

Joint Newsletter of the
**W. H. OVER MUSEUM, CLAY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 COMMISSION, AND CLAY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Clay County, Vermillion, South Dakota

Summer 2018

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The History of Electricity in Vermillion, SD
*The New Exhibit of the Old Electric Power Plant in
 Vermillion at the W. H. Over Museum*

Electricity came to Vermillion in 1895. The Vermillion Milling Company owned by two brothers, S.E. and Edward D. Brookman, was granted a 20-year franchise to operate a steam powered light plant. The cost of the electric plant was reportedly \$7,800. On October 7, 1895 electricity was turned on and was used to illuminate six streets with lights. By January, 1897 forty meters were in use.

In the beginning the current was supplied to customers from sunset to midnight because the generator was needed to supply power the milling machinery during the day. The Vermillion City Council attempted to buy the light plant on Center Street on April 20, 1905 to no avail. However, on June 1, 1915 the City took over ownership of the light plant as the 20-year franchise was up to that time. By August 19, 1915 the City Light Plant offered all night service, except for Sundays, to clean the boiler. In March 19, 1918 a new steam powered light plant was built at the same location.

Realizing the need for more electricity a new light plant was constructed in 1931 below the bluff at a cost of \$100,000 to replace the obsolete steam plant in the municipal building. This plant had two 525 horsepower diesel engines to power the generators. The plant was constructed below the bluff near the railroad to save hauling diesel fuel and other supplies up the hill.

In 1945 the City budget was set at \$41,000, of which \$35,000 was to be raised by taxation and \$6,000 to be taken from the light fund. A contract was approved to purchase a 1300 horsepower diesel engine, as an addition to the two diesel engines

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Photo by Jim Stone

Power Plant display shows how electricity was generated in Vermillion.

Please join us for a Celebration of the
 135th Founding of the
 W. H. Over Museum
 Sunday, September 16, 2018
 2 - 4 pm

History of Electricity continued from page 1

at the light plant. The engine was later changed to a 1200 horsepower diesel and or natural gas engine. An addition to the plant had to be constructed to house the engine and switchboard, costing the city \$140,776.

In 1947 a fourth 1300 horsepower powered by natural gas or diesel engine was installed to keep up with the electrical demand. This powered Vermillion through the early 1970's. By that time it was cheaper to buy electricity than it would have been to build a larger power plant. The old plant was maintained and started up at regular intervals to keep it in running order, but it did supply electricity. Moreover, the contract with the wholesale electricity provider would not permit the city to produce any of its

own electricity. A good portion of our electricity is generated by hydroelectric power from the dams on the Missouri River, which keeps our electrical costs lower.

In 2000 the old plant was demolished and all contaminated soil removed. There is no evidence of its existence today. Some of the old instrument panels were saved. Four of these panels, which were stored in the basement of the Austin Whittemore House prior to their move to the W. H. Over Museum, make up the new exhibit. Six more panels are displayed at the Municipal Service Center on 115 West Duke Street.

Be sure to stop by the W. H. Over Museum to view this new exhibit. Additional research will add to more information highlighting how electricity was generated in Vermillion.

Inventorying Exhibits and Collections in the Vault

Aside from working directly on exhibits, staff and volunteers at the W. H. Over are busy conducting a full inventory of items in its holdings including items on exhibit and those in the vault. The exact number of items in the collections is not clear. Estimates are over 72,000.

Jim Stone and Larry Bradley spearheaded inventorying the entire contents of all the exhibits which includes hundreds of items. Accession numbers (a unique number each item receives when it is accepted into the collection) and descriptions are then checked with what is in the current inventory using a commonly used museum computer program called PastPerfect. This program allows individuals quick access of the item's characteristics, donor, and when and by whom it was entered into the computer program.

Collections manager Tami Plank and volunteers Dave Moen, Evelyn Schlenker and Skyler McLibben, an undergraduate student, are inventorying collections within the vault where items not on exhibit are stored. The process involves getting computer printouts of items in specific areas of the vault and then comparing what is found (or not found) at that location with information in the print out. Fortunately many items are where they should be and are correctly identified. However, some items are not present at their presumed location and descriptions of them may be so vague that it is difficult to determine what they are. Dealing with each of these issues requires additional research.

The first vault items inventoried consisted of Native American Northern Plains objects of which the W. H. Over is honored to have an excellent and extensive collection. The beauty of many of these items lies in the magnificent and intricate bead and/or quill work on vests, clubs, belts, moccasins as well as paintings on dried buffalo containers (parfleche), and on deer skin. In



Photo by Evelyn Schlenker

A deer skin vest showing intricate bead and quill work.

addition, each item tells a story and contributes to the history of the region.

