Historical Highlights
Apr. 2012

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Catching Up

It’s been a busy time for Shawnee County Historical Society, although we have not put our news into print for a while.

Let’s catch up on activities:

Preservation Awards 2011

The fifth annual joint awards for preservation of sites reflecting the history of Shawnee County were presented on Sunday, May 1, 2011, at the Hale Ritchie House, 2 p.m., by the Shawnee County Historical Society and the Topeka Landmarks Commission.

Guest speakers were John Hunter and Anita Wolgast of the NOTO Fine Arts District project, an effort to revitalize North Topeka with an community of the arts.

Chris Schultz, Shawnee County Historical Society President, honored these 2011 SCHS Preservation Award recipients:


- **Maura** and **Bud Dingman**, “Historic Preservation and Neighborhood Revitalization, properties at 1100 and 1124 SW Taylor St., Topeka.


- **North Topeka (NOTO) Arts District**, Board of Directors, “North Topeka Revitalization Initiative.”

- **Mike Fox**, **Mike Wilson** and **Daryl Craft**, “Adaptive Reuse of Historic Property,” the Gordon Building, 900 SW Kansas Av., Topeka.

In addition, the SCHS Preservation Committee also recognized ex-trustee **Jack Wisman** for his preservation work, particularly in regard to preservation of Topeka Cemetery, Topeka’s oldest cemetery. Jack was not able to attend this event.

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Robert Banks of the Topeka Landmark Commission recognized:

- **Central Congregational Church**, on making living history of their ties with Charles Sheldon, Congregational pastor and author of *In His Steps*,
- **Deborah Edwards**, owner and resident of the John Nelson House, boyhood home of Langston Hughes. Deborah succeeded in having the home recognized as a Topeka Historic Landmark.

Our Preservation Event was our first public event to be held in the newly renovated Hale Ritchie Home, 1118 SW Madison St., Topeka, new home of SCHS.

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**Savor Topeka**

"Forging Freedom's Pathway"

Saturday, June 15, 2011 — a wrap-up

This event was co-sponsored by Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site and SCHS Ritchie properties. Buses shuttled between Monroe School and Ritchie Houses. National Park Service rangers hosted, and Lecompton Reenactors portrayed David Rice Atchison, Clarina Nichols, a Buffalo Soldier, Chester Woodward, and Julia Roundtree.
Freedom Seekers: Stories from the Underground Railroad. Sunday, April 1, 2012, 1:30 & 4 p.m. Premiere of Gary Jenkins’s 75-minute documentary, at the Cox Communications Heritage Education Center, Ritchie House Site, 1118 SE Madison. For more information on Jenkins and his films, visit http://lifedocumentaries.com/

Attic Sale: Saturday, May 5, 2012, 8 a.m-2 p.m. w/ auction at 1 p.m. Donate your treasures to our non-profit organization, Monday-Friday, Apr. 30 through May 4 at Hale Ritchie House, 1118 SE Madison, Topeka, 2-6 p.m. Come bid/buy on Saturday. Special guest: historian and antique dealer, Lt. Col. (ret) David Chuber

Preservation Awards 2012: Sunday May 6, 2012, 2 p.m. at Gizmo Productions (Jeff Carson’s Thacher Building, 110 SE 8th St.) Again, the awards will be co-sponsored by the Topeka Landmarks Commission Awards.

History Day Camps: Our Second Year!
4 weekly sessions: June 4-8 | June 11-15 | June 18-22 | June 25-29
Ages 8 - 11, limit of 30 campers per week
Each week’s activities are planned around a different historical theme with an emphasis on local history and the history of Kansas. Students experience pioneer life and learn about the pivotal role Kansans played in our nation’s struggle for freedom.
Held at the Cox Communications Heritage Education Center, Ritchie House Site, 1118 SE Madison, Topeka.
An Educational Initiative of the Shawnee County Historical Society.
Details will be posted at our Website as they become available: http://skyways.lib.ks.us/orgs/schs/ or call (785) 234-6097

Shared Stories of the Civil War readers theatre

Sunday, February 5, 2012:
“John Brown: Martyr or Madman?” Directed by Phyllis Penney, introductions by Kelly Erby, narrated by Ralph Hipp
Readers: Ken and Mary Kerle, David Tangeman, Ralph Skoog and Phyllis Penney

Sunday, February 12, 2012:
“The Underground Railroad” Directed by Margaret Wood, introductions by Kelly Erby, narrated by Ralph Hipp
Readers: Phyllis Penney, Lana Wagnon, Mary Feighny, Doug Wright and Margaret Wood

