



Austin-Whittemore House

HOME OF THE *Clay County Historical Society*

15 Austin Street, Vermillion SD 57069

605-624-8266 / www.cchssd.org / claycohistory@yahoo.com

Quarterly Newsletter

Fall 2015

Inside this issue:

President's Message	1&2
Highlights of Minutes	2
Dakota Days	3
From the Desk	4
Acquisitions	4
Thank You Members	5

Board of Directors

President	Maxine Johnson
Vice President	Caitlin Collier
Secretary	Judy Sullivan
Treasurer	Luann Ouellette
Past President	Joe Hoffman
Life-time Directors:	
	Cleo Erickson
	Ann Severson
Elected Directors:	
	Gary Bottolfson
	Dan Christophson
	Art Rusch
	Marvin Walz

Executive Director;
Wess Pravecek
Newsletter Editor:
Judy Sullivan

Message from CCHS President Maxine Johnson

It seems very strange that in the midst of this beautiful late summer weather along with the most welcome rain, that we have to begin planning in earnest for the upcoming fall and winter holiday events. If it weren't so much fun to have these events, it would be downright hard work. The Clay County Historical Society/Austin -Whittemore House have both had a great year of activities, visitors, and use. Our beautiful historical house has been the site of meetings, wedding showers, family reunions, impromptu tours, and visitors to our old/new one-room schoolhouse. From the ice cream social to the small bridal shower, our house looked wonderful thanks to the efforts of Judy Sullivan and Wess Pravecek. By the way, after much discussion, Wess now has a title: Executive Director. That's really just a very nice title for "someone who does whatever someone else wants them to do including dusting under the furniture"!

Our latest visible addition or improvement to our grounds is the sidewalk that connects the school to the House and gives a nice winding pathway to the front door of the school. Thanks to Gene Hawkins, Gary Bottolfson, Marvin Walz, Jim Stone, and Ross Stone for the planning and actual work of installing this improved walkway.



Otherwise, there have been many improvements made to things that don't show: plumbing, heating/cooling, electrical issues, computer updates, and all those things that keep a house in good shape. There has been lots of

furniture rearranging and more to come so be sure to come to our events so you can keep up with all that is going on behind those old brick walls.

At our board meetings, we do three things each month: review the past month, plan for what is coming up whether it's Dakota Day, Tanager Volunteer Day or

a tour; and generally think about how best we can fulfill our mission of having this wonderful reminder of our past always to be ready to be enjoyed. One of our ever present problems/discussion/worry is how to raise dollars to ensure that we are doing the best we can. One of the best ways to help take care of this problem is to grow our membership; so, if you are not a member at the present time, strongly consider joining. Remember, you might have a grandchild who has recently really enjoyed a tour to the past when they visited the schoolhouse and got to see what it was like, I suppose for their great-great grandparents, to be a student in grade school so very long ago. We can't appreciate our present unless we can see what has brought us here. Even though the one-room Wisconsin schoolhouse where I spent the first eight years of my education was a little larger and a bit more modern than our log schoolhouse, whenever I go into that little building, I still remember the thrill of going to school as a small child and it is so much fun to see and hear the impressions of these modern-day children. I can't help but wonder what their children will think about the schools and education these children are receiving. My favorite is still the little kindergartner who was listing all the things "this school didn't even have – no water, no bathroom, etc., etc., and not even a computer!" As these little ones grow older and learn about how things were in the early days of Vermillion, I can't help but think that they will be very, very impressed by the stupendous progress and accomplishments [that I sometimes find very scary, i.e., spread sheet] and a little thankful, too.

So while we're getting ready to help you enjoy and celebrate the holiday season coming up, you be ready to take part in all the hoopla that fall brings to us here in Vermillion every year. We will look forward to a beautiful tour of homes, delicious offerings at our annual Sweets 'n Treats and hope that lots of organizations use our lovely house for holiday gatherings and meetings. In the meantime, enjoy each day and please come visit – I think Wess could even find you a cup of coffee and, on a good day, find a cookie or two to enjoy with you.

