
Manhattan/Riley County PRESERVATION ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2005

FROM THE PRESIDENT—DIXIE WEST

An Arts and Crafts cottage located at 1014 Houston is now on the National Register for Historic Places. I am particularly pleased about this because I happen to live there. Ron, my spouse, and I moved into the house nearly 18 years ago, and it has been a journey that many readers of this newsletter will be able to identify with. In retracing the steps to National Register status, I hope that others living in historic houses will also be encouraged to submit their properties for the register.

Eighteen years ago Ron and I had outgrown our small house (i.e. we were getting too much stuff!) on Leavenworth, and we were looking for a place to expand. While walking the cocker spaniels, Ron spotted an old, dilapidated house for sale on Houston Street. The structure, on the market for over a year, was then a rental unit, broken into 3 apartments, and needed LOTS of work. I wasn't so sure about taking on the task of fixing up a house with fourteen rooms, but Ron, enamored to the hilt with the place ("Think of the possibilities, Dixie"), told me that it would be fun!!!! Over the next fifteen years, we patched holes in the roof much to the dismay of the squirrels that had taken up squatting rights, cleared the front, brick sidewalk of overgrown lawn (think "weeds") and landscaped, removed an exterior metal staircase from the west wall and painted the shell, peeled decades of wallpaper from every room (It's amazing what some people will hang on their walls),

tore out false ceilings originally installed to hide water damage, and generally overhauled the place to make it less of an embarrassment to us and the surrounding neighborhood.

When we first moved into the house in the '80s, no one thought much about preservation. We knew that Manhattan was historic, but we thought we were just another couple fixing up an old house. Over the years, the awareness of preservation grew in the community, and we wanted to be part of it. We wondered if our old house could possibly be significant in some way. The journey toward the Historic nomination

began. We went through the following steps to begin researching our house, and perhaps readers will find these useful.

Step 1: Search for your abstract—a compilation of documents which gives information about the names of the people and the legal transactions that are associated with your property. The title office

of Charlson & Wilson Bonded Abstracters is located at 111 North Fourth Street and the phone number is 565-4800. In the absence of an abstract, visit the Register of Deeds at 110 Court-house Plaza and ask for the names and dates of ownership of the people who have owned your property. The phone number there is 537-6340.

Step 2: Schedule an appointment with Linda Glasgow, the Archivist/Librarian at the Riley County Historical Museum, 2309 Claflin Road in Manhattan. Appointments may be obtained by

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calling 785-565-6490 or by emailing lglasgow@rileycountyks.gov. The collection of the Riley County Historical Society includes tax rolls from the late 1850s to 1920. Tax rolls beyond 1920 are located at the Riley County Treasurer's office, 110 Courthouse Plaza, 537-6321. Tax rolls are useful in identifying when a property's value significantly increased—a good hint that a building was added to the lot. Also located at the Museum are a collection of directories and census indexes which can be helpful in the attempt to locate information about the people associated with a property. Information gathered in the Manhattan Historical Survey of properties located within the original plat of Manhattan during the early 1980s is also available at the RCHM library. Additional information that might be useful includes maps, text files on Manhattan and Riley County topics, special editions of local newspapers, books on Manhattan and Riley County history, family files, obituaries, cemetery records, yearbooks, and photo files. Anyone having trouble getting started or who has gotten stuck with their research should feel free to call Linda at the Museum for research suggestions.

Step 3: The Manhattan Public Library has local newspapers available on microfilm. Once the likely year of construction is known, it is possible to find a mention of the building project in the newspapers of the time. The MPL also offers Sanborn Fire Insurance maps online through their website. The newspapers on microfilm and Sanborn maps on microfilm are also available at Hale Library on the Kansas State University campus. Sanborn maps of Manhattan, available for various years (starting in 1885 and ending in 1947) show the footprints of structures as they sat on the lots along with information about building materials.

Step 4: Additional family information is available at the Riley County Genealogical Society, 2005 Claflin Road, 565-6495; KSU Special Collections, Hale Library, 532-7456; and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Family History Center, 2812 Marlatt Avenue, 539-5445.

Step 5: Once you have gathered all your information, you can approach the Kansas State

Historical Society's Preservation Office (785-272-8681 ext. 240) to put your house on the Register of Historic Kansas Places or, additionally, on the National Register of Historic Places. If you have done your homework, the applications are fairly straightforward and the staffers at the KSHS are willing to lead you through it.

In summary, this is what we discovered about 1014 Houston, known as the Fitz House. It was built in 1914 by and for Professor Leslie Arthur Fitz. The architect was probably Henry B. Winter. The property is considered significant for its association with Professor Fitz who lived in the house until 1922. During this period Fitz was Professor of Milling Industry at Kansas State Agricultural College (KSAC—now Kansas State University) and made important contributions in the field of grain science and milling. The house is also noteworthy as a well-preserved example of a Craftsman bungalow that displays features of both the Tudor Revival and the Arts and Crafts styles. The Arts and Crafts style is most clearly expressed in the interior. Eighteen years ago the house was an abominable wreck. Today it is on the Register. I've learned that, with perseverance, anything is possible.

