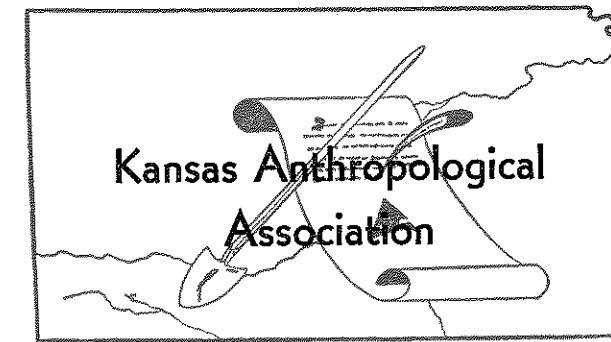


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NEWSLETTER

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THE 1969 FIELD SEASON AT OLD FORT HAYS

By

Thomas P. Barr

The archeological division of the Kansas State Historical Society conducted the fourth field season at Old Fort Hays from June 3 through August 15, 1969. This field season was equally divided between the actual archeological investigation and the initial phase of stabilization. Excavations were conducted on the post hospital with the stabilization being carried out on the previously exposed foundations along officers row and the west enlisted men's barracks.

The post hospital was a one story frame building constructed of pine lumber. This lumber was of the jointed weatherboard type, manufactured in St. Louis, Missouri and shipped to the post for the initial phase of construction. In November of 1867, the first structure had been erected. In the interim period (from 1867 until 1889) many alterations and additions were made to the original structure rendering it more suitable for the purpose for which it was intended. The hospital's overall floorplan shows the structure as having two ward rooms joined together by an entryway, and behind each of the wards were annexes in somewhat the shape of an inverted "U". Other significant features associated with the hospital proper was a cistern located between the two annexes with a drain system connected with the west annex and east ward room. Behind each of the ward rooms, located at the outer corner were two earth closets or vaults. The hospital also had a full length porch and a white picket fence which encompassed all of the buildings contained within the hospital complex. Thirteen years after the fort was abandoned by the military, the fort grounds were again occupied by the Fort Hays Normal School which was officially authorized on June 23, 1902. Only three of the fort buildings were to be utilized for school purposes. These were the guardhouse, commanding officer's house, and the hospital. The hospital was renovated and utilized as the office, classroom and library building. The guardhouse was used to house the gymnasium and the commanding officer's house served as the principal's home for several years. For a period of two years the old fort functioned as the school. In 1904, the school moved to its present location on the north side of Big Creek. The post hospital building also made the move to the other side of the creek where it served in numerous capacities until it passed out of existence at some later date.

The original location of the post hospital in relation to the existing structures on the fort grounds is a point equal distant between the framed officer's house and the blockhouse. The newly finished visitor's center is situated to the north and west of the hospital area. Excavations revealed the two ward rooms which have been previously mentioned and the two annexes which were attached to the rear (south) of each ward room. The ward rooms exhibited a combined measurement of 129 feet on the east-west axis and 24 feet on the north-south axis. The east annex measured 12 by 38 feet with the west annex measuring 12 by 48 feet. Remnants of the hospital's foundations were uncovered at depths which varied from six to eight inches below the present ground surface. Apparently when the hospital was moved from its original location to that area which now comprises Fort Hays State College, a large percentage of the stones that made up the foundation were removed with the structure. Later, when the land in the fort area was under cultivation, the foundations were further reduced. The only evidence that remained when the foundation was uncovered was either the first course of stones or a square discoloration on the undisturbed underlying soil. The foundation was of the pillar type set at intervals which ranged from 12 to 12 and one-half feet apart. Single and in some instances several stones provided the initial course, square in outline, and ranged in size from 24 to 30 inches. These stone slabs were obtained locally from a large outcrop of limestone situated several miles to the north of the fort complex. Features coeval with the fort's operation included a cellar, the cistern system, and a vault.

