



Austin-Whittemore House

## *Home of the*

Clay County Historical Society  
15 Austin, Vermillion SD 57069  
605-624-8266

[www.cchssd.org](http://www.cchssd.org)

[claycohistory@yahoo.com](mailto:claycohistory@yahoo.com)

**Fall/Winter Newsletter - Nov 2013**

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### **News from President Maxine Johnson**

It seems as though we spend lots of time lamenting how fast time goes by once we pass a certain age. All I know is that the years seem shorter and the holidays come closer and closer together. Looking back over the past year at the Austin-Whittemore House and the activities of the Historical Society, it seems little wonder that the time slipped by as we have been a busy group.

We had an ice cream social that continues to be one of the best in town – we take great pleasure in being the first one each year and we set the bar high for other ones – the funny thing about ice cream socials is that they are all great and each one has the best pies and the best taverns – until the next one comes around, that is! During the past few months, we have re-enacted the trial of James Ginn and Joe Hoffman has conducted his antiques appraisal. This is in addition to Cleo's constant assistance to folks who come to Vermillion in search of family histories.

Our dedicated board- Gary Bottolfson, Dan Christopherson, Joe Hoffman, Luanne Ouellette, Art Rusch, Judy Sullivan and Marvin Walz along with directors Cleo Erickson and Ann Severson meets once each month and reviews the events already over to see if and how they could be improved upon and to plan events to come. They have even been known to move desks through the streets of Vermillion because it was easier to push it over the cement than to find a truck to load it onto! At our last meeting, we reviewed Dakota Days [best ever] and the Tanager Volunteer Day. The young folks performed some duties that were on our "to do" list and they did them up in style. After they had worked on the lawn and washed windows, they were treated to a tour and got to see if Horace was in the basement. I hope that you have been enjoying the Equalizer column which Dan Christopherson compiles each week to help us remember times past. Many thanks to former board president, Tom Thaden, who spent many hours combing through old Plain Talks to find interesting facts about this city.

Plans for the annual holiday Tour of Homes and the Sweets 'n Treats sale are being finalized and we are hard at work on the Preserving the Past project. The Tour will be held on December 7;

Gloria, Dan and Erin are working on the publicity and have lined up some really nice homes for our pleasure. This is the day when we get to see how our friends and neighbors do Christmas

and make it special by inviting the whole town to come and see the result of their decorating. As usual, the Austin-Whittemore House will be gussied up for Christmas and will be open for admiration either before or after the rest of the tour is enjoyed. Joe Hoffman is in charge of refreshments and there will be meat balls as well as a host of other wonderful seasonal goodies available for enjoyment. Sweets and Treats will be December 14 and it will be a time for you to stock up on some special treats created by our talented members.

All the while we are busy working on events, we are also hard at work on the Preserving the Past project which will see the one-room school house replica moved to the grounds of the Austin-Whittemore House. The cement slab has been poured in preparation for the big moving day when the little log structure which has been moved about town so many times, will come to proudly be displayed as a monument to education. While the building is a replica, the schoolhouse enjoys a colorful history in this town and was the dream of long ago scholars - museum curator, William Henry Over as well as USD president, I.D. Weeks both of whom served many, many years in their respective positions. It is especially meaningful to have this project planned for completion to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of formal education here on the prairie. Watch the progress of the move and for opportunities to help complete this project.

Plan to enjoy the upcoming festive season – there is much to do, much to see – and the more people to do and see, the merrier the season will be!

## **Notes from the Office**

### **DAKOTA DAY**

Dakota Day was a great success at the Austin Whittemore House as the Dignitaries gathered for their rides in the parade. It was a cool windy day so everyone appreciated a cup of hot coffee. We served 75 guests with much visiting and renewing old friendships from years past. Even the Dakota Day Queen for 1962 who traveled from Washington to attend the reunion of her USD Class was among the guests.

### **THE OLD WALDORF HOTEL**

The Main Street in Vermillion has changed in looks many times in its history. In December of 1902, the Waldorf Hotel was dedicated at the corner of Main and Prospect Streets, the same location where Cortrust Bank is building their new bank.

An interesting article was printed in the Dakota Republican on December 18, 1902 entitled “The Waldorf Is Dedicated”. Mr. O. W. Thompson was toastmaster for the evening and in a few well-chosen words spoke in proud tones of the magnificent new structure.

