

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

Clay County, Vermillion, South Dakota

SUMMER / FALL 2019

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

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**Found In the W. H. Over Collections:  
 A Restoration Project Preserving Our Heritage;  
 Restoring Our Past**

During an inventory of the W. H. Over Collection, in the fall of 2018, an old suitcase was opened that contained an antique view camera dating from the late 1888's to early 1890's. Further research indicated that the camera was donated to the museum in 1979 from the Horace S. Clark estate. Clark (1869-1962) was a longtime resident and real estate agent in Deadwood, South Dakota. The suitcase was found in the basement of the Gier Building in Deadwood South Dakota and contained the camera and three Glass Plate holders (roll film was not invented until 1888 by George Eastman founder to the Eastman Kodak company). The camera was not in an operational condition. It was missing a lens, lens board, and the ground glass used for focusing.



*The Camera and parts as originally discovered.*



*The bellows were intact.*

Cameras such as this were important tools, recording life on the Plains in the eighteen hundreds. In addition, the cameras themselves were finely crafted works of art, constructed of beautiful mahogany, polished brass fittings, and red leather bellows. These cameras were very expensive in their day, and being made of primarily wood and leather, many did not survive. It was fortunate that the tattered suitcase protected this camera in reasonably good condition. The leather bellows, a critical part of the camera, was not torn nor had they lost the ability to remain light tight, making this camera an ideal project for restoration to its original and historic condition.

In undertaking the restoration process it was important to find components (lens, lens board and ground glass) that matched the function and appearance of the original camera. Using photographs from old catalogs as a guide and an abundance of antique lenses available on EBay made this an easier task. An appropriate landscape lens with rotating aperture stops was found at a reasonable cost and an appropriate lens board and ground glass were also purchased. (continued)

Since this was a glass plate camera, the lenses used did not normally contain a mechanical shutter. The emulsions used at that time were much slower than those used to day, and the time of exposure was often controlled by the removal and replacement of a lens cap. With the advent of faster emulsions, a device called a “Packard shutter” was developed. This device was attached behind the lens and was opened and closed in fractions of a second using an air bulb. One of these was procured to utilize the camera today with newer and faster cut sheet film. Additionally a metal sleeve was procured which allows the more modern cut sheet film to be used in the earlier glass plate holders. One of these was installed during the restoration. With these renovations, this antique camera is now fully functional. It is our plan to take a picture using a glass plate like the original one found with the camera and one using modern 8X10 film. The two photos will provide a basis for comparison of past and present photographic techniques.



*The new lens board. Note the initials on the suitcase “W.B.P”.*



*The new ground glass plate.*



## W. H. Over Museum

**Address:** 1110 N. University  
414 E. Clark Street  
Vermillion, SD 57069  
605-659-6151  
**email:** [whover@usd.edu](mailto:whover@usd.edu)  
**Website:** [whovermuseum.org](http://whovermuseum.org)

**WH Over Museum  
Officers and Board Members 2019**

- Doris Hodgen (President)
- Larry Bradley (First Vice President)
- Jack Powell (Second Vice President)
- Evelyn Schlenker (Secretary)
- Barbara Campbell (Treasurer)
- Gary Bottolfson,
- Sarah Chadima,
- Maxine Johnson,
- James Stone,
- Virginia Johnson,
- David Moen,
- Lynn Muller,
- Patrick Gross (ad hoc)
- Gene Iverson (honorary)

## Scanning and Digitalizing old Clay County Tax Records and Pictures

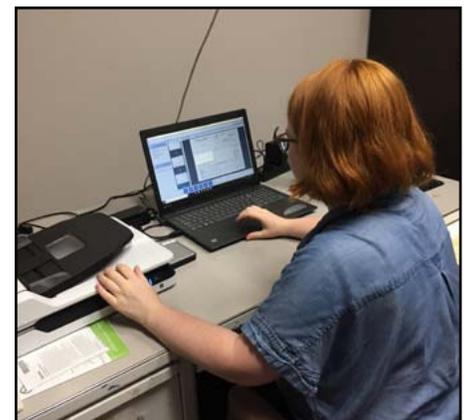
Jim Stone discovered that the Clay County Commissioners wanted to dispose of old real estate tax records and pictures of structures, because they were running out of storage space. These records were used by Director of Equalization and were updated in past years. By contrast, the newest records and pictures have been digitalized on their computer system.

Upon hearing this news from the Director of Equalization, I asked if they would consider donating these records to the W. H. Over Museum. The Clay County Commissioners concurred to have the records be archived at the W. H. Over Museum. In addition, the Board of Directors of the Over Museum agreed to receive the

donation. The Clay County Historic Preservation Commission (CCHPC) funded and is monitoring the project. In June 2019 the project began. There are about 9,000 parcels of land in the Clay County. Since records may contain over 8 pages and 2 or more pictures for each parcel, this is a large project!

Saving these records and pictures is important, since some of the old structures are no longer standing. Moreover, the digital records and pictures may be placed on the

CCHPC and W. H. Over Museum web sites and shared with the Clay County Office of Equalization so they can include the information on their computer system. These are all public records, which can be viewed by



*Mackenzie Stone scanning files at the W. H. Over Museum.*

the public. This project will contribute to the long and rich history of the settlement of Clay County. We need to preserve as much as possible for future generations.

## Converting a glass plate image to digital images

While doing inventory at the W. H. Over Museum, workers found many glass plate negatives stemming from the late 1800's to the early part of the 20th century. Since these are precious items that cannot leave the museum, a way to convert them to digital images and positive photographs was needed. Using a scanner or a camera on a smart phone and a light box as a background, this can easily be done. Below are two images of a Clay County farm scene from the early 20th century. One is a digitalized image of the negative (a photograph of the plate itself) and the other a positive photo from the negative image.

Some scanners have the ability to do this conversion, but there are programs found on-line that will also

accomplish the same task. Importantly, one needs to keep in mind the number of images to be processed and the resolution needed for a particular project. Photoshop has that capability, as does the following website where digital negative images can be uploaded <https://www.imgonline.com.ua/eng/make-negative.php>. Another program that allows conver-



sion of negatives to positive images is Lightroom (<https://sleeklens.com/turn-a-negative-into-a-positive-using-lightroom/>). Thus, faced with negatives either from glass plates or photo negatives, conversion to positive digital images allows these important finds to be printed, used in publications, and maintained as part of an archive.



