

The Riley County Historical Society and Museum

2309 Claflin Road Manhattan, Kansas 66502 Telephone: (785) 565-6490

RCBS NEWSLETTER

VOL. LVIII, NO. 5

OCTOBER 2010

RCBS Dinner Meeting, Monday, Oct. 18, 6:30 PM Meadowlark Hills Retirement Community Community Room

2121 Meadowlark Road, Manhattan, KS

Meadowlark Hills Catering

Menu:

Homestyle Chopped Steak with Mushroom Gravy
or Homestyle Meatloaf
Honey Glazed Sweet Baby Carrots
Crisp, Chilled House Salad with choice of dressing
Dinner Rolls
Tea/Water/Coffee

Cost: \$12.00

Reservations: Please call the museum, 565-6490
by **Thursday, October 14th**.

(If you must cancel, please call as soon as possible so
that someone else can have your place.)

Program:

The Military Trail Marker Project

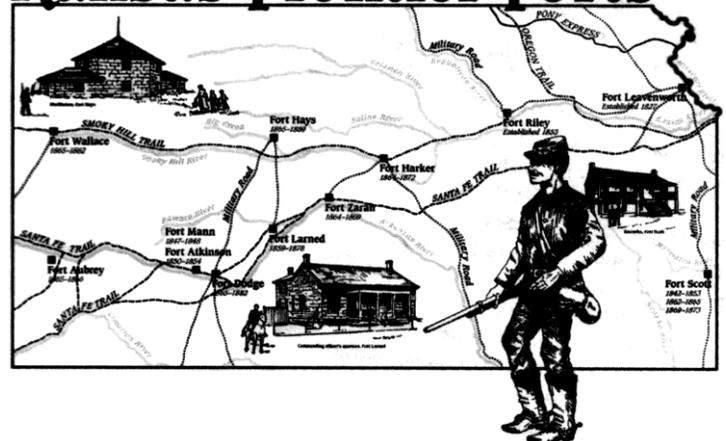
Program Speaker:

Doug Tippin, assisted by Don Combs

The Great Military Road connecting Fort Leavenworth, Fort Riley, Fort Larned and Fort Kearney was the first road providing access to the area for settlement by pioneers. Doug and Don's project has involved researching, preserving and promoting the construction of a series of markers indicating the road. Six of the nine proposed markers are in place. Marker #9 is located in Riley County.

The public is welcome to attend the program after dinner, without reservations at no charge.
The program will start about 7:15.

Kansas Frontier Forts



A Few Thoughts on Back Yards

Nearly everyone who owns or rents a home in the older sections of Manhattan has some kind of back yard. The front yard, with its curb appeal, shows the community something about the social and aesthetic values of the folks who inhabit the home and welcomes visitors to front porches and doors. Conversely, the backyard is the domestic zone reserved for household tasks. In back yards we barbecue, plant gardens, store yard debris for pick up, and build garages to house cars, sports equipment, garden tools and a myriad of offal-that-we-don't-know-what-to-do-with-but-can't-bear-to-throw-away. Nineteenth century back yards were "work horses" where laundry was hung to dry, water conserved, root cellars dug, and a variety of animals kept for transportation and/or household use.

The 19th century back yard was often equipped with a cistern-- a large container, often underground-- used to hold rainwater directed from roofs via gutter pipes. These vats held non-potable water to pour on gardens and flowerbeds, to quench thirsty animals, and if times got tough as a supplement water supply during droughts. Located below ground, cisterns also were makeshift refrigerators. Containers could be lowered into these back yard water tanks to keep food chilled and reduce spoilage during hotter summer months. The Manhattan City Codes Department provides instructions on how to safely decommission an old cistern that may be lurking in your backyard. You simply fill the hole with sand, top it off with soil and then place a heavy cover over the hole. It is heartening that City ordinance does not *prevent* any household from using a cistern; however, the device must be securely covered when not in use. The City of Manhattan website provides details on how to conserve water (<http://www.ci.manhattan.ks.us/index.aspx?NID=1331>). With a little elbow grease, historic cisterns could actually see a revival in this day and age of green energy and water conservation in Riley County.

Today some Manhattan neighbors keep chickens and other fowl in back yards for eggs and meat, but 19th century back yards were virtual arks for domestic livestock. The current Manhattan Code of Ordinances (Section 6-4) notes that the only domesticated animal NOT allowed in the city limits is the hog because of its annoying odor. Sections 6-1 and 6-2 of the current ordinance stipulate that it is unlawful for any horses, mules, asses, cattle, sheep, goats, chickens, ducks, geese, turkeys or other domestic animals to run at large within the city. Pens for such beasts can be no closer than 25 feet to the house and should be kept clean to avoid annoying neighbors. As an aside, probably few of us realize that it is illegal to keep elephants, baboons, hippopotami, ostriches, apes and monkeys, rhinoceroses, crocodiles, bears, bison and other such wildlife in back yards within the Manhattan city limits (Code of Ordinances; Sec. 6-7). Garages have replaced stables, barns, and chicken coops; cisterns have been filled; clotheslines are now rarely seen. But the back yard was once a vibrant part of the everyday life of past Manhattanites.

