



MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

June 2012

A Message From Our President Kathy Dzewaltowski

In the April 2012 newsletter, we reported on work being done to the Marlatt Homestead, which is on the Register of Historic Kansas Places. Inappropriate materials were used and windows removed without the prior approval of the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The Marlatt Homestead is owned by Kansas State University (KSU).

Since then, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was developed between SHPO and KSU in regards to the rehabilitation of the Marlatt Homestead. The MOA specifies that KSU will remove the metal siding and install wood shingles, replace the wood window sills, install wood-framed double-hung windows to match the originals, and the MOA specifies that the work will be completed within five years. If the terms of the MOA are not carried out, SHPO reserves the right to seek damages.

The M/RCPA Board of Directors has been in contact with KSU President Kirk Schulz, Dr. Jackie Hartman, who is the Chief of Staff and Director of Community Relations, and other University administrators. Our organization expressed its interest in collaborating with KSU to reverse the inappropriate work that was done and to fundraise, if necessary, to help finance the restoration work.

Dr. Hartman's response to our communications was to the effect that KSU does wish to collaborate with the M/RCPA and will be in contact with our organization as KSU moves forward in making positive changes to the Marlatt Homestead.

Dr. Hartman's letter also said that the work done to the Marlatt Homestead was done with the best intentions, and she stated that "K-State was unaware of the historical

status of the Marlatt Homestead." Most likely, Dr. Hartman chose these particular words in an effort to not cast blame on anyone. I would like to think that KSU is aware of the properties it owns that are on a historic register (Anderson Hall, Marlatt Homestead, KSAC Radio Towers) and strives to be good stewards of these significant cultural resources. Just to be sure, the M/RCPA provided a list of KSU's registered properties to Dr. Hartman and directed her to the Kansas statutes pertaining to historic preservation.

I hope that as restoration efforts move forward, Kansas State University will take advantage of our organization's willingness to help. I also hope KSU will regard the M/RCPA and other local and state-wide preservation groups as partners and resources in protecting our state's cultural heritage.

Need to Contact Us?

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E-mail: mrcpanewsletter@gmail.com
Web site: www.preservemanhattan.org

Facebook: Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance, or visit our web site and click the Facebook "Like" button at the bottom of the home page

The Board of Directors meets the second Thursday of every month, 7:00 p.m., at the depot, and members are always welcome to attend board meetings. The next Board of Directors' meeting will be June 14th, 7:00 p.m., at the depot.



Pictured above left to right are the Community House, a dry-stack limestone wall, and Holtz Hall. Below left is Sunset Cemetery.

Manhattan's & Riley County's Hidden Gems

May was National Preservation Month, and Mayor Loren Pepper recognized the occasion with a proclamation during the May 15th City Commission meeting. National Preservation Month was co-sponsored by the M/RCPA, Manhattan's Historic Resources Board, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The theme for 2012 was "Discover America's Hidden Gems." M/RCPA President Kathy Dzewaltowski and Vice President Sara Fisher accepted the proclamation and urged citizens to visit the M/RCPA's web site where they can submit suggestions for Manhattan's and Riley County's "hidden gems." "Hidden" could mean tucked away and not readily visible, like the Goodnow Park Cabin, or it could mean unnoticed,

such as the Community House that people pass every day but may not know its history.

Suggestions submitted thus far include the Community House, the Goodnow Park Cabin, Rocky Ford School, Sunset Cemetery, the Landmark Water Tower, prehistoric archaeological sites, old farmhouses in the county, stone fences and walls, Works Progress Administration projects (see pg. 3), and Holtz Hall on the KSU campus.

The Community House and Rocky Ford School were both featured in the February 2012 newsletter, and the Goodnow Park Cabin was featured in the June 2011 and December 2011 newsletters.

Sunset Cemetery may seem like an unusual choice for a hidden gem. During the M/RCPA's annual meeting in September, we learned from guest speaker Dr. Judith K. Major that one can see the design influences of American landscape architect Andrew Jackson Downing in the cemetery. Downing was an advocate for establishing public parks to connect with nature, and Sunset Cemetery certainly has a park-like quality.

