



MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

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The Rise and Fall of the Long Oil Company

With the completion of the city's Joint Maintenance Facility, the next step in the city's plan is to sell older shop facilities the city no longer needs, which includes the historic buildings located at 621 South Juliette Avenue that the city acquired in the 1970s. Completed in 1927, the nearly century-old buildings were originally a bulk storage facility and garages for the Long Oil Company, which was headquartered in Manhattan and had numerous filling stations and warehouses along U. S. 40.

The company's founder was Archie W. Long, who was born in 1872 and grew up in West Virginia where his father worked as a blacksmith and wagon maker. At age 19, Long left home for North Dakota where he spent two years learning the milling trade. He came to Manhattan in 1892 and founded the Manhattan Milling Company. He was later part of the Long-Barner Milling Company until leaving the milling business in 1913. In 1903, Long married Laura Engel, whose father had settled in Manhattan in the 1860s ("Death claims").

During his early years in Manhattan, Long was well known due to his involvement in politics and in the local community. He served on Manhattan's planning board, the city council, and served as mayor from 1909 to 1911. He also ran for the Kansas Legislature twice but was not elected ("Death claims").



Top, the section of the Long Oil Company's bulk storage and barreling facility that remains at 621 South Juliette Avenue. Bottom, the Long Oil Company's garages at the site.

After leaving the milling trade, Long farmed for two years and then turned his attention to the oil industry, having noted the considerable growth in the use of oil and gasoline in recent years. In 1915, he purchased the Sikes Oil Station from W. H. Sikes of Leonardville, KS, which provided wholesale petroleum products. With the purchase, Long changed the business' name to the Manhattan Oil Company. This small station, described as a "sheet-iron

shanty," was located at First and Colorado Streets. Its first-day sales totaled 60 cents. Despite this humble beginning, business grew, and Long decided to incorporate in 1917 and change the name to the "Long Oil Company" ("Long Oil Company enjoys").

In a few short years, Long's single operation in a sheet-metal shack had expanded to three stations: a drive-up station added to the First and Colorado Streets' location, a station at Third and Houston Streets, and a station at Colorado Street and Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. Expansion wasn't limited to Manhattan and included three stations in Topeka, as well as single stations in Atchison, Wamego, and Solomon ("Long Oil Company enjoys").

Expanding again, the Long Oil Company provided Aggieville with its first filling station in 1922. The station was built on the corner of North Manhattan Avenue and Moro Street on land leased from H. P. Wareham. Costing \$6,000 to build, the new station featured three clear-vision gasoline pumps, an attractive women's restroom, and an illuminated 12-ft. pyramid which displayed "The Long Oil Co." name with red lighting. On opening day, 2,000 people visited the new station ("Long Oil Co. opens"). A few years later, the station on leased land in Aggieville (*continued on p. 2*)

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closed and was replaced by a Long Oil filling station at 1215 Moro Street. A popular feature of the Moro Street station was the parking area at the rear of the building, which was open to the public (“Filling station opens”).

Long Oil built a station downtown at Fifth Street and Poyntz Avenue. At the time, U. S. 40 followed Poyntz Avenue, making Poyntz an ideal location for a filling station to serve travelers. The Presbyterian Church had been located on the corner, and the church was demolished to erect a red brick and white stucco Long Oil station in its place (“Beautify old church corner”). When it was completed in 1922, it was described as one of the finest filling stations in the state (“To open new filling station”). In 1927, the station at Fifth and Poyntz was remodeled, and a group of shop buildings was added along the south and west edges of the property (“To remodel”). The renovated station was outlined with brilliant red neon lighting, which was a relatively new innovation at the time, and the shops housed a floral business, a sandwich shop, a taxi service, and three bus lines (“Long’s formal opening”).

In 1926, the city contracted with the Long Oil Company to develop a free tourist park in what is known today as Long’s Park, which was land designated as a public square on the original town plat. The rise of the automobile in the early 20th century led to Americans traveling more by car for recreational purposes, and in the 1920s, it was common for communities to provide free campgrounds for travelers, often in a public park. Manhattan had been using City Park for its tourist camp, but residents complained about the use



Top, a vintage photo of the Long Oil station at Fifth Street and Poyntz Avenue. The photo is courtesy of the Riley County Historical Society and Museum. Bottom, a close-up of the brick Long Oil Company sign on the garages at 621 South Juliette Avenue.

of City Park in this manner, leading the community to find another option (“City to get”).

