

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

Clay County, Vermillion, South Dakota

Fall/Winter 2019/2020

CONTACT INFORMATION

Clay County Historical Preservation Commission (CCHPC)
 Jim Wilson, Chair
 211 West Main Street, Suite 102
 Vermillion, SD 57069
 605-920-6247
 whitewilson@msn.com
 Website: cchpc.org

W. H. Over Museum
 Doris Hodgen, President/Event Chair
 1110 N. University (Physical Address)
 414 E. Clark Street (Mailing address)
 Vermillion, SD 57069
 605-659-6151
 whover@usd.edu
 Website: whovermuseum.org

Clay County Historical Society (CCHS)
 Wess Pravecek, Executive Director
 15 Austin Street, Vermillion, SD 57069
 605-624-8266
 claycohistory@yahoo.com
 Website: cchssd.org

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Annual Tour of Homes

This year's event will be held Friday, December 6, 2019 from 4:30-7:30 p.m. followed by a reception starting at 5:00 p.m. at the beautifully decorated Austin-Whittemore House located at 15 Austin Street, turn south off Main Street. There will be 4 wonderful homes as follows:



**John and Doralee Lynch
 31835 469th Ave. Burbank**

Take highway 50 east and turn right south at Whimps Burbank sign and stay on road until you see the address on the right side of road and turn in. This large brick 2 story home was built in 2006 with all the amenities of country living.

**Gerry and Jan (Perkins) Petersen
 305 South Yale St.**

Turn off Main Street to South Yale. This house was built in 2000 to replace the original Perkin's home place. It is a rambling handicap accessible ranch style home.

**Steve and Carol Smith
 18 Forest Avenue**

Turn off of Main Street to Forest Avenue. This historic yellow Neo-Colonial style 2 story home was built in 1905 and is on the "National Register of Historic Homes". There are beautiful leaded glass windows throughout the home. This home was leased to the Alpha Phi Sorority for several years.

**Joni Freidel
 1310 West Main Street**

Turn off Main Street left to this large comfortable ranch style family home that was built in 2014. This home is located on the bluff with wonderful views.

Tickets may be purchased at the Austin Whittemore House at 15 Austin Street, Davis Pharmacy at 5 West Cherry Street and Lisa Johnson at the Spa at Wynie Maes 25 West Main Street starting November 12, 2019 until the date of the Tour. The price per ticket is \$20, unless you would like to use the City Transit bus as transportation to and from the homes, which has been arranged for by the Board. You must contact Wess Pravecek at the A-W House if you wish to ride the bus, space is limited at \$25 per ticket. Hosts will check off their home on the ticket as guests enter their home. This ticket is also to be used for the reception.

Looking Back . . . Vintage Vermillion and Clay County

First Community Tree in State at Vermillion

Dakota Republican – January 11, 1917

The community or municipal Christmas tree that has called forth so many complimentary expressions during the past three days was taken down yesterday and the place that knew it will know it no more until next year.

In conversation with J.G. Bower yesterday he told of what was probably the first “community” Christmas tree in the Dakotas, then Dakota Territory. It occurred in Vermillion on December 24, 1872, and was held in the old C.I.K. hall, the only place in the village large enough for anything of the kind. The tree was procured by J.C. Bower and his brother, W.G. Bower, who went across the Missouri River into Cedar County, Nebraska, climbed up one of those large cedar trees for which that part of Nebraska was famous, and cut off the top. The cedar trees there then were all too large, and the only way they could do was to take a part of a tree. The one they secured was a handsome one. The whole town turned out to make a celebration that was a celebration. C.E. Prentis acted as Santa Claus and there were \$200 worth of presents on the tree, which was a large sum of money for that time in a little town on the western frontier. The ladies met and made mosquito bar stockings for the candy (and the writer had her little pink stocking of candy, nuts, raisins, and popcorn with the rest of the little folks), the young ladies strung popcorn for trimmings, while young men waited around to take them home. When the big time came off every person in town went to the tree. If there were babies at home, the members of the family took turns caring for them so that all could go and see the beautiful sight and get a sack of candy. It was the event of the season, and was the talk of the town for weeks afterward.

It might be of interest and especially so to the people of Vermillion, to read the names of some of the people who were there at the time. Many of them are still in Vermillion, but at that time they were nearly all young, unmarried men. Here is a partial list: J.C. and W.G. Bower, C.E. Prentis, A.E. Lee, L.W. Bell, Frank Jones, William Jones, Frank Hayward, Cal Shaw, M.J. Lewis, M.D. Thompson, Col. Jolley, George Porter, N.J. Wallace, and Dr. Carl Jensen.

The young lady who played the melodian for the exercises was Miss Lida Bower, now Mrs. W.R. Bond, of

Custer. Among the other young ladies who helped were the Misses Rhodes, Frane and Belle Stanle, Franc Oakley, Alice Maynard, Viola Van Metre, Fredris Miner, Julia Russell, and Sabra Russel, who have since married, most of them, and who have been known in the state for their good works. – Rapid City Daily Journal

*Information Compiled by
Tom Thaden, Past President
Clay County Historical Society*

Collections

Did you know that the Austin-Whittemore House is home to 15 framed VHS Senior Composite framed photos? At one time they were going to be tossed out but some smart thinking members of the CCHS saved them from the dumpster and they are now a wonderful addition to our family photo room. Stop in some time and see if you can find your Aunt Sophie!