Dixie West

(Compiled with the invaluable assistance of Linda Glasgow and Cheryl Collins)



**INTERESTED IN HISTORIC FARM EQUIPMENT?
VISIT BALA, KANSAS, ON APRIL 24, 2005**

The Bala Pioneer Heritage Society is hosting an exhibition of horse drawn farm equipment starting at 2:00 p.m. on April 24th. At 3:00 p.m. Kevin Larson will give a program about how early day farms were family oriented and how farm equipment changed the world. It won't be hard to find the displays once you reach town. Also Bala's remarkable stone railroad bridge is a not-to-be-missed feature of the area. Bring a camera! Additional information is available through Phil Parry at 785-485-2463 or Rich Williams at 785-762-3325.

LISTING A PROPERTY

A step-by-step guide to listing a property on the National Register of Historic Places or the Register of Historic Kansas Places.

1. File a Preliminary Site Information Questionnaire (PSIQ)

This is a one-page, front and back form that the staff uses to evaluate whether properties meet the requirements for register listing. A property sponsor should file this form, along with photographs of the property, with the Cultural Resources Division.

2. Receive Eligibility Letter

Within four weeks of submitting the PSIQ, the property sponsor will receive a letter from staff indicating whether the property is eligible for either the state or national registers. If the property is eligible, the letter will include a descriptive process of how to proceed with the nomination.

3. Submit a draft National Register nomination

A National Register nomination consists of two main parts, a narrative architectural description of the nominated property, and a statement of significance. The statement of significance is based upon the National Register criteria the property meets. The property sponsor or consultant is responsible for writing the draft nomination.

4. Receive staff review

The staff will review and comment on the nomination draft within sixty days. Revisions may continue until the document is ready to be scheduled for consideration by the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review.

5. Present to the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review

Once the nomination is ready, the nomination will be considered by the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review. This board is appointed by the Governor to make recommendations on the nomination of properties to the State and National Registers. Nominations are presented to the board by Cultural Resources Division staff or consultants. Nomination sponsors are encouraged to attend this public meeting.

6. Board lists property on the State Register

If approved by the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review and the State Historic Preservation Officer, the property will be listed on the State Register following the meeting.

7. National Park Service lists property on the National Register

If the property is being nominated for listing on the National Register, the nomination will be forwarded to the National Park Service for their review. The sponsor will receive a letter from the Kansas State Historical Society informing of the State or National Register listing date about three to five months after the state nomination action.

*Usually the nomination process takes between eight to twelve months.

(The above information has been downloaded from the Kansas State Historical Society website).

INFORMATION NEEDED— PLEASE HELP IF YOU CAN

John Stamey owns **501 Laramie**. He is living there and is researching his house. He also is interested in finding anybody with information or photos of his house. John may be reached at stamejm@cat.com. The owners of **1708 Humboldt** are seeking information about and photos of their house. Please contact **Ann and Michael Dudek** at 537-1057. Also, **Jim and Gail Shroyer**, 537-0665, are searching for information about their house at **612 Osage**.

MANHATTAN/RILEY CONTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

Business Meetings: Second Thursday of each month, 7:30 p.m.

Location: First Congregational Church, Juliette and Poyntz unless noted

President: Dixie West

Vice-President: Michael Mecseri

Secretary: Linda Glasgow

Treasurer: Barbara Poresky

Newsletter Editor: Marolyn Caldwell

The businesses and individuals featured in the Preservation Alliance newsletter have helped us defray our mailing and printing costs by becoming sponsors.

REPORT FROM THE SOUTH MANHATTAN NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP

by Mary Ann Fleming

In my end of South Manhattan, things look good. Two older houses around the corner on Houston are under contract; we don't know our neighbors yet, but the quick sale of these homes—quite different—indicates that older neighborhoods like ours are desirable places to live. Thanks to the TNO, a single-family home will be constructed on a lot where a dilapidated house was demolished, and no more oversized duplexes have been constructed. People are cleaning up, planting, making home improvements; investment in property and neighborhood seem more worthwhile now that zoning and the TNO can help protect our investments.

The demolition of the Douglass Center pool has not occasioned any protest, as far as I know. Mr. DeWeese has written that he plans a neighborhood meeting to solicit ideas for the site. So far we still wait for that to be scheduled. There is concern over plans for City Park; many of us do not want the open space there further diminished by additional development, e.g., an aquatic/rec

complex. The open space provided by the Public Square is used more and more, and not just by Manhattan Catholic Schools.

We'd like to see more attention given to repairs of curbs, sidewalks, alleys, and streets—lots of broken concrete, obscured walks, and potholes are out there. But we hope that passage of the streamlined trash enforcement will alleviate that sore point—thanks, commissioners and code/attorney office people for your work on that.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Dues date from the Annual Meeting in September, but paid mid-year, confer membership status until the next Annual Meeting: \$15/ individual; \$20/family; and \$60/sponsor. Checks should be made out to the Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance, Inc. c/o P.O. Box 1893, Manhattan, Kansas 66505-1893. Questions? Call Linda Glasgow at 785-565-6490. If anyone has contributions for future M/RCPA newsletters, please contact the Editor, Marolyn Caldwell (776-4862 or marolync@flinthills.com).

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!

THE MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE WILL HOST THE PRESERVATION AWARDS CEREMONY AT 7 P.M. ON TUESDAY, MAY 17 AT THE MANHATTAN PUBLIC LIBRARY. MAY IS PRESERVATION MONTH AND THIS CEREMONY RECOGNIZES FOLKS WHO HAVE BEEN BUSY REVITALIZING AND MAINTAINING OLD BUILDINGS IN MANHATTAN, KANSAS.

M/RCPA
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