Holtz Hall on the KSU campus was built in 1876-77 to serve as laboratory space. Following

a devastating fire in 1900 that left only the limestone shell, the building was remodeled to serve as the women's gymnasium, and currently houses the Career Planning and Placement Center (Kansas).

When our pioneer ancestors arrived in the Flint Hills region, they found few trees to supply wood for construction. Using their creativity and resourcefulness, early settlers turned to readily available limestone to construct homes, walls, and fence posts, and many of those stone constructions still exist in both rural and urban settings.

At the Historic Summit in March, Dr. Lauren Ritterbush, archaeologist, shared with participants information about the wealth of prehistoric archaeological sites in Riley County, which need to stay hidden to protect them from potential artifact poachers.

If you would like to submit a suggestion for a hidden gem, visit M/RCPA's web site and click on the "Hidden Gems" button on the home page, or write to us via regular mail.

Kansas State University. University Archives & Manuscripts: History of Holtz Hall. [Online] <http://www.lib.k-state.edu/depts/spec/exhibits/holtz-hall.html> (accessed May 26, 2012).



Manhattan's WPA Projects

As mentioned on pg. 2, one of the "hidden gems" submitted was Works Progress Administration (WPA) projects in the Manhattan area (also known as the Works Project Administration).

Begun in 1935, the WPA was one of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal programs designed in part to provide jobs during the Great Depression. Workers employed by the WPA constructed public buildings, such as schools, and worked on infrastructure projects, like roads and bridges. The arts were also included in the WPA, involving drama, media, and literacy projects. WPA projects were designed to be completed in 1-2 years, to cost less than \$55,000, and employ both skilled and unskilled labor (Davis).

One person per family was permitted to be employed by the WPA, which typically meant the male head of the household. Women who were single, widowed, or whose husbands were unable to work due to a disability or other reason, did also work for the WPA.

At the same time that the Great Depression was affecting employment rates in the 1930s,

Kansas was also experiencing the Dust Bowl years of extreme drought and dust storms. The drought and dust storms caused crop failure and forced families to leave their farms to find work (Davis). The double forces of the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl created extreme hardship in the Plains states. As a result, this area of the country received greater federal assistance to combat the negative effects of the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression, which included a greater number of WPA projects than other areas of the country received (Davis).

The Manhattan area was the recipient of a large variety of WPA projects, as the result of the efforts of Evan Griffith and Fay Seaton.

Evan Griffith was the state re-employment director, Kansas director of public works, and was a director in the Kansas highway department (Davis). Fay Seaton, who in addition to owning *The Manhattan Mercury*, was the chairman of the State Social Welfare Board (Davis). Both Griffith and Seaton were positioned to make certain that the Manhattan area received its share of WPA projects.

Some of the WPA

projects involved infrastructure, such as road work and sewer repair, and aren't always visible today. One extensive road project was the Bluemont Hill Scenic Drive, which took 20,000 hours to complete (Davis).

Another example of a WPA project in Manhattan is Sunset Zoo. The zoo's land had originally intended to be used to expand Sunset Cemetery, but the ground proved to be too rocky for cemetery purposes. The area was then designated to become a zoo, and Dr. E. J. Frick, the zoo's founder, established his first animal exhibit in 1933 (Shoemaker). The first exhibit featured two mules, which had worked on a government-funded project for the City of Manhattan and had been abandoned. The City of Manhattan secured additional funding and labor from the WPA to develop the zoo and to construct exhibit space for animals. The zoo's older limestone exhibits are the portions that were originally built as a WPA project (Shoemaker).

Another New Deal program that operated as part of the WPA was the National Youth Administration, which employed older teens and
(continued on pg. 4)



At left is the cover of Insects in Kansas, and at right is Willard Hall.

