

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 2016

Interesting Notes from Our Past

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1869- The Old Settlers Organization was formed, with annual gatherings to be held on the anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans.

1872- The first community or municipal Christmas tree was put up in Vermillion in the C.I.K. (cash is king) Building, the only place big enough for such an event. J.C & W.G. Bower went to Nebraska and cut the top off a Cedar tree and C. E. Prentice acted as Santa Claus while Linda Bower played the melodeon for the exercises. It was the event of the season, with many of those present being young, unmarried men.

1875- A devastating fire destroyed a considerable portion of Vermillion's business district.

1879- The stairs leading up the bluff are being repaired for the summer season. The City could make money by charging 25 cents per couple, per evening.

1881- An ice jam has developed on the Missouri River and water is beginning to flood Vermillion. The last train arrived in Vermillion before the tracks were flooded out. Following the devastating flood, a decision was made by City leaders to move Vermillion up on top of the bluff.

1882-Clay County voters approved a \$10,000 bond for 20 acres and a new building to become the University campus. Work will start on layout of the University grounds soon, and then workers will begin planting trees.

1883- The corner stone for Old Main has been laid and will become the first building on the University campus.

1885- A law was passed prohibiting the sale of liquor within 3 miles of the University campus, effective July 1.

1888- Vermillion High School held its first formal commencement with 4 boys and 7 girls graduating.

We have lots more interesting information like this available at the Austin-Whittemore House! We would be happy to visit with you and help research our historical files. Thank you sincerely for supporting CCHS!

Best Regards,
Dan Christopherson
President

Events Coming Up

Appraisal Fair
October 27

Tour of Homes
December 2

Sweet & Treats
December 10

Our next event see poster
Please join us...it will be fun!

Board of Directors 2016-17

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| President | Dan Christopherson |
| Vice President | Glory Hensley |
| Recording Secretary | Lisa Johnson |
| Membership Secretary | Ruth Bylander |
| Treasurer | Caitlin Collier |
| Past President | Maxine Johnson |
| Life-time Directors: | Cleo Erickson |
| | Ann Severson |
| Elected Directors: | Erin Burrow |
| | Barb Campbell |
| | Art Rusch |
| | Judy Sullivan |
| | Marvin Walz |

Executive Director:
Wess Pravecek

CCHPC Representative:
Jim Stone

Newsletter/Web Editor:
Judy Sullivan

Antique Appraisal Fair



The Clay County Historical Society will be hosting an "antique appraisal fair" with local antique appraiser Joe Hoffman. He will appraise your item(s) and give you the approximate market value.

Everyone is welcome...you do not need to be a member of the Clay County Historical Society for a free appraisal. Refreshments.

**Where: Austin-Whittemore House
15 Austin St., Vermillion**

When: Thursday, October 27

Time: 7:00 p.m.

If you have questions contact the A-W House 624-8266
or claycohistory@yahoo.com



The Annual Christmas Tour of Homes is Friday, December 2, 2016 from 4:30-7:30 pm with the reception at the Austin-Whittemore House, 15 Austin Street starting at 5:00 pm. This year's reception will be co-chaired by Joe Hoffman and Lisa Johnson. The CCHS Board of Directors will be present to assist guests at this event and cordially invite everyone to enjoy the Tour and Reception. Members will soon be busy decorating the A-W House for the Holiday season. **This year's theme is "Home for Christmas"**.

Please check CCHS website <http://www.cchssd.org/events/>, facebook (search for "Clay County Historical Society") or the local newspaper at a later date for a list of the homes that will be on the tour.

Tickets may be purchased at the Austin-Whittemore House, Nook 'Cranny, Vermillion Beauty Shop and Davis Drug in Vermillion from November 18 until the date of the Tour. The price is \$15 per ticket unless you would like to use the City Transit bus as transportation to and from the homes which has been arranged for by the Board. In this case, please see Wess Pravecek at the A-W House and the price will be \$20. Hosts will check off their home on the ticket as guests enter their homes. This ticket is also to be used for the reception.

You may contact the Clay County Historical Society at 605-624-8266 or claycohistory@yahoo.com if you have additional questions. We hope to see you at the Christmas tour!

