

Austin-Whittemore House

HOME OF THE *Clay County Historical Society*

15 Austin Street, Vermillion SD 57069

605-624-8266 / www.cchssd.org / claycohistory@yahoo.com

Quarterly Newsletter

Winter 2015

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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 Maxine Johnson

This is the time of each year when we look back and see how the year has gone and begin making plans for the new year just beginning. To say that we have had a good year is an understatement. Not only did the Clay County Historical Society sponsor their usual series of annual events and meetings, we also finished up the long-awaited project of replicating the first schoolhouse in Dakota Territory. That historical little building is now residing on the south portion of the Austin-Whittemore House lawn ready for visitors. It was dedicated with much fanfare and hoopla in the early fall. One of our board members published a book about the county court houses in South Dakota and shared the process of how that book came to be with us one evening.

Possibly one of the biggest changes to come about this past year was the day Cleo Erickson announced her retirement as our resident "History Lady". We feted Cleo one day and many, many folks stopped by to share a cup of coffee, have some cake and recall the years and years and countless days and hours Cleo had devoted to keeping our past part of our lives. Our luck continues to be spectacular and Wess Pravecek agreed to step in as keeper of the house and her energy and presence lights up this old house. I can't think of a more seamless transition ever to take place. We will always miss Cleo and will never stop appreciating her ceaseless dedication to the Clay County Historical Society – but – we also wish her the best in this newly begun life of leisure!

Our annual Tour of Homes was a great success and the weather cooperated beautifully. Joe Hoffman, in spite of having surgery, managed to provide the now-expected table of delectable good food. Our board members provided the sweets portion of the refreshments. A scant week later, we had our Sweets and Treats bake sale and there were many tables in Vermillion that held some of the good things our membership provided for that sale. All this activity took place in a beautifully decorated Austin-Whittemore House.



Thanks to Judy Sullivan and Wess Pravecek for tirelessly trimming every nook and cranny that would hold evergreen or a bauble. Luann Ouellette again arranged her stupendous Christmas Village for all of us to enjoy. The men of the board, Gary Bottolfson and Marvin Walz are our “go-to” men when we need something carried or set up – they are really good at changing light bulbs, too.

Plans are being made to create programs that will bring folks to this wonderful old piece of the past. I encourage all of you to keep your membership current by renewing or joining, and to be mindful of remembering how life, as we know it, came to be. When one looks at the relatively short time it took us to be living among electronics [at things we looked at a little jokingly, i.e., phones in a wristwatch, etc.], it seems that we should take the time to really look at how lives are lived right now because before we know it, our “stuff” will be on display somewhere as an historical object – like my ’52 Ford!

We all here at the House wish you the very best of everything to come in the year 2015. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone, especially our dedicated board members, who helped to make this year the success that it was and to invite you to take part in all of our activities.

NOTES FROM THE OVER –

Our Christmas festival took place on December 7 and was a success. We had dancers, twirlers, and lots of trees and vendors. We decided to close the Museum for the month of January for some maintenance and general cleaning. We are the proud recipients of the collection of South Dakota art which retired Senator Tim Johnson acquired during his tenure in Washington. This will be on display in the front foyer of the Museum on a newly painted wall. We are also beginning to replace the timeworn carpeting in the foyer. Even though we were officially closed, we were happy to welcome visitors and were pleasantly surprised the day after New Year’s to greet several people who had to get out of their houses. I don’t know what it is about Christmas decorations but they are always so much fun to put out and such a chore to take down and put away. We have plans for creating a barn exhibit with Jim Stone’s help. The front siding on the Museum will also be removed and replaced with a permanent siding. Our annual meeting will be held in late January and our membership appreciation banquet will be held in March and we have already had calls (from California!) about our Rhubarb Day in June. Everyone is always welcome to stop over to the Over – you can visit both the Austin-Whittemore House and the Over in the same day.

Maxine,

Annual meeting of the Clay County Historical Society will be held
Thursday, April 23, 2015. Please plan to attend.

Check our books online. <http://www.cchssd.org//>

The books are under documents

Prices have been reduced!



Be My Valentine

The Clay County Historical Society will have on display, through the month of February, a collection of vintage valentine cards that were given to Ann Severson from her husband Maurice, over a sixty-year period.

We will have open house Saturday, February 14th from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at the Austin-Whittemore House . A drawing will be held for a candy chocolate heart for those attending. Please join us for coffee and cookies and some old time memories!

Happy Valentine's Day from the CCHS Board.

The Austin-Whittemore House is open:

Monday/ Wednesday/ Friday

10:00 am—2:00 pm

Or by appointment call 605-624-8266

From the Desk.....