The Long Oil Company made improvements to the public square that was adjacent to U. S. 40, which followed Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive and then turned east at Poyntz Avenue. The only cost to the city was the extension of utilities to the park, and all other improvements were financed by Long Oil. Walks and drives were added, and in the center of the park was a community building that featured a lounge with stone fireplace, writing room, showers, a telephone, and a kitchen. Everything was provided at no cost with the exception of a charge for gas used for cooking. The Long Oil Company invested over \$3,000 beautifying the park’s landscape with trees, shrubs, flowers, and tables and benches, and Manhattan

residents enjoyed using the park for picnics as much as travelers did (Evans). While the corner filling station is long gone, the large stone fireplace from the community building remains and is a striking feature of the shelter house in the park.

The Long Oil Company continued to grow with plans to expand west to Denver. The company’s assets were valued at more than \$500,000, and it was regarded as one of the largest businesses in the state (“Prosperous year”). As a result of the company’s exceptional success, plans were made to build the facility at 621 South Juliette Avenue, which would be a storage and barreling plant next to the railroad. The new plant would have a 1,000-barrel capacity, eight 12,500-gal. steel storage tanks for lubricating oil, six 22,000-gal. steel tanks for gasoline and kerosene, and an eight-stall garage to house tank wagons and a repair shop. The new facility was anticipated to cost \$22,500 to build (“Long Oil Co. will build”).

Designed by prominent local architect Henry Winter (O’Brien, 110-113), the facility included a bulk plant and garages, which were completed in early 1927 and were described as the largest facility of this type in the state. The facility occupied half a city block and had its own spur railroad line that spanned the entire south edge of the property. Both buildings were made of brick, and the two-story barreling plant was described as fireproof. The tanks housed in the barreling facility were set in warmed sand, which was heated by steam pipes (“Mammoth bulk station opens”). A portion of the bulk storage and barreling facility (continued on p. 3)

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complex remains at the site as does the brick multi-stall garage. The garage building includes the facility's most distinctive feature: a sign made of light-colored bricks incorporated into the front of the building that says "Long Oil Co."

By the end of 1928, the Long Oil Company operated over 60 bulk facilities and service stations, had a fleet of 50 tank trucks, and its assets were valued at \$1 million. The company's three assets regarded as without parallel were the station and shops at Fifth and Poyntz, the barreling plant and bulk storage facility at 621 South Juliette Avenue, and the tourist park ("Long's formal opening").

Despite all this success in the oil industry, Long didn't limit his interests to further expansion of the company, and in 1930, he turned his attention toward the development of a residential district in Manhattan. The tract to be developed was on the top of the hill between 18th Street and South Delaware Avenue, and between Pierre and Colorado Streets and included ten lots arranged around a central park to be known as "Hillcrest Park." Additional lots were mapped out further down the hill. Long reserved a large lot for himself with access from South Delaware Avenue where he planned to construct a "palatial" home ("Preliminary plan"). Today, these homes are located on Longview Drive.

Then, the Long Oil Company's fortune began to change. The headline in a local newspaper sums it up well: "Depression hits the Long Oil Co." The company was facing bankruptcy, receivership, or other proceeding, and its financial statements showed a deficit of \$390,000. The company's preferred stock had depreciated due to increased competition, price cutting, and a depression in the oil

industry ("Depression hits"). The Prairie Oil and Gas Company purchased shares in the Long Oil Company and became the majority stockholder. The local company would still be known as Long Oil and would maintain its headquarters in Manhattan, but A. W. Long was out as the company's president ("Long is out").

A few months after his ouster, Long filed suit in district court against Prairie Oil and the president of the First National Bank, alleging the parties had conspired to fraudulently gain control of Long Oil. The court petition claimed that during a period when Long had been ill, stockholders were advised the company was in poor financial condition, which led stockholders to sell their stock. In exchange for turning over his stock, Long asserted he was to be retained as a manager and receive \$500/month in salary for two years. He also alleged the bank's president had threatened to appoint a receiver due to money owed to the bank if Long hadn't turned over his stock ("A. W. Long sues").

Amid these troubles, A. W. Long died in February 1932. Shortly after his death, Long's widow and daughter revived the lawsuit as executors of the estate. Over the next few years, the case worked its way through the judicial system to the Kansas Supreme Court, and the Kansas Supreme Court ultimately ruled in favor of the defendants ("Defendants win").

