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RCHS Newsletter

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The Riley County Historical Society has a New Look!

We are happy to announce that the RCHS has adopted a new logo, branding package, and launched a new website!

The Society's Communications Committee, along with Director Katharine Hensler, have been working for almost a year to create, design, and introduce imagery, designs, and a new user-friendly platform. The platform will encompass the heritage of our County, its people, and the distinct cultural landscape of our region. At the same time, this task force has worked very hard to modernize how we get information to you and to make communicating with us, signing up for programs, renewing memberships, and making donations an easy and straightforward process.

The committee would like to thank Cora Wilson of Cora Wilson Graphic Design for her work on the new logo design and the creation of a formal branding package for the RCHS. We also extend a huge thank you to our webmaster Brian Tesene of Outdoor Resources, LLC for his work on creating our new website as well as maintaining our old website for over a decade. We extend our

thanks to both of these local business owners for their support of our Society and its mission! Please visit our new website at

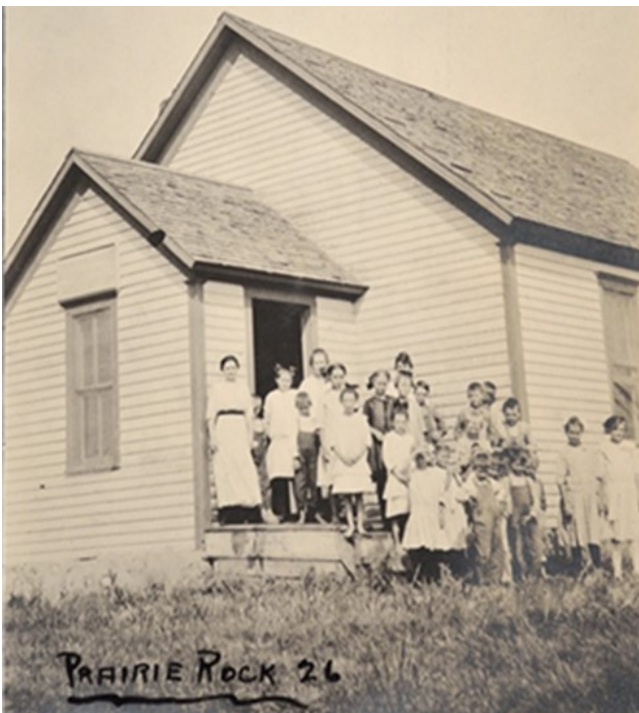
www.rileychs.org and enjoy the content! We are always open to suggestions for change, additional content, and edits as a website is an ever-evolving platform. Thank you, as always, for your support of our organization.

***The One-Room Schools of Riley County* by Doug Tippin**

Taking on a history project for the 150th anniversary of Riley County in 2005, five former USD 383 teachers set about researching county one-room schoolhouses. The researchers--Doris and Charles Setterquest, Jim Bogart, Roger Brannan, and Doug Tippin--interviewed former teachers and students and found photos of most of the schools at the Riley County Historical Museum. The cover of the resulting book, *Rural Schools of Riley County Kansas*, was designed by Jim Bogart.

The schools were built out of wood, stone, brick or stucco. Generally there was one large classroom and one or two cloak rooms. Some schools had a basement. The classroom consisted of student desks, a teacher's desk, a stove, maybe a piano and tables. Cloak rooms were used for lunch pails, water container, hanging up coats and caps, and keeping school supplies in cabinets.

Most schools had a large bell that was located in the belfry above the hallway entering the school. The first bell usually rang at 8:30 am and the five minute bell at 8:45 am. The bell was rung by the teacher or one of the more mature students.



Teacher Eusebia Knipe with Prairie Rock School class in 1894. Photo courtesy Riley County Historical Society and Museum.

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As of 1930, there were about 80 one-room schools in Riley County. They were located about two miles apart so students could walk or ride a horse to school. Some of the advantages of rural schools were that younger students could learn from older students, they had smaller class sizes, and they were a community focal point for social events and programs. Some of the disadvantages included a lack of space and resources, no running water or indoor restroom facilities, young teachers and a high teacher turnover rate.

Aside from their studies and learning lessons, students also had responsibilities such as bringing in fuel and taking out stove ashes, pounding chalkboard erasers and washing chalkboards, bringing in buckets of drinking water, and ringing the 8:30am bell signaling the start of school.

