



# MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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## Former YMCA/Hospital Added to Register

Built in 1907-08, the structure located at 1100 Fremont Street, which is currently the home of Delta Sigma Phi Fraternity, was recently added to the Register of Historic Kansas Places, and its nomination was forwarded to the National Register for consideration.

Originally, the building was home to the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). Around the turn of the 20th century, there was a movement in the U.S. to establish YMCA buildings in college towns to provide a social hub for college men, gym space, and a religious center. In Manhattan, discussions of erecting a YMCA building began in 1904 ("The building"). At the time, there were no national fraternity chapters in Manhattan and only two locally organized groups, and Kansas State Agricultural College (KSAC) did not have a gymnasium ("Crowds"). Members of the campus YMCA chapter contributed \$24,000 for the building (Register), and construction began in 1907.

The architects for the building were J. C. Holland and Frank C. Squires from Topeka, who had also designed the Riley County Courthouse in 1905 (O'Brien, 41-43). The brick three-story, Classical Revival style YMCA building was completed in 1908. The raised entry led to a reception hall with brick fireplace and a view



Above, a vintage postcard of 1100 Fremont St. when the building was a YMCA. The postcard is courtesy of the Riley County Historical Society and Museum.

of the grand staircase, which is intact and features original balustrades and newel posts. On either side of the central hall were living quarters, and there were communal lounge areas on the second and third floors. Many of the bedrooms still have original plaster, and original quarter-sawn oak floors remain in some locations (Register). The west wing of the building was the location of the gymnasium, which was described as the building's "greatest attraction" when it opened in 1908 ("The YMCA building"). A 1910 newspaper article noted the building was undergoing interior renovations in the summer, which might be an indicator that some interior finishes were not entirely completed when the building opened in 1908 ("Workmen").

In the days when Mike Ahearn was coaching athletics at KSAC and the college had no gym, the

college took advantage of using the available YMCA gym, and the KSAC athletic department was headquartered in the YMCA building. The men's college basketball team practiced and held games in the YMCA gym. Indoor track used the gym for practices, and the college football, track, and baseball teams used the

dressing rooms. High school teams also used the YMCA gym. After Nichols Gym was built on campus, college activities moved to campus ("Crowds"), and by 1912, the YMCA's Board of Directors was considering dividing the gym into more living quarters because use of the gym had declined. Manhattan residents opposed the idea and wanted the gym to continue to be available for town boys. The end result was the gym was used for classes for boys during the day and used as meeting space in the evenings ("Directors").

By 1926, the needs the YMCA had filled when it was built in 1908 had changed. There were now 18 chapters of national fraternities in Manhattan, many rooming houses where students could stay, KSAC and the school district had their own gym spaces, and the YMCA secretary had an office on campus to be closer to students. The organization was struggling and had been operating at a loss at the point when the building was turned  
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over to Park View Hospital, and the hospital organization assumed the mortgage (“Crowds”).

Park View Hospital was organized in 1903, and a building was erected at the corner of Juliette Avenue and Laramie Street. The hospital became cramped for space and had been looking for a suitable larger space, and the YMCA building fit the bill. At a cost of \$25,000, the building was renovated to meet the needs of the hospital. The former bedrooms were converted to rooms to serve 30 patients, and other rooms became operating rooms, delivery rooms, a nursery, and a sterilizing room. The basement housed the laundry, kitchen and dining room, showers, and sleeping rooms for nurses. An exterior ramp was constructed down to the basement for transporting stretchers into the building, and an elevator was added, which accessed all floors. The gym space was used for storage with the plan to use it for expansion of the hospital if needed (“Park”).

The hospital moved into the building during the summer of 1926, but the grand opening was delayed until October when all of the equipment had been installed. Nearly 1,200 people attended the formal opening and toured the building. A newspaper account of the opening noted that the building would continue to “minister to humanity’s needs. It serves, if possible, a still greater purpose” than when it was the YMCA (“Crowds”). The hospital served hundreds of area residents during its years of operation.

