SUNSET AREA HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY

prepared for the

CITY OF MANHATTAN, KANSAS

PREPARED BY

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JUNE 2018

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Special thanks for use of historic images that belong to the Riley County Historical Society

The City of Manhattan, Kansas contracted with Historic Resources Group, Inc. to prepare this report on the intensive level survey of the Sunset Area Resources. The report is authored by Melissa Dirr Gengler and Anne Bauer.

This report has been financed in part with assistance of a grant from the City of Manhattan with Federal funds from the National Park Service, a division of the United States Department of the Interior and administered by the Kansas State Historical Society. The contents and opinions, however, do not necessarily reflect the view or policies of the United States Department of the Interior, the Kansas State Historical Society, or the City of Manhattan.

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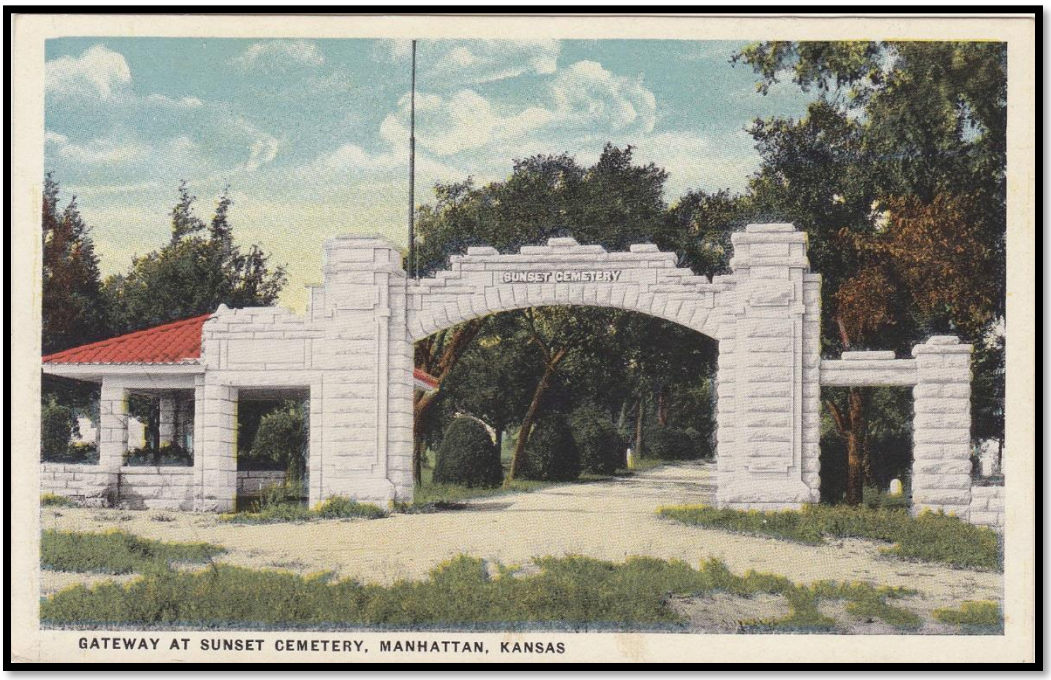

INTRODUCTION

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY

The City of Manhattan, Kansas contracted with Historic Resources Group, Inc. (HRG) to conduct an intensive level survey of the historic Sunset Area Resources in Manhattan. Two goals of the survey were to create a history of the properties and to provide a National Register of Historic Places recommendation of eligibility. HRG conducted the survey in October of 2017, presented a public meeting in March of 2018, and generated final report and recommendations in May of 2018. Research was conducted at the Kansas State University Archives, the City of Manhattan, Riley County Historical Society, the Manhattan Public Library, Riley County Genealogical Society, and the Kansas State Historical Society Library and Archives as well as various online resources. Information was also gathered through oral interviews of key personnel associated with the historic properties. Research concludes the development of the Sunset Area Resources which include Sunset Cemetery, Sunset Zoo, Sunset Park, and the Girl Scout Little House are historically linked and have a very similar development that represents significant associations with community and regional planning efforts at the local level. HRG recommends that these resources are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as one historic district. The Sunset Area Resources Historic District includes all four distinct resources mentioned above.

METHODOLOGY

The historian and architectural historian from HRG conducted field survey in October 2017 within the boundary area provided by the city of Manhattan. The city-owned resources in this boundary include Sunset Cemetery, Sunset Zoo, Sunset Park, and the Girl Scout Little House. Between October and April 2018 HRG completed field survey and conducted research at the Manhattan Public Library, the Riley County Historical Society, the City of Manhattan, the Riley County Genealogical Society, the Cemetery Sexton, the Sunset Zoo Offices, and the Kansas State Historical Society Library and Archives. HRG utilized survey standards identified in *National Register Bulletin 24: Guidelines for Local Survey: A Basis for Preservation Planning* and *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation.*

During field survey the HRG team photographed each of the Sunset area resources and collected information to build a detailed historic context. Construction materials, dates of construction, and levels of physical integrity were also evaluated during field survey. HRG developed the historic context to document the history of each parcel and to identify historical themes that might tie the resources together through time. This information contributed to a recommendation of eligibility for the resources and a method through which that eligibility is met: in this case, a single historic district nomination of the Sunset Area Resources to the National Register of Historic Places.

Information gathered was entered into the Kansas Historic Resources Inventory (KHRI) database and Preliminary Site Information Questionnaires (PSIQ) were prepared for each of the four

resources comprising the district. From these four PSIQ forms multiple entries within the KHRI document the primary resources associated with each property.

The recommendation of National Register eligibility is based on an evaluation of physical integrity, historic significance, and age. All eligible properties must retain physical integrity which is defined by seven categories that include location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, association, and feeling. These categories are applied based on property type, and in the case of the Sunset Area Resources, the property types are somewhat unique. Features such as significant transportation patterns, landscape placeholders, original materials, and design intent were considered for each property as well as the individual resources within the property.

To be listed in the National Register resources must retain significance in at least one of the following areas:

- Criterion A – Association with events, activities, or broad patterns of history
- Criterion B – Association with the lives of significant people in history
- Criterion C – Embody a distinctive characteristic of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic value, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- Criterion D – Have yielded or be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

HRG identified that the Sunset Area Resources possess significance as a potential historic district eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. As such, the district represents significance under Criterion A for its important contributions to Community and Regional Planning in Manhattan. As a potential historic district, the individual features of each resource are not as important as the collective significance of the entire district. Each resource must retain the integrity that speaks to the character defining features of the district and its period of significance or the time in history when it achieved and maintained significance.

The following historic context illustrates the development of the Sunset Area Resources through time and identifies the important elements of each resource.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The city of Manhattan is in north-central Kansas near the confluence of the Kansas and Big Blue Rivers. Manhattan is the county seat of Riley County, and early in Kansas history, Riley county was the western most county of the state. It is named for General Benjamin Riley, an Army officer in the 1850s who urged the Army to establish a military post at or near the Kansas River where it meets the Republican Fork. This eventually became the present site of Fort Riley, when it took that name in 1858.[1] William G. Cutler's *History of the State of Kansas* published in 1883 states that, "on this territory is the beautiful city of Manhattan, around which blessings gather in the greatest profusion. No such limited area in Kansas, has more of the combined works of nature and art to commend it than the township of Manhattan."[2] Kansas Territory was officially opened for settlement with the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854 which resulted in an immediate influx of Euro-Americans into the territory.[3] Early settlers were largely comprised of people from the northeast United States associated with the New England Emigrant Aid Society which intended to flood the area with abolitionists.

Waterways including the Kansas and Big Blue Rivers along with Wild Cat Creek contribute to the city of Manhattan's landscape. Geographically the Manhattan landscape includes river bluffs and upland divides that provided excellent crop and pastureland. The area was also a strategic location along the Kansas River for steamboats to deliver goods. Good quality clay was present for the establishment of brickyards and significant limestone deposits for quarries that would come to define the built environment in the city.

Manhattan's Early Settlement

Manhattan organized as part of two early settlements that combined to form the present-day city. George S. Park established a town site on the Kansas River called Poleska in 1854 and a group of midwestern developers that included Samuel Houston of Illinois, Sanders Johnson of Ohio, J.M. Russell of Iowa, E. M. Thurston of Maine, and A. H. Wilcox of Rhode Island established a site at the mouth of the Big Blue River called Canton. The following year, in 1855 a group of settlers with the New England Company left Boston and traveled the rivers through Ohio, Missouri, and eventually to Kansas where they chose to consolidate the two town companies already there with their own and established one larger permanent settlement they called Boston. Early claims were established at critical quarter-sections of the townsite and early commerce began with the first store established by William Goodnow on his claim.

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[1] William G. Cutler. History of the State of Kansas, A.T. Andreas, Chicago, IL. 1883, accessed at www.kancoll.org/books/cutler/riley

[2] Cutler, Riley County, Part 5, Manhattan, Part 1.

