

The Legacy of Manning, Kansas: The Manning Jayhawkers 4-H Club

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 Spring 2016



This is a paper about Manning, Kansas. Manning is located in Keystone Township of Scott County, Kansas. It lived from 1887 to 1955. The Manning Jayhawkers 4-H Club served as a persistence factor in Manning. It now serves as Manning's legacy. The exhibit provides the story of Manning and the Manning Jayhawkers through maps, historic and modern photographs, town histories, 4-H records, field work, and interviews.

A special thank you to Betty Scheurman. Another thank you to the Scott County 4-H program and the Manning Jayhawkers 4-H club for your contributions to my life.

Towering at heights of up to 170 feet, cement grain elevators are the monoliths of the Great Plains. They mark communities, both past and present. These elevators tower over the gentle rolling hills and wheat fields of western Kansas and can be seen from miles away. One such elevator, seen below, operated by the Scott Cooperative Association, stands as a monument over Manning, Kansas. Located in the Keystone Township in Scott City, Kansas, Manning lived from 1887 until 1955. Even after the closing of the post office in 1955, Manning still persisted for close to two decades, in part thanks to the Manning Jayhawkers 4-H Club. Though little remains in Manning, the Manning Jayhawkers 4-H Club is the community's legacy.



Figure 1. A photograph of the Scott Cooperative Association facility in Manning. This is the only business still in operation in Manning. The grain elevator towers over the plains, a constant reminder of the community that once thrived in the eastern portion of Scott County. SOURCE: Stacy Davis, May 11, 2016.

The Settling and Flourishing of a Community

Scott County was established in 1886 and named after General Winfield Scott. In January of 1887, Scott City was incorporated as a third class cityⁱ. Located in the geographical center of the county, Scott City was uncontested as the county seat. Ten miles east and five miles north of Scott City, Manning was surveyed by the Missouri Pacific Railroad in 1887ⁱⁱ. The following map provides Manning's location in relation to Scott City and Scott County. Though the map is from three decades after the community's settlement, it provides an accurate depiction of the county, including the Missouri Pacific rail line.

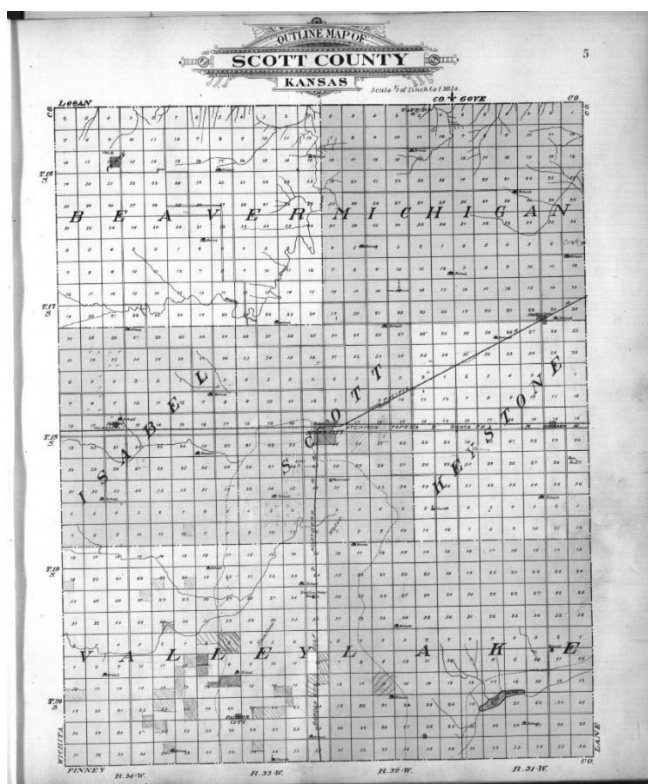


Figure 2. A map of Scott County, c. 1910. This map shows the locations of townships and small communities within Scott County. Manning is located to the northeast of Scott City along the Missouri Pacific rail line. SOURCE: Kansas Memory

Soon after the railroad tracks were laid, a depot was constructed between the main track and the side trackⁱⁱⁱ. Some of the earliest families in Manning were settled before the town was surveyed. Those families included; the Henry See family, The John French family, and the William Fleenor Family^{iv}.