Gloria Hensley
CCHS Vice-President

Highlights of the CCHS Minutes May - August 2016

- May 24, 2016 - Special Meeting to Discuss Priorities
- May 17, 2016 - Wess reported that 80 first graders visited the log school house in May. The Vermillion City Council met at the AWH in April.
- June 21, 2016 - Jim is done working on the windows in the cupola. A savings of \$215.00. Total cost (under budget) \$1,449.00.
- July 19, 2016 - Hayden Smith reported on the cost of insurance coverage. Current premium - \$2071.00
- August 16, 2016 - Marion Kryger donated a new American flag for outside. Reminder of Music Monday Aug 22, 7-8:30 pm. Dawn and Kirk Sorensen are playing.
- September Minutes have not yet been approved.

To See Full Minutes go to the [CCHS Web Page](http://www.cchssd.org/minutes/)

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

WHAT YEAR WAS IT?

SAMPLE BALLOT

Constitutional Amendment

“A”

The State Legislature recommends the adoption of this Joint Resolution, or Constitutional Amendment, proposing to change the salaries of certain State Officers and prohibiting certain Expense Allowances.

The State Constitution provides that the Governor and members of the Supreme Court shall receive an annual salary of \$3,000; that the Secretary of State, State Treasurer, State Auditor, Commissioner of School and Public Land and the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall receive \$1,800; and the Attorney General \$1,000.

Under this Amendment the Governor would receive \$7,500; the Supreme Court Judges \$6,500; the Judges of the Circuit Court and the Attorney General \$5,000; and the Secretary of State, State Auditor, State Treasurer, Commissioner of School and Public Lands and the Superintendent of Public Instruction \$4,000. The compensation of Legislative members would be increased from \$5 to \$10 a day, and their mileage from 5 to 10 cents. This Amendment further provides that such officers shall receive no other “compensation, fees, perquisites or emoluments.”

A vote “Yes” is in favor of the Amendment. A vote “No” is in favor of leaving the law as it now stands.

YES

Shall the above amendment to the Constitution be approved and ratified?

NO

VOTE “YES” AND STOP THE SALARY GRAB

Upstairs in a box we found several of these campaign ballots, indicating to vote yes, and thought that this would be of interest in this political year, but there is no year on it. Does anyone know what year this may have been voted on? Let us know.

From the Desk.....

I just read a something by Lee Maynard that sums up how I feel about the fall. "I love autumn, the one season of the year that God seemed to have put there just for the beauty of it". The only downside of this season is that it doesn't last long enough! Thanks to Leo Powell, the front porch of the Austin-Whittemore is looking great with a collection of pumpkins, gourds and bittersweet. Just when we get the house looking perfect for this season, we start preparations for our Holiday Tour of Homes. Never a dull moment.

We had a wonderfully busy summer and early fall at the A-W House. In June we had a very successful ice cream social in the yard. That means a big hungry crowd, super music and we didn't run out of food. There were visitors from all over the country who were curious about finding information on their family roots. There were two beautiful weddings in the gazebo through the summer.



We experimented with a new project that was called "Music Mondays" in June and August. We had talented local musicians play music from the gazebo on the first Monday of the month and our visitors just needed to bring a lawn chair and enjoy the music and popcorn. We're pretty happy with the results of this project so we'll be bringing this back again next summer. The Vermillion High School students helped us in our yard on their annual volunteer day and really did a great job of pruning bushes and hauling branches. SESDAC volunteers helped uncover some valuable old bricks in our back yard and did a spectacular job of stacking

them behind the house for future use. The USD School of Ed Social Studies class has already been back for their fall semester of hearing about what resources are available from the Clay County Historical Society.

One really big project that we took on early in the summer was reorganizing the upstairs rooms. We're not quite done yet but three out of five of the rooms have taken on a whole new look by just moving around furniture and items that we've had in the house for years and placing them in different locations. Old light fixtures were made new again and it's really coming along. We hope that you'll stop by and see what's old has become new again!

Upcoming events include but are not limited to.... Antique Appraisal Event on October 27, Holiday Tour of Homes on December 2 and the Sweets and Treats Bake Sale on December 10.

It doesn't seem possible that I've been working at the AW House for two years already. It's become such a fun part of my "retirement" and it's proof that we should learn something new every day. I would be remiss if I didn't say how much I appreciate the support of the CCHS board. They are all truly a "working machine". They all have their own talents and really put them to good use. I really appreciate the fact that when I say "I've got a great idea", they don't run for the door, they say what's next!

