



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 Publication

July 2014

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Board of Directors

Maxine Johnson, President
 Judy Sullivan, Secretary
 Luann Ouellette, Treasurer
 Joe Hoffman, Past President

Life-time Directors:

Cleo Erickson
 Ann Severson

Elected Directors:

Gary Bottolfson
 Dan Christopherson
 Art Rusch
 Marvin Walz

Message from CCHS President

The Society has just completed a spectacularly successful ice cream social. These kinds of events take all kinds of work and planning and in addition to the board members making the preliminary plans, Lisa Johnson took care of all the work of planning and ordering the food and paper goods needed to have a beautiful occasion. Gloria Christopherson, as usual, put her talents for finding folks who are happy to provide the homemade pies, to good use. Judy Sullivan and Mary Chicoine took great care in seeing that the House was in beautiful display mode – they washed windows, curtains, and hung pictures. All of the board members helped – the guys helped with the hard work of setting up tables and chairs and Julie Fallan saw to it that we had some 4-H members available to help carry trays and keep them clean between happy customers. John and Susan McNeill provided music for everyone's enjoyment and another social went down in the record book as being a very successful event. Happenings, such as these, are wonderful parts of the tapestry of tradition in Vermillion and I am always suitably impressed and grateful that we always seem to have a loyal cadre of folks who willingly volunteer their time, talents, real dollars, and expertise to take the initiative to be sure that these wonderful events continue to happen. So, thanks to all who helped in any way and thanks to all who came and enjoyed the event.

The long-awaited re-birth of the replica of the original one-room schoolhouse in Vermillion is essentially complete. Just a few remaining finishing touches remain to be completed and the schoolhouse is ready for its big introduction to society in early September. Gene Hawkins, Jim Stone and crew, including board members Marvin Walz and Gary Bottolfson have expended hours and hours of research time and actual building time. They have done a magnificent job! Gene said he always wanted to build a log cabin so his wish has come true. Thanks, too, to Tom Thaden for putting our toes to the fire and not letting up in his wish to have this project not only completed but beautifully done. Thanks to our anonymous donor who jump-started our fund raising and allowed the present board to find this wonderful project not only complete, but beautifully so.

The Austin-Whittemore House was also the scene for a family reunion in late June. The members who are descended from the original residents of the House chose to come to Vermillion to celebrate being together and sharing lunch, memories, and photographs. At least one wedding anniversary will be celebrated later this summer. The House is a beautiful setting for any kind of occasion and has been put to good use over the years and we look forward to many more events being celebrated in these beautiful surroundings. Thanks to Dan Christopherson and his helpers, the gazebo has been graced with a

new roof and some minor repairs to the structure itself. In a house this old, just like the rest of us, there is always something that needs repair or tweaking and it is a day-to-day task to keep ahead of needed repairs.

We have enjoyed and depended on the gracious presence and bountiful knowledge of the history of Vermillion ensconced by the “History Lady”, otherwise known as Cleo Erickson, for many, many years. Cleo has chosen to retire from her volunteer position. The gift of memory she bestowed is beyond measure and much of the glory of the presence of the Clay County Historical Society and the Austin-Whittemore House has been due to the dedication and love Cleo has for the history of this area and this house in particular. Cleo has been at the House and

has helped countless family members find, not only information about the burial location or whether the ancestral home still stands, but more than likely a story or recollection that makes that discovery and information quite special to the person seeking it. How do you say thank you to someone who has been so steadily dedicated to preserving the past for so many and for so many years? There is not a plaque big enough to hold all the thanks and signatures it would take to include all of the names of individuals and organizations that Cleo has helped over the years – so, Cleo, from the bottom of our collective hearts – THANK YOU!

Maxine Johnson



Join us
OPEN HOUSE
Honoring...
“The History Lady”
Cleo Erickson

for her many years of service to the Clay County Historical Society.

Sunday, July 20 from 2-4 p.m.
at the Austin Whittemore House, 15 Austin, Vermillion

or send a card to
833 Valley View Dr. Vermillion, SD 57069

Log School House to Celebrate 150 Year Sesquicentennial

The first permanent school house in Dakota Territory was built in 1864 at the base of the Dakota Street hill in Vermillion, South Dakota. In 1873 the original school ceased being used when Captain Miner donated land atop the bluff and a new school was built. In August 1909, a monument was placed at the original site at the base of Dakota Street hill and it is still there today.



