



March 10, 2022

Brig Gen. William Turner, Director
Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs
Topeka, KS

Dear Sir:

The Ford County Historical Society's motto is: "*Creating a Future for Our Past*". When it comes to Fort Dodge, which existed before Dodge City or Ford County on the Santa Fe Trail, the fort personifies that history.

Our mission is to protect that which once protected our forefathers as they traveled the Santa Fe Trail to a new life in the west. The Fort is the only one of the seven located in Kansas that is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is time for this oversight to be corrected.

With the Veteran's Affairs Dept's help, we are ready and willing to make that happen. Before the process can proceed, we must have Veterans Affairs sign-off as the current tenants at Fort Dodge. The process can proceed without the owner or tenant approval – but we believe that sets it up for failure.

Please find our ideas, plans and other information for your review within the following pages. They enumerate the past successes and future plans of Ford County Historical Society and the people connected with it.

Thank you,

Kent Stehlik, President
Ford County Historical Society

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Project Overview

We can debate the historical significance of Fort Dodge and its impact on trade and travel on the Santa Fe Trail until the cows come home. Without the protection afforded to wagon trains traveling both directions on the trail, trade would not have been so successful. And once the fort's significance as a military installation ended – it became the Kansas Soldiers Home and continues to today. It took grassroots efforts to repurpose the abandoned fort into a viable veteran's facility and now a new grassroots effort seeks to preserve the area and its historically significant buildings and grounds.

Over the years, some of the oldest buildings from the original military fort have been lost, but quite a few still remain (some being utilized, some not). Plus, additional buildings from the early years of the Kansas Soldiers Home still exist (again, some being utilized, some not). It is the goal of the Preserve Fort Dodge movement to get the National Register designation for the fort and buildings which will ensure that we don't lose anything further.

The Preserve Fort Dodge movement does not seek to impede anything related to veterans operations at the site. The veterans operation has been successful through the years and they continue to maintain the buildings they are using. But we are worried about the empty and seemingly abandoned buildings decaying as time passes. With the National Register designation, funding streams become available to stabilize and mothball buildings which are awaiting repurposing and funds to restore and upgrade other buildings for new purposes. These funding streams also become available for veterans operations to apply for to assist with maintaining the historic buildings they are using.

There are several buildings & sites that the Preserve Fort Dodge movement wish to see stabilized so plans can be made for appropriate repurposing. They include:

- Junior Officers Quarters (last remaining frame building for the original fort)
- Walt Hall (iconic building on the corner hill that functioned as the hospital)
- Dead House
- Quartermaster building (now the museum)
- 4H & Girls Scout Encampment area

Other buildings of historical significance being used by the Kansas Soldiers Home are:

- Pershing Hall (original hospital now being utilized as administration building)
- Nimitz Hall (currently used for the resident pantry)
- Eisenhower Hall (former administration building)
- Halsey Hall (the current hospital)
- Chapel

The site contains other buildings but the above eight buildings are the most important ones to begin with.

The Ford County Historical Society is the group spearheading the Preserve Fort Dodge movement and the Society has been in existence since 1931. For the last 50-plus years, they have maintained and managed the Mueller-Schmidt House (Home of Stone) as a period home in Dodge City. Built and occupied in 1881, the Home of Stone remains a beautiful example of

craftsmanship in Ford County and the Society has regularly applied for and received grant funds to maintain this historic structure.

The Society is now working to open the Ford County Legacy Center as a repository of county history and interpreting the story of Ford County and the communities therein.

The Society has a longstanding history of preservation in the county and many members of the Society have served on boards & committees related to other historic buildings & sites within Ford County. We're in this for the long haul and fully understand that this process will be on-going.

Our group has several ideas for repurposing unused buildings at the fort. But they are just seeds of what could develop.

