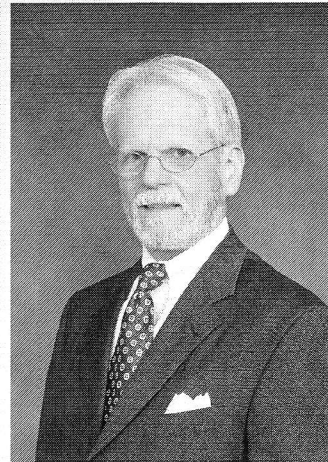


# Historical Highlights



## President's Message

First, let me say that I am honored to serve as the Shawnee County Historical Society President for the coming year. I'm fortunate to be working as part of a dedicated group of fellow members serving as your Board of Trustees who are interested in seeing that our Shawnee County Historical Society moves forward in its mission of recognition, preservation, and education of and about our County and State heritage.



SCHS President, George Bernheimer

A few weeks ago, the Board met in a special session to examine our position in accomplishing our mission, detail what is working and how we can do it better, to find out what isn't working, and discuss some of the challenges that we face. Some of the findings and recommendations of that session included putting the Society on a more stable financial footing, expanding our membership, and the further development of our education program along with adequate funding. A summary of the work along with recommendations to meet some challenges that the SCHS faces is included later in this newsletter. We are already moving forward on some of these recommendations. For ex-

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## President's Message Continued

ample, the interview process should begin shortly to hire a grant writer to help us develop sources for funding of operations, maintenance and further interpretation work on the Ritchie House structure, and funding for our expanding education program. The grant writer's compensation is being underwritten by a generous grant from the Glenn Swogger Redbud Foundation. We will continue working on objectives and action plans at our next Board of Trustees meeting.

Additional plans will include developing additional opportunities for membership interaction and education through special programs, social events, and participation with other historic sites and community groups. If you would like to have some hands-on involvement in this work, there are opportunities for committee participation and volunteer service. Let us know where your interests lie.

As these plans move forward and additional work develops, we want you to stay informed. Publishing of this Historical Highlights newsletter

takes place four times a year, and while it carries a lot of information, it's not the best way to stay completely up to date about what is going on in the Society. I encourage you to be a subscriber to our SCHS News to Use email newsletter if you're not now receiving it. SCHS News to Use is sent out twice a month, unless a special edition warrants it, and it informs you of upcoming events, recent news, and small items not included in Historical Highlights. It's purposely kept concise to be immediately relevant. If you're not receiving it, send an email to me at George Bernheimer <[shawneecountyhistory@gmail.com](mailto:shawneecountyhistory@gmail.com)>, and I'll see that you are added to the mailing list. Go to our webpage [www.shawneecountyhistory.org](http://www.shawneecountyhistory.org) occasionally and to be a subscriber to our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/ShawneeCountyHistoricalSociety/?fref=ts> . Lastly, all Board of Trustee meetings are open for members to attend as guests. Meetings are held on the third Monday of each month and begin at 5:30 pm.

2017 promises to be a challenging year. Among the challenges are our finances, changes that have taken place in our educational partnerships, and the how and why historical places, such as the Ritchie House, are relevant. Challenges create excitement, energy, opportunity, and growth for us and for those we serve. We are here to serve; to make lives better by telling the story of how people enriched the lives of other people, of how they made a difference, and how they met their challenges. Embrace the challenge!

## Membership Renewals for 2017

Paid memberships for 2017 as of 1/7/17

### **Regular:**

Gregory Allen  
Terry E. Beck  
Melvin Bruntzel  
James S. Daniel  
Shirley Driscoll  
Jerry and Barbara Estes  
Betty Frantz  
Gem Properties  
Johnathan Hart  
Edna Greene  
Thomas and Cinda Henderson  
Sandra Kassebaum  
Robert E. Keeshan  
Bob and Margaret Knecht  
Carolyn Litwin  
Jim and Nancy Parrish  
Paul Post  
Elliott Potter  
Robert H. Reeder  
Frank and Judith Sabatini

Janice Seagraves  
Marsha Sheahan  
Hershel and Jacque Stroud  
Richard Taylor  
Carolyn Yoho

### **Patron:**

Jon E. Boursaw  
Betty Bomar  
Jeffery S. Carson  
Sheldon Cohen  
Virginia M. Correa  
Bill Cutler  
Hon. Karen Hiller  
Walter Hillmer  
Carolyn Heubner  
Hon. Jan W. Leuenberger  
Richard Meidinger  
Tom Muth  
Austin and Marianna Nothern  
Ramon Powers

Ralph Skoog  
Lawrence Tenopir

**Renovator:**

George Bernheimer  
Ross Jory  
Mike Lennen  
Patricia Michaelis  
Ann L. Strecker  
Bryan Taggart

**Sustainer:**

Hon. Robert J. Dole

**Foundation Grants**

Westar Energy Foundation  
Topeka Public Schools Foundation  
Redbud Foundation  
Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area

## 2017 Planning Retreat for SCHS Board Members

In October, 2016 the Shawnee County Historical Society Trustees met to evaluate the year's programs and plan for 2017. The full report is available on request. Treasurer Bill Wagnon will present a budget based on those plans for the trustees to consider early in January.

