

# RILEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Since 1914

Contact us at: 2309 Claflin Road Manhattan, Kansas 66502

RCHS Newsletter

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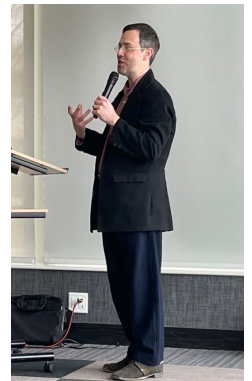
### ***Lunch and Learn Quarterly Meeting Recap*** by Derrick Doty



The Riley County Historical Society held a Lunch and Learn quarterly meeting at the Prairie Star Restaurant at Meadowlark Hills on March 22, 2023. Derrick Doty, host of the Pioneer Log Cabin in City Park, was the guest speaker. Doty reported that the log cabin, Riley County's first museum, was built in 1915 and 1916 and had been inspired by Homer Williams's 1910 log cabin at Louisburg, Kansas. The Williams cabin housed a number of unusual artifacts, includ-

ing a pre-Revolutionary War violin, a wooden canteen from the War of 1812, and a skillet purportedly used to cook cornbread served to Abraham Lincoln in 1860. He noted how our cabin was built using volunteer labor and that the walnut logs were donated by locals. A slideshow gave insight into the primitive nature of most Territorial cabins. One of Riley County's most interesting log structures was the Conic School on Deep Creek, with six sides and a cone-shaped roof.

Doty (*pictured, right*) also shared some stories about the artifacts in the Pioneer Log Cabin, such as the wagon wheel hub that brought John McCormick to Deep Creek in the spring of 1855 and the cast iron bread oven used by E. St. John and Charles Martin on a bison hunt west of Manhattan in the 1860s. The presentation concluded with Doty playing a rendition of the well-known pioneer fiddle tune, "Natchez Under the Hill," or what today may be recognized as "Turkey in the Straw." Society members also shared their memories of the Log Cabin and City Park, including of a goldfish pond formerly near the log cabin.



### ***Juneteenth, our newest national holiday***

Juneteenth, a combination of the words 'June' and 'nineteenth,' was traditionally celebrated on the third Saturday in June, even before it became a national federal holiday. In 2021, President Joe Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act into law. This holiday marks the anniversary of the day (June 19) in 1865 when General Order 3, a legal decree issued by Major General Gordon Granger enforcing the Emancipation Proclamation in Texas, freed all remaining enslaved people in the state. The order was disseminated by General Gordon upon arriving at Galveston, Texas after the end of the American Civil War and 2 ½ years after President Lincoln had originally issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863.

As far back as the 1860s, early Juneteenth celebrations centered more around church-community gatherings. Today, Juneteenth is more of a multicultural holiday, often marked with local celebrations. Traditional African-American music, songs, and readings may be highlighted, as well as featuring red foods and drinks, such as red velvet cake and strawberry soda, with the red representing resilience and joy.

This year, Juneteenth will be observed as a federal holiday on Monday, June 20, although the Manhattan Juneteenth celebration will be held June 15-19. For more information, go to [www.manhattanjuneteenth.org](http://www.manhattanjuneteenth.org).

## **Curator's Corner: Bringing Riley County History In-Focus** by Melanie Highsmith, Curator of Education and Design

Did you know that the museum has a regularly scheduled radio airtime? Every third Monday of the month, I join Brandon Peoples for a KMAN In-Focus segment from 9:05 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. on 1350 AM/93.3 FM. Different topics take the spotlight every episode as surprise guests, community partners such as Dave Baker (Director of the Douglass Center) and the Riley County Genealogical Society join us periodically. So far this year, we have discussed Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s visit to K-State in 1968, the recent nomination of the Yuma Street Historic District, and business practices of the glamorous Gertrude Doud Tetrick (*pictured, right*). Callers are welcome during all segments to share memories and participate in building our community of history enthusiasts. Please tune in and let us regale you with riveting tales of historic people, places, and events around Riley County. The backlog of all previous episodes of the program can be found at <https://1350kman.com/category/ondemand/infocus/>.

