
MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

AUGUST, 2010

Websites to Visit!

Advisory Council
on Historic Preservation
achp.gov

Kansas Preservation Alliance,
Inc.
kpalliance.org

Kansas Historical Society
kshs.org

Preservation Programs
kshs.org/resource/buildings.htm

Archaeology Programs
kshs.org/archeologists/index.htm

National Park Service
Heritage Preservation Services
cr.nps.gov/hps

National Register of Historic Places
cr.nps.gov/nr/

Tax Credit Program
cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/tax

National Center for Preservation
Technology and Training
ncptt.nps.gov

National Trust for
Historic Preservation
nthp.org

National Main Street Center
mainstreet.org

Traditional Building
traditional-building.com

Report: State Historic Preservation Office 2009 State Preservation Conference Planning Results

The results of two planning sessions held at the 2009 State Preservation Conference in Topeka were reported at this year's conference. The overall goal is "Preservation at the Center of Every Community in Kansas." Ideas were discussed for improving preservation in the state. The following represents the agreed upon goals in priority order:

1. Create a Habitat for Humanity type program to inspire and organize volunteers to help with selected preservation projects.
2. Maintain a statewide organization with preservation advocacy as its primary mission and with the organizational structure to communicate and respond quickly.
3. Bring the message of preservation to conferences held by other associations and disciplines and encourage joint conferences with other organizations to increase the preservation audience. For example, partner with local historical societies on programming.
4. Use technology to create databases to demonstrate the economic importance of preservation. Address the need for a clearinghouse of information using technology.
5. Create programs for K-12 to provide students with an understanding and appreciation of preservation. Curriculum materials should focus on both the economic impact of preservation and the value of preserving a community's cultural resources to its citizenry.
6. Discourage sprawl by encouraging the reuse of rehabilitated historic structures.

ANNUAL MEETING
SAVE THE DATE:
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9TH
7:00 P.M.
MANHATTAN'S UNION PACIFIC
DEPOT

Inez Alsop House, 1646 Laramie

The Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society (NFHAS) has recently become the sole trustee for the **Inez Alsop Foundation** which oversees the property at 1646 Laramie.

In 1968 when the (then Ramada Inn) hotel building was constructed, the late Inez Alsop was the only property owner on the block who refused to sell. Ms. Alsop, a resident of Manhattan since 1923 and who lived in the house from 1952 until her death in 1989, considered the property to be a bird sanctuary. Her will precludes the property from being sold.

According to NFHAS's July/August 2010 newsletter, the first trust holders were not responsible stewards of the property. Volunteers had to remove two industrial sized dumpsters worth of "junk" from the condemned house.

The condemnation was not for structural reasons. In this case the condemnation requires the house to be "maintained vacant" due to recent problems with vagrancy.

On July 20th Brad Claussen of Manhattan Code Services stated that his department has not conducted a thorough structural inspection of the

house. He had assumed the house would be fixed up and returned to useful service so was surprised to learn of the NFHAS newsletter article mentioning demolition.

According to Cam Moeller of Manhattan's Community Development Department, the property is just outside the halo of the KSAC radio towers that are listed on the National Register, which means the demolition will not be reviewed by Manhattan's Historic Resources Board.

Contact NFHAS president Patricia Yeager at 776-9593 for more info.

Phillipena J. Strasser House

The Historic Sites Board of Review has voted to forward a nomination of the Phillipena J. Strasser House to the

office of the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places to be evaluated by its professional staff. If the

staff concurs with the board's findings, the Strasser House will be included on the National Register.

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

To the editor:

Riley County tax assessors recently appraised a Manhattan home at a higher rate because the house happens to be on the National Register of Historic Places. In this particular case, the homeowners appealed the case to the Riley County Board of Tax Appeals—Small Claims Division.

The homeowners brought in a local real estate agent to evaluate the property in question using values of comparable structures in the city. Subsequently, the professional real estate agent valued the National Register property at a lower price than that assessed by the County.

The case ultimately went to the Court of Tax Appeals State of Kansas Small Claims and Expedited Hearings Division, and the assessed value of the home was lowered to a level more representative of its true worth.

That this happened is, to say the least, disconcerting. National Register status protects older homes and stabilizes historic neighborhoods. The threat of higher taxes on historically designated properties and neighborhoods will deter individuals and neighborhoods from seeking Historic Register status for properties.

We in the local preservation movement should be aware that this particular activity is occurring, and we should be prepared to meet this head on. As homeowners, we want our homes to be high dollar when it comes time to sell, but we all know that when it comes to selling real estate, the property, historic or not, is usually compared with similar homes that have sold in the area in the last year or so.