1909	1929	1934
1923	1930	1935
1924	1931	1936
1925	1932	1937
1927	1933	1938





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, 2020

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

Directors - Barb Campbell, Jim Stone,

Kevin Jacobson, Lisa Johnson

Art Rusch, Judy Sullivan, Tom Sorensen

Appointed Positions

Executive Director Wess Pravecek

CCHPC Representative Jim Stone

From the Desk....

As I sat and thought about what I would write about in this Fall/Winter newsletter my philosophical thoughts just turned into good memories. I've always loved autumn. As a kid I loved how beautiful nature became but I was really fond of our small school football games, jumping in leaves, playing with neighbor kids, caramel apples, Halloween, etc. I guess what I loved the most about it was the warm feeling of family, even though we weren't the Waltons. Mom and Dad both worked full-time, so we were latchkey kids before there was a name for it. When the weather got cooler and then cold, home was a warm sanctuary that involved siblings who fought occasionally, the smell of coffee, a meal cooking, and most importantly that warm sense of security we felt when Mom and Dad walked into the house after work. I'd venture to guess that some of my memories may strike a note with you.

On that note, the Austin-Whittemore is preparing for one of our more nostalgic events, the Holiday Tour of Homes. By the time Thanksgiving arrives, we'll have the House decked out in its finest and our hope is that we will help to bring back memories that all of our visitors may have of their own. In a nutshell, this is the mission of the Clay County Historical Society. We want to be a place where people feel comfortable, where you may find a little piece of your family's or community's history or you may be able to provide us with a piece of that history. If you're reading this newsletter, you are probably already a member, but you may want to think about giving a friend or family member who's hard to shop for a CCHS membership.

My wish for you is to have a wonderful holiday season and a happy and healthy New Year. Stay in touch with us. It's always good to hear from you!

Wess Pravecek
Executive Director

Santa Will Make an Appearance



Santa will be available for those who need to make a request. Mr. Clause will be at the Austin Whittemore House at 15 Austin Street for the reception after the Tour of Homes.

Tickets for the Tour are available at Davis Pharmacy, 5 West Cherry Street and from Lisa Johnson at the Spa at Wynie Maes, 25 West Main Street starting November 12, 2019 until the date of the Tour.

Under the category of “you can’t make this stuff up”, I am sharing a front page news story from 1942.

THE DAKOTA REPUBLICAN
Vermillion, South Dakota
June 25, 1942

FRONT PAGE

The Office of Price Administration has sent out a long list of instructions telling ladies how to prolong the life of their girdles. It is axiomatic, of course, that the best way to make a girdle last is to make the brassiere first, but the OPA neglects to mention this fundamental fact.

They do say, however, that dirt, heat and strain are the worst enemies of girdles. As every girdle is constantly working under extreme strain, we guess there is nothing that can be done about this. And as to dirt, my goodness sakes, we have for many years had it forcibly impressed on us through magazine ads that every lady who does not wish to become a social outcast must spend practically every spare moment sudsing her invisibles. So this should eliminate dirt as a menace, leaving only heat, which we can’t do much about during hot weather, either.

“The first key to long wear in a girdle is correct fit.... The best way to test a girdle for fit is to sit down in it.” This is but sound horse sense. One can imagine the tragic predicament of a lady who goes to a theatre and discovers her girdle is so tight she can’t sit down in it. Or to a bridge party or the Ladies’ Aid even. However, if you ladies want to increase your social standing this might be one way to do it.

You should have at least two girdles, asserts the OPA, “if you can afford them” thus recognizing that

not everybody is lucky enough to have a government job. If you have two girdles, you should wear them on alternate days. No, we don’t mean you should wear both girdles one day and no girdle the next day—we guess we were not exactly clear. What we mean is you should wear one of these girdles every other day. Shucks! That won’t do either!

This two-girdle business is kind of hard to explain, but we’ll try again. You have two girdles—girdle number 1 and girdle number 2. Suppose it is Sunday. You wear girdle number 1 on Sunday. Then the next day, Monday, you wear girdle number 2, and the next day girdle number 1 again, and the day after that girdle number 2, and so on. We hope you get the idea now. If you don’t, maybe you better write to OPA for more detailed instructions. We have done the best we can with our limited intelligence.

Torn places in the girdle should be darned immediately. Some ladies will even go so far as to damn them, we betcha. The best way to avoid tearing your foundation garment is to get into it slowly and gently even if you have to make the old man or your boy friend wait ten or fifteen minutes longer. (The boy friend won’t say anything, but we betcha the old man will, but who cares what the old man says anyhow?) Avoid strong pulls and jerks in putting on your girdle or you may have to do a lot of darning and maybe in extreme cases you may find it difficult to refrain from heartfelt damning.

Historically Yours,
Dan Christopherson
CCHS President

Please join us for our
Sweets and Treats Fund Raiser
Saturday, December 14, 2019
10 am to 1 pm



2019 CCHS Spoken History Cemetery Tour

“A County of Culture” presented the lives, talents and accomplishments of six renowned Clay County residents who are interred at Bluff View Cemetery. Those featured during this year’s tour contributed to the art, music and literature in this area. Although their talents were many and varied, brief examples of their accomplishments are:

G.W. Collins (1869-1939) was a dentist who organized the first University band and first Vermillion orchestra. He was portrayed by Steve Gapp.



Oscar Howe (1915-1983) was an international artist renowned for Native American paintings. Paul Sneve told his life story.



W. H. Over (1866-1956) was presented by Larry Brady. The archeologist, geologist and author was honored when the WH Over Museum was renamed.



Mabel Richardson (1874-1962) was a poet who wrote the words to the USD alma mater and was a USD librarian for 34 years. She was portrayed by Sara Lampert.