- * The Junior Officers quarters could be restored and used for a Veterans Art Gallery. There already is a program with the American Legion involving art programs for the residents at Fort Dodge and the building could become the home of that program. This building was saved from razing by efforts of the Historical Society and probably should be the first project to be addressed once National Register status is achieved. In 2019, the Ford County Historical Society secured an \$18,000 grant to fund a feasibility study to determine what would be needed to stabilize and restore the Junior Officers Quarters building. The estimated cost to renovate the structure is \$500,000. Our planned sources to finance the renovation are Heritage Trust Grant - \$90,000; Saving America's Treasures - \$250,000; Preservation Tax Credits - \$160,000, for a total of \$500,000. It is one of the first buildings constructed at Fort Dodge (ca. 1870) and was originally the "Captain's Quarters". The 36-page feasibility document can be made available, if desired.
- * Walt Hall is the most iconic building on the site and could be repurposed into the Fort museum and have exhibits related to the history of the Fort as the Kansas Soldiers Home (including restored hospital rooms). A second idea for this building could include housing for homeless veterans. But ultimately, once designation is achieved, we need to make sure this building is adequately mothballed and further disintegration is stopped until the repurposing can be achieved. We currently have no information on the condition or the cost to rehabilitate it.
- * The Dead House (originally used to store coffins/bodies until burial) is currently being used for storage. This small building could be repurposed into a simple exhibit highlighting its use/purpose.
- * The Quartermaster Building is currently the fort museum. This building just needs to be stabilized for now. If Walt Hall is repurposed as a museum, then this building could be repurposed as additional fort history exhibits.

Each of these buildings would have to be addressed one at a time. There is no way this could all be accomplished at once, but a comprehensive plan would be developed to prioritize what should be done first and just begin working through the list. This entire process is a multi-year endeavor. We just have to move one step at a time. First is the National Register designation. Adequate mothballing would be first, for sure.

General Fort History

FORT DODGE, KANSAS SENTINEL ON THE SANTA FE TRAIL

The origin of Fort Dodge, now the Kansas Soldiers' Home on Highway 400, just east of Dodge City, goes back to 1847, when Fort Mann was established at the Cimarron Crossing on the Santa Fe Trail, 22 miles west of the present Fort Dodge.

Colonel Gilpin's volunteers were garrisoned at Fort Mann to protect the Santa Fe Trail traffic from Indian attacks. His recommendation for several adobe posts along the course of the Trail were well received by the War Department which led to the establishment of Fort Dodge at the close of the Civil War, according to David K. Strate, whose "Sentinel to the Cimarron" defines the "frontier experience of Fort Dodge, Kansas."

The importance of posts such as Fort Dodge in ensuring peaceful passage along the trail and eventual settling of the area and establishment of cities, such as Dodge City, has never been adequately recognized. Intensity of Indian assaults along the routes resulted in suspension of mail service and lost travel by 1864.

Major General Grenville Dodge was placed in command of the 11th and 16th Kansas Cavalry Regiments and began work during the harsh winter of 1865, to repair telegraph lines and reopen travel routes. The Indians usually refrained from combat in winter months.

The new post was ordered built on March 17, 1865, between two fordable crossings, the Mulberry which was 17 miles east of Fort Dodge and the Cimarron, 22 miles west. The post rested in a narrow pasture off the Arkansas River, overlooked by a limestone bluff to the north. This bluff extended into an open plain where ravines proved handy to Indians who approached the Fort usually to steal horses and livestock.

Initial fortifications were crude earth dugouts excavated along the north bank of the river. Many men first stationed there were Confederates who preferred a fight with the Indian's to languishing — perhaps dying — in northern prisons.

The Soldier's had no lumber or hardware, so they had to use the available materials, grass and earth, to create the 70 sod dugouts. These were 10 x 12 feet in circumference and 7 feet deep. A door to the south faced the river and a hole in the roof admitted air and light. Banks of earth were bunks for the sods that slept from 2 to 4 men. Sanitation was poor and spring rains flooded the dugouts.

Pneumonia, dysentery, diarrhea and malaria were common the first year in the isolated fort. The General decided the Soldier's named the dismal Fort "Dodge" in its unpromising start to get even with him for them being brought there. The War Department made the name official.

The first shipments of lumber arrived in the summer of 1866 and the officer's quarters and temporary hospital were erected, still sod with wooden bunks. Supply houses and horse corrals were the first permanent structures of lumber. A field oven was the first piece of army equipment that improved the Soldier's lot at the post. Sutler's Store was built and immediately the Sutler took advantage of the Soldier's pay in their pockets. When they began to quarry stone, twelve miles to the North, desertion became an acute problem. It was a choice between hard work with stone or to face the Indians.