[3] Sally Schwenk AssociatesLate Nineteenth Century Vernacular and Stone Houses in Manhattan, Kansas MPDF, 2008, E2.

Later the same year a group of settlers from Cincinnati, Ohio traveled the rivers to establish a town they called Manhattan. The company numbered seventy-five people who also brought with them materials for ten houses to readily erect at their townsite. When they arrived and found the townsite of Boston already established, the two town companies worked together and joined to become one new community called Manhattan.[4] The city continued to grow with organized religious groups, fraternal organizations, and businesses. The county seat vote was held in September 1857 and Manhattan beat out the city of Ogden for the important role. The city was incorporated in the same year.

Early Cemetery Organization

Among early administrative responsibilities of the newly formed city was to establish a cemetery along with other public resources such as parks and schools. The minutes of the city council from July 5, 1858 note that a three-person special cemetery committee was appointed, but neither the location nor acquisition of land were easily determined. A second committee was appointed in June of 1859 to continue the task, and it was not until the following year that a recommendation was made. In April 1860 the committee recommended that a portion of John Flagg's claim be purchased for the use as a city cemetery. However, this was not accepted by the city council and yet another committee was appointed to identify different sites and select a cemetery location.[5]

Much consternation seemed to be a part of the various selection committees. Once the council rejected their recommendation the committee reconvened and were unable to come to an agreement to select a cemetery location. The committee was then discharged, and the issue postponed indefinitely. This did not last long as a new committee was appointed in June of 1860, and by the following month this group recommended an area of 35 acres at the head of Poyntz Avenue if Clark Lewis, the owner would give clear title to the city. The clear title did not directly happen, but the deed was shifted to John Pipher who then deeded the land to the city for $610.00.[6]

This 35-acre tract became the original city cemetery, even though the area was technically outside city limits. The Sunset Addition was added to the city of Manhattan when the plat was filed by Sam and Cora Kimble in 1909. The land was part of their property and the new plat included Evergreen Avenue, the main approach into Sunset Cemetery from Poyntz Avenue. This Addition included lots for the Sunset Cemetery Sexton House as well as the National Register listed Landmark Water Tower.[7] The tract was located at the southeast quarter of Section 13, Township 10, Range 7. The original tract of land has remained with the cemetery from the beginning. Some of the difficulty in selecting the site may be reflected in a quote from a local Manhattan woman

[4] Ibid.
[5] Wayne Amos, ed. *Sunset Cemetery, Manhattan Kansas*, February 1936, 1.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Benjamin Chmiel and Amanda Loughlin, "Landmark Water Tower National Register Nomination." Manhattan, Kansas, United States Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C., October 24, 2017.

who stated, "If I should die I hope I will not be buried on this bleak and desolate hill,"[8] describing the site as a barren and wind-swept burial ground.

Prior to the establishment of the cemetery, burials routinely took place in remote areas of a farm or homestead and in many cases the graves were exhumed and reburied in the city cemetery after it was organized. Because of this practice, documentation of the first burial in the cemetery is unclear. However, it is widely regarded that the first tombstone erected in the cemetery is just inside the main gate on the south side of Evergreen Avenue for Juliet Whitehorn, a 20-year-old woman who succumbed to typhoid fever. The stone was installed unmarked, and when the family later left Manhattan they ordered an inscription prior to their departure. The stone mason never made the inscription and the stone remains blank today. One historical account notes that, "The reason for his failure to do so is said to have been his habitual use of intoxicants; he was never sober enough to complete the work."[9]

Sunset Cemetery looking east circa 1895. Photo courtesy Riley County Historical Society.

To keep livestock from grazing within the cemetery, the city commissioned a stone fence to surround the cemetery in 1860. The construction was not immediately carried out, perhaps in part due to the financial climate surrounding the Civil War and recovery thereafter. In 1869, the city

[8] C.M. Correll, *A History of Sunset Cemetery*, 1936, 1.
[9] Ibid, 5.

awarded the fence construction project to brothers F.B. and J.M. Woodward at a cost not to exceed six dollars per rod (approximately 16.5 ft).[10] Rather than pay fully in cash, the city deeded 15 acres of the original 35-acre cemetery tract valued at $600, and the balance of the contract was paid in cash to the brothers for their efforts. The Woodwards completed the fence that year. The fence was designed to look like the fence that "encloses Professor J. Dennison's farm." The stone fence surrounded the 20 acres and was 24 inches wide at the bottom and 15 inches wide at the top and rose to four-and-a-half feet high. A special subcommittee of the City Council's cemetery committee supervised the work and the project was completed in March 1870. This fence stood until the stone wall that exists today replaced it as part of a relief project during the 1930s. In 1885 the Woodward brothers transferred title to their 15 acres of cemetery to George F. Brown who then sold the land back to the city. This retained the original 35-acre tract of the cemetery parcel. [11]

The city began to lay out and plot burial lots within the city cemetery. The first were plotted in the northeast corner of the tract and the second block in the southeast corner. Blocks were laid out in a westward fashion until 1900 when everything east of the ravine was laid out. No formal landscape consideration or trained landscape architect was utilized in laying out or designing plantings for the cemetery. Typically, this role fell to the sexton, the city, or was influenced by public input. The city offered a prize of ten dollars for whoever could come up with the best plan that laid out the section of the cemetery west of the ravine. It is unclear in the historical record or the city records if the prize was ever awarded. [12]

The city has historically retained and prioritized responsibility for the maintenance and care of the cemetery. City council always had a standing cemetery committee over which a member of the council was identified as superintendent and paid a small salary to monitor, report, and document improvements needed to the cemetery. The first superintendent was Charles Barnes who was appointed on July 6, 1863 and received $25 per year in compensation. By 1864 a Mr. G. Hall was appointed cemetery sexton, but it is unclear if he was also considered the superintendent. Following Barnes was George Brown who served as superintendent from 1866 to 1869, and he was succeeded by T. J. Jenkins who was named City Undertaker and Superintendent of the Cemetery. George Murphy served from 1870-1874 and was the first to involve the city in the undertaking business.[13] He encouraged the city to purchase a part share in a hearse. This devolved over the years into lawsuits and the city never fully stepped into the role as undertaker.

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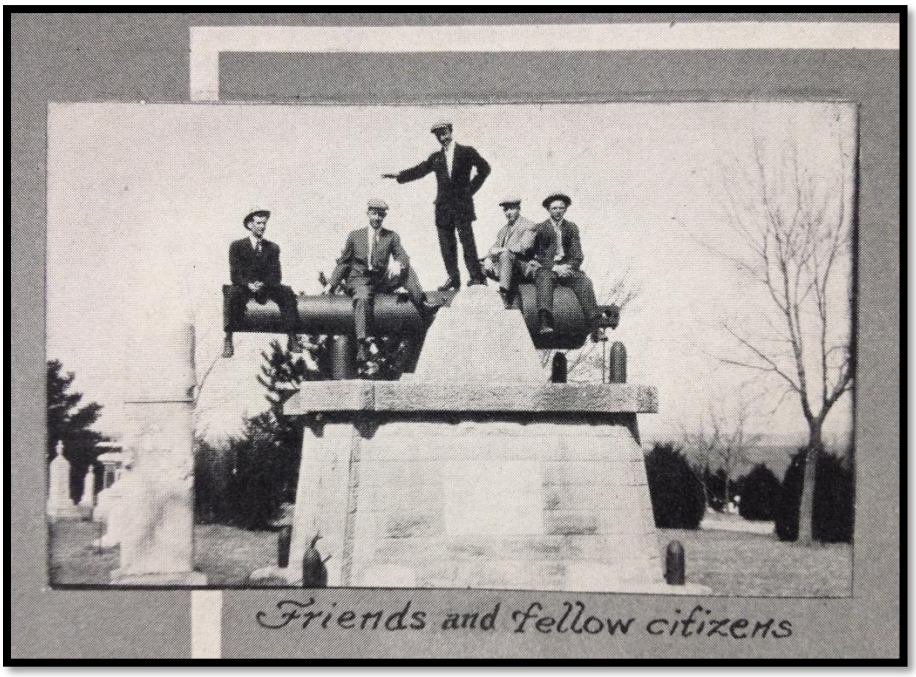
[10] Dea Brokesh, *History of Sunset Cemetery Structures*, January 25, 2015, revised March 17, 2015. Accessed at www.mhkprd.com/213/cemeteries
[11] Amos, 4.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.

