: September 2018

*“Minnesota City: A Beautiful Legacy, A Beautiful Future, A Beautiful Tomorrow.”*

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

September 8:  
Saturday, 9:30 a.m.; Monthly MCHA meeting; Historic First Baptist Church, 140 Mill Street, Minnesota City.

September 27:  
Thursday, 6:30 p.m.; Minnesota City Community Readers; City Hall, 149 Mill Street; Selection: *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* by Thomas Hardy.

### “Go Green!”

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

## Annual Historic First Baptist Church August 27 Summer Service Lauds Restoration Project and People

“The Historic Church Foundation of Minnesota City (formerly the Baptist Ladies Aid) is pleased to announce the completion of another project at the First Baptist Church on Mill Street. The circa 1875 church recently had new front steps with a handicap ramp and sturdy railings installed. The old steps had long outlived their usefulness and the old railings could no longer be made secure due to crumbling concrete.

Previously there was no handicap entrance. This new addition makes the entrance safer, is more aesthetically pleasing and allows access to all to the church building. All new landscaping and northern blue rock was placed around the steps, ramp and under the front windows. Low maintenance, hardy, attractive plants and a weeping white spruce were planted. New grass was seeded along the steps, the ramp and on the boulevard. The work was done by Winona Nursery. These improvements were planned and supported by the eleven members of the Historic Church Foundation. Community members, foundation members and family of past members donated funds for this enhancement of a local landmark.” (Submitted by Nancy Volkart O’Malley)

A large number of family and friends of the eleven Ladies of the Historic Church Foundation of Minnesota City gathered on Sunday, August 27 to applaud the people and projects that have occupied ideas and energies of this inspiring group of individuals. Organist for the service was Daniel Lewis and the officiant was Elder Neal Hunt. Corinne Zierfus welcomed guests. Jean Gardner gave the report on Ladies Aid Activities, including some historical dates and the menu directed in bylaws for First Thursday monthly meetings. She welcomed back Gen O’Grady (ill for several months). Gen O’Grady enumerated activities of the Minnesota City Historical Association at the church in the past year and expressed gratitude for use of the building, including Hometown Harvest and Community Caroling.



(photo by Christina Ferden)



### Brakes need work??

Attention garnering vehicle at the Bunke Building on Mill Street.

## Standing Invitations:

- to attend regular meetings of MCHA. These meetings are usually held at 140 Mill Street.
- to respond to newsletter content. Please send additions, corrections, suggestions, calendar information (meetings, reunions, birthdays, other significant dates) etc. to [mgogrady@embarqmail.com](mailto: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.

## Minnesota City Historical Association August Meeting

The regular monthly meeting of MCHA was held at the now handicap accessible historical church edifice on Mill Street. After observation and commendation of the cement work and landscaping that has been completed, meeting attendees considered the agenda. Topics of discussion included a possible name change of Minnesota City Day to Minnesota City Community Celebration, judged to be a more inviting inclusive term. Additional details developed by Wallace Burley on the school bell housing were examined and possible topics for presentations, walking, and driving tour sites were recorded. A best wishes for recovery card was signed by attendees for Janet Seabern, a longtime MCHA meeting attendee who is recovering from a fall. Jean Gardner described details of the Sunday afternoon annual service planned for the church on August 26.

## Oakland Cemetery Visitors Connect with Ancestors' History

In July, we spoke with two individuals who were visiting a grave at Oakland. We were able to give them information from the archives about their relatives—Schultz and Drussell -- that we had acquired several years ago when Ruth Drussell Brendel visited here. Her grandmother Minnie Schultz died from chronic myocarditis. She was born in Germany in 1862 and died in 1935 and is buried in Oakland. M. L. Donehower was the registrar, P. A. Mattison was the attending physician and Carl Breitlow was the undertaker. This information was in the Birth and Death Register that is in the archives. She was four years old when she arrived in America. The Sens' left Prussia because of a plague. A three week sailing trip took them to Quebec. They then traveled across New York and westward until they came to Lewiston where Minnie's father earned enough to purchase a plot in Norton Township, one mile past Rollingstone. Minnie married Michael Schultz in 1883. Here they built a sod house and then cleared land and built a frame house and barn. The visitors at the cemetery were a cousin from Chicago and a Winona Schultz relative. Schultzes and Drussells are buried in Oakland.



Schultz (Sens) grave in Oakland Cemetery

*Autumn is a second spring  
when every leaf is a flower.*  
— Albert Camus



## SEPTEMBER *Helen Hunt Jackson*

*The golden-rod is yellow; The corn is turning brown;  
The trees in apple orchards With fruit are bending down.*

*The gentian's bluest fringes Are curling in the sun;  
In dusty pods the milkweed Its hidden silk has spun.*

*The sedges flaunt their harvest, In every meadow nook;  
And asters by the brook-side Make asters in the brook.*

*From dewy lanes at morning The grapes' sweet odors rise;  
At noon the roads all flutter With yellow butterflies.*

*By all these lovely tokens September days are here,  
With summer's best of weather, And autumn's best of cheer.*

## **Quilters of St. Paul's Parish Continue Art/Craft**

The July 29 bulletin of Holy Trinity, St. Paul's, St. Mary's described a financial contribution of the quilters of St. Paul's Parish. Quilters named were Judy Hohensee, Jackie Denzer, Clare Denzer, Doris Evanson, Rosie Benke, Joanne Fritz, Alice Hall, and Nancy Rollinger. In 2002, Jennifer Evanson interviewed the quilters of St. Paul's Church in Minnesota City, for inclusion in the Riverway publication *Old Wise Tales*. Women quilting at this time were Doris Evanson, Jackie Denzer, Clare Denzer, and Judy Hohensee. They had been quilting from thirty five to fifty years. "The women say their favorite parts about quilting are visiting with each other, giving their quilts to the poor or to persons who have had fires or floods, knowing that people appreciate the finished product, seeing the finished quilt itself, or even never knowing until they are done what the quilt will look like. It is a hobby, it keeps them busy, they enjoy it, they give the quilts as gifts, they are creative, and they just like the history and everything about it. People have been quilting for many years, forever actually," one woman said. Settlers had to quilt to keep warm. These women enjoy working with the material, looking at the beauty of the quilt, and the time with their friends."