## Friends of the W. H. Over President's Corner

Summer kicked off at the W.H. Over Museum on June 2<sup>nd</sup> with the 13<sup>th</sup> annual celebration of Rhubarb Day. After visitors enjoyed rhubarb desserts and beverages Virginia Johnson presented an illustrated program on many of her quilts which had decorated Sletwold Hall this spring. The Betsy Award (named for our 1923 fire engine and honors our wonderful volunteer firefighters) was given to Jewel Hood for the most favorite rhubarb dessert sampled this year.

The museum suffered a great loss on May 7<sup>th</sup> when long time employee Shirley Andersen passed away. Shirley had cataloged museum artifacts for nearly 20 years and shared her lively sense of humor and zest for life with staff and visitors alike. Several of us attended her Celebration of Life and were touched when the pastor spoke of Shirley's dedication to the W.H. Over. She is missed.

A joint project with the Clay County Historic Preservation Commission has begun with the hiring of an intern to scan about 9000 files from the Clay County Office of Equalization. This endeavor will result in permanent digital files in a searchable format. Funds for this project came from a grant to the CCHPC.

Large and small tour groups continue to visit the museum. In June we were a stop on a "mystery tour" for

a group of seniors from Sioux City. A highlight of their visit was an impromptu concert on the player piano by Larry Bradley. Some of these visitors began to polka as the music played. Looking ahead, our summer children's programs will include map making, building rockets, and use of cameras. Please come visit us this summer. Bring your house guests, grandchildren (for fun in the Discovery Room) or just yourselves. We have new exhibits to show off including a 9'x18' mural illustrating buffalo in the Black Hills. This mural was painted by Stanley Peterson, a USD student in the 1970s. Visit the Gift Shop which is open during museum hours.

This fall following the annual pumpkin carving event for kids on Sunday afternoon October 27<sup>th</sup> we will enjoy our **Welcome Fall** Soup and Pie dinner. This event is open to everyone so bring your favorite pot of soup or dust off that rolling pin and make a pie to share. Vermillion's own Bluff Ridge Band will provide musical entertainment for us.

Mark your calendars now for the Holiday Festival on Sunday December 8<sup>th</sup>. Vendors are already signing up for that event. Hopefully we will not have a blizzard!

Meanwhile, enjoy our South Dakota summer,

*Doris Hodgen  
President*

# Exhibits

## “Quilts and More” Exhibit

Since the last news-letter two exhibits were constructed and another one up-graded with a newly found backdrop.



*Virginia Johnson*

One exhibit compiled by Virginia Johnson entitled “Quilts and More” highlighted quilts that she purchased or had constructed, four beautiful Victorian-style dressed dolls, and a magnificent needle work by Joyce Zimmer. On April 23, 2019, as part of an OLLI course Virginia started her talk with a travelogue of traditional quilts. Subsequently, Virginia discussed “Using your Stash” highlighting new designs in conjunction with particular cutting methods, types of fabrics and the use of appliques. The doll display featured dolls designed by Jean Ahlgrim and costumes made by Virginia Johnson. Accompanying



*An example of Virginia’s quilts.*



*Virginia’s beautifully dressed dolls.*

the display is a pamphlet describing the quilts and how they were pieced and quilted. Virginia presented a repeat performance of her talk at the Rhubarb Days festival on June 2, 2019. Her artistry is a treasure for the eyes! The exhibit was up through June 11, 2019.



*Needlework by Joyce Zimmer.*

## Canes, Canes, Canes

The second new exhibit is housed in a “new” case donated to the W. H. Over by the National Music Museum. The purpose of the case is to exhibit items found in collection on a rotating basis. Currently sixteen canes are on display. Canes or walking sticks have a long history. They were used to aid walking or hiking, for defense, and as a statement of fashion or social status. Components of canes include the grip or handle, which may be connected to the shaft by a collar, and the tip or ferrule. Canes can be constructed from a variety of materials including various woods, glass, ivory, horns, and metals.

Some canes may consist of simple branches or contain intricate designs including embedded gems and metals, intricate carvings, and bright paintings. In additions, canes may include information about the date of manufacture or presentation and ownership. There are three categories of canes: decorative types including fashion accessories, folk art canes usually made of wood, and system or functional canes that conceal weapons such as swords or daggers, flasks containing liquids, or physicians’ equipment.

Folk art canes may include animal carvings of snakes, plants or other animals; contain shields, symbols of organizations; or consist of purely decorative sculptures. In this exhibit,



*Folk art canes snakes and more.*

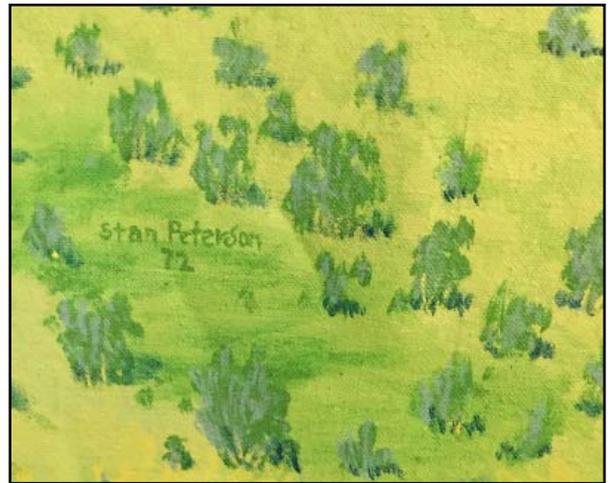


all types of canes are represented ranging from the late 19th to early 20th century. One decorative cane is inscribed on the ornately worked brass handle “A. E. Lee, Vermillion, SD.” Lee was an eminent businessman in Vermillion, served as mayor of Vermillion from 1892-1996, and Governor of South Dakota from 1897 to 1901. The majority of canes displayed are folk art canes, many American. A whole section of the exhibit is devoted to folk art snake canes. Thus, canes are both functional and decorative cultural expressions.