A replica of the original schoolhouse was built in 1939 and placed on the USD Campus east of the current National Music Museum. It was later moved several times on campus before being returned in 1964 to the base of Dakota Street hill.

Continued vandalism caused the replica to be moved back up the hill in 1978 to Captain Miner Lane on the Southwest corner of the Main Street Center parking lot. The school replica has fallen into disrepair and has been razed and rebuilt on Clay County Historical Society's Austin-Whittemore property at 15 Austin Street in Vermillion.

Hawkins Construction of Vermillion was hired by the CCHS, and the replica has been constructed with newly milled logs using old time construction techniques. Some of the original furnishings were salvaged and moved to the new structure.



A grand celebration and dedication is planned at a lawn party at the Austin-Whittemore property on Wednesday September 3, 2014 from 4pm to 7pm to mark the 150th Anniversary of the original building. In the tradition of Pansy Whittemore's birthday parties, sugar cookies and lemonade will be served. A ribbon cutting and short program will be held at 5:15pm. Tours of the log school as well as the home will be available.

WE NEED YOUR HELP TO PRESERVE THE PAST!

A financial donation to the Clay County Historical Society, a 501(c)3 organization, will double our ability to properly fund and furnish this project, as an anonymous individual will match donations dollar for dollar!

Spirit Mound on the Sesque

Discovery of Captive LeRays Narrative by State Historian Doane Robinson

Dakota Republican – February 20, 1908

To the Editor of the Republican –

I have recently come upon a most interesting document, it being the Journal of Mr. Charles LeRays, who from October, 1801, to April, 1805, was a captive among the Sioux Indians. He was taken captive by a band of Brules at the mouth of the Osage and brought that fall to the Sioux River, above Elk Point. During the succeeding years they dragged him about all over the Northwest, but by the summer of 1804 they were back upon the Vermillion a few miles above its mouth, and while Lewis and Clark were examining Spirit Mound, were in council near by as to what course to pursue: whether to destroy the soldiers or let them proceed. LeRay then describes Spirit Mound:

“Above the Sioux River, and between that and the River Sesque (in another place he spells it Sesqui), is a small hill, destitute of timber, which the natives say is inhabited by spirits, in the shape of human beings, of a very diminutive size, not being, according to their description, more than six or eight inches high. Respecting these bodily spirits they have a number of ridiculous fancies. An old chief told me with great gravity, that the occasion of their coming and living on this hill, was because the Indians a great many winters ago, were so wicked and foolish as to strive to kill all the animals made for their use. The Great Spirit saw them from above, and was so angry with them that he sent these little beings which the Indians call Wakons, to drive all of the animals out of the country, which they did and many of the Indians starved for want of food. But after much entreaty and many sacrifices, the anger of the Great Spirit was appeased, and he permitted the animals to return, but directed the Wakons to reside on this hill, to watch the conduct of the Indians, and should they again be so wicked, they are to drive all of the animals off never to return. This impression has had an excellent effect on the natives, as it prevents causeless waste of what is so necessary for their subsistence. They pretend often to see these little beings on and about the hill, as they are passing, but no consideration would induce an Indian to set his foot on this holy ground.”

I have not elsewhere found this name: Sacque or Sasqui: applied to the Vermillion.

Faithfully,

Doane Robinson

Instructions to Teachers in Dakota Territory – September 1872

Teachers will fill lamps, clean chimneys and trim wicks each day.

Each teacher will bring a scuttle of coal and a bucket of water for the day's use.

Make your pens carefully. You may whittle nibs for the individual tastes of the children.

Men teachers may take one evening each week for courting purposes or two evenings a week if they go to church regularly.

After ten hours in school, the teacher should spend the remaining time reading the Bible or other good works.

Women teachers who marry or engage in other unseemly conduct will be dismissed.

Every teacher should lay aside from his pay a goodly sum for his declining years so that he will not be a burden on society.

Any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, frequents a pool or public hall, or gets shaved at a barber shop will give good reason for suspecting his worth, intentions, integrity and honesty.

The teacher who performs his labors faithfully and without fault for five years will be given an increase of 25 cents a week in his pay providing the Board of Education approves.

(From the files of the South Dakota Historical [Society](#))

Dakota Republican – January 31, 1896

There is a move on foot among some of the prominent citizens of Vermillion to rebuild the old schoolhouse, just like it used to stand in the ravine years ago. It will be on the same spot, of the same dimensions, and be so near like it that a professional would be needed to tell them apart. It is planned to have a big time at the "rasin'," inviting people from all over the state to come and witness this interesting event. Some of the necessary steps have already been taken, and the proposition will undoubtedly be a go. The restoration will be an honor to Vermillion and will bring to this city a large number of prominent people. There are people now prominent in the state's history who used to be connected with events at the old schoolhouse and who would hail with gladness an opportunity to be present at the ceremony of "rasin'."

