



MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

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A Message From Our President

Shortly after my father died, my mother became enraptured with researching our genealogy. She would call with news about what she learned, documents she found, and people she had spoken to. I was reportedly less enthusiastic, even uninterested. To be fair, I was in graduate school, teaching, and pregnant with my second child. Today, my mother continues her research, and she has inspired me to be active with her in the Daughters of the American Revolution. Together we pursue membership in other heritage societies. I tell this story because I believe that developing an interest in one's personal family history is much like developing an interest in one's local structural history.

Earlier this month the M/RCPA, the Historic Resources Board, and the Riley County Historical Society and Museum co-hosted the bi-annual Historic Summit. This year's theme was the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act. The keynote speaker was K. Vance Kelly, Chair of the Advisors for the National Trust. Vance spoke about the merits of the Preservation

Act and its role in past and future preservation efforts. At the center of his talk was the Docking Building in Topeka, after which my mother said to me, "He made the building sound so alive, like a living thing with a *soul*. I feel like I know the place."

As I have said here before, preservation is and *must be a* community effort. It requires collective action and community support. We must work together and create coalitions and alliances; we must bring different peoples and perspectives together in the spirit of protecting the past for the sake of the future.

As preservation-minded people, our task is to help others see the merit and value of preservation. Some will be motivated by economic incentives – the making or saving of money – others will not. Psychologists know that external incentives (such as money and tax breaks) can be highly motivational, at least for a while, but the more long-lasting motivational incentives are internal. This means we must *do more than* talk about money and the finances of preservation. We must help others understand the *internal, intrinsic value* of local structural and cultural resources. We must make it personal for them. Non-preservationists must come to know what Vance helped my mother to know – places have souls, buildings embody spirit. PLACES MATTER. We must help others feel what we feel, the connection between our lives

today and local structures yesterday.

As my mother concluded years ago, I was not overly interested in learning about our heritage. I was distracted with the obligations of the present day. I had no time nor energy to invest in the past. The people my mother wanted me to care about were spatially and temporally distant. I did not feel a connection to them.

My disinterest and disconnection with the past changed with the redevelopment of North Fourth Street. It was at this time that I became involved with the Preservation Alliance, in part, because I realized that the present I was living in (my home, neighborhood, and community) was being threatened. It became clear to me that my neighborhood and home were (and are) part of the historical fabric of the community – just as I am part of the historical fabric of my family.

My mother has nurtured my sense of responsibility and obligation to my children's children to learn about my heritage; she has inspired me to see my connections with the past. As preservationists we must do the same for others. We must nurture their connection with the past and inspire a sense of responsibility to protect the structures and places of our community's past.

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Trailers, Barracks, & “Splinterville”

Coping with a Post-World War II Housing Crisis

In 1944, President Franklin Roosevelt signed into law the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act, commonly known as the “G.I. Bill,” which provided a range of benefits to World War II veterans. One of the benefits was tuition and living expenses for veterans to attend college or vocational school. Many veterans took advantage of the opportunity to attend college, which resulted in a dramatic increase in enrollment at Kansas State College (KSC), as Kansas State University was known at the time, and a housing crunch for the influx of new students.

Beginning as early as the spring of 1946, hundreds of veterans enrolled in classes. Many were new to college life, while others were returning to campus after having had their educations interrupted by the war. The projected enrollment for KSC for the fall of 1946 was 5,000, but the actual number turned out to be 6,500 students, and in later years swelled to 7,400.

KSC also hired more faculty to deal with the increased enroll-

ment. The new students and faculty left KSC and Manhattan scrambling to find housing for everyone. Some new students were able to rent apartments off campus, with every available spare room, basement, and attic filling up. One thousand beds were made available to residents to encourage them to take students as lodgers (*Royal Purple*, 1950). Many of the veteran students had families, and if they couldn’t find housing to accommodate the entire family, the wives and children stayed behind with family members (*Royal Purple*, 1947).