# Exhibits

## Murals, Murals, Murals

Finally, during our inventory of the collections in the vault we came upon two very large rolled up canvases. One was entitled “Little Log House.” Curiosity caused us to unroll the canvas on the floor of Sletwold Hall. What we discovered is a backdrop that had been created in 1972 by Stan Peterson when the W. H. Over Museum was housed in the Carnegie Library on the USD Campus (now the home of the National Music Museum). The backdrop was trimmed and reused in as a background for the exhibit depicting animals that Lewis and Clark may have encountered on their travels. Fifty seven years after its creation, having been shrouded since 1984, the beautiful backdrop makes another exhibit spring to life!



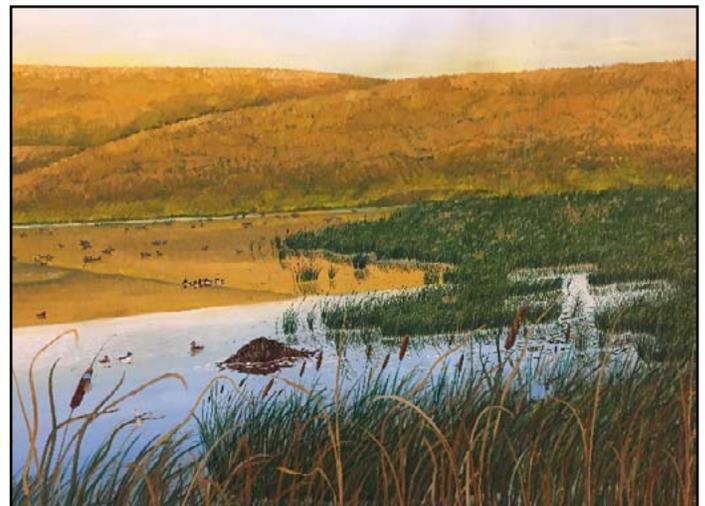
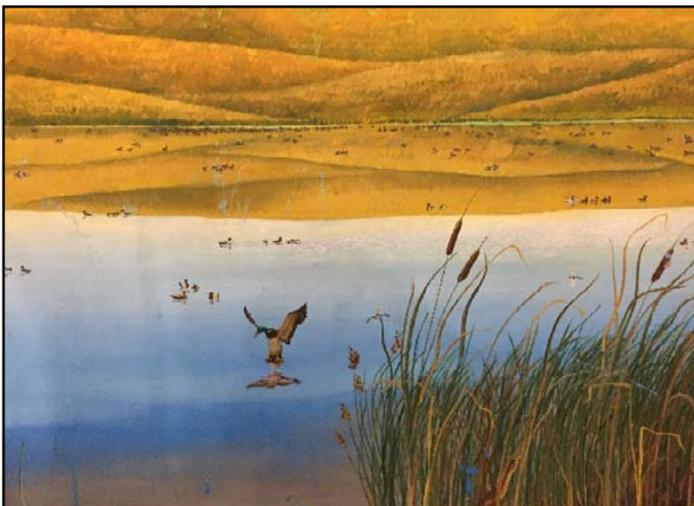
*The Stan Peterson backdrop installed behind the animals that Lewis and Clark may have encountered in their travels.*

*Photographs by Evelyn Schlenker*



The Stan Peterson backdrop installed behind the animals that Lewis and Clark may have encountered in their travels. The smaller photograph shows Stan Peterson’s signature and the date he painted the mural. Photographs by Evelyn Schlenker.

The second rediscovered mural, now used as a backdrop in the bird exhibit area, consists of a river scene depicting ducks and other migrating birds. Unlike the first mural, this one is unsigned, but most likely was also painted by Stan Peterson. The grasses, cattails, dragonflies, and birds are painted with great detail and accuracy. Below are two portions of this new mural.



# From the CCHS President

By Dan Christopherson

The following words were penned by our beloved “History Lady”, Cleo Erickson, who left us on January 12, 2017. Since the earlier days of “saving” the Austin-Whittemore House from demolition, to seeing to its continuing refurbishing efforts, Cleo was a stalwart! *It seems fitting as we celebrate 50 years of CCHS, that we reflect on some of Cleo’s writing!*

**From the Cleo Erickson files, 1969:**

The President of our University, Dr. Richard Bowen, his wife Connie and their children lived in the red house directly south of this home and his wife heard that there was to be an auction of the household goods. She called several of us together and said we need to save the house. That is all it took, and the Clay County Historical Society was formed. The young Mr. Whittemore came to Vermillion to give a piano concert at USD and a group of us went backstage after the concert and told him we wanted to save the house as it was such a part of the history of this community. He laughed us right out of the room. He did have the auction and the contents were scattered to the winds. The old white cupboard in the kitchen is the only piece of furniture that was in the house that was given back to us. We didn’t give up on saving the house as we wrote letters, we made telephone calls, and tried very hard to convince him to save the house. We offered to buy the 4 lots that are on this piece of property if he would give the Historical Society the house but it ultimately took a final letter asking if he had thought of the tax he would save if he gave us the house and we bought the lots. He went along with that and today we have the house, the lots are paid for and we are here to preserve the history of Vermillion and Clay County for future generations in Vermillion and Clay County!



I am also working on a history of the Vermillion Airport from its early origin in the 1920’s up to present. Among many interesting stories in old newspapers is the following:

**VERMILLION PLAIN TALK  
OCTOBER 18, 1928  
SITE SELECTED FOR AIRPORT  
EAST OF TOWN  
AIRPORT GROUP RECOMMENDS USING  
M.B. WEST FARM FOR NEW LANDING FIELD**

Speeding preparations for the new flying field in order to have landing facilities available for planes coming to the Dakota Day celebration at the University, the committee of the American Legion has reported on five suitable locations. The selection of the M.B. West property one mile east of town on the Sioux City Road has been recommended.

The property selected will be prepared for use immediately and will be equipped with a “wind direction sleeve” and the regulation white circle landing marker also provided. A 2,000 foot runway will be available on the rectangular field. Sixty acres will be available for immediate use, while an additional 31 acres may be added to the landing field if needed. The additional acreage, according to R.V. Newcombe, professor of civil engineering at the university and city engineer in charge of the work, will allow for the marking off of a field with a 2,600 foot runway which will meet the standard specifications set by the federal government.