Preservationists who have purchased a neglected, old house fully

expect to see taxes rise as they improve the building. However, when a property is assigned a higher price tag because it has National Register status, then this is definitely a step in the wrong direction.

National Register designation is an honor for homeowners and it demonstrates that a particular property is of historic value; on the other hand, it does not necessarily imply that a particular structure is worth \$100,000 more than its undesignated, but comparable, neighbor just down the street.

Dixie West
1014 Houston

Dixie West has served as president of the Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance on three occasions. Dixie and her husband Ron own the Leslie Fitz House which is on the National Register.

Junction City Historic Downtown Tour

About fifteen Alliance members took advantage of the walking tour of Junction City's downtown guided by Manhattan architect Bruce McMillan on Saturday, May 22nd. The tour concluded at the Geary County Museum. Former Alliance board member Georganne White offered refreshments, a short history talk, and the opportunity to tour both the Museum and the Starcke/Henderson Period House Museum located next door.

Thank you Bruce and Georganne!



Update: *The Mary Butterfield House, 831 Leavenworth*

By Kathy Dzewaltowski, member of the Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance board of directors and member of the First Presbyterian Church

Photos courtesy of Dr. Patricia J. O'Brien

Thanks to the First Presbyterian Church for providing access to the building on November 2, 2009

The Mary Butterfield House, located at 831 Leavenworth and better known locally as the former emergency shelter, was named to the Kansas Preservation Alliance's 2010 list of Most Endangered Historic Properties.

You may be asking how did the house get to the point of being considered endangered and what happened to First Presbyterian's (the house's owner) plan to offer the house for free to anyone who was willing to move it? Well, things didn't go as smoothly as hoped.

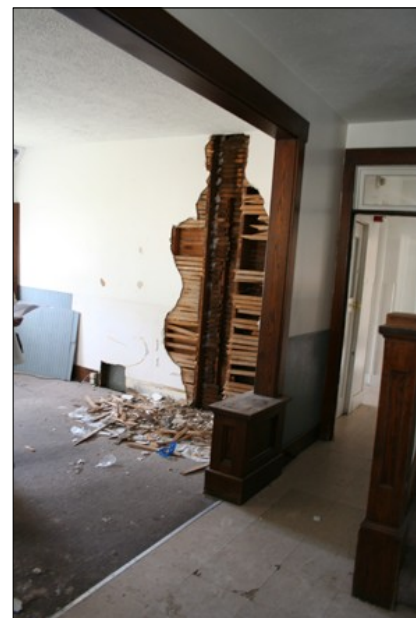
To bring everyone up to speed, a little background information is necessary. Manhattan Emergency Shelter Inc. (MESI) had occupied 831 Leavenworth since 1985. MESI built a new facility and vacated the house over a year ago leaving First Presbyterian with no specific plans for continued use of the structure. Last summer, the church offered the house for free to anyone who was willing to move it, and an article in the June 18, 2009, edition of *The Manhattan Mercury* indicated that the church had been

contacted by 20-30 parties who were interested in the house. The plan to move the house hit a snag, though, when it was determined that it's wider than the street, which would result in several mature trees needing to be removed in order to move the house from its lot. The city was not keen on the idea of cutting down several mature trees.

First Presbyterian then began the process of pursuing demolition. The Butterfield House falls within the environs of two houses on the National Register of Historic Places, the Woman's Club House and the Robert Ulrich House, which means the demolition request had to be reviewed by Manhattan's Historic Resources Board (HRB) and by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The HRB denied demolition and determined that demolition of the house "Does not meet the Standards and Guidelines for Evaluating the Effect of

Projects on Environs and will encroach upon, damage or destroy the environs of the Robert Ulrich House." The church had also proposed to create a columbarium (a repository for cremated remains) with green space on the site, which was in conflict with the standard that states, "When the severity of deterioration requires removal within the environs, compatible reconstruction shall occur." The SHPO also denied the demolition request and determined that "831 Leavenworth is a character-defining feature of the environs of the Robert Ulrich House and the Woman's Club House."

Advocates for saving the house became concerned about the possibility of its being vulnerable to piecemeal demolition after observing that stones had been removed from the front porch and after touring the interior and observing that some demolition had taken place in anticipation of complete demolition being approved. The M/RCPA submitted a nomination to the Kansas Preser-





vation Alliance for consideration for the "Most Endangered" list, and the Butterfield House was named to the 2010 list.

