

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

Clay County, Vermillion, South Dakota

Spring /Summer 2019

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Preservation Awards

On November 7, 2018 the Clay County Historic Preservation Commission presented awards for Preservation at the noon Rotary Meeting at the Neuharth Center, University of South Dakota. Categories of awards included 1/ Restoring a specific structure or site, 2/ Individuals who have a track record of several preservation projects or documenting preservation in Clay County, and 3/ Maintaining the integrity of a structure over time. In the first category the Spirit Mound Trust received the award for restoring the integrity of the Spirit Mound Cemetery, containing graves of early Clay County settlers. Mark Wetmore presented a slide show chronicling the steps involved to rehabilitate the cemetery.

The awardees in the second category were Lynn Muller and Russ Stone for photographing buildings in the University and Downtown Historic Districts, respectively. Their photographs are important to compare how a structure looked at a point in time and what changes occurred to that structure over time.



Spirit Mound Cemetery
Photo by Evelyn Schlenker



First Baptist Church
Photo by Russ Stone

The First Baptist Church on East Main Street, Vermillion, represented by Pastor Sandy Aaker, received the award for helping maintain the integrity of a structure of time. The building is on the National Register of Historic Places. The more eastern located part of the current church, designed by Sioux Falls architect Wallace Dow, was constructed in 1889 and the second part constructed in 1925 was designed by Beuttler and Arnold, a renowned architectural firm from Sioux City, Iowa. In 2018, the Church celebrated its sesquicentennial.

New Book: A History of 2-4 East Main Street

by Evelyn Schlenker

When Nate Welch, Executive Director of the Vermillion Chamber and Development Corporation (VCDC), approached me about writing a book about the building that the VCDC were planning to remodel (2-4 East Main Street, now known as 2 East Main Street and McVicker Plaza), I jumped at the chance. During the time Phyllis Packard owned the building, prior to selling it to the VCDC, she gave me a tour and I noticed that although the first floor had been remodeled, other parts of the building needed renovation. Moreover, several buildings had been added to the original structure. On the second floor there were apartments and a storage room that the Clay County Historic Preservation Commission (CCHPC) had used to house booklets, data, minutes and books. This led me to question what had happened to the building since it was constructed in 1884. Thus, the book which is in PDF format as part of the CCHPC website (cchpc.org) examines the origins of the building including the various owners of the land and/or the building (including G. T. Salmer, Ole Anderson, Frank Burdick, Robert James McVicker, Nels Abrahamson, John (Jack) Henry Litzelman and David DeRouche, Cynthia and Keith Brown, Phyllis Packard, and the VCDC) and the numerous businesses that occupied the building over the last 136 years.

Below is an excerpt from the book describing the building's origins.

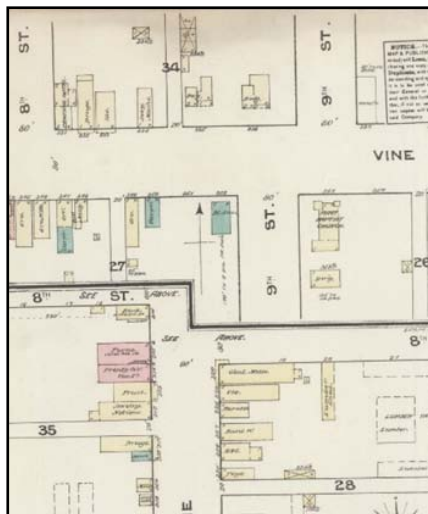
Early History of the Buildings

According to the 1883 Sanborn fire map, the city of Vermillion was divided into blocks, but lot numbers were altered on March 3, 1884 when the city was replatted (City Council meeting minutes). In 1883, the site of 2-4 E Main Street consisted of two wooden structures: the Central Hotel on the corner of now Center (denoted then as 8th Street, and then Cottage Street, in later Sanborn maps) and Vine. East of that building was a drug store.

Salmer and Burdick

From documents at the Office of Deeds, both Burdick and Gilbert. T. Salmer (1841-1909, came to Vermillion in the 1870's) owned lots 15 and 16 (Block 34) respectively. In 1883-1884, Burdick was Mayor of Vermillion, owner of the Dakota Republican, and a physician and surgeon, and Salmer an Alderman. Moreover, both were entrepreneurs. In fact, the 1900 census lists Salmer's occupation as "capitalist". He owned a drug store, a hardware store, several lots in the "new" City of Vermillion, and over 500 acres of farmland in Clay County.