In 1932, Prairie Oil was acquired by the Sinclair Oil Company. In the spring of 1933, Sinclair purchased the remaining minority shares of the Long Oil Company, and Long Oil's stockholders voted to sell assets to Sinclair and then dissolve the corporation, bringing the end to the Long Oil Company ("Long Oil takes Sinclair offer").

With Sinclair's purchase of company assets, Long Oil stations,

the facility at 621 South Juliette Avenue, and the tourist park were renamed Sinclair. Today, the Long Oil filling stations in Manhattan are gone. Long's palatial home planned for South Delaware Avenue wasn't built, and A. W. Long's widow sold the land. The tourist park returned to being known as Long's Park in the 1950s, and a historical marker installed in 2014 details the park's history. A. W. Long's grandson, David Dary, was on hand when the marker was dedicated.

The Long Oil Company began in a simple sheet-metal building, earning a mere 60 cents in revenue its first day of operation and grew to a business with stations and warehouses in many communities in central and eastern Kansas. The last remaining structures associated with Long Oil in Manhattan are a section of the bulk storage complex and the garages at 621 South Juliette Avenue, which city officials recently agreed to sell to a private party. According to public records, the new owner is a limited liability company that owns a number of properties in Manhattan. The company's plans for the property are unknown.

To learn more about the history of Long's Park, see the M/RCPA's February 2014 newsletter on the M/RCPA's website.

David Dary, A. W. Long's grandson, provided the keynote address for the 2014 Historic Summit. A recording of his remarks is available on the M/RCPA's website under the "More" tab.

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- "Beautify old church corner." [The Manhattan Mercury](#). 15 September 1922: 1.
- "City to get real tourist camp." [The Morning Chronicle](#). 5 May 1926: 1.
- "Death claims Archie W. Long." [The Manhattan Mercury](#). 20 February 1932: 1.

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 “Depression hits the Long Oil Co.” The Morning Chronicle. 8 February 1931: 1.
 Evans, R. Kenneth. “Long Oil Company has doubled its territory, gallonage, and business during past 24 months.” The Manhattan Mercury. 18 April 1928: 4.
 “Filling station opens.” The Manhattan Mercury. 15 June 1927: 1.
 “Long buys oil station.” The Manhattan Daily Nationalist. 4 March 1915: 2.

“Long’s formal opening held tomorrow.” The Manhattan Mercury. 10 December 1928: 9.
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 “Long Oil stock to the Prairie.” The Manhattan Mercury. 20 February 1931: 1.
 “Long Oil Co. will build new plant.” The Morning Chronicle. 24 August 1926: 1.
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 “Mammoth bulk station opens.” The Manhattan Mercury. 2 February 1927: 1, 8.

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 “To open new filling station.” The Manhattan Mercury. 22 December 1922: 1.
 “Preliminary plan for A. W. Long’s new residential district.” The Manhattan Mercury. 31 May 1930: 2.
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 “To remodel Long Oil Co. building.” The Manhattan Mercury. 22 April 1927: 1.

721 Pierre Street: One of Manhattan’s Oldest Houses

Tucked into the south side of the 700 block of Pierre Street is a charming white brick house, which is one of the oldest houses in Manhattan. Located at 721 Pierre Street, the house is a contributing resource to the Houston and Pierre Streets Residential Historic District. Known as the Huntress-Fox House, the east portion of the house was built during the first decade following the Civil War at a time when residential development was occurring in the area between Fifth and Ninth Streets (Schwenk and Davis).

The original section of the house was built by Amasa Huntress. The property’s tax valuation provides the best evidence of when the house was built. The lot’s tax valuation in 1865 was \$20, which likely means it was vacant, and the tax valuation jumped to \$240 in 1866, which is a strong indicator that a building had been erected on the property in 1866 (O’Brien, 136-137).

Amasa Huntress and his family came to Manhattan from Maine in 1857 at a time when there were only 17 houses (Brown). For the first few months, the Huntress family stayed in a hotel, which was an enlarged Hartford house whose original occupants had been Amanda Arnold’s family (see p. 6-9) (“Last of the Mohegans”). The family settled in town, and Huntress became a community leader, serving as county clerk, assessor, treasurer, and register of deeds as well as serving as Manhattan’s mayor. It’s

unclear whether the Huntress family lived at 721 Pierre Street. Huntress owned a large parcel of land south of the Kansas River (Brown), so it’s possible Huntress built 721 Pierre Street as an investment property.