**Field to Have Marker**

The landing field will be one mile east from the huge “Vermillion” sign which will be painted on the roof of the new armory and gymnasium at the university as a landmark for aviators. The landmark provided by the university will have a large arrow pointing to the landing field, Mr. Newcombe states.

With the plans and drawings of the new field hardly completed, the first request for landing directions has been received from “Sec” Taylor, sports editor of the Des Moines Register. Mr. Taylor plans to fly to Vermillion on Dakota Day accompanied by a staff photographer to take pictures of the football game between Morningside College and the University. The pictures will then be rushed back to Des Moines by the same plane for publication in the Sunday rotogravure section of the paper.

# CCHS 2019 EVENTS

## Prior Events



**Address:** Clay County Historical Society  
15 Austin St, Vermillion, SD 57069  
**Phone -** 605-624-8266  
**Web page -** cchssd.org  
**Email -** claycohistory@yahoo.com  
We are on Facebook – Search for Clay County Historical Society Vermillion South Dakota

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

A-W is available for family gatherings, meetings, class reunions, weddings, showers, business meetings, etc., call 624-8266 to schedule.

CCHS Web Page includes:

- Upcoming events
- Newsletter
- Monthly minutes
- Story of Austin-Whittemore House
- List of pictorial books and maps of Vermillion and the Clay County area for sale
- Officers/Directors

**MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE April 1, 2019**

Membership Dues are:  
Individual \$25  
Family \$40  
Institutional \$75  
Life Member \$250

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**CCHS Elected Board of Directors:**

**April 1, 2019-March 31, 2020**  
President - Dan Christopherson  
Vice President - Gloria Hensley  
Recording Secretary - Erin Burrow  
Membership Secretary - Ruth Bylander  
Treasurer - Joni Freidel  
Past President - Maxine Johnson  
Directors - Barb Campbell  
Kevin Jacobson, Lisa Johnson  
Art Rusch, Judy Sullivan, Tom Sorensen

\*\*\*\*\*

Appointed Positions  
Executive Director Wess Pravecek  
CCHPC Representative Jim Stone

**April 18** - The Clay County Historical Society was proud to celebrate the completion of the main floor bathroom accessibility project at the Austin-Whittemore House. Mayor Jack Powell performed the “First Official Flush” and read his proclamation.

The CCHS Annual Membership Meeting was held the same evening. All officers agreed to serve another term except for Marvin Walz who has Retired Emeritus status. Marvin has faithfully served us at all our events and has promised to continue with special events in the future. Tom Sorensen is Marvin’s replacement on the Board.

Joe Hoffman followed with his Antique Appraisal show. Folks brought items for Joe to examine and appraise free of charge.

**April 27-** CCHS board members Judy Sullivan and Gloria Hensley hosted the “CCHS Spring Table” for the annual ESA Tour of Tables to benefit St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital.

**June 10** - Our first “ Music Monday” was held on the grounds of the A-W House with “Acoustic Jam” Joe Sokolowski and Matt Kyger performing.

**June 20** - The CCHS annual Ice Cream Social celebrating 50 years of ownership of the Austin-Whittemore House was held at the Eagles. This event was sponsored in part by Clay County Historical Preservation Commission. Mamma Mia cast sang and danced for the audience’s enjoyment. This was our most successful Ice Cream Social ever thanks to our wonderful community participation.

*The following photos include Mayor Jack Powell and the first official flush, Joe Hoffman and the Antique Appraisals Show, Music Monday’s group playing in the Gazebo, and on the following page - the cast from the Vermillion Community Theatre play Momma Mia entertaining the crowd and crew working at the Ice Cream Social.*



## Join us for these CCHS Upcoming Events



**July 29, Music Monday, the “Bluff Ridge Band”** will perform from 7:00-8:30 pm on the grounds of the A-W House. Free popcorn. Bring your own lawn chair.

**August 19, Music Monday** will be our last for the season with the “Clay Creek Band” performing 7:00-8:30 pm for your listening enjoyment on the A-W lawn. Free popcorn. Bring your own lawn chair.

**October 14, Monday - The second annual “Spoken History” Cemetery Tour-Chapter Two** will start at 5:00 pm at the Cemetery Chapel. Tickets will be available at the Austin-Whittemore House prior to the event, presale only, starting September 30th.

**December 6, Friday - The annual CCHS Tour of Homes** will start 4:30-7:30, followed by a reception at the beautifully decorated Austin-Whittemore House at 15 Austin Street which opens at 5:00 pm. Once again there will be great homes for you to tour. Tickets will be available middle of November at Davis Pharmacy, Lisa Johnson at the Spa at Wynie Maes and the Austin-Whittemore House.

**December 14, Saturday - “Sweets and Treats”** at the Austin-Whittemore House with takeout boxes for your convenience. We bake and you celebrate with our delicacies.

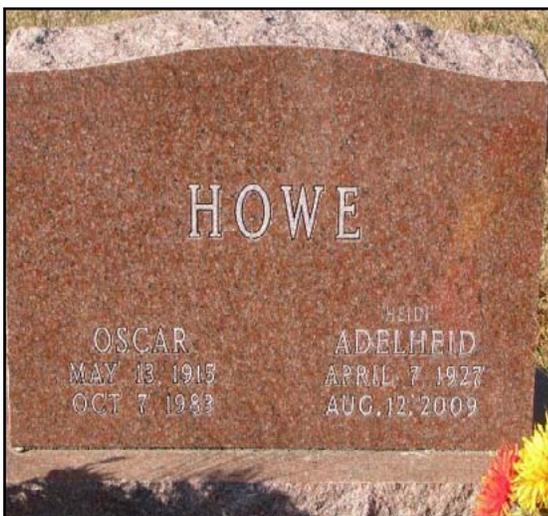
Thanks, so much for your ongoing support of all our events. We could not be successful without your support.

Gloria Hensley  
Vice President

## Spoken History Cemetery Tour, Chapter 2 “A County Of Culture”

“In art I have realized a part of a dream – to present a true image of the Dakota Indian as I understood him and his culture.” Oscar Howe

The Clay County Historical Society invites you to explore the history of regional culture during our 2019 cemetery walking tour. The Bluff View Cemetery (599 Pinehurst Avenue) is the final resting place to many creative figures including artists, authors, and musicians. Discover the stories of six Clay County residents who were inspired to share their talent with the people of this area.