In addition to his noted profession as physician, Burdick served as Vermillion's mayor over a 10 year period. This included 1878-1885 during which time Vermillion was

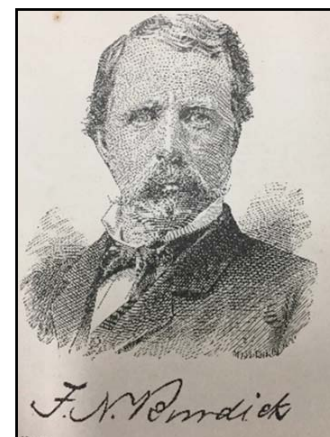


1883 Sanborn Fire Map.
The blue rectangle denotes wooden structures that existed prior to construction of 2-4 East Main Street.

relocated above the bluff following the flood of 1881. He also served as mayor from 1886-1887 and 1890-1892. From Register of Deeds documents at the Clay County Court House, it was also clear that Burdick bought and sold a large number of acres of land below the bluff as well as several blocks (#'s 33, 34 and 64) in the city when it was rebuilt above the bluff.

Aside from his service to Vermillion, Burdick served as a delegate from Clay County to the Territorial Convention for Statehood for Dakota in 1887. He was elected secretary on the Executive Committee. Burdick was also one of the original members of the Board of Trustees instrumental in establishing the University of Dakota in Vermillion.

The non-profit organization that formed in 1881 for the purpose of starting the University consisted of members from other Dakota Territory cities, as well as Vermillionites Burdick, D. M. Inman, John L. Jolley and Judge Jefferson Kidder. Burdick's primary role in the enterprise was to run a campaign to convince residents to allow the University be located in the town, and to assist in fundraising. Some of these funds derived from a \$10,000, ten year bond overwhelming



Frank Noyes Burdick as Mayor of Vermillion; Clay County Atlas, 1884. W. H. Over Museum.

supported by citizens. Ten acres of land were donated by Kidder and another 10 acres purchased from G. B. Bigelow with funds contributed by local donors on which to develop the University. Burdick went on to serve

on the first Board of Regents and contributed over \$2,500 toward a building fund to construct University Hall. In 1899 Burdick moved back to the Eastern United States to be with family and continue to practice medicine.

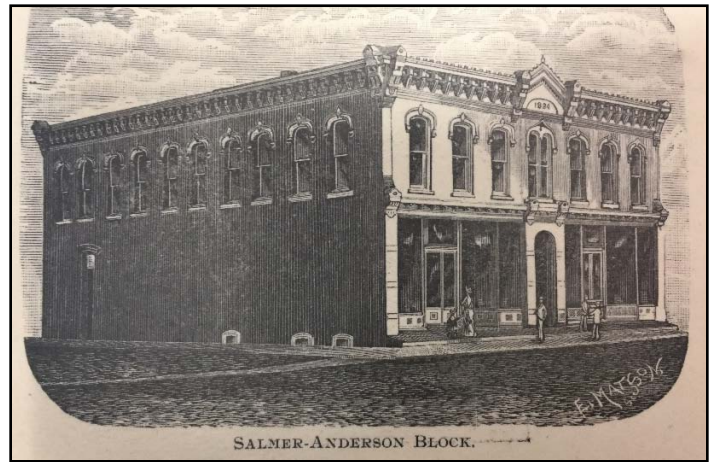
Building 2-4 East Main

Who actually commissioned the construction of 2-4 East Main Street is not clear from records in the Office of Deeds, nor the Dakota Republican newspaper. Both Burdick and Salmer may have contributed to the enterprise as well as Ole Anderson. There is evidence that Eric Matson, a recent immigrant from Norway, may have designed the building. He had arrived in Vermillion from Norway in 1882, and with all the new construction required due to the bluff relocation of the city, Matson was in great demand. He went on to design and build several structures in Vermillion as described in Jim Wilson’s book “Vermillion Architects and Contractors 1870 to Present”. Wilson mentioned that the contractor for 2-4 East Main Street was J. J. Andersen.

An early print of the brick building signed E. Matson published in the October 13, 1887 Dakota Republican, and also in the 1901 Atlas of Clay County, indicates the architectural characteristics of the structure calling it the Salmer-Anderson block. These include the centrally located staircase to access the second story, the decorative tin cornice around the front and west side of the building, the tall display windows in 2 and 4 East Main Street, one over one half-rounded, arched windows with decorative headers (or lintels) and brick sills below, and the prominent, decorative, peaked cornice framing the year the

building was constructed, “1884”. The print also shows that there was a side door located on the west side of the building and a basement as indicated by the windows at the bottom of the building.

Whereas the first floor was reserved for businesses including groceries and general retail, the second floor housed doctors’ offices and other enterprises. In the appendix, a list of businesses that occupied the basement, first floor shops, and the second floor offices are detailed. Suffice to say that over 135 years there were many more businesses that occupied the buildings than there were owners.



Original print of 2-4 East Main drawn by E. Matson showing architectural characteristics of the building. Note that it was known as the Salmer-Anderson Block in the 1901 Clay County Atlas after G.T. Salmer and Ole Anderson. W. H. Over Museum.