Simeon Fox purchased the house from Huntress in 1867 and is the person most associated with the property since he lived there the next 71 years (O’Brien, 136-137). The original house built by Huntress consisted of two rooms on the first floor and two rooms above. Fox enlarged the house to the west with an addition that featured dormers and a porch that spanned the length of the addition (Seaton). A short news item in 1877 noted Fox was having the house painted “so that the whole building will be of the same color” (“S. M. Fox is having”), which likely means the addition had been recently completed, giving it a construction date of 1876.

Simeon Fox was born in 1841 and grew up in Lansingville, NY. His father was a Methodist minister who came to Kansas in 1854 to do mission work, and he settled in Doniphan County while Simeon stayed in New York to attend college. Fox later traveled to Doniphan County when his mother died and decided to stay in Kansas. In 1861 a few months into the Civil War, Fox enlisted at Fort



Above, 721 Pierre Street in February 2023.

Leavenworth with the first group of Kansas volunteers, which was later known as the 7th Kansas Cavalry. Fox was a lieutenant and became the regimental adjutant. He was discharged from service in 1865 and returned to Leavenworth (Brown).

While living in Leavenworth, Fox became friends with Howard Kimball, who owned a bookstore. Kimball noted the railroad was expanding westward toward Manhattan and a college had been established there, and the two saw the potential in starting a bookstore in Manhattan (Brown). Fox and Kimball traveled to Manhattan to assess the situation. They spent several days in Manhattan, visiting with business owners who assured them a bookstore was something Manhattan needed and would be successful (“Simeon Fox saw Manhattan grow”). They bought all the books and school supplies they (continued on p. 5)

(continued from p. 4) could find, returned to Leavenworth to gather more stock, and then established a store known as Fox and Kimball's Bookstore on the north side of Poyntz Avenue near Second Street and Poyntz (Brown). When Fox was on the return trip to Manhattan on the train, which only went as far west as Wamego at the time, he became acquainted with a fellow passenger who was also traveling to Manhattan to try out his fortune ("Simeon Fox saw Manhattan grow"). The other passenger was Dr. Charles Little, long-time Manhattan physician who established the Charlotte Swift Hospital with his daughter, Dr. Belle Little (Jack, 63-65).

After a few months on the north side of Poyntz Avenue, the bookstore moved to another location on the south side of Poyntz, and the space was shared with a jeweler and the post office. At some point, Fox bought out Kimball, and newspaper ads near the end of 1869 show the store was renamed "Fox's Bookstore."

In 1879, Fox erected a new building at 311 Poyntz Avenue to house the bookstore. The two-story stone building was Fox's design and when completed, it was described as "one of the most showy and best finished business houses in the city." The bookstore was located on the first floor, and the upper level was rented by a dressmaker ("S. M. Fox has removed to his new location").

Fox continued to operate the bookstore until 1895 when the governor appointed him to be adjutant general of the Kansas National Guard. Fox and the governor had served together in the 7th Kansas Cavalry during the Civil War ("What they say"). Fox served in the adjutant general position until 1901. When Fox accepted the appointment, he sold all his stock to Guy Varney, a fellow Manhattan bookseller. Varney had already been



Above, a vintage photo of a vine-covered 721 Pierre Street. The photo is courtesy of the Riley County Historical Society and Museum.

operating his own bookstore on Poyntz Avenue, and with the purchase of Fox's stock, Varney moved his business to Fox's former location at 311 Poyntz Avenue ("General S. M. Fox sold his stock").

In Fox's later years, he spent much of his time reading and conducting genealogical research. His genealogical research was highly regarded by genealogical authorities, and his extensive research is part of the Riley County Genealogical Society's collection (Brown).

Fox died in 1938, and his daughter, Florence Fox Harrop, moved into her childhood home at 721 Pierre Street. A 1939 account of a social gathering at Harrop's home provided a detailed description of the house. The article noted the brick exterior had been recently whitewashed and shutters were painted green. The floors were fir, and interior woodwork had been painted an ivory color. The front hall included a handsome circular walnut staircase, which is still a beautiful feature of the house. The dining room's flooring was blue and white linoleum, and the room's walls included wainscoting painted white. Renovations completed by Harrop included adding a bathroom where the kitchen had been and establishing a new kitchen and

pantry in the north section of the house. The light on the front porch was a restored Wabash Railroad lantern. The furnishings were largely family antiques, including a large mahogany-framed mirror from Harrop's grandfather's house in New York that had reflected the scene of the marriage of Abigail Powers and Millard Fillmore, future U. S. president (Seaton).

