
MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

AUGUST, 2007

A GUEST EDITORIAL BY DIXIE WEST

Women and Riley County's Built Environment

On March 31, 1776, Abigail Adams wrote to her husband, future U.S. President John Adams, "I long to hear that you have declared an independency. And, by the way, in the new code of laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire you would remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors."

One hundred thirty-eight years later, in the summer of 1914, Nellie Cecilia Hemmant Fitz and her husband Leslie built a Craftsman bungalow at 1014 Houston Street. Now on the National Register of Historic Places, the Fitz House is considered a significant historic property in the city for its association with Leslie Arthur Fitz and its architectural style.

Professor Fitz made important contributions in the field of grain science and milling as a professor of Milling Industry at Kansas State Agricultural College (KSAC - now Kansas State University) and for the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

It is believed that 1014 Houston's architect was Henry B. Winter, a KSAC alumnus. The original,

handcrafted, native Cottonwood limestone curbstones installed in 1904 are still present. The 1014 Houston house serves as a well-preserved example of Craftsman bungalow.

When my spouse, Ron, and I were gathering information in order to place the 1014 Houston Street house on the historic register, we gleaned information from newspaper articles, phone books, county records, and the web. We found substantial documentation about Leslie Fitz. He was, apparently, a very important fellow.

But Nellie Fitz remains a mystery. We know that she was married to Leslie Fitz in Halstead, Kansas, in 1904, and that she died September 29, 1933 in Manhattan, Kansas, "after a long illness." However, we know little about the woman who must have had considerable say in the construction of the building as well as how the household was run once the building was constructed.

While a portrait of Leslie Fitz graces our front parlor wall, to this day my spouse and I have no idea what Nellie Fitz looked like.

Over the years I have been disappointed in how little women are

recognized in Manhattan history. For every house built, there has probably been a woman—or several—associated with that structure in one way or another.

Women perform a myriad of tasks in any community and are a substantial part of the birth and growth of a city. And yet we have been overlooked by history.

The year 2008 has been designated "The Year of the Woman," and I believe it is time that we begin to recognize the contributions that women have made to the history of Manhattan and Riley County, Kansas.

In the words of Abigail Adams, it is indeed time to "Remember the Ladies." In the upcoming year I plan to periodically chime in, via the Preservation Alliance newsletter, to remember those historic 19th and 20th century Riley County women whom history has all too often ignored.

Dr. Dixie West is an archaeologist and a research affiliate at the Natural history Museum, University of Kansas. She has served three times as president of the Preservation Alliance.



It's time to think about renewing your membership for the 2007—2008 year.

Your membership committee (Debbie Saroff, Dixie West, Marina Pecar-Krstic, and Judine Mecseri) has been hard at work.

You should have already received an invitation by mail to join the Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance for the 2007-2008 year.

We are continuing the wide range of membership levels. They are designed to be appropriate for any budget.

Remember that we are a 501 (c) 3 organization and that your contribution is tax-deductible.

Membership at all levels includes the opportunity to attend educational programs and the annual preservation awards ceremony.

Members at the \$250 and above levels will be able to participate in a tour of Manhattan's historic Castle Kimble, a private residence in an estate setting. The tour will include

a reception with refreshments and good conversation—guaranteed!

Membership dues allow our organization to fund this newsletter and our informative website, (www.preservemanhattan.org). Dues also allow us to engage in historic preservation projects that contribute to the betterment of our community.

Your support and participation are deeply appreciated.

Notice of Annual Meeting

The Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance, Inc. will hold its annual meeting on Thursday, September 13th, at 7:00 p.m. at Manhattan's Union Pacific Depot.

Dr. Lauren Ritterbush of Kansas State University's Department of

Anthropology will give a talk on the archaeological sites of Manhattan and vicinity.

Members who have paid their dues will vote to fill the open positions on the board of directors. The directors will, in turn, select the

officers who will serve for the 2007 - 2008 term.

Please mark your calendar. It is important for as many members as possible to attend the annual meeting and to participate in the election process.

MANHATTAN RILEY COUNTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

THE BENEFITS OF ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

\$15+ STUDENT

- *NEWSLETTER
- *EDUCATION SEMINARS

\$ 35+ MAINTENANCE

- *ALL OF THE ABOVE BENEFITS

\$ 100+ HISTORICAL

- *ALL OF THE ABOVE BENEFITS PLUS:
- *INVITATION TO SPECIAL EVENTS (FOR 2 PEOPLE)

\$ 250+ PRESERVATION

- *ALL OF THE ABOVE BENEFITS PLUS:
- *PRIVATE TOUR AND RECEPTION AT CASTLE KIMBLE (FOR TWO PEOPLE)

\$500+ LANDMARK

- (\$450 TAX-DEDUCTIBLE)
- *ALL OF THE ABOVE BENEFITS PLUS:
- *CHOICE OF SIGNED AND NUMBERED TOWER PRINT OR FORSYTHE PRINT

ALL MEMBERSHIPS ARE 100% TAX DEDUCTIBLE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

PLEASE DETACH HERE TO RETURN YOUR MEMBERSHIP ACCEPTANCE

MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP ACCEPTANCE

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- \$35+ MAINTENANCE
- \$100+ HISTORICAL
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- \$500+ LANDMARK

PLEASE RESPOND BEFORE SEPTEMBER 7, 2007.