If you can't join in on-air but have related stories or artifacts to share, please come by the main museum at 2309 Claflin and chat with me. Recently, through the generosity of a radio listener, I was able to see a photograph of an original Gertrude Doud Tetrick painting that I didn't know existed and which hangs in their family home. Additionally, if you have ideas for potential topics, I am always open to suggestions and look forward to learning with you.

*A native of Texas, Melanie moved to Manhattan in 2018 to pursue her Ph.D. in History at Kansas State University. Her dissertation concerns asylums in Kansas in the late 1800s, medical technology, and social perceptions of wellness. She received a B.A. in History from Angelo State University and two M.A.s in History and Anthropology from Texas Tech University. Her hobbies include walking her two dogs, playing survival horror video games, and enjoying a nice whiskey out with fellow Curator Dawn Munger. In addition, Melanie serves on boards for the Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance, the Arts & Humanities Association of Manhattan, and is on sabbatical from the board of the Wonder Workshop Children's Museum.*



## **THE BAND PLAYS ON: Manhattan Municipal Band** by Mary Stamey

Percussionist Charlie Moorman was just 16 in 1919 when he set out to gather signatures to petition town leaders to form a municipal band. He'd heard of other town bands playing for the public on various occasions and wanted the same for Manhattan, Kansas. The City did soon adopt an ordinance creating the Manhattan Municipal Band and it has played for the public since its 1920 debut. In its early years, the band also made goodwill trips to other communities such as Salina, Abilene, and Clay Center.



Courtesy of the Riley County Historical Society & Museum

The first band contract stipulated that they play one concert in the winter and 17 concerts during the summer, and later were required to be available year-round. Winter concerts were held in the newly-built Community House, and summer concerts held in front of the courthouse on a portable horse-drawn stage. This was replaced in 1930 by the City Park Pavilion, which was home to the band until the Larry Norvell Band Shell was completed in 2004. Since 2009, the band has been under the City's Parks and Recreation Department. Today, the band season begins on Memorial weekend and ends in mid-to late July.

The first uniforms the band members wore were borrowed from local college and high school bands. In the 1930s, new band uniforms were purchased, including white trousers for the men and white skirts for the women. No substitutions were allowed, which meant having to wear a wool band uniform blouse in the summer heat. The wool uniforms lasted until 1956 when they were donated to the high school's drama department. (*continued, next page...*)

# 2023 RILEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Throughout its storied history, there have been seven municipal band directors. Larry Norvell holds the record of having served the longest, from 1950-1995 (45 years!). Current director Frank Tracz has served for 22 years. Biographical sketches of each band director are available at <https://www.k-state.edu/band/mmb/index.html>.

Charlie Moorman later finished high school, went on to college, joined John Phillip Sousa's band and was a member of many circus bands before returning to Manhattan to teach music in area schools. Most of the other band members have not, however, been professional musicians. A sense of community and just the fun of performing has led people from many walks of life to join the band each summer. The Manhattan populace has been steadfast in their support of the Municipal Band. In early years, some audience members would even park close to the pavilion and listen from their cars, honking their horns after favorite songs. With the hospital across the street from the park, honking was later discouraged.

Patriotic songs have comprised much of the program during band concerts in the park. Who hasn't sung along to "Yankee Doodle" or tapped their feet to "Stars and Stripes Forever"? Broadway hits, Top-10 songs from bygone eras, classical compositions and sometimes silly ditties comprise the repertoire of any given performance. Local vocal talent has also played a role, including soloists and Manhattan's Little Apple Chorus. Instrumental solos, duets or entire sections of the band are highlighted. I was honored when Charlie asked me to play a xylophone duet with him prior to his retiring from his beloved town band.