Vermillion Historic Preservation Commission Writes Mission Statement and Begins Work

*by Susan Keith Gray, Chair,
Vermillion Historic Preservation Commission*

The Vermillion city council established the Vermillion Historic Preservation Commission in July 2018. The commission began its work in October, 2018 with the election of officers and organizational activities. The members of the commission are Susan Keith Gray, Chair, Ed Gerrish, Vice-Chair, Cyndy Chaney, William Dendinger, Gloria Hensley, Dietrik Vanderhill and Jim Wilson. The commission created a mission statement that is posted on the commission’s page of the city’s website and reads as follows: 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 mission statement and the commission’s

activities are in line with the guidelines for historic preservation commissions laid out by the State Historic Preservation Office. Liz Almlie of the state office visited with the commission in January to discuss the nature of the guidelines as well as potential financial support available from the state. In addition, the commission identified all of Vermillion’s properties on the National Register of Historic Places. City Engineer Jose Dominguez compiled a binder with this information housed at Vermillion City Hall, accessible to the public. On an ongoing basis, the commission will provide input to the city on any permitted activities requested by owners of historic properties. The commission discussed the permitting process and agreed on a 5-day turn-around for making its recommendations. The commission is now beginning efforts to create new historic districts in the city.

CCHPC

Clay County Historic Preservation Commission

Address: 211 West Main Street,
Suite 102
Vermillion, SD 57069
email: whitewilson@msn.com
Website: cchpc.org

Officers and Board Members of the Clay County Historic Preservation Commission 2019

Jim Wilson (Chair)
Tom Sorensen (Vice-Chair)
Molly Rozum (Treasurer)
Evelyn Schlenker (Secretary)
Ed Gerrish
Dennis Konkler
Patrick Morrison
Bill Ranney
Jim Stone
Monica Iverson
Gloria Hensley

University Historic District Association (UHDA) Plans Neighborhood Activities

The University Historic District, previously known as the Vermillion Historic District, is the oldest Historic District in Vermillion and includes houses located south of the University of South Dakota bounded on the east and west by North Yale and Willow Streets, and north and south by Clark and Main Streets (see map below). The UHDA organization was formed on September 24, 2014 to further the quality of the structures and the neighborhood in the district.

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 appointed. Meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the 2nd Thursday of the month and are open to the public. Locations are TBA. For information, contact Susan Keith Gray at susankeith.gray@gmail.com, Ed Gerrish at egerrish@gmail.com or Randy Von Ehwegen at randyvonehwegen@gmail.com or visit us on facebook at [@universityhistoricdistrict](https://www.facebook.com/@universityhistoricdistrict).

The University Historic District Association Board of Directors is planning several activities for the coming months.

- On March 14 at 7 p.m. in the large conference room at Vermillion City Hall, Keith Joy will discuss windows in historic homes—replacement when necessary or tightening up existing historical windows. The public is welcome to attend free of charge.

- We feel that trees are an important aspect of historic neighborhoods. We will be encouraging and helping residents to take advantage of the city cost sharing for trees.

- Twice each year we sponsor a yard-waste clean-up for our neighborhood. This spring's date will be in late April. On a Saturday morning, we pick-up yard waste and unpainted wood which we take to the city landfill.

- We advertise our activities with a semi-annual newsletter that we hand deliver to each house in the neighborhood.



W. H. Over Museum

Address: 1110 N. University
414 E. Clark Street
Vermillion, SD 57069
605-659-6151
email: whover@usd.edu
Website: 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).

President's Corner

Happy New Year from the Friends W.H. Over Museum! The 2019 Museum Board held its first meeting in February and we look forward to many events and activities for all ages this coming year. The annual meeting and potluck dinner with the election of new officers was held on January 27th and preparations have been made for the annual Membership Banquet on March 17th. The entire community is invited to enjoy a delicious meal catered by Vermillion's own Heck's Barbeque and then enjoy a musical program by John and Susan McNeill. During the evening you can participate in the silent auction of many fine items. Buy your tickets now for this evening of fun and celebration. We welcome all new members!

Another reason to visit the Over is to check out the newly installed historical medical exhibit. If your group or organization is searching for a place to hold a meeting or special celebration, please consider using our smaller Discovery Room or the larger Sletwold Hall. This spring the annual Easter basket day will be held for children. Watch for more details about that "egg-citing" event. Looking ahead, Vermillion's own Rhubarb Day will be celebrated this year on Sunday June 2nd. The Rhubarb Recipe contest has a new category this year – Beverages.

If you have not visited the Museum recently, please consider doing so soon. It is an enjoyable way to spend a chilly afternoon as you peruse objects relating to the cultural and natural history of South Dakota.