Harrop continued to own 721 Pierre Street until 1963 when newspaper ads show the house and contents were to be sold. The Fox-Harrop family had owned the house for nearly a century at that point. In a handwritten document housed at the Riley County Historical Museum and dated July 23, 1949, Harrop expressed her preferences for what would become of the property after her death. Her request was that the house and lots would not go to the Roman Catholic Church, which was based on her perception of the way a previous real estate transaction mentioned in the document had been handled. However, Harrop added her wish wasn't imperative if her children and grandchildren would suffer financial loss in following it (Harrop). Today, the house is sandwiched between the Seven Dolors Parish Center and the Manhattan Catholic Schools' grade school. Perhaps Harrop's wishes explain this unusual site condition and explain why 721 Pierre Street is the lone house on the south side of the block.

Over the decades, the Huntress-Fox House has managed to retain some of its historic elements. As mentioned, the distinctive curved walnut staircase remains in the house. Other features include the historic intact six-over-six wood windows and two-over-two wood windows, and each historic window has a stone lintel and sill. The exceptionally deep front yard set-

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back is also a character-defining feature of the property.

The 157-year-old house is showing its age and seems to have declined in recent years. For the most part, the exterior visually appears to be in relatively good condition. The house was recently on the market, and photographs from the real estate listing indicated the interior had deteriorated over the years. If the house were to be renovated, a project would potentially be able to take advantage of the benefits available to contributing resources in historic districts. A project would be eligible for the state's rehabilitation tax credit, eligible for the federal tax credit if the property were income-producing, and eligible for grants and other benefits available to historically registered properties. These benefits would help with renovation expenses and ongoing maintenance.

The house recently changed hands, and the Catholic Diocese of Salina is the new owner. Fr. Ryan McCandless, Seven Dolours' pastor, provided information about the plans for the house. Fr. McCandless wrote in an email, "With the completion of the renovation of the Seven Dolours Catholic Church building in 2018, the importance of restoration of a historical building is on full display. The cooperation and teamwork that went into this project also displays the importance of a community that can work together in appreciation for the historical significance of a community with mixed religious expressions and houses of

worship. Seven Dolours is in a unique and historical placement within the city of Manhattan and is happy to have the opportunity to purchase the 721 Pierre Street property. It is not lost on us to know of the historical significance of this home and those who helped found this city. There was always word that the Roman Catholic Church was somehow banned from being able to purchase the property, however there was no indication in the purchase process that that was the case. The history of those who lived in the house is extensive, even with a quick Internet search.

"Future plans include exterior clean-up of overgrown ivy and trees while keeping in mind the need for the

"Along with the school, budget shop, food pantry and our parish center, the parish looks forward to the house becoming a part of our everyday campus."

Fr. Ryan McCandless

green space throughout. The interior of the home is in much need of renovation and restoration. Yet, the house and its foundation are as solid as the day they were built. There are plenty of ideas for the space, including the potential for the house to become a type of bookstore and coffee shop with additional meeting space.

"The house has sat vacant for several years and was often a source of speculation for those who pass by between the school and parish center. Through the years, after some yard clean-up and several exterior fixes on the house, there was a verbal agree-

ment with the previous owner to keep the lawn mown.

"Along with the school, budget shop, food pantry and our parish center, the parish looks forward to the house becoming a part of our everyday campus."

While there's no way of knowing what Simeon Fox's preference would be for the use of his house, it would seem to be a safe guess that one of Manhattan's early booksellers would like the bookstore idea.

When the Huntress-Fox House was built in 1866, the Civil War had ended the year before and a rail line was yet to extend as far west as Manhattan. Much has changed since those early years, and the house has carried on, serving as a tangible reminder of the people and places of Manhattan's first decade as a community.

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- "What they say." The Manhattan Nationalist. 22 February 1895: 3.