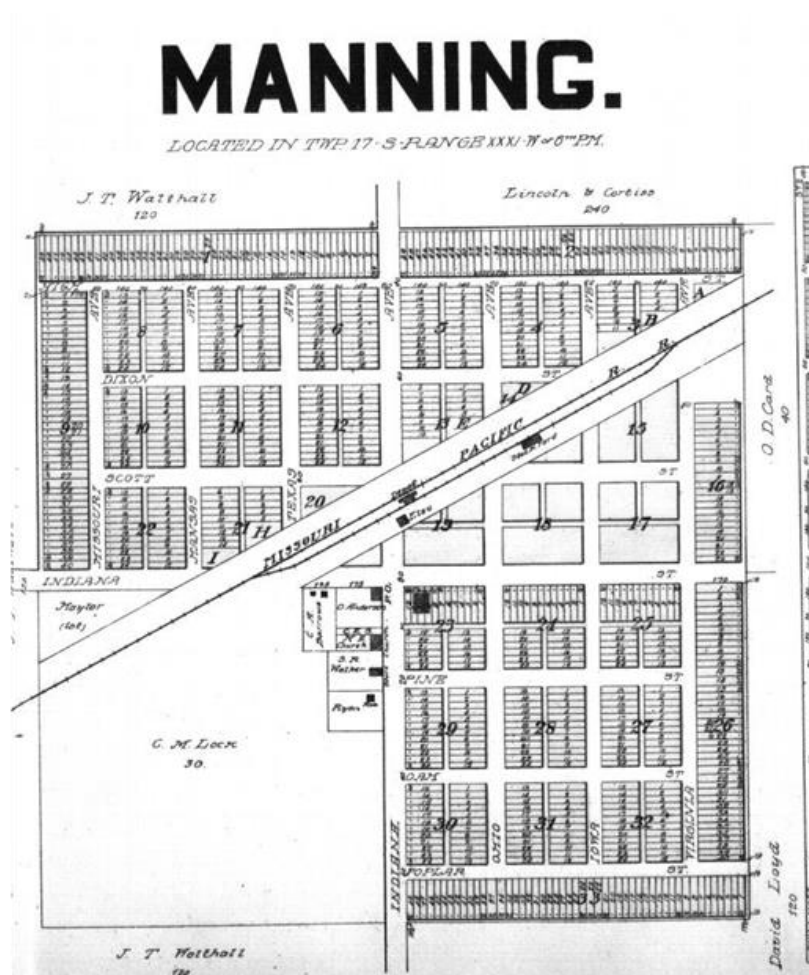


Figure 3. A plat map of Manning, c. 1910. The map shows the locations of the post office, the Missouri Pacific railway line, and the depot. For the most part this map is a paper town. Many of these streets never actually existed. The town was primarily south of the railroad tracks. SOURCE: Kansas Memory

On December 20 of 1887 a post office was established in Manning^v. The map above shows Manning. Melvin Bruntzel's *Quick Reference to Kansas* reveals that the town was originally to be named Arthur, before it was discovered that there was another town in Kansas with that name. The name Manning came from Daniel Manning, who served as Secretary of the Treasury under President Grover Cleveland from 1885 until March of 1887^{vi}. It is likely that this town was named after Danny Manning because his failing health was highly publicized. According to an article in the *New York Times* on December 21, 1887, Danny Manning passed away just days after the post office was established in Manning. Dave Lloyd served as the first postmaster of Manning. The post office was located in a store on his property. The Polk Directories from 1894 and 1900, continue to list Lloyd as the postmaster. Manning's population was 25 and 20 respectively.