Several items we have encountered belonged to illustrative pioneers from Vermillion, Dakota Territory. For example, the collection contains the original surveying devise that Sgt. Horace J. Austin (1838-1891) used dating back to the 1860's. Austin served in the Union

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Inventorying Exhibits and Collections continued

Army during the Civil War in the first Dakota Cavalry, was a member of Dakota territorial House of Representatives, 1865-67; was a member and became president of the Dakota territorial council, and member of the 2nd district in the South Dakota state house of representatives. In 1882 Austin built what is now known as the Austin-Whittemore House, home of the Clay County Historical Society.

Another item of interest is a Passenger Pigeon egg collected by Frank A. Patton in 1883. This species went extinct in 1914. A "recent discovery" in the vault was a medical item whose description in PastPerfect stated that it used radio waves for medical purposes. Actually the device is used in diathermy, or deep tissue heating. Electrical currents are used to generate the heat. This technique, although not delivered through the 1930's apparatus found in the Collections, is still in use by Physical Therapists today. Finally, looking in a box that included Civil War period clothing, revealed the pillow cover shown below. Across the front is the phrase "America First". This was an item dates the Spanish American War in 1898 that many South Dakotans participated in.

Inventorying items in the Collections is exacting and time consuming work, it is also rewarding to discover the many unique treasures housed in the W. H. Over Museum that add to the rich history of South Dakota. With a complete inventory, the items will add to the education and research capabilities that the W. H. Over has to offer.



Photo by Evelyn Schlenker

"America First" pillow cover from the Spanish-American War

What's Happening at the Over

By Maxine Johnson

This has been a busy summer and we have hosted several tours; perhaps the most interesting was a squad of helicopter pilots, veterans of the Viet Nam War, and their spouses who met with Eldon Nygaard, their commander, in Vermillion; the liveliest was the group from USD's Children's Center. Our Rhubarb Day was held the first Sunday in June and Governor Daugaard had declared Vermillion the Rhubarb Capitol of South Dakota for that day. Doris Hodgen and Jim Cody took care of the festivities that day. We also appeared on KDLTV in Sioux Falls and KUSD has filmed two segments that will be featured throughout the year. The Lions Club sponsored the annual Travelers' Breakfast and it was held on the grounds of the Museum because of the construction at the Homestead Rest Area on I-29. The Gift Shop has a good selection of South Dakota souvenir items available, some beautiful art prints, and Larry Bradley has imprinted several caps, shirts, and cups with logos of the Over Museum. The player piano repair project is almost completed and we are looking forward to listening to some of that special player piano music. Events coming up, including our birthday celebration in September include our Welcome Fall event in October and the Holiday festival in December.

SAVE THE DATE

W. H. Over Museum

Welcome Fall Event

Sunday, October 28th | 5:30-7:30 PM.

Please check our website and facebook page for more info.

W. H. Over Board of Directors

Officers: President: Maxine Johnson

First Vice President: Larry Bradley

Second Vice President: John E. Powell

Secretary: Evelyn Schlenker

Treasurer: Dennis Steffens

Board Members at Large:

Gary Bottolfson, David Moen, Patrick Gross, Lynn Muller, Gene Iverson, David Posthumus, Virginia Johnson, Jim Stone

Staff: Museum Director: Larry Bradley

Collections Head: Tami Plank

Secretary and Gift Shop: Dennis Steffens

Exhibits: Jim Stone

Collections Secretary: Shirley Anderson

Programming: Maxine Johnson

Newsletter: David Posthumus

Highlights from the Missouri Valley Historic Preservation Conference

The Clay County Historic Preservation Commission (CCHPC) organized and hosted the Missouri Valley Historic Preservation Conference from May 16-18 in Downtown Vermillion, SD. This event was part of Preservation Month and was held in collaboration with the South Dakota Office of Historic Preservation (SDOHP), the Yankton County Historic Preservation Commission and several other organizations. The focus of conference was economics of preservation with Donovan Rypkema, a world renowned expert as the keynote speaker. Rypkema is the Founder and CEO of Place-Economics, a firm located in Washington, DC and also authored several books on the Economics of Preservation including “Feasibility Assessment Manual for Reusing Historic Buildings” and “The Economics of Historic Preservation: A Community Leader’s Guide”.

The Conference began on the evening of May 16th with an informal reception held at the historic Dakota Brick House where participants and guests from South Dakota, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, and North

Dakota visited. The Dakota Brick House is a contributing building in the Vermillion Downtown Historic District.

The following day Rypkema presented a keynote address entitled “The Economics of Historic Preservation” at the Red Steakhouse Theater, Coyote Twin Theater. Over 65 attendees listened to

Rypkema discuss four main interconnecting themes that he is an expert on: Downtown Revitalization, Heritage Tourism, Jobs and Income, and Property Values. This presentation was followed by a Panel Discussion with the audience including moderator Molly Rozum (CCHPC Board member) and discussants, Rypkema, Linda Mayrose (Century 21 Prolink Real Estate, LeMars, Iowa; Michael Allgrunn, an economics professor at the University of South Dakota and

Ted Spencer representing the SDOHP.