Among the enjoyable things about school were perfect attendance awards in the spring, library books to read, talking and playing with friends, and community social events (cake walks, box suppers). Playground games included "Mother, May I...?", Hopscotch, 'Fox and Geese,' ice skating on the creek in winter, and playground equipment such as the merry-go-round and teeter-totters.

Special school activities included spring track meets, field trips, and hikes. There was often competition between schools in sports such as baseball and basketball and in academic pursuits like spelling bees and math contests. Teachers were in charge of organizing spelling bees, holiday programs, games at recess, bringing in the drinking water, and cleaning of the building.

Some schools had horse barns to keep horses while the students were in class. And school was dismissed in mid-April. Typical school lunches might include sandwiches, fruit, cookies, cake, preserves, or boiled potatoes. Lunches were carried in a lunch box or syrup bucket and were sometimes traded among students.



Ashland School, circa 1920s. Photo courtesy Riley County Historical Society and Museum.

Students studied the usual subjects of reading, writing, and arithmetic, but also included were agriculture, geography, health, and Kansas and American history. Teachers attended training sessions offered by the county Superintendent of Schools and were to attend the state teachers' meeting each fall. Some had limited college training while others had only finished high school. All had to complete requirements for a teacher's certificate which had standards established by the state. Some were lifetime certificates, while others had to be renewed every two to five years. By the 1950s, two years of university work was required, and by the mid-1960s, the standard became a four-year college degree in education. Student teaching was not a requirement, but one needed to observe in a classroom for a semester. All teachers were required to attend the County Institute which was held before school started and on Saturdays.



Rocky Ford School, Photo Courtesy Riley County Historical Society and Museum

The superintendent made the teaching assignments and the rules for female teachers (e.g. Shall Not: marry or keep company with men, loiter in town ice cream stores, dress in bright colors, etc.) were much stricter than for male teachers (Shall Not: frequent pool halls, get shaved in a barber-shop, take more than one evening per week for courting unless attending church regularly—then can take two evenings for courting).

Several of the county's one-room schools are still standing. Some, such as Ashland, Deep Creek, Center Hill, and Prairie Rock, are being used as community centers. Others have been converted into homes or are used for storage, some have been moved while others have been torn down and are simply gone. The one-room school house at Rocky Ford is now a Riley County Historical Society property. Rebuilt after a 1927 fire, the building is open for tours by appointment. The public is invited to an Ice Cream Social and Open House at Rocky Ford School on October 1 from 2-5pm for tours, treats, and demonstrations. Admission is free.

Chief Standing Bear is Topic at September Quarterly Meeting

Ron Wilson will present "Off the Reservation: Chief Standing Bear and Riley County" at the Riley County Historical Society's quarterly Speaker Series on Tuesday, September 19 at 6pm. The meeting will be held at Lazy T Ranch, 2103 Zeandale Road, Manhattan, KS.

Wilson is director of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University. He has written and produced the radio and web versions of Kansas Profile with the tagline "Now That's Rural!" since 1992.

The presentation will highlight Standing Bear's 1879 journey from Oklahoma to Nebraska to return his 16-year-old son's remains to the land of his birth along the Niobrara River. Because Indians were not allowed to leave their reservations without permission, Standing Bear and those who made the journey with him were labeled renegades. That journey set off a court case considered one of the early civil rights cases.

Dinner for this event is by reservation only, but the Chief Standing Bear presentation is free and open to the public. The menu includes pork loin, cheesy potatoes, green beans, rolls, dessert, and non-alcoholic beverages. Dinner begins at 6pm and the talk will start around 6:45. Reservations for the meal must be made by Tuesday, Sept. 12, online at the RCHS website www.rileychs.org/calendar.cfm, over the phone, or in person at Riley County Historical Museum, 2309 Claflin Rd. Manhattan, KS 66502. The cost is \$16 for RCHS members and \$20 for non-members.