(continued from pg. 3)

young adults to work on projects. The Youth Cabin, also known as the Boy Scout House, and known today as the Goodnow Park Cabin was a National Youth Administration project. The cabin was constructed 1937-38 and employed 115 youths (Davis). The two-story limestone structure is located in Goodnow Park and owned by the City of Manhattan. Set on the hillside, the cabin features stone retaining walls and a terrace area. To access the cabin, one has to hike a trail to reach it. The cabin was used by the Boy Scouts through the 1960s, and then it fell into disrepair during the 1980s. The Goodnow Park Cabin Coalition took over the maintenance and upkeep of the cabin in 1991 with a 20-year lease agreement with the city. The cabin is now a picturesque site for passive recreation.

Griffith Field (now known as Griffith Park) was a WPA project that employed 46 workers and took four months to construct (Davis). Completed in 1936, the field, which is surrounded by an eight-foot stone wall, was considered a modern, state-of-the-art sports stadium. Griffith Field is, of course, named for Evan Griffith.

Other WPA projects in the Manhattan area include the airport hanger, the old City Pool and Douglass Pool, which have both been razed, and two classrooms were



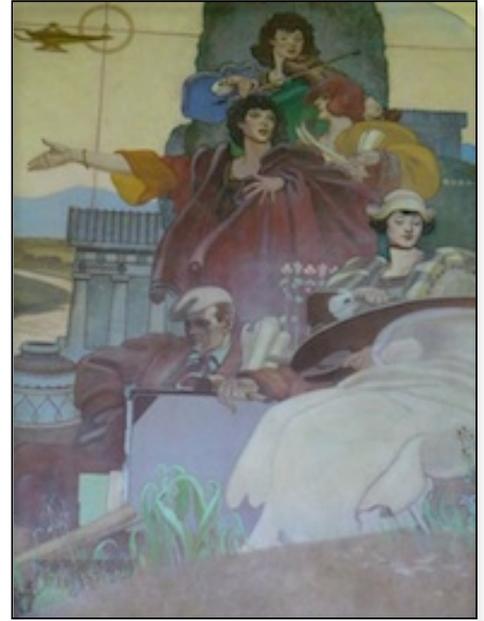
Goodnow Park Cabin

added onto Douglass School (Davis).

Kansas State University (KSU) was also the beneficiary of WPA projects. Willard Hall, which housed the chemistry department, was constructed during 1937-39 and used a combination of state funds and \$272,000 of WPA funds to finance the project (End). The building features brass light fixtures, vaulted ceilings, alchemical symbols inlaid in the entryway floor, and elaborate details on the exterior that symbolize chemistry's contributions to industry, agriculture, and society. Willard Hall is currently used by the art department (End).

WPA projects weren't limited to constructing buildings and infrastructure, but projects also included the arts. Another WPA project on the KSU campus is the four murals painted on the walls of the Great Room in the Historic Farrell Library section of Hale Library. The murals were painted by regional artist David Hicks Overmyer in 1934 (Bohn). The four murals depict KSU's four colleges that existed at the time: agriculture, mechanics (engineering and industry), arts, and home economics. The murals had lost their luster over the years due to age and water damage. The Friends of the K-State Libraries financed restoration work of the murals, which was completed in 2011 (Bohn).

An example of a smaller WPA project is the illustrations in the book *Insects in Kansas*. Compiled by KSU's entomology department, 16 artists were employed using WPA funds during 1940-41 to draw 128 illustrations of the insects described in the text (Smith). It isn't hard to imagine that there may be other similar smaller WPA funded projects in the Manhattan area that have



The mural depicting the arts

become obscured by the passage of time.

In 1943, the WPA program ended. By then, the U. S. had entered World War II, and American workers were able to find jobs supporting the war effort. The program may have ended, but the buildings and art created during those eight years continue on.

