
MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

MARCH, 2007

A LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT, JUDINE MECSERI

Hello everyone—

Harry Edwards once said, “We must teach our children to dream with their eyes open.”

One of the best ways to teach is to lead by example. The Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance does just that when we look at a building in its neglected state and see its potential grandness and stature.

Several community members would call us “dreamers.” AND they would be right!

Our “dreamers” once took a look at a neglected Union Pacific Depot and saw the potential to bring it back to a building that would once again create life-long memories for the public.

As a bride and groom celebrate their new union or an 80 year old celebrates a birthday in

the newly restored Depot—the building once again creates history and nostalgia.

The Depot has won a Preser-

have brought recognition that help make our Little Apple shine.

Now the “dreamers” have bought and placed the endangered, neglected house at 617 Colorado on the Register of Historic Kansas Places. It is now being considered for placement on the National Register of Historic Places.

As we dream with our eyes open we can envision 617 Colorado as a grand Bed and Breakfast, where guests will return home with life-long memories and remember Man-

hattan with fondness.

Now with the lesson in place, imagine what our children will dream with their eyes open!

A Dream Realized



*Courtesy of Bruce McMillan AIA Architects and the City of Manhattan
Photography by Douglas Kahn*

vation award from the American Institute of Architects and is now being considered for a state and national award for Preservation.

These Manhattan “dreamers”

Judine

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McPherson County News Alert

Riley Countians have long entertained a fondness for our neighboring community of Lindsborg with its distinctive Swedish heritage as presented by McPherson County's Old Mill Museum.

The McPherson County Commission will soon decide whether to transfer the Old Mill Museum property to the City of Lindsborg for sale to a private investor who wishes to develop a Little Sweden theme park.

The staff of the Old Mill Museum believes the County

should retain ownership and that the facility should remain a history museum concerned with the preservation of the county's heritage through its collections and historic buildings.

If you would like more information or would like to express your opinion on the theme park proposal, you can reach the McPherson County Commission through the county administrator, Rick Witte, at P.O. Box 676 McPherson, Kansas 620-241-8149 or by email at rwwitte@mcphersoncountyks.us.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

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

State Preservation Conference
 May 10th—12th
 Dodge City, Kansas

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE, INC.

ANNUAL DUES ARE USUALLY PAID IN SEPTEMBER.
 MEMBERS WHO PAID EARLY AS A PART OF THE SPECIAL
 SPRING 2006 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE WILL REMAIN IN
 GOOD STANDING UNTIL SEPTEMBER, 2007.

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS
 \$15 + STUDENT
 \$35 + MAINTENANCE
 \$100 + HISTORICAL
 \$250 + PRESERVATION
 \$500 + LANDMARK

PLEASE MAKE YOUR CHECK PAYABLE TO THE M/RCPA.
 MAIL TO P.O. BOX 1893, MANHATTAN, KS 66505-1893.

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I PREFER TO RECEIVE THE NEWSLETTER THROUGH THE POSTAL SERVICE (CIRCLE ONE) YES NO

2006–2007 MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

DUES ARE NORMALLY PAID AT THE ANNUAL MEETING IN SEPTEMBER BUT MEMBERS MAY JOIN AT ANY TIME DURING THE YEAR. CONTACT US AT info@preservemanhattan.org OR AT P.O. BOX 1893, MANHATTAN, KANSAS 66505 FOR DETAILS.

\$15+ STUDENT LEVEL – CHARLENE BROWNSON, HAL DACE, MEGHAN DOWDY, ELIZABETH HARMON, SALLY LEE.