Table 1. Cemetery Superintendents through 1934

Name	**Date**
Charles Barnes, Superintendent	1863
G. Hall, Sexton	1864
George Brown, Superintendent	1866-1869
T.J. Jenkins, City Undertaker and Superintendent	1870
George W. Murphy	1870-1874
W.H. Bower	1875
John N. Smith	1880
J. P. Peckman	1881
John Elliot	1894
B.W. Smith	1901
W. D. Laflin, Superintendent, Sexton	1906-1924
C.H. Lantz	1925
Harold N. Cary	1934

Special groups were often considered in planning the cemetery layout. In 1869, Mayor E. C. Manning recommended that the southeast corner of the cemetery be dedicated to the Riley County veterans of the Civil War. The proposed design included a 100-foot-wide avenue running west from the east entrance to the top of the hill, another 200-foot-wide avenue running north and south over the apex of the hill with a 40-foot diameter circular tract enclosed with stone at the intersection. The council defeated a proposal to erect a soldiers memorial in this area. Lots were given to the local posts of the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) who placed a cannon and other memorial emblems. Today, the canon is mounted on a large limestone block base with an engraved marble plaque that reads,

ERECTED 1898
BY LEW GOVE POST
GRAND ARMY REPUBLIC
AND
WOMANS RELIEF CORPS
IN MEMORY OF THE
DEFENDERS OF THE UNION
1861-1865



Historic postcard of G.A.R. cannon in Sunset Cemetery, ca. 1920. Photo courtesy City of Manhattan and taken from the Royal Purple Year Book from Kansas State University. Note that the large shells on the four corners of the cannon are no longer present.

The cemetery superintendents and sextons took on the personal responsibility, with support of the city, to improve the aesthetics of the cemetery. John Elliot, who was appointed in 1894 along with Jeffry Mails the chairman of the city council's cemetery committee, personally planted many cedar trees.

Manhattan City Cemetery to Sunset Cemetery

In 1908, the City and the *Manhattan Mercury* newspaper crafted a contest that offered a cash award for the citizen who submitted the best new name for the city cemetery. The name Sunset Hill was selected as offered by Mrs. George A. Dean. Charles Vernon who edited the newspaper presented the new name to the city council. No action was taken and the prize money was never awarded, however the name gained popularity and began to come into common use, gradually evolving to Sunset Cemetery. The first official reference to the name appears in minutes from a 1916 council meeting. The name was emblazoned on the stone gate constructed the following year, though it was not until December 31, 1935 that the city passed an ordinance formally accepting the name

Sunset Cemetery.[14] It was determined that the new name, "softened death's maudlin associations and end of course symbolism and inferred a time of rest and a ceasing of cares."[15]

Undated photo Sunset Cemetery. Courtesy Riley County Historical Society

Public-Private Partnerships

The city with involvement from the public has consistently supported beautifying and developing the cemetery. The public-private partnership that evolved resulted in some of the most significant construction efforts in the cemetery.[16] As an example, Manhattan resident Benjamin F. Miller willed an additional eight acres of land to the cemetery in 1901. This land was just north of the northeast corner of the cemetery and it was originally identified for cemetery use exclusively, although today this plot is where the Girl Scout house stands.

Mrs. Sam Kimble, along with H.H. Bates, H. Hougham, William Diebler and George Southern, formed a committee to raise money through private subscription to donate to the city in order to build a house for the cemetery sexton in 1909. The city council committed to contribute an equal amount to that privately raised to secure the land and complete construction of the sexton's house. Judge and Mrs. Sam Kimble donated the ground and the stone for the residence which was just east of the main entrance to the cemetery. The proximity to the cemetery enabled the sexton to be

[14] Ibid, 9.
[15] Jared Tremblay. Manhattan's Cemeteries and GIS Grave Locator. Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance Newsletter 1994-2014. October 2014. Information in article was based on history in Sunset Cemetery-Manhattan, KS: From beginnings to Preservation Outlook" by B.C. Van Dyke.
[16] Ibid, 6.

near it at all times in the hopes it would prevent vandalism.[17] Construction began in 1910 and the Walters Construction Company completed the building at a cost of approximately $1200. The residence was built of stone and consists of seven rooms, one of which was reserved for public use, allowing those visiting the cemetery to take refuge indoors particularly during cold weather months.[18]

At this same time the Kimble family donated land for the Sunset Addition to the City of Manhattan. The addition included Evergreen Drive within the Sunset Cemetery. Once this addition was platted and filed, the Cemetery was formally included within the boundaries of the city. The Kimble's were lobbying for an extension to the city's water service for not only their impressive residence known as the "Kimble Castle" (located on Poyntz Avenue just south of the cemetery), but to support the beautification of the cemetery. Cora Kimble and her family established and tended to the early plantings in the cemetery by using horses to haul barrels of water among the trees.

Cemetery Sextons Residence at the northeast corner of Sunset Avenue and Leavenworth Street.

In 1917 the Women's Relief Corps raised money to construct the memorial arch at the east entry of the cemetery. The city council approved the proposal and Mrs. D.E. Deputy led the committee.[19] Local architect E. Arthur Fairman donated his services to design the memorial gate which included

[17] "For A Sexton's House." *Manhattan Mercury*, October 28, 1909.
[18] "Is There to Stay." *Manhattan National*, October 6, 1910.
[19] "Plans are Ready Now." *Manhattan Mercury*, November 30, 1916.

an open-air restroom or seating area for an estimated cost of $4,000. The plans were posted at the Manhattan Furniture Company store and the First National Bank for citizen comment, and the Women's Relief Corp awarded the contract in 1917 to Charley Howell, a local African-American stone mason. Howell began construction that spring and the gate was completed by Decoration Day, May 30, 1917. The memorial gate commemorates the memory of the Riley County soldiers who served the union during the Civil War.

Sunset Cemetery Memorial Gate, ca. 1920. Photo courtesy Riley County Historical Society

Wareham Mausoleum

Harry Pratt Wareham was a wealthy Manhattan businessman who spent $1000 to purchase circular plot 100 feet in diameter where he built a significant marble mausoleum. The monument was imported from Italy with bronze doors and granite urns. It had full height Ionic style columns on all four sides of polished red granite with the Ionic capitals in white granite. The walls and roof are built in white granite. The interior is finished in pink marble with eight crypts each designed with bronze wreath patterns. An art glass window at the west elevation depicts Faith, Hope and Charity. Wareham planned the mausoleum for his mother and father who are both interred within. It was built in 1920. He entered into a contract with the city that designed his plot for the exclusive use for the burials of the Wareham family and in return he funded a $10,000 trust for the city to care and maintain the ground and the building. This was the most significant gift to the city for the care and maintenance of a plot, but not the first. Other families donated sums from between $100 to $1000 for special care of their family plots. City ordinances established ordinary care for all lots within the cemetery at the public expense and "especial care" of lots for which trust funds were

provided.[20] Wareham himself died in 1939 and the money for improvements was tied up in stock that was only to be liquidated after the death of a family member, so improvements to the plot did not take place until 1964.

Wareham Mausoleum

[20] Ibid, 8.

Evergreen Avenue in Sunset Cemetery, ca. 1929 showing Wareham Mausoleum. Photo courtesy Riley County Historical Society

Cemetery Subdivisions

As a public cemetery, individual and family burial plots were chosen by the individuals who purchased them based on their desired location. Some areas do retain a concentration of burials for specific groups, however. The cemetery has several groupings that were set aside for specific uses such as for Civil War veterans, the Wareham family, a potters field, babies and children, and other military veterans. Bishop Tief of the Concordia diocese of the Catholic church arranged to purchase all of the lots in blocks 14A through 14F located on the rising ground south and west of Paslay Tower for the sum of $17,735 in 1933. The United National Bank held the money in escrow until the lots were sold and payment made to the city. This constituted a Catholic section of the cemetery. Lots in Blocks 7, 10, and 16 were identified as infant or baby sections with burials dating from the 1860s through the 1960s. Portions of blocks 4, 5, and 10 were commonly acknowledged to be segregated for the African American population, though there were no formal red-line laws dictating this practice.[21]

[21] Jared Tremblay. "Manhattans Cemeteries and GIS Grave Locator." Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance Newsletter, October 2014.

CEMETERY GROWTH AND THE DEPRESSION ERA

As lots were sold and the cemetery began to fill, the citizens approved a bond issue of $12,000 in January 1929 to acquire additional land for cemetery purposes. The city purchased a 57-acre parcel south and west of the existing cemetery from Dell Wickham who is also the namesake of Wickham Road just north of the cemetery. Because of significant drainage patterns that ran through the lot from the north to the south and the rocky terrain at the fringes of this parcel, only 37 acres were suitable for burial. Mayor Evan Griffith and cemetery superintendent Charles Lantz believed the unusable sections could be used as a picnic ground for the public to enjoy.[22] Plans commenced to improve the new cemetery section, because by late 1931 pressure to develop the cemetery addition was fueled by rumors of a competing cemetery and mausoleum. The city paid W.F. Kipper $1,113.25 to lay out lot plans in the new section.[23] Curvilinear paved drives with curbs and bridges were the style of the time and defined this new area of the cemetery, which was a notable shift from the orderly grid and circular patterns in the rest of the cemetery.

