



# MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

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## A Message From Our President

Let me tell you about a few of the things happening in the world of local historic preservation. To begin, the M/RCPA held its Winter Social last month. All in attendance had a good time. Each winter we gather for wine, food, and conversation in a neat historic building, often in downtown Manhattan. This year, we met in the renovated J & C Imaging building. No telling where we will be next winter. You should come!

Concerns about the sale of public land adjacent to the Landmark Water Tower have subsided. At present, the proposal has been withdrawn. Instead, the lot is expected to be designated a *pocket park*. Already approved by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the Historic Resources Board, all that remains is approval by the City Commission and a naming of the park. What do you think about naming the park *Sam Kimble, Jr. Park* or perhaps *Judge*

*Kimble Water Tower Park* or maybe *Judge and Mrs. Cora Kimble Park*? It seems appropriate to credit the Kimbles for the park because it was Judge Sam Kimble who deeded the lot in perpetuity to the city. It is he whom is credited with allocating space for the first water tower in the city. (Apparently, it was also a pretty cool view.)

Also noteworthy is the adoption of "Manhattan Area 2035" by the Manhattan City Commission, and Riley and Pottawatomie County Commissions. Manhattan Area 2035 updates the long-range plan for the area. Two items in the plan are of preservation significance. First is the upzoning of an area east of campus along North Manhattan Ave., which is intended to accommodate the demand for high-density housing. The plan proposed extending highest density zoning one block east of North Manhattan Ave. and four blocks north of Vattier Street. We appreciate that city leaders are *planning* for higher density construction instead of the less desirable "spot zoning."

Also part of Manhattan Area 2035 is a proposal to downzone the neighborhood east of City Park in an effort to stabilize the neighborhood. Since 2003, downzoning has proved effective at preserving single-family neighborhoods by encouraging homeowner investment, attracting families, and dissuading

construction of new multi-units. Residents of the East Park Neighborhood and the M/RCPA board strongly support this part of the plan. We appreciate the attention given to the historic neighborhoods.

Not much is happening at the state level in terms of historic preservation, though the local Preservation Alliance and the Kansas Preservation Alliance remain vigilant to legislation relative to historic preservation and/or historic properties. Rest assured we *will* keep you abreast.

I hope you know that **April 7th is Election Day** in Manhattan and Riley County. Manhattan citizens are being asked to choose three city commissioners and four school board members. If you have already voted, thank you. If you have not, I hope you will. Your vote *really does matter*. It was not long ago when a city election was decided by a coin toss.

I almost forgot to mention that May will be National Preservation Month! In celebration, the Preservation Alliance will be hosting the local Preservation Awards. I hope you will join us at the Union Pacific Depot on Thursday, May 14th, 7:00 p.m., to learn about preservation efforts. For me, I find the Preservation Awards to be hopeful and inspirational.

*Sara Fisher*

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The Board of Directors meets the second Thursday of the month at the Union Pacific Depot at 7:00 p.m. Members are always welcome to attend.

# The Transformation of Barney's Place to Katie's Way

Two prominent stone houses located on Poyntz Avenue were built by brothers: Francis Byron (known as Barney) Kimble and Judge Sam Kimble, Jr. Sam, Jr.'s home, which he called "Kastle Kimble," was built in 1894 and is located at 2001 Poyntz Ave. In 1912, Barney built a two-story stone house at 720 Poyntz Ave. The architect is believed to have been John Walters (O'Brien). Walters was a professor at Kansas State Agricultural College and began the architecture program at the college. (Barney also built Kimble Cliff, which is a two-story stone house near Keats, KS.)

Over the years, Barney's former home has had a variety of uses. Most recently, it was rented out as apartments, and prior to that, the offices of Sullivan and Associates were located in the house. Long-time Manhattan residents may remember the many years the Conroy Funeral Home used the house. Over the past several months, Barney Kimble's house has been under construction, transforming into the home of Katie's Way, which will offer mental health services to children and youth.

Jeff and LeAnn Mathis, the current owners of 720 Poyntz Ave., purchased the house after losing



At top, the front elevation of 720 Poyntz. Middle, the original fireplace with tiled surround. Bottom, a work-in-progress view of a rear section of the house that was rebuilt.

one of their daughters to suicide in 2013. Their experience led them to want to see Manhattan have a place where mental health services for young people could be provided in a comfortable, homelike setting. A historic limestone house fit what they were looking for, and Jeff says they purchased the house without even looking at it first.

After taking over ownership, the Mathises discovered the house's residents included bats and mud dauber wasps, and the house had a number of other issues, such as asbestos and a failing foundation. Working with Wayne and Zac Sloan of BHS Construction, the Mathises set about addressing the house's problems and renovating it.

With the plan to eventually list the house on the National Register of Historic Places, Jeff says they have strived to maintain as much of the house's original features as possible. Original hardwood flooring throughout the house was refinished and maintained. Interior woodwork and doors, including pocket doors, were spruced up and kept. Interior doors also still had their original hardware, including functioning mortise locks with skeleton keys.