\$35+ MAINTENANCE LEVEL – RUTH ABBOTT, BARBARA ANDERSON, PHIL & DAWN ANDERSON, RICHARD & SYLVIA BEEMAN, MEL & JAN BORST, MAROLYN CALDWELL, D. CHERYL COLLINS, KENNETH & MARGARET CONROW, CLARK & NANCY DANNER, LELAH DUSKIN, ALICE EDMUNDS, ENDACOTT LIGHTING, MARY ANN FLEMING, BERND & ENELL FOERSTER, JANE GIBSON, ROD HARMS & STEPHANIE ROLLEY, CORINA HUGO, JEAN HULBERT, LANCE & MELANIE KLEIN, VLADIMIR KRSTIC & MARINA PECAR-KRSTIC, STEVE LEE & NANCY RALEIGH, CRISS MAYFIELD, MICHAEL & JUDINE MECSERI, ELAINE MOHR, BILL PALLETT, JEANNE JACCARD PARKER, MARY DON PETERSON, LAWRENCE & MARY H. POLLACK, GERALD & MARTHA POWELL, LAUREN RITTERBUSH & FAMILY, TOM & KAREN ROBERTS, RICHARD & KIMBERLY SMITH, K TAYLOR, TERRI VIPOND, CHERYL WALTERS, KATE WATSON, PATRICIA & RAY WEISENBURGER, RANDALL WEISER, EDNA WILLIAMS, STUART & NANCY B. WILLIAMS, JUDY WILINGHAM, PAT ZARGER.

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\$250+ PRESERVATION LEVEL– HAL & PHYLLIS BROADIE, LARRY & LINDA GLASGOW, JEAN BIGBEE HILL, MR. & MRS. PERRY C. PEINE, BARBARA PORESKY, VERLYN RICHARDS, STEVE & DEBORAH SAROFF, JAMES SHEROW & BONNIE LYNN-SHEROW, STEVE & WHITNEY SHORT, CHUCK & MARSHA TANNEHILL, JERRY & LINDA WEIS, RON & DIXIE WEST.

\$500+ LANDMARK LEVEL–BURKE & MARGERY BAYER, GWYN & GINA RIFFEL.

PRESERVATION AWARD RECIPIENTS/HONORARY MEMBERS– JEFFERY & PAMELA ALGER, ANDERSON KNIGHT ARCHITECTS, SHERYL BALLARD, SCOTT & CHRISTIE CADY, JOHN & JESSICA CALLAGY, DEAN & VERLLA COUGHENOUR, ROY & SUE CRENSHAW, DANKER ROOFING, INC., RON DECHANT, DEAN DENNER & CIA VERSCHELDEN, DOWNTOWN MANHATTAN INC., CALVIN EMIG, GENE ERNST, TODD FULMER, KENT GLASSCOCK, KILEY & ANDREW HAMOR, DONALD & KATHLEEN HEON, HITTLE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS, RODNEY & SUSAN HUMMEL, KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, KAIL KATZENMEIER, MARK KROHN, CITY OF MANHATTAN, MCCULLOUGH DEVELOPMENT, JAN MILLER, DANIEL & TERRY MULHERN, TIMOTHY NELSON, THE PALACE, DEAN DONALD RATHBONE, GARY STOWE & SONS, ROB & MARY SATTERLEE, WAYNE SLOAN, MARK TAUSSIG.

Do you recognize this “princely mansion?”



Courtesy of the Riley County Historical Society, ca. 1904—1908

According to the *Industrialist*, a publication of Kansas State Agricultural College, in an article dated October 1, 1904, “work has commenced on President Nichols’ new residence near the east entrance to the City Park. The building will be one of the finest in Manhattan. The lower story will be of range stone and the upper of lumber. The main floor will have five large rooms, a reception hall with stairway, rear stairs, pantry, ice closet, etc., and the second floor six large bed-rooms and a bathroom. The basement will be concreted and contain the hot-water heating plant, several coal bins, a laundry room and a water-closet. The large east and

west porches will be of a heavy modern colonial style, with broad stone steps and floored with hexagonal tiling. The well-known Tull Building Co., of Manhattan, are the contractors.”