On June 15, 1944, Park View closed to new patients due to a lack of nurses, which was



Top to bottom, the front exterior of 1100 Fremont St., the building’s west wing built in 1958, a drawing of the YMCA in 1911, and the interior of the YMCA in 1911. The bottom two photos are from the May 10, 1911 edition of *The Students’ Herald*.

speculated to be a result of many nurses serving in World War II. The hospital planned to permanently close once all of its patients were discharged. Many citizens were concerned because Park View’s closing would leave the community with a shortage of beds. Some residents thought Riley County should take over the

hospital, and the community could raise funds in order to transfer the hospital to the county debt-free (“Riley”). However, county commissioners were not interested in taking over Park View Hospital (“Ask”).

Oneita Marker, who was a laboratory technician whose husband had been a doctor at the hospital before being sent overseas with the Army, purchased the controlling interest in Park View Hospital and planned to re-open it in September 1944. She planned to operate the hospital as a non-profit corporation, and she would be the hospital’s manager (“Parkview”). Mrs. Marker’s efforts allowed the hospital to carry on for almost two years, but before long, the situation was back to the same place, with the hospital’s Board of Directors announcing the hospital would close on Aug. 1, 1946 (“Hospital”).

The Sisters of St. Joseph, who had been operating St. Mary Hospital at 11th and Osage Streets, were interested in buying Park View Hospital if the community would help raise \$25,000 toward the \$34,500 purchase price, and the Sisters would contribute the rest. A fundraising campaign launched immediately, sponsored by the Council of Service Clubs. The campaign used the slogan “Ninety beds or 50!” to emphasize that if Park View permanently closed, the community would be reduced to only 50 hospital beds (“Seek”).

Donations streamed in from across the county, with clubs and organizations chipping in. Businesses proudly announced when one hundred percent of their employees had contributed. A group of farmers in the Randolph area donated \$100. Donations were also collected in the upper Blue (continued on pg. 3)

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Valley and Swede Creek areas. Kansas State had a campus fundraising drive, which faculty and students donated to. Businesses hosted coin boxes for customers to toss in their loose change. Several women staffed donation tables in various locations around town, while other women canvassed neighborhoods, collecting over \$5,000. By Aug. 10, 1946, which was barely a week since the campaign had started, all of the funds had been raised. People continued to donate even after the \$25,000 goal had been reached, and the total was more than \$31,000. The overage in funds was also turned over to the Sisters for the purchase of equipment ("Hospital fund").

The Sisters assumed ownership of the building, and it was renamed "St. Mary Hospital-Parkview." The building was renovated, and the Sisters made the Parkview campus the maternity department with a children's ward on the third floor. The old YMCA gym in the west wing was converted to a workshop, nurses' quarters, and a chapel ("Renovation").

By early 1955, the Sisters planned to end maternity services in the Parkview building and to incorporate them in the main St. Mary Hospital building. During the years the building had functioned as a hospital, 5,728 babies had been born ("Maternity"). As with the YMCA, the landscape had changed. The post-World War II baby boom had slowed, and the Riley County Memorial Hospital on Sunset Avenue had opened, which may have been contributing factors to Parkview's closing.

The Sisters put Parkview Hospital up for sale, and Delta

Sigma Phi fraternity purchased the building to serve as its chapter house ("Buys"). The fraternity spent a few months renovating the former hospital and then held an open house for the public in November 1955 ("Delta").

In 1958, Delta Sigma Phi demolished the west wing where the old YMCA gym had been located and built a new addition on the site. The architect for the addition was Alfred K. Bader, who was from Junction City and was a graduate of KSAC's architecture program. Construction was contracted to the Ira Wheeler Company, which was a local builder. To save on costs, Mr. Bader suggested re-using the bricks from the old YMCA gym, and fraternity members spent nights and weekends chipping mortar from the salvaged bricks to make them usable (Register). The addition cost \$70,000 to construct, and it included rooms for the house-mother, a living room, a study, and sleeping quarters for 14 fraternity members ("Delta Sigma Phi to dedicate").

The elevator and its head house were decommissioned in 1963, and both were completely removed in 2010. The roofline was restored to its original configuration following the removal of the elevator's head house. The building's windows were replaced in 1984 (Register).