Herbert Schnell (1899-1994) wrote the definitive state history book, “History of South Dakota” and Art Rusch told of his research and numerous publications.



Gertrude Walker Shaw (1904-1966), portrayed by Kelsey Collier-Wise, was a colorful character who played violin and viola in the University Orchestra for 46 years.



Dressed in character for the “Spoken History Cemetery Tour”. From left to right. Larry Brady, Paul Sneve, Steve Gapp, Kelsey Collier-Wise, Sara Lampert and Art Rusch.

Thanks to the Bluff View Cemetery Board of Directors for providing refreshments, the WH Over Museum for contributing the complimentary Oscar Howe notecards for our guests and thanks to those that provided their golf carts to make it easier for some attendees to get around.

Over a hundred people attended the tour and if you would like to learn more about this event and the Clay County ancestor contributions, David Lias wrote an article in the October 18 edition of the *Plaintalk*.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! The 2020 Spoken History Cemetery Tour is themed, “It’s All About Politics” and scheduled for Monday, October 12, at 5:30 pm.

*Joni Freidel
Cemetery Tour Chair*

Clay County Historical Society’s Newest Member!

Erin and Dave Burrow are proud parents of son Winter Burrow. Erin is currently serving as recording secretary of the CCHS. Congratulations to the family!!





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

After an active summer with many visitors to the museum we continue to host tours and meeting events at the museum. Many new USD students visited us for the first time as various departments held their orientation sessions in Sletwold Hall as the fall semester began. We were also pleased to again some of the local OLLI sessions as well.

The passing of longtime Vermillion resident Evelyn Peterson earlier this year resulted in a generous bequest to the museum. We greatly appreciate her generosity and remember her with great fondness. Her gift will continue to support the mission of the museum for many years.

On Sunday afternoon October 27th at 2 pm the museum hosted the Dragons are Too Seldom puppet workshop led by Markie Scholz. Children created their own puppets. Parents and children attended this fun event. This event is sponsored by the Clay County Youth Foundation, the Vermillion Lions Club and the South Dakota Arts Foundation and hosted by the Friends of the museum.

Our annual fall soup and pie supper was that same evening beginning at 6 p.m. This year the Bluff Ridge Boys from Vermillion performed. This group of talented musicians is a local favorite and we are pleased to have them return to the museum for this evening of food and fun.

The museum collections department was excited to receive the recent donation of a balance scale in its mahogany case that is over 100 years old. It is in good condition and comes with a complete set of weights. This scale was used in regional schools as part of biology and chemistry laboratories. We also welcome Cindy Gehm to the museum as an employee who is helping with the continuing effort to catalog and update our extensive inventory along with the assistance of our dedicated volunteers. We are making great progress thanks to these folks.

Looking ahead please mark your calendars for the annual Christmas festival on Sunday afternoon, December 8th. Come see the many decorated trees and enjoy a little hospitality with friends as you peruse the many vendors who will be pleased to help you with gifts for the holidays. The museum gift shop has a small supply of vintage Christmas cards which are available for purchase at the festival or anytime during regular museum hours. Books, CDs, and other items of regional interest are also available. Meanwhile, Happy Fall from all of us at the W.H. Over Museum.

Doris Hodgen

Visitors to the Museum

On September 18, 2019 we had visitors to the W. H. Over who arrived in a 1916 Model T Ford automobile (shown in the photograph below). The visitors included Vermillion native Paul Hasse, his sister Anne and friends from Kansas. They toured the Museum, listened to songs played on the 1920 player piano, and visited the museum gift shop. Paul's iconic car was parked near the Museum entrance. Following their visit, folks climbed into the Ford and visited other parts of Vermillion.



Photo by Tami Plank

The W.H. Over Museum Announces a Successful Restoration of a 1888 Camera

The W.H. Over Museum Photo Center is proud to announce the successful restoration of its 1888 camera found while inventorying the collection. The last Joint Newsletter article described the processes used to restore the camera. In this article, the camera was put into use.

The first image was recently captured by this historic South Dakota antique camera it is shown above. Taken from a state of major disrepair, Dr. Lynn Muller, the curator of the Photo Center, carefully restored the camera using appropriate vintage and historically correct parts he purchased. The camera is now completely functional as it would have been in the late 1800's. The first image of the front of the W. H. Over Museum taken

by Dr. Lynn Muller (see photograph above) assisted by Dr. Evelyn Schlenker, with the restored camera used modern 8x10 inch Black and White Tri-X film. The early morning picture taking process, attracted many favorable comments and stares from curious onlookers, who stopped to take double takes.



A photograph taken of the W. H. Over Museum



Lynn Muller taking the picture using the 1888 camera.

Items in the Collection

The Coyote Football Team Goes to Washington DC

In 1930 the University of South Dakota (USD) played George Washington University in Washington D.C. According to reports in the October 22, 1930 Volante, the score of this momentous contest was 0-0. While in Washington D.C., the Coyotes and their coaches met President Hebert Hoover near the White House on October 17, 1930. The meeting was recorded in a panoramic photograph found in the W. H. Over Museum Archives. By using the 1932 Coyote yearbook a listing of individuals in the picture can be discerned.

Importantly, the back of the photograph is signed "Charles Gunderson". Charles Young Gunderson graduated from Vermillion High School and went on to play football at USD from 1928-1930. Subsequently, he received a LLB degree from the USD Law School graduating summa cum laude. Gunderson was a professor and then Dean of the Law School for 30 years. He took a hiatus from the Law School during World War II when he joined the army and was in

the Judge Advocate General's Corp. He left the army in January, 1946 as a full colonel. In 1974, Gunderson was inducted into the Coyote Sports Hall of Fame for his football achievements. Below is a picture similar to the one in the W. H. Over Museum Archives found in the 1932 Coyote Yearbook. Note that President Hoover is standing in the center of the photograph and Clark Gunderson is standing just to the right Mrs. E. Z. Robbins.



