



MSM Bellringer

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NEWSLETTER OF THE MCCORMICK SCHOOL MUSEUM

JUL/AUG 2024

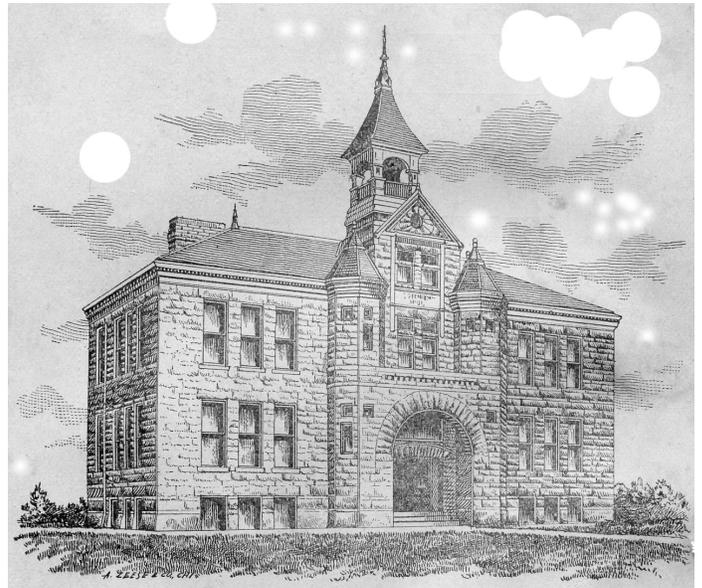
McCormick: A Prairie School

When the McCormick Avenue School first opened for students in September, 1890, its limestone block walls and white belltower stood as a lone proud landmark set in a sea of waving prairie grasses with prosperous cattle and pig farms to the south and the growing city of Wichita to the north. The school was named for McCormick Avenue which was named for the John McCormick family, prominent early settlers to the area who lived close by. Designed by architects Willis Proudfoot and George Bird, the school building was a demonstration of local prosperity, growth, and progressiveness as Wichita transitioned from a wide-open, untamed prairie railhead and cattle town to a refined, modern urban center of culture and commerce. To re-create the essence of this early school prairie setting, museum staff and volunteers envision a prairie in the southwest corner of the school property. Following are some thoughts and plans that are taking shape for this prairie.

The idea for a prairie and demonstration garden began when museum staff and volunteers observed photos of the early school building set amid the prairie grasses and farms that were prevalent at that time. The concept of re-creating a small portion of the prairie on the museum grounds followed with discussions on how to begin this project. The McCormick School Museum (MSM) prairie team was formed consisting of Cynthia Davie (Operations Manager), Sharon Rutherford (Wichita Parks Master Gardener), LuAnna Peck (volunteer), and Cynthia Rhodes (volunteer). The MSM prairie team attended the Earth Partnership for Schools (EPS) workshop on June 3 through 7 at the Dyck Arboretum in Hesston to learn more about the prairie and natural history of Kansas and how to establish a prairie.

The Earth Partnership for Schools is a 40-hour institute that trains school teachers, staff, and others who work with children in the award-winning EPS program. The curriculum, which is correlated to Kansas Common Core and Next Generation Science standards, can engage students in the process of prairie gardening and learning about prairie plants and animals on school and facility grounds. During the week at EPS, the MSM prairie team actively listened to the lectures, participated in the learning activities, discussed the ideas that were forming, and developed a diagram and plans for the MSM prairie and a demonstration garden entitled "Gateway to the Prairie."

MSM neighbors and interested persons will soon see preliminary work being performed on the southwest quadrant of the museum property to prepare the ground for the prairie. For more information and to see diagrams and plans, contact the museum office at 316-708-0676 (call or text) or send an email message to mccormickschoolmuseum@gmail.com. The MSM prairie team welcomes additional members to the committee to assist with planning efforts and gardening projects. Those wishing to be involved should contact the museum office for more information about committee meeting times and work dates. Come and join us as we grow a prairie!



A. Zeese & Co., Chicago. From the Superintendent's Annual Report of 1891.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the McCormick School Museum is to showcase and protect its historical and architectural importance while telling the story of Wichita Public Schools through artifacts and archives.