In December 1945, KSC contracted with the Federal Public Housing Administration to receive approximately 100 trailers to house the veterans and their families. The trailers came from Great Bend, Dodge City, Salina, and Pratt and were placed on campus in an area west of Gen. Richard B. Myers Hall (*Royal Purple*, 1950).

The trailers were arranged in circular courts of 5-10 trailers, and the trailer town was named “Campus Courts.” The students living in the trailer community believed in being neighborly, and they created their own governing council and elected a mayor (*Royal Purple*, 1946). The



Above, Hilltop Courts as shown in the 1950 *Royal Purple*. In the background is the roofline of Ahearn Fieldhouse under construction.

women in the trailer community developed a system for sharing housekeeping duties to help the wives who were also taking college classes or had a job (*Royal Purple*, 1950).

Mrs. M. S. Bishop, a journalism student, was interviewed by *The Collegian* in 1947 and asked to describe life in a Campus Courts trailer. Having lived previously in a one-room apartment with her husband, Mrs. Bishop felt her trailer was large in comparison. The trailer was lined with fir paneling and outfitted with a three-burner stove and oven, a kerosene stove for heat, an ice box, a 15-gal. tank for fresh water, and a sink that drained into a bucket. Hot water was hauled from the laundry room. Each family had a scheduled laundry time for using the shared washing machines. Mrs. Bishop said, “Walking to the shower at night, I enjoy the friendly lights of the surrounding trailers. Anyway, I like it” (“Well, . . .”). A single-unit (*continued on pg. 3*)

Below, the Splinterville barracks near Aggieville, as shown in the 1948 *Royal Purple*.



(continued from pg. 2)

trailer rented for \$18/month, and an expansible trailer was \$24/month (“Legislature”).

These first trailers were a start, but they didn’t put much of a dent in the need for student housing. KSC planned to build dormitories when materials became available, but in the meanwhile, additional temporary housing continued to expand. For the spring semester of 1946, the west side of Memorial Stadium was converted to housing for single men, and later, the east side of the stadium became housing for single women (*Royal Purple*, 1948).

Surplus Army barracks were used to create apartments for students with families. Hilltop Courts, located north of Ahearn Fieldhouse, provided on-campus housing. Elliot Courts was off campus and located west of Hilltop Courts and west of Denison Avenue. Farther away from campus, barracks were set up in Goodnow Park (*Royal Purple*, 1950).

Some veteran students owned their own trailers and wanted a location near campus where they could park them. On the west side of Elliot Courts on land that had recently been farmland and pasture, West Campus Courts was set aside for students to set up their own trailers for housing (*Royal Purple*, 1950).

Barracks for single men were constructed near Aggieville, with students helping to build them. The barracks were across the street from Aggieville and were approximately where the Beach Museum’s parking lot is today. Officially named Moro Courts, the barracks were quickly nicknamed “Splinterville” (*Royal Purple*, 1947). The 1950 *Royal Purple* noted that a casual visitor to

Manhattan might have guessed that the morale was low for students living under the conditions of the Splinterville barracks. Instead, low morale was far from the case, and the students living in Splinterville found the barracks to be superior to any they had recently occupied while in military service.

In general, students seemed to be glad to have housing, even if the conditions weren’t ideal. One family with five children living in a two-bedroom apartment in Hilltop Courts was simply happy that the father no longer had to commute to campus from Eskridge (“Frugal”).

KSC also used barracks for classrooms, office space, and to create an addition to the student hospital. Some of the barracks came from Burlington and were described as being “shipped erect in 60-foot sections” (“Progress”). Army surplus was also the source of the student union building. While plans were in the works to construct a permanent student union, KSC acquired a recreation building from Herington Army Air Base to serve as a temporary student union. The Army building was dismantled and then re-established on campus (“Surplus”).

As a child, Manhattan resident Stormy Kennedy lived in Hilltop Courts with her family, her father having served with the U.S. Navy in World War II. Stormy says there were many children living in the temporary housing, providing many playmates to spend time with. Families walked to the grocery store on the corner of



Top, a woman in her Goodnow Courts kitchen, from the 1952 *Royal Purple*. Bottom, children play in West Campus Courts, from the 1950 *Royal Purple*.