Maxine

Highlights of the CCHS Minutes, starting with the fiscal year April 1, 2015. Highlights of the minutes will be printed quarterly in the following newsletters.

April 20, 2015

- Ideas for fund raising – cookbook, sell tickets on a larger item
- Board will meet April 27, 8:00 am to clean house, yard, and schoolhouse.
- Jim Stone nominated for Governor's Award
- A copy of an old Fire Department photo will be presented

given to Fire Department

April 23, 2015 – Annual Meeting

- Potluck followed by the annual financial report.
- Annual events have been scheduled, Ice Cream Social, Tour of Homes and Sweets & Treats
- Caitlin Collier elected Vice-president – all other directors remained the same
- "Appraisal Fair" – Joe appraised antiques and collectibles that members had brought along

May 19, 2015

- Reviewed records pertaining to the corporation and the Sletwold bequest
- Discussion on leak in bathroom and the possibility of a restroom downstairs
- Board agreed to stay with current alarm system
- Cement pad in front of school house–estimate \$2400

- Laptop donated

June 15, 2015

- "Red Hat" group from Orange City toured the house.
- A wedding has been booked for June 2016
- Committees ready for Ice Cream Social June 18th

July 20, 2015

- Bridal shower held at the house
- Report on furnace problems and what was purchased and fixed- total \$7409 to James Heating and Cooling
- Friday-December 4, 2015, Tour of Homes; Saturday-December 12, 2015, Sweets & Treats

August 17, 2015

- Pleasant Valley Ladies had luncheon at house
- Brown re-union program held at house
- Catered-in barbeque for a group
- Monica (Café Brule) donated a buffet
- Sidewalk from house to school house- \$3253.87 (Hawkins-\$2893.17, Herren-Schempp-\$360.70)
- Tom Thaden is putting together a brochure on the old log school house
- Discussion on grant to make house handicap accessible

Membership:	Individual / \$25	Family / \$40	Institutional / \$75	Lifetime / \$250
--------------------	--------------------------	----------------------	-----------------------------	-------------------------

ANNUAL DAKOTA DAY BIG TIME

Proved to Be a Big Success in Spite of Many

Handicaps to Be Overcome

Dakota Republican – October 18, 1917

Despite war conditions and kindred elements the University students, alumni, town people, and visitors enjoyed a peppy Dakota Day. The celebration undeniably came up to expectations, for the variegated aspects of the numerous floats in the parade aroused favorable comment. Though the parade was late in being assembled, the delay, no doubt, made it better appreciated.

Bee Boller, chosen by the student body to be Miss Dakota, rode on a huge white float preceded by the band. Miss Dakota, dressed in white with white furs, pink roses, and liberty cap, won admiration.

The parade was of uncommon interest and attracted hundreds by its ingenuity and cleverness of creation. Honors were divided between the swift gray and red hospital ship constructed by the Medics and the Kaiser converter, which invention rolled the emperor up a continually moving spiked belt, past a spanking device which was calculated to hurry Wilhelm along into the mysterious interior to at last emerge as a string of brilliantly colored sausages. The yells of merriment provoked were sufficient praise for the cleverness of the Engineers who have certainly enhanced their reputation.

Two patriotic autos with their liberty bond posters attracted attention, as did also a bevy of girls in a much ornamented float for the Sophomores. The human flag which carried out the parade idea of patriotism was formed by the many East Hall girls dressed in red, white, or blue robes. They marched behind Miss Dakota and were followed by three men bearing standards with the names of the enlisted men in print. The faculty, in caps and gowns, appeared in a float whose chief ornament was a huge golden eagle.

Adam Kayser with the "kaiser's goat" showed a solitary looking goat with a German helmet on its head and a placard with the words "The Kaiser's Goat." The Junior-Senior float was original and displayed a variety of stunt features. Lydia Mueller as the Goddess of Liberty, clad in a garment of bunting was the center of attraction. Several girls dressed as men showed how the women were going to work after the war. Hilda Hooper represented a painter. Irene Ward raked hay and Cora VanBeek lathered and shaved.