A picnic lunch followed at the historic 1882 Austin-Whittemore House (home to the Clay County Historical Society). Following the luncheon, the meeting convened at the Edith B. Siegrist Public Library where first participating organizations introduced them-

selves and then three panel discussions were held.

The first panel was entitled “Working with Local and State Governments and Recruiting CLG (Certified Local Government) Members” and included moderator Jim Wilson, representing the CCHPC, Kellie Bacon, CLG Coordinator, Nebraska Preservation Office and Lis Almlie, Historic preservation Specialist, SD Historic Preservation Office. The second panel discussed “Building Local Constituencies” and included Richard Zietlow from the LaMars, IA Historic Preservation Commission, Susan Keith Gray, President of the University Historic District in Vermillion, SD and head of the newly established Vermillion Historic Preservation Commission, and Racheal Meyerink, President of the All Saints Historic District Neighborhood Association in Sioux Falls, SD. The final panel discussed “Working with Local and Regional Media” and included moderator Bernie Hunhoff, Publisher and Editor of the South Dakota Magazine and member of the Yankton County Historic Preservation Commission, Randell Beck, former



Photo by Evelyn Schlenker

The first panel was entitled “Working with Local and State Governments and Recruiting CLG Members”

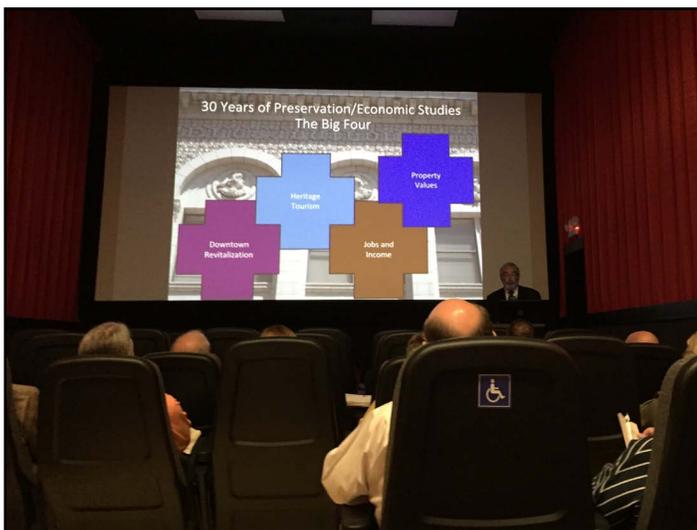


Photo by Evelyn Schlenker

Rypkema presented a keynote address entitled “The Economics of Historic Preservation” at the Red Steakhouse Theater, Coyote Twin Theater.

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The last panel of the Conference entitled Local Government Policies and Regulations Supporting Preservation

participants to go on a tour of the First Baptist Church (celebrating its sesquicentennial this year) and then several historic buildings on the campus of the University of South Dakota. Participants could also go on other tours with information provided in the program to access the sites.

On Friday morning the Conference

Editor and Publisher of the Sioux Falls Argus Leader and Larry Roher, Director of Content, South Dakota Public Broadcasting.

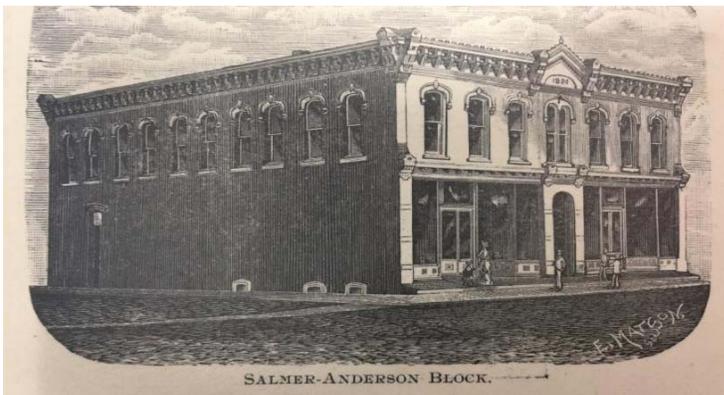
After the last panel Evelyn Schlenker (CCHPC Board member) invited

commenced at the W. H. Over Museum (founded 135 years ago) with the first of two panel discussions. The first entitled “Preservation Documentations and Outcomes” included Evelyn Schlenker as presenter

and moderator, Doug Fortune (representing the City of Pipestone, Minnesota Historic Preservation Commission) and Jana Morehouse with Quality Services, Inc. from Rapid City, SD. The panelists used examples of documenting characteristics of specific historic structures and outcomes that may include renovations, replacements, restoration, or demolition.