The fall and winter have been moving by quickly. With the frigid temperatures we've had to dig deep to see what kind of "stock" we come from. Isn't that what investigating our family history is all about? Extra socks and some cuddle-duds have helped. Even with cold temperatures, we've still had visitors interested in tours of the house and the old/new school house.

The Tour of Homes and the Sweets and Treats bake sale proved to be successful fundraising events in December. We've continued with the tour because of the gracious invitations from home owners to open their homes plus the overall interest from the community. This year the Vermillion Public Transit offered the use of one of their busses so that some of our guests could ride instead of drive. The bake sale once again gave holiday shoppers the opportunity to take a day off from baking and purchase holiday treats to share with friends and family.

As visitors and callers ask for information about their ancestors, we can only answer questions with information that families have shared with us. So keep in mind as you're researching your Clay County family roots that we'd like to set up a file in your family name so that you can continue to be a part of the Clay county history. What's happening now with your family and/or business will someday be history that people are interested in. After all, **today will be history tomorrow.**

I'm working on some fun events for the spring that will be of interest for visitors of all ages. We want to encourage people to visit the house and see something new on every trip. Your input is valuable so if there's something you think may be interesting, informational or just plain fun, please let me know. You may also want to consider using the Austin-Whittemore House for a special event. You may contact me at claohisycory@yahoo.com or 605-624-8266. Our website at www.cchssd.org has formation on what has happened, what's currently going on and what's yet to come. Stay tuned and thanks for your support.

Wess Pravecek

Requests for the House

There are a couple of items that we are looking for to use in the house. In the office I'm looking for a desk that is more of a period piece that can be used to set the computer and printer on. The size of the desk should be about 45" wide by 30" deep.

I'm also looking for an umbrella stand that we could use in the foyer of the house to hold various canes and umbrellas. If you have a desk or umbrella stand that you would consider donating, please contact me at 605-624-8622.

Donated Items

Ladies white cotton gloves and black beaded evening bag donated by Luann Ouellette.

Items were part of her mother's estate.

Large 1940's baby buggy donated by Mary Boomgarten.

Thanks!

A special thanks to Leo Powell for donating all of the beautiful pumpkins, gourds and corn stalks to decorate the A-W House last fall and to George Roetman for cleaning our sidewalk this winter.

We will have articles from different communities or interesting events that have happened in Clay County through the years. The articles are from our files at the Clay County Historical Society. This time we will go back in time to Burbank's centennial and a little history of Burbank. If you have something of interest in your community that you would like to share, you may contact me through the Austin- Whittemore House at 605-624-8266 or email claycohistory@yahoo.com.

Judy Sullivan

Excerpts taken from the Sioux City Journal June 19, 1973....

Burbank to Mark 100th Year

The Town of Burbank located in Southeastern South Dakota will commemorate the 100th anniversary of its founding at a one-day centennial celebration.

The celebration will get under way at 8 a.m. with open air church services at the school. The centennial parade will step off at 10 a.m., a potluck reunion dinner is scheduled at noon, and at 1:30 in the afternoon there will be a ballgame between the Burbank Bloomer Girls and the Wakonda Girls. There will also be other games for children and adults.

Horse races are scheduled to begin at 3 p.m. and the barbecue will begin at 6:30 p.m. A talent show at 7 o'clock and a pavement dance at 8:30 o'clock will conclude the day's activities.

A centennial museum will be open during the day in the Old Burbank Bank Building which also housed the U.S. Post Office at Burbank from 1939 until July 31, 1972.

Centennial cochairmen are Francis Fullenkamp, Mrs. John Bell, Wayne Hawley, Bill Anderson and Agnes Malloy.

The Burbank town site was surveyed and platted on June 8, 1873, by Cornelius Andrews, Nelson W. Cusick and Jonas Meckling. The town was platted along the right-of-way of the Dakota Southern Railroad and was named in honor of John A. Burbank, governor of the Dakota Territory from 1869 to 1874.

The Burbank Post Office was opened June 23, 2873, and the first postmaster was Roswell A. Hotchkiss. The town today boasts only a post office, a restaurant-nightclub and several residences. (Before 1910 there was a school building that formed the nucleus of "Whimp's, a popular Burbank restaurant. Photo and article was published in Sioux City Journal June 19, 1973.)

In 1910 there was a bank, two lumberyards, two general stores and three elevators. At that time, the town also had a blacksmith shop, two restaurants, a boarding house, a barber shop, a butcher shop a hardware store and a couple of saloons. During the early part of the century, the town also boasted a thriving stockyards facility. Miss Malloy, Burbank postmaster from 1921 until 1963 recalled that farmers would drive their stock to Burbank and keep them in separate herds around the town until they could drive the cattle to the pens for loading on railcars. In those days, all of the livestock was shipped to Chicago. The Stockyards were destroyed by fire sometime before November 1919.