The comedy element was ably furnished by "Gills" as the inimitable Charlie Chaplin and his band. Not to be outdone were Gertrude McGee and Clara Olston as vivid clowns. They finished the parade which wound up and around the city streets from the Law building, the usual starting place.

In the afternoon came the game at which "Billy" Milton attracted the audience with his singing. The dance in the evening drew a large crowd of visitors as well as students who pronounced it as one of the best ever given. Altogether Dakota Day was a success as attested by the tired, happy crowd when the day ended.

Submitted by Tom Thaden, Member of the Clay County Historical Society

<p>We are always looking for interesting stories about families or happenings in the communities in the past. If you would like to share, please contact the house.</p>

From the Desk.....

I'm sitting here at my desk in this beautiful 1882 house working on my house news for you and I'm listening to a soft rain come down along with the sound of a train whistle below the hill. We live in a beautiful community that still embraces everyday sights and sounds that our ancestors probably enjoyed 130 years ago.

As the summer is drawing to a close, I wanted to give you a little recap of what's been "cooking" in the house the past few months. We enjoyed hosting family reunions, the ice cream social, a bridal shower, a Lutheran women's mystery trip, a Red Hat Society visit (from Orange City, Iowa), private parties, child care center visitors and many visitors who were curious about the Austin-Whittemore house and the log school house. I also had the pleasure of greeting and visiting with folks who were looking for information about family and/or property history. I'm quick to let people know that I don't have all of the answers but I know a lot of people who can help find some of the answers to questions when I'm stymied. I learn new things every day and I'm thankful to my friends who have such a vast knowledge of our county's history.



Fall activities will include visiting with the Dr. Jing An's USD Social Studies class and organizing student tours, hosting teacher meetings, preparing for the annual Tour of Homes (December 4), organizing the Sweets & Treats bake sale (December 12), not to mention visiting with more community organizations about building partnerships. **Here's where I want to invite you to think about using the Austin-Whittemore House for family gatherings, Christmas parties, meetings, weddings, showers, etc..** It's a beautiful house that deserves to have people spending time in it. Call me if you'd like more information.

I want to thank the board of directors for their support. They are great at sharing information, brainstorming, swinging a hammer, doing dishes, baking goodies, and always letting me bounce ideas off of them and never rolling their eyes! I want to personally thank Judy Sullivan, CCHS secretary and super "partner in crime". Not only does she fulfill her duties as secretary, but the time she puts into decorating, sorting, and coming up with great ideas, is invaluable.

Thanks to all of you for your membership. Your support is what keeps the Austin-Whittemore House functioning and the history of Clay County available to all who are interested. Think about giving a yearly membership as a gift this holiday season!

Please feel free to contact me at 605-624-8266 or at claycohistory@yahoo.com. House hours are Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. If you're interested in visiting at a time outside of regular hours, let me know. Winter hours are subject to change so please be sure to call ahead of a visit.....Wess

THANK YOU FOR THE ACQUISITIONS!

*Ann Severson Men's shaving set Floor lamp from the Waldorf Hotel *Vermillion Methodist Church Cabinets for the kitchen	*Monica Iverson Mid 1900's buffet for the dining room *Leo Powell Pumpkins, gourds, and corn to decorate the house
---	--

Trivia.....The first year Vermillion held a Christmas gathering was 1870. The first archaeological excavation was held at the Austin-Whittemore House in September 1975. The "dig" was sponsored by the W.H. Over Museum and the Clay County Historical Society.

THANK YOU TO OUR MEMBERS!

Your financial support is crucial to enable us to keep the doors open as we strive to preserve the past and forge into the future. Our sincere appreciation for caring about and nurturing our heritage!

