



MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

April 2012

A Message From Our President Kathy Dzewaltowski

The current session of the Kansas Legislature has been a rollercoaster ride for historic preservation, with good news coming from Topeka one day followed by bad news the next. The historic rehabilitation tax credit program and the environs review process have both been in jeopardy at various points.

The Senate discussed a bill that would have allowed a municipality to adopt an ordinance exempting itself from the review process for projects in the environs of a historic registered property and to develop its own standards. When the Senate's Local Government Committee discussed the bill, the bill was amended to delete all references to the environs review process, effectively eliminating the environs review process altogether. Following further discussion, this particular bill was withdrawn because the committee members needed more time for input and deliberation and felt the bill went too far.

The future of the historic rehabilitation tax credit program continues to be uncertain. The Governor's proposed tax plan to eliminate tax credits, deductions, and exemptions would make the historic rehabilitation tax credit available only to corporations and not available for individual tax filers. Many users of the historic rehabilitation tax credit program are individual tax filers, so the proposed change would have a significant impact on the tax credit program.

During the session, bills have been introduced that support the Governor's plan, and bills have also

been introduced that would leave the historic rehabilitation tax credit program intact. What will ultimately happen with the historic rehabilitation tax credit program is still up in the air.

The M/RCPA did its part by writing to our area legislators, submitting written testimony, and by contributing financially to lobbying efforts. Throughout the legislative session, the M/RCPA has kept its members up-to-date through e-mail messages and the web site. The M/RCPA will continue to use those means to inform our members about developments in the Legislature.

While historic preservation has been struggling in Topeka, on the local front the preservation community received a shocking reminder that the work to educate others about historic preservation is never ending. On pages 2-3, you will find an article about recent work done to the Marlatt Homestead,

which is on the Register of Historic Kansas Places. Most likely, the work was done with good intentions, but the results are devastating to the property due to the use of inappropriate materials and the removal of windows. Good intentions don't go very far when the caretakers of a historic registered property lack the necessary knowledge for maintaining it in an appropriate way. Ignorance of the law is never an excuse, and the same idea applies for the preservation statute and the Secretary of the Interior's standards for historic properties.

Since the work done to the Marlatt Homestead is quite recent, what happens next is still unknown. The M/RCPA plans to investigate the possibility of collaborating with Kansas State University (the property owner) to restore the property.

M/RCPA Grant Program

The M/RCPA awards small grants in the range of \$250 – 2,500 for the purpose of promoting historic preservation in the community and surrounding area, enhancing economic development through historic preservation, and/or educating the community as to the cultural importance of historic preservation. Examples of projects include but are not limited to: hiring a consultant to assist with a national register nomination, materials for the repair/replacement of brick sidewalks, support for a graduate student's research project, matching funds for a grant application, support for a student's internship, etc.

For more information, contact the M/RCPA at mrcpanewsletter@gmail.com.

Marlatt Homestead Project

The Washington and Julia Marlatt Homestead, located at 1600 College Avenue, is owned by Kansas State University (KSU) and used by Grounds personnel. On Sunday March 11th, the president of the M/RCPA happened to drive past the Marlatt Homestead and noticed that inappropriate corrugated metal siding was in the process of being applied to the south dormer on the house. The Marlatt Homestead was listed on the Register of Historic Kansas Places in 2006, which means that work done is required to be reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in accordance with Kansas statute K.S.A. 75-2724. The project had not been reviewed by SHPO, and it appears the work does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's standards for historic properties.

Immediately Monday morning, the M/RCPA contacted KSU President Kirk Schulz and also three administrators in the Division of Facilities to express our organization's concerns about the project at the Marlatt Homestead. The M/RCPA also contacted the SHPO and the Kansas Preservation Alliance.

The SHPO made contact with KSU officials later that same day.

As established by Kansas statute, the State Historic Preservation Office is the state agency with the authority to review and approve projects as well as investigate instances of noncompliance.

The Marlatt Homestead is significant to the history and development of Manhattan as well as KSU. Davies Wilson, the original owner of the farmstead, came to Manhattan on the Hartford in 1855 and was a surveyor with the Cincinnati Land Company (Register). Wilson purchased several lots of land as an investment, including the land on present-day College Avenue. Records indicate there was a stone house on the property in 1856 that Wilson was renting to a young couple. This means that the Marlatts' home is the oldest still standing stone home in all of Riley County. In later years, Wilson's widow donated the money to build the current KSU's

president's home on campus (Register).