Ron Wilson



Photo courtesy Carol Hockersmith

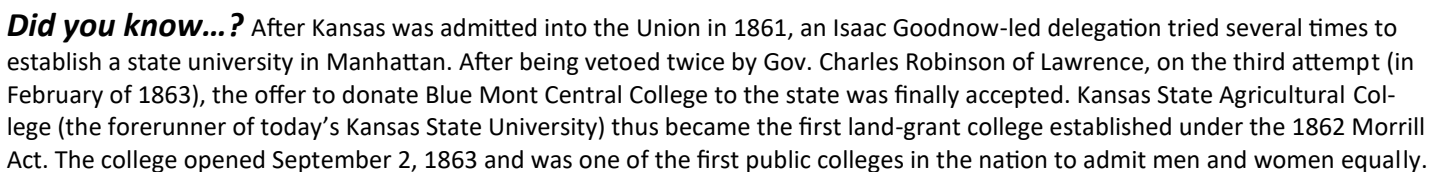
RCHS Annual Meeting to be Held November 9 by Carol Hockersmith

Come celebrate the history of the Riley County Courthouse clock tower, now featured in the new Riley County Historical Society logo. Save the date for the RCHS annual meeting Thursday, November 9, at 6 p.m. at the Blue Hills Room, 2315 Tuttle Creek Blvd, Manhattan, Kansas. Guest speaker at this meeting will be David Seay of Manhattan, owner of Regulator Time Company. Seay joined forces with the historical society in 1979 to raise funds to restore the Riley County Courthouse clock. He completed the renovation in 1980 and has continued to care for the clock.

The annual meeting will include dinner, electing new officers and board members, and RCHS president Debbi Thompson highlighting society accomplishments of the past year. The program will follow.

There is no cost to attend the meeting and program, but reservations are required for the meal at \$16/per person. The menu will include a baked potato bar plus green salad and dessert. The reservation portal will open in late September and reservations must be made by Thursday, November 2. We can now accept cash, checks, and credit card payments.

While on the website or while visiting the Museum, renew your historical society membership for calendar year 2024. RCHS membership runs from January 1 to December 31 annually. Riley County Historical Society collects, preserves, and presents the heritage of Riley County and the State of Kansas, supporting, advocating for and promoting an interest and awareness of our local history, and the Riley County Historical Museum for the benefit of all.



Interpretive marker installed at Marlatt homestead by Gloria Freeland

An interpretive marker explaining the importance of the Washington and Julia (Bailey) Marlatt homestead was installed at the property in July 2023, thanks to the efforts of the Riley County Historical Society, the Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance, and the Facilities Department of Campus Planning and Project Management at Kansas State University.



An interpretive marker was recently placed at the Washington and Julia (Bailey) Marlatt homestead. Photo by Kathy Dzewaltowski.

The Marlatt homestead was the residence of the initial educators for Blue Mont Central College, a predecessor of Kansas State University. It was constructed around 1856 by Davies Wilson of local limestone in colonial American style and is considered the oldest standing stone home in Riley County.

Mr. Marlatt came to Kansas in 1856 motivated by a desire to ensure the territory would be free from the institution of slavery. Julia came in 1859 and they worked together as principal and assistant at the college, a private institution founded in 1858. They married in 1861, the same year Kansas became a state. Soon after, efforts began to establish a state university, and Blue Mont Central College became Kansas State Agricultural College (KSAC) in 1863, the nation's first operational land-grant institution established after the passage of the 1862 Morrill Act.

The Marlatts were prominent members of the community and played a significant role in developing the area. Washington was integral to Blue Mont's transition to KSAC—today's Kansas State University—and was president of the Manhattan Town Association.

The original Blue Mont Central College building, located on the northwest corner of Claflin Road and College Avenue, was torn down 1883-84. Washington Marlatt purchased some of the materials and constructed a bank-style barn on the property. The carved stone "BLUEMONT COLLEGE" blocks were installed above the barn's west entrance. They were moved to the campus library in 1926-27 and are now above the fireplace at the K-State Alumni Center.

The homestead was primarily a family residence and is currently owned by Kansas State University. The property is on the Register of Historic Kansas Places.

As one of the first land-grant institutions, K-State acknowledges that the State of Kansas is historically home to many Native nations, including the Kaw, Osage, and Pawnee, among others. Kansas is currently home to four federally recognized Native nations: the Prairie Band Potawatomi, the Kickapoo Tribe of Kansas, the Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska, and the Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska. The recognition that K-State's history begins and continues through Indigenous contexts is essential.