By Dixie West, President

Wolf House News

The Wolf House is needing a dehumidifier for the basement. Does anyone have one they are not using that is in good running condition? Call 565-6490.

The Wolf House is having a small indoor sale on Nov. 5 & 6. Could use some small items. Christmas decorations, costume jewelry, knick knacks, dishes and other small items. The sale will be in the Moses cottage where we have the book sale. Please, no large items. Items can be left on the screened-in porch of the Wolf House. Thanks for your continued support for the restoration of the House. Questions, call Edna: 539-8771.

If you can help mark books and prepare for the sale, let us know at 565-6490

A big thank-you to Dixie West and Cornelius Hugo Sr. for trimming the bushes at the Wolf House.

New Peine Grant Awarded to Wolf House Museum

Wolf House to Close November 1

Last spring the Riley County Historical Society requested \$10,000 from the Manhattan Fund - Caroline Peine Charitable Foundation, with a \$10,000 match from our organization, to restore two rooms, the front parlor and upstairs bedroom, in the Wolf House Historical Museum.

We are very pleased to announce that our request has been granted. We will close the Wolf House Museum on November 1 to start preparing for the work to be done. All the furnishings in the two rooms to be restored will be moved out and stored in the other rooms, and then the existing wallpaper will be removed and the plaster repaired, much as the dining room was restored last year. The parlor was the primary room that we wanted restored, but we thought it was prudent to work on the room above it at the same time, since the condition of the plaster is a little uncertain. Authentic reproduction wallpaper will be applied, hopefully by the people who did such a beautiful job in the dining room.

During 2008 the Caroline F. Peine Charitable Foundation awarded the Riley County Historical Society \$5,020. Peine money was used to stabilize the back porch and paint the exterior wood elements and windows of the Wolf House Museum. During 2009 the Caroline F. Peine Charitable Foundation awarded the Riley County Historical Society \$5,000.00 to restore the Wolf House Museum dining room. The restoration work was completed during March 2010. We are very appreciative of the support the Wolf House Museum has received from the Foundation.

In February 2008, the “Edna Williams Wolf House Historic Site Fund” was established at the Greater Manhattan Community Foundation as an endowment to benefit the house. During 2010 a “Friends of the Wolf House” group was established to help preserve and maintain the Wolf House Historic Site. A pledge of \$5,000 has already been received for this portion of the restoration. Donations for the remainder of the matching fund will be very welcome. Won’t you be a Friend of the Wolf House Museum?



Current Outreach Exhibits

At Meadowlark Hills

The Wire That Won the West

Where: In the main building, down the hallway past the game room is an alcove with three showcases.
Open 9:00-5:00

The current exhibit includes part of a barb wire collection donated by the Soil Conservation Service and tools and equipment from the Museum’s collection. Until mid-November.

At the County Office Building

The Perry-Harling-Burtis Family

Where: Showcase to the right of the entrance. Open Monday-Friday 8:30-5:00

Three generations of the family that owned the house that is now the Wolf House Museum at 630 Fremont.
Until mid-October.

Riley County Commissioner’s Meeting Room

Doyntz Avenue: The Difference A Century Makes. Until mid-December.

Open during the hours the Commission meets, Monday and Thursday mornings.

Exhibits are changed four times a year.

*The Riley County
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2309 Claflin Road
Manhattan, Kansas 66502*

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 407
Manhattan, KS 66502

Return Service Requested

Please Renew Your Membership

RCHS Membership Form

January 1, 2011 – December 31, 2011

(Membership Donations are tax deductible)

Please select the membership category of your choice. Make checks payable to the Riley County Historical Society and mail to: 2309 Claflin Rd., Manhattan, KS 66502

Individual Annual Membership Donations

_____ Friend \$10 - \$49
_____ Sponsor \$50- \$74
_____ Sustainer \$75 – 99
_____ Patron \$100 and above

Family Annual Membership Donations

_____ Friend \$15 - \$54
_____ Sponsor \$55 - \$79
_____ Sustainer \$80 - \$110
_____ Patron \$110 and above

Individual Life Membership Donation

_____ \$300 (Can be made in three annual \$100 installments)

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail _____

New _____ Renewal _____ Amount Enclosed _____

_____ I do not wish to be on the published membership list.