Washington Marlatt was drawn to the Manhattan area in 1856 because of his strong opposition to slavery. He was a preacher and was assigned to the Wabaunsee Circuit. He purchased the



Above, the Marlatt Homestead "before" and barn at lower left, photos taken Feb. 22, 2012

property from Wilson for \$1,200 in 1858 (Register). Marlatt was living in a boarding house at the time and continued to do so while renting out the farmhouse and while making improvements to it. Also living in the boarding house was Julia Bailey, and Washington and Julia were married in 1861 (Register).

Washington was part of the group of early settlers, which included Isaac Goodnow and Joseph Denison, who desired to establish a college with the hope that through education, slavery in Kansas would be eliminated. Washington was a trustee of the Bluemont Central College Association and with an attorney, wrote the incorporation charter. Washington also helped to construct the original Bluemont Central College (BCC) building (Register).

Washington and Julia were among the first faculty of BCC, which opened in 1859. Washington taught Greek and Latin and was the principal of the preparatory department, and Julia taught French and drawing (Register).

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Then, along came the Morrill Act, which was enacted by Congress in 1862. The Morrill Act provided each state and territory with 30,000 acres of public land for each senator and representative. The land was to be sold, the money from the sale invested, and the interest from the investments was to be used for the creation and support of a college that would focus on agriculture and mechanical arts.

The board of trustees of BCC, which included Washington Marlatt, offered BCC to the Kansas Legislature for the purpose of making it the state's land-grant institution. The Legislature accepted the offer on Feb. 3, 1863, and BCC became Kansas State Agricultural College (KSAC). KSAC was the first institution to complete all of the requirements of the Morrill Act, making it the nation's first land-grant university (Register). Thus, Washington was directly involved with establishing BCC and of making it KSAC, which of course, became Kansas State University.

By 1863 when KSAC was founded, the Marlatts were settled into their home. By 1869, they had five children living in the modest home. In 1877, the Marlatts added on to the home to the north to accommodate their growing family.

In 1875, KSAC moved from its location near present-day College Avenue and Claflin, to the University's current location, which was closer to town. The original stone Bluemont College building was torn down in 1883, and Washington purchased the roof timbers and much of the stone to construct a barn. Numbering on the barn's roof timbers is still visible, which was done to ensure the timbers were reassembled in the same sequence in which they had been disassembled. The barn's door

lintels and sills were also from the original college building. The arched west entrance to the barn featured carved stone blocks from the original college building that spelled "Bluemont College" (Register). In the 1920s, the "Bluemont College" stones were removed from the barn and used in Farrell Library, and today, the stones are featured in an arch above the fireplace in the Alumni Center.

In addition to teaching and preaching, Washington enjoyed experimental farming and writing about his experiments and observations. He was clearly a successful farmer because the 1870 Census shows his owning property valued at \$11,200, which would have been a great deal of money at the time (Register).

Washington and Julia continued to live on the farm until their deaths in 1909 and 1911, respectively. Their son Frederick had begun living with them on the farm in 1905 and took over ownership of the property after their deaths. Frederick married in 1913 and hired local architect Henry Winter to remodel the house to suit his new wife. Frederick and his new family lived on the farm until 1918 when KSAC acquired the

property. Frederick's daughter Abby said the Marlatts were forced off the property through the use of eminent domain (Register).

After KSAC acquired the property, the house continued to be used as a residence through the 1960s by College of Agriculture students who lived in the house while caring for the college's livestock. The dormer was added in the 1950s to house more students. The barn also continued to be used as a barn and housed farm equipment and animals (Register). As mentioned, the buildings are currently used by KSU Grounds.

The M/RCPA has since learned that several windows on the dormer along with their sills were removed when the siding was added, which means the siding can't simply be removed. While this is an unfortunate turn of events for the Marlatt property, perhaps the situation will provide an opportunity for the preservation community to partner with the University in working to rehabilitate the property. Stay tuned!

Register of Historic Kansas Places,
Washington & Julia Marlatt Homestead,
Manhattan, Riley County, Kansas.

Pictured at right is the Marlatts' home with the application of the metal siding in progress, photo taken March 11, 2012.



KSU's Historic Conservatory

One of the most beautiful spots on the Kansas State University (KSU) campus is the KSU Gardens, located on Denison Avenue. The KSU Gardens are a favorite location for formal portraits to be taken and are well known and much admired in the community. Within the gardens, the historic Victorian conservatory is one of the focal points, and its graceful lines stand in unique contrast to the neighboring utilitarian modern greenhouses.