The last panel of the Conference entitled Local Government Policies and Regulations Supporting Preservation included Tom Sorensen (CCHPC, moderator), Erin Berzina, Sioux City, IA, Doug Fortune, Diane deKoeuyer representing Sioux Falls, SD and Kevin Kuchenbecker representing Deadwood, SD. The variety of policies and regulations and ability to affect preservation of structures in the cities was discussed. The Conference ended about noon. Many thanks for the organizers (Ted Muenster, Molly Rozum, Evelyn Schlenker, Jim Stone and Tom Sorensen) and the excellent presenters and participants. All contributed to the success of this informative regional conference as did the supporting organizations that made the conference possible.

Renovating Two East Main Street



1901 Clay County Atlas, W. H. Over Museum

After the destructive flood of 1881, Vermillion residents and businesses moved up the Bluff. Businesses immediately started building stores, most were constructed of wood. In 1884, a two story, brick building was built on the northeast corner of Vine (now Main Street) and 8th Street (now Center Street). Currently, the Vermillion Chamber and Development Corporation (VCDC) is renovating the structure to one similar to the print of the 1884 building shown above.

In conjunction with this rebuilding Evelyn Schlenker and the VCDC are writing a history of this building including owners and several businesses that occupied the structure over its long history. Stay tuned.

“Check out our many full access publications and photo gallery on our website: <http://cchpc.org>.

Clay County Historic Preservation Board Members (2017-2018)

Jim Wilson, Chair
Tom Sorensen, Vice Chair
Molly Rozum, Treasurer
Evelyn Schlenker, Secretary and Newsletter

Dennis Konkler
Jim Stone
Patrick Morrison
Ed Gerrish
Bill Ranney
Monica Iverson
Gloria Hensley
Ted Muenster

The M.C. Davis Barn - 5658 Square Feet of Barn



M.C. Davis Barn

Photo by Jim Stone

As part of Jim Stone's extensive survey of barns in Clay County and surrounding areas, he documented the M. C. Davis Barn located at 33036 484th Street, Union County, Jefferson, South Dakota. The original owner, M. C. Davis, bought this 160 acre farm for \$1,500 in 1883. In 1891 he sold it for \$11,000 in 1891, bought it back at a sheriff's sale for \$1,800.00 in 1895. He and his wife May donated the barn and land to The Trustees of Iowa College in 1916.

This barn was built in 1908 – 1909 and is the largest barn that Jim Stone has ever recorded. The dimensions are 46' wide by 123' long, which would be 5,658 square feet of barn. This contrasts with the Danish brick barn (now demolished) that was 4,104 square feet.

Structural characteristics of the M. C. Davis indicate that it is constructed with five (5) 2x12's laminated to build posts that supported the five (5) 2x12's laminated beams which hold up the 2x10 floor joists for the floor of the hayloft. There are two (2) rows of beams that are in 16' 6" from the outside wall and 13' apart for the center drive through alley. The floor joists 18' long to span 15' – 4-1/2" and 14' long to span the 13' drive alley.

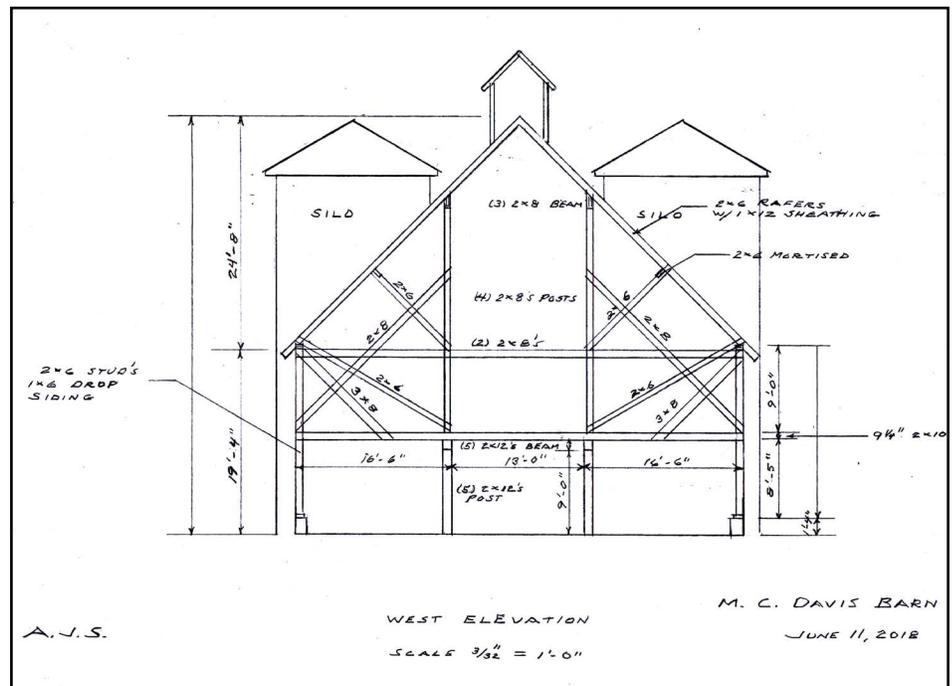
This barn was built to house dairy

cows and has a concrete floor in the 56' by 100' of the original building. The gutters were built into the floor was 100' long on both sides of the barn and there were a 2x6's imbedded into the concrete for the stanchions and a 2x4 imbedded in front of the stanchions for attaching a feed trough. The barn would have had room for 76 milk cows.