Denison and Claflin, and Manhattan had a good bus service for families without cars. She remembers watching the construction of Ahearn Fieldhouse, with her home at Hilltop Courts providing a front-row seat to the construction. For July 4th, Stormy says families pooled their money to purchase fireworks and then watched the fathers shoot them off. She recalls that the community was close-knit and says her parents remained friends their entire lives with another couple they met while living there.

Almost as quickly as the housing crisis had arrived, it subsided. The first crush of veteran students attending KSC completed their studies and graduated. By 1950, waiting lists for housing had decreased, although the temporary housing continued to be full (*Royal Purple* (continued on pg. 4)

Round House Update

At its May 23rd meeting, the Historic Resources Board approved forwarding a recommendation to the City Commission to nominate the Round House for historic registry listing. A nomination for the Round House, which was historically known as Floral Hall, was prepared in 1977, but it needed additional documentation, and so it didn't advance. Since then, additional information has been found, and it will be added to the nomination.

The next step will be to ask the Parks and Rec. Advisory Board to support the nomination during its June 6th meeting.



A Whirlwind Experience

Revisiting the Manhattan Tornadoes of 1966 and 2008
 Sunday, June 5, 7:00 p.m.
 Peace Memorial Auditorium
 1101 Poyntz Ave.
 A Free Family Event

The program's guest speaker will be Mary Knapp, Assistant State Climatologist. A vortex machine will be on hand for kids to explore the power of wind.

Donations will be accepted for the restoration of the stage and foyer of Peace Memorial Auditorium. Donations may also be sent to the Friends of Peace Memorial Auditorium, P. O. Box 265, Manhattan, KS 66505.

(continued from pg. 3) *Purple*, 1950). After only five years of use, the Splinterville barracks were torn down in 1951 due to lack of need. Campus Courts was no longer in existence by 1952, and the trailers had all been sold (*Royal Purple*, 1952).

KSC's construction of permanent housing reduced the need for the temporary housing. Putnam and Boyd Halls were built in the early 1950s to provide housing for women, and additional dorms for women were built in the 1960s. Jardine Terrace, the first permanent housing for married students, was dedicated in 1957 (*Royal Purple*, 1958). Goodnow Hall opened in 1960, and Marlatt Hall followed soon after. Several fraternities and sororities made plans to build larger chapter houses or built additions onto their existing houses.

Seventy years after the first wave of post-war students hit Manhattan, little remains of the temporary housing that was created. The apartment buildings located at 806 N. Sunset Ave. and 1225 Bertrand Street appear to be remnants of the barracks years, and there may be others tucked in

here and there, serving as reminders of Manhattan's post-war housing crisis.

"Frugal Veteran Finds Way to Balance Budget." The Kansas State Collegian. 14 March 1947.

"Legislature Impressed by Emergency Preparations." The Kansas State Collegian. 21 February 1947.

"Progress Report by Gingrich Indicates New Drawing Labs will be Completed Soon." The Kansas State Collegian. 28 March 1947.

The Royal Purple. Ed. Marcia Boyd. Manhattan, KS: Kansas State College, 1958. Web 16 May 2016.

The Royal Purple. Ed. Dorothy Cochran. Manhattan, KS: Kansas State College, 1946. Web 16 May 2016.

The Royal Purple. Ed. Virginia Gingrich. Manhattan, KS: Kansas State College, 1948. Web 16 May 2016.

The Royal Purple. Ed. Tess Montgomery. Manhattan, KS: Kansas State College, 1947. Web 16 May 2016.

The Royal Purple. Ed. Ann Thackrey. Manhattan, KS: Kansas State College, 1950. Web 16 May 2016.

The Royal Purple. Ed. Dave Weigel. Manhattan, KS: Kansas State College, 1952. Web 16 May 2016.