Doris Hodgen

Events at the W. H. Over Museum

Since October of 2018 there have been several social activities at the Over. This included the Fall Festival which commenced with pumpkin carving and ended with a soup and pie dinner on October 28, 2018. The 54th annual Christmas Festival was held on December 2, 2018. Although the weather was not as cooperative as one would have liked, organizations' Christmas trees were on display and vendors were present including one that sold Norwegian lefse. The patrons enjoyed a hospitality table as well as information about Jerry Wilson's new book and publications from the Clay County Historic Preservation Society. Tom Sorensen played a memorable "Santa" and music was provided by the refurbished 1920's player piano. On January 27, 2019 members participated in a pot-luck annual meeting. Maxine Johnson recounted the events of the past year and a slate of officers and board members were elected, these are listed on the side panel. In addition, Jim Stone discussed publication of his 5 volume barn book and Evelyn Schlenker discussed the new medical exhibit she is working on. More about that later. The well attended event set the stage for the New Year and several activities that are being planned including the Fund-raising Banquet on March 17, 2019, an April quilting program presented by Virginia Johnson, Easter events for children, and the ever-pleasing Rhubarb Days, a sure indication that the warm weather has finally arrived.

An important component of work at the Over is education. This includes several OLLI classes that are offered and a number of students who volunteer or are working on specific projects at the Museum as part of the Museum Certificate program. Aside from giving valuable help to inventorying items, under the direction of Tami Plank, and getting hands-on experience in developing exhibits, students also share their unique expertise.



Pumpkin Carving, Lefse for sale and Christmas trees at the Christmas Festival and the upcoming Annual Fund-Raising Banquet.



Quilt Show

April 23, 2019

1:00 to 3:00

at the W. H. Over Museum

A Doctor's Office Exhibit

A new exhibit in the W. H. Over contains documents, posters, books, and instruments associated with the practice of medicine and surgery in the early to mid-20th century medical practice in the region thanks to items from three collections: Drs. E. M. Stansbury, J. F. Hill, and A. P. Goblrish. One item in the exhibit, a apothecary balance that belonged to pharmacist Alfred Helgeson, was donated by Dr. Warren Fairbanks, a physician who lived in Vermillion, SD. Short biographies of the three physicians whose items were used in this exhibit follow.

Dr. Stansbury (1881-1956) graduated from the University of Nebraska Medical School in 1909 and came to Vermillion, SD following medical practice in small towns in Nebraska from 1910-1913. He was a physician and a surgeon who was licensed to practice in South Dakota in 1914. He also ran two private hospitals and was a captain in the Medical Corps during World War 1 stationed in France. Additional items that Dr. Stansbury would have used during the war including a uniform, helmet, canteen, and Edison portable phonograph made specifically for soldiers during the war that played one half inch thick records. The small cover of a bulletin about eugenics and a large poster in the medical exhibit belonged to Dr. Stansbury. The poster was published by the American Medical Association in 1947 to counter a proposal by President Truman to develop a single payer system in the United States. The eugenics brochure made a case for sterilization of "undesirables", a practice that started in the United States in the early 20th century and went on for decades. Importantly the brochure is stamped "Department of Physiology, University of South Dakota". Eugenics was part of the curriculum in many schools in the United States.

Dr. Goblrish (1899-1973) practiced medicine for over 40 years in Sleepy Eye, Minnesota starting in 1925 following his undergraduate and medical education at the University of Minnesota. His mother's family came from South Dakota. Dr. Goblrish also helped establish the Sleepy Eye Municipal Hospital in 1942. Remarkable in Goblrish's collection are the large number of splints used to treat fractures, books, and a variety of surgical instruments he utilized. These include tonsillectomy guillotines or tonsillectomes. During the 1920's through the 1950's removal of the tonsils was common. A recent study compared the current method of tonsil removal to use of the tonsillectomy guillotine. Both methods were comparable, with the tonsillectomy guillotine causing less immediate bleeding and less pain! Another commonly used devise of the time period in the exhibit is a short wave equipment (diathermy). This devise was used for deep tissue heating and fighting infections.



A painting by Sir Luke Fildes entitled "The Doctor" that was used on the 1947 American Medical Association poster to counter Truman's "politicized" medicine



A tonsillectomy guillotine used to remove tonsils in the early 20th century

Dr. John Hill (1895-1982) practiced medicine in Yankton, South Dakota and like Stansbury served a captain in the medical corps during World War 1 in France. Dr. Hill attended the University of Pennsylvania Medical School in 1927 and did three internships prior to working at the South Dakota State Mental Hospital in Yankton, SD from 1930 to 1938. From 1938-1945 he was Physician-Surgeon for the Union Pacific Railroad in Caliente, Nevada and Evanston, Nebraska. Dr. Hill returned to Yankton in 1945 and practiced with his wife's older brother Dr. Arthur Smith (founder of the Yankton Medical Clinic) until 1953 when Smith passed away. Dr. Hill continued in private practice until 1956. Subsequently, he again joined the South Dakota State Mental Hospital and retired in 1972. The two posters "Scarlet Fever" and "Diphtheria" emphasized the need to prevent these dreaded diseases. Dr. Hill also had an extensive collection of surgical instruments used in his private practice. Some instruments are shown in the exhibit. All three physicians practiced medicine and surgery in rural communities. The items they left behind are a window on their world from the first half of the 20th century.

