



MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

October 2016, Vol. 22, Issue V

Brick Sidewalk Restoration Project

The City of Manhattan recently started a project to restore the brick sidewalks along the public square surrounding the former jail, located at 600 Colorado Street. The public square is part of the original town plat and was platted in approximately 1855. The site is located within the Houston and Pierre Streets Residential Historic District and is considered a “contributing” resource to the District “due to its presence and visual linkage with the streetscape during the length of time when the surrounding neighborhood was developing” (National).

Brick sidewalks within the historic district are also considered a “contributing” resource to the district. The National Register nomination for the district notes, “The network

of brick-paved sidewalks is a significant pedestrian transportation feature of the district” (National).

The master plan developed for the public square calls for the reconstruction of existing brick sidewalks. Existing bricks will be salvaged and reinstalled in a herringbone pattern on a sand base. The city’s stockpile of bricks will be used to replace any damaged bricks. Portions of the sidewalk that are currently concrete will remain concrete.

The sidewalk phase of the master plan will primarily be funded by a Community Development Block Grant.

National Register of Historic Places, Houston and Pierre Streets Residential Historic District, Manhattan, Riley County, Kansas.



Annual Meeting

Thursday, Oct. 6, 7:00 p.m.

Union Pacific Depot
Program: Military Trail
Project by Doug Tippin

All members are invited to attend the M/RCPA’s annual meeting of the membership. Doug Tippin will present information about the Military Trail Project. The meeting will also include the election of the board of directors and officers.

Proposed 2016-17 Officers & Board of Directors

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Treasurer: Barbara Poresky

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Alyn Pennington West

Catherine Roy-Tremblay

Terms ending in 2019:

Marina Pecar-Krstic

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The Future of the Jeremiah Platt House

The Jeremiah Platt House, located at 2005 Claflin Road, has been in the news recently because of discussions about selling it. Owned by Riley County, the Board of Riley County Commissioners approved on Aug. 1 to publish a notice of intent to sell the Platt House and three other county-owned properties. Built in 1871 and added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1981, the fate of the Platt House became an item for the M/RCPA to watch because of the potential for a new owner and the potential owner's unknown plans for the house.

Jeremiah Platt was born in Connecticut in 1833, and the family moved to Illinois when Jeremiah was a baby. His parents were abolitionists, and their barn sheltered fugitive slaves from Missouri as part of the Underground Railroad (Siebert). Given his upbringing, it's not surprising that Jeremiah grew up to also be an abolitionist. He moved to the Kansas Territory to advocate against slavery and was part of the Beecher Bible and Rifle Colony in Wabaunsee County ("Circuit").

In 1856, Jeremiah moved to Topeka and worked as a teacher. He helped with the founding of Lincoln College, which was a private Congregational school, and today, is known as Washburn University (National).

Jeremiah moved to Manhattan in 1864, which was just one year after Kansas State Agricultural College (KSAC) had been established as the nation's first land-grant institution, and he was a member of the faculty. The first catalog for KSAC shows there were 94 students, and Jeremiah was one of six total faculty members. His salary was

\$600 per year (Walters). He was the first head of the preparatory department and was a professor of vocal music. Later, he taught math and English (National).

A few years after arriving in Manhattan, Jeremiah purchased 10 acres of land in 1867, not far from where KSAC was located at the corner of Claflin Road and College Avenue. To the west of Jeremiah's land was another 10-acre property, which was owned by Isaac Goodnow, who was another early settler, abolitionist, and founder of Bluemont College (the precursor to KSAC). The majority of Jeremiah's 10 acres were farmed, and he built a house on the property in 1871 (National).

The Sept. 15, 1871 edition of *The Nationalist* includes a short notice that reads, "The walls of Prof. Platt's new house are about completed." A month later the Oct. 13, 1871 edition of *The Nationalist* states, "Prof. Platt's new house is just inclosed, and will be finished by the end of the term. It is of brick, two-stories, with light limestone trimmings, and is built in the best manner."

Jeremiah's brother-in-law, William Harrison Smith, owned a brick yard in Junction City, and the Platt House National Register nomination speculates that Smith may have been the house's builder (National). Benjamin Powers was also a prominent builder at the time, and the book *The Architects and Buildings of Manhattan, Kansas* credits Powers as the builder for the



Jeremiah Platt House

Platt House.

The house is a Victorian variant of the Georgian house type and is a relatively rare example in Manhattan of domestic architecture constructed in the decade following the Civil War. It features two bay windows, limestone lintels and sills, and a simple cornice. Photographs of the house from the late 1800s show an ell addition on the rear of the house, which housed the kitchen, and a small wood-frame porch. The ell was removed in 1928 and replaced by a wood-frame, two-story addition. In the early 20th century, the porch was removed and replaced with the current porch, which wraps around two sides of the house (National).