No more classes in 9th and Poyntz school by Janet Duncan and Mary Stamey

For the first time in 109 years, there will be no students educated in USD 383's 9th and Poyntz facility – most recently known as the 9th Grade Center. In its storied history housing students in grades 7-12, it has seen many successful athletic contests, drama performances, musical events, additions, expansions, renovations, and yes, even student pranks. One legend is of a horse coaxed into the first-floor hallway, which then refused to be led back out.

In 1857, the Manhattan City Council built the first city school building at 9th Street and Poyntz Avenue – the "Avenue School." It was said to be "the best public school building west of Topeka." One teacher taught grades 1-8.

With the area's growth, the city council then turned its public-school property over to Riley County's newly-organized County School District, "provided they levy a tax to be spent on school purposes." This in turn became a Joint School District of Riley County/ Pottawatomie County.

The city's second public school, the Central School was built in 1878 for four primary grades, four grammar years (grades 5-8) and Manhattan's first dedicated public high school. That school was where the current-day Woodrow Wilson school is now located.



MHS students heading to class, circa 1930s. Photo courtesy Riley County Historical Society and Museum

In 1880, when Manhattan became large enough, the first Board of Education was elected, and the Avenue School was razed to build a bigger stone school on Poyntz Avenue. It was also known as the "Avenue School."

The first recorded Manhattan High School graduating class was in 1892. In 1913, the Manhattan School Board authorized a new four-year senior high to be built on the Avenue School site along with a two-year junior high building, each to accommodate 450 students. The high school was occupied in 1914 and the junior high in 1918.

The junior and senior high school annex, with its 1,000-seat auditorium, additional classrooms, shops, vocational agriculture rooms, and storage, was ready in 1926. By the 1950s, the city's growth again signaled change and a new Manhattan High School for grades 10-12 was built in 1957 at Poyntz and Sunset avenues. The first class to graduate from that building was the class of 1958. Janet Duncan, a member of that graduating class, has fond memories of the 9th Street and Poyntz Avenue building.

"Among the most vivid memories of my years there are the activities that revolved around the big auditorium," she said, "which held the whole student body for assemblies, music and theater productions, with indoor gym classes, MHS basketball games and school dances in the gym behind the stage."

Mary Stamey also recalls the 9th and Poyntz complex of buildings.

"I have many fond memories [of that complex] as a student in the early '60s, as a teacher through the '70s and as an administrator in the early '90s. Besides rooms for teaching and learning, there are a multitude of intriguing small places throughout the buildings for finding solace, meeting up with a friend or simply hiding."

When Manhattan's two middle schools were built, the old Poyntz buildings were returned to Manhattan High School and re-opened in 1997 as the MHS East Campus, with only grade 9. Now, grades 9-12 will be located at Poyntz and Sunset, and the old MHS East Campus on 9th and Poyntz will be used for district library services, computer servers, storage, etc. for USD 383, with potential uses for community organizations as well.



Television Console, ca. 1948-1949, at the Riley County Historical Museum

Curator's Corner by Linda Glasgow, Curator of Archives and Library

This Westinghouse television console (*pictured, left*), probably dates from 1948 or 1949. From June of 1948 to February of 1949, the Westinghouse Electric Company, in cooperation with the Glenn L. Martin Company, tested "Stratovision," an airborne TV transmission relay system designed to serve remote areas. After initial testing proved encouraging, TV equipment was installed in a B-29 "Super Fortress" once the military armament had been removed. This four-engine aircraft, pressurized and air-conditioned, was capable of operating at 30,000 feet. The receiving array was positioned on an 8-foot mast attached to the vertical tail fin. Transmitters on a retractable 28-foot vertical mast extended downwards during flight. While alternative technology supplanted Stratovision in the domestic market, the U.S. Military has continued to employ the technology for specialized purposes.

Kansas State Was First College To Put Money into TV Research

"Although Kansas still is without a commercial television station, TV is not new to the state. Twenty years ago Kansas State College received its first experimental television license and was the first school in the nation to put its own money into TV research.

In 1938, K-State first used the iconoscope camera in satisfactory demonstrations at its Engineers' Open House and conventions on the campus. In 1941, the Federal Communications Commission granted a television construction permit for experimental telecasting on Channel No. 1. After WW II, K-State faculty members and graduate students completed the transmitter using military surplus and industry-donated equipment.