The *Manhattan Nationalist* reported on March 3, 1905, that “the shop used by carpenters in the construction of Pres. Nichols’ residence was entered last night and some paint stolen. Then the miscreants proceeded to paint ‘05’ on the stone work of the new house. They broke into the house and left several windows open but did no other damage. The removal of the paint from the stone can hardly fail to leave marks. It is not known who the offenders are

nor whether they belong to the class of ‘05 or used that figure as a blind. They should be severely dealt with.”

An *Industrialist* article dated March 11, 1905, reported on the progress of the building. “Another month will complete the interior, though the leveling of the yard, the bluegrass, bushes and evergreens will require the whole of the spring season. The building is roomy and well arranged, modern in every respect, and will be one of the very finest and most substantial dwellings in central Kansas.”

The March 25, 1905, *Industrialist* reported that the cement walks had been built and the

evergreens and shade trees had been planted during the week.

On April 8, 1905, the *Industrialist* reported that President and Mrs. Nichols had moved into their new house, "East Parkgate," at 1031 Leavenworth.

The *Manhattan Mercury* reported on October 4, 1905, that "Pres. And Mrs. E.R. Nichols gave a brilliant reception at East Parkgate last Thursday evening for the regents and members of the college faculty. One hundred and twenty-five invitations were issued and nearly all were accepted."

In the 1908 tax year 1031 Leavenworth was still owned by President Nichols but in the 1909 tax year it was owned by William Aye. It appears that four vacant lots owned by the Aye family on the north side of the corner of Leavenworth and Eleventh Street were sold or exchanged in some way with the Nichols' family's five lots (with house and barn) located on the south side of Leavenworth and Eleventh.

The *Manhattan Nationalist* Semi-Centennial Edition of June 16, 1910, reported that "one of Manhattan's wealthiest citizens is Wm. Mitchell Aye, who lives in a princely mansion at the west end of Leavenworth Street, facing the city park. This was

formerly the home of President Nichols, of K.S.A.C."

"During the twenty years Mr. Aye has lived here he has been busy with the management of the immense ranch lands owned jointly by himself and his brother, M.C. Aye, of Marion, Ohio. At the present time they own 7,640 broad acres of land, lying in one body six miles long and averaging two miles wide.



House & Barn
Nationalist Semi-Centennial Edition, 1910

This vast body of Kansas soil is located on the head waters of Deep Creek and three branches of the McDowell Creek, ten miles southeast of Manhattan. Mr. Aye is a director in the Manhattan State Bank, a director of the Manhattan Chautauqua, and is regarded as one of our foremost citizens."

(The Aye Ranch was owned in recent years by A.B. Hudson of Maple Hill. The ranch became something of a tourist attraction when camels were introduced in 1990 for brush control. The 10,000 acre ranch has since been sold to conservationists Bob and Gail Foote, although Mr. Hudson has retained the right to lease the property for wind

power development.)

The barn associated with the residence on Leavenworth was designed by Henry B. Winter. "Its harmonious appearance, with the same general style of architecture as the house, has been frequently commented upon. It is the finest barn in the city." (*Manhattan Nationalist* Semi-Centennial Edition, 1910)

The barn is now part of the apartment complex located to the east of the historic Nichols-Aye House.

In 1915 1031 Leavenworth was acquired by the Sigma Nu Fraternity. In 1922 the house, pictured in the Royal Purple, looked much as it had in earlier times. In 1923's Royal Purple the house's appearance was significantly altered, with an ex-



Barn
Nationalist Semi-Centennial Edition, 1910

panded third floor with a large dormer facing west. The house burned in 1933 causing the fraternity to move to rented quarters at 1221 Thurston. In 1937 the fraternity built a new chap-


ter house at 513 Sunset, moving in for the fall semester of 1938.

1031 Leavenworth was reconfigured yet again after the fire. The trees, planted so long ago, have grown very tall, providing extensive shade during the summer months. The historic house once again serves as a private residence.

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