Here are a few of the recommendations that may be of interest to the membership:

- SCHS is looking for non-Trustee members to serve on committees. Currently we need people for program planning, facility maintenance and membership.

- Thanks to a generous **grant from the Redbud Foundation**, SCHS will be contracting with a fund-raiser to help with grant writing and other resource development.
- **Expanding our membership is the most critical issue.** The trustees will be determining what will add value to our membership. We would love to hear from you what makes your membership valuable.
- **New, member-only programs are coming soon**, as well as programs with a broader focus outside the territorial period with an emphasis on Shawnee County.
- Do you belong to a service club that would be interested in a twenty minute program on interesting parts of highlights of SNCO history? Some suggested topics were
  - Themed Historic Structure Tour of SNCO
  - Veterans Day program honoring Harry Colmery
  - Segregation/racism in Topeka around the time of Brown v Board.

The Societies priorities for its budget, in order, are

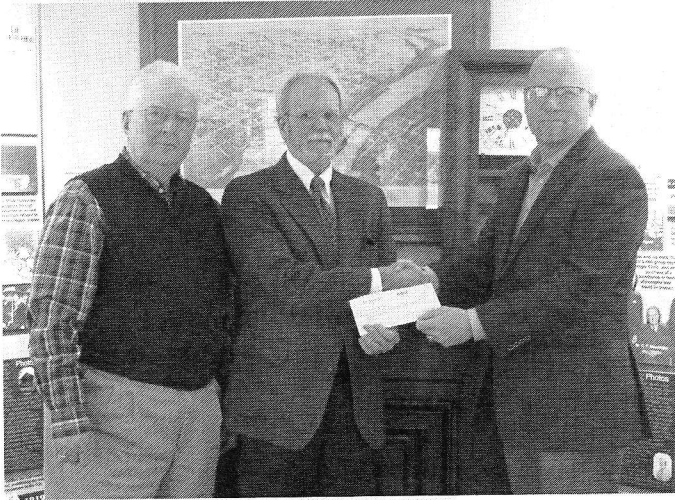
- General unrestricted funding that will put SCHS on a stable financial footing.
- Membership development
- Find funding for adult programming
- Expansion of School Program

## Westar Invests in the SCHS Education Program

Thank You, Westar!

The SCHS received a check for \$2000 from Westar Energy to support the Society's education program. The Westar Energy Foundation supports programs that encourage youths to stay in school and develop to their full potential, promote STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) education, develop workforce skills and enhance personal development to successfully participate in our society and improve the communities in which they live.

Pictured at left is the presentation to Bill Wagnon and George Bernheimer, SCHS Trustees by Bryan Taggart, Director, Transmission and Generation System Operations at Westar and SCHS Trustee.



## 2016 Annual Meeting of the SCHS

The 70th Annual Meeting of the Shawnee County Historical Society convened on Sunday, December 4, at the Cox Communications Heritage Education Center in commemoration of the 162 anniversary of the founding of Topeka, December 5, 1854.

President David Heinemann reported on the activities of the Society for the past year, including record attendance of the heritage education program for area schools, recognition of meritorious historical preservation projects, support for District History Day at Washburn University, and public programs on area history. He also recognized the following foundations and businesses for their financial support during the year: Westar Energy Foundation, Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area, Redbud Foundation of Glenn and Claire Swogger, the Prairie Band Potawatomi and the Topeka Public Schools Foundation.

The following persons were elected for a First Three Year Term ending in 2019: Chris Bowers, Carol Christensen, Timothy Hrenchir, Michael Lennen, James A. McHenry, Jr., and Chris Schultz. Jon Boursaw was elected for a Second Three Year Term ending in 2019.

Trustees whose terms were bylaw-limited were recognized and given a plaque attesting their service to the Society. They were Jill Wolters, Douglas Wright, and David Heinemann.

Society Trustee Tom Ellis provided the program on small towns in Shawnee County, entitled, "Uniontown—Where The Oregon Trail Crossed the Kansas River, Near Willard".