Moreover, there are two (2) 16' diameter by 40' tall silos on the east

end of the barn. The silos set on top of a 5' concrete foundation, which is 3' in the ground and 2' above the ground. This gives the silos a 16' by 45' capacity for silage. A 23' by 46' addition was added later to enclose the silos and allow silage to be unloaded for the cows without them needing to be out in the inclement weather. That area of the barn has a dirt floor.

The hayloft is huge, with sidewalls 9' tall on the 100' sides. The peak is about 32' above the hayloft floor. There is 110,400 cubic feet of space in this hayloft and would hold 138 tons of loose hay. Ample amounts bracing held the roof up and protected it from high wind loads. The posts are four (4) 2x8's by 24' tall directly over the beams and posts on the first floor and support a beam of four (4) 2x8's, which support the roof rafters. There is another 2x6 rafter support from the 2x8 cross ties at a 45 degree angle up to the rafters with a 2x6 mortised into the end of the 2x6 support. More detail about the barn and silos is shown in the drawing below by Jim Stone.



Details of the barn shown in the mechanical drawing.



CCHS INFORMATION

Clay County Historical Society,
 15 Austin St, Vermillion, SD 57069.
Phone: 605-624-8266
Web page: cchssd.org
Email: claycohistory@yahoo.com

The Austin-Whittemore House is open: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 10am - 2pm.

We are on Facebook – Search for Clay County Historical Society Vermillion South Dakota

Upcoming events, quarterly newsletter and monthly minutes are published on the CCHS web page. CCHS website also has a list of pictorial books and maps of Vermillion and the Clay County area for sale.

Elected Board of Directors:
 April 1, 2018-March 31, 2019

President - Dan Christopherson,
 Vice President - Gloria Hensley,
 Recording Secretary - Erin Burrow,
 Membership Secretary - Ruth Bylander,
 Treasurer - Joni Freidel,
 Past President - Maxine Johnson,
 Lifetime Director - Ann Severson,
 Directors - Barb Campbell,
 Kevin Jacobson, Lisa Johnson,
 Art Rusch, Jim Stone, Judy Sullivan,
 Marvin Walz

Appointed Positions:
 Executive Director - Wess Pravecek,
 CCHPC Representation - Jim Stone

CCHS Prior 2018 Events

March 13, 2018, the CCHS Board hosted and prepared a luncheon for the Clay County Commissioners at the Austin-Whittemore House. We wanted to show a small token of our appreciation for their continued support.

April 7, 2018, CCHS Board members and guests represented the Austin-Whittemore House at the annual “Tour of Tables” fundraiser. Benefits from the event went to St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital. The dishes were “Pansy” Whittemore’s and the other display pieces came from the Austin-Whittemore House.

April 12, 2018, the CCHS Annual Board of Directors meeting was held at the Austin-Whittemore House. Following the business meeting, Tom Sorensen presented his new book “Courting ‘Old Betsy’ ... and Taking her Home.”

April 28, 2018, the Medium program was held at the Austin-Whittemore House. Thirty people attended this program which was very well received.

May 16-18, 2018, The Missouri Valley Historic Preservation Conference was held at various locations around Vermillion. This was presented by the Clay County Historic Preservation Commission. The CCHS Board hosted a picnic for the participants on May 17, 2018 on the grounds of the Austin-Whittemore House. Participants were also given a tour of the house and we received very positive comments.

“Music Monday” June 4, 2018, was held on the lawn of the Austin-Whittemore House 7:00-8:30 p.m. with Gapp and Gibbs performing. Free popcorn was provided for everyone. The community really appreciates this free summer event.

June 16, 2018, the CCHS held a yard sale in conjunction with the City-wide rummage sales.

June 21, 2018 from 5:00-7:00 p.m., the Annual Ice Cream Social was held at our alternative location, the Eagles, due to rain all week. The Clay County Historic Preservation Commission helped sponsor this great event.

“Music Monday”, July 23, 2018 from 7:00-8:30 p.m. was held on the lawn of the Austin-Whittemore House with the Clay Creek band performing. We had a large turn out with 2 guest appearances which provided some out-standing music. Our guests said they sure hoped this was not our last concert as they enjoyed these events so much.