View from Paslay Music Tower looking northeast, ca. 1932. Photo courtesy Riley County Historical Society

The Manhattan Construction Company and the Walters Construction Company were awarded contracts totaling $13,000 to build a concrete bridge over the ravine, install curbing, and to pave (gravel) the driveway. This money was to come from the sale of lots. This scope of work quickly escalated with the availability of funds through the Works Progress Administration (WPA), and additional work was identified to support the increased number of unemployed laborers in Manhattan. Additional work items included paving Evergreen Avenue in both the old and new sections and building the Paslay music tower. This increased spending to over $41,000 which was

[22] B.C. Van Dyke, "Sunset Cemetery-Manhattan, KS: From Beginnings to Preservation Outlook." May 1983, 17.
[23] Van Dyke, 17.

to be paid to the companies in city bonds which bore 4.5 percent interest.[24] These relief funds were also awarded to Manhattan resident Guy Calderans and the R.B. Spilman Camp Sons of Union Veterans who oversaw construction of a permanent stone and concrete platform at the west slope of the ravine. The new platform or bandstand became the new location for the City's Memorial Day services.[25] Prior to this, the city held their annual Memorial Day celebrations near the cannon and utilized improvised platforms set up specifically for the event.

With the use of public funds through the WPA the city made the decision to replace the original stone wall completed in 1869 which enclosed the cemetery. In 1932, Charles (Charley) Howell, the same African American stone mason who built the memorial entrance gate was retained to remove the old stone wall and build a new stone wall surrounding all but the north and west sides of the 45 acres included in Sunset Cemetery. This wall in combination with the memorial gate built in 1917 define the aesthetic at the cemetery. The stone wall is approximately four feet high with squat pyramidal caps that repeat the entire circumference of the wall. The distinctive design utilizes larger trapezoidal to triangular stones set among smaller rectangular stones in roughly-laid horizonal courses. Such an unusual pattern provides visual interest, speaks to the skill of the stone mason, and serves as a design signature which can also be seen in the foundation at the National Register listed Lyda-Jean Apartments at 5th and Houston Streets. least one other project attributed to Howell. Howell was a respected laborer in the community and is credited with contributing to many of the stone buildings in Manhattan, on the campus of Kansas State University, and in infrastructure such as streets and stone curbs. The Howell family was well known in Manhattan. J.M.T. Howell, Charley's father, ran for city council in his district which was dominantly African-American, and Minnie Charley's sister was the first African-American woman to graduate from Kansas State College. The Howell family has a burial plot in the cemetery.

Paslay Music Tower

The Paslay music tower is a stone tower with sound system and was meant to provide music for special programs as well as burial services. The idea for recorded memorial music is credited to C.H. Lantz who was the cemetery superintendent at the time. Professor Joseph T. Ware of the Architecture Department at Kansas State College, designed the tower as an octagon using native limestone. It is fifty feet high and fifteen feet in diameter with a room at the base of the tower where some of the sound system equipment was located. The equipment was concealed behind ornamental aluminum grills at the top of the tower. The tower contributed not only to burial services but to the city's Memorial Day services as well.[26]

The engineering behind the sound system at the Paslay Music Tower was the vision of Professor L.C. Paslay, who taught at the Department of Electrical Engineering at Kansas State College (at

[24] Ibid, 9.
[25] Ibid, 7.
[26] J.T. Ware, *The Singing Tower*, Sunset Cemetery Manhattan, KS, 1936, 15.

the time).[27] Paslay designed the sound system to reproduce music using electric transcription reproducing equipment with the output amplified and converted to sound by high power amplifier and loudspeaker system and described the system in a history pamphlet about the cemetery. Underground cable that connected the tower to city power lines was run along the south side of the cemetery. To project the music, high quality phonograph records were used and a library of 175 ten and twelve-inch records of appropriate music were collected. The tower had two manual turntables and one automatic turntable. Paslay designed the sound system so that it was completely automated which included music selection and volume control. Output of the system was 200 watts which was about 100 times that of a regular console radio.

Paslay Music Tower under construction, 1932. Photo courtesy Riley County Historical Society.

The sound emanates from ten dynamic loud speakers that are concealed behind the aluminum grills at the top of the tower. Each loud speaker unit has horns of different sizes that ranged from four to

[27] L.C. Paslay, *The Music Tower Sound System*, Sunset Cemetery, Manhattan, KS 1936, 13-14.

nine feet long. They were each designed and located within the tower to present a uniform sound presentation throughout the majority of the cemetery. A remote-control system facilitated the use of the tower during funeral services when a small portable radio transmitter was used near the grave where buzzer signals would be sent to the receiver used by the operator in the tower. Music could then be started or stopped, and the volume adjusted during grave site services.

Paslay believed the most interesting feature of the tower was the automatic system. A clock was set each evening, generally close to sundown to close a control circuit. Automatic contactors could then start the equipment in the appropriate order, so the tubes had sufficient time to warm up before full power was applied. Another device controlled the settings for the automatic turntable to choose any number of records. Once all the tubes were appropriately warmed up a final relay closed and started the automatic turntable where the tone arm is placed at the first groove of the record and the volume smoothly turned on.[28]

By 1951 the cemetery reported that 90% of burials requested music from the tower, and it was documented as the only tower of its kind in Kansas. Though unique and technologically advanced, the tower was not always popular with neighbors who were subject to the music from burial services on a regular basis. Due to disrepair the tower was unused for eleven years from 1951 to 1962 when the Council of Service Clubs raised nearly $1000 to renovate the tower. In 1982 a fire damaged the tower and it was completely gutted by 1983. However, Leroy Paslay donated $500,000 to the city in 1998 to restore the singing tower and install a new state of the art sound system so that it can chime once a day and on special occasions.[29] The refurbished tower was rededicated in September 2002.

Paslay Tower, 1932. Photo courtesy Riley County Historical Society

[28] Ibid.

[29] Dea Brokesh, "Research City of Manhattan Owned Properties" clippings files at Riley County Historical Society.

NEW RESOURCES FROM SUNSET CEMETERY

In 1930 the city determined that 20 acres of the total 57-acre addition to the cemetery land was unsuitable for burials because of the rocky terrain. This land remained in city ownership, but because it could not be used for burials, it's function was reassigned for use as a city park and zoo, which eventually became Sunset Park and Sunset Zoo.

SUNSET PARK

Sunset Park picnic tables, c. 1950. Photo courtesy Riley County Historical Society

The 20-acre portion of the new cemetery addition unusable for burials began to develop as a picnic grounds referred to as Sunset Park. The early development of the picnic grounds coincided with the improvements to Sunset Cemetery in 1930-1931. Large slabs were quarried from the hillsides to create monolithic rusticated picnic tables that ringed the western and southern slopes of the park. Early on, a cage was built to house a raccoon, soon followed by cages for other animals. The informal zoo became a major attraction within the picnic grounds. The entire area was officially designated a city park in 1933 by Mayor Griffith and the city commission.

There was much debate in city meetings during the 1930s as to whether the competing uses of the area for animals and picnicking were compatible. Complaints about the zoo indicated that the animal cages were in poor condition and that the animals could create unpleasant atmosphere for picnics and parties. It seemed the lines were drawn based on age with the "mature gentlemen" attending in favor of the park and picnic ground and younger citizens preferring the zoo.[30] The same article noted that Sunset park was one of the prettiest natural picnic spots in the area, but that it suffered deferred maintenance. Portions of the zoo were not as well maintained as areas such as the bear pits. Those areas had a negative impact on the picnic park. At the same time the zoo was identified as a valuable public asset that maintenance there should not be deferred. Many decided that if both were possible then both features should be pursued.

[30] "Picnic Park or Zoo?" *Manhattan Mercury*, August 12, 1936.

Sunset Park stone terracing, c. 1934. Photo courtesy Riley County Historical Society

During the 1930s the park and zoo were treated as one resource. The city budgeted $200 per month to operate Sunset Park where Manhattan's zoo is located. The budget was to operate the park and pay the park keeper who was responsible for the zoo and the park and kept both clean and maintained the roads and picnic tables.[31]

Sunset park stone grill, ca. 1934. Photo courtesy Riley County Historical Society.

[31] $200 Per Month to Operate Zoo and Sunset Park" *Manhattan Mercury*, August 5, 1938, 1.

SUNSET ZOO

The Sunset Park picnic grounds had animals on display for visitors as early as 1930. There was no formal zoo as the animals were displayed in simple wire cages. A brief note in the Manhattan Republic newspaper from July 31, 1930 notes that, "in Sunset park in a cage built around a tree to the heighth of a ceiling and housing an old log for a playground, there is a coon, said to be a pet, but nevertheless suspicious of strangers venturing near the cage. The animal is providing lots of amusement for children and grown-ups who frequent the park."[32] The raccoons were moved to new cages and other animals included monkeys from Mexico and a pair of brown bear cubs. The area began to be called the Manhattan Zoo.