Figure 4. Main Street Manning, c. 1905. The Manning Store, which housed the post office, can be seen in the middle of the photograph. The Manning Methodist Church can be seen in the background. The flat roofed building that can barely be seen south of the church is the hardware store. SOURCE: *Scott County, Kansas, 1886- 1896: Celebrating 100 Years!*

The photograph above shows Manning in the early 1900s. In the center of the photograph lies the store that housed the post office. The Manning Methodist Church, organized in 1893 lies in the background of the photograph, a new church building was erected in the same location in 1937. Between the Manning Methodist Church and the Manning Store was a hardware store^{vii}. The 1912 Polk Directory lists D.H. Decker as the post master and the operator of The Manning Store. At the time, Manning had a population of 30. The directory also lists a grain company. When the Gruver family came to town in 1919, The Manning Baptist church lay east across the street shown in the photograph^{viii}. South of the Baptist church was a restaurant. North of the Baptist church lay another store, this one operated John and Lillie Ludlow. The town also had a blacksmith shop.



Figure 5. The Manning School, c. 1921. The school is brand new at the time. The building, which housed a K-12 school, still stands in Manning. Several small county schools consolidated to The Manning School District 30 at this time. SOURCE: *Scott County, Kansas, 1886- 1896: Celebrating 100 Years!*

The Manning School, as seen in the photograph above, was built in 1921. It housed Kindergarten through 12th grade. Prior to the construction of this school students attended school one half-mile west of Manning. Thanks the *History of Early Scott County*, we know that some of the school teachers at that location included Leota Ludlow, O.D. Card, Charley McDearis, Mrs. Hattie Mills, Herbert Babcock, Mrs. B.A. Tomlin, Robert Crabtree, Phoebe Daughtry, Marie Griffith Elliot, and Hazel Garner Canady. The first graduate of Manning School District 30 was Hazel Eikermann (nee See)^{ix}. As of 2016, she is still living in a nursing home in Colorado.

The Founding of a 4-H Club

An understanding of the impact of 4-H in Manning begins with an understanding of 4-H history. The origin of 4-H is clouded; however, it has deep roots in Kansas. Part of the mystery surrounding 4-H is because the term “4-H Club” was not used to describe the program in the beginning. It is generally agreed upon that “Boys’ and Girl’s 4-H Club Work” was first used in 1926^x. However, as revealed by Betty Lou Denton and Merle Eystone in their history of Kansas 4-H, Otis Hall, the Kansas Boys’ and Girls’ State Leader was using the term in his written work as early as 1914. Hall also wrote the earliest version of the 4-H pledge in 1919. “As a true club member, I pledge my head to clearer thinking, my heart to greater loyalty, my hands to larger service, my health to better living for my club, my community, and my country.”

During the 1930s 4-H faced the same problems that were plaguing the country. Though there was a steady growth of clubs in the early 30s, financial problems left just one County Club Agent in the entire state of Kansas^{xi}. During the dustbowl, many members agriculturally based projects suffered. Despite these problems, 4-H had massive social importance in the 1930s.

Denton and Eyestone share that members surveyed specifically mentioned social interaction as a reason for club involvement. In 1939, enrollment in 4-H reached a new high^{xii}. It was in this year that a 4-H club was organized in Manning^{xiii}.