Early *Winona Republican Herald* news stories carried accounts of quilting groups in Minnesota City.

"Mrs. George Church entertained Thursday afternoon at a quilting party. The guests were Mrs. William Kloetzke, Mrs. Adolph Kloetzke, Mrs. Pauline Witt, Mrs. Herbert Witt and Mrs. Rose Saehler." January 17, 1931

"A large number of relatives and friends met at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Valentine Denzer Thursday and spent all day quilting, complimenting their daughter, Miss Edna Denzer of Chatfield, who is soon to be a bride." March 12, 1929

"Mrs. Albert Ramlow entertained at a quilting party Thursday afternoon for Mrs. Michael Schultz, Mrs. Pauline Witt, Mrs. George McDougall, Mrs. Emily Norbye, Mrs. A. Kloetzke. Lunch was served." October 29, 1927.

When the Burley Family and the Denzer Family gave presentations for MCHA, both included displays of family historical items, and in both cases, these included quilts.

## **September and School Beginnings Recalled**

Caroline Smith, one of the first teachers in Minnesota City, in a speech given at the last meeting in the old school (Maybury Building), made these comments which currently evoke varied emotions related to the array of changes in Rollingstone and Minnesota City that have occurred in intervening years in both villages.

"There were untold hardships awaiting the Rollingstone Colony as it was called and which settled near Minnesota City, but suffering and privation did not prevent these sturdy pioneers from attempting to give their children an education under most trying circumstances. However, the school came into existence under rather favorable influences because a remarkably fine type of men and women had left comfortable eastern homes to establish a new home in a Minnesota wilderness. The heritage of the Minnesota City School is therefore of high order since the founders of the school knew full well the value of an education which had its beginning under difficulties some 85 years ago in an unknown territory. Miss Ann Orton, later Mrs. Houck, was the teacher in the first organized school in Winona County and the honor of establishing the first school in this county belongs to Minnesota City." (Winona Republican Herald, May 21, 1938).

## Whetstone Family Reunion held at Farmers' Community Park

(Submitted by Susan Althoff)

The bi-annual reunion of the Whetstone family was held on Saturday, August 4, 2018 at Farmers Community Park in the Green Lodge. Those attending are the descendants of David and Nancy Whetstone who came to Winona County from Indiana in 1855 and settled in Warren Township, Lewiston area. They relocated to Minnesota City in 1882.

A potluck was held at noon. Those traveling to attend were Chad and Jamie Ellinghuysen from Coon Rapids, Pamela McNeill from Eden Prairie and Eric Whetstone and family, Minneapolis. The honor of head of the family went to Audrey Smith, Winona. The two youngest members attending were great-granddaughter of Jerry Whetstone and granddaughter of Wesley and Brenda Whetstone. There was one deceased family member, Stanley Whetstone, since the last reunion. (Stanley and his family were former Minnesota City residents).

The theme for the reunion was the "Great Whetstone Get Together" fashioned after the Minnesota State Fair. Blue, Red, White and Honorable Mention ribbons were handed out for items brought to share from the vegetable and flower gardens, homemade crafts and sewing, canning and meat/fish smoking. Clever ideas were presented for "something on a stick" and many pictures, scrapbooks, memorabilia lined up on the tables. A group picture was taken and the day ended with a parade and ice cream.

The Grand Prize winners received a rosette ribbon and ticket to the Minnesota State Fair. Winning entries were: Horticultural Building and International Bazaar, Kathy Theisen, Mazappa; Culinary Award, Brian Whetstone of Mazappa; History and Heritage Center, Susan Althoff, Lewiston; Coliseum and Parade, Mary Whetstone, Mazappa and Parade People's Choice, Chloe Whetstone, Minneapolis.

Judges were Brian Whetstone, Pat Theisen, Bruce Whetstone, all of Mazappa, Lucas Whetstone, Minneapolis, Wes and Brenda Whetstone and Joyce Betz, of Winona.

## Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church of Town Norton (Rollingstone) observes the 140th Anniversary

The congregation of Norton Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church observed the 140th anniversary of the congregation and of the church building on August 19. A social hour followed the service. Charles Bonow was the guest organist for the service. The church is located at 19246 County Road 27 out of Rollingstone; David Eckert, Minnesota City, is the church pastor. (Information from Winona Daily News, August 11).

## MCHA extends sympathy to the friends and family of :

- Sharon A. Googins, 72, of Minnesota City, who died on July 31, 2018 at her home

Anyone who wishes to donate to or 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.

### MCHA invites readers to submit

dates for the newsletter of family reunions, milestone birthdays, and other events about which readers wish to share information.

Check [www.minnesotacity.org](http://www.minnesotacity.org) or use the QR code. Submit information to ([mgogrady@embarqmail.com](mailto:mgogrady@embarqmail.com))