General Fort History – cont'd

A 43,000-acre military reservation was established. A cemetery and guardhouse were built, along with a supply store for destitute civilians off the barren plains and sometimes victims of Indian raids. During the next 2 years, permanent facilities of sandstone were erected, which included 2 barracks, a hospital, quartermaster buildings, headquarters building and commanding officer's quarters. Several buildings still stand and are in use today, including the commanding officer's quarters, now the residence of the Kansas Soldiers' Home Superintendent.

Both Civilian's and Soldier's quarried the stone, utilizing sixty teamsters and two hundred mules to haul it. Lieutenant George A. Hesselberger directed the construction. He demonstrated a taste for durability and subtle beauty, apparent in some buildings still in use at the Fort. Stones used were of varying length, but were cut to 18 inches in height and two-foot thickness. Each barracks held fifty men and was equipped with a kitchen and mess hall. Latrines were erected behind the barracks. The hospital had a ward room, adequate for the sick of 4 companies, administration section and kitchen.

The Commanding Officer's quarter was the two-story structure on the post. The first floor had administrative rooms where the Commanding Officer could host fellow officer's or hold court martials. The second floor, provided with rifle ports, was for family use. There was a blacksmith shop to keep horses shod and sixty wagons in repair. Two large corrals of sod with four feet thick walls, kept the Indian's from raiding the supply of mounts and protected the horses and cattle herds from the severe winters.

Negro troops that made up a large part of the population on the post after the Civil War were segregated and housed in a 20 x 40-foot structure, part of which served as storage. They were also segregated at the hospital in a small separate frame structure. All buildings were arranged in a circle, which faced inward to form a parade ground.

Skilled craftsman earned from \$85.00 to \$199.00 a month. Unskilled laborers were paid \$35.00, however, there was always a shortage of men and materials. Lumber and hardware were delivered from eastern Kansas or Santa Fe, New Mexico, where a thousand feet of lumber could be delivered for only \$30.00.

Many problems encountered during the construction were local in origin. There were frequent Indian attacks on the Fort and shortages of supply wagons and work details. Few workers could be enticed to work at hard, dirty labor for \$35.00 a month, with the possibility of a scalping thrown in.

The men at the Fort received criticism from headquarters for their lack of control of the Indians. General Marcy came out to investigate and his wagon train was attacked in route. Once there, he sent back a critical report of the newly erected building's, saying, "quarters are so magnificent and smoothly dressed that they appeared to be designed for the National Capital." The director of the building, Lieutenant Hesselberger, was singled out for criticism. His feat was rewarded with a court martial and his name on the dedication stone was covered over with a buffalo robe during subsequent ceremonies.

General Fort History – cont'd

A barracks once used for cholera victims was converted to a recreation room. The Chaplain, Major White, complained that the spiritual and cultural life of the men was neglected. As a result, church services were held in the building on Sunday, although the chaplain complained frequently of having to conduct his worship rites from a pool table.

Life was hard on the Plains and desertions were frequent. Dr. Tremaine, the Post Surgeon, was an advocate for better treatment and reduction of unnecessary hardships for the troopers.

In addition to providing protection for commercial trade routes, Fort Dodge also provided safeguards for frontier communities, including Dodge City. This included protection from thieves, cattle rustlers, bank robbers and Indians.

The Fort distributed food and water to civilians during the severe winter of 1874, just 2 years after the establishment of Dodge City. It also contributed a column to the Dodge City newspaper on military and social activities at the post. The Sutler's Store was a very popular spot on the reservation. Whiskey could be served from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. each evening, with 3 drinks allowed per man. However, it appeared the count was not always accurate. The Fort Dodge Cemetery held the bodies of many of Dodge City's early day residents, in addition to post inhabitants. One of these is Edward Masterson, brother of Bat, who was buried after being shot by a drunken gunfighter. The saying then was "the rich are buried at the Fort and the cowhands and poor are buried on Boot Hill and gone to hell."

As civilization advanced, the Indian's found no sanctuary from the white man's army. General William T. Sherman, a typical example of the military mind set, was sure that all attempts at civilization of the Indian were ridiculous. Extermination or reduction of their status to that of paupers with complete dependence on the government was his idea for their fate. Many Easterners were shocked at the treatment of the Indian. The men on the frontier had reason to complain of the Easterner's lack of comprehension of the savagery of the Indian.