Items in the Collection

There is a wealth of information in the W. H. Over Museum collection. Below two pieces and their historic significance are highlighted, one is a guitar zither and the other a folio of artwork by Native American Artists, especially Amos Bad Heart Bull produced at the end of the 19th to early 20th centuries.

Menzenhauer's American Guitar Zither

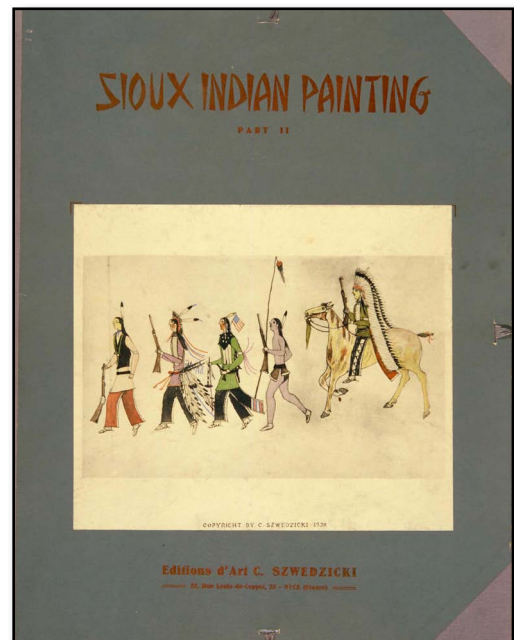
A recent rediscovery in the collections is a pristine Menzenhauer's American Guitar Zither Patented-Bravete (U.S Guitar Zither Co. Oscar Schmidt. Antique Guitar Zither # 2 ½) that was first patented in 1894 and manufactured by US Guitar Zither Co Oscar Schmidt, Inc. of New Jersey. The inventor, Friederich Menzenhauer, was the known for developing the guitar-zither in the United States when he moved to the United States in 1882 from Germany. In October of 1897, he and Oscar Schmidt formed a business known as the U.S. Guitar-Zither Co., which became the distributing arm of their organization. By 1898, Menzenhauer was also doing business as the Menzenhauer Guitar-Zither Co., and the operation was located on Ferry Street in Jersey City, the site of Oscar Schmidt International until 1972. Early on, the location was known as 34-41 Ferry Street, the numbers of the lots on the survey of land by the Holland Co. By 1902 the location had received the street addresses 87-101, which the townhouses on those lots still hold today. According to Adrian Sheets, curator of string instruments at the National Music Museum, this guitar zither dates between 1904 and 1911. Although the case that the instrument is in needs repair, the surprise finding is the beautiful shape of the instrument as shown below. According to Adrian Sheets, this fine instrument is worthy of exhibit. Another treasure in our Collections!



The Zither Guitar and close-up of the label indicating the maker and location that helped date the instrument.

"Sioux Indian Paintings" Folios

The W. H. Over houses two complete folios of the two part series of "Sioux Indian Paintings" published by C. Szwedzicki in France in 1938 and edited by Professor Hartley Burr Alexander. The folios contain ledger art from several artists including Amos Bad Heart Buffalo or (Bull), Kills Two, Pretty Hawk, Chief Washakie, Katsikodi, Silver Horn, Unknown Mandan, Unknown Shoshone (artists). The second part consists predominately of art by Amos Bad Heart Bull (1869-1913) a noted Oglala Lakota artist, whose family belonged to an Oglala camp known as the Soreback Band. Although Amos Bad heart Bull was not involved in some of the battles he depicted such as the Battle of Little Big Horn, his elders described the ensuing events which Amos Bad Heart Bull then chronicled in the form of drawings and narratives. In April 18, 1877 the Bad Heart Bull family surrendered at the Red Cloud Agency. Following the killing of Crazy Horse in September 1877, the family with other northern Oglala moved to the nearby Spotted Tail Agency, but subsequently fled north eventually joining Sitting Bull in Canada. After a few years, the Bad Heart Bull family returned to the U.S. with other Oglala Lakota, who surrendered at Fort Keogh in 1880. The family was first transferred to the Standing Rock Reservation in 1881 and then to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.



The cover of Part II of Sioux Indian Painting containing much of Amos Bad Heart Bull's ledger art. The drawing on the cover is entitled "Greater Indian Shows".