In the late 1960s, Delta Sigma Phi struggled to maintain members, and membership had dwindled to 14 members in the spring of 1970. The remaining members feared they would lose the chapter. A few members were more positive and believed the chapter could be saved, notably Tex Le Blanc and Pat Bosco, the latter of whom would go on to be Kansas State's Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students. Mr. Le Blanc spent the summer recruiting new members,

and when classes resumed in the fall, the fraternity had 26 new members. That year, the chapter was also the first traditional national fraternity at Kansas State to have an African American member ("Student"). Delta Sigma Phi survived, and today, the fraternity continues to use the building as its chapter house.

Over the life of the building, it's served our community as a YMCA and a hospital and is now a fraternity. It has experienced several renovations and changes, but through it all, it has continued to be a community landmark. The building was nominated for historic registry listing for its architecture.

- "Ask a second hospital meet." Manhattan Mercury-Chronicle. 5 July 1944: 1.
- "The building movement among college Y.M.C.A.s." The Students' Herald. 21 April 1904: 5.
- "Buys Parkview for fraternity house." The Manhattan Mercury. 24 June 1955: 3.
- "Crowds at opening." The Manhattan Republic. 28 October 1926: 3.
- "Delta Sigma Phi to dedicate new \$70,000 addition." The Manhattan Mercury. 5 November 1959: 1.
- "Delta Sigma Phi invites public to open house." The Manhattan Mercury. 20 November 1955: 12.
- "Directors did not act." The Students' Herald. 9 March 1912: 2.
- "Hospital fund over top; plan property transfer." Manhattan Mercury-Chronicle. 11 August 1946: 1.
- "Hospital problem to be discussed Wednesday." Manhattan Mercury-Chronicle. 30 July 1946: 1.
- "Maternity ward at Parkview Hospital moved." The Manhattan Republic. 9 March 1955: 1.
- O'Brien, Dr. Patricia J. The Architects and Buildings of Manhattan, Kansas. Manhattan, Kansas: Riley County Historical Society, 2008.
- "Park View holds formal opening." The Morning Chronicle. 26 October 1926: 1.
- "Parkview is sold today." Manhattan Mercury-Chronicle. 16 August 1944: 1.
- Register of Historic Kansas Places, St. Mary's Hospital/Manhattan YMCA, Manhattan, Riley County, KS.
- "Renovation of Parkview will soon be completed." Manhattan Mercury-Chronicle. 24 September 1946: 1.
- "Riley Co. may get hospital." Manhattan Mercury-Chronicle. 25 June 1944: 1.
- "Seek \$25,000 for hospital." Manhattan Mercury-Chronicle. 1 August 1946: 1.
- "Sisters select hospital name." The Manhattan Republic. 18 September 1946: 1.
- "Student rebellion causes a downturn." Delta Sigma Phi Alpha Upsilon at Kansas State University, <https://aydsp.org/about#history>. Web. 21 Sept. 2019.
- "Workmen are at work." The Manhattan Nationalist. 21 July 1910: 4.
- "The Y.M.C.A. building." The Manhattan Nationalist. 4 June 1908: 9.

## Added to the Register

Three Riley County properties have been added to the Register of Historic Kansas Places, including the Abner Allen House and outbuilding, located at 7280 Zeandale Road; the Hartford House, located on the grounds of the Riley County Historical Society and Museum at 2309 Claflin Road; and the Avalon apartment building, located at 417 Fremont Street. The nominations for the latter two have been forwarded to the National Register for consideration.

Built in 1865, the limestone Abner Allen House and associated outbuilding are located in rural Riley County. The historic portion of the house is L-shaped with a cross gable. The western end of the L is a two-story structure, and the other section is one story.

Abner Allen came to Kansas from Ohio in 1856, and he and his wife Lavina were early settlers in Zeandale Township, which was part of Wabaunsee County at the time. The Allens received a land patent in 1860. It's believed that the limestone home was built circa 1865 (Register, Allen).

