



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

Summer 2016

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Message from CCHS President

Thank you sincerely to our very dedicated board members and volunteers who care so deeply about CCHS and the Austin-Whittemore House! It is such a joy to work with folks who are so willing to help in maintaining our physical structure and the heritage of our past! I am extremely honored to be serving as your president this fiscal year.

Thank you to retiring board members Gary Bottolfson and Joe Hoffman! Your years of devoted and enthusiastic service were essential to our mission and much appreciated!

To Luann Ouellette, serving as Treasurer for multiple terms, you performed the task of keeping our finances in order with meticulous, thorough and diligent accuracy, and we offer our humble appreciation! And to Maxine Johnson, outgoing President, our thanks is simply not enough to describe your passion! Also while serving numerous terms, Maxine guided CCHS with her caring and compassionate style, as well as simultaneously giving to several other community organizations in a similar capacity.

Please take note of the current (2016-2017) Board of Directors listing found in this newsletter. In addition to those members who will be continuing from last year, we are pleased to welcome Erin Burrow, Ruth Bylander, Barb Campbell, Lisa Johnson and Gloria Hensley to the Board. These ladies have already 'hit the ground running' as they are also contributing their talents to our mission of *"Bringing together those people interested in the history and pre-history of Clay County and the adjacent areas."*

Your Board of Directors has been diligent in identifying and prioritizing the current and future needs of the CCHS. With a historic property that was constructed in 1882, much of our effort is directed to physical needs. Thanks to Jim Stone and Gene Hawkins, we now have a cupola/widow's walk that is basically water tight after years of moisture problems. Other current concerns are a kitchen sink/faucet upgrade, ADA accessible ramp into the building and a main floor ADA restroom.

We would love YOUR active involvement in our organization! There is a place in this newsletter where you may indicate your area of interest. Thank you for considering some 'hands on' at the Austin-Whittemore House! We also hope to see you on Thursday June 16 for our annual ICE CREAM SOCIAL from 5-7!

Sincerely,
Dan Christopherson, President

Would
You
Like To
Volunteer?
See
Inside
Flyer

Executive Director:
Wess Pravecek

Newsletter Editor:
Judy Sullivan

A NEW ADVENTURE IN 1968
THE BEGINNING OF THE CLAY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

On a Thursday morning in 1968, the Broadcaster had an ad for a large auction to be held at the Austin Home located at 15 Austin Avenue in Vermillion, SD. Mrs. Helen Whittemore, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Austin lived in the home all of her life and had passed away and the home was given to her son, Arthur "Bucky" Whittemore, Mr. Whittemore lived in New York and was anxious to get the estate settled. All of the family left the Vermillion area so this seemed to be the way to dispose of the property.

Dr. and Mrs. Richard Bowen lived in the home located south of the Austin-Whittemore property and Connie Bowen saw the ad. Her immediate thought was to save the house as a historical home for the Clay County Historical Society. A few days later she found that the home would be sold and torn down and a parking lot would be placed on the property. That is when Mr. Whittemore was contacted, not once but many times by letters from local residents, who were now interested in saving the home and asking Mr. Whittemore if he would be interested in donating the home to the Clay County Historical Society. Many times his answer was "NO".

By this time Connie Bowen had called several residents of Vermillion together and meetings were held to try and convince Mr. Whittemore that the home should be saved. After the many letters and calls he said he would give the home if we would buy the four lots that were with the home.

At that time the Society had no funds. So another adventure began to take place. He asked for \$20,000.00 for the four lots. As a group, we began to figure out what we could do to raise money. We first went through the Vermillion phone book and sent letters to all in the book. That first mailing was done with an early electric typewriter and an old mimeograph machine. Along with our letter, we sent pledge cards for people to fill out and return. It was amazing the response that we had. The next venture was an ice cream social that was held at the home of Max and Phyllis Crystal. The yard was beautiful but the yard was infested with many insects. Some spraying was done to control the insects and the homemade ice cream and homemade pies were enjoyed by everyone.