An elaborate dinner was served to the Vermillion Citizens who were guests of Mr. & Mrs. C. A. Sampson. The menu included:

Oyster Soup  
Plain Celery Worchester Sauce  
Tea Biscuits Olive Oil  
Baked Turkey with Giblet Sauce  
Cranberry Jelly Young Radishes  
Mashed Potatoes Cauliflower Fried  
Pineapple Sherbet  
Waldorf Salad Saratoga Wafers  
Queen Olives  
Fruit Jelly Harlequin Brick Creams  
Cream Cheese Assorted Cakes  
Sugared Dates with Walnuts  
Salted Almonds  
Mixed Nuts Oranges Cataula grapes  
Layer Resins Coffee

When the last guest finished the last cup of coffee and the guests were touring the new hotel, the dining room was cleared and soon the bewitching strains of Tace's harp announced that all was in readiness for the dancers. It was not until 1 o'clock in the morning that the party broke up thanking Mr. & Mrs. Sampson for the wonderful evening.

**"Heritage Notes"** - published weekly on the CCHS website  
(<http://www.cchssd.org/heritage-notes/>) and in the Equalizer, local newspaper.  
The articles contain interesting stories and facts regarding Vermillion and Clay County.

## **W.H. Over Museum Events**

The W. H. Over Museum celebrated the arrival of the fall season by hosting their annual "Welcome Fall" Sunday which found children carving pumpkins and enjoying the Museum during the afternoon and an evening soup supper for grown-ups – some families make a whole afternoon and evening. Entertainment was provided by the Swedish Cleaning Ladies of Wausa, Nebraska who appeared as Olga and Lena complete with high top 'tennies' and mops. The Veteran's Day celebration was held on November 11 and is always an event which is thought provoking and beautiful. The Christmas festival is always held one of the first Sundays in December depending on when Thanksgiving falls – this year's date is December 8 from 1-4:30 p.m. when vendors, a bake sale, children's activities, dancers, baton twirlers, beautiful trees and wonderful refreshments and hospitality will be there for you to enjoy and everyone is welcome. The Museum will begin its 124<sup>th</sup> year here in Vermillion.



**Preserving the Past...**through restoration and reconstruction of the Replica of Dakota Territory's First Permanent Schoolhouse.

**With a \$10,000 fund raising challenge from an anonymous donor**, each \$1 raised will be matched. Raising \$10,000 will net \$20,000 toward our \$25,000 fund raising goal.

As Vermillion was the site of the first permanent schoolhouse in Dakota Territory and Rachael Ross (Austin) was one of the first teachers, it is only fitting that the replica of the first permanent schoolhouse finally be given a permanent home on the SW corner of the Austin-Whittemore property. The Schoolhouse will be located at the southwest corner of the Clay County Historical Society Austin-Whittemore Museum site (south of West Main Street, between Luxemburg and Austin Streets, facing Kidder Street).

The Board has selected the date for **dedication as Wednesday, September 3, 2014**, to honor the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first permanent schoolhouse in Dakota Territory.

The slab has been poured, two trees have been removed, other trees have been trimmed, and the trees for logs have been cut. A sign is being placed announcing this is the future site of the replica of the first permanent schoolhouse in Dakota Territory.

Furnishings from the current replica will assist in re-creating an early day school and the schoolhouse will be available for prearranged class meetings and visits.

We'd appreciate your financial support to the Clay County Historical Society, a 501(c)3 organization, noting the donation is for PRESERVING THE PAST. Please mail to:

Clay County Historical Society  
15 Austin Street  
Vermillion SD 57069

Thank you for your help in making PRESERVING THE PAST become reality. You can contact the Clay County Historical Society by calling 605-624-8266 or e-mail [claycohistory@yahoo.com](mailto:claycohistory@yahoo.com)

**Happy Holidays!**

*Maxine Johnson, Interim President/  
Vice President  
Judy Sullivan, Secretary  
Luann Ouellette, Treasurer  
Joe Hoffman, Past President  
Cleo Erickson, Life-time Director*

*Elected Directors:  
Gary Bottolfson, Director  
Dan Christopherson, Director  
Art Rusch, Director  
Marvin Walz, Director  
Ann Severson, Life-time Director*



# **Christmas Tour of Homes**

## ***“Joyful Traditions”***

**Friday December 6, 2013 – 4:30 pm to 8:00 pm**

**Tickets \$10 per person at Nook ‘n Cranny or Vermillion Beauty Shop**

### ***Homes to be Toured***

- \*Erin & John Beyers – 216 Forest Avenue
- \*Michelle Kanto Nelson – 122 North Yale Street
- \*Virginia Talley – 121 South University Street
- \*Joanne & Mel Ustad – 937 Ridgecrest Drive
- \*Sandy & Ross Dickenson – 16 Cypress Drive
- \*Austin-Whittemore House – 15 Austin Street  
(complimentary refreshments served at this location)

**Hosted by the Clay County County Historical Society, 15 Austin Street, Vermillion, SD**



### ***A Holiday Open House***

**Sweets and Treats – Saturday, December 14, 10:00am to 1:00pm  
at the Austin-Whittemore House**

**Select your own homemade Christmas goodies, cost \$5.00 a dozen.  
Hosted by Clay County Historical Society. Everyone welcome!**

## HISTORICAL RELATED ITEMS AVAILABLE

### **From the River Valleys to the Rising Bluff ... A Pictorial History of Vermillion, South Dakota 1859-2009**

304 pages. This publication was sponsored by the Clay County Historical Society, Inc. for the Vermillion Sesquicentennial in 2009. The book conveys Vermillion's history through pictures and text.