Thanks to Tom Thaden, one of our past presidents, for some interesting articles that he has compiled.

If you call the A-W House, please leave a message. We will get back to you.

From Luann Ouellette, Board Treasurer, on behalf of the Board of Directors ...

THANKS to each of you who have paid your dues for the year that started April 1, 2014 and to those who have become Life Members.

We are a 501(c)(3) and receive limited financial support from our major fundraisers--The Tour of Homes in December and the Ice Cream Social in June— and through income on investments, donations for use of the House, donations from visitors and for genealogy research, and an annual \$500 allotment from the Clay County Commissioners, so dues are very important to our bottom line.

We hope if you've been a member previously that you'd consider re-joining us ... and for those who have not belonged previously we'd appreciate your support. The Dues Payment Form is found on page last page in this issue and is included in each newsletter.

<u>Life Membership</u>			
\$200 per person one-time payment			
	<u>Annual Dues</u>		
Individual	\$15	Family	\$25
		Institutional	\$50

Below is a listing of paid members as of July 2, 2014 ... if your name or business isn't there, we'd hope you'd complete the form and mail it with a check to the CCHS, 15 Austin St, Vermillion, SD 57069. Unfortunately we are not equipped to process credit card payments.

If there are questions or you see an oversight, please contact me via phone (h) 605-624-8298 or (c) 605-677-9484) or via e-mail luouellette@vyn.midco.net or luouellette59@gmail.com

Thank you for considering supporting The Clay County Historical Society!

PAID THROUGH MARCH 31, 2017: Terry Horner

PAID THROUGH MARCH 31, 2016: No one

PAID THROUGH MARCH 31, 2015:

Barbara Campbell	Bud & Doris Heine	Roger & Jane Kugler
Alan Clem	Gloria & Bill Hensley	Joy Linsmaier
Davis Pharmacy	Barbara & Fred Humpert	Anita Mehaffey
Eleanor Fabricius	Margaret Hurowitz	Mike & Jane Slattery
First Bank & Trust	Derric & Irma Iles	Loren Taylor
Jean Girard	Laurie Jurgensen	Eileen Turner
Maureen Goddard	Esther & Wayne Knutson	Marvin & Carol Walz

LIFE MEMBERS:

Priscilla All	Dorothy Golden	Mary Merrigan
Edis Anderson	John & Patricia Gors	Marlys Miller
June Armstrong	Paul S. Hasse	Young Moore III
Jeanine Ashmore	Jay & Mary Lea Hennies	Ted & Karen Muenster
Joyce Benson	Joan Holter	Luann Ouellette
Michael Bottolfson	Mary Ellen Jensen	Emogene Paulson
Connie Smith Bowen	Dale & Lisa Johnson	Kay Powell
Troy Boysen	Jerry & Betty Johnson	Ann Severson
Drs Kevin & Cindy Brown	Ronald Johnson	Glennis Stewart
Cyndy Chaney	Linda Kogel	Judy Sullivan
Leone Christopherson	Marion Kryger	Beverly Swanson
Mary Beaty Edelen	Don Lancrain	Tom Thaden
Cleo Erickson	Sylvia J. Lynch	Lyle Wagner
Robert Fallan	Catherine Martin	Ken Whitehorn
Esther Girard	Nancy McCahren	Jeanette Williams

Bank of the West

Vermillion Cemetery Association

Vermillion Civic Council

**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: \$ 15.00

_____ Family Membership: \$ 25.00

_____ Institutional: \$ 50.00

_____ Life Member/per person: \$200.00

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

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

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I'd like to be included in

PRESERVING A PIECE OF VERMILLION'S PAST

(replica of the first permanent schoolhouse in Dakota Territory

and

have my donation apply toward the

\$10,000

match from generous anonymous donor

Dedication to be held Wednesday afternoon, September 3, 2014 from 4-7 pm

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Donation amount: _____

Checks payable, please, to: Clay County Historical Society (a 501(c)3 entity)

Mail to: CCHS Preserving the Past, 15 Austin Street, Vermillion, SD 57069

Clay County Historical Society
15 Austin Street
Vermillion, SD 57069