With the coming of the railroad to Dodge City in 1872 and the threat of extinction of the buffalo, the Indian's conducted a final outburst of violence in an attempt to preserve their livelihood. At that time, buffalo hides were selling for \$3.50 each and plenty of hunters were on the scene to benefit from the price. By 1873, most of the buffalo had been annihilated, even to the south of the Arkansas River where the Medicine Lodge supposedly protected the buffalo and Indian's rights. In 1874, the Army renewed engagement against the Indian's, for asserting their rights by forays to the north of the Arkansas River. General Nelson Miles continued these attacks until the spirit of the Plains Indian's was broken and their wild and independent culture had virtually disappeared.

Between 1870 and 1875, more new buildings were built at Fort Dodge. Ten sets of officer and family quarters were erected, in addition to buildings for civilian employees. A new guardhouse replaced the old, overcrowded original structure. A granary for storing one million pounds of grain was also erected. Between 1874 and 1882, life on the post was fairly stable. Most

excitement came out of Dodge City where trail herds waited to be sold. Longhorns strayed onto the fort, sometimes tearing down laundry and threatening Soldier's and their families.

General Fort History – cont'd

In 1878, there were 100,000 cattle driven from Texas to Dodge City. Poor relations existed between the cowboys and the Soldier's. A uniformed man could not enter town without being harassed by a cowman, often aided by a local lawman. The drinking establishments often took advantage of the Soldier's.

At one time in 1877 Colonel William Lewis assembled a detachment of men and marched on Dodge City. The town judge hoisted a white flag and arbitration ensued. Dodge City's famed "Peace Commission" was formed soon after the incident with the help of Colonel Richard Dodge, who was furious when his personal servant, a young black, was shot and left to die in the street. The Commission consisted of such famed names as Wyatt Earp, Charlie Barrett, and Bat Masterson.

The last of the Indian scares was an attempted migration by the Cheyenne under Dull Knife, from El Reno, Oklahoma to their former home in South Dakota. During the Indian's march through Kansas, several dozen settlers were killed. Several Indians' were taken to Topeka for trial, with Ford County Attorney Michael Sutton as prosecuting attorney. The natives were acquitted for lack of evidence.

In December 1880, some of Fort Dodge's reserved land was opened to homesteaders. The first seventy-five homesteads were claimed by Dodge City residents that included gamblers, saloon keepers, prostitutes and a few actual homesteaders. In 1889, the rest of the area was opened, creating a real land rush. It is believed the Dodge City homesteaders purchased the land for \$158.00. On April 5, 1882, the Fort was abandoned by the U. S. Army. The last of the troops marched southward to Camp Supply when the flag was lowered on October 2, 1882. Fort Dodge, guardian of the commercial frontier, the cattleman and homesteader, had fulfilled its purpose.

For the next eight years the land and Fort were managed by a Custodian of the Department of Interior. Robert Wright, a Dodge City entrepreneur, managed to exploit the facilities by housing drovers who awaited the sale of their cattle. He purchased the land surrounding the Fort with money he earned selling whiskey and buffalo hides. In January 1890, Fort Dodge was deeded to the State of Kansas for use as a Soldiers' Home.

Veterans' began arriving to Fort Dodge. Most of them were Civil War Veterans'. Others were Veterans' of the Mexican and Indian Wars, many of whom had served with great honor in the Army. Records show these early residents did not always retire peacefully. Many were dismissed from the Kansas Soldiers' Home for quarrelsomeness, drunkenness and the like. Even croquet had to be abandoned as a form of recreation when the mallets proved too handy a weapon to settle quarrels among the members. Eventually, dependents and relatives of Kansas Veterans were admitted along with Confederate and Negro Veterans'.

The Kansas Soldiers' Home now includes a Museum and Library, modern skilled Long-Term Nursing Facility, recreation center, 3 residents halls and 65 cottages. Names of streets and buildings honor great American Presidents and military heroes, including Eisenhower, Nimitz, Sheridan, Garfield, Custer, Lincoln, Dewey, Halsey and Walt. Veteran' of the Mexican, Civil, Indian, Spanish-American, Philippines, Boxer Rebellion, World War I and II, Korean and Vietnam Wars have all been occupants. The peaceful park, quiet, shaded tree-lined walks and dignified buildings, both old and new, seem a far cry from the dugouts and forsaken Soldier's that existed on the Arkansas River bank in 1865.

Historical Sites in Fort Dodge

HALSEY HALL - Built of brick and dedicated June 21, 1970. This two-story Intensive Care Nursing Facility has the capacity for 86 residents. An activity recreation room provides ample space for numerous activities and programs.

