
MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY, 2007

A LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT, JUDINE MECSERI

The new year is already off to a busy, exciting start. We are determining how to combine all of our efforts toward our common goal of historic preservation.

Although individuals may define Preservation in various ways, we can identify a few common links:

- Preservation respects our heritage.
- Preservation of historic buildings and structures provides us with a sense of place.
- Preservation is an economic tool for the revitalization of communities.

There are several entities in Manhattan and Riley County working towards preserving our history. The first ever Historic Summit will bring some of these organizations together to discuss issues of common interest and to share their priorities with one another. The Summit will be held on Thursday, February 8th, at 7:00 p.m. at the Union Pacific Depot. See page 2 for more information.

How can you help?

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has several suggestions.

1. Explore your family's history. Show your kids the places where

you went to school or where you got married; take your parents to a place that's important in your life.

2. Walk or bike. Getting out of your car allows you to appreciate the buildings and parks that make up the place in which you live.

3. Shop on Main Street. Traditional commercial districts not only have appealing buildings but they also feature locally-owned stores that are vital parts of your community.

4. Tour your hometown. Visit a historic site in your area or stop by the local historical museum. Check the events calendar in the newspaper or on the Web, then go to one of the street fairs or ethnic festivals or neighborhood tours you've always meant to enjoy.

5. Read all about it. Every community has a book about its local history and many have more than one. They're available at the local library or at the historical museum.

6. Entertain yourself surrounded by history. Attend live performances or a movie at a historic theater, or eat at a restaurant in a historic building. If you like the atmosphere, tell the owner or host.

7. Join an organization dedicated to preservation—even better, more than one! Become a member of the

National Trust online, or find out about groups in your area such as the Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance.

8. Sleep in a historic place. There are historic inns and B & B's across the country as well as right here in Manhattan.

9. Ask your neighbors about your neighborhood. Talk to people who've lived on your street longer than you have. Find out what they remember about living there, and about the people who have moved on.

10. Visit some sacred history. Churches are often among a community's oldest and most beautiful buildings. Cemeteries reveal the fascinating lives of those who came before.

Protecting America's heritage can be easy and fun—SO ENJOY!

Judine

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Manhattan Historic Summit
Thursday, February 8th, 7:00 p.m.
Manhattan's U.P. Depot
M/RCPA Board Meeting
Thursday, March 8th, 7:00 p.m.
Manhattan's U.P. Depot

Reaching for the Summit

By Bonnie Lynn-Sherow

The Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance, Inc. will be hosting Manhattan’s first Historic Summit on Thursday, February 8th, at 7:00 p.m. at Manhattan’s historic Union Pacific Depot.

The Summit will be an opportunity for local groups to share their visions and concerns about the current state and future of historic preservation in Manhattan.

The boards of the M/RCPA, Downtown Manhattan Incorporated (member of the National Trust Main Street Program) and the City’s Historic Resources Board will be the primary participants in the meeting along with a select group of interested representatives from other organizations.

The summit’s purpose is strictly educational and informational, as each organization presents its own priorities for the future of preserva-

tion in Manhattan.

The purpose of the summit is to identify common goals and challenges and thereby provide mutual support in meeting those goals. For example, the older portions of Manhattan are undergoing rapid development—something that all three groups have expressed concern about.

It is hoped that better communication within the wider preservation community will prevent a duplication of effort and provide each group with new insights and resources to meet their objectives.

The Manhattan Historic Summit is very timely, coming on the heels of the Preserve America summit meetings in October of 2006 in New Orleans, Louisiana, chaired by First Lady Laura Bush and hosted by the National Council for Historic Preservation.

Some of the topics reviewed by several panels of national experts included “Building a Preservation Ethic,” “Historic Resources as Economic Assets,” and “Protecting Places that Matter.”

Look for the complete executive summaries from the national summit and webcasts of the meeting at www.preserveamerica.org.

Any member of the Preservation Alliance who would like to volunteer to help host the upcoming summit is encouraged to call Bonnie Lynn-Sherow at 565-0086 or email the Alliance at info@preservemanhattan.org.

Bonnie Lynn-Sherow is immediate past-president of the M/RCPA and continues to serve on the M/RCPA Board. She is also a member of Manhattan’s Historic Resources Board.

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Poyntz Avenue, 1918, But Where Exactly?



Courtesy of the Riley County Historical Society

Downtown Manhattan was a bustling place in 1918 and it boasted amenities that made the town proud.

Although not the first street lights on Poyntz, eighteen electric street lights had been installed by the Manhattan Ice, Light & Power Company in 1914 at a cost of \$2,138. These were the decorative King De Lux No. 105 light standards as seen in this photo. They were topped by four 60 watt Tungsten side lights contained in ten inch Alba balls and one 100 watt Tungsten top light contained in a fourteen inch Alba ball. The lights were on from dusk to eleven p.m. and the top lights were wired to shine all night if desired.