*A grave marker for Oscar and Adelheid Howe at the Bluff View Cemetery.*

Admission is by presale only and \$10 tickets will be available at the Austin Whittemore House on Monday, September 30. Rain or shine, mark your calendars for Monday, October 14, @ 5:30 pm. Please watch the newspaper and follow us on facebook.

Joni Freidel  
Cemetery Tour Chairman

### In Memorium of Ann Severson

On June 8, 2019, Annabelle (Rask) Severson, the last Lifetime Director for the Clay County Historical Society board, passed away at the age of 87. She was one of the last original group of ladies who helped save the Austin-Whittemore House from becoming a parking lot. Her passion for history and wonderful work ethic helped to build many Clay County resources that are still available and being used at the AW House. We could always count on Ann when it came to decorating and helping with event preparations. She will be greatly missed.



### *Thanks for the Memories*

(Donations made to the Austin-Whittemore House)

- Floor plans for the USD Chi Omega Sorority House – Donated by Dawn Sorenson/Carla Sorenson
- Engman Family Photo Album (Butler photography 1883-1910) – Donated by Janice Olson
- 1966 Clay County Family & Ranch Directory
- 1932 Farm Account Book
- Vermillion Postcards 1908 – Donated by Ruth Bylander/Minnie Messler
- Child’s Metal Barn and Silo Set and Happy Time Cash Register – Donated by Susan Tuve
- Early 1900 Telephone Bill Receipt Book – Donated by Leonard Bottolfson/ John Taylor
- Newcastle/Vermillion Bridge Material – Donated by Don Meisner
- Shoe Stretchers – Donated by Gary Lurkon/Lutmilla Granowski
- Early Vermillion photos – Donated by Tom Severson/Ann Severson collection
- Early Wooden Theatre Seats
- Early books – School Laws for SD, Poll Book, Teachers Register, Laws of 13th Session of 1879 Legislative Session – Donated by Jane Larson/Meckling Township

*And again, a big thank you to everyone that donated time or money to make the new handicap accessible bathroom a reality. Thank you, thank you.*

## From the Desk of the Clay County Historical Society

Fifty years ago, I had just finished my freshman year in college. I didn't have a lot of money, but I had a lot of fun and looked forward to what my life might become. The world around me was moving quickly with headlines about the Viet Nam War, political uprising and questionable fashions. Little did I know that there was a group of forward-thinking individuals in Vermillion who were working like crazy to save an important part of history, aka the Austin-Whittemore House. They saw the value of how holding on to something from the past actually helps put things into perspective for our future. It was 50 years ago this month that the Clay County Historical Society held its first ice cream social as a fundraiser. This social event not only created an opportunity for the community to gather together to share food and fellowship but also to raise money and awareness for an important project. This event continues and thanks to everyone who participates.

Another anniversary that's should be recognized this summer is the 1909 dedication of the Log School house monument that sits at the foot of Dakota Street. Classes were held at this log schoolhouse in Dakota Territory from 1864-1872. In 1905 the remaining students and teachers formed the Log Schoolhouse Association and at their meeting in 1909 it was decided that a monument should be placed at the original site of the school. School children still enjoy visiting the newest replica of the first log schoolhouse. The importance of education in this community continues.

Two other dates that I'm thinking about this summer are the birthdays of Horace (July 11, 1837) and Rachel Austin (June 1, 1838). Mr. Austin was only 54 years old

when he died, and Rachel was 66 years old when she passed. As 19-year-old teenagers, I'm curious what news was swirling around them at the time. Little did they know that their future plans would play a pretty important role in the future of a community called Vermillion.

This beautiful AW House has had some "spiffing up" taking place the last couple of months. After the handicap ramp was built, it was apparent that the front porch needed a good scraping and painting. The CCHS board stepped up and went to town on the porch. There was lots of scraping and painting done to make it look shiny and new again. Marvin has given his beautiful bench a new paint job and Dan repainted the front door. With all of the guests that we've had coming to visit this summer, the house is looking good and we hope that you'll come by and check it out.

Please remember that if you're interested in using the beautiful historical house for an event, wedding, family reunion, club meeting, give me a call at 605-624-8266 and let's talk. There has been life in this house since 1882 and we want to continue the tradition. Thank you for your support and we hope to hear from you soon.

Wess Pravecek, Executive Director  
Austin-Whittemore House



# Vermillion Historic Preservation Commission Awarded CLG Status

Following the establishment of the Vermillion Historic Preservation Commission (VHPC) in July 2018, the city of Vermillion applied for and was awarded the status of Certified Local Government (CLG) in April 2019 through the South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). According to the South Dakota SHPO, "...the CLG program is a federal historic preservation program administered through State Historic Preservation Offices. The goal of the CLG program is to increase the participation of local governments in historic preservation activities and tie local governments into the nationwide historic preservation network made up of a variety of federal, state and local organizations. CLGs can be towns, cities, or counties. If a local government meets certain federal and state requirements and is granted CLG status, it is eligible to apply for yearly grants from the SHPO that may be used for a variety of preservation projects." Vermillion is the 20<sup>th</sup> CLG in the state of South Dakota. The Clay County Historic Preservation Commission, is also a CLG. The formation of an active citizen commission is one of the requirements of being a CLG.

The founding members of VHPC are Cyndy Chaney, Bill Dendinger, Ed Gerrish, Dietrik Vanderhill, Jim Wilson, Gloria Hensley and Susan Keith Gray. These members joined the commission to help community members be aware of Vermillion's treasures and to guide the community in preserving them. Historic preservation, when embraced by a community, provides economic, ecological and sociological benefits. The VHPC will be eligible to apply for funds in March 2020. This funding will assist Vermillion, through the HPC, to fund such projects as property surveys for listing on the national register and community educational projects related to historic preservation.

*The mission of the Vermillion Historic Preservation Commission is to protect, preserve, and restore Vermillion's historic and cultural assets through public education, workshops, and outreach to the community.*

The recent activities of the VHPC included a public meeting on May 2<sup>nd</sup> at Jolley School to discuss interest in a possible new historic district in an area bordered by Main Street on the north, S. University Street on the east, the bluff on the south and the Forest Avenue district to the west. The commission will begin to survey this neighbor-

hood on Wednesday, July 31st. All interested persons are invited to attend a training session that day lead by Liz Almlie of the South Dakota SHPO from 9:30-11:30 a.m. in the large conference room at city hall. After lunch, we will begin the "drive by" survey in the neighborhood, noting the external historical characteristics of each building. Anyone interested in participating may contact Susan Keith Gray at [susankeith.gray@gmail.com](mailto:susankeith.gray@gmail.com) for more information.