Abner was devoted to horticulture and agriculture and reportedly introduced a new raspberry to the area. The farm featured a large orchard, and Abner brought 100 varieties of apples to the Kansas State Fair one year. Abner was also very involved with local politics and served as a county commissioner. The property was nominated to the state register for its association with the settlement of Zeandale Township (Register, Allen).

The Hartford House is one of ten prefabricated wood-frame homes that the steamship *Hartford* brought from Ohio in 1855 to the area that would be named

Manhattan. The prefabricated, one-room homes provided temporary shelter for the early settlers who came with the Cincinnati and Kansas Land Company (Register, Hartford).

The house had been located at 523 Colorado Street and had been encompassed by additions over the years. When the structure was slated for demolition in 1971 as part of an urban renewal project, the surrounding additions were carefully removed, and the Hartford House components were disassembled. The Hartford House components were stored until the Riley County Historical Society acquired the land of its current location on Claflin Road, and then the house was reassembled in 1974. The Hartford House is the only known remaining prefabricated house of the original ten and may possibly be the only surviving 19th century portable house in the U.S. The house was nominated to the register for its association with exploration and settlement, and for its architecture (Register, Hartford).

The Avalon apartment building started out as a nine-room, single-family home, built circa 1890, and was expanded and converted to apartments in the 1920s. Following World War I, the nation experienced a housing shortage, and apartments provided an affordable solution for many Americans. The owner who converted the house to apartments likely saw the value in creating apartments to deal with the housing crunch (Register, Avalon).

The Avalon is in the Prairie School style, and there are two living units per floor. The front façade is characterized by two-story stacked porches with arched openings. The apartment interiors



Top to bottom, the Abner Allen House, the Hartford House, and the Avalon apartments.

feature plaster walls and ceilings, wood floors and trim, wood stairs, wood windows, and original paneled wood doors. The bathrooms have original cast-iron bathtubs, and some have original light fixtures. The building also originally included rear porches, and the apartments' kitchens were expanded into the porches at some point. The alteration of the rear porches is one of the few exterior modifications to have occurred in the 90 years since it became apartments. The Avalon was nominated to the register for its architecture (Register, Avalon).

Register of Historic Kansas Places, Abner Allen House and outbuilding, Riley County, KS.

Register of Historic Kansas Places, The Avalon, Manhattan, Riley County, KS.

Register of Historic Kansas Places, Hartford House, Manhattan, Riley County, KS.

## 2019-20 Officers & Board of Directors

Officers and members of the Board of Directors were elected during the Annual Meeting of the membership on Sept. 26th.

President: Linda Glasgow  
 Vice President: Catherine Roy-Tremblay  
 Treasurer: Barbara Poresky  
 Secretary: Dawn Munger

Terms ending in 2020:  
 Sara Fisher  
 Linda Glasgow

Terms ending in 2021:  
 Kathy Dzewaltowski  
 Gary Ellis  
 Allana Parker  
 Alyn Pennington West  
 Catherine Roy-Tremblay

Terms ending in 2022:  
 Lacy Fisher  
 Melissa Janulis  
 Dawn Munger  
 Barbara Poresky  
 Sharlin Sargent

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

E-mail:  
 mrcpanewsletter@gmail.com  
 Website:  
 www.preservemanhattan.org

The Board of Directors meets the second Thursday of the month at either the Union Pacific Depot or the Strecker Nelson West Gallery. Visit the "About us" tab on the M/RCPA's website to find the schedule of meeting locations. Members are welcome to attend board meetings.

Newsletter editor: Kathy Dzewaltowski

## Johnny Kaw Plaza Dedicated

The new plaza surrounding the feet of the Johnny Kaw statue in City Park was dedicated on Sept. 20th.

For several months, the Friends of Johnny Kaw have been working to enhance the area surrounding the statue to provide a viewing plaza, seating, sidewalks, interpretive panels, and landscaping. The cost of the project was close to \$300,000, which was raised through donations and through contractors donating services, material, and labor.