By that time, we had collected \$10,000.00 so we offered Mr. Whittemore that amount for two of the lots and asked for an option on the other two lots. He agreed, signed the house over to us and everyone was happy. More fund raisers were held such as an auction of donated items from who ever would give something, a basket social and by the next year another ice cream social. By this time all the paper work was done and we were given the privilege to be on the National Register.

It took ten years to bring the home to a point where we could accept visitors. When we opened the door the first day for visitors, we were amazed at the number of people that came. We had enough money to buy a small love seat and two matching chairs. From then on, many beautiful pieces of furniture have been given along with china, silver, books, linens and the list goes on.

Our thanks go out to Connie Bowen for having the foresight to save the home, to the great committee that didn't give up and to the many volunteers we had and still have that have given of their time, talents and money to make the home the beautiful place it is today.

Please take time to visit the home. Please tell your friends about us. You can tour the home, and best of all if you are interested in your family roots in Clay County; you will find many resources to explore. If you would like to join the Society, we would love to have you as a member. We look forward to seeing you and your friends. And remember, our annual ice cream social is coming up soon on June 16th. Come and enjoy good food, good music and visiting with friends.

Cleo Erickson
Life-time Director

Highlights of the CCHS Minutes January - April 2016....

January 18, 2016

- Final - Tour of Homes - \$1844.04
- Final - Sweets and Treats - \$876.00
- It was approved to pursue a plan and financing for handicap accessibility to the A-W House and creation of a first floor handicapped bathroom with 60% of funding coming from grants, donations and fundraising and not more than 40% from the Sletwold Endowment.
- Reviewed proposed budget for 2016-2017

February 15, 2016

- ESA group held a meeting at A-W House. They are considering to meet here monthly.
- Downton Abbey Tea scheduled to be held at the house March 5th, 2-4pm.
- CCHS will be represented at the Tour of Tables, April 23rd.
- A 1921 Fireman's picture is being copied to present to them.
- Installed a router.

March 21, 2016

- Discussed Board positions.

- Discussed annual Meeting scheduled April 28, 2016. Membership open house preceding and an open house social, between 4:30-6:00 pm with the annual meeting at 6:30 pm. Postcards will be mailed out to members regarding annual meeting.
- Reviewed and revised the budget. New budget with revisions will be mailed to the Board.

April 4 2016 Special Meeting

- Slate of officers and directors presented. Nominations can be added at annual meeting.
- Board reviewed and made by-law changes that would be presented to members at the annual meeting for approval.

April 18, 2016

- Reminder of the city council luncheon scheduled for Monday, May 2, 2016 at 11:30 pm.
- Annual meeting discussion.
- CCHS monthly meetings were moved to the third Tuesday of each month, same time, 9:30 am.
- Stool leaking in men's bathroom.

May Minutes have not been approved.

Find us on Facebook!

Search for "Clay County Historical Society "on Facebook and like our page to learn about the latest events, news and other fun extras. Look for our profile picture featuring the Austin-Whittemore House, and you'll know you've come to the right place! Be sure to invite your friends and family to like our page as well.

As a reminder, you can always find our phone number, address, or web page address on the first or last page of the newsletter.

Board of Directors 2016-17 elected at the annual meeting in April

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

From the Desk...

I'm a little nostalgic today. My brother and sister in law just left this morning after a wonderful five-day visit. The days were filled with food, family get-togethers, and great conversations in my back porch about childhood memories. We feel so fortunate that we grew up in a family that loves and cares for each one another. We grew up in Wakonda and that community played an important role in how we grew up caring about our neighbors, building friendships plus taking the lead from our parents and seeing how important it is to volunteer time.