Mrs. E. Z. Robbins, Gunderson, Root, Bleeker, Carl Walker, Leverett, Miss Robbins, C. S. Ball, L. Hanson, Coach Montgomery, Craker, President Herbert Hoover, Qualem, Captain N. Lees, H. Seeborn, Frank James, Carlson, Coach Hoy, Harriet Brown, Paul Davis, Walker, Carter, Tice, Hyllested, Hoppel, Fitzgerald, South, Kramer, Uinkler, R. Lees, O'Connor, Adkins, Stewart

FOR THE SECOND consecutive year, President Herbert Hoover threw wide the doors of the nation's capitol and welcomed our football team to Washington. In 1929 President Hoover welcomed our players to the White House after the Army game of that year and in 1930 when the Coyotes battled to a tie with George Washington University, the chief executive again proved himself the most cordial host.

It was with open arms that the east welcomed and acclaimed our football players from the prairies of South Dakota. Throughout Washington the praise of these gridiron warriors of the west resounded following a gruelling struggle, and it is for our football teams of the future to uphold the honor and glory of those teams we sent to the nation's capital.

Items in the Collection continued

A Railroad Spike and 1901 Railroad Map

Railroads in the United States started with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in 1830. The lines expanded throughout the eastern part of the United States and were instrumental during the Civil War. In 1869, the first transcontinental rail lines were laid. The railroad's incursion into South Dakota started in the 1870's in the southeastern portion of the State. Its expansion into northern and western regions coincided with the development of towns as settlers and miners moved into various parts of the state. Railroads carried passengers, mail and commodities, especially agricultural products, into and out of the state. With the advent of automobiles, trucks and highways by World War II, the role of the railroad in South Dakota was markedly diminished.

Inventorying the collection is a constant source of discovery. An example is a "golden" spike embossed on three sides with Lead, SD, May 18, 1902 and F.E. & M.V. R.R., which stands for the Fremont, Elkhorn & Missouri Valley Railroad. The Fremont Nebraska based railroad supplied a lucrative route into the Black Hills to aid in the mining of gold and minerals. By 1903 the Chicago & North Western Railroad (C&NW) acquired the F.E. & M.V. R.R. eventually connecting it with Rapid City and routes traveling east and west. The spike was given to the W. H. Over Museum in 1961.



Different sides of "Gold spike" from the F.E. & M.V. R.R. railroad in Lead, SD.

All That Glitters is Not Gold

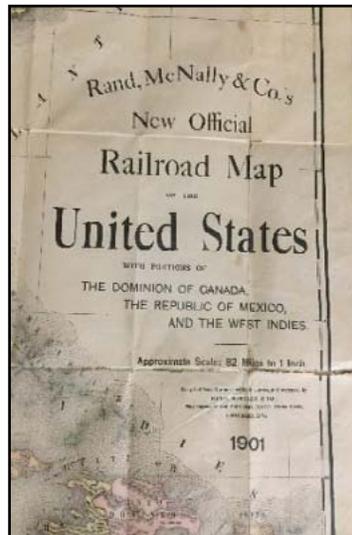
When Custer and his party discovered gold at French Creek in the Black Hills in 1874, it set off a gold rush that resulted in major migration of prospective miners and the development of mining towns. A new addition to the exhibit on minerals in South Dakota consists of a piece of pyrite or iron sulfide (also known as "fool's gold") is a very attractive conglomerate of golden colored crystals and the less subdued gold ore. Importantly, pyrite and gold may be found in the same locations.



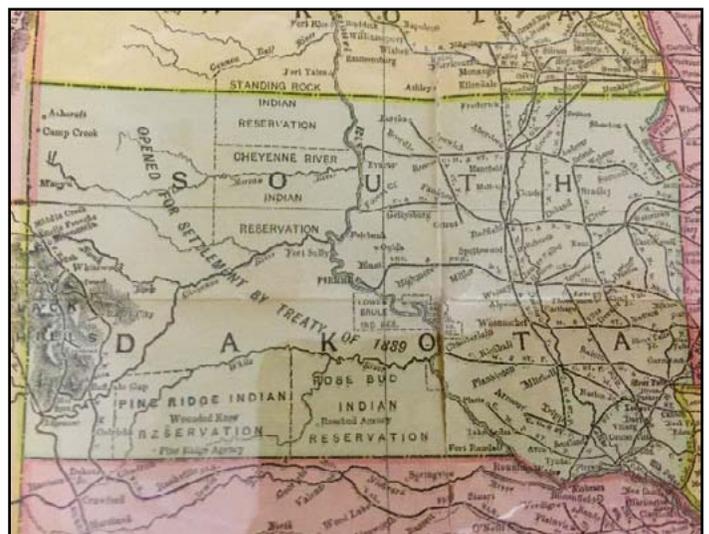
Pyrite



Gold Ore



Another item found in collections was a folded pocket 1901 New Official Rand McNally Railroad map that depicted railroad lines throughout the United States at that time. Below is a picture of what railroad lines looked like in South Dakota with most lines were located in the eastern part of the State.