"Surplus Barracks is New Student Union." The Kansas State Collegian. 27 May 1947.

"Well, It's a Home Anyway." The Kansas State Collegian. 18 February 1947.

Aggieville Community Vision

The City of Manhattan is in the early stages of a year-long process to develop a long-term vision for the future development of Aggieville. The goal is to create a comprehensive and cohesive planning document that will guide development and meet community needs.

Visit the city's web site to learn the latest information and to sign up for email notices of meetings and input opportunities:

<http://cityofmhk.com/2714/Aggieville-Community-Vision>.

Over 125 years old, Aggieville has long been a part of Manhattan's history. By participating in input opportunities and sharing information about Aggieville's significance to our community, you can help to shape a planning document that will take into account and respect the history of the district.

Riley Co.'s Registered Properties

The National Historic Preservation Act was signed into law in 1966, and the M/RCPA will be featuring locally registered properties in the newsletter in 2016 in honor of the 50th anniversary.

Community House

120 N. 4th Street, built 1917

National Register, 2006

The Community House was built during World War I as a recreation center for servicemen. Dances and musical performances provided entertainment for servicemen, and the Community House also provided them with a place where they could relax and sleep. During World War II, the building was used again as a U.S.O. Today, the building is owned by the City of Manhattan, and the Parks and Rec. Department uses it for activities.

Hulse-Daughters House

617 Colorado Street, built 1892

National Register, 2007

The house is a shingle style and was designed by Herman McCure Hadley. The house is significant because of its having been built during Kansas' progressive era and because it's almost pure in architectural style. The house features a stone first floor, and a lack of exterior ornamentation. David Hulse was a furniture retailer and businessman. Curtis Daughters was an attorney, who was active in the Republican Party and served on the Kansas Board of Regents.

Fitz House

1014 Houston Street, built 1914

National Register, 2005

The house was designed by prominent local architect Henry Winter for Leslie Fitz, who was a professor of milling industry at KSAC. The house's exterior features both the Tudor Revival and Arts and Crafts architectural styles. Fitz also worked for the



Community House

U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, and his research focused on small grains.

Robert Ulrich House

121 N. 8th Street, built 1869

National Register, 1978

The Ulrich House is significant to Manhattan because of its association with Robert Ulrich, an early resident whose successful brick manufacturing and construction business satisfied desires of residents to build fine and substantial brick buildings. Brick buildings were viewed as valuable contributions to the town's image, and Ulrich's bricks were considered first class. The house is one of the few remaining in Manhattan built during this time period.



Hulse-Daughters House



Fitz House

KSAC Radio Towers

KSU campus, built 1924

National Register, 1983

The KSAC Radio Towers are an excellent example of early radio towers built in the U.S. In 1924, they represented the finest radio technology. They are the only remaining towers of their type in Kansas, and one of only a few remaining in the U.S.



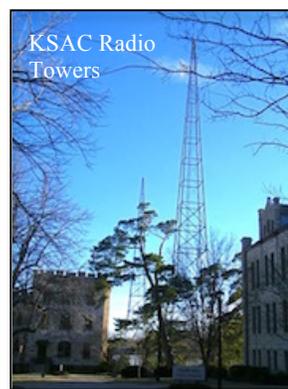
Robert Ulrich House

Seven Dolores Catholic Church

731 Pierre Street, built 1920

National Register, 1995

Under the guidance of Father Arthur Luckey, the Seven Dolores Parish grew from 25 families to over 350 members by the end of World War I, and the congregation had outgrown its building and needed a new one. Seven Dolores' architectural style is Romanesque Revival, which became popular during the second half of the 19th century and was frequently used in the design of churches. Completed in 1920, the church maintains a high degree of interior and exterior architectural integrity and is known for its two symmetrical towers that frame the gable.



KSAC Radio Towers



Seven Dolores Catholic Church

M/RCPA P.O. Box 1893 MANHATTAN, KS 66505-1893
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2015-16 M/RCPA Membership Roster

\$35 Historic Level

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