Please plan to stop by and visit me at the house. I'm there on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. If I don't have coffee made, I can make that happen. I joke about the fact that the hardest part of my job is getting out by 2:00 because I find or uncover something super interesting every day. Thanks for your financial support of the Clay County Historical Society and be proud of the difference you're making in keeping history alive.

Wess Pravecek
Executive Director

More Pictures on [CCHS Web Page](#)

STORAGE - FURNITURE - NEEDED

The Clay County Historical Society is in need of a trunk or older cedar chest to use for storage. It would be displayed in the beautiful redecorated ladies bedroom and filled with lovely extra clothing to be preserved but rotated to view and show off. If you have one that you would like to donate, it would be marked as such. And if we are lucky enough to get a second one, we would put in the gentlemen's bedroom or the maids room.

For such a large home, there is only two closets in the Austin-Whittemore House. The one downstairs in the dinning room is used for extra chairs, folding tables, and books that are for sell. The other closet is upstairs in the ladies bedroom and

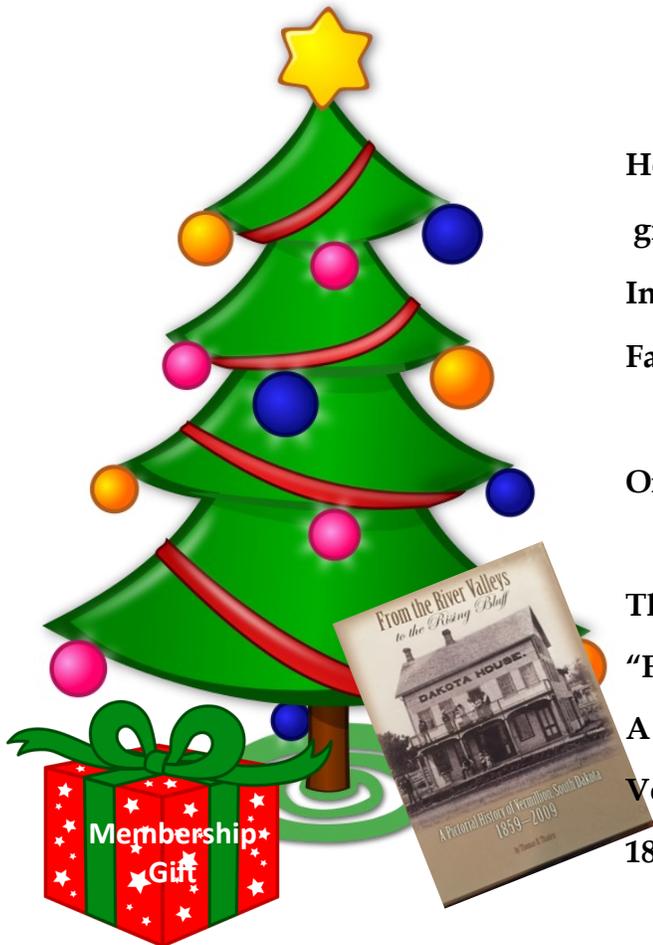
it stores cemetery records, some wall pictures (we need to go through), hat boxes, and different organizations records. The closets are full!

We do seem to have a number of nice chairs but we could certainly use period end tables or coffee table. It would be nice for guest to have a place to set their plate or cup of coffee on when there is an event at the house.

Anything that you feel may be able to be used, please contact the Austin-Whittemore House at 624-8266 or claycohistory@yahoo.com.

Thank you.

Since we have been talking about Christmas...



How about a nice and quick gift of a CCHS membeship.

Individual: \$25.00

Family: \$40.00

Or

The Book...

"From the River Valley"

A Pictorial History of
Vermillion South Dakota
1859-2009. Price: \$25.00

*The CCHS Board
wishes you
Happy Halloween
A Festive
Thanksgiving
And
Happy Holidays!*

Clay County Historical Society

15 Austin Street

Vermillion, SD 57069

**The Austin-Whittemore House is available for family gatherings,
meetings, class reunions, 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/>

Search for Clay County Historical Society on Facebook!

A-W House is open:

Monday/Wednesday/Friday

10am-2pm

Thank you for your support!