Remembering Amanda Arnold

In the spring of 1855, a group of steamship passengers found themselves unexpectedly stranded a few miles from their intended destination. Among the passengers

was a young woman named Amanda Arnold, who was traveling with other family members with the goal of settling in Kansas as part of an anti-slavery effort. The passen-

gers decided to stay in the area that would become Manhattan, and the young woman would become one of Manhattan's first teachers and (continued on p. 7)

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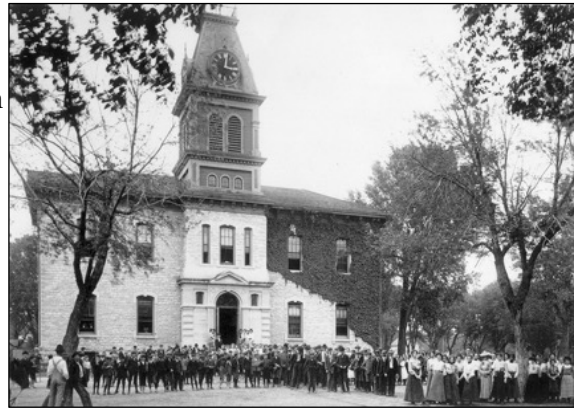
dedicate her life to the profession.

Amanda Arnold's father, Rezin Arnold, was born in Pennsylvania, and by the time he married her mother Maria, he was living in Ohio. According to the 1850 U. S. Census, Rezin was a farmer, and a history of Harrison County, OH, indicates Rezin had been one of the county's sheriffs (McGavran, 17). The Arnolds had several children, and their daughter Amanda was born in Harrison County in 1837.

In the spring of 1855, the Arnolds joined the Cincinnati and Kansas Land Company, which planned to establish an anti-slavery community in Kansas. Rezin, Amanda, and one of Amanda's brothers boarded the steamship *Hartford*, which traveled down the Mississippi River and then the Missouri River on a journey that took four weeks (Bohn).

The trip was unpleasant for the 18-year-old Amanda Arnold, who was ill during the first part of the journey. While she was ill, she overheard others discussing her condition and saying, "They will bury her on the way." Arnold was not the only passenger to experience illness, as she recalled there was a cholera outbreak on board, which claimed the lives of some of her fellow passengers (Jack, 30).

When the *Hartford* reached Wyandotte, the Kansas River's water was so slow the travelers had to wait a week for spring rains to raise the water level to continue their journey (Bohn). During this pause, a few of the men traveled by land to where Junction City is approximately today and began making plans for a town site ("Colonel John"). When the steamship was finally able to proceed,



Top, Amanda Arnold (right) with her brother in front of their home at 618 Humboldt St. Bottom, Central School. Both photos are courtesy of the Riley County Historical Society and Museum.

St. George resident Mrs. Elijah Walker recalled witnessing the *Hartford* pass by, having been called to the riverbank by the sounds of the boat's bell and whistle ("Pioneer day"). The steamship encountered low water again and ran aground on June 1, 1855, near the confluence of the Blue and Kansas Rivers (Jack, 14)

Earlier in 1855, a group of settlers with the New England Emigrant Aid Company, which included leaders such as Isaac Goodnow and Joseph Denison, had arrived in the area and formed a community they called Boston, having been attracted to Kansas by the same determination as the *Hartford*'s passengers to ensure Kansas entered the Union as a free state. Reportedly, a party from the Boston group went to Junction City where men from the *Hartford*

were planning the town and invited the *Hartford*'s passengers to join their community ("Colonel John"). The Cincinnati and Kansas Land Company's officers accepted the offer on the condition the settlement's name be changed to Manhattan (Jack, 14), which was in accordance with the company's constitution. The *Hartford*'s passengers disembarked, and the Arnold family joined the group of Manhattan's earliest residents.

The *Hartford* was sold to another Cincinnati group. On its return trip to Ohio, the *Hartford* caught fire and burned near St. Marys. The boat's bell was salvaged and later placed in the Methodist Church. Today, the bell hangs in the Riley County Historical Museum (Jack, 15).

Included in the supplies carried on the *Hartford* were ten prefabricated houses, which could be quickly erected to provide shelter and which came to be known as "Hartford houses." Amanda Arnold's brother was in charge of the houses, which perhaps helped to ensure the Arnold family was able to secure one (Jack, 30). The first winter half the roof blew off the house, and a carpet was used to cover the gap. The amount of time the Arnolds lived in the *Hartford* house appears to have been brief. By the next spring, Charles Barnes owned the house, had enlarged it, and was operating it as a hotel. The Arnold family's *Hartford* house was destroyed by fire in the spring of 1887 ("Last of the Mohegans").

