



MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER 1994 – 2014

CELEBRATING **YEARS** OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

February 2014

A Message From Our President

The M/RCPA celebrates our organization's 20th anniversary in 2014! It seemed appropriate to share a president's message from 1995 from the M/RCPA's first president.

"Dear Friends and Members:

"In early spring 1994, a group of concerned citizens met at the Riley County Historical Museum on a Sunday afternoon. Most of us did not know each other, but we had been drawn together in a common cause. We were increasingly frustrated that the community of Manhattan was bent on a relentless pursuit of modernization in the name of 'progress.' It was apparent to us that many old structures, under no protective eye, were falling and would continue to fall by way of the wrecking ball. Of course, this has been going on for years. Older, large houses have been broken up into rental units due to housing shortages for KSU and Ft. Riley. Tree-lined streets full of historic properties are giving way to acreages of gaping blacktopped parking lots in historic neighborhoods. We believed it was time to educate ourselves, our neighbors, and our city government that we must recognize these historic structures and the space in which they sit. We stand at the brink of the 21st Century, hoping that our community will continue to grow and prosper, but it is our duty as individuals and a community to preserve the work of those 19th and 20th Century people who paved the way . . . I invite you to renew your membership to the M/RCPA. Let's make the second year as successful as the first!

Dixie West, President"

And, we've continued to promote and advocate for historic preservation for the past 20 years.

Our advocacy includes both local concerns and also state issues. The 2014 session of the Kansas Legislature has begun, and already a bill has been introduced that impacts historic preservation. S.B. 298 was introduced in the Senate's Assessment and Taxation Committee and proposes to eliminate the Kansas Mortgage Registration Fee, which is the sole source of funding for the Heritage Trust Fund (HTF) program.

The Kansas Mortgage Registration Fee is a one-time payment of 0.26% of the principal debt securing the mortgage paid by an individual or entity before the mortgage is filed with the county Register of Deeds. The majority of the mortgage registration fee – 25/26th of the fee – goes to the county's general fund and supports basic county operations. The remaining 1/26th goes to the state treasurer and supports the HTF.

The HTF program was established in Kansas in 1990 and provides matching funds up to \$90,000 for the preservation of properties listed on the state or national registers. Locally, HTF monies have been used for work on the Carnegie Library, the Riley County Courthouse, and the Union Pacific Depot. It has been an important resource for historic preservation projects as well as a revenue source for counties.

The M/RCPA will keep members up-to-date with e-mail messages and postings to our web site under the "News" tab on the home page.

Kathy Dzewaltowski

How You Can Help

As the legislative session progresses and should issues arise that concern historic preservation, you can help by contacting our area legislators and sharing your thoughts. You can also help by contributing to lobbying efforts.

The Friends of Historic Preservation is a coalition of preservation advocates and has a paid lobbyist. Contributions should be made payable to Terry Humphrey Public Affairs Group and sent to

Friends of Historic Preservation
c/o Terry Humphrey
Public Affairs Group
P. O. Box 4953
Topeka, KS 66604

The Kansas Preservation Alliance (KPA) also advocates for historic preservation, and you may be interested in joining the KPA. Kansas Preservation Alliance
P. O. Box 2506
Topeka, KS 66601
www.kpalliance.org

Manhattan/Riley County
Preservation Alliance
P. O. Box 1893
Manhattan, KS 66505

E-mail:
mrcpanewsletter@gmail.com
Web site:
www.preservemanhattan.org
Facebook: Visit our web site and click the Facebook "Like" button at the bottom of the home page.

The History of Long's Park

by Wyatt Thompson

As the Park Planner for the City of Manhattan, I oversee planning and design for Manhattan's 1,200 acres of parks, recreation areas, and open spaces. In the short time I have held this role, I have often been asked about the significance and the history of our city's parks. My favorite is "Why is Paul Bunyan in City Park?" (It's not Paul Bunyan; it's [Johnny Kaw](#), thank you very much.) One question that has really intrigued me is about the history of Long's Park, at 17th and Colorado Street.