Daisy the Dragon and the Fall Festival

On October 27, the “Dragons Are Too Seldom”, along with master puppeteer Markie Scholz from Spearfish, South Dakota visited to the W. H. Over Museum and proceeded to enchant and fascinate an attentive audience of 45 children and several parents. The puppet show was a story about Daisy, a lovely little purple dragon who fell to the earth and engaged all sorts of fantasy critters to begin a dragon settlement on earth and stay in touch with her home planet. After the audience watched an evil witch turn into a frog when her curse backfired, they all moved to the Discovery Room and learned make a sock puppet. We had Kevin the Catfish, Cat, a unicorn plus many other puppets socks amply trimmed with a huge assortment of buttons, pom poms, ribbons and yarn. After the puppets were finished, Markie instructed the children how to bring those puppets to life by creating a voice especially for that sock and how to talk to each other. A fun time was had by all and the adults present were equally enchanted by the story of Daisy the Dragon.

After the puppet activity, the annual Welcome Fall soup and pie supper was served in Sletwold Hall. There was an unbelievable selection of soup and lots and lots of pie. The Bluff Ridge band performed a wide variety of music and engaged the audience in the music and the story each song told. Wonderful local musicians make up this band and they were great – they also liked the pie! The sponsors who helped create this wonderful afternoon and evening were the Rotary Club, the Lions Club, the Clay County Youth Foundation, the South Dakota Arts Council and the Friends of the W. H. Over Museum.

Students at the Over

For many years undergraduate students have worked at the Over as volunteers, interns, or to study specific artifices or even develop innovative exhibits. This summer Katie Struckman-Johnson, an undergraduate attending the University of Iowa, interned at the Over and helped inventory items in the collections, re-invigorate exhibits, and help accession items donated to the Museum under the direction of our very experienced Collections Manager, Tami Plank. Tami came to the Over about 8 years ago having extensive museum and history research experience in Minnesota. Another student volunteering at the Over is undergraduate Andrew Pfuff. He was worked at the Museum for several semesters on the ongoing inventory the Collection.

While this is the first year in a long time that we haven't included pumpkin carving/painting afternoon activities, thanks to the generosity of Randy Wheelock and Leo Powell, many pumpkins went home to become jack-o-lanterns. The generous donations of these organizations and individuals will a full year of activities designed possible to bring children into the Museum – watch for the days and times for those activities.



The purple Daisy the dragon puppet



Making puppets in the Discovery Room with Markie Scholz

This fall, Department of Education Professor Jing Williams brought her class of 22 students to use exhibits at the Over as an innovative way for them to develop a curriculum for elementary school students. As part of the class, Evelyn Schlenker presented a short history of the Museum and then gave a tour of several exhibits focusing on the history and ethnography of this region of the country. After the class, several students examined in more detail a number of exhibits including on containing articles that Civil War veterans brought from the eastern states the Civil War ended to claim lands in Dakota Territory. In the “Time to Remember Room” students were introduced to items that were in doctors’ offices in the 1920-1930’s, items from the original Burr

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Students at the Over continued

Broom Factory (one of the longest lasting businesses in Vermillion) and an exhibit containing lawyer's office complete with a picture of the 1905 University of South Dakota law school faculty members and students.

This is just a sampling of recent student activity at the Over. Not only do the students learn how a museum works and make substantial contributions, but staff and other volunteer benefit from the students' insights. Definitely a win-win combination!

CLAY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION NEWS

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)
- Gloria Hensley (Treasurer)
- Evelyn Schlenker (Secretary)
- Ed Gerrish
- Dennis Konkler
- Patrick Morrison
- Bill Ranney
- Jim Stone
- Monica Iverson
- Tim Schreiner

2019 Survey of Vermillion River Historic Properties in Clay County

By Bill Ranney

An archaeological survey of several historic properties, primarily along the Vermillion River in Clay County, begun this summer. The project is being sponsored by the Clay County Historic Preservation Commission (CCHPC), and the survey was conducted in conjunction with the USD Department of Anthropology. William Ranney (CCHPC), Dr. Anthony Krus (USD), and Ethan Jennings (USD student) participated in the survey. We looked at three areas, and recorded one prehistoric site, one early homestead, and one townsite during the June fieldwork.

The original townsite of Vermillion was the first area examined, primarily to test the precision GPS equipment rented for the project. This equipment is capable of mapping a point on a map to within centimeters. Vermillion was initially situated just below the bluff, when the Missouri River was on the north side of the valley. After the flood of 1881, the Missouri River channel moved to the other side of the valley and the town was re-established on top of the bluff. We were interested in determining whether the current streets correspond to the original street locations prior to the flood. Using an 1868 plat of the town, we were able to georeference the early plat to contemporary streets and locations and did indeed determine that the current Broadway Street is in the same location as Broad Street in 1868. Armed with this knowledge and the many pictures that W.H. Over Museum has of the first business district in the original Vermillion, we are planning to correlate specific early businesses to individual lots in present day Vermillion.

The Alex Ufford property, just east of Vermillion, has several archaeological sites already recorded on it. This summer's survey revealed one more historical site, the Lamb Taylor homestead dating back to the 1860's. Hidden at the base of the Missouri River bluff are the remains of three to four structures, a partially intact brick root cellar and a large quantity of historic artifacts. There are live springs on each side of the farmstead. Early county atlases show the farm, depicting at least three buildings and a driveway on the south leading to Burbank Road. The original homestead was in the center of the section and included land on the river bottom and on top of the bluff. In order to access the land on top of the bluff, Taylor built his own road up the slope that is still present today.

