

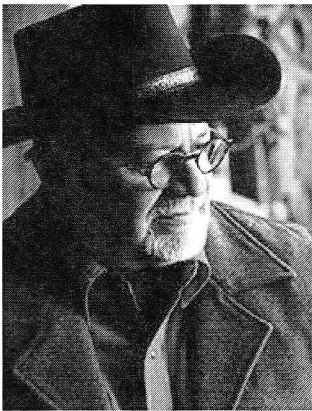
Nelson Antrim Crawford & his Topeka Home. pp. 2-6

Historical Highlights

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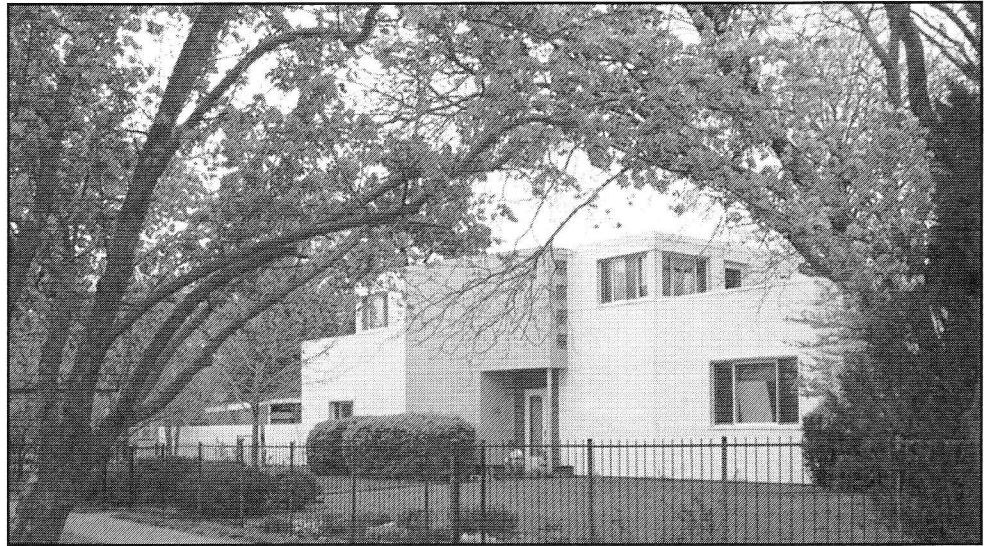
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The news is full of startling and dramatic views and events. Those of us with inquiring minds wonder how we should respond when there are so many issues. You and I are not unique in pondering our times. Those who came before us did as well. Imagine what it



was like to be Kansa, Potawatomi or one of the other seventeen tribes in North-

east Kansas forcefully relocated. Ponder the hardships of emigrant travelers on the Oregon Trail through Shawnee County who knew cholera might strike and leave them buried next to the fresh graves they passed daily. Think about what it was like for a family of runaway slaves to cower in the woods along the Shunganunga on a cold night waiting for a guide to help them to freedom. Consider what it was like for a frontier family, upon learning



Crawford House, 2202 SW 17th St. — Nelson Antrim Crawford's International style house was designed by Kansas architect **Floyd Orson Wolfenbarger**. [Read "**Architect Info**" on **page 6**] The house was the first of its kind in the city of Topeka. [Article starts on **page 2**]

that Lawrence had been sacked, to feel terror when seeing men approaching. Share the panic felt by anti-slavery leaders in Topeka labeled treasonous and fearing for their lives. Ponder the courage of a father, Oliver Brown, to file a lawsuit so his daughter could attend the school near her home. Admire the entrepreneurs who staked their fortune and reputation on businesses and industries in a new capital city in a new state. History gives us perspective by which we can judge our times and our future. Some

lessons of history repeat themselves and others should never repeat. Knowing history helps discern the difference. Sharing history is not just a hobby; it is a responsibility. On **May 12** we will host our annual **Preservation Awards** recognizing those who sustain history and we will enjoy documentary presentations by outstanding high school history students. ***Please join us, and thank you for your membership and financial support which allows all of us to share history.***

— Tom Ellis

THE CRAWFORD HOUSE, TOPEKA — AND THE BIOGRAPHY OF ITS ORIGINAL OWNER

This story was written for *Historical Highlights* by **Jewel Makda**, one of the home's current owners.