Amos Bad Heart Bull, a self-taught artist, showed interest in the history of the Oglala encouraged by pictographs generally drawn and painted on animal skins or as the

continued page 8

winter count which had occurred for centuries. In 1890, Amos Bad Heart Bull enlisted in the U.S. Army as an Indian scout and learned to speak English. During this time, he purchased a ledger book from a clothing dealer in nearby Crawford, Nebraska. He used its pages to draw a series of pictures of battles and life prior to and following his relatives living on reservations by adapting traditional Native American pictography techniques to the new European medium of paper. Uniquely he also included important narratives as part of the ledger art. After returning to Pine Ridge, Bad Heart Bull made his living as a small cattleman. He became the tribal historian of the Oglala Lakota, like his father before him.

Amos Bad Heart Bull, married and had one daughter, but none of his immediate family survived. The ledger book was then given to his sister Dolly Pretty Cloud who was contacted by a graduate student at the University of Nebraska, Helen Blish (1898-1941), to study the artwork as part of her master's thesis. Blish's mentor at the Univer-

sity was the renowned Native American Indian ethnologist Hartley Burr Alexander who was professor of philosophy and studied myths and legends among various Native American tribes. Blish's master's thesis, "The Amos Bad Heart Buffalo Manuscript: A Native Pictographic Historical Record of the Oglala Dakotas," was completed in 1928. This information formed a basis for a book published by the Nebraska Historical Society in 1967 entitled "A Pictographic History of the Oglala Sioux" which was updated in 2017, the 50th anniversary of the first publication.

When Dolly Pretty Cloud died in 1947, the ledger book containing Amos Bad Heart Bull's work was buried with her. In the 1930s, Hartley Burr Alexander, Blish's professor, had Bad Heart Bull's drawings photographed and colorized several. He had several Amos Bad Heart Bull's drawings published with an introduction and notes in two part folio, "Sioux Indian Painting" (1938), two copies of the magnificent folios are valuable part of the W. H. Over Collection.

CLAY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

FIRST OFFICIAL FLUSH - THURSDAY APRIL 18, 6:00 pm Sharp

The Clay County Historical Society is very proud to announce the completion of our main floor bathroom accessibility project! Coupled with our outdoor ramp, we are extremely pleased to now be wheelchair friendly and accessible to all areas of the main floor of the Austin-Whittemore House!

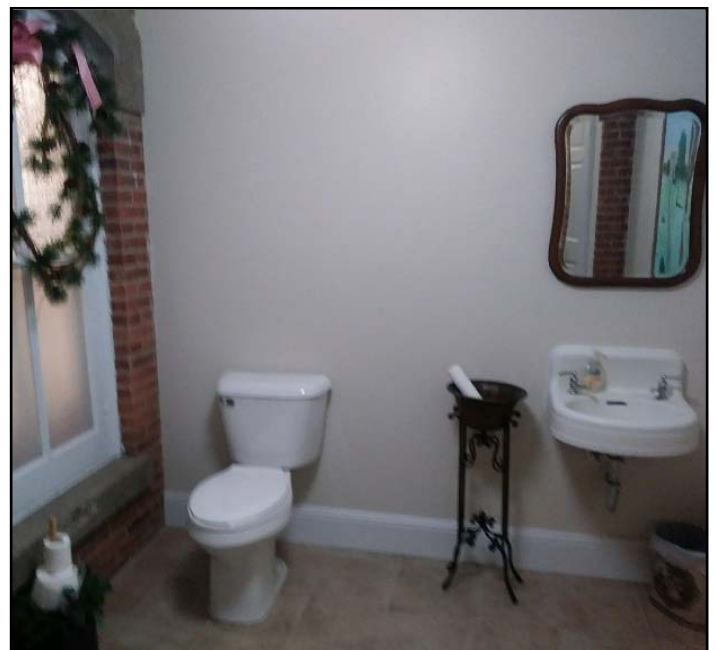
To celebrate this update to our historic facility, we invite you to the "First Official Flush" performed by Mayor Jack Powell at 6:00 pm sharp on Thursday April 18, 2019. The "FLUSH" will be followed by the CCHS Annual Meeting at 6:30 pm and Joe Hoffman's Antique Appraisal Show at 7:00 pm. Folks are invited to bring items for Joe to examine and appraise, free of charge. Light snacks will be served.



When remodeling, this painting was found hanging on the old door that lead to the old porch that went outside. It hangs in the new bathroom now as a reminder!

Many hands make light work.....we have numerous ongoing and one-time projects waiting for your help. Please ask Wess how you can get involved with CCHS! We think you will have FUN also!!

Thank you!
Dan Christopherson, CCHS President



New main floor wheelchair accessible bathroom.