The site of the town of Burbank had a history before the new town was platted. A man by the name of Alec C. Young settled there in 1855, and for several years the area was known as Alec C's Point. It was a favorite camping ground for freighters and teamsters on military expeditions.

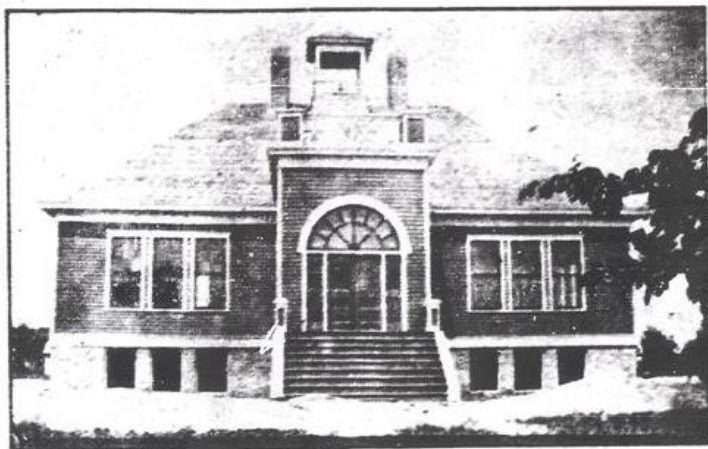
In 1911, the ladies of the community decided to organize a club under the name of the Burbank Thimble Club.

The members met every two weeks for many years and club activities included quilting bees, showers, canning, oyster suppers for couples, sewing for friends and neighbors, ice cream socials and dances in the Modern Woodmen Hall.

The first rural electric cooperative in South Dakota was formally organized at a meeting of 17 men in the general store operated by E.J. Manning at Burbank. Known as the Fairview Rural Electric System, first plans for the cooperative later were changed to include more farmers to make the Rural Electrification Association Loan "feasible".

The expanded cooperative was named Clay-Union Electric Corp., the first in the state to get a loan from the R.E.A. The charter for the first co-op was dated Nov. 29, 1935. After nearly two years of hard work, 67 miles of line were constructed and electricity began to flow through lines on Oct. 3, 1937.

Publishers. Dak Rep Aug 4, 1910 VE



The New School-house at Burbank.

Burbank School-Picture from Dakota Republican Aug 4,1910.

Dakota Republican - Feb.27, 1913

The school at Burbank will give an Arabian Nights entertainment at the M.W.A. hall in Burbank on Monday evening, March 3. A basket social will be held in connection with the entertainment. Everyone is cordially invited, and the ladies are requested to bring baskets. Proceeds go for the benefit of the school.



The Burbank School Today !

Burbank School No. 10 is on the National Register of Historical Places.

For many years the school had 10 grades, but this was reduced to eight grades in the fall of 1952.

The school is still being used today for events, barbeques and the Easter Egg Hunt.

Membership

In 1969 the Clay County Historical Society was created. A group of forward thinking Clay County residents realized how important it was to start collecting and saving valuable pieces of our history. For the past 46 years the membership of this organization has grown and the value and importance of this growth and development continues. Please keep in mind as we look forward to the new fiscal year beginning on April 1 that your membership is kept current. Memberships play a vital role for the continued growth and survival of the Clay County Historical Society and the upkeep of the Austin-Whittemore House. All of you are receiving a hard copy of this quarter's newsletter. Please look at the mailing label* to see when your membership is due. If you pay your dues before April 1, 2015, you can pay the old rates which are listed below. If you pay your dues after April 1, please note that the dues are rising slightly. If you have questions, please feel free to call the House at 605-624-8266.

<u>Current Dues</u>		<u>Dues as of April 2015</u>	
Individual	\$15.00	Individual	\$25.00
Family	25.00	Family	40.00
Institutional	50.00	Institutional	75.00
Lifetime	200.00	Lifetime	250.00

On the label there is an "exp" with a date of when your membership expires:

exp - dues are due April 1 2015 exp 0000 - no dues due (life time membership)
exp 2015 - dues are due April 1 2015 exp compl - no dues are due
exp 2016 - dues are due April 1 2016
exp 2017 - dues are due April 1 2017

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: _____

Pay dues before April 1, 2015—pay current rate (see above)

____ Individual Member: \$15.00/\$ 25.00 ____ Family Membership: \$ 25.00/\$ 40.00

____ Institutional: \$50.00/\$ 75.00 ____ LifeMember/per person: \$200.00/\$250.00

____ Newsletter by Email **or** ____ Newsletter by Mail

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

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

Thank You!

Clay County Historical Society

15 Austin Street

Vermillion, SD 57069

**Time to Renew Your Membership
Due April 1, 2015**

Remember to check Clay County Historical Society Website for news and events.

www.cchssd.org

We are on facebook too!