Sunday, February 19, 2012:
“Guerilla Warfare: Bushwackers & Jayhawkers” Directed by David Tangeman, introductions by Bruce Mactavish, narrated by Ralph Hipp
Readers: Phyllis Penney, Ken Kerly, Mary Feighny, Doug Wright and David Tangeman

Sunday, February 26, 2012:
“Quantrill’s Raid on Lawrence and Order Number 11” Directed by Lana Wagnon, introductions by Bruce Mactavish, narrated by Travis Lamb
Readers: Ralph Skoog, Phyllis Penney, Jack Wagnon, Phyllis Penney and Jan Stover
The Society marked completed restoration of the Hale Ritchie house, 1118 SE Madison St., Topeka, by Daryl Nickel of Nickelodeon Restorations, LLC, (plus subcontractors) with an event held to thank donors. This outdoor celebration included an open house tour of the new facility, and regional media coverage.

Special guests included:

- Chris Schultz, President, SHS
- Olivia Simmons, Visit Topeka
- Judy Billings, Freedom’s Frontier National Heritage Area
- Kevin Singer, Topeka Public Schools
- Victor Miller, Shawnee County Commission
- Pamela Hollie, Mistress of Ceremonies
- Dale Anderson, Ritchie House Capital Campaign
- Justin Sachaske, National Park Service, Brown v Board National Historic Site
- Jenny Chiles, Kansas State Historical Society
- Larry Wolgast, Topeka City Council
- Bill Wagoner, Ritchie House Capital Campaign manager
Feature —

Building Our Land

Topeka & Shawnee Co. Sites, Buildings, and Districts on the Kansas and National Registers of Historic Places

by Douglass Wallace, SCHS Board Member

Since 1946 the Shawnee County Historical Society has published a “Bulletin” as part of its mission. Initially, these small booklets came out four times a year, then three, and until 1963, twice a year. Beginning in 1965, under the leadership of the late John Ripley as editor, the Bulletin was an annual publication, usually coming out in November or December. Under two subsequent editors, Dan Fitzgerald and Douglass Wallace, the SCHS Bulletins have become book size, often featuring 200 or more pages. This has been a time consuming and expensive work that has led to delays. For that reason, a full Bulletin like those of the past will now be produced on an irregular basis. Instead, the center section of a quarterly SCHS newsletter will focus on historic and preservation topics. Volume I, number 1 of the new Shawnee County Historical Society Newsletter features a description of Topeka and Shawnee County Historic Register sites.

Currently there are 81 properties on the National and/or Kansas Registers of Historic Places (at least one site has been removed, the 1931 National Bank of Topeka Bldg. at 6th & Kansas; razed, 1995). Most are found in Topeka though every section of the county can boast of at least one recorded site. The National Park Service oversees the National Register while the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review (appointed by the governor) meets four times a year to review applications submitted to the KSHS’s Historic Preservation division. From the Kansas State Historical Society regarding criteria for nomination—

The National Register of Historic Places is the country’s official list of historically significant properties. Properties must be significant for one or more of four criteria for evaluation:

A. Properties can be eligible if they are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B. Properties can be eligible if they are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C. Properties can be eligible if they embody the distinctive characteristic of a type, period, or method of construction, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

D. Properties may be eligible for the National Register if they have yielded or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

The National Register recognizes properties of local, statewide, and national significance.

The Register of Historic Kansas Places is our state’s official list of historically significant properties. Properties included in the National Register are automatically listed in the state register. However, not all properties listed in the state register are included in the National Register. The same general criteria are used to assess the eligibility of a property for inclusion in the state register, but more flexibility is allowed in the interpretation of the criteria for eligibility.

Listed chronologically by date placed on the National and/or Kansas Register, below are the 81 Topeka and Shawnee County sites: the property’s name, address or location (e.g., section, township, and range along with county township), date(s) of construction and date placed on the National Register (NR) or Kansas Register (KR).

National Register Sites in Topeka & Shawnee County

- **The Kansas Statehouse**, Capitol Square (1866-1903). NR: 9/03/1971
- **Menninger Clinic Building**, 3535 W. 6th Ave. (c. 1905). NR: 2/13/1975