In addition to teaching at KSAC, Jeremiah was very involved with the Congregational Church. He traveled extensively in Kansas to establish Sunday schools in recently settled areas. He wrote letters, describing his activities and travels, which were published in *The Nationalist* and which provided vivid descriptions of the towns, settlers, and natural beauty he encountered ("Circuit").
(continued on pg. 3)

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During his time at KSAC, Jeremiah was well-respected and held in high regard by his colleagues. The Board of Regents conferred upon him an honorary Master's degree in 1872. The Platt House National Register nomination states that he was also very involved with the Prohibition movement in Kansas, and despite his high regard, the Board of Regents demanded that Jeremiah resign in 1889 because of his Prohibition activities (National). Another source indicates Jeremiah left KSAC in 1883, and it makes no mention of a forced resignation ("Circuit").

Jeremiah Platt was ordained in the Congregational Church in 1888, and he moved to Oklahoma in 1893 where he continued his work of establishing Sunday schools. While living in Oklahoma and until Jeremiah's death in 1899, the Platts continued to own their Manhattan home and rented it. After Jeremiah's death, his widow returned to Manhattan and lived in the house until she sold it in 1904 (National).

Over the years, the Platt property changed owners a handful of times until Andrew Ekdahl purchased it in 1928. The Ekdahl family owned the property until 1965 when it was deeded to the Board of Riley County Commissioners. The county used the Platt House as the headquarters for the ambulance service until 1980 when the house was leased to the Riley County Genealogical Society (RCGS) (National), and the RCGS has used the house ever since.

In recent weeks, county commissioners had discussed selling the Platt House along with the Pawnee Mental Health building, the EMS services building (all three

on Claflin Road), and Plaza East. The county had been working on plans to relocate the EMS headquarters to the Manhattan fire station located at 2000 Denison Ave. and would eventually no longer need the current EMS property. Commissioner Robert Boyd indicated he believed the EMS parcel of land would be too small to attract buyers if it weren't bundled for sale with the Pawnee Mental Health building and the Platt House. County commissioner discussions indicated that part of the motivation to sell the properties was because K-State would provide the county with a more favorable lease agreement for the relocated EMS services (the property where the Denison fire station is located is owned by K-State) in exchange for getting to purchase the Claflin Road properties.

The plan to sell the Platt House caught the RCGS off guard, as the organization had not been notified ahead of the county commission's Aug. 1 meeting about plans to sell the Platt House. During the 35-plus years that the RCGS has leased the Platt House, the RCGS made a number of improvements to it, including a \$50,000 addition paid for by the RCGS to house an expanded genealogical library.

The Platt House's National Register status provides it some protections, but register listing does not prevent the sale of a property nor does it prevent demolition. If an owner desired to demolish a historic registered property, there is a public process that allows the public to review the plans and to provide comments, but the process doesn't eliminate the possibility of demolition. County commissioners made a "preservation plan" a condition of the sale of the Platt House, meaning a buyer would need to explain how the house would continue to be preserved.

During the Aug. 15 county

commission meeting, commissioners voted to hold off selling the properties, in part because Commissioners Ron Wells and Ben Wilson indicated they had not been aware of the previous negotiations with K-State at the time the sale was initially discussed. Commissioner Wells also thought the decision process was too rushed.

The RCGS has a lease for the Platt House through 2020. The county commission indicated the possibility of selling the Platt House to the RCGS, but the RCGS is a volunteer organization with limited financial means. Regardless of the outcome, Barry Michie, president of the RCGS, says the RCGS has some thinking to do as to how to move forward. For the time being, the Platt House will continue to be owned and maintained by Riley County, but the situation could change when one or more new commissioners take office in January.

"Circuit-Riding in Southwest Kansas in 1885 and 1886: The Letters of Jeremiah Evarts Platt." Ed. Louise Barry. Kansas State Historical Society. Web 19 September 2016.

National Register of Historic Places, Jeremiah Platt House, Manhattan, Riley County, Kansas.

The Nationalist. 15 September 1871:3.

The Nationalist. 13 October 1871:3.

O'Brien, Dr. Patricia J. The Architects and Buildings of Manhattan, Kansas. Manhattan, Kansas: Riley County Historical Society, 2008.

Siebert, Wilbur Henry. The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1899.

Walters, Dr. J. D. History of the Kansas State Agricultural College. Manhattan, Kansas: Kansas State Agricultural College, 1909.



Historical Museum Celebrates 100!

Everyone is invited to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Riley County Historical Museum (RCHM) on Wednesday, Oct. 5, 7:00 p.m., at Pottorf Hall in CiCo Park, 1710 Avery Drive. The birthday party is free, and everyone is invited to attend.

The RCHM dedicated its first museum, the Pioneer Log Cabin in City Park, on Oct. 5, 1916. The

museum moved to the basement of Peace Memorial Auditorium, 1101 Poyntz Ave., in 1957. The current RCHM, located at 2309 Claflin Road, was built by Riley County in 1976.