Ceilings contained asbestos material, which was removed and new ceilings established. Interior walls were plaster, and the plaster was repaired and restored as needed.

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The main floor includes an original fireplace with wood mantel and tile surround. The glazing on the tiles resembles tortoise shell.

The staircase that leads to an unfinished third-floor attic was in poor condition with walls that were caving inward. The staircase was restored and the walls repaired.

Interior room arrangements were maintained in their current configurations, meaning interior walls were not removed. The one exception was the bathroom was enlarged in order to make it handicapped accessible.

The kitchen was renovated in a style compatible with the house and in keeping with the goal of creating a homey atmosphere.

The rear section of the house on the northeast side needed considerable work. Jeff says that if he had looked at the house before purchasing it and had seen the problems in that section, he might have had second thoughts. The foundation in that section was failing and the floor joists were

rotten. In order to fully address the issues, that portion of the house was stripped back and rebuilt.

The exterior stones were carefully removed and numbered in order to put them back in the correct sequence. The result is that one cannot tell that area of the house was completely rebuilt.

In addition to the house, the garage was also renovated. The garage had an exterior extension that was possibly added to accommodate a long hearse in the days when the house was a funeral home, and the extension was removed. New carriage style garage doors were added.

The property includes a large secondary building whose original function has yet to be determined. Future plans call for renovating the secondary building to provide a



place for overnight care for clients.

In addition to BHS Construction, AsterHouse Design performed the interior design work, with the goal of creating comfortable surroundings that blend with the style of the house.

With the bulk of the renovation of Barney Kimble's former home completed, Katie's Way began accepting clients in March.

O'Brien, Dr. Patricia J. [The Architects and Buildings of Manhattan, Kansas.](#)

Manhattan, Kansas: Riley County Historical Society, 2008.



Left, a lounge area has been created in the second floor hallway. Middle, a conference room. Right, the renovated kitchen. Top right, the rear portion of the house that was rebuilt.

## Water Tower Update

During the Jan. 20th City Commission meeting, commissioners discussed a request from the property owners adjacent to the Landmark Water Tower to purchase a portion of the water tower's property. The request was to purchase 920 sq. ft. of city-owned land on the eastern edge of the property line of the water tower's parcel. The adjacent property owners made the request because they would like to expand the existing house. The proposal discussed on Jan. 20th had been headed to the Board of Zoning Appeals for further action when it was withdrawn. The adjacent property owners have indicated they are still exploring options.

An outcome of the City Commission meeting was that commissioners indicated they were

supportive of the development of a historic register nomination for the Landmark Water Tower. Mayor Wynn Butler also suggested that the city could designate the water tower's surroundings as a "pocket" park.

During the March 2nd Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting, board members considered whether to create a pocket park at the site. Wyatt Thompson, park planner with the city, informed board members that if the land were park land, amenities such as a bench and a sidewalk could be added, the park would add to the city's park inventory, and a plaque with historic information could be included and would provide the opportunity to create a network of historic sites. The board approved

designating the land a pocket park.

The Historic Resources Board was also asked during its March meeting for its opinion about the creation of a pocket park by the Landmark Water Tower, and the board also expressed its approval of designating the land a pocket park.

Designating the land as park land does not prevent the City Commission from selling it, but selling park land involves a different process than selling regular city-owned property.

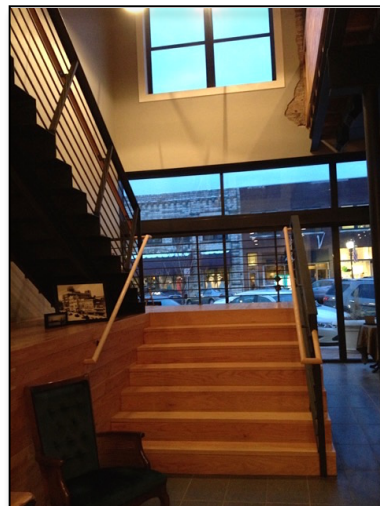


## Winter Social

On February 20th, approximately 30 M/RCPA members attended the Winter Social event, which was held at J & C Imaging in the Askren Building in the Downtown Manhattan Historic District. Members enjoyed great conversation and delicious appetizers prepared by Wahoo Fire and Ice Grill.

John and Cindy La Barge, owners of J & C Imaging and members of the M/RCPA, served as hosts and provided tours of the renovated building. Renovations included restoring the historic exterior by removing a faux façade and restoring the street-level storefront. The interior space has been renovated to

create a bright and inviting photography studio. Improvements made to the building were recognized in 2013 with a Historic Preservation Building Award.