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• Crawford Building, 501 Jackson St. (1888). NR: 8/22/1975
• Columbian (Knox) Building, 112-114 W. 6th Ave. (1889-90). NR: 9/05/1975
• Ward-Meade House, 124 N. Fillmore St. (c. 1872). NR: 11/12/1975
• Central National Bank, 701-703 Kansas Ave. (1877). NR: 7/19/1976
• Sage Inn, 13553 SW Highway K-4, Dover Twp. (1878). NR: 10/08/1976
• Davies Building, 725-727 Kansas Ave. (c. 1879). NR: 9/15/1977
• Hicks Block, NW corner 6th & Tyler Sts. (1889). NR: 11/09/1977
• Bethany Place Historic District, 833-835 Polk St. (c. 1874 & later). KR: 11/17/1978
• Wakarusa Hotel, Main St., Wakarusa, Williamsport Twp. (1873). NR: 4/04/1979
• Potwin Place Historic District, Greenwood & Woodlawn Aves. (1886 & later). NR: 5/01/1980
• Elks Club Building, 122 W. 7th St. (1907). KR: 12/10/1980
• Central Motor and Finance Building, 222 W. 7th St. (1926). NR: 2/19/1982
• Woman’s Club Building, 420 W. 9th St. (1925). NR: 2/19/1982
• Cedar Crest (The MacLennan House), Cedar Crest Rd. & Fairlawn Rd. (1929). NR: 5/06/1982
• England Farm, 4619 SE 37th St., Tecumseh Twp. (c. 1874 & later). NR: 5/07/1982
• Horace G. Lyons House, 4831 SE 61st St., Monmouth Twp. (1860-93). NR: 8/01/1984
• St. John’s Lutheran School, 315 W. 4th St. (1922). NR: 1/03/1985
• Mccauley Bridge, S25/T13S/R14E, Auburn Twp. (c. 1915). NR: 7/02/1985
• Sumer School, 330 Western Ave. (1936). NR: 5/04/1987
• Monroe School, Monroe School, 1515 Monroe St. East Topeka Junior High date: 1/23/2004
• Oakwood Farm, 2521 NE Sherman Rd., Soldier Twp. (1892-95). NR: 5/02/1992
• Ross Row Houses, 513-521 Van Buren St. (c. 1880-82). NR: 11/05/1998
• Charles Curtis Junior High School, 316 NW Grant St. (1927). NR: 10/22/2001
• TFD Fire Station No. 2, 719-723 Van Buren St. (1927). NR: 7/03/2002
• Union Pacific Depot, 701 N. Kansas Ave. (1926-27). NR: 10/01/2002
• Holliday Park Historic District II, 1009-1035 Fillmore St. (1886-1900). NR: 11/15/2002
• East Topeka Junior High School, 1210 E. 8th St.
Many of the properties listed here have been photographed, with photos posted on our web site: http://skyways.lib.ks.us/orgs/schs/preservation/pho-toarchive.html

You may even find an interior tour of specific building posted online.

Please note that we also have a photo “wish list” of sites we wish we had documented.

Consider sharing your photos of buildings listed on our wish list!

SCHS extends a special THANK YOU to Betty Bomar for purchasing the Society a new printer / copier / scanner for our programming.
Characteristics of Neighborhoods:
- Architecture (Potwin, Westboro)
- Unique History (Elmhurst, Kenwood)
- Ethnicity (Shop District, Ward-Meade)
- Geography (N. Topeka, Oakland)
- Socio-Economic (Shop District, N. Of Santa Fe yards, E. of Santa Fe Shops)

Library Resources (TSCPL/Topeka Room):
- Polk City Directories, & SW Bell Telephone Books
- Maps & Atlases: City, County, Sanborn, Carson, Parr
- Published neighborhood histories and biographies
- SCHS Bulletins
- Photographs & Postcards
- Local government reports
- Reminiscences of longtime residents
- Local newspapers on microfilm

Other helpful resources:
- Neighborhood Association Newsletters & Websites
- KSHS resources (www.kshs.org)
- Local historians, architecture buffs, longtime residents
- Register of Deeds; Shawnee County Appraiser (www.google.com) These lists are not exhaustive, but they are a starting point.

Caveats & Cautions:
- Topeka street numbers changed from lot numbers to block numbers in 1887; eg., Crosby Bros. Store pre-1887, 173 Kansas Ave.; after 1887, 533 Kansas Ave.
- Many street names were changed in 1938; eg. Euclid became 17th St.
- Neighborhood boundaries have changed over time
- House numbers may vary from one directory to the next, and even street addresses, if a house is on a corner
- Disasters, natural or man-made, such as floods and tornadoes, fires, and urban renewal have changed the look of many neighborhoods

President’s Letter

by Deb Goodrich Bisel, SCHS president

Dear Friends,

I have always considered myself an evangelist for history. This is an exciting time for SCHS. With the completion of the Hale Ritchie House as the Cox Communication Heritage Education Center, we at last have a home. But it is so much more! Our education committee, so capably chaired by Doug Wright, will welcome students of all ages throughout the year. The summer history camps begun last year will be expanded in 2012 and other programs will continue to be added. Likewise, the permanent exhibit in the parlor provides a rich orientation for visitors, and gives them a glimpse into the many-layered history of Shawnee County.