CCHS members and guest at the April 7, 2018 ESA “Tour of Tables” fundraiser



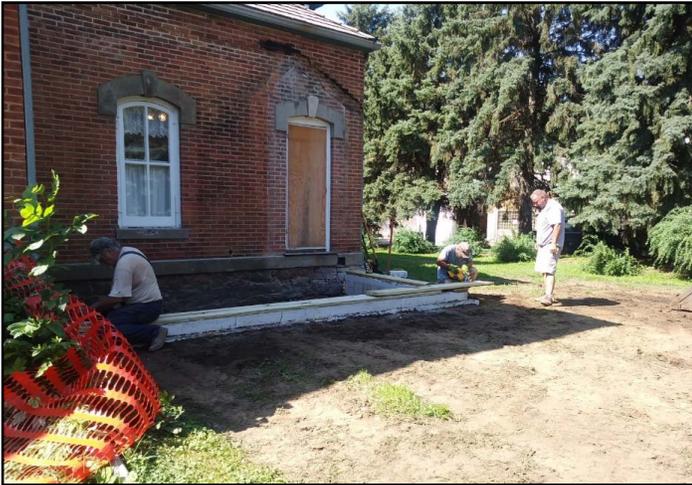
Ice Cream Social 2018. Lots of Pie!

Benefits of Your Assistance

Building improvements are necessary for continued utilization of the Austin-Whittemore House by the Clay County Historical Society and other public and private organizations. The CCHS encourages groups to use the Austin-Whittemore House for meetings, receptions, reunions, etc. A wheelchair ramp was installed in 2017 to permit wheelchair-bound visitors to more easily access the building.

At the present time, a number of visitors have a difficult time negotiating the stairs to the second floor where the existing restrooms are located. The first-floor restroom will accommodate use by all visitors. In addition, the expanded storage area will provide much needed space for dishes, kitchen equipment, supplies, etc.

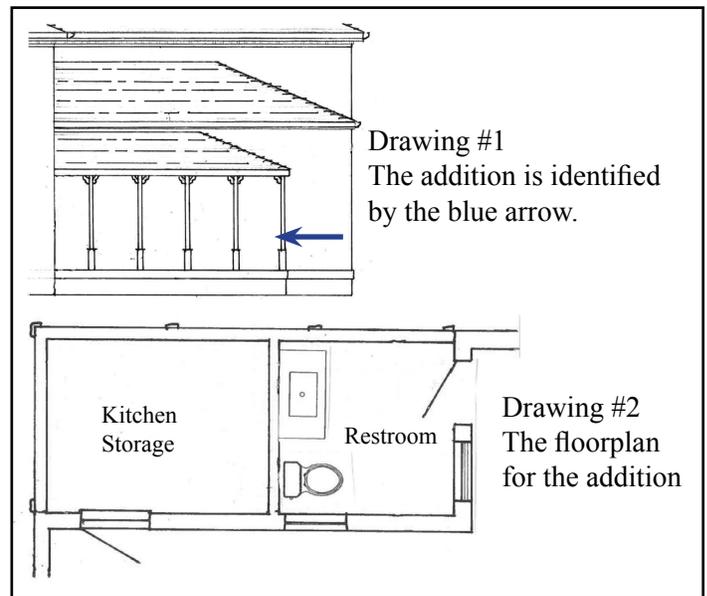
The Clay County Historical Society plans an addition to the northwest corner of the Austin-Whittemore House to accommodate a first-floor restroom and kitchen storage



Digging foundation for new bathroom.

area. The addition will be built where a covered walkway at one time was located. The walkway was used by the Austin and Whittemore families to access an outhouse. It seems fitting that the addition will serve the same purpose as well as provide much needed storage for the small kitchen that is positioned in that part of the historic structure.

Please consider supporting the Austin-Whittemore accessibility project. A donation form is included in this newsletter. If you have any questions regarding the project, please feel free to 605-624-8266. We hope to hear from you and appreciate your support.



Drawings #1 and 2 show the proposed addition to the rear of the house.

YES! I want to support the Austin-Whittemore House's accessibility project.

Platinum-level donors - \$5,000 or more

Opportunity to name the addition, donor names on a project plaque, and invitation to a "Bathroom Bash".

Gold-level donors - \$1,000 or more

Donor names on a project plaque and invitation to a "Bathroom Bash".

Silver-level donors - \$500 or more

Donor names on a project plaque.

Copper-level donors - less than \$500

A sincere Thank You from the CCHS Board of Directors.

How I wish to be recognized: _____

Make checks payable to CCHS Accessibility Project.

Mail to the Clay County Historical Society, 15 Austin Street, Vermillion, SD 57069.

The CCHS is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

From the Desk of the Clay County Historical Society

What do Corsicana Texas, Bismarck North Dakota, Lake Havasu Arizona and Goshen Indiana have in common? They all provided guests to the Austin-Whittemore House in the past few months. These towns/cities are a small sample of the places guests have come from and walked through and admired this beautiful house. I sometimes wonder if the Austin and the Whittemore families would have ever imagined that the beautiful home that they built would become such a point of interest.