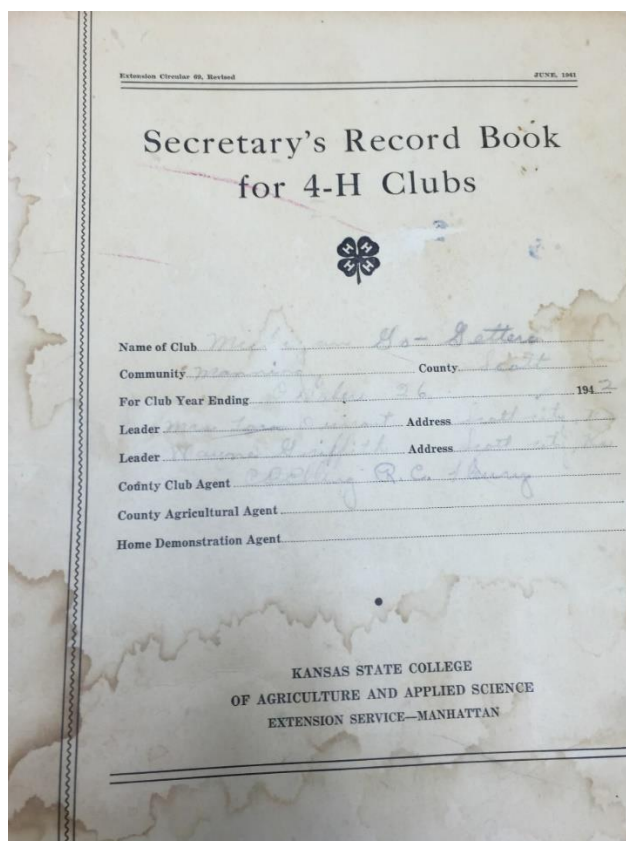


Figure 6. The 1942 Manning Go-Getter's Secretary Book. This was the first year that the state distributed secretary's books, making these the first written records available. The club had 25 members at the time. SOURCE: The Manning Jayhawkers 4-H Club.

The earliest records of 4-H in Manning are the names of the community leaders of the club. Community leaders are adult volunteers, usually parents of the members, who typically serve as liaisons between clubs and local extension agents. The first community leader of the 4-

H club that met in Manning was Charlie Conine^{xiv}. The first written records of the club are from 1942. It was in this year that the Kansas introduced secretary's books as a way to keep records. The club was called the Manning Go-Getters. The 1942 secretary's book, pictured above, contains a list of members, records of all the meetings, records of activities, as well as a grid that plots where all the members lived. 1942 was the same year that the first Scott County 4-H Achievement Banquet was held. Betty See was the county champion in Home Economics and Billy See was the county champion in livestock^{xv}.



Figure 7. The Manning Jayhawker's 4-H Club Charter, c. 1946. The charter features signatures from the president of Kansas State University, the Director of Extension, and the State 4-H Club Leader. This charter established the club names as The Manning Jayhawkers. SOURCE: The Manning Jayhawkers 4-H Club.

The image above is the Manning Jayhawkers official charter. It was in 1946 that the club was officially chartered as the Manning Jayhawkers. In 1946, the community leaders were Marvin Bower and Mildred Conine. Richard Ramsey served as the club's first president. The club officially met in the Manning School Building on the second Monday of every month^{xvi}.