CLG status encourages and supports attendance at preservation conferences. In May, city manager John Prescott and VHPC chair Susan Keith Gray attended the Preserve Iowa Summit in Newton, IA. Topics included small scale incremental development, wood window repair, pand economic development, zoning and preservation, design guidelines for tax incentive applications, stories of many examples of successful preservation and more.

*The mission of the Vermillion Historic Preservation Commission is to protect, preserve, and restore Vermillion's historic and cultural assets through public education, workshops, and outreach to the community.* The VHPC is made up of seven members with rotating terms. Members are chosen for their interest and expertise in history, architecture, archeology, city planning and related fields. Interested residents of the city of Vermillion may apply annually at the city website.

**CCHPC**  
Clay County Historic Preservation Commission  
**Address:** 211 West Main Street, Suite 102  
Vermillion, SD 57069  
**email:** whitewilson@msn.com  
**Website:** cchpc.org

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**Officers and Board Members  
of the 2019 Clay County  
Historic Preservation Commission**  
Jim Wilson (Chair)  
Tom Sorensen (Vice-Chair)  
Gloria Hensley (Treasurer)  
Evelyn Schlenker (Secretary)  
Ed Gerrish  
Dennis Konkler  
Patrick Morrison,  
Bill Ranney  
Jim Stone  
Monica Iverson  
Tim Schreiner

## Two Carnegie Libraries in Vermillion, SD: Background information for a new publication

by Evelyn Schlenker

During the latter part of the 19th and early 20th century Andrew Carnegie's philanthropic mission was to donate monies for the construction of libraries throughout the United States. Carnegie believed in the transformative education ability of libraries according to his own experiences growing up in Scotland. According to Bobinski's book, "Carnegie Libraries: Their history and impact on American Public Library Development", most libraries were constructed from 1890 to 1917. The Carnegie Foundation gave over \$ 56 million to help construct 2,509 library buildings.

Communities in South Dakota were the recipients of funds that resulted in 25 public libraries and two academic libraries, one affiliated with the University of South Dakota (USD) in Vermillion and the other affiliated with Yankton College, which closed its doors in 1988. That building is currently part of the Federal prison system and is a contributing building in the Yankton College Historic District. Moreover, Yankton and Vermillion built public libraries. The Yankton Public library was constructed in 1902. The building served as a library until 1973 (Frank H. Adams, VPT April 24, 1980) and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979 (<https://npgallery.nps.gov/AssetDetail/NRIS/79002412>). Currently the building houses the Horn Law Office. Public libraries offered opportunities for patrons to educate themselves, as well as being in a safe community space to hold meetings and lectures.

Applications to garner library building funds from the Carnegie Foundation included filling out forms guarantee-



*Vermillion Public Carnegie Library*

ing that cities have populations greater than 1000 residents and that the cities were willing to donate 10% of the cost of the library per year to maintain the building. Vermillion's population in 1900 consisted of more than 2100 people. Moreover, it was assumed that additional fees and donations would contribute to buying books, shelving and furniture. In addition, the entity in charge of the library had to commit spending 10% of the library building's Carnegie contribution per year. In the case of the Vermillion public library funds came from the City. Funds for the USD library came from the South Dakota Board of Regents.

The "gate-keeper" that reviewed the applications was

continued

### ***University Historic District Association Activities***

The University Historic District Association had its annual meeting on June 13th. Neighborhood residents Martha Fagg and Ariel Rosenberg were selected as new board members. Continuing board members are Dan Neufeld, Randy VonEhwegen, Jill VonEhwegen, Ed Gerrish, Teresa Gilbertson, Claude Garelik, Joan Holter and Susan Keith Gray. The Association will hold a *Sunday Sundae* Ice Cream Social on August 25 at 4 p.m. at 26 N. University St. All neighbors are cordially invited to attend. The September quarterly meeting will be held on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Program ideas being formulated. The annual fall cleanup will take place at the end of September. Email updates, newsletters and flyers will be used to provide more information.

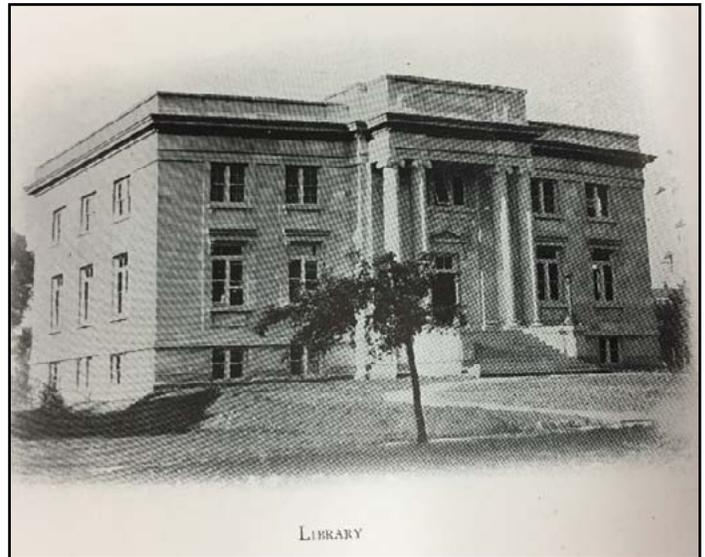
The UHDA board meets monthly to plan activities for the association. General meetings for the entire neighborhood are held in June, September and March. The June meeting is the annual meeting where new board members are selected. Meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month. Locations are TBA. For information, contact Susan Keith Gray at [susankeith.gray@gmail.com](mailto:susankeith.gray@gmail.com) or Randy Von Ehwegen at [randyvonehwegen@gmail.com](mailto:randyvonehwegen@gmail.com).