Following the meeting, the Trustees elected officers for 2017: George Bernheimer, President, Tom Ellis, President-Elect, Shirley Driscoll, Secretary, and Bill Wagnon, Treasurer.

For more information, contact George Bernheimer, 785-640-5312 or lvnghstry@zoho.com

## Topeka, Santa Fe and the Building of a Modern Institution

By Michelle L. Spencer

*The Santa Fe Hospital in Topeka was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2016 recognizing the building's significant role in healthcare for the State of Kansas and specifically, Santa Fe railroad employees.<sup>1</sup> Located at 600 SE Madison Street near downtown Topeka the hospital was an integral piece of Topeka's history from its inception. A series of three articles will examine the Santa Fe Railroad's largest hospital and the role it played in healthcare for Topeka and Santa Fe employees. This first article of the series will focus on how Topeka became the home of the largest and most important railroad hospital.*

Cyrus K. Holliday played a significant role in the establishment of Topeka and the Santa Fe Railroad.<sup>2</sup> One of the initial founders of the town, Holliday would go on to represent the town in the territorial and state legislature as well as being voted mayor of Topeka three times. Holliday wrote, introduced and promoted passage of an 1859 bill to incorporate the Atchison and Topeka Railroad. He lobbied Congress for the provision of federal land on which to build the railway; then turned to the people to rally their support. In October 1868, nearly ten years after the granting of the first charter, the work building the road began.<sup>3</sup> Holliday continued to support the town and the Railroad. He got the city to issue \$100,000 in bonds for Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad (AT&SF) in return for the railroad agreeing to keep its general offices and shops in Topeka in perpetuity. This action is credited with Santa Fe's long-term relationship with the Capital City, a commitment still strong today. The first locomotive of the Santa Fe Railroad was named the "Cyrus K. Holliday" after the man who had envisioned the greatness of the capital city and the railroad that made it so.

As the railroad expanded, it quickly became clear to the leadership of the AT&SF that in order to keep the railroad running at peak performance employees would require quality, accessible healthcare, something not commonly provided by employers nor available to workers outside large cities on the East Coast of the United States. Thus, Santa Fe chose to build hospitals for company employees. On April 7, 1884 the Atchison Railroad Employees' Association was formed as a benevolent and charitable corporation distinct from the railroad. The associa-

tion began with \$55,000 capital from AT&SF. Four hospital buildings were authorized for immediate construction with AT&SF Railroad providing the land as well as manpower and materials for construction. The first hospital opened in Las Vegas, NM on October 11, 1884, followed by a second in La Junta, CO, in November of the same year. Hospitals in Ottawa, KS, and Fort Madison, IA, followed in 1888.

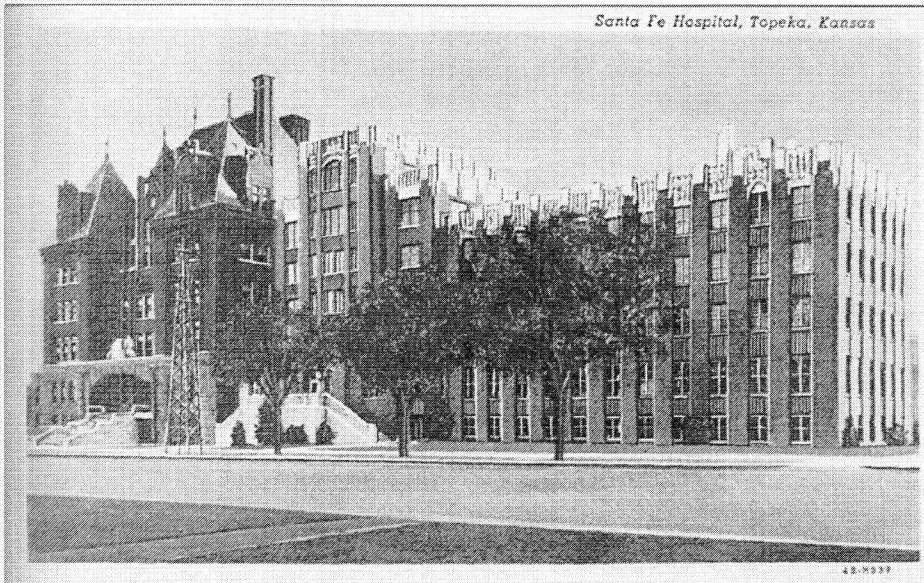
By the late 1880s Topeka was the center of the Santa Fe empire, due in large part to the aforementioned efforts of Cyrus Holliday. Not only was Topeka a crossroads for the major lines, it was the location of Santa Fe's principle offices and shops. It was therefore, the logical location for the largest hospital and headquarters of the Hospital Association. Santa Fe employees in Kansas complained about the distance required to travel for healthcare and in 1892, 2,300 Santa Fe employees petitioned for a facility to be built in Topeka.<sup>4</sup>