The key word here is "volunteering". Like so many organizations, it takes people giving their time and talents to make things happen. The members of the Clay County Historical Society are made up of people who do just that. We are at the beginning of our new year and we have a newly elected board who are dedicated to preserving the past and securing the future of the Austin-Whittemore House and the CCHS. If you are a member of the CCHS, thank you! If you haven't joined yet, have we got a deal for you! (You'll find a membership form in the newsletter.)

The AW house has been buzzing for the past few months. We've had USD students use resources from the house to learn more about fallen heroes. Local service organizations are holding their regular meetings at the house. Austin Elementary first graders visited the log schoolhouse. Groups of red hats, tea drinkers and city officials have come to break bread at the house. We've had visitors from North Carolina, Texas, Iowa and Minnesota not to mention online requests for family information that we've been able to provide.

The summer is just beginning and we look forward to more visitors, weddings, musical events, the ice cream social just to mention a few things that are on the calendar. We're also making some cosmetic changes to the house that we hope you'll come to see. If you're looking for a beautiful venue to host an event, please feel free to contact me for more information. Thanks for your support and come and be our guests!

Wess

Valkommen to the 147th Annual



Friday, June 24, 2016

AFTERNOON PROGRAM

2:00 p.m.

"Dance to the Fiddle"
Bill Peterson and Friends

3:00 to 7:00 p.m.
Viking Invasion



EVENING PROGRAM

7:00 p.m.

Master's Voice Quartet
Hegg Brothers Duo

Raising of the
Midsommar Pole
Ball Game

5:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Children's Train Rides and Inflatables!

Dalesburg Lutheran Food Stand to begin serving at Noon.

Scandinavian Smorgasbord Serving 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Tickets: Adults - \$12.00, 8 years and under - \$4.00. Tickets may be purchased in advance and at the door.

Send checks payable to Dalesburg Midsommar. State number of tickets desired, and enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope. **NO REFUNDS.**

Mail to: Dalesburg Midsommar, 30595 University Road, Vermillion, SD 57069.

Plan on attending Midsommar at Dalesburg and the WH Over Museum, they have some lovely quilts. And don't forget the CCHS Ice Cream Social.

Have a nice summer and have a good 4th of July.

*From the
CCHS Board of Directors*

Clay County Historical Society



ICE CREAM SOCIAL

**June 16 (Thurs)
5-7 pm**

**Austin-Whittemore House
15 Austin Street, Vermillion**

**Inclement weather the event will be held at the
Eagles Lodge, 114 West Main**

*Join us on
the lawn for
an old-time
ice cream
social*

Serving taverns,
homemade pies,
cake, ice cream,
chips, coffee &
lemonade

Carry outs
Available

**Free Will
Donation**

**LIVE
MUSIC**

**Train Rides
For Kids**

Clay County Historical Society
Membership Application / Renewal
Membership Year is April 1 – March 31

Name: _____

Address: _____

City : _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

E-mail Address: _____

_____ Individual Member: \$ 25.00 _____ Family Membership: \$ 40.00
_____ Institutional: \$ 75.00 _____ Life Member/per person: \$250.00

Please mail check payable to: Clay County Historical Society, Inc.

Mail to: CCHS, 15 Austin Street, Vermillion, SD 57069

Thank You!

Volunteer Opportunity

I would like to become more involved in the Clay County Historical Society by volunteering in the area(s)
I have checked below.

- _____ Christmas Tour of Homes
- _____ Ice Cream Social
- _____ Decorate the Austin-Whittemore House for holidays
- _____ Lawn and garden
- _____ Assist Executive Director with filing of historic information
- _____ Research
- _____ Publicity/Advertising
- _____ Member recruitment
- _____ Newspapers (putting in chronological order)
- _____ Sort archived pictures
- _____ Assist with house cleaning
- _____ Other _____

Please return this form to The Clay County Historical Society, 15 Austin Street, Vermillion, SD 57069 or call (605) 624-8266. If you are renewing your membership, include this form with your membership renewal check. We will be delighted to accept any help you wish to offer.

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!