



Clay County Historic Preservation Commission Newsletter Spring 2013

Clay County Historic Preservation
Commission
Courthouse Suit 102, 211 W. Main
Vermillion, SD 57069

<http://www.cchpc.org/>

Photo: Evelyn Schlenker

A Summary of Clay County Historic Preservation Commission (CCHPC) Activities for 2012-2013

In the past year the CCHPC has been and continues to be active in many endeavors. Among this year's activities was the excellent job Jim Stone has been doing documenting the barns and other out-houses of clay county. One barn that is currently being dismantled is the Danish Brick Barn that is highlighted on pages 2 and 3. Interpretative Signs of historic sites in Clay County is almost completed. Wednesdays held each month and consisting of a variety of topics having to do with historical preservation and the history of Clay County. Publications of the CCHPC were updated including the Walking Tour of the University of South Dakota and

Guide to National Register of Historic Places in Clay County South Dakota. This coming year the CCHPC a book commemorating the 100th birthday of the Clay County Courthouse was written and published. In addition, Jim Wilson is writing a book containing the information about architects, engineers and contractors who constructed buildings in Vermillion. Jim Wilson, John Erikson, and Jim Stone have consulted with individuals interested in renovation and preservation of historical properties in Clay County. As in the past, the CCHPC strives to fulfill its mission to promote a comprehensive program of historic preservation in Clay County by advocating

the use, conservation and acquisition of historic properties in Clay County for the education, inspiration, pleasure and enrichment of the citizens of the municipalities, county, state and nation.

Preservation Celebration will take place on Thursday, May 23rd at the W. H. Over Museum. Activities will include a history of bricks and brick making in Clay County and vicinity, presentations on masonry construction, joints and models of barns, and a presentation of Barns in Clay County by Jim Stone. Clay County Historical Preservation Commission publications will be available.



Old Log Cabin School House

Inside this issue:

CCHPC events and
Preservation Celebration 1

Relocation of the Log
Cabin Schoolhouse 1

The Danish Brick Barn 2-3

Barn and Stained Glass
Quilts 4

CCHP Board Members

- Jim Wilson
(President)
- John Erikson (Vice
President)
- Tom Thaden
(Treasurer)
- Evelyn Schlenker
(Secretary)
- William Ranney
- Holly Straub
- Dennis Konkler
- Will Schweinle
- Brendyn Richards
- Malene A. Little
- Jim Stone

Renovation and Relocation of the Old Log Cabin School House

The original log cabin school house, the first permanent school in the Dakota Territories was erected in 1864 by Capt. Nelson A. Miner and members of the First Dakota Cavalry, Company A. This structure was located at the bottom of what is now Dakota Street and Broadway (then Ravine Road). A replica of that schoolhouse was built in 1938. W.H. Over and I.D. Weeks,

Professor Brookman, and Mrs. W. H. Beede wanted to use the schoolhouse to educate children about attending school in past. WPA volunteers helped build the schoolhouse and moved it to the University of South Dakota campus between what is now the National Music Museum and Slagle Hall. In the 1950's the building was moved to the NE corner of the campus alongside Cherry Street. Another move took place in 1964 when the building was

moved to the bottom of Ravine Road. The schoolhouse was repaired and moved to Captain Miner Lane. Currently, the CCHPC and the Clay County Historical Society plan to retain parts of the old building that are salvageable and rebuild the rest of the building at its now location on ground of the Austin Whittemore House.

Historic “Danish Brick Barn”: Topic for Upcoming Book

Jim Stone

One of the most exciting documentation of barns that Jim Stone has done is that of the Danish Brick Barn. The history and characteristics of this barn including where the clay came from to make the bricks for this distinctive building is the subject for an upcoming book. Below is a short description of the salient characteristics of the barn.

The Johnsen, Calle Nissen / Hansen farmstead is located in the SW ¼, of Section 32, in Meckling Township and is on the National Historical Register. Calle Nissen Johnsen was one of the first Danes to settle in this area. He emigrated from Schleswig, Denmark and purchased a land patent on 160 acres for \$200 in 1869. The brick barn on this property is thought to be the only remaining brick barn from the 1870's in the area. The walls are constructed of clay brick manufactured on the property by skilled Danish masons from Demark. Yes, the clay was dug on site, bricks formed, dried and the bricks fired on site. Just imagine the amount of firewood they must have used to fire that many bricks.

Most of the buildings have been demolished and removed from this farmstead. The brick home, the 1860's log cabin, a scale and this brick barn are all that remain. The farmstead was a large farming operation at one time. Today with huge machinery and modern agricultural methods, these building have outlived their usefulness.

The most distinctive feature of this rural historic district is the clay brick barn, thought to be the only remaining brick barn from the 1870's in the area. With unique walls constructed of clay brick manufactured on the property, work commenced in 1870 and was completed in 1878. The T shaped barn 47'long (North to South) and 36' wide (East to West) on the West end and a 36' wide (North to South) by 67' (East to West) on the East side. The foundation is native granite/quartzite stone, which is about 1'-5" above ground level. The brickwork is very ornate with soldier brick arches above all door and window openings, except the seven hayloft doors (three on the North wall, three on the South wall and one on the East wall of the East wing of the barn) as the top of the door is at the top of the 12' wall (see both top and right bottom photographs.) The brick walls have pilasters built into all six corners and four in each of the 67' walls on the East part of the barn. The West side and all of the 36' gable ends each have two pilasters and the corner pilasters (see both top photographs.) The foundation and bricks are mortared with sand and lime, as Portland cement was not available before 1880.