Price \$35.00 + 7.5% tax = \$ 37.64 / add \$ 5.00 shipping & handling to SD addresses

Price \$35.00 + 5.00 shipping/handling to other states

### **History of Dakota Territory** ... originally published in 1869 and 1870. 125 pages

A history of the Territory of Dakota tells about the Homestead land and the towns in the area. It describes the location of timber land, steam mills, water, and the climate and soil. It's a good source for those looking at the area.

Price \$15.00 + 7.5% tax = \$ 16.13 / add \$ 5.00 shipping & handling to SD addresses

Price \$15.00 + 5.00 shipping & handling to other states

### **Dakota's First Lynching** ...

The booklet tells the lively story about James Hogan, a "desperado of the worst character". James Hogan's body was seen hanging from a roadside tree near the mouth of the Vermillion River on 26 February 1866. It's a mysterious little book to read.

Price \$5.00 + 7.5% tax = \$ 5.38 / add \$ 3.00 shipping & handling to SD addresses

Price \$5.00 + 3.00 shipping & handling to other states

### **Hay Country** ...

A history of the Meckling and Gayville SD area makes this a great book for a historian. It also contains the history of many families that settled in Norway and Meckling townships.

Price \$12.00 + 7.5% tax = \$ 12.90 / add \$ 5.00 shipping & handling to SD addresses

Price \$12.00 + 5.00 shipping & handling to other states

### **History of Clay County** ...

The book was written in 1976 by Dr. Herbert S. Schell and tells the "grass-roots" story of Clay County. The author traces Clay County from the pre-settlement period to the 1970's. It has numerous illustrations and a comprehensive index.

Price \$15.00 + 7.5% tax = \$ 16.13 / add \$ 5.00 shipping & handling to SD addresses

Price \$15.00 + 5.00 shipping & handling to other states

### **Clay County Place Names** ...

Names of schools, churches, villages, parks are listed in the book. A map of the county is included showing exact locations of the above name places. Some pictures are included.

Price \$7.00 + 7.5% tax = \$7.53 / add \$ 5.00 shipping & handling to SD addresses

Price \$7.00 + 5.00 shipping & handling to other states

**Clay County Country School CD** ... A history of the country schools in Clay County with many photos of schools buildings and students. The CD contains many Clay County 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Country School graduation pictures. Most have students identified. Would appreciate names of "unknown" students pictured.

Price \$10.00 + 7.5% tax = \$10.75 / add \$ 3.00 shipping & handling to SD addresses  
Price \$10.00 + 3.00 shipping & handling to other states

**Clay County Homestead Map of 1884** ... approximate size 17-1/2" x 22-1/2"; shipped in mailing tube

Price \$10.00 + 7.5% tax = \$10.75 / add \$ 3.00 shipping & handling to SD addresses  
Price \$10.00 + 3.00 shipping & handling to other states

**1902 Clay County Map** ... compiled and drawn from Special Services and Office Records by E. Frank Peterson, Map Publisher, Vermillion. Approximate size 17-1/2" X 22-1/2"; shipped in mailing tube.

Price free / \$3.00 for shipping & handling to either SD addresses or addresses in other states

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**TO ORDER:**

please make check payable to Clay County Historical Society, Inc.

and mail to 15 Austin St.  
Vermillion, SD 57069

At this time, we do not have the capability to accept debit or credit card charges. We're sorry for any inconvenience this may cause.

**QUERIES**

Questions, such as shipping and handling costs outside the United States, please contact the Historical Society at the address above or

phone 605-624-8266 e-mail [claycohistory@yahoo.com](mailto:claycohistory@yahoo.com) website [www.cchssd.org](http://www.cchssd.org)

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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR BUSINESS**

Check out the [Clay County Historical Society](http://www.cchssd.org) website ([www.cchssd.org](http://www.cchssd.org)) for upcoming events, Heritage Notes, links to other interesting historical websites, to order historical books and for new or renewal membership forms.

**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.

And mail to  
CCHS  
15 Austin Street  
Vermillion, SD 57069

If you have questions about membership or the Society, please call us at  
(605) 624-8266 or e-mail us at [claycohistory@yahoo.com](mailto:claycohistory@yahoo.com) or write to us  
at the above address.

**\*NOTE:**

In a revised opinion, we were able to revert to the CCHS Fiscal Year being April 1-March 31.

Any news you'd like to share?

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Clay County/Vermillion area surnames of interest to you

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