CUSTER HOUSE - Built of wood and native sandstone in 1867. This is the home of the Kansas Soldiers' Home Superintendent. Originally, the first floor was the commanding officer's headquarters and administrative offices. The second floor was the living quarters for the Fort Commander and his family.

PERSHING BARRACKS - Built of native sandstone and wood in 1867. First permanent hospital. After the construction of Walt Hall, Pershing Barrack was converted into a men's dormitory. Due to lack of residents Pershing Barrack was closed in December 1985 and reopened as a clinic for Veterans in 1997. It is now used as the Administration Building.

FORT DODGE CHAPEL - Built of wood in 1902 Church was held in the school house (was located in Funston Park) until the chapel was built.

EISENHOWER HALL - Built of brick in 1962. Business offices, meeting room and auditorium.

FORT DODGE LIBRARY AND MUSEUM - Built circa 1867 of native sandstone. Has been used in the past as a granary and then used to store and dispense commodities and also a dispensary.

NIMITZ HALL - Built of native sandstone in 1865, it was originally separate buildings. Angel's Wing -north wing and Owl's Roost - south end. Pershing Street ran between the two buildings. It was made into one unit during W.P.A. days in the early thirties. 1933 to 1956 - housed Headquarters', beauty shop, carpenter shop, plumbing shop and a little store.

STONE COTTAGE: This building was built of native sandstone and wood between 1870 and 1875 and continues to be one of the original cottages at Fort Dodge.

PAINT SHOP - was a shower house (public bath house). Saturdays were children's bath days. The children would just about get wet when it was time to get out and let another take a bath. This was when there was a water hydrant between each two cottages. On occasion, the horses were washed outside the bathhouse where a water hydrant once stood. Before there were hydrants, water was brought up from the Arkansas River just south of the Fort by horses and buggies.

FORT DODGE SUTLER'S STORE - Built circa 1865 of wood, this building was a post office and a place to have a daily drink between 6:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. People could buy furs or exchange goods at the store. It was also used as a club house. In the early 1900's cottage residents received their daily ration of bread from a stone bakery in the backroom.

LINCOLN HALL - Built of brick, around 1922 to house 38 residents and named after Abraham Lincoln. In 1941, this hall was restored to house transferees from Mother Bickerdyke Home in Ellsworth, Kansas when it closed because of funding. Today, it is still used as a domiciliary for both men and women.

Historic Sites – cont'd.

GRANT HALL - Built of brick in 1925 and was used as a dormitory for 42 residents of the Fort. In 1941, it was restored and used to store government records and housed transferees from the Mother Bickerdyke Home in Ellsworth, Kansas. Today, it is still used as a domiciliary for both men and women.

FUNSTON PARK - Two barracks were in the park and a school for children from surrounding areas attended. The school was used for a hall for meetings and a church before the Fort Dodge Chapel was built. It now has horseshoe pits, picnic tables and provides a place to walk and rest.

WALT HALL - Built of brick in 1927 and was the second permanent hospital at Fort Dodge. It housed 34 patients and the Doctor lived on the second floor at one time. It was closed on January 8, 1990 due to lack of patients.

KANSAS VETERANS' CEMETERY AT FORT DODGE - The old Fort Dodge Cemetery was established in 1890. The new Kansas Veterans' Cemetery at Fort Dodge was dedicated on November 1, 2002.

FORT DODGE OLD MORTUARY (DEAD HOUSE) - Built of wood in 1877. It was used to store human bodies during winter months until the cemetery grounds thawed for burial. The soldiers referred to the Mortuary as the "Dead House".

Other Ford County Preservation Projects Completed

Following is a list of projects within Ford County that have been completed successfully (six of eight are listed on the National Register):

1991: The Ford County Government Center, formerly the 1928 Lora Locke Hotel, was a \$1.5 million renovation project, repurposed as the County Government administration building. **(National Historic Register designation – 1985)**

1993: The Ford County Courthouse renovation project to renovate the County's courthouse was completed and it still serves in that capacity (since 1910).