Local Sertoma Club member and architect Henry Wichers requested support to draw up plans to formalize the zoo and picnic area and requested funding to construct these through the WPA. Wichers designed a crescent shape of stone animal enclosures along the bluffs at the far south and west edge of the city park property.

The Sertoma Club sponsored much of this construction and acted as advocate for the zoo and park. They also supported installation of a water system, so workers no longer had to haul water to the site. Wichers also designed the massive oversized stone picnic tables, benches, and stools along the walking paths between the zoo and cemetery. George Sandell utilized the hauling capability of a burro from the zoo to haul the six-foot slabs into the park.

The land overlooking Wildcat Creek and housing animals for the residents of Manhattan was an asset to the community and with the assistance of WPA funds was identified as something to develop further, so the city signed a five-year lease for ten additional acres of land from C.M. Siever for $120 per year adjacent to the south side of the zoo. In April 1941 the city extended this to a ten-year lease which totaled $2,540 at the end of which the land would be deeded to the city.

[32] "Have a Zoo Started." *Manhattan Republic*, July 31, 1930.

Circa 1940 photo of Sunset Zoo stone enclosures designed by H.E. Wichers. Photo courtesy of Riley County Historical Society.

With the economic stability and prosperity that followed World War II, it became clear to the Sertoma Club that Sunset Park and Zoo was again in disrepair and needed maintenance. A new deer pen was completed in 1947 with fencing to enclose a large area for the deer to run. The deer enclosure included the sloping land below the bear pen and extended westward over the old road and "clear up on top where when it's cool they're up above, but when it's stormy or hot they need shade they spend their time down under the trees in the old part of the pen."[33] In August 1948, President of the Sertoma Club Melvin Dodd organized a committee to focus solely on the Sunset park resources. Under his leadership subcommittees were established to evaluate and address the condition of the roads, picnic facilities, landscaping, zoo buildings and grounds, maintenance, planning, finance, and budget. These comprehensive committees were set to revitalize and address the needs of the public park resources for the city. The committees proved effective and provided not only recommendations but much needed labor. Between August and October 1948, they succeeded in hauling away more than twelve truckloads of trash and provided trash barrels throughout the picnic area to address the problem in the future.

Over the course of the next ten years the Sertoma Club and the City Commission agreed to match funds one-to-one with the goal of raising $50,000 to provide new roads, curbs, gutters, landscaping, restrooms and an outdoor pavilion for the zoo. The Sertoma Club had several

[33] "Sunset Zoo Family." *Manhattan Mercury*, August, 1947, clipping file.

community allies to help in their efforts. Professor L. R. Quinlan drew complete landscaping plans for the area; Sertoma member Ray Lippenberger prepared a complete topographical map of the park and provided designs for the shelter house; and Henry Bayer donated additional stone for the huge picnic oven. Other service clubs such as the Lions Club, the Kiwanis and the Rotary supported the zoo and park by joining with Sertoma to hold Minstrel Shows to raise funds. The Sertoma spent $4,000 of their own funds for picnic ovens, trees shrubs, and bird houses.

The large shelter house was completed in 1954 and turned over to the city in an elaborate buffalo and bear barbecue celebration on April 12. Mayor Harold Howe in his dedication speech announced that, "this building is a magnificent addition to the park system of Manhattan. It…will serve the lifetime of this generation as well as many generations to come."[34] Later, the Sertoma Club donated the log cabin previously located on the courthouse lawn to commemorate the City's Centennial in 1955 for use as a concession stand. Continued revenue from the minstrel shows and other fundraising projects funded the zoo into the future.[35]

A children's zoo section began as a dream partnership between former Manhattan Mayor Hurst Majors, a Park Board member, and Dr. E.J. Frick the zoo director, along with a group of fraternities and sororities from Kansas State University. To resurrect a popular fundraiser called the Interfraternity Sing which had stalled after 34 years of competitions, the fraternities met with Majors and Frick to discuss the zoo as a potential benefactor of the fundraising efforts, if successful. Majors had long dreamed of a children's area at Sunset Zoo where children could interact with baby animals directly. Dr. Frick explained to the groups that baby lambs, calves, pigs, guinea pigs, rabbits, ducks and other animals could be fed and touched by the children in a supervised area. This could serve a dual purpose as a place for children's parties and special occasions. Excited by the prospect, the Greek Sing was revived and raised $600 in the first year and the Sertoma Club, the longtime supporter and sponsor of the zoo, matched the funds.[36] Many other groups donated to the cause including the Manhattan Jaycees, the Garden Club, and campus ROTC organizations.

Continuing with this partnership, Kansas State University landscape architecture professor Charles Parks assigned the children's zoo design as a class project. Carlos Garcia, a student from Puerto Rico, generated the preferred design that incorporated a miniature stone castle with turrets and courtyards in a medieval setting. He envisioned balconies and oddly shaped cages and corrals for the small animals. He also included twin towers to flank the entrance gate set into a stone wall, gingerbread houses, a medieval barn, and a little wading pond for ducks. A party room was incorporated into the front wall of the castle for birthdays and other special occasions. Contractor

[34] Speech made by Mayor Harold Howe at the Shelter House in Sunset Park Dedication ceremony, April 12, 1954. Loose clipping.
[35] History of Sunset Park, c. 1956, loose clipping.
[36] "Kids Zoo Goes Up." *Manhattan Mercury*, October 12, 1969.

estimates in the summer of 1968 came in at $60,000 and the project was approved with ground breaking in the Fall.[37] The Majors children zoo was completed in 1974.

The zoo continued to grow and add to its resources over time. During the 1970s wire enclosures were installed as part of the Kansas exhibit. A Friends of Sunset Zoo organization was formerly organized in April of 1971 to support and protect the zoo endeavors.[38] In 1979 the Winters Park Building was completed, and the Ruth Glenn Large Cat Preserve was added in 1982 at the southwest edge of the zoo. In 1985 the Top Tier exhibits were completed, and the entry was improved with a parking lot, ticket booth, and entryway in 1989. These activities supported the Zoo accreditation process, and it was accredited by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA) in 1989.

In 1992 several new exhibits included the snow leopards, red crown crane, and T.H. White Cranes of Hokkido were completed. The tropical building, cheetah yard and the Keeper Center and maintenance shop were added in 1993.[39] Throughout the remainder of the 1990s the winter holding quarantine, concessions building, Australia exhibit, prairie dog exhibit, and otters exhibit were completed. In 2000 the zoo added a stone amphitheater with stone blocks from the Bayer Quarry where much of the stone was cut for other zoo projects. The new main office, interpretive center, and meeting space was constructed in 2012. The veterinary clinic at the west side of the zoo was built in the 1960s as a one-story ranch style residence and was initially used as an animal rescue shelter. As the zoo navigated the accreditation process they were not able to keep the building as a rescue shelter. The building was eventually converted to the veterinary clinic in 2012-2013, and the interior was gutted for the new use, but the exterior was retained.

Throughout the zoo's history Dr. E.J. Frick was the driving force behind the animals' care and welfare. Dr. Frick was the first zoo director in 1933 and remained involved with the zoo for the remainder of his life. As a veterinary professor at Kansas State University, he developed a unique partnership where veterinary students would provide no-cost medical care for the zoo while they gained valuable experience treating and working with exotic animals. He served as the Department Head of Veterinary Surgery and Medicine until 1961 and retired from teaching in 1966. He stepped away from his leadership of the zoo in 1976 to become Director Emeritus of the zoo. Dr. Frick was beloved by the Manhattan community and his legacy is evident; the Clinical Sciences Building on the Kansas State University campus was named the E.J. Frick Clinical Sciences Building in 1978, the primate building at the zoo was named in his honor, and he also has a street in Manhattan named for him. Today, Kansas State University has a nationally-known veterinary school that has an exotic animal emphasis unique from many other programs. Dr. Frick was recognized for his

[37] Ibid.
[38] "Sunset Zoo friends form corporation" Manhattan Mercury, April 30, 1971.
[39] Park History files, Manhattan Public Library.

contributions as part of the zoo's 50th anniversary in 1983. Even at 87 years old, he remained active in the zoo and the community.[40] Dr. Frick died in 1993 and is buried in Sunset Cemetery.

GIRL SCOUT LITTLE HOUSE

The eight-acre parcel deeded to the city by Benjamin Miller in 1901 became the home of the Girl Scout Little House in 1934 after it was deemed unfit for burials.

Girl Scouts were an organized group in Manhattan for many years, but the four troops that existed in the community in 1932 were not sufficient for all eligible girls in the community. In October that year the Manhattan Girl Scout Council was chartered, and one of its first goals was to construct a Girl Scout Little House to provide meeting space and more opportunities for members.