The hayloft floor on the East wing is 36' x 67' and is supported with massive hand hewn cottonwood beams 8"x9" x 36' long which run North to South the 36' width. These beams are about 6' on center and are supported by hand hewn cottonwood 6x6 posts. The posts are mortised and tendon into the bottom of the beams. There are six posts under each beam, which are about 4' O.C. from the North and South walls, leaving a 12' alley in the center running East to West. On the first floor there were single cow stalls between each row of 6x6 posts. It is not known if these served as milk cow stanchions or to feed cattle for market. There is one pen with a manger and feed boxes in the Southwest corner of the East wing that is said to have been a calving pen.



A NW, SE corner view of the barn.



The west wall of west wing showing the arched doorway .

The hayloft in the 36'x47' West end has six rows of the massive hand hewn cottonwood 8"x 9" x 36' beams running the 36' width East to West. These beams are 8' O.C. from the South wall and about 5' O.C. from the North wall leaving a 14' alley, which lines up with the alley to the East. Plus another 8"x 9" beam imbedded into the South brick wall. These beams are supported by hand hewn cottonwood posts 8' O.C. on the North side and 4'-6" O. C. for the five single horse stalls and 9' O.C. for the double horse stall on the South side. Each post is mortised and tendon into the bottom of the beams. The wall between the alley and the horse stalls is covered with boards for a solid wall. There are doors with heart shaped finger pulls to open to feed the horses (see left photograph at the bottom of this page).

There are mortise holes are 2' O.C. in the bottom of the center 16' of the 8"x9" beam which is on the North side of the alley. The 9' on each end of this beam do not have these mortise holes. This may have been a granary or a corncrib under a hayloft on the second floor. There could have been granaries above on the hayloft floor and the reason for the four 8"x9" beams 5' O.C. with another beam imbedded into the North brick wall on the North side of the West wing.

The floor joists have been replaced with double milled 2x8's and five granaries have been built above on the South side. It is believed that the South side above the horse stalls was a hayloft as the beams supporting are 8' O.C. There are two granaries in the center of the North side, with a 9' space for haylofts on the East and West sides. The center 14' alley is open to the peak of the roof. The granaries on the North have been rebuilt with milled 2x6's and 1x10 shiplap. The original floor joists have been removed to make the granaries go up through the hayloft floor to make these granaries about 14' high. The beams still are in place and have the notches where the original floor joists were for the hayloft floor or granaries on the second floor.

The 2x8 rough sawn cottonwood rafters are supported in the center of each rafter with one row of 6x6 posts and 6x6 beams. The posts are about 6' O.C. in the East wing of the barn. These posts are mortised and tendon into the bottom of the beam above. There is a rough sawn cottonwood 2x10 from the top of the 12' high brick wall horizontally to each post and is mortised tendon into the posts with a round wood peg. The rafters in the West side are supported with four 6x6 posts and a 6x6 beam running North to South. These posts also set on top of the beams below and are mortised and tendon into the beams with the end posts setting on top of the brick wall. The roof sheathing is rough sawn cotton boards covered with cedar shingles. The first wood shingles would have been cottonwood shingles made locally. The gable ends have 12" vertical boards for siding.

Unfortunately this barn, as so many, will be demolished and parts salvaged for many projects. Thus, in a way parts of the barn still remain.



An example of a heart-shaped figure pull that is characteristic of several doors in this barn.



Above bottom window is a soldier brick arch above . A hayloft door is situated at the top of brick wall .

Barn Quilts Occur in Many Locations and Types

The Zimmer House built in 1919 and located on the western corner of Harvard and National represents a new form of “Barn Quilting”. Aside from the nor traditional barn quilts on the South side of the House (larger log cabin motif) and smaller (neighbor motif), the large east facing window is framed on top by a series of 6 stained glass “barn quilts” . The stained glass quilt patterns were selected by Joyce Zimmer and the windows made by the very talented Cal Peterson, of here in Vermillion. Designs included two Log Cabin blocks, a Jacob’s Ladder, the Willow Tree is to honor Joyce’s Dad (the house they lived in on Willow Street was selected by her father) and the Little Red School House is to honor Joyce’s Mom, who taught school for 42 years. The sixth pattern is a pinwheel motif.



The top left photo depicts the south side of the house with the two barn quilts. These are enlarged in the two photographs.



The large picture window is now the “home “ of 6 small stained glass windows depicting Joyce Zimmer’s favorite quilt patterns.

If you would like to receive a copy of upcoming Newsletters, please e-mail Jim Wilson at whitewilson@msn.com or mail us at Clay County Historic Preservation Commission, Courthouse Suit 102, 211 W. Main , Vermillion, SD 57069.