As buildings and houses began to go up in the new community, settlers saw the need to provide their children with instruction. While Amanda Arnold is often described as the first teacher in the area, she wasn't the first. The first (continued on p. 8)

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teacher was Mary Blood, who was the wife of Rev. C. E. Blood. She taught a subscription school in her home in 1855-56 (“The Schools of Manhattan”). Arnold is regarded as the first teacher hired by the young city to teach school (Jack, 30). Though she felt she lacked the knowledge and experience, she understood that people had to make do with what was available, and she seemed to be the best person available (“Miss Arnold buried”). She agreed to serve, signing a contract to teach school for a three-month term for which she would be paid \$15/month. Initial enrollment was two students but grew to 16 by the end of the term. School was held in the town’s Land Office on Poyntz Avenue (“Manhattan the center”).

Arnold taught school until approximately 1860 when more members of the Arnold family arrived in Kansas, and she left teaching for a time to help with the family’s farm in Blue Township in Pottawatomie County (Jack, 31). When Bluemont Central College opened, which was a precursor to Kansas State University, Arnold enrolled to further her own education, and while attending classes, she boarded with the family of Joseph Denison, who was the college’s first president (“First teacher”).

Arnold returned to teaching around 1864. In 1874, Arnold is listed as the principal of the primary department. By this time, the town had built a two-story school in the 900 block of Poyntz Avenue, and in 1878, Manhattan erected an eight-room stone school, known as Central School, on the north side of the 600 block of Leavenworth Street (“Manhattan the center”). Arnold continued in her position as principal of the primary department when Central School was completed (Bohn).

During her long career, Arnold taught school in St. George and in Wichita in addition to Manhattan. Her job in Wichita was described as an excellent position, but Arnold fell ill with pneumonia while there, and her health ultimately led her to return to Manhattan (“Miss Arnold has returned”). Aside from these two stints, the bulk of her teaching career was spent in Manhattan where she taught various grades at the primary level.

In her later years, Arnold struggled with health issues, and newspaper notices indicate she was frequently in the hospital. Her financial situation was described as lacking the “earthly riches” that would have helped make her declining days more comfortable (“Honors old settler”). All her immediate family members had preceded her in death. But, she had many friends who helped her pass the hours, and unbeknownst to her, Manhattan businessman Harry P. Wareham, a former student who had much respect and affection for Arnold, provided for her financially when necessary (“Harry P. Wareham”).

When Amanda Arnold died in November 1923, she was the last surviving member of the *Hartford* contingent. Prior to her funeral service, the *Hartford*’s bell in the Methodist Church rang for five minutes in honor of its last passenger (“Miss Arnold buried”). During the service, the minister described how Arnold had delighted in sharing the stories of Manhattan’s early days and the resolve of the anti-slavery settlers, and she was proud of all she had contributed to the community’s progress (“Honors old settler”). In his remarks, the minister suggested that a school be named for her (“Miss Arnold buried”).

This was not the first instance when it was suggested that a



Above, the Amanda Arnold Arch on the Riley County Courthouse plaza.

school should be named for Amanda Arnold. At the time that Bluemont Elementary School was under construction in 1911, a few citizens submitted letters to the editor of local newspapers, noting she deserved the honor as a long-time and well-liked teacher.

At the time of Arnold’s death when Woodrow Wilson Elementary School was under construction, a couple of local organizations drafted a resolution and presented it to the school board, requesting that the new school be named for Amanda Arnold. Naming the school for Arnold seemed especially appropriate given that the new building was being erected on the same block where Arnold had taught at Central School. But, the school board had already decided on the building’s name, the stone cutting of the name plaque was in progress, and the board didn’t want to cause a delay in changing the name (“Would change school name”).

As Wilson Elementary was going up, plans were in place to demolish Central School. Judge Sam Kimble, Jr. proposed to preserve Central School’s arched entryway as a memorial to Amanda Arnold. Kimble proposed to relocate the arch to the top of the hill where South Delaware Avenue and Colo- (continued on p. 9)

(continued from p. 8)

rado Street intersect and where it could be seen from many directions (“Would preserve”).

Kimble’s suggestion of memorializing Arnold in some fashion inspired the formation of a committee comprised of representatives from various organizations to study an appropriate way to honor her. Committee members met for a few weeks, considered Kimble’s memorial arch idea, and ultimately recommended a bronze plaque in Arnold’s honor be installed in Wilson Elementary. The committee members thought Arnold could be honored without the expense of purchasing land for the arch, disassembling it, and then reassembling it (“Arnold memorial”).