Why does the Butterfield House matter? Preservationists so often hear, "It's just an old house." In this particular case, the Butterfield House provides a context, a physical record of time, place, and use, for the two properties on the National Register. One only needs to look to the Phillipena Strasser House, the stone house in the north redevelopment area and also on the state register, to see what happens when a historic register house's context is allowed to be destroyed. The Strasser House is now an orphan, the last remnant of its residential neighborhood, surrounded by all new construction with nothing in its environs to provide a physical record of what the neighborhood used to be like. The Strasser House looks out of place even though it's an original structure that has been there over one hundred years. In the case of the Butterfield House, all of the other houses on its block are gone, believed to have been demolished by the church in the 1960s. It is the only remaining house on its block that provides historical context for the Ulrich House and the Woman's Club House.

If the Butterfield House were not in the environs of National Register properties, would it still be worth saving? The house was included in a historical survey of residential properties of the late 19th and early 20th

centuries and received a historical integrity rating of "excellent" and was noted to be of the "Colonial Revival/Georgian" architectural style. The house's interior still has many of its original features, including stained glass sidelights, brick fireplace, recessed panel room dividers between the front entry and the living room, pocket doors, plaster walls, transom windows, and unpainted original woodwork.

If the house had not been in the environs of historic properties, the church quite likely would have been issued a demolition permit and the house would be gone.

So many times in Manhattan and in other communities, perfectly fine older houses are demolished to make way for new construction with the arguments being something along the lines of "they aren't 'historic,' they're just old houses" or "they're old and not worth the investment to renovate them." Many people believe it makes more economical sense to invest in creating new instead of reinvesting and improving the already built environment.

Preservationists see beyond the tired exteriors and see the quality materials and fine craftsmanship -- structures that were built to last and would continue to last with a little care. In the case of the Butterfield House, preservationists also see the irony in sending the house to the landfill while creating green space in its place. Demolishing the Butterfield House

would rob Manhattan of yet another house that provides a physical record of life in the early days of the town.

So, what happens next? An interested buyer contacted First Presbyterian about purchasing the house and renovating it to be a residence, but the church wants to maintain ownership of the property and doesn't want to sell it. Other charitable organizations were contacted to see if they might be interested in using the house, but nothing has panned out along those lines either. First Presbyterian also has the option of pursuing demolition with the City Commission, and the City Commission does have the authority to override the findings of the HRB and SHPO and approve demolition if it so chooses.

In the months since the HRB and SHPO denied demolition, the Butterfield House has continued to be vacant. In similar situations, structures have been left to sit while the elements and a lack of maintenance take their toll, a process known as "demolition by neglect." Eventually, the code office deems the structure unsafe and condemns it, thereby accomplishing what the owner wanted all along.

First Presbyterian's plans for the house are unknown, but it's hard to imagine that creative and thoughtful suggestions for uses for the house wouldn't be considered.



A Pictorial Review of the 2010 State Preservation Conference

Preservation at the Crossroads of America

Newton & North Newton and vicinity, June 2—5, 2010



The J. J. Krehbiel & Co. Carriage Factory is now an art gallery/museum nominated to the National Register

Original residential fence surrounds Krehbiel Memorial Park



The Warkentin House Museum, built between 1886 and 1887, is listed on the National Register



Interior of
Masonic Lodge
Newton



The Carnegie Library,
now the
Harvey County
Historical Museum,
is listed on the
National Register



↑ Saturday's tour included
↑ The Bernhard Warkentin Homestead, Halstead,
National Register/National Historic Site



Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church
Goessel, Kansas

My First State Preservation Conference

By Sara Fisher

I was a newcomer to the Kansas Preservation Conference, held on the Bethel College campus in North Newton, June 2nd through 5th.

As a newbie, I came with no expectations about the conference and a limited understanding of what “preservation” meant and what preservationists did. (Isn’t that why you go to conferences? To learn more?)

My first impression was how *seemingly* unrelated the presentations were. For instance, I attended a session on an affordable housing renovation program in Hutchinson, on volunteerism, and on the Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) program. I took a walking tour of Mennonite architecture on the Bethel College campus. I viewed a slide presentation on three remarkable archeologists who were from North Newton, and then I took a stroll down the Sand Creek Trail, past archeological sites right on the Bethel College campus.

On the surface these were very different, seemingly unrelated topics. Yet, the presentations *were* united by the theme of protecting and preserving social, historical, and natural resources.

I came to realize that preservation is about recognizing and appreciating what and who has come before us and the traces they left behind, including those of the hunters and gatherers of the plains, the structures created by the Mennonite craftsmen, and the preeminent turn-of-the-century architects who designed them.

I realized that *preservationists are not born, they are made*. They are made when they learn (and teach others) to recognize the ways in which the environment is rich with markers of our past, our natural and social histories.