The *Industrialist* reported in 1908 that the Manhattan city council had let the contracts for the curbing of Poyntz and Juliette, a total of over twenty thousand feet.

Prior to 1911 Poyntz Avenue

downtown was surfaced with macadam. Layers of compacted angular stone or "aggregate" created a strong and free-draining pavement. The advent of motor vehicles traveling at faster speeds created a vacuum that sucked dust from the macadam surface and also caused the raveling of the road material.

The brick street surface, laid down on Poyntz in 1911, was visually pleasing and a boost to civic pride.

In 1912 the city acquired a "flusher" to cleanse the paved streets of town. Purchased at cost of \$1,000, the machine produced 70 pounds of water pressure which was "sufficient power to flush off the heaviest material that may accumulate on the city streets. Since the city has gone ahead with much street paving, the flushing formerly done by a hose was entirely inadequate." (*Manhattan Nationalist*, September 26, 1912)

Streetcar tracks had been laid down the center of Poyntz by W.R. West & Sons in 1909. The car barn, powerhouse, and offices were located at 213 Yuma. Cars ran at twenty minute intervals. A side track in the 800 block of Poyntz allowed one car to pull over so that another car could pass it. The conductor collected the fares (five cents) while waiting on the side track.

The line was extended to Eureka Lake Amusement Park, three miles west of town, in 1912 and was extended again to connect to the Union Power Company's line to Junction City in 1914.

Other transportation options depicted here include wheels, feet, and hooves.

This photo was taken from Third Street looking east towards the south 200 block of Poyntz where the Manhattan Town Center mall sits today.

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We're almost there, Radio Kansas!

The M/RCPA board has approved a plan to become, at the appropriate time, an underwriter for Radio Kansas, a National Public Radio affiliate station that serves most of the state and is especially popular with Manhattanites. We want to be ready with the cash when the time is right.

If you plan to donate to Radio Kansas this spring, please consider routing that donation through the M/RCPA's underwriting fund. Donations to the M/RCPA are tax deductible and if your contribution is earmarked for Radio Kansas, you can be assured that it will go to Radio Kansas!

Book Sale to Support Historic House

The Riley County Historical Society's historic house museum, the Wolf House, is hosting its annual benefit book sale on March 9th and 10th this year. Donated books (hard cover and paperback), CDs, DVDs, videos, tapes, etc. may be left on the screened porch of the Wolf House (located at 630 Fremont). Call 785-565-6490 for more information.

Contact Us

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Snowy, Snowy Night



Manhattan's Union Pacific Depot, January 20, 2007
Photographs courtesy of Hillary Glasgow

Protecting Your Family and Pets from Lead Poisoning

By Barbara Anderson



Deteriorated lead-based paint can create a health risk for building occupants.

It is widely known that lead is a health hazard, but preservationists are sometimes surprised to learn where potentially hazardous lead can be found in historic buildings.

Most people know that historic buildings were typically painted with lead-based paints. Even buildings that are not thought of as historic can have lead-based finishes because it was lawful to use lead-based finishes in residential structures until 1978. For that reason most homeowners should be concerned about lead.

To make matters more complicated, lead is found in historic materials other than opaque paints. Historically lead was also used in some varnishes, window glazing compounds, and joint sealants.

Residences built before 1978 that are occupied by pregnant women or children under the age of six, should be tested for lead-based coatings and lead-containing glazing compounds and joint sealants.

Testing should be focused on painted or varnished surfaces within reach of children, deteriorated finishes, friction surfaces (such as window sash and frames that touch as the window operates), surfaces that are subject to abrasion (like stair treads), glazing compounds, joint sealants, and the soil surrounding the building exterior where lead dust may have contaminated the soil.

Homeowners can purchase testing products to do cursory testing themselves, however licensed hazardous materials professionals will use more sophisticated technology and provide highly accurate results. Hazardous materials professionals will test all finish layers, even those buried under more recent, and thus lead-free, finish layers.

Before beginning any project that will require sanding, sawing, drilling, refinishing, and the like, homeowners should have a haz-

ardous materials professional perform a test for lead. If lead is found, a licensed professional can provide a risk assessment and make recommendations for action.

When undertaking a project where lead is present, the construction methods and materials should be determined by a licensed professional so that they are appropriate to the situation.

The work should be undertaken by individuals who have completed training and are certified to do the work of lead encapsulation or removal. These certified professionals will make sure that the workers and building occupants are protected from exposure to the lead and that lead dust is not allowed to contaminate the building or the site.

Barbara Anderson is an assistant professor of interior design at Kansas State University. She has more than twenty years of experience in historic preservation and she currently serves on the M/RCPA board.

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