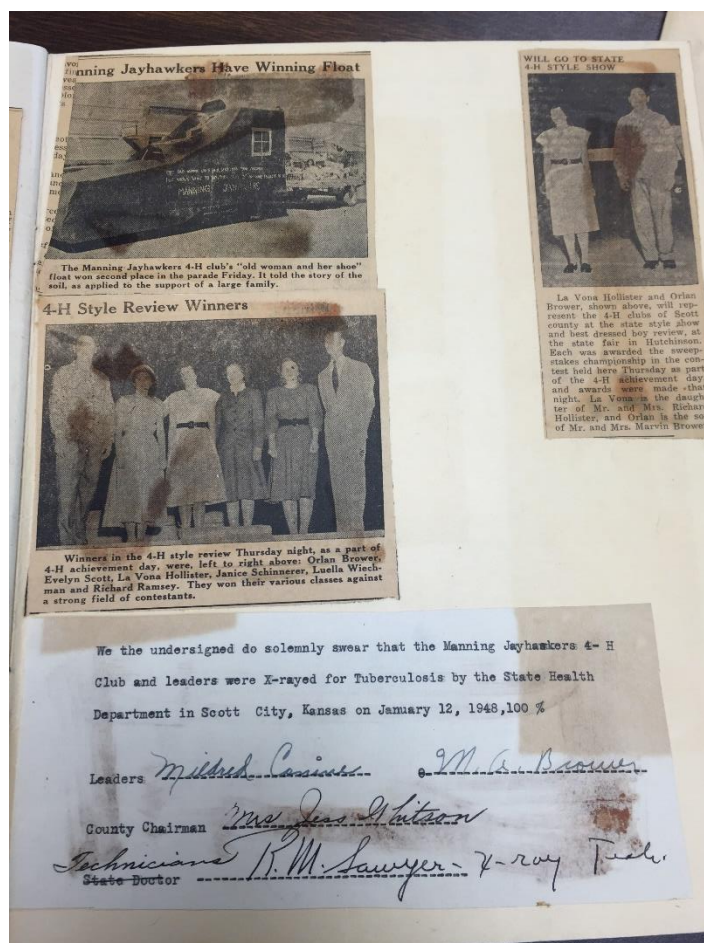


Figure 8. Records pasted in the 1947 - 1948 Manning Jayhawker's Secretary Book. These records offer a glimpse into 4-H Club work in the late 1940s. They also show the success of the Manning Jayhawker's at the county level. SOURCE: The Manning Jayhawkers 4-H Club.

According to an article written by Nany Griffith in the Scott County Centennial Book, in 1947, the Manning Jayhawkers had the most entries at the Scott County Fair. Records from 1948 show that the entire club was screened for tuberculosis. These records, along with news clippings pasted into the back of the 1947 – 1948 secretary's book appear above. The news clippings share highlights of the county fair. The club had the winning float in the fair parade that year.

Manning's Decline

It is arguable that Manning's decline began in 1943 when the high school closed. During World War II, it was difficult to attract teachers to the area and high school classes were consolidated to Scott City, though middle school and elementary school continued. The closing of the train depot was another notable mark of Manning's decline. Though specificities about the date the depot closed cannot be located, Betty Scheuerman says she can remember the mail coming in through the depot when she was young, and she approximates the closing of the depot to be during World War II. In 1955, the Manning Store and post office closed, and Manning was added to the routes handled by the Scott City post office. Though this may be considered the official end date of Manning as a community by many, Manning persisted for close to two decades after the post office was closed.

Even as Manning declined, The Manning Jayhawker's continued to meet at the Manning School. On November 28, 1954, the Great Bend Tribune reported "4-H Achievement Dinner Honors Scott Countians." From the Manning Jayhawker's 4-H Club, Ladonna Gruver and Norma Jean Jewell preformed a duet as part of the program. A mishap with the Manning Jayhawker's float in the county fair parade was the subject of a feature in the Garden City Telegram of

August 14, 1958. The float was a large “lath-and-cardboard rocket” accompanied by the saying “Rocket to Success with 4-H.” The article goes on to describe how the top of the rocket struck an overhead wire halfway through the parade and the nose cone promptly dropped to the pavement.

In 1968, The Scott County School District, USD 466, made the decision that they would discontinue middle school in Manning at the end of the 1968-1969 school year. As revealed in an article in the Garden City Telegram on December 31, 1968 “Manning residents point to the blow to community togetherness if the Junior High is closed. The school activities in the Junior High are the center of most community events since the Manning Methodist Church closed its doors a year ago.” The Manning Baptist church was long gone by this point as well. By 1975, elementary school had also been discontinued at Manning, thus signaling an end to the community. This held more finality than the closing of the post office had.