Tuesday nights in the Larry Norvell Band Shell continue to be the home of the Manhattan Municipal Band. Please join them each Tuesday evening at 7:30 from Memorial Day through July 18. Bring your family and neighbors—you'll be a part of history! More information about the band's history may be obtained at the Riley County Historical Museum, the KSU band's website noted, above and the City's Parks and Recreation website: [www.mhkprd.com/202/Arts-in-the-Park](http://www.mhkprd.com/202/Arts-in-the-Park).

*Mary is a retired public school teacher and administrator. She has played in Manhattan's Municipal Band for many years and is a member of the Riley County Historical Society's Board of Directors.*

## ***RCHS Quarterly Meeting set for June 20 with speaker Marla Day***

The Riley County Historical Society's next quarterly meeting is set for Tuesday, June 20, at 7 p.m. The program will take place at the Manhattan Public Library Auditorium, 629 Poyntz Avenue. Marla Day (*pictured, right*), Curator of the Kansas State University Historic Costume and Textile Museum, will be giving a presentation titled "Sunbonnets and Calico: Clothing of the Kansas Frontier." The program will be taking a look at the clothing worn by men, women, and children as they carved out a life on the plains of Kansas during the time of the Santa Fe and Oregon Trails. The public is invited to this free event with light snacks provided.



While the event is at the library, it is not a program of the Manhattan Public Library; it is an educational program sponsored by Riley County Historical Society. The society supports, advocates for, and promotes interest and awareness of local history and the Riley County Historical Museum for the benefit of all.

## ***Did you know...?***

Manhattan, Kansas was founded in 1855 and incorporated as a city on May 30, 1857, officially making our fair community nearly 166 years young!



## Wolf House and Photography Studio

The Wolf House, located at 630 Fremont (now a museum open Saturday and Sunday 2-5 p.m.) was originally constructed in 1868 for John and Sophia Frank to be used as a boarding house, and it is still in its original location. Accepted to the National Register of Historic Places in 2019, the area is full of a rich history the museum and historical society wish to preserve for years to come.

By 1875, house had been sold to siblings Maria Abigail Wells and Dr. Gideon Babcock Perry, although it was their brother, Dr. George Hazard Perry, who actually lived in the home with his wife and family. The house remained in the Perry family for 63 years until 1938 when Elisabeth Perry Harling sold it to Professor John V. Hepler and his family, and the home ceased operation as a boarding house. The Heplers then sold the

property in 1941 to Max and Lucile Wolf. Max Wolf and his father had moved to Manhattan in 1901 to build a photography studio after operating a studio in Garden City since the 1880s. Soon after, the Wolf Photography Studio was built in 1902 at 112 N. 5th St. in Manhattan, KS, in the shadow of the historic Riley County Courthouse. The studio structure consists of a one-story square building. The most distinguishing feature is a 30-pane, glass-walled shed dormer that was used as a natural light source for the photographer's studio and it is an excellent and relatively uncommon surviving feature compared to other historic photography studios. The Wolf Studio (*below, picture from 1907*) was one of the longest continually operated businesses in Manhattan and the longest



running photo business when it closed in 1956 upon Max's death, having remained in the family for 70 years. Max even added a darkroom to the basement of Wolf House to continue working after business hours.

In 1957, when downtown redevelopment threatened the studio, Lucile Wolf had the building moved to its current location within the Wolf House Historic District at the corner of Juliette and Fremont Streets. Mrs. Wolf donated the studio and the house to the Riley County Historical Society in 1982, and the Wolf House opened as a museum with Edna Williams serving as its first Curator from 1983 until her retirement in 2014.

The Wolf House is still open for tours and is home to yearly fourth grade field trips and a Christmas

Open House. A great effort has been made to ensure the integrity of the Wolf House, and the Photo Studio is next on the restoration list.