The Johnny Kaw legend was created in 1955 for Manhattan's centennial by George Filinger, who was a professor at Kansas State. Prof. Filinger was inspired to create a legendary hero who would represent the pioneer spirit. Prof. Filinger created stories about Johnny Kaw's exploits, which were featured in *The Manhattan Mercury*. Elmer J. Tomasch, who was an art professor at Kansas State, created sketches of Johnny Kaw based on Prof. Filinger's description. Mrs. Walter O'Neil built a five-foot concrete model of Johnny Kaw, which was placed in City Park during the centennial celebrations until vandals damaged it.

In 1966 following a community



Top, Johnny Kaw with the new sunflower-themed platform and interpretive panels. Bottom, a close-up of one of the panels.

effort to build a full-size sculpture, the Johnny Kaw statue, which is comprised of concrete and steel, was erected in City Park. Since that time, the statue and surrounding area had not been upgraded, and there was no information near the statue to explain what it is.

New site improvements include a platform surrounding the statue's base that resembles a sunflower, limestone blocks for seating, new landscaping, and interpretive panels that tell the Johnny Kaw story.

## M/RCPA's Budget

The M/RCPA held its annual meeting and started a new membership year on Sept. 26th. The M/RCPA's only funding source is dues, and what follows is a partial list of expenses supported by membership dues during the past year.

- Fall social event and tour
- Genealogy and History Fair
- Reimbursed members for preservation conference fees
- Supported Kansas Assoc. of Historians conference

- Historic Preservation Building Awards
- Professional memberships (KPA, Aha! Manhattan, Kansas Museums Association)
- Supported preservation advocacy in Topeka
- Supported operations of the Wolf House Museum
- Website service, post office box rental, letterhead and newsletter printing, postage
- Annual filing with Sec. of State

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

### **\$35 Historic Level**

Dede Brokesh, Charlene Brownson, Sandra Chandler, Carole Chelz, Cheryl Collins, Margaret Conrow, Melvin & Randi Dale, Mike & Jan Danenberg, Marla Day, Wanda Fateley, Beverly Fink, David & Kay Fiser, Troy & Sara Fisher, John & Jill Frese, Katharine Hensler, Kent Kellams, Debra Mercer, Dawn Munger, Larry & Sandy Murphy, Felisa Osburn, Bill Pallet, Allana Parker, Jerry & Martha Powell, Gloria Juhl Raney, Lauren W. Ritterbush, Tom & Karen Roberts, Catherine Roy-Tremblay, Sharlin Sargent, Ken & Nina Warren, Ron & Dixie West, Judith Willingham

### **\$100 Preservation Level**

Phil & Dawn Anderson, Mimi Balderson, Brent Bowman, Preston & Diana Chapel, Nancy Danner, Jed Dunham, Gary & Paula Ellis, Calvin & Genie Emig, Debbie Nuss & Brad Fenwick, Joe & Janette Gelroth, Charles & Kate Gillum, Larry & Linda Glasgow, Kail & Becky Katzenmeier, Mark & Ann Knackendoffel, Ann Kosch, Bonnie Lynn-Sherow, Blade Mages, Karen McCulloh, Michael & Judine Mecseri, Dori Milldyke, Jan Miller, Linda Morse, Karin Westman & Phil Nel, Marina Pecar-Krstic, Barbara Peck, Mary Pollack, John & Mary Beth Reese, Richard & Kimberly Smith, Brenda Spencer, George & Julie Strecker, Joan C. Strickler, Barbara Withee, Nancy B. Williams

### **\$125 Corporate Preservation**

Bria Taddiken-Williams/Coldwell Banker Real Estate Advisors, Bruce McMillan AIA Architects PA, GJL Real Estate/Gwyn & Gina Riffel, Rick & Judy Glowiak, Griffith Lumber Co. Inc., Master Landscape, Riffel Property/Gwyn & Gina Riffel, Strecker Nelson West Gallery/Kevin West & Alyn Pennington West, Timber & Stone Architecture and Design

### **\$250 Landmark Level**

David & Kathy Dzewaltowski, Barbara Poresky

### **Honorary Lifetime Members**

Mel Borst, Enell Foerster (in memory of Bernd Foerster), Edna L. Williams