North of Vermillion and just east of Highway 19 along the Vermillion River is located the old townsite of Bloomingdale, which had the first flour mill in Clay County. According to records, the mill was established in 1868 and operated until 1901. The exact locations of the town and the mill have been a mystery. It turns out that the current landowner, Bob Gregoire, knew the approximate location of the mill. With this information, the "exact" location was found using early maps and

continued on page 11

2019 Survey of Vermillion River Historic Properties in Clay County continued

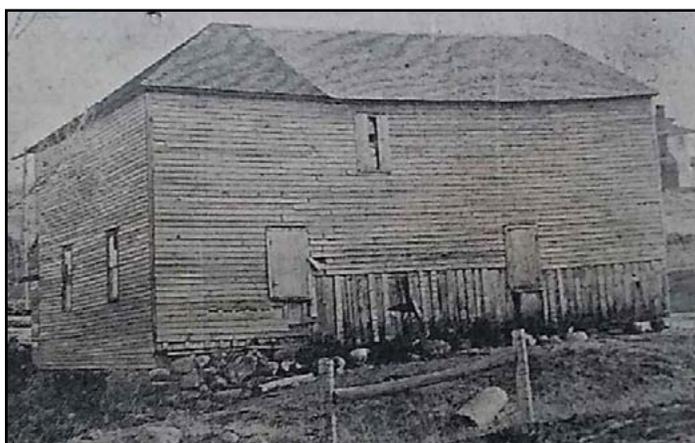
aerial photography from 1937 and 1951. Other buildings in the immediate area also appear on the aerial images that were probably part of the town. In the late 1800's when the town was active, it had a post office, a general merchandise store, a blacksmith shop, and a hotel. The survey revealed several artifact scatters on top of the bluff that may represent other residences. The early county atlases show at least three farmsteads along the road that leads down to the mill site. The mill itself stood into the 1950s, when it was dismantled. The latest image we have of the mill is from the 1931 *The Dakota Republican* photo shown on the right.

One prehistoric site was discovered, in a cultivated field overlooking the Vermillion River valley. State law requires that the precise location of Native American sites remain confidential to protect them. The artifacts that were found included some chipped stone debris from stone tool making, and one fragment of a chipped stone tool that was probably used as a knife.

All of the sites that were recorded this summer will continue to be researched over the winter. Any information that readers may have about the sites that were recorded would be greatly appreciated. The survey project will continue into the summer of 2020. We will seek permission to survey other properties next summer. Thanks to the landowners who so generously allowed us on their property this past summer: Alex Ufford, Bob Gregoire, Ron Johnson, Danny & Eldon Johnson and Ken Wastlund.



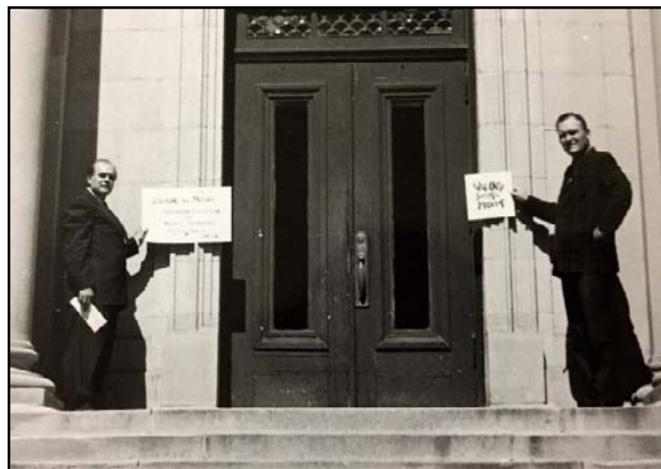
Part of the root cellar from the Lamb Taylor homestead



The Bloomingdale Mill

Two Carnegie Libraries

It is hard to believe how iconic a picture can be! To the right is a photograph from the upcoming book about the history of the two Carnegie libraries in Vermillion built in the beginning of the 20th century; one was the Vermillion Carnegie Public Library (VCPL) and the other the University of South Dakota (USD) Carnegie Library. When the buildings outgrew their purpose as a library, they were used for other purposes. The VCPL building, owned by the City of Vermillion, has been leased to lawyers since 1978. Once the USD ID Weeks Library was completed in 1967, the USD Carnegie Building became the home of the W. H. Over Museum, the Shrine to Music Museum and the Oscar Howe Gallery. Who would solely occupy the building was an ongoing contest until 1984.



Above is a 1967 or 1968 photo of Arne Larson (Shrine to Music) on one side of the entrance of the Carnegie Building and a taller James Howard (Director of the W. H. Over Museum) on the other side. Courtesy of the W. H. Over Museum.

Vermillion Mason's Incense Lodge #2 Marks Sesquicentennial

By Tom Sorensen

In 2019 masons in the Vermillion and Clay County are celebrating their 150th anniversary as the second-oldest lodge in South Dakota, established in 1869 in Dakota Territory, under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Iowa. Historically, the Incense Lodge was instrumental to help establish the Grand Lodge of Dakota Territory which, on November 2, 1889, became two states: North and South Dakota. Incense Lodge #2 has been under three jurisdictions - Iowa, Dakota Territory, and now the Grand Lodge of South Dakota.

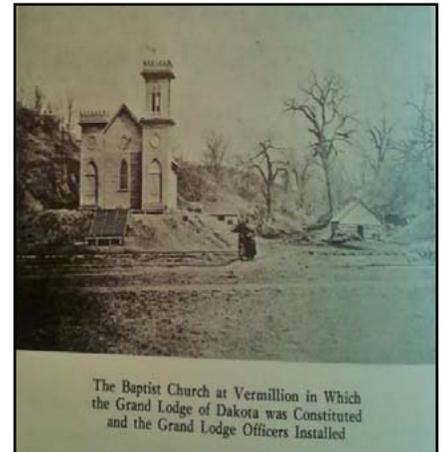
Freemasonry is a fraternity which teaches ethics and morality. The Ancient Free and Accepted Mason members welcome all men who are willing to profess his belief in a Supreme Being. A society that keeps some secrets, Freemasonry's influence and effects on society have been significant. Its main purpose is to make good men better. Freemasons also embrace diversity of opinion and religious, ethnic, cultural, social, and educational differences.