The Crawford House, located at 2202 SW 17th St., is far from ordinary. It stands out from the sur-

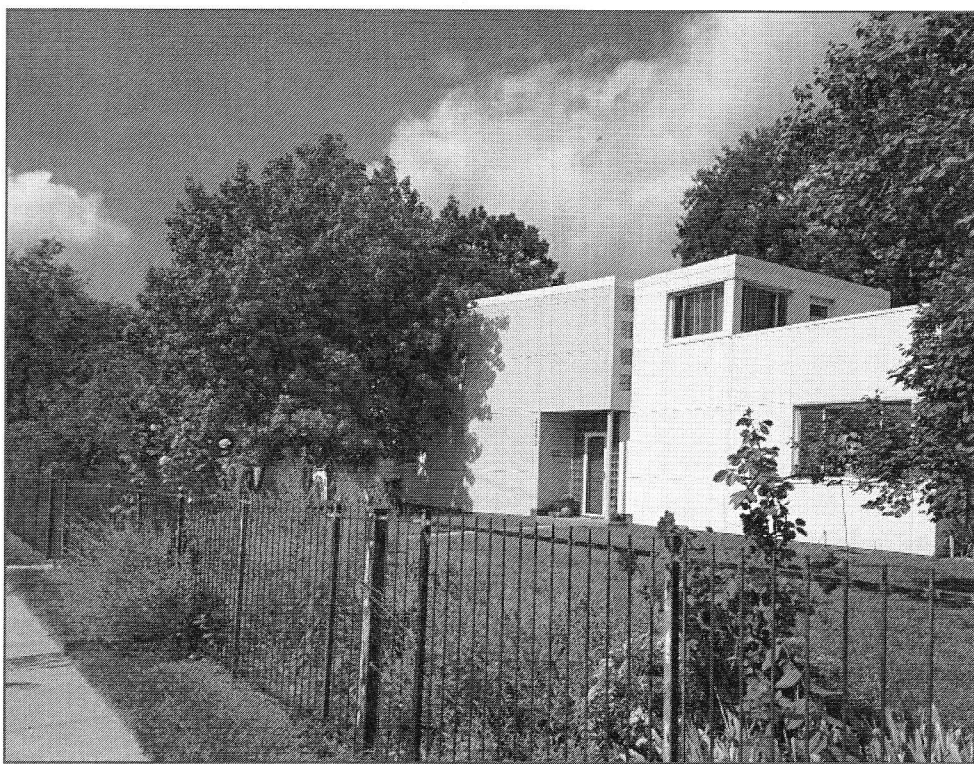
Nelson Antrim Crawford purchased three lots at the northwest corner of 17th and Plass on April 12, 1937. The house, designed by notable Kansas architect **Floyd Orson Wolfenbarger** and built by Topeka builder **George Senne**, was the first such house to be constructed in Topeka.

Nelson Antrim Crawford, Jr. was born May 4, 1888 in Miller, South Dakota. Early in his youth he moved to Iowa where he attended Council Bluff High School. He began his career in Iowa and

Agricultural College (now Kansas State University) in Manhattan.

The decade between 1914 and 1924 was foundational for Crawford. According to one biographer, "In those early teaching days, Antrim [as he known to almost everyone] Crawford took on a prodigious amount of magazine work and journalistic projects peripheral to his classroom work." He served as the managing editor of the *Kansas Industrialist*, the first newspaper published at Kansas State University (from 1875 to 1955), during this time period. He was also head of the university's printing department and press service where he published two texts related to agriculture and the press. Between 1916 and 1918 Crawford was editor of *Kansas Churchman*, the official paper of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas, a denomination to which Crawford belonged.

During America's World War I years (1917-1918), Crawford "served on the Kansas Council of Defense and was publicity director for the U.S. Food Administration in Kansas." It was likely during this tenure that Crawford first worked closely with William Jardine, then Dean of Agriculture at the college. As Jardine also wrote extensively on agricultural issues, Crawford and he likely crossed paths before the war. When Jardine became president of Kansas State Agricultural College in 1918, he appointed Crawford head of the newly formed Department of Industrial Journalism. This department was designed to instruct journalists on how to accurately report on specific areas—industries—common to American readers, including agriculture, labor,



The two-story International style house has a concrete foundation, concrete panel cladding, and a flat roof.

rounding houses with its asymmetrical form, stucco panels and a curved wall consisting of 228 glass blocks. Many Topekans may be unaware it was recently listed on the National Register of Historical Places due to its both its architectural and historical significance. What makes this home so unique is the man who had it built.

Nebraska, writing for newspapers. He earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from the State University of Iowa in 1910 and later moved to Kansas where he earned his Master of Fine Arts in 1914 from the University of Kansas. Upon graduation at the age of 26, he became an Associate Professor of English and Journalism at Kansas State



Nelson Antrim Crawford was a prominent journalist, author, magazine editor and educator in Topeka.

finance, and law. Crawford's interest and work in this department enabled him to pen *The Ethics of Journalism*, the first college textbook on journalism ethics in 1924. Crawford pointed to journalists' "ignorance, inertia, and fear" as a main cause of failure of "American newspapers in giving the public the facts which the public has a right to demand." He further stated, "Such ignorance, though lamentable, would not present so

serious a face were it not for the fact that the average reporter does not seek enlightenment." This ignorance is what the Department of Industrial Journalism sought to combat during Crawford's tenure.