This house has indeed created interest and not only shares information about itself but also provides information about families, and other beautiful homes and locations in the area. A really interesting project that is currently being worked on is the history of the M.D. Thompson house which is located at 403 E. Main. It sits on the west side of the USD president's house, the Inman House. The USD Foundation has purchased the Thompson house and wants to know as much as it can about its history. What a great way to create partnerships with USD, the Clay County Historical Society and family members who have connections to the Inman House, the Thompson House and the Morgan House. These three houses were lived in by the three Lewis sisters. What an opportunity for Cyndy Chaney to get acquainted with a distant relative of hers, Rick Swan who I just started corresponding with this year. These folks are going to have a great time comparing notes and photographs and expanding the depth of their family roots. I can hardly wait to get in on the information sharing.



*Bride and Groom -
Ali and Wade McCombs*

Lovely bride and bridesmaids!

The wonderful part of history is that the events going on today will be history in a few years. A perfect example of that is a wedding that was held in the AW gazebo a few weeks ago. A young lady who grew up in Vermillion brought her beau back to get married in her home town and they chose the gazebo to exchange their vows. The bride and her maids dressed upstairs in the house in the room where the Whittemore girls spent time and while the wedding party waited for the ceremony to begin, the groom and groomsmen played the piano and guitar and filled the house with joy and anticipation. What a beautiful day! We hope that others will follow suit and make new memories in a house that has survived 136 years.

So, I extend an invitation to all of you to contact me if you have questions about Clay County and I will send out a request for you to share information about your family or business that you may have been involved in. You never know when your long-lost Uncle Pete from Sheboygen may stop in to see me looking for information on your family and I'd really like to deliver! Thanks to all of you for your support and membership. We wouldn't exist without you!

Wess Pravecek
Executive Director

*Austin-Whittemore House
is available for
family gatherings,
meetings,
class reunions,
weddings, showers,
business meetings, etc.,
call 624-8266
to schedule.*



CCHS Heritage Notes

Compiled by Dan Christopherson, President

During the 1930's Clay County experienced the worst depression in its history. The nation's economic collapse is generally blamed on the stock market crash in October 1929, but South Dakota's crisis had its beginnings as early as World War I.

War conditions pushed farm prices up, in turn leading to increased production. Farm prices at the war's end sparked a land boom. Clay County land prices rose rapidly during 1919 and 1920. Purchases at a hundred dollars an acre and up were common. A farm near Vermillion sold at \$400 an acre.

Toward the end of 1920 the Federal Reserve began to raise its discount rates, and prices for both farm produce and land dropped sharply. The average price of corn dropped from \$1.10 to 26 cents per bushel. Cattle averages dropped from \$54 to \$29 per head.

The sharp erosion of farm income coupled with the shrinkage in property values was making it difficult for farmers to meet their banking obligations. Banks began to incur heavy losses from overextended loans. In Clay County the Wakonda State Bank and the Bank of Burbank both suspended operations in 1927. The Bank of Meckling closed in 1930.

The hard times set in motion economic moves that included local government budget cuts and elimination of services. In 1931 the Clay County Commissioners decreased the tax levy by 60% and lowered the assessed valuation by 40%. County official's salaries were reduced in 1933 by legislative action.

The Vermillion City Council made large budget cuts, including reducing the 1932 City payroll by 11%. To offer relief to consumers it also made three reductions in electric rates during 1932. The Vermillion School Board was also forced to reduce salaries in the 1933 budget by 25%.

The University teaching staff sustained a 10% salary reduction in 1932, followed by a 25% decrease in 1933.

Timeline 1896-1940

1896- City Council passes ordinance officially creating Vermillion Fire Department.

1900- Herman Malby built a ferry boat in just four weeks. It has a first class cabin and will be taking excursion parties up the river.

1903- Committee to select site for the new library. Two sites considered: lots East of Baptist Church on Main Street and lots South of Baptist Church on Church Street. Purchase of Church Street site was made for \$100.

1905- Vermillion's first automobile accident. Dr. Collins and L. Rustad were in Collins new car and turned to avoid a pedestrian. They ran into Judge Runyan and the machine was not stopped until they were a half block down the street.

1906- The first entry is made in the Waldorf Hotel register, four years after the hotel opened for business.

1911- J.R Dunlap, who farms 12 acres known as the "Island" near Vermillion is watermelon king of South Dakota, raising 30,000 melons this year.

1912- Lee & Prentis Ranch just West of Vermillion sold to D.J. Stafford of Sioux City. Ranch contains 3,060 acres and consideration was over \$250,000.

1918- N.W. Telephone & Exchange sells out to S.D. State Telephone Co. The local exchange is concerned since N.W. stills holds the two long distance lines out of Vermillion.

1925- Masons buy site west of Trinity Lutheran Church (Main & Harvard) for future building. Later this location was site of new Congregational Church building.