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

**CCHS 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 Serverson
Directors - Barb Campbell
Kevin Jacobson, Lisa Johnson
Art Rusch, Judy Sullivan, Marvin Walz

Appointed Positions
Executive Director Wess Pravecck
CCHPC Representative Jim Stone

CCHS 2019 EVENTS

April 18, Thursday

- At 6:00 pm a “Ribbon Cutting” with Mayor Jack Powell in celebration of our new first floor accessible bathroom.
- The CCHS Annual Membership meeting will follow at 6:30 pm.
- At 7:00 pm, Joe Hoffman, Past President who continues to assist us in our “Christmas Tour of Homes” reception and bake for our “Sweets and Treats”, will present the “Antique Appraisal” show. Bring your antique item and Joe will share with you his expertise and information on your item.

April 27, Saturday

Board members Judy Sullivan and Gloria Hensley will host the “CCHS Spring Table” for the Annual ESA Tour of Tables. Benefits from the event go to St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital. The ESA ladies have generously given of their time assisting us in our large events, so we are happy to reciprocate. The dishes to be used are the Art Deco snack glass trays made by Hazel Atlas Glass Co. in the late 40’s. These were donated by Joe Hoffman, past President of CCHS. The trays have been used for our Tour of Homes Reception at the A-W House. Linens, accessories and keepsakes from the A-W House will be used as well. This event takes place at St. Agnes Auditorium with salads and desserts made by the St. Agnes ladies, lunch will be served at 11:30am. Doors open at 10:30 am in order that there is time to view all the tables.

June 20, Thursday from 5-7 pm

CCHS Annual Ice Cream Social will be held on the grounds of the A-W House. If inclement weather, the event will be held at Eagles Lodge. Taverns, chips, beverages and assorted desserts and ice cream will be served with a free will donation. The Clay County Historic Preservation Commission has designated June 2019 as Preservation month and helps sponsor this event. The Preservation Commission will have a table with free information and brochures available as well as some of their Board members, to answer any of your questions and discuss preservation with you.

June , July August 2019

Music Mondays will again be back from 7:00-8:30 pm on the grounds of the A-W House. You bring your chair or blanket and we will provide the music from a local band. There will be plenty of popcorn as well. Watch for the dates.

October 2019

Plans are in process for another “Spoken History Cemetery Tour”. Watch for more details in our next newsletter. The 2018 event was a great success.

December 6, 2019 - “Christmas Tour of Homes”

December 14, 2019 - “Sweets and Treats”

We hope to see you and have your continued support of our 2019 upcoming events and thank you for your past support. Any additional events in 2019 will be advertised as they come up.

Gloria Hensley, Vice President

From the Desk of the Clay County Historical Society

Since my last letter to you, my actual desk is sitting in a new spot. With the completion of the new and snazzy handicap accessible bathroom, the office here at the Austin-Whittemore House needed to be shifted around for better traffic flow. This means that two out of the three bookcases that we had went away, my desk and file cabinets were moved, plus nine miles of computer cords were strung in a different direction. Not that I'm a creature of habit or anything, but there have been a couple of times that I have found myself using the facilities upstairs because I forgot we had the new one on the main floor. With time, this too shall pass!

The holidays came and went quickly this year. The A-W House was decked out beautifully and new and old memories were relived and created. A fun project that we had this year was the sale of Clay County Historical Society aprons. We thought it would be fun to wear these aprons at events to promote the house and organization. Thanks to social media, a real bonus is that three great granddaughters plus a granddaughter of Pansy Austin Whittemore are now wearing these aprons on the east coast. I think Pansy would be really pleased with this project!!



This is Anna Martin -- her grandmother was Rosalind Whittemore, and her great-grandmother was Helen Austin Whittemore. Anna is from Watertown, Massachusetts.

Since this beautiful house is in constant motion, there are a couple of projects on the "to-do" list. There is a small room on the second floor that is a treasure trove of old newspapers, photo albums, scrapbooks, telephone books and stacks of material that I've never seen the bottom of. The smaller bathroom on the second floor is going to be turned into a store room with shelves that will be able to hold some of the keepsakes that will come out of the treasure trove. I've taken names of people who have casually said "if you ever need any help", and I know where you live, so I'll be in touch.

The second project is to reorganize the large southwest "bridal room" so that it can feature more historical material featuring Clay county organizations and businesses. It's not that we don't love all of the wedding dresses and hats that have been featured in this room because we will rotate these from time to time. This new focus will walk us through what residents have been interested in through the years and where they may have shopped. Did you know that there have been car clubs in the Vermillion area since the 1950's? Be sure to talk to George Roetman and you'll quickly find out why these clubs have stayed active. Did you know that Jacobsen's Bakery had cookie cutters that were 11 inches wide and some were in the shapes of a cow and a pig? Stay tuned and I'll keep you updated on how our list progresses.

Our new fiscal year starts on April 1 which means that if you aren't already a lifetime member, it's that time of the year that we invite you to pay your membership dues. Your support helps us to keep our mission alive...to bring together those interested in the history and prehistory of Clay County and the surrounding area. You make a difference and thank you!!