On Sunday, Oct. 2, 4:00 p.m., Riley County Historical Society members and friends will meet at the Pioneer Log Cabin to take a photograph commemorating the

100th anniversary of the opening of the historical museum. Everyone is welcome! The rain date will be Tuesday, Oct. 4, at 5:30 p.m.

Left, the Pioneer Log Cabin in City Park, which served as the first Riley County Historical Museum. Right, the Riley County Historical Museum when it was in the basement of Peace Memorial Auditorium.



M/RCPA's Notecards

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

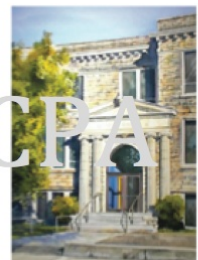
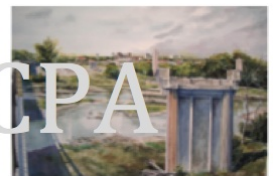
E-mail:
mrcrepanewsletter@gmail.com
Web site:
www.preservemanhattan.org

The Board of Directors usually meets the second Thursday of the month at the Union Pacific Depot, 7:00 p.m., and members are welcomed to attend.

The M/RCPA has printed preservation-themed notecards available for purchase. The notecards come in packs of eight with envelopes and feature prints of original watercolors by local artist Ralph Fontenot. Mr. Fontenot generously donated the use of his artwork to the M/RCPA.

The notecard packs contain two cards each of four different designs, including the Wolf House, the Pillsbury Viaduct bridge piers, the Goodnow House, and Manhattan High School East Campus.

With the holiday season approaching, the notecards are a great local gift idea for teacher gifts, stocking stuffers, etc. The notecards are \$15 per pack and can be found at



the Strecker-Nelson Gallery (downstairs) and the Riley County Historical Museum, or contact the M/RCPA at mrcrepanewsletter@gmail.com.

Proceeds benefit the M/RCPA.

Riley Co.'s Registered Properties

The National Historic Preservation Act was signed into law in 1966, and the M/RCPA is featuring locally registered properties in the newsletter in 2016 in honor of the 50th anniversary.

Jesse Ingraham House

1724 Fairchild Avenue, built 1867
National Register and Manhattan Register of Historic Places, 2014
Jesse Ingraham was an early settler in the Manhattan area. His gable-front two-story limestone house was completed in 1867. He was a prominent member of the community, serving as a county commissioner, coroner, and school board member. Ingraham's farm bordered the KSU campus, and some of his donated farmland is now part of the campus.



controlled by African Americans in Manhattan. In later years, the congregation was active in Manhattan's Civil Rights Movement and participated in community discussions about racial barriers in housing.

Daniel & Maude Walters House

100 S. Delaware Avenue, built 1928
National Register, 2012
The one-story limestone structure exhibits elements of the Craftsman style as well as features of Tudor Revival. The house was designed by Daniel Walters, who was also the original owner and was one of the early graduates of KSAC's architecture program. Daniel's father, John Walters, founded the architecture program at KSAC. The house was one of the first built in the emerging neighborhoods of Manhattan's western edge that had been made accessible by the automobile.



Riley County Courthouse

100 Courthouse Plaza, built 1905-06
National Register, 2005
The Courthouse was designed by architects J. C. Holland and Frank Squires, who also designed three other courthouses. The Courthouse is constructed of locally quarried limestone and is an example of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture. The building retains many of the defining characteristics of the architectural style, including arches on squat columns, central bays rising to form a clock tower, and pedimented gabled dormers.



Strasser House

326 Laramie Street, built 1874
National Register, 2010
Phillipena Strasser, a German immigrant and widow, built the house in 1874. The house is constructed of locally quarried rough-cut limestone and is an example of a gable-front-and-wing stone house property type. The Strasser House was one of a limited number of residences constructed in Manhattan's Ward 2 at the time of its construction. It is now the last remaining residence on its block.



Second (Pilgrim) Baptist Church

831 Yuma Street, built 1917
National Register, 2012
The Second Baptist Church was organized in 1880, which was at the time when a large contingent of former slaves left the South, known as the "Great Exodus," and settled in the Manhattan area to start new lives. The church was constructed in 1917 and was designed by prominent local architect Henry Winter. The Second Baptist is significant because churches were the only community institutions entirely



Anderson Hall

KSU Campus, built 1879-85
National Register, 1980
Anderson Hall has been the administrative center of KSU since its construction. It's a noteworthy example of high Victorian Gothic design. Conceived as a single design in 1878, the building was constructed in phases as the necessary appropriations were made by the Kansas Legislature. At the time it was completed, it was one of the largest academic buildings in the state.



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

\$35 Historic Level

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\$250 Landmark Level

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