In 2013, the City had funds available through a Community Development Block Grant to make improvements at Long's Park. Early in the design process, I began researching the history of the site. That search led to Ben Eckart, a local oil industry historian, who has amassed a wealth of information about the park at his website <http://www.enarco.com/long/park.htm>.

Long's Park was platted as one of Manhattan's town squares in 1857. It was swampy ground and went undeveloped for many years, until 1917, when A. W. Long, a

former Manhattan mayor and owner of the Long Oil Company, contracted with the City to operate a service station there. The square was located on U.S. Highway 40 (modern day 17th Street), a popular coast-to-coast highway. Mr. Long opened a gas station and market at the northwest corner of the park, and in 1926 developed a free tourist camp at the site. Travelers could use the park, including landscaped picnic areas and a shelter house with a fireplace, restrooms, kitchen, and a telephone, all for free, paying only for gas to cook in the kitchen.

Mr. Eckart met me at the park one day and showed me where Mr. Long's service station had been. The buildings were gone, but the concrete foundation was still visible, just a few feet from the sidewalk. Most people would walk by without noticing, but now that I knew what was there, I wanted to let others know. Mr. Eckart put me in touch with David Dary, A. W. Long's grandson. Mr. Dary has graciously offered his time, resources, and knowledge to further my understanding of the

park's history.

The City of Manhattan Parks and Recreation Department is interested in telling this story. I am currently working with Mr. Dary, our local Historic Resources Board, and the Riley County Historical Society to install an historical marker at Long's Park. The marker is envisioned to interpret the history of the site, from the original plat to the most recent improvements that will be completed later this year. A ribbon cutting and dedication of the park is tentatively planned for Summer 2014. It is the Department's intention to develop a plan to install similar markers at other parks. Each park has a story, and the history of these public spaces should be shared with the thousands of visitors who use our facilities each year.

My purpose in telling this story here is twofold. First, I want the preservation community to be informed about the work we have been doing at Long's Park, and hope to do at others, as time and funds permit. Second, I would like (*continued on pg. 3*)



View of Long's Park taken from the west side of U.S. 40, looking southeast toward the Long Oil station and tourist park, late 1920s – early 1930s. The photo is courtesy of Ben Eckart, <http://www.enarco.com/long/park.htm>.

(continued from pg. 2)

to ask for your help. We have documented the key events at many of our parks and recreation facilities, primarily from resources at the Riley County Historical Society. I would like to know if

there is other material – photographs, postcards, maps, articles, etc. – that would help tell the story of our parks, and how Manhattan’s residents and visitors have enjoyed and shaped them.

If you have documents or

stories that would bring this history to life, please contact me at 785-587-2757 or by e-mail at thompson@cityofmnhk.com. I would appreciate the opportunity to visit with you and learn all that I can.

Jarbeaux House: Sold!

The City of Manhattan recently accepted proposals for the disposition of the Sophia Jarbeaux House, located at 402 Bluemont Avenue, which it had acquired during the construction of the roundabout at the intersection of Fourth Street and Bluemont Avenue. During the Jan. 21st City Commission meeting, commissioners approved authorizing the mayor to enter into an agreement with Tim and Adena Weiser. In essence, the Weisers’ proposal was accepted by commissioners, and the sale is not yet final but will be soon.

The Jarbeaux House is not currently listed on a historic register, but the State Historic Preservation Office has determined that the house is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under the Multiple Property Documentation Form, “Late Nineteenth Century Vernacular Stone Houses in Manhattan, Kansas.” The Weisers plan to pursue registry listing.

The Weisers intend to keep the Jarbeaux House residential, which is in keeping with the current zoning. The Weisers’ proposal included the possibility of adding a second floor to the existing single-story wood-frame addition, improving the landscaping, and adding a privacy fence. The city allowed prospective buyers to tour

the house and provided inspection reports, but the Weisers said they don’t really know what improvements the house will need or what will be possible to accomplish until they officially have ownership and can thoroughly examine the house.