We are so pleased with the latest bulletin, The Capital’s Storied Capitols, 1856-1886. It is the perfect gift for someone who is not a member of the SCHS. Our bulletins, edited for several years by the incomparable Douglass Wallace, are outstanding resources and many of them are still available for purchase. Carol Yoho volunteers her time for our newsletter and website, and bulletins and memberships can be purchased online or at one of our events.

This year is one of transition, and one of those involves publications. Depending on the volunteer hours required for researching, writing and editing on an ongoing basis is not practical in today’s society. We have opted to commit to an expanded newsletter format, saving money and manhours, with the option of producing other publications as time and money permit. I think you will find the newsletters will become keepers!

May has traditionally been the time we recognize businesses and individuals for their efforts in historic preservation. Past SCHS president, Carlton Scroggins, continues to head the committee for our Preservation Awards to be held on May 6. We appreciate his hard work. The prestige that accompanies this award is recognized and appreciated by the honorees, and furthers the awareness of the value of preservation efforts.

On May 5, we will hold the first of what we hope will become an annual event. The Shawnee County Attic Sale will be a combination of Antiques Road Show meets estate sale. We plan to recreate the feel of an old-fashioned trading day on the grounds of the Ritchie House with donated items offered for sale and more valuable items being auctioned to benefit the society. Make plans to attend and to volunteer.

We welcome Martie Rison to the board as membership chair. Martie’s Facebook page is Topeka History Geeks.

The SCHS would like to offer our thoughts to the family of the Rev. Richard Taylor who recently passed away. Shawnee County and Kansas have known no greater advocate for the preservation of historic sites than Dick Taylor. With that, it is time to roll up our sleeves and get to work!
Topeka is wrestling with the potential demolition of three century-old buildings on Kansas Avenue. The decision will have lasting impact. The properties at the center of the debate are 926, 928, and 930 Kansas Avenue. Located near the highly visible intersection of Kansas Avenue and Tenth Street, the structures are owned by Hunter LLC, a local property management company. In July, Hunter LLC applied for a permit to demolish the buildings. The proposed demolition has sparked a larger discussion among city officials, community members, preservation advocates, and property owners. What is the role of preservation in the revitalization of downtown? This demolition poses the first major challenge.

Some would argue that these buildings are not worthy of preservation because they were not owned by historical figures or never housed important businesses. Perhaps that is exactly where their significance lies. The buildings were constructed around the turn of the 20th Century. They are Italianate red brick structures with cast-iron and limestone trim. Architectural features indicate the 928 was built as early as the 1880s, making it one of the older structures on Kansas Avenue. City directories reveal that 928 and 930 probably functioned as showrooms for the Shawnee Motor Car Company and the Electric Car Company. Photographs from the 1930s show the buildings as a shoe shop, a hand laundry service, and the Green Parrot restaurant. Since then, the structures have housed a Merle Norman Cosmetics store and the Crown Hair and Nail Salon. With roughly 100 years of existence, these are only the documented businesses in what was probably a constant turn-over. For over a century, these buildings housed the successes and failures of Topeka’s small business owners. They represent the competitive and sometimes tumultuous nature of conducting business on Kansas’ main street. In 2011, these buildings again find themselves at the center of a business district in transition.

Efforts are afoot to revitalize downtown Topeka, an area drained of department stores and small businesses in the 1970s. A handful of pioneering business owners have already occupied preexisting downtown structures in an effort to target the under serviced state workers and corporate staff, proving that rehabilitation is a viable option. The hope is that city officials exercise the vision to encourage this model, thus reestablishing a downtown that possesses unique character. The process has proved successful in communities like Lawrence and Hays, where vintage building and new business combined to create a shopping experience not replicated in strip malls.

To date, the city has taken positive steps regarding historic preservation downtown. In June, Topeka was awarded an Historic Preservation Fund grant from the Kansas State Historic Preservation Office to conduct a survey of downtown structures. The intent is to research historical value building by building and identify properties that may qualify for preservation-related funding. Because the 900 block is located in proximity to several properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the demolition request was brought before the Topeka Landmarks Commission. They wisely determined the action would “encroach upon damage or destroy the environs of listed buildings downtown.” Thinking long term, commissioners recommended any final resolution not be determined until after the completion of the survey. In essence, we must learn what we have before we start demolition.