***Two Carnegie Libraries - continued***

Andrew Carnegie’s secretary James Bertram, like Carnegie a Scott. Bertram was extremely critical about the contents of building application and letters of support from city officials. In addition, the site chosen where the library stood within a community was critical; it had to be easily accessible by its patrons. Moreover, the communities were expected to hire an architect that was knowledgeable about constructing Carnegie Libraries.

In Vermillion, the architect for both library buildings was Joseph Schwarz. He was born in New York City on February 22, 1858 and moved west with his family first to La Crosse, Wisconsin and then to Sioux Falls, Dakota Territory in 1880. His background in contracting and carpentry was a boom in the rapidly growing city. Although Schwarz had no formal university training in architecture, he learned his trade through apprenticeship. Between 1895 and 1924 Schwarz designed buildings in South Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska and Iowa including twenty-two Catholic churches, twenty schools and parish houses, sixteen commercial or warehouse buildings, six Carnegie libraries, six other public buildings, five residential properties, four county courthouses, and four churches of other denominations. His main professional competitor during the late 19th century into the early twentieth century was Wallace Dow (<http://plainshumanities.unl.edu/encyclopedia/doc/egp.arc.017>).

Like Dow, Schwarz utilized Sioux quartzite, but Schwarz also built structures using brick (used in the Vermillion Public Library) and Indiana limestone (used in the



*University of South Dakota Carnegie Library  
Note the different architectural styles of the two libraries.*

USD library) transitioning from Romanesque with some use of the Gothic style buildings to Italian Renaissance, as well as on Neoclassical styles used to design many Carnegie libraries. Schwarz had three sons (Henry J., Edmund A., and Joseph Jr.) who worked in the Schwarz firm. Joseph Jr. continued the architectural firm into the mid-1930. Like Dow, many of Schwarz’s buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places ([https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mX-Wo6uco/wiki/Joseph\\_Schwarz.html](https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mX-Wo6uco/wiki/Joseph_Schwarz.html)). Joseph Schwarz died in Sioux Falls on December 26, 1927. Appreciation of and respect for his work has grown over the years.

***Forest Avenue Historic District Neighborhood Meetings***

*By Gloria Hensley, Representative for Historic Forest Avenue Historic District  
Vermillion Historic Preservation Commission*

The first Forest Avenue Historic District Neighborhood meeting was held on April 25, 2019 from 7:00-8:00 p.m. at the United Church of Christ. Postcards were sent to the residents in the District (located along Forest Avenue and includes several properties located along Lewis Street, the Southern terminus of Forest Avenue) from a list provided by the Clay County Equalization Office. The purpose of this meeting was to help residents recognize the special nature of the Forest Avenue Historic District and to encourage the role of historic preservation in improving the quality of life and property values of the District. Jim Wilson and Cyndy Chaney of the Vermillion Historic Preservation Commission were also in attendance and added to the discussion.

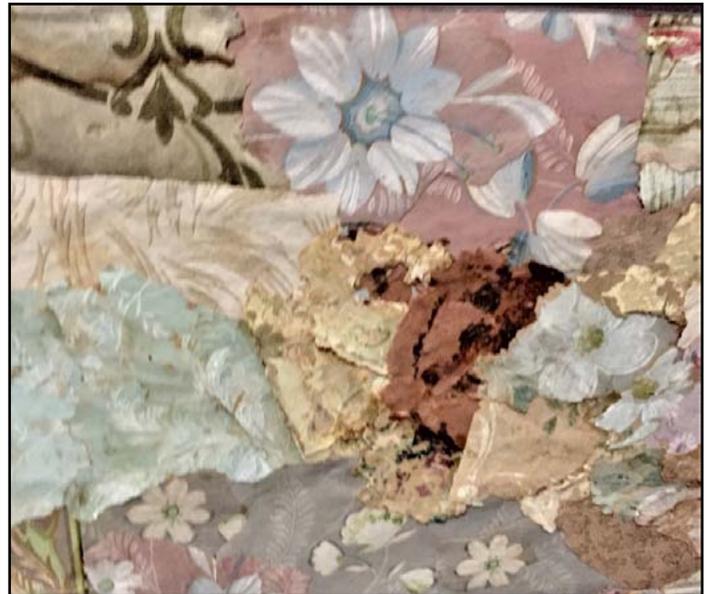
Residents asked questions and discussed topics for meetings held on May 16 and June 13. Topics that were covered included: What the National Register Listing Does and Does Not Do, Contributing and Non-Contributing property types, and relevant web sites. Finally, Gloria noted that “The Forest Avenue Historical District Vermillion, South Dakota 1873-1980” a book by Judith Gudger Krueger is now available on line at [judykrueger.com](http://judykrueger.com). Residents were encouraged to contact Gloria Hensley regarding questions relevant to Forest Avenue.

## CCHPC Outreach Activities

The Clay County Historic Preservation Commission (CCHPC) participates in several outreach activities that support our mission for education about preservation. This includes giving tours, OLLI courses, posting publications on our website (cchpc.org), and disseminating and discussing publications and preservation possibilities. For example, this spring Jim Wilson presented a tour of “green” houses in Vermillion in conjunction with the celebration of Earth Day. Next fall Jim Wilson will present a downtown Vermillion tour as part of an OLLI course.

At the Clay County Historical Society ice cream social on June 20, 2019, which the CCHPC helped sponsor, several CCHPC Board members and Art Rusch facilitated discussion and dispersal of CCHPC publications. The following day Bill Raney attended the 150th celebration of Midsommar Festival at Dalesburg dispersing our CCHPC publications and answering questions. Many people stopped, chatted and picked up publications at both well attended events. Later this summer, Bill will have a table at the Clay County Fair featuring CCHPC activities and publications.