The Weisers are excited to be taking on the project and are looking forward to reviving the historic property. They enjoy finding houses that have the potential to be wonderful again if given some care and attention, and they enjoy bringing the houses back to livable condition. Tim and Adena are M/RCPA members and were featured in the August 2013 newsletter for their renovation work on the house located at 100 South Manhattan Avenue. They were also recognized with a Historic Preservation Building Award in 2013 for the renovation of the South Manhattan Avenue property.

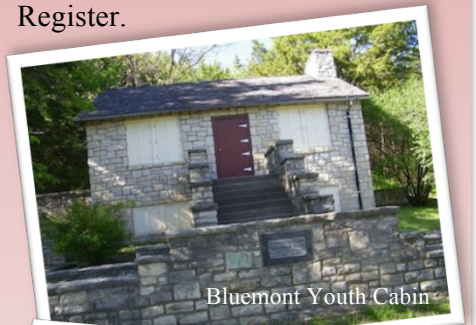
The M/RCPA has advocated for the preservation of the Jarbeaux House for many years. Our organization participated in discussions that established how the adverse effects of the roundabout’s construction would be mitigated, which ultimately led to the house’s being moved on its lot. The M/RCPA is pleased that the house’s future looks bright!



Sophia Jarbeaux House

Added to Nat’l Register

The Bluemont Youth Cabin (aka Goodnow Park Cabin) and the Jesse Ingraham House were both recently placed on the Register of Historic Kansas Places, and both properties have since been approved for listing on the National Register.



Bluemont Youth Cabin



Jesse Ingraham House

The M/RCPA Turns 20

And the House that Started it All

The Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance celebrates its 20th year in 2014, having been officially incorporated in 1994. What was happening in Manhattan in 1994 that motivated a group of citizens to form a preservation-minded organization? The Manhattan Public Library wanted to expand, and in order to do so, a historic house needed to get out of the way.

The plans for a \$2.7 million project that would add 31,000 square feet to the library had been under discussion for a year, with the first indications that there was opposition to the project surfacing during a public hearing in the summer of 1993 (Manning). Neighbors were concerned that the expansion plans included the removal of the house at 612 Houston Street, which had been built in the 1890s. The Manhattan Public Library Foundation had purchased the house with tentative plans to move it. Relocating the house was believed to be difficult and likely expensive, and with the expansion plans needing to move forward, citizens were concerned that the house would ultimately be demolished.

The house located at 612 Houston Street needed to be removed to create more parking for the expanded library, which caused other homeowners along Houston Street to be concerned about the impact on their neighborhood. These Houston Street homeowners along with other concerned citizens became the core group that formed



612 Houston Street, courtesy of the Riley County Historical Society

the original Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance (M/RCPA), meeting in the Wolf House Museum in those early days.

The goal of the first M/RCPA members was to have 612 Houston Street stay where it was and not be affected by the library's expansion. They wrote letters to the editor and packed the room for City Commission meetings. M/RCPA members argued that removing the house to create a parking lot would be harmful to the historic nature of the neighborhood, additional parking created by the house's removal would still not meet all the parking needs, and the historic nature of the house had not been accurately depicted by city staff. In the end, the City Commission approved the library's expansion, and a person interested in relocating the house stepped forward and had it moved.

Whether this first effort by the newly-formed M/RCPA was a success or failure is a matter of interpretation. Efforts to keep the house on its lot had failed, but the house was moved instead of demolished. Research conducted

on Houston Street homes led to the first historic homes tour, which featured Houston Street properties, and led to a greater appreciation of Manhattan's history, the importance of preserving it, and resulted in three Houston Street homes being placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Today, the

Houston and Pierre Streets Residential Historic District is a nationally registered historic district.

After the library expansion issue was settled, M/RCPA members wanted to be more than an organization concerned about preserving Houston Street properties and looked for ways to be more involved in the community. One of the first community efforts was preparing a register nomination for Seven Dolors Catholic Church, with board member Diana Hatch performing the bulk of the research. Seven Dolors was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1995.