Girl Scout centers can be divided into three types or categories which include Little Houses, cabins, and apartments or rooms. A Girl Scout Little House is a separate building that is accessible and available to all Girl Scouts in a community and can be used by the girls for general program activities as well as a meeting center. Girl Scout Little Houses are primarily found in smaller communities where travel distance to and from the house is minimal and only three or four troops are in the area. The Little House can serve as the center for not only local council activities, but also for committees and leaders meetings. Little Houses were meant to function as the meeting center for all Girl Scouts in a community so were primarily located in smaller communities where there were only three or four troops and the total number of scouts tended to be fewer than two hundred. The Little House concept would not be practical in a larger community where travel distance to the house could be an issue and with the increased number of scouts it would not be expected to serve as a meeting place for all troops which was its intent[41] The national Girl Scout headquarters had no architectural plans for a Little House but could offer design and use suggestions that were based on the needs of the local council, available materials, and local sponsors.

CWA or civil work employees were used to construct the headquarters and camp house for the Girl Scouts in Manhattan on the unused city lot which was just north of Sunset Cemetery.

The WPA provided funds for the labor, the Girl Scouts in Manhattan while the city and friends of the Girl scouts provided materials and stone for the building.

The city incurred very little cost for the project because they could provide readily available stone material and the unused city lot just north of Sunset Cemetery. Girl Scout supporters began to raise funds for the furnishings, receiving support from organizations like the College Social club, the Elks Lodge, and the Roosevelt F.T.A.[42] Kansas State College professors Paul Weigel and H.E.

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[40] "Fifty Years with Sunset" *Sunset Zoo Quarterly*, v.1 n.1, Spring/Summer 1983, 8.
[41] "The Girl Scout Little House." Clippings files at Riley County Historical Society, 1939.
[42] "Cabin Work is Delayed." *Manhattan Mercury*, February 19, 1934, 1.

Wichers provided the plans for the building. The stone masons employed by the CWA needed the work after the stone wall around the cemetery was completed.[43] Construction of the Little House was delayed until spring by the work on the cemetery wall. The project may have stalled due to lack of funds because the Girl Scouts agreed to raise up to $700 to complete the project, which the city resolved to do. The Little House was eventually dedicated in November 1934.

The house became the center of Girl Scout activity in Manhattan. Every year from 1936 to the present day there has been a summer camp held at the house. The Manhattan Rotary Club completed an addition to the house in 1960 and today the building is used by the Kaw Valley Girl Scout Council.[44]

[43] "House Will Be Built for the Girl Scouts", *Manhattan Mercury*, January 5, 1934, 1.
[44] Park History file at Manhattan Public Library.

RECOMMENDATIONS/NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGBIILITY

Manhattan's Sunset Area Historic Resources are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district. Though the resources have varying historic functions their development and maturity are all tied to singular events. The district is eligible at the local level under Criterion A for its significant association with community planning and development as well as the area of entertainment and recreation. The district represents important community planning and development ideals prioritized by the city of Manhattan to serve their residents. From the city's earliest organization, town leaders and planners recognized the need for a public cemetery. The first city commission in 1858 appointed a cemetery committee to identify, acquire, and develop land for the purposes of a cemetery. This was achieved by 1860 when a 35-acre parcel at the head of Poyntz Avenue was acquired by the city for $610.00. The first burial in the cemetery is noted at approximately 1860. The cemetery developed at the hand of the city and those appointed to manage the resource which included either a superintendent or a sexton. Many of the sexton's or city engineers had a hand in the design and layout of the cemetery. There is no continuity in the block designs and it therefore represents the personal views of the planners and the changing trends over time. As was deemed necessary, an additional eight acres of land was willed to the city by Benjamin Miller in 1901. This land is where the Girl Scout Little House stands today as it included parcels deemed too rocky for burials. At this same time the city built a dedicated residence out of stone for the cemetery sexton. The city acquired a 57-acre parcel abutting the cemetery at the south and west in 1929. However, because of drainage patterns that ran through the area and rocky terrain at the fringes of the parcel, only 37 acres were suitable for burial purposes. These three acquisitions represent the totality of the Sunset Area Resources Historic District today.

Rather than rid itself of the remaining 20 acres of unusable land, the city chose to retain all parcels associated with the cemetery and develop additional public services which included the Sunset Park, Sunset Zoo, and the Girl Scout Little House. Over much discussion the city determined to fund the development of the park for the public benefit. However, because some animals were caged in the area, the zoo slowly developed from the park and the city chose to utilize public funds available during the Depression era of the 1930s to expand and improve on these resources. Significant funds were prioritized by the city to improve the cemetery and parks. In the cemetery these funds built the stone perimeter wall, three stone bridges, the stone bandstand and flagpole, the Paslay Music Tower, and paved the lanes. As part of the zoo development, these funds provided for stone animal enclosures, walkways, and retaining walls. As part of the park development these funds provided for massive monolithic picnic tables, stone grills, extensive retaining walls, and stone lined paths. These funds also built the Girl Scout Little House at the north side of the cemetery.

The Sunset Area Resources Historic District is also significant for entertainment and recreation. The city developed the Zoo and Park for the benefit of the residents of the community. The city managed and funded both the park and the zoo. The citizen's benefit was even a consideration

when it built the sexton's house with one room that would always be available for public use, especially during cold weather. Further, the city held and continues to hold their Memorial Day services at the cemetery, and historically the bandstand was utilized for music and patriotic services throughout the year.

The district does meet National Register Criterion Consideration D. Cemeteries have been identified by the National Register program as a property type that are not considered individually eligible. However, Criterion Consideration D notes that a cemetery which derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events may be considered eligible. The Sunset Cemetery retains historic significance for its age, for its contribution to community planning and development, and for its association with important entertainment and recreation ideals created by the city of Manhattan.

The recommended period of significance for the Sunset Area Historic Resources extends from 1860 through 1968, the established 50-year cut-off date established by National Register program guidance. 1860 is identified as the beginning of the period of significance because it marks the year when the first 35-acre parcel of land was acquired by the city for cemetery use. Because the resources are recommended eligible under Criterion A for their contributions to community planning and development and entertainment and recreation, and were in continual use throughout the historic period, the terminal date of 1968 is appropriate.

Table 2. Table of Contributing Resources

Sunset Cemetery	1860	**Sunset Zoo**	1933
Transportation System/landscape	1860/1931	Stone animal enclosures	1933-34
GAR Cannon	1898	Stonework/retaining walls	1932
Sexton House	1910	Deer Pen	1947
Fortune Crypt	c.1912	Sertoma Picnic Shelter	1954
Memorial Gate	1917	Curator Residence	c. 1950s
Wareham Mausoleum	1920	Clinic	c. 1960s
Bandstand	c. 1932	Major's Children's Zoo area landscape/pond	c. 1960s
Paslay Music Tower	1932	Children's Zoo tower/gate/wall	1969
Stone Wall	1932	Bison Relief Panel	1958
Stone Bridges-3	1932	Bear sculpture	c. 1960
		Lioness sculpture	c. 1060
Sunset Park	1933	**Girl Scout Little House**	1934
Stone tables (approximately 16)	c. 1934	Stone fire/grill	1934
Hexagonal Picnic Shelters (2)	c. 1960s		
Stonework-retaining walls, culverts, grill, firepit	c. 1934		

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Sunset area resources are comprised of four distinct continuous and connected units which include a cemetery, zoo, Girl Scout Little House, and park. The four units developed off the original cemetery as part of city improvements when the land at the fringes of the cemetery was deemed too rocky for burial use. The resource boundary is roughly "L" shaped with the cemetery at the core of the footprint.

The Sunset area resources are located at the intersection of Poyntz and Sunset Avenues. The area is in south-central Manhattan, Kansas and is surrounded by residential properties to the north and east, the public high school to the south, and Wildcat Creek to the west. The resources are defined by their extensive WPA era stonework. Dense foliage creates a sheltered environment at Sunset Park while designed and planted landscape features present a more formal and planned environment at Sunset Zoo and Sunset Cemetery. Terrain in the district is relatively level with some rolling hills along with steep rocky terrain at the west and south fringes of the boundary.

Photographs and descriptions of each resource are provided below.