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*Take the “historic building” quiz:
What do you know about
these Manhattan buildings?*



1



2



3



4

All of these buildings are private property.
None of them are on a national, state, or local
historical register. Turn the page for answers.

Here are the answers to the quiz!

1. 1117 Hylton Heights - Home of Joseph Denison, the first president of the first land grant college in the U.S. Later it was the Riley County Poor Farm.
2. 826 Yuma - The home of Phi Beta Sigma (Delta Chapter), the first historically African-American fraternity to come to a predominately white college (Kansas State Agricultural College) and later the home of George Giles, a superb Negro League first baseman and life time .300 hitter who joined the Kansas City Monarchs at age 18.
3. 1726 Poyntz - Boyhood home of Del Close, stage and film actor and one of the pioneers of improvisational comedy who was long associated with the Second City improv troupe in Chicago and with Saturday Night Live in New York.
4. 412 North Eleventh - The first dormitory at the first land grant college in the U.S., built by C.P. Dewey, the cattleman who developed the ranch that is known today as the Konza Prairie.

Riley County Museum director, Cheryl Collins, gave this quiz to local elected officials at a recent inter-governmental meeting.

Elected officials are often called upon to make decisions involving properties. When they weigh the value of one course of action against another, it is important to know all the facts before deciding.

How does one determine if a property is historic? Only a relative handful of Riley County properties are listed on any historic register so register listings can not serve as a comprehensive guide to historical importance. Can you look at a property and determine if a property is historic? Of course not! Making a determination based on facts is going to take research.

The Riley County Historical Museum (RCHM) has resources to assist in finding information about properties that might be affected by public projects. The archive/library is **open by appointment**. Please call (785-565-6490) or email (lglasgow@rileycountyks.gov) the RCHM's archivist, Linda Glasgow to make arrangements for her to assist you in your research.

**It is good public policy for public
officials to have all the facts
before making decisions.**

Register Properties in Riley County, Kansas

National Register Of Historic Places

Anderson Hall, Kansas State University, Kansas State University, Manhattan
 Community House, 120 North Fourth Street, Manhattan
 Damon Runyon House, 400 Osage, Manhattan
 E.A. & Ura Wharton House, 608 Houston Street, Manhattan
 Fitz House, 1014 Houston Street, Manhattan
 Goodnow Memorial Home, 2301 Claflin Road, Manhattan
 Grimes House, 203 Delaware Street, Manhattan
 Hulse-Daughters House, 617 Colorado, Manhattan
 Jeremiah Platt House, 2005 Claflin Road, Manhattan
 KSAC Radio Towers, Kansas State University, Manhattan
 Lyda-Jean Apartment House, 501 Houston Street, Manhattan
 (Old) Manhattan Carnegie Library Building , Fifth Street & Poyntz Avenue, Manhattan
 Mattie M. Elliott House, 600 Houston Street, Manhattan
 McFarlane-Wareham House, 1906 Leavenworth Street, Manhattan
 Riley County Courthouse, 100 Courthouse Plaza, Manhattan
 Robert Ulrich House, 121 North Eighth Street, Manhattan
 Samuel Houston House, 3624 Anderson Avenue, Manhattan
 Seven Dolors Catholic Church, Juliette Avenue & Pierre Street, Manhattan
 Woman's Club House, 900 Poyntz Avenue, Manhattan

Register of Historic Kansas Places

Manhattan State Bank, 400 Poyntz Avenue, Manhattan
 Manhattan Union Pacific Depot, Fort Riley Boulevard, Manhattan
 Washington & Julia Marlatt Homestead, 1600 College Avenue, Manhattan

Manhattan Register of Historic Places

Mattie Mails Coons House, 1922 Leavenworth Street

In a letter dated July 20, 2007, the Kansas State Historical Society announced that the Hulse-Daughters House at 617 Colorado Street has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The letter states that the National Register is the country's official list of historically significant properties and Kansans can feel proud to have a large and growing representation of these tangible links to our past.


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Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance members should feel especially proud because our organization facilitated the transfer of ownership that saved 617 Colorado from demolition by neglect.

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