2004: The historic Dodge City Santa Fe Depot (circa 1898), is the largest in Kansas at 45,000 sq. ft. The depot was empty into the 1990s and in critical need of renovation. Originally thought to be beyond saving (with only Amtrak using it as a waiting room) the successful \$14-million renovation has returned the building to its past elegance and is home to 7 different entities and is entirely occupied. **(National Historic Register designation – 2000)**

2008: St. Mary of the Plains Hennessy Hall, a 120,000 sq. ft. building (circa 1952), needed major repairs to the roof, costing a quarter of a million dollars. **(National Historic Register designation – 2004)**

2015: Sacred Heart, our Catholic primary school built 105 years ago, required an upgraded air conditioning system. This was a project costing approximately one-half million dollars. **(National Historic Register designation – 1983)**

2019: The original Carnegie Library, now the Carnegie Arts Center (circa 1907), required renovations including stained glass windows restoration at a cost of a quarter million dollars to complete. **(National Historic Register designation – 1979)**

2021: The Mueller-Schmidt House aka The Home of Stone (circa 1881). A major renovation of this house museum included exterior stonework and complete interior restoration at a final cost of \$200,000. **(National Historic Register designation – 1972)**

2022 – ongoing: The Ford County Legacy Center, built as a large department store in 1948 contains 22,000 sq. ft. We anticipate renovations to convert this building into a county museum to require a minimum cost of one quarter of a million dollars, to be completed in 2023.

Additional National Historic Register listings in Ford county:

- Burr House (historic home) **(National Historic Register designation – 2008)**
- Dodge City Historic Downtown District **(National Historic Register designation – 2009)**
- Former City Hall (now Boot Hill distillery) **(National Historic Register designation – 2013)**
- Immaculate Heart of Mary Church (Windhorst) **(National Historic Register designation – 1989)**
- Santa Fe Trail ruts **(National Historic Register designation – 1966)**
- Sawlog Creek Crossing (Ft Hays to Ft Dodge Road) **(National Historic Register designation – 2013)**

Ford County Historical Society Personnel / Representatives

The People Involved in FCHS and the Fort Dodge Preservation Committee:

Kent Stehlik, President

Has successfully raised money for historical buildings across Southwest Kansas, including the Depots in Dodge City, Garden City and Liberal. Mr. Stehlik has been a professional fundraiser since 1975 in three states, Wisconsin, Florida, and Kansas.

Troy Robinson, Vice-President

A retired published professional photographer who has long pursued his interests in historic photographs and artifacts. Mr. Robinson is also a native of our area and is a member of one of the two families in Dodge City who played a major role in our daily newspaper.

Sonya Hughes, Treasurer

A local business owner for 41 years, Hughes has been involved in organizations which include the Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Chamber of Commerce, and our Downtown Dodge Association. She has participated in multiple successful grant applications on behalf of the FCHS.

Connie Penick, Secretary

Connie has participated at various levels of authority to promote the historic value of the Community of Dodge City. She served 12 years at Boot Hill Museum, and 28 years with the Santa Fe Depot and Depot Theater Company, assisting with promotion and fund raising. She Served two-3-year terms as Chair for the Dodge City Senior Center, and is currently serving as Vice-chair of the American Legion Auxiliary, Post #47. She has recently retired, however continues to work as a BOA on-call for Edward D. Jones.

Doug Austen, Board Member/Collections Manager

Doug Austen is a Dodge City native and currently serves as Co-Director of New Chance Inc. (local drug & alcohol rehab center). He has been associated with Boot Hill Museum over the last 40 years and currently serves as Show Director for the Long Branch Variety Show. He is also the Executive Director for the Dodge City High School Alumni Association and Executive Secretary for the Dodge City Municipal Cowboy Band.

Aaron Fisher, Board Member/Historian

Aaron is a lifelong Kansas and American History enthusiast who also has owned and operated multiple businesses in the museum and collector fields for over 25 years. His principal two businesses are Fisher Carriage Works and Fisher Wind Engine, but he also operates a general restoration and fabrication shop capable of virtually any wood or metal project. Aaron has a great interest and experience in historical buildings. This interest focuses primarily on early Kansas building types including, sod, adobe, wood, and stone. He has been part of several evaluation, stabilization, and repurposing projects of historical structures. Aaron Fisher lives in rural Gray County Kansas and has served as a longtime past member of the Fort Larned Old Guard, the Friends Group of the Fort Larned National Historic Site. He works closely with the National Park Service and is an active volunteer at Fort Larned. Preserving our history and finding ways to make it relevant to today's youth is one of his greatest passions in life.