The cellar was situated under the east annex of the hospital. Dressed limestone blocks formed the wall of the cellar which extended the full length of the east annex. Due to the occupancy of the Fort Hays Normal School, the fill contained within the feature was comparatively late. Traces of the cellar entryway included portions of a wooden door and two hinges which were uncovered in the south end of the cellar. The cistern system, centrally located between the two annexes and just to the south of the covered entryway of the two ward rooms, was also uncovered. The cistern was bell-shaped in cross-section and lined with a thin coating of hog-hair mortar over soft fired brick. This feature was bell-shaped in vertical cross-section and measured approximately six and one-half feet at the orifice and 12 feet in depth. The drains which were associated with the cistern extended from the west annex of the hospital and the east ward room. The base for the drains was a square receptical with soft-fired bricks lining the periphery. Materials utilized inside this basal portion of the drain consisted of a white stone chat with liberal quantities of charcoal. At a central point within this square was a perforated piece of galvanized metal which acted as a second filter. The actual drains were made up of long round sections of clay tile protected by a single course of soft-fired clay brick. The surfaces of the bricks were then coated with a layer of mortar which varied in thickness from one-half to one inch.

The last feature associated with the hospital complex when it was utilized as a military infirmary was that of a vault located at the southwest corner of the west ward room. Numerous artifacts were recovered from this feature. Perhaps one of the more significant artifacts was a spiked dress helmet with the numerals 18 on an eagle device. This helmet undoubtedly belonged to an individual of the 18th Infantry who was stationed at Fort Hays from June 1875 until September 20, 1889. Two additional vaults were opened, one which would be in close proximity to the dead house and the second was situated behind house seven on officer's row. Both of these features yielded a considerable amount of material relating to the active span of the fort when it was occupied by the military.

Features in the immediate area of the hospital which date from the early phase of the Fort Hays Normal School included two vaults which yielded a meager recovery. Artifacts associated with these vaults included late newspapers and one bottle.

The second phase of the field work was directed toward the initial phase of stabilization. Foundations concerned in this project included eight of the existing nine foundations of officer's row and one enlisted men's barracks which is situated at the west end of the parade ground. The foundations and their associated features, such as chimney flues and chimney foundations, were originally exposed during the 1967 and 1968 digs at the fort. This current phase of the work consisted of marking the corners and then backfilling over the original foundation. Then slabs of limestone were hauled from a quarry some fifteen miles from the dig site. These slabs were placed over the fill and brought up to the present ground surface. These foundation markers will later be pointed up with mortar. Plans also call for an all-weather sign in front of each foundation to give a history of that structure and the occupants who were stationed at the fort.

Kansas State Historical Society
Topeka, Kansas

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

If you're wondering why there is no K.A.A. news or articles in this issue it is because I've received none for the last two months. Are you still out there?

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INFORMATION FOR K.A.A. MEMBERSHIP

The objects and purposes of this association are: to unite individuals who are interested in the Indian history and prehistory of the State of Kansas; preservation and display of Indian remains within the State; the scientific study, investigation and interpretation of archeological remains and ethnological materials; the publication and distribution of information concerning Kansas archaeology and ethnology; the development and promotion of greater public interest and appreciation for the cultural heritage of the State.

Types of memberships and dues:

Active	\$5.00	Institutional	\$7.00
Student	\$3.00	Contributing	\$10.00
Family	\$8.00	Life	\$100.00

Application for membership and dues should be addressed to the Secretary-Treasurer of the Kansas Anthropological Association as the address appears on the title page of the Newsletter. A membership year begins on September 1st and annual dues are payable at that time.

PUBLICATIONS

Members will receive the Newsletter nine times a year. Printed from September to May the Newsletter contains reports of archaeological and ethnological work in the state as well as activities of the K.A.A. members. All members and interested individuals, professional or amateur, are invited to submit material to the K.A.A. editor for use in the Newsletter. Five reprints will be provided free to the author for each article accepted. Additional reprints or reprints of back numbers if available, may be ordered from the Secretary-Treasurer.

Prices are 35 cents each for issues from Volume 1 - 12. Fifty cents each for issues from Volume 13 on.

The Association also publishes bulletins on specific subjects as the material becomes available. Currently in print is Bulletin No. 1, Coal Oil-Canyon, by Peter W. Bowman, \$2.25. Bulletins may be ordered from the editor.

MEETINGS

Association meetings are held one or two times a year. The 1970 Spring meeting will be held in Hays, April 18, 1970 at the Memorial Union, Fort Hays College campus.