According to "The First 100 Years of the Grand Lodge A.F. & A. M." (Ancient Free & Accepted Masons), John's Lodge at Yankton in 1869 recommended to the Grand Lodge of Iowa that a dispensation be issued to a group in Vermillion. On June 2, 1869 Iowa issued a charter designating Incense Lodge No. 257 (later renumbered), but no meetings were held until December. The history of the Incense Lodge in Clay County "is very clear on the events leading up to the formation of Grand Lodge of Dakota."

Minutes of the effort state: "By September 1874, it was ordered that the Incense Lodge concur with the Minnehaha Lodge and sign the petition for a Grand Lodge Charter." There were only five chartered lodges at that time. "Those lodges in the north part of the Territory (near Canada) never answered our communications," said Brother T.H. Brown of the Minnehaha Lodge, who later would become the first Grand Master of Dakota Territory.

The Committee on Credentials included Incense Lodge Brothers H.J. Austin, A.H. Lathrop, and C.E. Prentice. On July 21, 1875, the Masonic Convention was called to order in the hall of Incense Lodge No. 257, Vermillion, D.T., to install the Grand Officers of the new Grand Lodge of Dakota. The Committee on Arrangements reported that the Grand Officers-elect in attendance and all things in readiness for their installation at the Baptist Church in the city. The Baptist Society having kindly granted the use of their church building for that purpose. The first Grand Master of

Dakota Republican photo and included in the book, "The First 100 Years of the Grand Lodge A.F. & A. M. of South Dakota," Centennial Committee, Tisher, Harold I. P.G.M. (Past Grand Master), Grand Historian (1974). The book was signed and presented to Incense Lodge 2 of Vermillion, S.D.



The Baptist Church at Vermillion in Which the Grand Lodge of Dakota was Constituted and the Grand Lodge Officers Installed

Masons of Dakota was Thomas H. Brown, who served 1875-1876 and again 1881-1882. The Grand Lodge ultimately concluded business and was closed until the next Annual Communication.

Over its first 150 years, Incense Lodge #2 members have included names familiar to Clay County history, including Charles Lotze, Vermillion's first fire chief; past state Grand Master Edgar Brookman, who with his twin brother, Edwin, who established the Vermillion Pearl Roller Flour Mill in the spring of 1890; former Vermillion alderman, mayor, and later Governor Andrew Lee, and Governor George S. Mickelson. Among members associated with the University of South Dakota were Lewis Akeley, Marshall McKusick, Clark Young Gunderson, and Charles Estee. Farmers, welders, pharmacists, physicians, and businessmen included, Lloyd Holmes, Ole Olson Jetley, Everett Bogue, Martin Weeks, Jr., Tom Kaltsulas, Myron Iverson, Harold Sletwold, Robert Oden, Russell Heikes,



This 1909 photo shows the Masonic symbol to the left of the utility pole on the 7 West Main St. building. (Photograph courtesy of the Clay County Historical Society)

continued on page 13

Vermillion Mason's Incense Lodge #2 Marks Sesquicentennial continued



*The present location of Incense Lodge #2 at 7 W. Main St. in Vermillion.
Note the differences in the building compared to the 1909 photo.*

Photograph by Russ Stone

Harland Emerson, T.G. Mones, Phillips B. Crew, Harold Ashbaugh, Lewis Radigan, Rollie French, Merle Offerdahl, Tom Olson, Tom Lavin, Howard Willson, and Graham Thatcher.

The Grand Lodge of South Dakota is comprised of more than 74 lodges with a membership of more than 5,500 brothers. South Dakota Freemasonry has included such prominent members as Richard F. Pettigrew, philanthropist and South Dakota's first U.S. Senator; Governor, Medal of Honor recipient and commissioner of the American Football League Joseph (Joe) P. Foss; and Gutzon

Borglum, sculptor of Mount Rushmore National Memorial. At present, Grand Master Harold Ireland of Piedmont heads South Dakota's Grand Lodge, which is headquartered in Sioux Falls.

Many of those deemed founding fathers of the United States of America were Masons, including George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Hancock, Benjamin Franklin and Paul Revere. Across the globe, other Masonic members included Amadeus Mozart, Simon Bolivar, Giuseppe Garibaldi, Voltaire, Goethe, and Franz Joseph Haydn.

According to "The History of Freemasonry" by Albert Mackey (Random House Value Publishing, Inc., 1996), the society's age is unknown, but is very rich and complex in its mythology and symbolism. Freemasonry's beginnings may be traced back to approximately 1000 B.C.

In conclusion, Incense Lodge #2 of Vermillion marked its 150th Anniversary by participating in the 2019 Dakota Day Parade. Many more events are being planned.

Forest Avenue Historic District Association Report

The Forest Avenue Historic District Association held 4 meetings in 2019, the last one was a Neighborhood Fall Social in October hosted by John and Erin Beyers at their 216 Forest Avenue home. This is a two-and-a-half story Colonial Revival style. Many people refer to this building as the late Dr. Hugo Andre home; Andre was a prominent physician in Vermillion. At our meeting, we enjoyed the friendship, wine, cider and appetizers. We also shared names of recommended contractors that we have used and discussed what we liked about affiliated with the Forest Avenue Historic District. The top items were being a part of the early history of Vermillion, living in a home with a long history, and the integrity, charm, and the friendliness of an old fashioned neighborhood.

