



they added on and made it even larger and more grand. The stairway located in the foyer originally stood in the southeast corner of the music room. The large dining room and the large room above it were added to the house. Mrs. Austin had a greenhouse attached to the south side of the dining room where she grew her own garden year around. Little Pansy's pet rabbit lived in the greenhouse. Mrs. Austin was known as a very good cook, and over the years, many very important people sat at her table."

Helen grew up in the home and married a man from town and they lived in the house. His name was Arthur Whittemore.

"Whittemore, a football coach at the University of South Dakota, and Helen raised four daughters and a son in this home," Pravecek said. "After the children grew up and moved away from Vermillion, Pansy continued to live here. She rented out rooms upstairs for extra income."

She added that when Helen passed away in 1968, her son Arthur "Bucky" Whittemore inherited the home.

"He was a well-known musician who lived in New York," Pravecek said. "The house was beginning to need lots of repair and he did not wish to deal with the house. He decided to sell the house and the four lots to the grocery store which was across the street at the time. After the sale, the house would be torn down and a parking lot constructed." Pravecek said that several Vermillion residents got together and said "we need to save the house".

"They formed the Clay County Historical Society and told him we wanted to save the house because it was such an integral part of Vermillion history," she said. "He went ahead with the household goods auction, which is unfortunate so everything you see here today has been donated except for the old white cupboard in the kitchen. It is the only piece of furniture from the house that has been given to us."

After they convinced Bucky to sell the society the house, then began the work of renovating the property back to what it would have looked like in the early 1900s.

"Can you just imagine how grand they would have had the home fixed up for the holidays?" Pravecek asked during a tour of the home. "They loved children and I know it would have been a very festive place, so we try to capture that in our decorating for the holiday which we will showcase at the Tour of Homes."

Showing Off Their Holiday Spirit

"The first week-end in December we traditionally host a Tour of Homes with many beautifully decorated local homes on the tour," Pravecek

❖ **AUSTIN-WHITTEMORE** *continued on page 24*



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