Having survived the Depression of the 1930s, the flood of 1951, and the tornado of 1966, these buildings have proven unusually resilient. That may not be enough though. If Hunter LLC decides to appeal the
The Jayhawk Theatre was awarded a Heritage Trust Fund grant in the amount of $54,240 Feb. 18. The theater was one of 24 projects throughout the state recommended for grant monies by the committee of the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review. The funds will be used for repair and revision work on the theater’s fly gallery roof and main theater roof.

“There were 24 projects that were awarded this year and the Jayhawk was one of the few to be fully funded,” said Katrina Ringler, grants manager at the Kansas State Historical Society. “It’s a beautiful building that has a lot of potential to have a rehabilitation that will benefit the city of Topeka and the state.”

The Jayhawk Theatre, built in 1926 and a National and State Historical site, requires $9 million for full restoration and renovation. The Jayhawk’s board of directors has raised over $600,000 over the past 15 years, utilizing those funds for infrastructural improvements.

The lengthy project has picked up speed in recent months with new board appointments, sizeable grants with the City of Topeka’s Historic Sites for Heritage Tourism grant in the amount of $42,400 last November, and the recent Heritage Trust Fund grant. The board of directors aims to complete the project by Dec. 2013.

**New board appointments**

Doug Jones, co-owner of JQ Historic Properties and past president of the Shawnee County Historical Society is the new president of the Jayhawk board of directors.

“I’m thrilled to become the president, and there’s exciting new momentum. This thing is starting to roll,” said Jones. “We have an aggressive fundraising campaign that is ready to kick into higher gear.”

Jeff Carson, co-owner of Gizmo Pictures, Inc., is the new vice president.

“The excitement about downtown, with the capitol renovations and other areas of revitalization really bode well for our project and our new team. We have a lot of work to do, and we’re rolling up our sleeves, but we’re all looking forward to the opening of the theater,” said Carson.

**Plans moving forward**

The Jayhawk board of directors plans to raise the remainder of the funds necessary for construction to begin through a combination of sources: corporations, foundations, individuals, further grant opportunities and through several types of tax credit tools.

“We want to make the Jayhawk the crown jewel of downtown development,” said Jones.

Once complete, the theater will seat audiences of up to 900 people and provide live theatre and music, film and other arts events as well as providing meeting space for business and recreational needs.
MEMBERSHIP FORM

Our membership year is Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 annually. Make check to “Shawnee County Historical Society” and mail form w/ your check to: Shawnee County Historical Society, P.O., Box 2201, Topeka, KS 66601-2201. PLEASE PRINT or TYPE info requested.

Choose type:       ___Regular / $35.   ___Patron / $50       ___Renovator / $100

PERSONAL MEMBERSHIP

Name: _______________________________________________________________ Email: ____________________________

Address: ___________________________________________________________ City: __________________________ State: ______ Zip: ______

GIFT MEMBERSHIP

Name: _______________________________________________________________ Email: ____________________________

Address: ___________________________________________________________ City: __________________________ State: ______ Zip: ______

Tax Deductible 501 (c)(3) DONATION    Indicate amount: $ ___________

I wish to join this/these SCHS committee(s):       ___ Nominations     ___ Membership    ___ Publications

                                   ___ Annual Meeting/Socials ___ Public Relations ___ Historic Preservation ___ Education/Communications

SCHS has gone High Tech AND is saving members money by teaming with PayPal on-line to accept memberships and donations. We also hope to offer sales of our inventory of Bulletins with on-line payment via PayPal. Links now appear on-line http://www.shawneecountyhistory.org to allow payment transactions via PayPal by secure credit or debit card transaction.

Consider updating your membership or joining us as a 2012 member by using this new payment option.
Attic Sale
Saturday, May 5, 2012, 8 a.m-2 p.m. Auction @ 1 p.m.
Ritchie Homes, 1116 & 1118 SE Madison, Topeka
First: Donate treasures from April 30-May 4, 2-6 p.m.
Second: Attend, enjoy, purchase and bid.

Special guest: historian and antique dealer, Lt. Col. (ret) David Chuber

Alexis, grand duke of Russia, came to Kansas in 1872 to hunt buffalo. His entourage was aided by Kansas buffalo hunter William Cody, known as “Buffalo Bill” who, at the time, was employed as a scout by the U.S. Army.

Alexis succeeded in killing as many as 25 buffalo. He even shot a few more from the train as it chugged its way across western Kansas toward Topeka, where the grand duke was greeted at the Kansas Pacific depot by a large crowd brought by special excursion trains to the capital.

The hunting party stopped at J. Lee Knight’s photographic gallery to pose for keepsake photos before going on to the Statehouse where, Saul said, a cornet band accompanied a special chorus and the entire Legislature in serenading the grand duke with these lyrics set to the tune of “Old John Brown.”