Jon Cronin, Board Member

A professional interior designer, Mr. Cronin played a major role in the renovation of the Lora Locke Hotel as well as the recently renovated Mueller-Schmidt House. In his professional life, he designed interiors for the chain of Gibson's Discount Store, as well as the historic Carriage House in Salina.

Personnel – cont'd.

Susan Rueb, Fort Dodge Preservation Committee member

Susie is a 1966 graduate of Dodge City Senior High. She graduated from Ft Hays State College in 1970 with a BS in Nursing, and a 1973 graduate of Wichita State University with a MS degree in Nursing. She retired in 2014. She is the Founder and President of Windthorst Heritage, (historic church preservation) since 1997. Susie serves on USD #381 Sight Council, Secretary, Daughters of Isabella, and Volunteer for Hospice. She has served as past president of Windthorst Alter Society. A Lifelong citizen of Ford County, and wife of farmer/rancher for 45 years.

Charles Sellens Fort Dodge Preservation Committee member

Charles J. Sellens served in the US Army in administrative positions in Germany. He acquired grant writing skills while serving in elective and appointed positions in county government. His grant writing skills were foremost to his success as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Solomon Islands. Charles lived thirteen years in Japan working for the Japanese Foreign Service in a system analogous to the Peace Corps. He taught English-as-a-Second Language at Dodge City Community College for several years and has a master's in public administration degree.

Mike King, Fort Dodge Preservation Committee member

Mike is currently retired from education and is a full-time Kansas-based historical writer and founder of Wild West Podcast. Wild West Podcast, as of 2022, has reached over 350,000 downloads and streamed in over 3,840 countries. In addition, the podcast is listened to in 1,168 cities and is now in the top 1.4% of all podcasts globally. Wild West podcast has also been featured in the October 15, 2021, edition of the Kansas Magazine. He is enjoying his time as a member of the board of directors for Boot Hill Museum. Michael is the author of "Return of the Great Hunters," "A Man in a Black Derby Hat," "The Machiavellian's of Dodge City: The Antic Stories of Luke McGlue," "Buffalo Days: Legends of Dodge City," "Trails, Forts Treaties and Indian Wars," and "Return of the Great Hunters: Tales of the Frontier."

Eldon D. Brandenburg, Fort Dodge Preservation Committee member

Born in the Russell. Grew up on a farm in Southwest Russell County Kansas. He attended rural country schools, Russell High School and graduated in 1968 from Dodge City High School. Eldon was a Social Studies Teacher at the Dodge City Middle School, and served as an Adjunct Professor of American History, American Government and Western Civilization at Dodge City Community College. He continues to stay active in education and serves on several community organizations. Until June of 2021 he worked at Water Sports Campground and Recreation as Executive Administrator of Operations, and CEO.

Patric Hamit -Executive Director, Community Foundation of Southwest Kansas

Pat is currently the Executive Director of the CFSWKS. During his 20-year tenure he has built the organizations financial base from \$5 million to over \$50 million. He is a graduate of Friends University with the Bachelor's Degree in Business. Pat was a member of the Advisory Board for USD #443 Scholarship Fund. He has served on the Bell Government Credit Union board of directors, was a founding member of the Trail of Fame in Dodge City and served approximately 20 years on the Boot Hill Museum Board of Directors, serving four years as chairman.

Dana Williamson, Architect and Consultant to Fort Dodge Preservation Committee

Dana is a member of the Dodge City Historic Landmark Committee and also serves on the Kansas Preservation Alliance as well as the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review.

Past Grant & Other Funding Successes

We frequently encounter grants which are only available with the National Register of Historic Places designation. Fort Dodge does not qualify for these without this designation. Specifically, “Saving America’s Treasurers”, “Rural Preservation”, “Heritage Trust”, “Kansas Humanities” and “Preservation Tax Credits” are not available for the Fort Dodge project at this time.

However, other projects in the county (listed earlier) have accessed various grants and funding sources. Those have included:

- Heritage Trust Grant - \$90,000
- Preservation Tax Credits - \$125,000
- ITC Wichita - \$12,000
- Victory/Co-Bank - \$10,000
- Mariah Fund - \$36,000
- Community Foundation of Southwest Kansas \$82,200
- Community Facilities Advisory Grants - \$98,676
- KDOT - \$7.5 million
- Ford County - \$387,000 (2018 – present)
- Private Donations - \$3.5 million