The future of the Union Pacific Depot was another concern, due in part to the construction of the new bridge over the Kansas River and the construction of the on-ramp immediately adjacent to the depot. Board member Breta Bloomberg Ellis suggested that the M/RCPA should make the depot another project. M/RCPA members staffed a booth during a summer festival in City Park, and many of the citizens who stopped by shared similar concerns about the depot's future. Having heard from community
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members that there was considerable interest in the depot, the depot's renovation became the focus of the M/RCPA for many years. The depot's renovation demonstrated that the organization was capable of accomplishing projects that would benefit the

community. The renovated depot was formally dedicated in 2006.

Dixie West, the M/RCPA's first president, said that possibly the most important outcome from the formation of the M/RCPA was learning that there were others who were equally passionate about historic preservation, and the

M/RCPA provided the avenue for those like-minded folks to connect. The M/RCPA is still fostering those connections 20 years later.

Manning, Todd. "Fight brewing over Houston home." *The Manhattan Mercury* 18 January 1994: A1 and A8.

Winter Social

On Friday January 24th, approximately 65 M/RCPA members attended the Winter Social event, which was held at Hibachi Hut and Manzanita Art and Antiques.

Manzanita, owned by M/RCPA members Tim and Adena Weiser, is a relatively new business to downtown, having opened last August. Manzanita stayed open later than usual to provide members with an exclusive opportunity to engage in after-hours shopping and to check out its wares.

The Hibachi Hut restaurant, a decades-long fixture in Aggieville, closed some months past, and the Hibachi Hut name and signature recipes were purchased by Ward Morgan. Mr. Morgan relocated the restaurant to downtown Manhattan and provided M/RCPA members with the opportunity to preview the restaurant before it officially opens in February.

The old booths from the Aggieville location were saved and are being reused in the new restaurant, after having been spruced up and reupholstered.

A wall mural of a bayou scene, which is an enlarged photograph by Rod Mikinsky, retired *Manhattan Mercury* photographer, was also salvaged from the old location and transferred to the new.

The menu of the new Hibachi Hut will include a number of favorite menu items from the old restaurant and will also feature new Creole and Cajun creations. Long-time fans of Hibachi Hut are encouraged to let the new owner and staff know about other favorite menu items they would like to see resurrected.

In the future, Mr. Morgan said he plans to learn more about the history of the Hibachi Hut building and plans to encourage other downtown business owners to do the same, with the goal of adding plaques to the exteriors of downtown buildings that will showcase their histories.



Pictured at top are M/RCPA members shopping in Manzanita, and the bottom two photos show the interior of the new Hibachi Hut.

M/RCPA
P.O. Box 1893
MANHATTAN, KS
66505-1893

Peace Memorial Auditorium Concert

On Dec. 11th, The M/RCPA partnered with Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, a music fraternity at Kansas State University, and presented the program, "Holiday Musical Spectacular," on the stage of Peace Memorial Auditorium. The program was free, with donations for the restoration of the auditorium accepted at the door. Just shy of 200 people were in attendance.

The M/RCPA would like to thank American Legion Pearce-Keller Post 17 for providing the Color Guard for the program, the Parks and Recreation Department staff members who went to extra lengths to ensure the stage was lighted appropriately, and the 60 members of the Tau Chapter of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia who provided

outstanding musical performances.

The M/RCPA greatly appreciates everyone who attended the event, helped to raise awareness about Peace Memorial Auditorium, and made a contribution toward the restoration of the auditorium. The M/RCPA is providing a donation match to the funds raised during the concert.

The M/RCPA plans to partner with Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia to present another concert in the spring.

Pictured at right are concert-goers making donations.

If you would like to contribute to the restoration of Peace Memorial Auditorium, donations may be sent to the M/RCPA, P.O. Box 1893, Manhattan, KS 66505. Donations made to the M/RCPA are tax deductible.