In 1896 Santa Fe broke ground on the first Topeka hospital located at 6th and Jefferson Street, the northeast corner of the current site. The railroad donated the land and gave \$30,000 toward hospital construction.<sup>5</sup> The hospital opened its doors on June 22, 1896 providing 100 beds for Santa Fe Railroad employees. In 1897 the hospital treated 341 patients; a number that climbed to 461 the following year.<sup>6</sup>

As of June 1916 the railroad had spent \$178,428.33 on the land, original cost of building and improvements of the Topeka hospital.<sup>7</sup> The Topeka Santa Fe Hospital and the Hospital Association had earned credibility and trust leading to a dramatic increase in patients and members. Even with seven geographically dispersed medical facilities, Topeka often was operating far beyond its intended capacity throughout the 1920s.

As with many other hospitals designed in the 1880s to early 1900s medical and scientific advancements made Topeka's Santa Fe Hospital 1896 design out-of-date. In order to accommodate patient expectations and modern medical requirements, the old Topeka Santa Fe Hospital would have to undergo significant

change. In 1929 the board voted to proceed with a modern expansion to ease congestion in the existing facility and according to the *Topeka Capital Journal*, to provide "a much larger number of private rooms for patients seriously ill."<sup>8</sup> In December 1930 the new hospital was opened. The five-story facility was state-of-art with a new surgical department, private patient rooms, medical library, and doctor's offices as well as a lab and x-ray department.<sup>9</sup> As the second largest hospital in the city, the Santa Fe Hospital provided care for the 5,000 Santa Fe employees that called Topeka home.<sup>10</sup>



Postcard illustrating 1930 hospital built adjacent to original 1896 hospital (The original building was ultimately removed as part of the 1950s hospital expansion) Source: Postcard History of the Early Santa Fe Railway by Don Harmon.



The hospital constructed in 1930 would undergo numerous expansions and continued to operate as a hospital until its closure in 1989. The next article in this series will look at railroad medicine and the role of the Topeka hospital in the Santa Fe Company. The final article in the series will review the construction and modernization of the hospital facility and its current role as independent living apartments for senior citizens.

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<sup>1</sup>The complete nomination is available online on the Kansas Historical Society website at [http://www.kshs.org/resource/national\\_register/nominationsNRDB/KS\\_ShawneeCounty\\_SantaFeHospitalNR.pdf](http://www.kshs.org/resource/national_register/nominationsNRDB/KS_ShawneeCounty_SantaFeHospitalNR.pdf)

<sup>2</sup>William E. Treadway, "The Santa Fe – A Child of Topeka," (Topeka, KS: Shawnee County Historical Society, No. 56, December, 1979) 1-5, 160-161 and Brenda Spencer, ATSF Motive Power Building National Register Nomination, Kansas State Historical Society, 2010.

<sup>3</sup>William G. Cutler, *History of the State of Kansas*, (Chicago, IL: A.T. Andreas, 1883).

<sup>4</sup>Ducker, William H., *Men of the Steel Rails*, Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1983, 46.

<sup>5</sup>"Fifty Years of Santa Fe History," *The Santa Fe Magazine*, (January 1923), vol. 17, no. 2, 33.

<sup>6</sup>Stannie Anderson, "The Third Hospital," *Topeka Capital Journal*, 6 March 1977.

<sup>7</sup>"Great Work of the Three Hospital Associates on the Santa Fe," *The Santa Fe Magazine*, (June 1916), vol. 10, no. 7, 33.

<sup>8</sup>"Add to Hospital," *Topeka State Journal*, 31 August 1929.

<sup>9</sup>"More about Our Hospital Association," *Santa Fe Magazine*, (May 1934), vol. 28, no. 6, 9.

<sup>10</sup>"Topeka is Well-Equipped with Hospital Service," *Topeka State Journal*, 15 August 1931.

*Michelle Spencer (mlskassociates@gmail.com) assisted Brenda Spencer (brenda@spencerpreservation.com) of Spencer Preservation in Wamego, Kansas with the development of the National Register nomination for Topeka's Santa Fe Hospital nomination.*

The SCHS would like to thank Brenda and her team for providing this wonderful history for our readers. This is the first part of a four-part series about the Santa Fe Hospital. Be sure to check out part two in our next *Historical Highlights Review*.

## Supporting Your SCHS!

Besides becoming a member, there are many other ways you can help your Shawnee County Historical Society. You can volunteer on a committee for one project or an entire years worth of projects.

Making a Donation without sending us a dime!

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