Sunset Cemetery

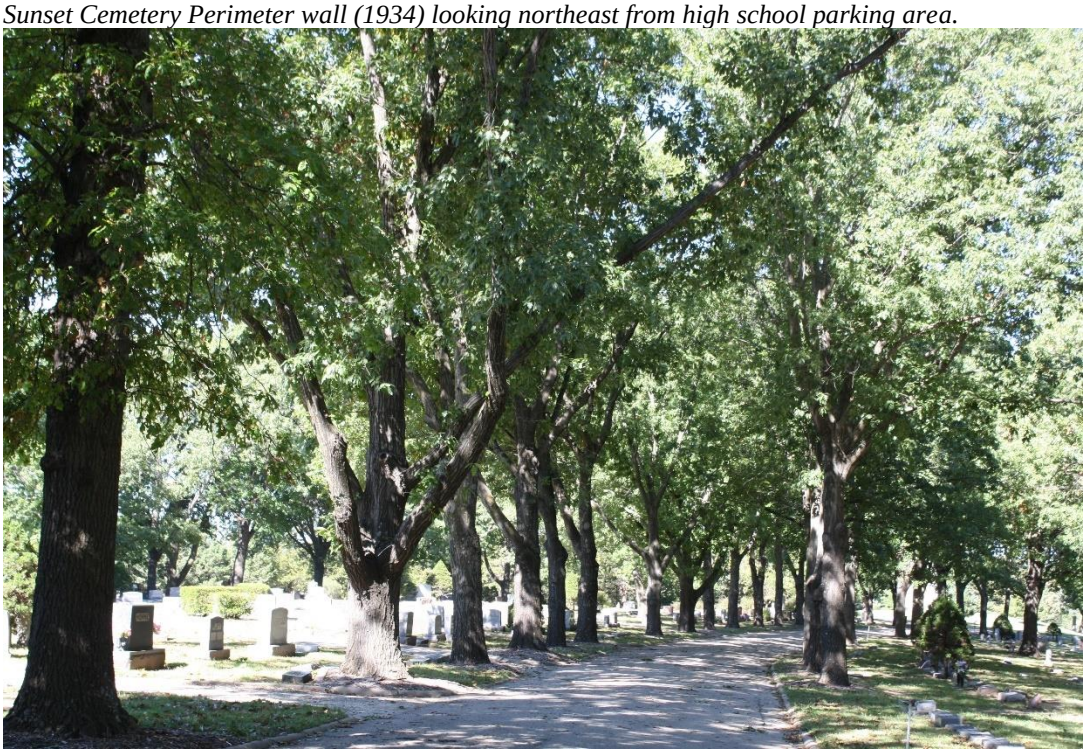
The cemetery main gates are at the east edge of the proposed district providing access to the L shaped plan through Evergreen Avenue. The cemetery is primarily stone with curvilinear drives at the west and south edges and rectangular lots each with varying stylistic designs at the central and east ends. Most notably within the cemetery is the Wareham Mausoleum located at the center of block 7 within a circular path with burials radiating from the center circle. Most of the stones within the cemetery represent death and afterlife motifs such as angels, lambs, faux bois, crosses, and military symbols. The cemetery is surrounded on the east and south sides by a stone wall built in 1934. The main gates are also stone and were erected in 1917 as a memorial to Union soldiers who served during the Civil War. There are three stone bridges also constructed in 1934 as part of WPA era relief efforts along with a stone bandstand with flagpole. As part of the WPA efforts the lanes and drives through the cemetery were paved with gravel. Also associated with the cemetery is the Sexton's house, built in 1910 by the city with contributions from the public. The stone cottage is located east across Sunset Avenue. Mature trees line the drives at the north and west ends of the cemetery with selective plantings at the east and central portions.

Aerial image from Riley County GIS indicating Sunset Cemetery resources.

Sunset Cemetery Photographs

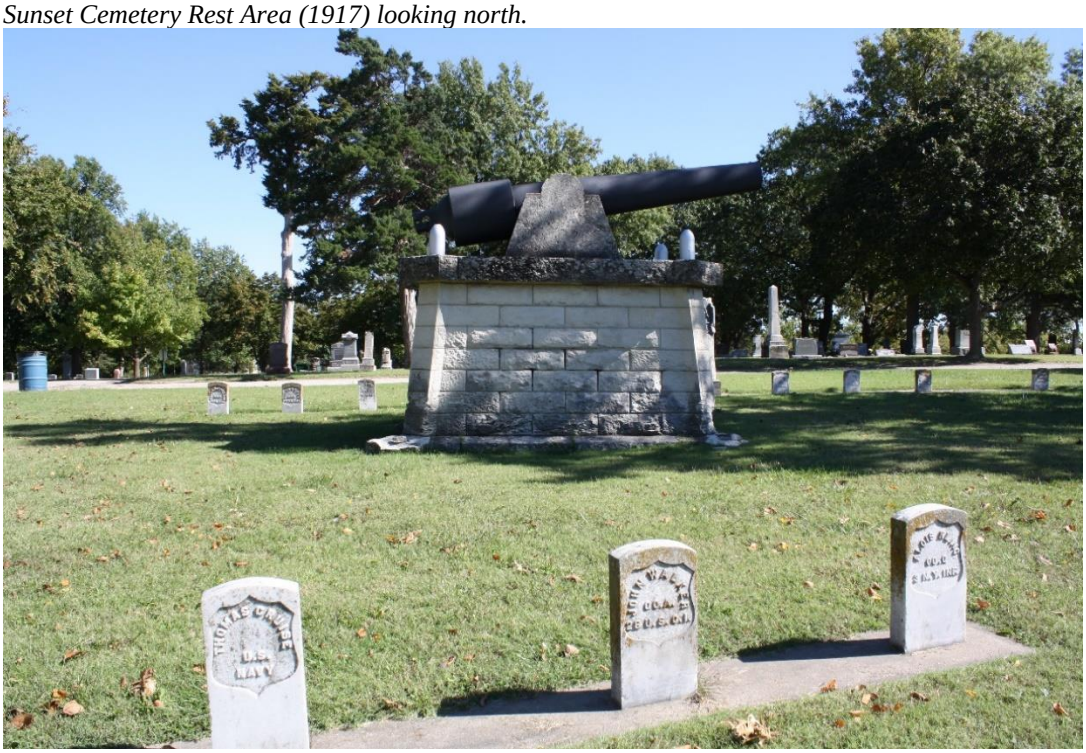
Sunset Cemetery main gate (1917) from Leavenworth Street and Sunset Avenue looking west.

Sunset Cemetery Perimeter wall (1934) looking northeast from high school parking area.



Sunset Cemetery drive showing alee of mature deciduous street trees.

Sunset Cemetery Rest Area (1917) looking north.