*The greatest public use of K-State's experimental station was made during the 1949-50 basketball season. The basketball team was battling to a tie for the Big Seven championship in Nichols Gymnasium, which seated only 3,000 of more than 7,000 students enrolled. The college telecast games from the gym to a special 6x8 foot screen in the auditorium and to TV receiving sets in the temporary student union and recreation center. Television channel No. 1 has been reallocated by the FCC and is no longer available for experimental use by the college. One year ago, the FCC proposed a new allocation of TV channels in which channel No. 8 was suggested for an educational television station at Manhattan, Kansas. Kansas State College filed a statement of intent to utilize this proposed channel if the assignment were made permanent. Thus, K-State, operator of the first television in Kansas hopes to continue in its role as a pioneer in the TV field...." From **The Manhattan Republic**, April 16, 1952*

Linda has worked at the Riley County Historical Museum more than 30 years, arriving in 1978 with a degree in American History and three years of on-the-job training at the Western Historical Manuscripts Collection at the University of Missouri in Columbia. After taking a sabbatical to rear her children, she returned to the museum in 1994. As curator of Archives and Library, she assists patrons with their research on Riley County history and other topics. One of the tools she uses, searching through old newspapers, was used to find the background information on the Stratovision television console in our museum collection.

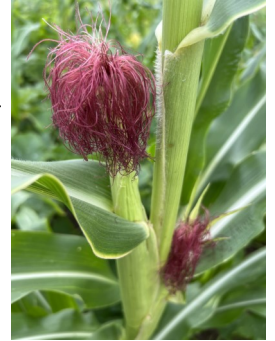


The museum garden has grown like a weed since our last newsletter; fortunately, the weeds have not. The pumpkins and squash have vined out and taken over the corn patch, threatening to commandeer the lawn and Pioneer Park. We don't mind, though—it has helped keep the weeds down and retain water. The Cherokee Purple Tomatoes have proven equally vigorous and bushy though we're still waiting for ripe tomatoes. On August 4th, we harvested our first Anne Arundel muskmelon, partly because it was ripe, but mostly because some bunny had already started eating on it. The nearly 300-year-old muskmelon variety was decidedly delicious!



However, not all things have turned out well in the garden. Of the four or five varieties of beans that were planted, none have survived. The deer must find them delectable since they nip off any leaf that appears. The Rose Finn Apple Potatoes don't look promising either. The intense heat we've experienced has been hard on them. The vegetable oysters and parsnips did not come up, and only a couple of beets survived. We plan to do some fall plantings of beets and cabbages and see if we have success with them.

The cushaw squash are huge and looks like they will make a good crop for winter pies. The Stowell's Evergreen Sweet Corn is growing magnificently, but will we get to it before the raccoons do? To learn more about the Goodnow Interpretive Garden and how to get involved, visit www.rileychs.org/goodnow-interpretative-garden.cfm



Calendar of Events

September is National Save Your Photos Month and Hispanic/Latin Heritage Month (starts Sept. 15)

September 4—Labor Day, museum is closed

September 11—9/11 Remembrance Day

September 12—Fireside Chat at 5:30pm, Flight Crew Coffee, 423 Poyntz Ave.

September 13—Board of Directors monthly meeting, 3:30-4:30pm, Dallas Gallery, Riley County Historical Museum

September 17—Constitution Day

September 18—KMAN In-Focus radio program featuring Melanie Highsmith from RCHM, 9:05-10:00am

September 19—RCHS Quarterly Meeting, 6pm: Chief Standing Bear Trail Presentation by Ron Wilson@Lazy T Ranch, 2103 Zeandale Road, MHK; advance reservations required, \$16 for members/\$20 for non-members

October is National Family History Month and Hispanic/Latin Heritage Month (ends Oct. 15)

October 1—Rocky Ford School Ice Cream Social and Open House, 2-5pm, 1969 Barnes Rd., MHK; admission is free and will include tours, treats, and demonstrations

October 9—Indigenous Peoples Day

October 10—Fireside Chat and 5:30pm, Flight Crew Coffee, 423 Poyntz Ave.

October 11—Board of Directors monthly meeting, 3:30-4:30pm, Dallas Gallery, Riley County Historical Museum

October 16—KMAN In-Focus radio program featuring Melanie Highsmith from RCHM, 9:05-10:00

October 28—Make a Difference Day

Stay up-to-date with all of our events and programs by visiting www.rileychs.org/calendar.cfm