Abbott	Jim & Colette	Hanson	Wayne & Beverly	Osborne	Kent & Cindy
Abild	Richard	Harnois	Maryln	Ouellette	Luann
All	Priscilla	Hasse	Paul M.	Ouellette	Marie
An	Jing	Hawkins	Gene	Paulson	Emogene
Anderson	Edis	Heimstra	Maria	Peterson	Doug & Jennifer
Anthofer	Larry & Trudy	Heine	Bud & Doris	Peterson	Jeanne
Armstrong	June	Hennies	Jay & Mary Lea	Powell	Jack & Lisa Ketcham
Ashmore	Jeanine & Keith	Hensley	Gloria & Bill	Powell	Kay
Bank of the West		Hesla	Alda B.	Pravecek	Wess
Benson	Joyce	Hoffman	Joe & Shawn	Pressing Matters Printing	
Bottolfson	Beverly	Holter	Joan		Lindy/Paulet
Bottolfson	Gary	Horner	Terri	Raab	Shirley
Bottolfson	Michael	Humpert	Barbara & Fred	Ranney	Wm & Doris Peterson
Bowen	Connie Smith	Hurowitz	Margaret & Lori	Remmes	Geri
Bowers	Jim & Judy	Iles	Derric & Irma	Roetman	George
Boysen	Troy	Jensen	Mary Ellen	Rusch	Arthur
Brown	Kevin & Cindy	Jepsen	Marianne	Schafer	Donna
Bruyer	Nick	Johnson	Allen & Maxine	Schlenker	George & Evelyn
Campbell	Barbara	Johnson	Dale & Lisa	Severson	Ann
Chadima	Sarah&Dick	Johnson	Jeffery L & Virginia P	Shumaker	Sandi
	Hammond	Johnson	Jerry & Betty	Simmons	Tom & Lin Quah
Chaney	Cyndy	Johnson	Ronald A	Slattery	Michael & Jane
Christopherson	Dan & Gloria	Johnson	Tim & Barb	Solomon	Crystal
Christopherson	Deanie	Jorgensen	Delores	Stammer	Dave & Nikki
Christopherson	Leone	Jurgensen	Laurie	Stewart	Glennis
Clay Co. Hist. Pres. Comm.		Kaufman	Fern	Stone	Jim
Clay County Commission		Knutson	Wayne & Esther	Sullivan	Judy
Clem	Alan	Kogel	Linda	Swanson	Beverly
Collier	Caitlin	Kronaizl	Barbara	Thaden	Tom
CorTrust Bank		Kryger	Marion	Tieman	Rod & Joanne
Dahlin	Gary & Brenda	Kugler	Jane & Roger	Turner	Eileen
Dahlman	Dorothy	Lancrain	Don	Tuve	Susan & Douglas
Dakota Hospital Fdn		Laughlin Nelson	Michelle	Uhl	Jane & Randy
Davis	Marshall Brook &	Lavin	Tom & Sandy	Vann	Wm & Janet
	Barb	Lynch	Sylvia J.	Verm. Fed. Credit Union	
Dickenson	Sandra Lea	Marsh	Jack	Vermillion Cemetery Assn.	
Donahoe	Sharon	Martin	Catherine D.	Vermillion Civic Council	
Edelen	Mary Beaty	McCahren	Nancy	Wagner	Lyle
England/Christensen	Joan & Orla	Mehaffey	Anita	Walz	Marvin
Erickson	Cleo	Merrigan	Mary	Whitehorn	Ken
Fabricius	Eleanor	Merrigan	Nick & Mary	Williams	Bruce
Fallan	Robert	Miller	Marlys	Williams	Jeanette
First Bank & Trust		Miner	Jane	Wilson	Jerry & Norma
Girard	Jean	Mount	Gwen	Wilson	Jim
Goddard	Maureen	Muenster	Ted & Karen	Wingen	Theresa & Pat
Gors	John & Patricia	Nelson	Julie & Dave	Wylie	Rev. L. James
Groon	Brenda	Nelson	Michelle		
Hanson	Amond	Nygaard	Lois		

Clay County Historical Society
15 Austin Street
Vermillion, SD 57069

**The Austin-Whittemore House is available for family gatherings,
Christmas parties, meetings, weddings, showers, etc..
Call 624-8266 to schedule your event.**

Remember to check Clay County Historical Website for news and events.

<http://www.cchssd.org/>

We are on facebook too!

**A-W House is open:
Monday/Wednesday/Friday
10am-2pm**

Thank you for your support!