The 1902 Wolf Photography Studio is in great need of both interior and exterior repair as it has sat mostly undisturbed for decades. The RCHS has established 5 phases of this project: 1) exterior restoration; 2) skylight restoration; 3) interior restoration; 4) interpretation and exhibit development; and 5) grounds restoration. Because of generous donors and smart investing, the RCHS has pulled together the seed money to assist in getting the project moving. The restoration of this building (*right, picture from 2022*) would preserve this historic resource, improve the appearance of the property, assist in neighborhood beautification, and enhance the enjoyment of the individuals who live in this neighborhood. If you would like more information on this project or would like to become involved, please reach out to Riley County Historical Museum Director Katharine Hensler at [khensler@rileycountyks.gov](mailto:khensler@rileycountyks.gov).



### German Boarding House.

Table Board, and Board and Lodging, also  
Travelers accommodated at the large Stone  
House—near the Steam Grist Mill.  
JOHN FRANK, Prop.  
Manhattan, Kansas. 33-1f

## ***Pioneer Log Cabin open every Sunday through October***

The Riley County Historical Association—now known as the Riley County Historical Society—was founded on May 28, 1914. Its objective was “to promote interest in and preservation of written or printed records of our history and also to collect relics for a museum.”

Early on, the association met nearly every month at the county courthouse. The association planned a museum, but lacking funds, they chose to build a log cabin to house a historical collection. Permission was given to place the log cabin museum in City Park. Logs, labor, and building materials were donated. On October 12, 1915, following a parade consisting of 102 floats depicting the history of the county, a ceremony was held and the first cornerstone was laid. That stone was taken from the walls of the Bluemont Central College building and historical papers were placed inside. A second cornerstone was taken from the old government bridge at Juniata, which was part of the Fort Leavenworth to Fort Riley military trail dating from the 1850s.



Once the cabin was completed, another ceremony was held on October 5, 1916 and after a picnic, speeches and musical presentations, the cabin was opened to visitors. Many of the original settlers were gone by 1916 and most of those who remained had been children during pioneer times. The message that they sent forward to the future was that “our history is a sacred trust inherited from the pioneers, let us never cease our efforts to preserve it.” This year, the Pioneer Log Cabin in City Park opened on April 2 and will be open every Sunday from 2-5 p.m. through October 29. Admission is always free.

*(Information for this article came from the Riley County Historical Society's book Log Cabin Days, published in 1929 and from the May 2009 Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance, Inc. newsletter.)*

### ***Calendar of Events***

May 6—Flint Hills Festival at Blue Earth Plaza, 10am to 5pm <https://www.flinthillsdiscovery.org/381/Flint-Hills-Festival>

May 9—New Program! Fireside Chat, 6:00pm at Flight Crew Coffee, 423 Poyntz Ave; free event

May 10—RCHS Board of Directors meeting at Manhattan Senior Center, 3:30-4:30pm

May 15—***In-Focus*** KMAN radio program featuring Melanie Highsmith from RCHM, 9:05-10:00am

June 14—RCHS Board of Directors meeting at Manhattan Senior Center, 3:30-4:30pm

June 18—***Votes for Women: Women's Suffrage in Riley County*** temporary exhibit at the Riley County Historical Museum closes , 2-5pm; free and open to the public

June 19—***In-Focus*** KMAN Riley County Historical Society and Museum program, 9:05-10:00am

June 20—RCHS Quarterly Meeting with a presentation by Marla Day titled “Sunbonnets and Calico: Clothing of the Kansas Frontier”, 7pm at Manhattan Public Library; no reservations required, light refreshments will be served; free event

July 1—New RCHM temporary exhibit opens, 2pm; free and open to the public—more details to come

July 17—***In-Focus*** KMAN Riley County Historical Society and Museum program, 9:05-10:00am

July 18—RCHM Board of Trustees meeting at Manhattan Senior Center, 4-5pm

August 19—History and Genealogy Fair, Pottorf Hall at CiCo Park, 10am-4pm, <https://rileycgs.com/>