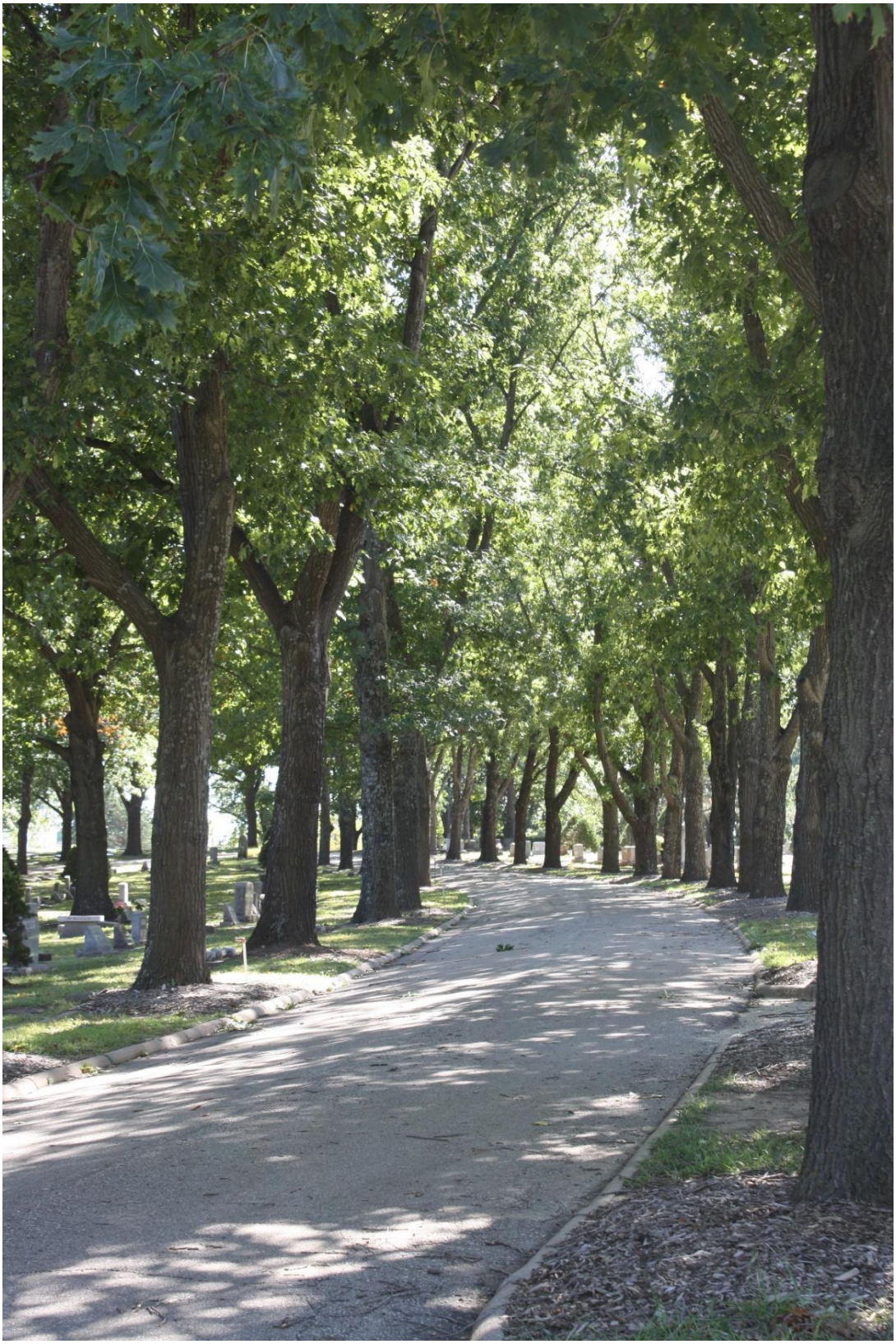


GAR Cannon (1898) looking east

Wareham Mausoleum (1920) looking west

Paslay Music Tower (1932) looking north

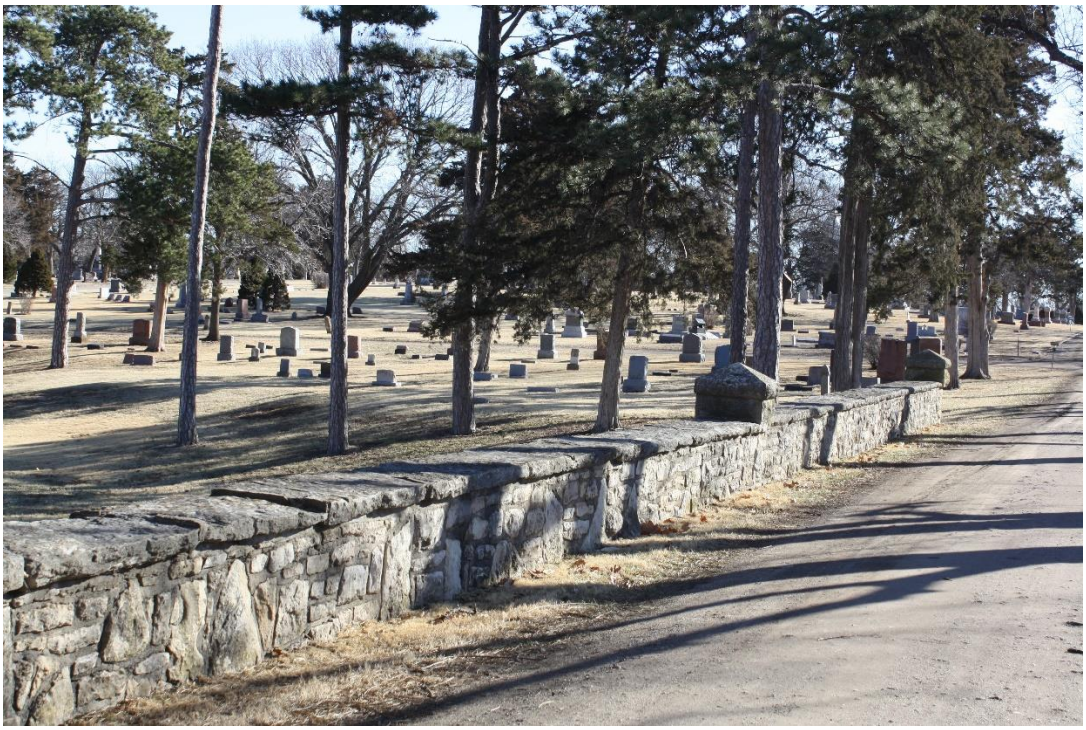
Stone bridge looking east



Paved drive and alee of mature deciduous trees looking northwest

Stone perimeter wall looking northwest

Stone bandstand and flag pole (1934) looking northwest



Stone perimeter wall (1934) looking east from southwest corner of cemetery

Sexton's Residence (1910) looking north from Leavenworth Street

Sunset Park

Sunset Park consists of dense trees and steep slopes at the west end of the cemetery in an area unfit for burials because of the rocky terrain. A footpath connects the park with the zoo. The most notable built feature of the park are massive monolithic stone picnic tables that were quarried and installed as part of the WPA era relief efforts. Stone steps and retaining walls were also constructed to provide access to the entirety of the slope. Aerial photography indicates that a footpath extended from the northwest corner of the cemetery along the entire west side and around then curves along the south side of the zoo terminating at the zoo's perimeter road at Oak Street. The path lies between Wildcat Creek and the cemetery.

Aerial image from Riley County GIS indicating Sunset Park resources

Sunset Park Photographs

Sunset Park stone picnic table and benches looking south from walking path

Sunset Park stone grill looking northwest from path

Stone steps leading down terrace at Sunset Park looking west

Stone lined path and picnic table and bench looking south from path

Detail of stone bench and picnic table

Stone steps at Sunset Park terrace looking east

Sunset Zoo

Sunset Zoo utilized the largest section of land too rocky to be used for burials. The first formal enclosures were stone and built as part of WPA relief efforts. These stone enclosures form a crescent shape along a steep slope at the south side of the zoo. Curvilinear walking paths connect the Sertoma picnic shelter constructed in 1954. The Picnic shelter is a gable end open air structure with stone piers and stone fireplaces at the west end. The children's zoo was added in the 1970s as part of a design competition at Kansas State University. Other resources include a stone amphitheater, stone sculptures, a veterinary clinic, service areas, and a new building that houses administrative offices and learning center. A gate over Oak Street has two stone bases on either side with a metal arch over the street identifying Sunset Zoo.

Aerial image from Riley County GIS indicating Sunset Zoo resources

Sunset Zoo Photographs

Sunset Zoo buffalo relief (1958)

View of roads and paths with elevated bear sculpture looking northwest

Sertoma Club Picnic Shelter (1954) looking southwest

Sertoma Club Picnic Shelter (1954) looking northwest

Sertoma Club Picnic Shelter (1954) fireplace detail

Stone retaining wall and zoo walk (1934) looking southwest

Detail of stone animal enclosure (1934)

Detail of stone animal enclosure (1934)

Animal clinic looking east

Majors Children's Zoo area stone gate and turret (c. 1970) looking west

Detail of stone animal enclosure (1934)

Majors Children's Zoo (c. 1970) looking west

Sunset Cemetery stone perimeter wall (1934) and Sunset Zoo boundary fence with walking path through Sunset Park between, looking east

Girl Scout Little House

The Girl Scout Little House was built on the north side of the cemetery. The stone cottage was built in 1934 as part of WPA era relief efforts. An addition was constructed in 1960 at the back or west elevation. An outdoor stone barbeque grill with chimney along with five campfire rings are located on the site west of the house. Large deciduous trees dot the landscape offering shelter and shade around the campfire circles.

Aerial image from Riley County GIS indicating location of Girl Scout Little House resources.

Girl Scout Little House Photographs

Girl Scout Little House (1934) looking south and west at main facade

Girl Scout Little House (1934) looking north and west at main facade

Girl Scout Little House (1934) looking north and west from Sunset Cemeter

Girl Scout Little House (1934) looking north and east at back elevation

Girl Scout Little House (1934) stone fire place looking west

Girl scout Little House (1934) stone fire circle looking east

Girl Scout Little House (1934) stone fire circle and rear elevation of house looking east.

Boundary justification

The Sunset Area Resources Historic District boundary incorporates the entirety of the parcels associated with the cemetery and the subsequent development of the zoo, park, and Girl Scout Little House along with the Sexton's residence. A proposed historic district boundary is outlined in red on the below Google Earth image. From the northeast corner the boundary begins at approximately the intersection of Grandview and Sunset, continues south to the parcel line (defined by the stone perimeter wall) between Manhattan High School and the cemetery. From this point the boundary continues west to a cemetery gate where it turns south until reaching the boundary lane at the zoo. At the northeast corner of the zoo the district boundary continues south following the east line of Sunset Neighborhood Park to the southeast corner of the park to just north of Chris Street. The boundary then turns west along the southern edge of the Sunset Neighborhood Park and the wooded parcel of the zoo and then continues north along Wildcat Creek to a line that connects with the fenced boundary of the cemetery along Park Street. Continuing east between Park Street and the Cemetery the boundary heads east to the wooded area behind the Girl Scout Little House. Here, the parcel line continues in a northeasterly fashion through the wooded area along the eastern line of the Jorgensen Addition to the south edge of Grandview, then connects back to its starting point at Grandview.

Approximate boundary recommended for the Sunset Area Resources Historic District.

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