## The Oldest Church in Leonardville

Settlers began arriving to the Leonardville area following the Civil War, building farmsteads across the prairie. At the point where the farms of Lambert Erpelding, Lucien Kilbourne, and John Ford converged, a small village known as Alembic developed (Slagg). When the railroad came through, the town's name was changed to "Leonardville" in honor of the railroad's president (Slagg). (See the February 2015 newsletter for more about Leonardville.)

As the town grew in those early years with the arrival of new citizens and businesses, churches were also established. One of the early churches was established by the Baptist congregation. Rev. N. B. Rairden, a Baptist minister, came to what was then the village of Alembic in 1878 and held a number of revivals (Slagg). In the months that followed, other Baptist ministers passed through and held church meetings in private homes or in area school buildings, and the Baptist congregation grew such that when it was formally organized in 1878, there were 24 members (Slagg).

Rev. A. J. Bengston came to the Alembic village in 1879 and held church meetings in the school north of town, until the school was destroyed by a tornado that hit Leonardville in 1882 (Slagg). After the school was destroyed, the Baptist congregation was inspired to construct their own church building, making it the first church building constructed in Leonardville. Rev. Bengston led the effort, using his skills as a stone mason to build a stone structure (Slagg). Stone from a nearby stone ledge

was transported to the site by Baptist church members with the help of others in the community (Slagg). The one-room stone church was completed in June 1884, and the resulting revival of the congregation caused the membership to swell to 81 members (Slagg). A short news item in the Aug. 28, 1884 edition of *The Leonardville Monitor* describes the building as "a neat and commodious stone church," and goes on to say, "The church has a large membership and is in a prosperous condition."

A history of Leonardville written for the community's 75th anniversary in 1956 lists the Baptist Church as having celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1934. As the years went by, many members of the Baptist congregation moved or passed away, until the membership dwindled past the point of being able to keep the church going. At some point between 1934 and 1956, the church folded.

Today, the little one-room stone church still stands on Barton Street, but its current condition is deteriorated, making it vulnerable to demolition. The west wall has a visible crack near the rear. Along the east wall, there are several visible cracks, and in one area, the stones have failed and have fallen in.

While vacant, the Baptist Church is the oldest remaining church building in Leonardville and serves as an important connection to Leonardville's early years and its early settlers. If the church were demolished or should the structure fail, it would be a

significant loss to the cultural heritage of Leonardville and Riley County.

*Leonardville, City of the Plains.* 24 March 2015. <https://sites.google.com/site/leonardville66449/Home/leonardville----yesterday/01---historical-info>.

Slagg, Winifred N. Riley County, Kansas. Manhattan, KS: Ted Varney's University Book Store, 1968.



At top, the vine-covered Baptist Church in Leonardville. Middle, a view of the west side of the church. Bottom, some of the stones in the east wall of the church have fallen in.

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## *2014-15 M/RCPA Membership Roster*

### **\$35 Historic Level**

Charlene Brownson, D. Cheryl Collins, Margaret Conrow, Clark & Nancy Danner, Beverly Fink, David J. Fiser, Joe & Janette Gelroth, Joann Goldstein, Corina Hugo, Jean Hulbert, Camille & Phillip Korenek, Ann Kosch, J & C Imaging/John & Cindy La Barge, Prof. Robert D. (Bob) Linder, Allana Parker, Lawrence & Mary Pollack, Gloria Juhl Raney, John & Mary Beth Reese, Linda Sue Rice, Tom & Karen Roberts, James E. Roper, Catherine Roy-Tremblay, Sharlin Sargent, Bill & Donna Schenck-Hamlin, Carolee Stark, Gary Stith, Bria Taddiken-Williams, Ron & Dixie West, Nancy Williams

### **\$100 Preservation Level**

Mimi Balderson, Mel & Jan Borst, Bowman Bowman Novick Inc., Jacqueline Brewer, Melvin & Randi Dale, John & Bonnie Devore, Gary & Paula Ellis, Wanda Fateley, Debbie Nuss & Brad Fenwick, Troy & Sara Fisher, Larry & Linda Glasgow, Judy Glowiak, Master Landscape Inc., John & Karen McCulloh, McCullough Development Inc., Bruce McMillan/Bruce McMillan Architects, Dori Milldyke, Linda L. Morse, Larry & Sandy Murphy, Karin Westman & Phil Nel, Marina Pecar-Krstic, Schrum Rentals LLC, Deborah Saroff, George & Julie Strecker, John & Joan Strickler, Chuck & Marsha Tannehill, Barbara E. Withee

### **\$250 Landmark Level**

David & Kathy Dzewaltowski, GJL Real Estate, Mark & Ann Knackendoffel, Dr. Patricia J. O'Brien, Barbara Poresky, Prairiewood Retreat & Preserve, Gwyn & Gina Riffel, Kevin S. & Alyn Pennington West

### **Honorary Lifetime Members**

Rose M. Bissey (in memory of Charles Bissey), Enell Foerster (in memory of Bernd Foerster), Dr. Patricia J. O'Brien, Edna L. Williams