Though the community had gone a different direction, Kimble still acquired Central School’s arch, had it disassembled, and moved to his property, which was Castle Kimble located at 2001 Poyntz Avenue. Kimble died, and the arch’s stones lay in a heap for a time on the property. In 1927, Fletcher Moore, whose sister lived in the castle, worked to reassemble the archway (“A monument”). The arch remained on the castle’s grounds for the next several decades, readily visible from Poyntz Avenue. Kimble’s vision was

finally realized in 1984 when J. D. Richards, the castle’s owner, donated the arch to be reassembled on the plaza of the Riley County Courthouse (Rhodes). A plaque on the arch explains it’s a memorial to Amanda Arnold and to all the pioneer teachers.

In the mid-1980s when the school district had plans to erect a new elementary school, Amanda Arnold’s name was suggested again as a name for the school -- more than 70 years since the first time her name had been suggested for this honor. The Board of Trustees of the Riley County Historical Museum and the museum’s staff made the recommendation to the school board to use Arnold’s name (“Plenty of names”). Several other names were suggested by community members, but the school board settled on Amanda Arnold for the school’s name (Wika). The Amanda Arnold Elementary School opened in 1985, and the dedication plaque reads, “As a tribute to all teachers, past, present, and future, this school is named for Amanda Arnold, the first teacher in Manhattan, whose life was devoted to serving children and youth.” Arnold never married, which may have been because it was a common practice in her time that female teachers couldn’t be married, and so she dedicated her life to teaching and regarded her numerous students as her children (Wika).

One more tribute to Amanda Arnold was still to come, and that honor was to provide her grave with a headstone. In 1995, it came to light that Arnold’s grave in Sunset Cemetery was unmarked, which may have been because she had outlived all her immediate family members. Through the efforts of the Amanda Arnold Parent Teacher Association and students, the Polly Ogden Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Manhattan Monument Company, and a number of private donors, funds were raised to pay for a headstone for Arnold (Bohn). The headstone’s engraving features a schoolhouse, a school bell, and the words, “First teacher in Manhattan.” A century has passed since

Amanda Arnold died, the last of the hardy souls who traveled to Kansas on the *Hartford*, but her contributions and influence on our community live on. While she may have thought of herself as not ready for the role as Manhattan’s first paid teacher, the many years she dedicated to teaching and the respect and high regard all who knew her had for her demonstrate she was more than capable, and the Manhattan community and students were the better for it.

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The Board of Directors meets the second Thursday of the month via Zoom. Members are welcome to participate in board meetings. Contact the M/RCPA if you would like to participate in a board meeting.

Newsletter editor: Kathy Dzewaltowski

All the articles in the April 2023 newsletter were written by Kathy Dzewaltowski.

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Sexton's House Update

During a City Commission work session in November 2022, commissioners were provided with information about developing master plans for both Sunset and Sunrise Cemeteries. As part of the planning process, one option discussed was to sell Sunset Cemetery's sexton's house and apply the proceeds to building new cemetery shops.

The land the sexton's house sits on at 2000 Leavenworth Street was donated to the city in 1910 by Judge Sam Kimble, Jr. and his wife Cora. The M/RCPA contacted Riley County's Register of Deeds office and requested a copy of the deed.

The deed's language mentions "the faithful performance forever of the conditions subsequent herein written." The conditions described state that a building will be erected within two years and "thereafter forever maintain and use said real estate and buildings thereon, as a Residence and Office of the Sexton and Superintendent of the Manhattan City Cemetery . . . all to be maintained in a clean and neat manner and condition. A failure to perform said condition shall cause Reversion of said lot to Grantors."

The M/RCPA shared a copy of the deed with city officials, and the last the M/RCPA knew, the city's legal department was studying the situation. It's not yet known whether this development will impact plans.

Wurst House Update

In 2021, the Historic Resources Board (HRB) denied a request to demolish the Wurst House, located at 212 South Fifth Street. The house is a noncontributing resource within the Houston and Pierre Streets Residential Historic District. The HRB's finding was appealed to the City Commission, and commissioners upheld the HRB's finding. Arguments made in favor of demolition mentioned the house was in poor condition and would be too costly to renovate, and issues with the "quality of tenants" were also mentioned.

Since then, the house has a new owner, and the exteriors of both the house and garage have been spruced up.



Above, the Wurst House in March 2023. Right, the Wurst House in November 2021.