Bohn, Beth and Emily Vietti. "From the Great Depression to a Great Restoration: Project Adds New Life to Historic Overmyer Murals." June 2, 2011. Kansas State University. Web. May 24, 2012. <<http://www.kstate.edu/media/newsreleases/jun11/murals60211.html>>

"The End of an Era: Chemistry to Leave Willard Hall!" *KSU Chemist* Summer 2008: 2. Web. May 24, 2012. <<http://www.k-state.edu/chem/downloads/Newsletter%202008%20Volume%204.pdf>>

Davis, Kerry and Sally F. Schwenk. Historic Preservation Services, LLC. *Manhattan, Kansas Survey: Historic Contexts*. Manhattan, KS 2004. Web. May 24, 2012. <<http://www.cityofmhk.com/DocumentView.aspx?DID=1076>>

Shoemaker, Scott. "E. J. Frick: The Legend Behind Sunset Zoo." *Sunset Zoo Insider* July 2008: 4. Web. May 24, 2012. <<http://www.ci.manhattan.ks.us/archives/71/july%2008%20insider.pdf>>

Smith, Roger C. et al. *Insects in Kansas*. Topeka, KS: Kansas State Printing Plant, 1943.

Added to Nat'l Register

Bethel A.M.E. Church, the Second (Pilgrim) Baptist Church, and Rocky Ford School were all recently placed on the Register of Historic Kansas Places. Their nominations were forwarded for consideration for the National Register of Historic Places, and all three were approved for listing on the National Register.



Bethel
A.M.E.
Church

Both churches were nominated under the "African American Resources of Manhattan, Kansas" multiple property listing, specifically for the *African American Community Institutions* property type.

Rocky Ford School was nominated as part of the "Historic Public Schools of Kansas" multiple



Second
(Pilgrim)
Baptist
Church

property nomination for its educational and architectural significance.



Rocky Ford
School,
courtesy of
the Riley
County
Historical
Society

Depot Connection Project Update

One of the features included in the South Redevelopment project has been the creation of a pedestrian trail that will connect the Discovery Center with the Union Pacific Depot and connect to the Linear Trail. Because the depot is sited on the far side of the K-177 on-ramp, an underpass or tunnel has been planned to provide safe passage for pedestrians and bicyclists.

During the May 1st City Commission meeting, commissioners awarded the construction contract for the underpass to R. M. Baril Construction of Manhattan, and the project is already underway. The on-ramp to K-177 has been closed, and workers have cut through the pavement and dug the trench that will become the underpass.

The underpass will essentially be a reinforced concrete box and will also include a limestone veneer, lighting, wall treatments that will allow for future display options, and landscaping.

The trail connection with the underpass between the Discovery Center and the depot will provide easier access for groups using the Discovery Center, the conference center, or the hotels to utilize the depot for smaller, break-out sessions. The connection will also allow larger groups using the depot or attending activities in the South Redevelopment to access additional parking.

The underpass project is being financed with STAR bonds.



The photo above shows the beginnings of the trench that will become the underpass.

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M/RCPA Membership Roster 2011-12

\$35 Historic Level

Mary Elizabeth & Tom Atwood, Diana Chapel, Wayne M. Charney, D. Cheryl Collins, Kenneth & Margaret Conrow, Michael & Janet Danenberg, Nancy & Clark Danner, Glee Eggers, Rev. H. Wayne & Beverly A. Fink, Sara Fisher, Mary Ann Fleming, Ron Fowles Construction, Linda Glasgow, Charles S. & Charlotte B. Herr, Angie Hickel, Robin D. S. Higham, Jean Bigbee Hill, Corina Hugo, Jean Hulbert, Camille & Phillip Korenek, Marianne Korten, Ann Kosch, Robert D. Linder, Judith K. Major, Marilyn McCord, Robert & Elaine Mohr, Fred Newton, Janet & Tony Nichols, Ed & Kay Olson, Kevin G. W. Olson, Bill Pallett, Jerry & Martha Powell, Virginia Quiring, Dr. M. C. Reay, Lauren Ritterbush, Rachelle Routh/The Strong House, Marcia Rozell, Sharlin Sargent, Todd & Geri Simon, Connie Sink, Kimberly & Richard Smith, Maurice & Carolee Stark, Gary Stowe (Stowe Property LLC), Joan & John Strickler, Walter Remodeling Inc., Weis Realty Executives, Patricia & Ray Weisenburger, Alvin & Edna Williams, Judith M. Willingham.

\$100 Preservation Level

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\$250 Landmark Level

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Honorary Lifetime Members

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