In addition, Jim Stone edited and updated his barn publication available on the CCHPC website and Evelyn Schlenker uploaded a PDF of a booklet denoting the history of 2-4 East Main Street, a building constructed in 1984 and recently renovated to become McVicker Plaza, the home of the Vermillion Chamber and Development

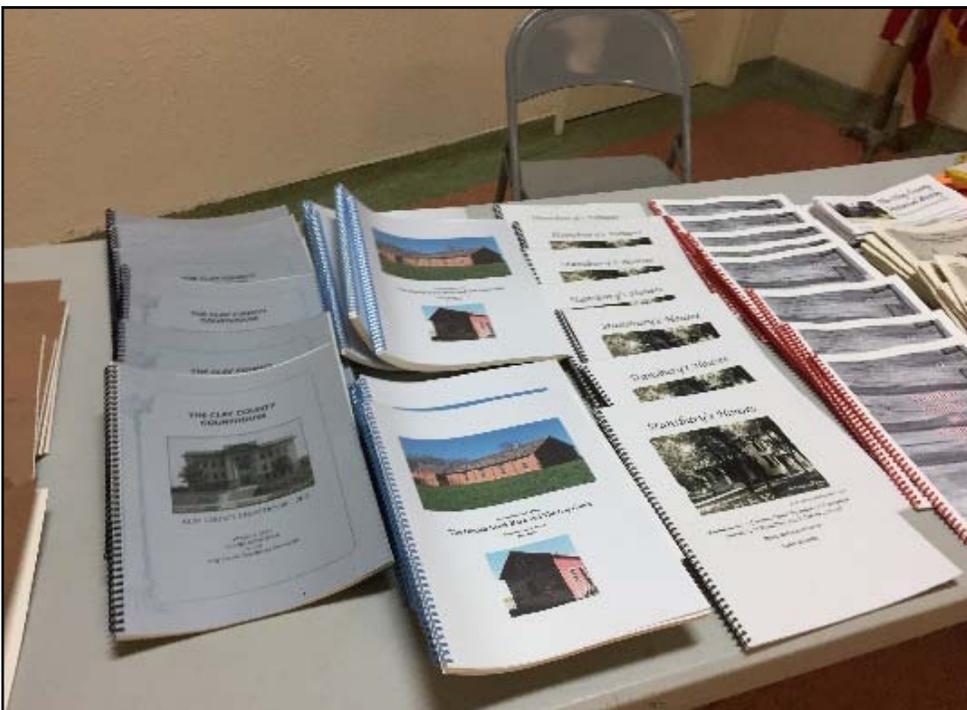


*A portion of Monica Iverson's collage showing a variety of wallpaper fragments.*

*Picture by Evelyn Schlenker*

Corporation and the USD store “Charlie’s.” Finally, in the process of dismantling 2-4 East Main Street know, Monica Iverson, a CCHPC Board member, was able to salvage pieces of wallpaper from various sites. Monica determined that wide variety, types and ages of wallpaper were represented in the samples she took. She created a wallpaper montage that hangs in the McVicker Plaza building. The

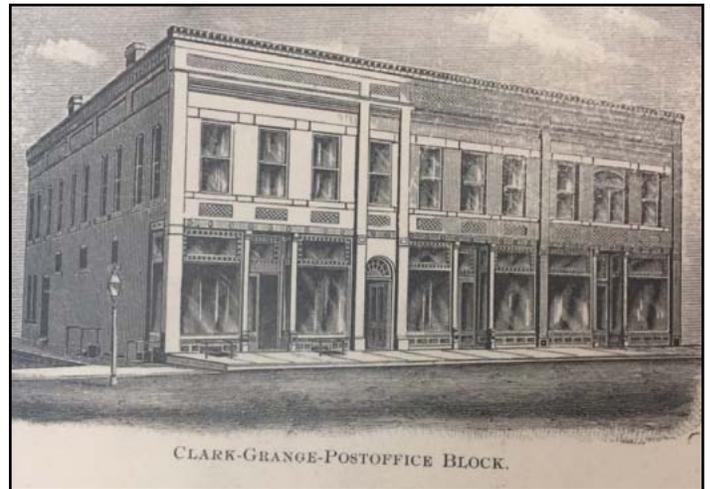
periods of wall paper represented in the montage include the Victorian style from 1884-1910 that include the large white apple blossom with the yellow-green center and leaves on a gray background. Another pattern of wall paper design (1890-1910) consisted of darker and lighter vines located on the top of the wall in a repeating pattern. Examples of Victorian Arts and Crafts (late 19th to early 20th century) patterns that were manufactured are large floral designs. Another style is the Aesthetic Movement style, a mixture of Japanese and Gothic influences <https://www.historicwallpapering.net/historic-wallpaper-resources>. In addition to the montage, Monica is composing a brochure to accompany the montage that will discuss the variety of wallpaper types that hung in the building prior to its renovation.



*Some CCHPC publications disseminated at the Clay County Historical Society Ice Cream Social. Photograph by Evelyn Schlenker*

## Heads up: Nominations are open for CCHPC Preservation Awards

Now is the time to start thinking about nominating a person, business, or organization that demonstrates a dedication to preserving structures in Clay County. The categories are 1. Preservation Projects (restoring a specific structures), 2. Individual Preservation Awards (individuals who have a track record of several preservation projects in Clay County) and 3. Lifetime Achievement (maintaining the integrity of a structure over time). We are fortunate to have so many residents of Clay County who are actively engaged in preservation activities that make the quality of life in this area better and help preserve our history. Awards will be given in November, 2019.



## A list of some CCHPC Publications

(<http://cchpc.org/resources/>)

*Termes Murals* by Many Hands by Dick Termes and the Termesphere Gallery

*Courting 'Old Betsy'...and Taking Her Home* by Thomas L. Sorensen

*Summary of Clay County Barn Project 2011-2014* by Jim Stone

*Vermillion Architects and Contractors 1870 to Present* by Jim Wilson

*Guide to the National Register of Historic Places in Clay County, SD*

*Tour of Vermillion: Downtown Historic District*

*Vermillion Downtown Masonry Tour* by Jim Wilson

*Guide for Interpretive Signs in Clay County, South Dakota*

*Houses Owned by Eugene & Josephine Stansbury in Vermillion, SD 1916-1956* by Evelyn Schlenker

*Stained Glass Windows of St Agnes Church* by Evelyn Schlenker

*Stained Glass Windows of the St. Patrick's Catholic Church* by Evelyn Schlenker

*USD tour booklet* by Tom Thaden

*The Danish Brick Barn and The Log Cabin* by Jim Stone

*The Last of the Clay County Country Schools 1999 - 2015* by Fern Kaufman and Donna Gross

*The Clay County Courthouse: A Centennial Celebration* by Art Rusch

*A History of 2-4 East Main Street* by Evelyn Schlenker

(<http://cchpc.org/a-history-of-2-4-east-main-street-by-evelyn-schlenker/>)

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