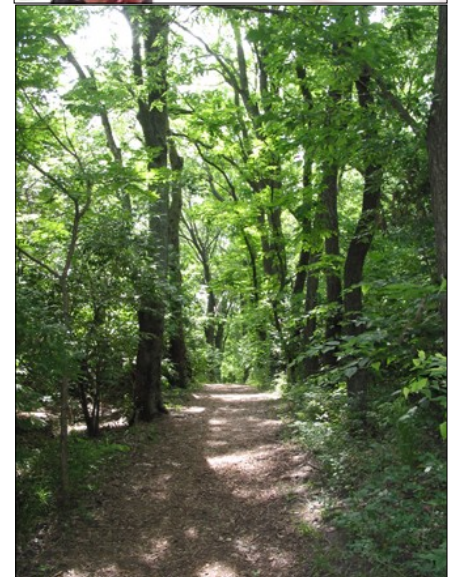
At the state preservation conference I became a better preservationist by learning (among other things) to recognize and appreciate different architectural styles and by developing a vocabulary that marries “green design” with historical properties and by being challenged to see the traces of peoples long past.

My acculturation into the world of preservation, however, was not complete until the Friday night banquet at which Charles Phoenix, author of **God Bless Americana** amused the attendees with his illustrated discussion of iconic American culture.

Dressed in what appeared to be a vintage double-knit red, white, and yellow suit, Mr. Phoenix challenged us to appreciate who we are as Americans and to not take for granted the traces *we* are currently leaving behind for others to appreciate. These traces include our vehicles, buildings, neon signs, clothing, and vacation photos.

I left that presentation in particular and the conference in general with a re-focused eye for what is worthy of “preservation.” Indeed, preservation is about much more than saving the old building, environs, and tax credits. Preservation is about protecting and preserving a culture, its physical markers, and the oral accounts of people—our people. To be a preservationist in America is to cherish our American heritage.

Sara Ford Fisher, a member of the Preservation Alliance board of directors since 2008, holds a Ph.D. in Sociology from K-State. She moved to the area in 1996 and into the Arts and Crafts bungalow at 811 Osage in 2000. She teaches sociology (and sometimes psychology) at the Manhattan Area Technical College. She also serves as a researcher for E3 at K-State and she volunteers with several community organizations.



Bethel College campus:
Mennonite Church
Administration Building
Sand Creek Trail





Photograph, probably late 1930's, courtesy of the Riley County Historical Society

Manhattan's Grand Masonic Temple

By Rebecca Bush

The story of the Manhattan Masonic Temple began in January 1914 when Adelia E. Higinbotham sold Lots 419 and 420, Ward 2, to the trustees of the Lafayette Lodge No. 16 of the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons. These lots, situated at the northeast corner of Sixth and Poyntz sat vacant until February 12, 1920, when Manhattan Masons voted to build a temple for the local Scottish Rite organizations. It was estimated that more than 800 people would use the facility, including members of Lafayette Lodge No. 16, Manhattan Chapter No. 14 of the Royal Arch Masons, Oriental Commandery No. 48 of the Knights Templar, Order of the Eastern Star Chapter No. 209, the Scottish Rite Club, the Masonic Club, and DeMolay Chapter No. 5.

According to the February 13, 1920

edition of the Manhattan Daily Nationalist, the Masons specified that the building should be "for purely Masonic uses, and not for partly commercial uses."

Members organized a committee to develop tentative plans, and Topeka architect W.E. Glover (known for designing many homes in the Westboro subdivision and East Topeka Junior High School) was hired. In June the Blue Lodge and Royal Arch chapters approved plans for a story-and-a-half temple measuring 80 by 100 feet.

The building, which would include a 40' by 80' lodge room with a stage in addition to a library, reception area, game room, and lodge offices, had an estimated construction cost of \$100,000.

Excavation began with a large celebration on August 19, 1920. No less

than seven speeches preceded the first shovelful of dirt, thrown by junior warden W.H. Sanders. Several other Masons from the crowd of 75 then joined in, as well as three women from the Order of the Eastern Star. The Daily Nationalist reported that the 2,200 cubic yards of dirt excavated was to be bought by the city for 25 cents per load and used to fill a ditch on Thurston Street between Juliette Avenue and Eighth Street.

Under the guidance of well-known local contractor and Mason, Clarence Johnson (who also built the Riley County Courthouse and the current First United Methodist Church building), construction proceeded quickly. The cornerstone was laid on April 14, 1921. A gala affair marked the occasion, with state Masonic officials offering praise for what would surely

be remembered as a “Red Letter Day” for local Masons.