The Legacy of Manning

Despite the discontinuation of school at Manning, The Manning Jayhawker’s continued to meet at the Manning School on the second Monday of every month. At one point in the 1980s, the Manning Jayhawkers had over 80 members enrolled in the club^{xvii}. The club met in Manning until 2003. A current photograph of the school building appears below. As shared by Lance Huck, a Manning Jayhawker’s 4-H club alumni and parent of former club members, the club stopped meeting at Manning for two reasons. The first was a matter of convenience, as most of the club members now resided in Scott City, and the second was that the school building was starting to deteriorate.



Figure 9. A photograph taken looking northeast upon the Manning. The school is one of the only structures remaining in the community. School was held here from 1921 until 1975. This was the meeting place of the Manning Jayhawkers 4-H Club from 1939 until 2003. Author Photograph, April 16, 2016.

The Manning School now sits on private property. Since the Manning Jayhawkers 4-H Club stopped using the facility has further deteriorated. Little remains in Manning. The Scott Cooperative Association continues to operate the grain elevator pictured at the beginning of the exhibit. The Manning Methodist Church, pictured below, is still standing, serving as a frame of reference in conjunction with the photograph of Manning from the early 1900's. According to Betty Scheuerman, two families still live in Manning.



Figure 10. A photograph taken looking southwest upon the Manning Methodist Church. This building was constructed in 1937, and services were held here until 1968. The church building is one of the only structures remaining in Manning. Author photograph, April 16, 2016.

As of 2016, the Manning Jayhawkers is one of 5 active 4-H Clubs in Scott County. The club membership accounts for 39 of the approximately 145 4-H members enrolled in Scott County^{xviii}. The club members are involved in projects ranging from rocketry to market beef. They are active on the local, county, state, and even national levels. Two members serve on the county 4-H council each year, helping to lead the Scott County 4-H program. The club, 2015-2016 membership pictured below, meets on the second Monday of every month at the William Carpenter 4-H building in Scott County. Christina Tilton, a former president of the club says, “4-H has taught me to be a better leader and a better citizen. As the motto says, ‘to make the best better,’ I strive to be a better person every day.”



Figure 11. A portion of the Manning Jayhawkers 4-H Club 2015 – 2016 membership. There are 39 club members, not all of whom are pictured. The club contains members who are first generation 4-H members as well as those who come from generations of 4-H members and even generations of Manning Jayhawkers. SOURCE: Stacy Davis, October 2015.

The smooth cement of the Scott Co-op grain elevator that towers over Manning “is a visible monument marking the location of Manning on the plains,” as written in the 1986 Scott County Centennial Book. However, this grain elevator is not the only monument of Manning. Both grain elevators and the head, heart, hands, and health that 4-H members embody are the epitome of the Kansas plains. In fact, 4-H is a vital community institution in the state of Kansas and across the country. More than 6 million youth are currently enrolled in 4-H programs, and these programs have over 25 million alumni^{xix}. In fact, every single county in the nation has 4-H involvement according to the National 4-H Council^{xx}. The Manning Jayhawkers 4-H club makes sure that a community on the plains is continually remembered and honored. The club itself is a monument, albeit remarkably less visible than the grain elevator, and the members and alumni of the Manning Jayhawkers 4-H club are the legacy of Manning, Kansas.

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- ^v Committee, *History of Early Scott County*, 1977, 31
- ^{vi} “Danny Manning,” US Department of the Treasury, 2010, <https://www.treasury.gov/about/history/Pages/dmanning.aspx>
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- ^{xiii} The Manning Jayhawkers 4-H Club, “4-H Records,” (Scott County, Kansas: 1939 – 2016)
- ^{xiv} 4-H Club, “4-H Records,” 1939—2016
- ^{xv} The Manning Jayhawkers 4-H Club, “1942 Secretary’s Book,” 4-H Records (Scott County, Kansas: 1942)
- ^{xvi} 4-H Club, “1942 Secretary’s Book,” 1942
- ^{xvii} 4-H Club, “4-H Records,” 1939—2016
- ^{xviii} The Scott County Extension Office, in discussion with the author, 2016
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