1936- Work started in re-laying water mains in Vermillion. A crew of 50 WPA workers started digging ditches.

1940- Four new rooms are planned for the sub-basement in the Clay County Court House to provide a winter WPA project.

*Thank you to all who have renewed your membership.
You're keeping history alive in Clay County.*

**If you haven't renewed, please consider sending your dues in to:
CCHS, 15 Austin St., Vermillion, SD 57069**

Membership Dues: Individual \$25, Institutional \$75, Family \$40, Life Member \$250
Membership Date: April 1, 2018-March 31, 2019

The Legend of Spirit Mound

Spirit Mound, or Paha Wakan, was known by tribes for miles around before the Lewis & Clark expedition ever came to Clay County. Lewis & Clark reported that the people of the Omaha, Oto, and Yankton tribes believed that the mound was occupied by little people who shot any human who came near.

By the 1790's when European traders came up the Missouri River, reports of this mound must have been well known, although no written record earlier than the journals of Lewis & Clark has been found. On August 24, 1804, the day before they reached the mouth of the Vermillion River (they called it the White Stone), Clark wrote:



“Capt. Lewis and myself concluded to visit a high hill situated in an emence plain three leagues N. & 20 degrees W. from the mouth of the White Stone River. This hill appears to be of a Conic form and by all the different Nations in this quarter is supposed to be a place of Deavels that are in human form with remarkable large heads and about 18 inches high. They are very watchful and are

“Spoken History Cemetery Tour – Chapter One.”

The tour is scheduled for Monday, October 8 at 5:30. Admission is \$10, and tickets will be available at the Austin-Whittemore House and W.H. Over Museum in September. It will be a year of firsts – Since this is the very first cemetery tour in Clay County, we will spotlight six prominent Clay County residents including the first person buried in Bluffs Cemetery. Community members will portray the deceased and share their life story and historical significance to Vermillion.

Following the tour, members of the Bluff View cemetery board will be serving refreshments at the chapel. Please plan on joining us...it will be an interesting tour. Please watch the newspaper and follow us on facebook for more details.

armed with sharp arrows with which they can kill at a great distance. They are said to kill all persons who are so hardy as to attempt to approach the hill. Tradition is that many Indians have suffered by these little people and among others that three Maha men fell a sacrifice to their murceyleless fury. The Mahas, Souix, Ottoes and other neighboring nations believe this fable and no consideration is sufficient to induce them to approach this hill.”

Spirit Mound is located 6 miles north of Vermillion along SD Highway 19 and is open year around for visitors. Detailed information at www.spiritmound.org

UPCOMING 2018 EVENTS

“**Music Monday**”, August 6, 2018 from 7:00 -8:30 p.m. on the lawn of the Austin-Whittemore House, the Bluff Ridge band will be performing. As usual, free popcorn. will be provided. This is our last “Music Monday” event for 2018.

Monday, October 8, 2018 on Native American Day, we will have our first Historical Cemetery Tour at Bluff View Cemetery. Watch Facebook and the paper for more details.

Thursday, October 18, 2018, Oshner Life Long Learning Institute (OLI) class will be held at the Austin-Whittemore House.

The month of October, ESA will have some of the beautiful wedding dresses displayed at the Austin-Whittemore House that will be part of the “She Said Yes to the Dress” program to be held in November at the Trinity Lutheran church.

Friday, December 7 from 4:30-7:30 p.m. our “Annual Tour of Homes” followed by a reception at the beautifully decorated Austin-Whittemore House at 15 Austin Street starting at 5:00 p.m. Once again, there will be 4 large homes on the Tour. Tickets may be purchased at the Austin-Whittemore House, Davis Pharmacy in Vermillion and Vermillion Beauty Shop starting November 16, 2018 until the date of the Tour.

Saturday, December 15 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. our annual “Sweets and Treats” fund raiser at the Austin-Whittemore House at 15 Austin Street. We will do your Christmas baking for you.

The CCHS Board so much appreciates your continued support of all of our events.

Gloria Hensley
CCHS Vice President

Joint Newsletter of the
CLAY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
W. H. OVER MUSEUM AND
CLAY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
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Seeking Preservation Awards Nominees

This year the Clay County Historic Preservation Commission is again selecting individuals and organizations that have contributed to the preservation of structures and sites of historical importance in Clay County. Preservation Awards recognize various Categories of Achievements including: Preservation Projects (restoring a specific structure); Individual Preservation Awards (individuals who have a track record of several preservation projects in Clay County); Lifetime Achievement (maintaining the integrity of a structure over time). Presentations will be made in November. Any and all nominations are welcome. Please contact Jim Wilson regarding your nomination at whitewilson@msn.com

Three organizations join together
for one newsletter:

W. H. OVER MUSEUM,

**CLAY COUNTY
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

AND

CLAY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Thank you
for your support!*



*Clay County Historic
Preservation Commission*
cchpc.org