Wess Pravecek, Executive Director

Membership Renewal

We're History! And proud of it. The Clay County Historical Society begins a new fiscal year on April 1. Your membership helps us preserve and share history through home tours, an informative walk through the cemetery, music programs, ice cream social and more. Individual Membership is \$25, Family Membership is \$40; Business/Organization Membership is \$75, and Lifetime Membership is \$250. Be a living part of history today. Send checks to CCHS, 15 Austin St., Vermillion, SD 57069.

Thanks.

Ruth Bylander, Membership Secretary

Stories from our Heritage File

USD Letters on the Bluff

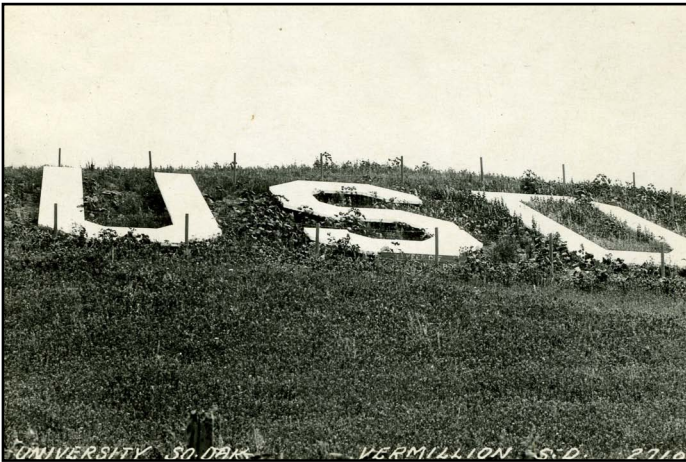


Photo from the files of Clay County Historical Society

The erection of the concrete symbols – USD – on the hillside above the railroad tracks and Burbank Road a mile or so East of Vermillion was designed to advertise the University of South Dakota. The letters—made of concrete, each about 50 feet long, by students in the USD College of Engineering—were formally presented in a ceremony on June 9, 1922 by the Vermillion Civic Council. The event was held in the University Chapel, with the Civic Council making the presentation on behalf of the people of Vermillion and Clay County (and the USD Class of 1921) as a reminder of the University’s location and the determination to keep it in Vermillion.

The funds for the construction of the letters had been raised through the efforts of various organizations in the Vermillion community. It was assumed that the upkeep of the letters would become the responsibility of the USD first-year classes.

A tradition lasting a number of years came into being the following autumn on the afternoon of October 23, 1922 when the University’s upperclassmen—with full approval by the Student Senate—rounded up about a hundred fifty freshmen to march them in columns of four to the site. The neophytes proceeded to give the letters a good cleaning and a fresh coat of white paint under the careful supervision of the upperclassmen.

Meanwhile, the USD Alumni Association was trying to raise funds to build an Alumni Hall to be located east of the University Library on Clark Street. The structure would have been the first Union Building on the campus, but the effort was not successful at the time. The first Student Union at USD opened on February 2, 1931, using space in an existing campus building.

Robbery in Vermillion

Four heavily armed and unmasked men held up three employees in the Citizens Bank & Trust on the morning of January 26, 1933 in downtown Vermillion. M.J. Chaney, C.L. Lloyd and Maude Sloan, as well as three customers in the bank were surprised in a robbery seen as one of the boldest and most coolly and quietly executed holdups in this state.

Fortunately, the safe was under time lock, a fact which none of the robbers would believe. Abusive language and threats greeted Mr. Lloyd when he told them he was unable to open the safe. Finally convinced that the safe could not be opened, the robbers scooped up \$2,800 in petty cash and herded the employees of the bank out to the car.

They traveled east on Main and then north on Dakota before stopping on the outskirts of Vermillion to release the three hostages. The robbers went north on County Highway L, straight north of the University. Several reports have been received that a speeding black sedan was seen going north.

The men who robbed the Citizens Bank had an easy time of it compared to the difficulty that the local newshounds have had in obtaining an accurate story. It was reported by witnesses that the men escaped in a car which was a Buick, Studebaker, Auburn, Hupmobile and Oldsmobile. About the only thing they agree on is that it was not a Ford.

According to Vermillion Police Department files, the four holdup men were reported to be John Dillinger and three of his gang members. Dillinger was known to have a hideout in Minnesota.

Save the date
Thursday, June 20th
 5:00 to 7:00 pm
CCHS Annual
Ice Cream Social
 on the grounds of the
Austin Whittmore House
 If inclement weather, the event will be held at Eagles Lodge.

Joint Newsletter of the
CLAY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
W. H. OVER MUSEUM AND
CLAY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
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VERMILLION, SD 57069

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W. H. OVER MUSEUM

and

CLAY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Thank you for your support!



*Clay County Historic
Preservation Commission*

cchpc.org