The mission of the Advisory Council is to guide and assist in long-range planning, marketing, and development of the McCormick School Museum, seeking opportunities for growth and recognition through increased educational opportunities and significant fundraising efforts.

The Newsletter of the McCormick School Museum, Inc. is published six times per year to inform constituents of the Wichita Public Schools and other interested patrons of activities and events taking place at the museum. Contributions help us to produce this publication.

You may send your gift to
McCormick School Museum, Inc. at:

McCormick School Museum, Inc.
P.O. Box 12881
Wichita, Kansas 67277
savemccormick.com

Editor: Cynthia Rhodes

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Recent Happenings at MSM

The 2nd annual MSM 16 mm Film Fest was held in the multipurpose room on June 1 with a showing of entertaining and educational 16mm films from both the MSM film archives and the personal collection of Rick Every. Rick has served as the projectionist at the Orpheum Theatre and technician at KAKE-TV and Century II. He is a renowned local reel to reel film expert and collector of 16mm films and equipment. The evening's feature film was "They Said It Couldn't Be Done," produced in 1970 by Bell Telephone with narration by Lee Marvin and music by the 5th Dimension. During the 15-minute intermission, lantern slides highlighting pre-World War II science and social studies high school curricula from the museum's collection were shown using a lantern slide projector purchased by the Franklin Elementary School PTA in 1928. Movie goers were treated to freshly popped popcorn, ice-cold lemonade, and movie candy snacks from the concession stand. Fifty-seven people attended the evening, including a group from Newton! Thank you to all who attended the film fest this year.

The Wichita Association of Retired School Personnel held their June luncheon, business meeting, and program in the multipurpose room on June 7. A buffet table was assembled to serve sloppy joe sandwiches and sides catered by Spears Restaurant to the forty-two members in attendance. For the program, the three 2024 WARSP Scholarship awardees each presented their educational endeavors and future school plans. Gaily decorated tables provided an early summer feeling to the luncheon meeting. The museum staff was pleased to host the WARSP group for this event.

Museum tours during the summer months have included a group from East Heights United Methodist Church led by former USD259 Dispatcher Randy Rector. McCormick neighborhood resident, Samuel Martin, regaled us with stories of his early K-6 years at McCormick

School. As a US Marine in Vietnam, Sam was a member of a specialized "sneak and peek" electronics surveillance team. The deployment signal he chose while out on patrol was the same familiar crosswalk whistle he used as Sergeant of the McCormick Elementary School Safety Patrol: two short blasts and one long.

To set up a tour or reserve a meeting room for your group, contact the museum office at 316-708-0676 (call or text) or send an email message to mccormickschoolmuseum@gmail.com for more information and availability. We have several rooms that are handicap accessible in the 1930's building to accommodate your meeting needs. Call the museum to find out more!



WARSP Scholarship recipient Dayanara Morones, Elementary Education major at Wichita State University, speaks at the WARSP luncheon on June 7. Photographer: Paul Oberg

EVENTS & MUSEUM HOURS

The McCormick School Museum is open Wednesdays from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm and Sundays from 2:00 to 5:00 pm. Park to the north of the building; enter through door #4 (closest entrance to the parking lot). Ring the doorbell if needed. You may call 316-708-0676 to confirm museum hours before your visit or to schedule tours outside regular hours.

The Museum complex is located at 855 S. Martinson in Wichita. Currently, the stairway to the multipurpose room is handicap-accessible. Admission is by donation; your support is always appreciated.

SAVE THE DATES

OCTOBER 19

Walking Tour: McCormick School Neighborhood. 9am to 1pm. Cost \$55.00. For more information, see the Wichita State University Fall 2024 Community Education Catalog or call the MSM office.

DECEMBER 6

Annual Holiday Open House. 9am to 5pm

DECEMBER 7 & 8

Holiday Open House Weekend. 2 to 5pm both days

DECEMBER (date to be determined): Carol Sing Around the Tree. 6:30 to 8pm

To reserve a room for your event, contact the museum office for reservation information and availability of dates.

For more information and to contact the museum:

Website: www.mccormickschoolmuseuminc.com

Facebook: McCormick School Museum

Gmail: mccormickschoolmuseum@gmail.com

Telephone: 316-708-0676 (call or text)

MSM Office: 316-558-5804 (leave a message)