The first known house to have been built on Forest Avenue was the Finlay McKercher House built at the southwest end of Forest bluff in July 1873. On

March 30, 1876, Darwin Inman purchased this house and seven lots for \$1,500. In 1882 the house was moved to East Main Street and became the home of the President of the University of South Dakota. One of the biggest myths is that Vermillion residents only moved up to the bluff after the devastating flood of 1881. Actually, the wealthy class constructed houses on the bluff long before the flood.

On Friday, December 6 from 4:30-7:30, Steve and Carol Smith's Neo-Colonial style home located at 18 Forest Avenue will be part of the Clay County Historical Society Annual Tour of Homes. At one time this building was leased by the Alpha Phi Sorority. Many of the Forest Avenue homes have been on the Tour of Homes. Finally as representative of the Forest Avenue Historic District Association, I continue to give historic information on the homes to residents and the Realtors.

*Gloria Hensley
Forest Avenue Representative*

Discovery of Diesel Engines from the Vermillion Power Plant

About two years ago Jim Stone located some electric panels and switches stored at the Austin Whittemore house. These items were saved from the 1931 Vermillion Power Plant and used to construct an exhibit at the W. H. Over Museum. This prompted him research and then to write up whatever history is available about the power plant that was demolished in 2000.

While it was functional, for several years the power plant generated a profit that was equal to $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Vermillion City annual budget. This plant produced the electric power for Vermillion from 1931 through the 1970's.

Two of four of the giant diesel engines from the Vermillion plant have been located! On August 15,



The picture above is of one of two 525 horsepower diesel engines. This Fairbanks Morse motor is 15'8" long, 5'4" wide and 9' tall. It is a five-cylinder giant that produced 357.6 kilowatts at 447 RPM. This is one of two engines that were placed in the original power plant, which was built in 1931. The other 525 horsepower engine was sold as scrap metal.

2019 a road trip was made to Boyer Sand and Gravel near Hawarden, Iowa. Pictures of these mammoth engines were taken. Tom Sorensen, Gary Bottolfson, Larry Bradley, Evelyn Schlenker and Jim Stone were so excited to see these motors! Tom Sorensen's father, Elmer Sorensen, was the head engineer at the Vermillion Power Plant for several years. The fourth diesel/natural gas engine was purchased in 1947. This was a Fulton diesel/natural gas, 1300 horsepower and had eight cylinders. This generator produced 1125 kilowatts at 270 RPM. This engine was also sold as scrap metal. It weighed 160,000 pounds or 80 ton! Thus, we have found and documented two very important treasures from Vermillion's past electrical power plant and Vermillion's history.



The picture above is of the third diesel/natural gas engine purchased in 1945. This was a 1200 horsepower engine. This Worthington engine was 15'-7" long, 5'-3" wide and 11' tall. This mammoth was also six-cylinder. It produced 840 kilowatts at 1050 RPM. Note the relative size of the engine to the size of Gary standing off to the side.

Christmas Cards Celebrating Vermillion History

Thanks to Monica Iverson and the Clay County Historic Preservation Commission, new Christmas cards will be available for purchase at the Clay County Historical Society at the Austin-Whittemore House and the W.H. Over Museum.

This year send your friends and family members a piece of Vermillion history.

Picture of Chandler Hill in the winter



Preservation Awards: 2019

On October 23, 2019 at the noon meeting of Rotary, the third annual preservation awards were presented by the Clay County Historic Preservation Commission. Awards were given in three categories: 1. Long-term preservation and conservation of a structure and site; 2. Individual preservation projects (restoring a specific structure or site); and 3. Lifetime Achievement (maintaining the integrity of several structures over time). Below is a summary of the awardees and their extraordinary achievements.

In the first category Gary Marshall received his award for his painstaking restoration of the 224 Willow house built in 1907. Gary mentioned that he started the project with the idea of just painting the structure, but soon found out that it needed major renovation. This two year project culminated with a beautifully restored early 20th century building in the University Historic District.

Nate Welch, representing the Vermillion Chamber and Development Corporation (VCDC), received an award for major renovation of the 1884 brick building located at 2 East Main Street. The effort restored the façade of the building close to its original status while maintaining the 1974 Termes Mural on the west side of the structure. The building, known as McVicker Plaza houses the Vermillion Visitors' Center, the offices of the VCDC, space for community gatherings, and Charlies, a store selling University of South Dakota items.

Jerry and Norma Wilson received a preservation award in recognition of preservation of a historic site, the 1869 Severson homestead, and conservation of land

back to its status as a prairie. During the award ceremony, each person discussed the processes involved to restore the structures and land to that prior to settlement in Clay County. Jerry mentioned that most likely the two story 1869 log cabin structure will eventually fall down, but he is prolonging that possibility. In addition, by putting the land the Wilsons own in a Conservation Trust, the work they have done will outlive them.

Awards are given in three categories

Long-term preservation and conservation of a structure and site

Individual preservation projects

Lifetime Achievement

The final award was given to Karen Muenster, who has demonstrated an extraordinary lifetime of work preserving historic buildings in Vermillion and in Sioux Falls. Highlighted during the presentation were five buildings located in the three historic districts in Vermillion that she renovated. All 4 awardees discussed their drive to preserve sites and the importance of doing so for the economic development, history, and quality of life of Clay County residents.



Congratulations to the 2019 preservation awardees, Gary Marshall, Nate Welch, Jerry and Norma Wilson and Karen Meunster.

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