The conservatory was erected in 1908 near Dickens Hall, which was the horticulture building, and approximately where Bluemont Hall is located today (O'Brien). At the time that the conservatory was built, the University had desired for many years to acquire a greenhouse, which would allow students to study plant species that would not survive in Kansas's climate without the temperature-regulated conservatory. An example of an exotic plant that thrives in the conservatory is the dwarf banana plant, which was acquired at the time that the conservatory was constructed. The current banana plant is a descendant of the original one that came to KSU over 100 years ago (Kansas).

In 1978, the conservatory was

moved to its current location on Denison Avenue to allow for the construction of Bluemont Hall on the KSU campus. The metal framing and glass panels were established on a new foundation of native limestone (Kansas). The relocation of the conservatory was the first step in reestablishing the KSU Gardens in its new and current location.

After over 100 years of use, the conservatory is in need of renovation, which has led to a discussion of whether the historic conservatory should be renovated or demolished. The metal framing is in good condition, but many of the glass panes need to be replaced, the components made of cypress wood have deteriorated, and it needs a new heating and cooling system. Cost estimates for renovation exceed \$250,000. In recent months, asbestos was discovered in the glazing, and the abatement cost is estimated to be \$160,000. There is not an identified funding source for

Below left is KSU historic conservatory. The photos at right show the conservatory's signs of wear.

the asbestos abatement.

KSU's historic conservatory is the oldest of its kind in Kansas and possibly in the Midwest. The conservatory has been an invaluable educational tool for KSU's students and the community for over a century. The conservatory's future is uncertain, and the M/RCPA hopes that efforts will be made to save this important historical resource.

Kansas State University. KSU Gardens Historic Conservatory. [Online] Available <http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/ksugardens/conservatory.htm>, Mar. 27, 2012.

Dr. Patricia J. O'Brien researched the conservatory and provided historical information.



Two Churches Placed on Kansas Register

Bethel A.M.E. Church and the Second (Pilgrim) Baptist Church were both recently placed on the Register of Historic Kansas Places, and their nominations have been forwarded for consideration for the National Register of Historic Places.

Bethel A.M.E. Church was organized in 1879, and the Second Baptist Church was organized in 1880, which was at the time when a large contingent of former slaves left the South, known as the “Great Exodus,” and settled in the Manhattan area to start new lives.

The Bethel A.M.E. Church congregation increased over the years, necessitating the construction of a larger building. The current building, located at 401 Yuma Street, was built in 1927 (Bethel). Similarly, the Second Baptist Church congregation also needed a larger facility, and the current structure, located at 831 Yuma Street, was constructed in 1917 and was designed by local architect Henry Winter (Second).

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

Manhattan’s African American population was never large enough



Bethel A.M.E. Church

to have a completely separate community, consisting of African American owned businesses and other institutions. As a result, churches became the heart of the neighborhood and were significant



Second (Pilgrim) Baptist Church

because they were the only community institutions entirely controlled by African Americans (Second). The churches also welcomed KSU students and military families, and they provided a sense of home for Manhattan’s

transient populations at a time when the town wasn’t always kind and welcoming to African Americans (Second).

In later years, the congregation of Bethel A.M.E. Church with the support of other African American churches was very active in Manhattan’s Civil Rights Movement (Bethel). The Second Baptist Church congregation was also involved in improving civil rights and participated in community discussions about racial barriers in Manhattan’s housing (Second).

Equal rights for African Americans in housing resulted in many moving away from

Manhattan’s south side to other areas of town. Urban Renewal projects in the 1970s led to the demolition of many structures in the traditional African American neighborhoods of Manhattan, specifically areas east of Fourth Street and south of El Paso (Bethel). Other African American churches closed as people left the neighborhood and joined different churches.

Manhattan is fortunate that the Bethel A.M.E. Church and the Second (Pilgrim) Baptist Church have survived and are rare examples of African American institutions.

Register of Historic Kansas Places, Bethel A.M.E. Church, Manhattan, Riley County, Kansas.

Register of Historic Kansas Places, Second Baptist Church, Manhattan, Riley County, Kansas.

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Historic Summit

About 40 people attended the Historic Summit on March 1st and participated in discussions about historic preservation. Attendees had their choice of three break-out sessions and learned about topics such as researching their properties, archaeological sites, using historic tax credits, and revisiting Manhattan's Most Endangered List, which prophetically included the Marlatt Homestead.



Marlatt Homestead

The photo below on the right is another “before” view of the Marlatt house, which shows the south-facing windows and also the graduated windows on the east side of the dormer that were removed.