The April 15, 1921, edition of the Manhattan Mercury reported that the following items were placed in the cornerstone: “a history of the Lafayette Lodge No. 16 and a complete roster of all the members of the Royal Arch Masons, Oriental Commandery No. 48, the O.E.S. and the DeMolay; a program of the 1921 Past Masters’ Night; By Laws of the Order; one ‘Let’s Get It Done’ booster button, a Chapter penny, a Blue Book, and copies of the Manhattan daily papers.” That night, two hundred and twenty-five Masons dined at a banquet prepared by members of the Order of the Eastern Star.

The first meeting in the main lodge room took place on June 17, 1922, and the Masons continued to use the temple without interruption until December 1933. It was then that insurance company Standard Life Association won \$40,676.58 and a mortgage foreclosure against the Manhattan Ma-

sonic Temple Association. The Masonic lodges continued to lease the building until July 6, 1938, when the Methodist Episcopal Church (today’s First United Methodist Church) suddenly announced they had bought the temple for Sunday school and “other religious education purposes.”

Dr. W.E. Grimes, chair of the church board, later announced that the purchase price was \$20,000, with half of that coming from a trust left to the church by longtime member Lucinda Harris. Despite being more than \$35,000 in debt from other projects, the church board “deemed (it) wise to take advantage of the opportunity” to purchase another building for the growing congregation. The temple was formally dedicated on April 23, 1939, as the Lucinda Harris Memorial Temple of Christian Education.

The Methodist Church used the building continuously from 1938 to 1957 for Sunday school classes and general meetings.

Since then, the building has been

used intermittently. When USD 383’s junior high building was undergoing renovations in the late 1970s, the district rented the temple as a temporary school facility. In 1981-82 an extensive renovation allowed the structure to be updated for modern church use while retaining its most distinctive historic and architectural features.

New stained glass windows showcasing Manhattan’s history glow in a small chapel, while most doorknobs are still emblazoned with Masonic emblems.

In 1986, the First United Methodist Church and renovation architect Richard J. Hill were honored with a Kansas Preservation Alliance Award for their work to preserve the character of Manhattan’s grand Masonic Temple.

Rebecca Bush graduated from K-State with a B.A. in History in 2009. She is about to begin her second year at the University of South Carolina, earning an M.A. in Public History and working as a graduate assistant at Historic Columbia Foundation.

Kansas Preservation Alliance Honors Ray Weisenburger With Lifetime Achievement Award

The Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance’s own Ray Bradley Weisenburger was honored with the Muriel Golobay Lifetime Achievement Award by the Kansas Preservation Alliance (KPA) at the 2010 state preservation conference.

Ray is a registered architect and a registered landscape architect who began his teaching career at Kansas State University in 1954. He has just completed his forty-sixth year of service in the classroom. Among the courses he teaches is Urban Design and Preservation Theory. Ray, himself, doesn’t know how many students he has introduced to historic preservation.

Ray is a member of the American Institute of Architects and AIA Kansas. He has served on the AIA Kansas Historic Resources Committee from 1985 to present.

Ray has served on the KPA’s board of directors. He was vice president from 1987 to 1989 and president from 1989

to 1992. He also served as the KPA’s liaison to the AIA Historic Resources Committee from 1996 to 2007.

Appointed to the Kansas State Historic Sites Board of Review by Governor John Carlin in 1981, Ray served on that board until 1986.

Ray was a member of the Manhattan Urban Area Planning Board from 1981 to 1999, serving as chair from 1985 to 1987 and 1995 to 1996.

Ray served on Manhattan’s Core Downtown Redevelopment Committee from 2006 to present. He has also served on Manhattan’s Historic Resources Board from 2004 to present.

Ray’s long, varied, and ongoing record of service to historic preservation has been characterized by competence, professionalism, and excellence. The Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance congratulates Ray on this lifetime achievement award.

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"Seaton Hall"
By Ralph Fontenot

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Contact Ralph Fontenot at
785-539-0239
for information about
commissioning work.

When the Kansas Preservation Alliance board of directors determined that they would be honoring Ray Weisenburger with a lifetime achievement award, the next question concerned what form the award should take. After some deliberation the decision was made to make the award personal by commissioning a painting of the building that has played an important role in Ray's professional life: Seaton Hall on the campus of Kansas State University. Noted watercolor artist Ralph Fontenot was asked to execute the commission. The Strecker Nelson Gallery and Danenberg's Jewelers complemented the painting with a lovely frame and a brass plaque. Read more about the award on page 9 of this newsletter.

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SEE US ON THE WEB AT WWW.PRESERVEMANHATTAN.ORG.