Crawford contributed stories, poems, and essays to magazines such as *The Nation*, *New Republic*, *Look*, *American*, *Coronet*, *The American Mercury*, *The Nation's Business*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Rotarian*, and *Reader's Di-*

gest. He also contributed editorial work on *Farm and Fireside* and the *Midland*, a well-respected literary quarterly in America's heartland established in 1914 "for the purpose of presenting the literary ideals of the middle west." He held onto his editorship of *Midland* until 1933.

In the 1920s Crawford met a number of influential Kansans who became close friends and colleagues, including Emanuel and Marcet Haldeman-Julius, Dr. Karl Menninger, and Senator Arthur Capper. At a meeting of the Kansas Authors' Club in 1920, Crawford met Emanuel and Marcet Haldeman-Julius. Emanuel Haldeman-Julius was a fellow publisher, author, and editor, who, with his wife, Marcet, became friends and colleagues following their initial meeting. Crawford served as a long-time editor for E. Haldeman-Julius's Little Blue Books and contributed articles to other of Haldeman-Julius's publications.

Crawford's belief that reporters of medicine and science should understand the subject upon which they were reporting, led to his meeting of Dr. Karl Menninger in the 1920s. Menninger, a pioneer in the field of psychiatry, was likely interested in the psychological aspects of Crawford's views on journalism, on which he wrote in the years leading up to publishing *The Ethics of Journalism*.

In 1925 a newly-married Crawford relocated to Washington, D.C., to become the first Director of Information for the U.S. Department of Agriculture when President Calvin Coolidge appointed William Jardine Secretary of Agriculture. During these three years,

—continued on p. 4 ➔

Crawford continued as editor of several publications in Kansas, including the *Midland*, and became good friends with Arthur Capper, U.S. Senator from Kansas. He held his position with the Department of Agriculture until 1928 when he returned to Kansas alone, his wife having left him.

Upon his return to Kansas, Crawford settled in Topeka, becoming editor in chief of *Household Magazine*, one of the nation's largest magazines. Senator Capper—who, as president of Capper Publications, was the previous editor—offered this position to Crawford, who served as editor from 1928 to 1951. *Household Magazine*, established in 1926, was “profusely illustrated, and packed with light, briskly written house-and-garden helps” and “enjoyed a broad circulation nationwide, with many rural subscribers. Its appeal was as an unsophisticated suburban and farm standby.” Crawford’s view of the magazine’s purpose was shared in a 1931 interview:

“I have an ideal that I think is not impossible—good literature that at the same time will appeal to the average reader. I am sick of the theory that the average reader wants third-rate stuff; I believe he takes it just because some editors sling it into his eyes. The average reader does not want formula stuff. He wants stuff that is interesting and varied, and he recognizes good literature even if he can’t define it.”

Household Magazine’s circulation increased 62% to well over

two and a half million copies with two million subscribers during Crawford’s editorship. A significant contributing factor to this growth was Crawford including first-rate contributors such as Edward L. Bernays, L. Morgan Yost,

ing novelist. Crawford published more new fiction and more short stories in the magazine than had been included before he became editor.

Already known for his short stories, essays, and editorial prow-



Nelson Antrim Crawford was a cat lover. In 1947 he published *Cats in Prose and Verse*, a compilation of writings by others about cats.

and other widely-known writers like Carl Sandburg, William Bison, Sinclair Lewis, Sara Haardt, and Karl Menninger to name a few. *Household* was the first magazine of national circulation to print the work of Jesse Stuart, best-sell-

ess, once Crawford settled back in Kansas, he began publishing books. *A Man of Learning* (1928) was a satire in which a fictional character, Dr. Redfield, wrote self-help books. Many readers mistook the satire for reality. One wrote

Crawford asking where they could obtain Dr. Redfield's books. In 1930 Crawford co-authored Dr. Karl Menninger's *The Healthy-Minded Child*, as well as contributed significant editorial comments on Menninger's own seminal

ward the end of the 1930s. *We Liberals* (1936) is a collection of satirical essays. *Your Child Faces War* (1937), an informational guide on how to discuss serious matters with children, was well received. The late 1930s were also a time of

which Nelson Crawford is best known was a love of cats. As early as 1934, Crawford published an article in *Psychoanalytical Review* entitled, "Cats Holy and Profane," in which he discussed the psychoanalytical basis for the love



Interior view of the living room with its block glass window.

ARCHITECT INFO

Floyd Orson Wolfenbarger (1905-1979) attended Kansas State Agricultural College from 1922 to 1926, with a focus of Architectural Engineering. He never graduated. Instead he left college early to pursue his architectural career. He established his practice in Manhattan in 1935 and was the only full-time architect in the late 1930s. Wolfenbarger designed a number of residences and buildings in Kansas City and Manhattan, quickly becoming a prominent and recognized architect in the community.

work, *The Human Mind*. Crawford also published his second novel in 1930, *Unhappy Wind*, a book exploring the world of synesthesia. Two additional books followed to-

personal joy for Crawford. In February 1938, Crawford married his second wife, Ethel Mattingly.

The Crawfords shared many interests, but perhaps the one for

and hate of cats and became one of the few non-medical writers to appear in this journal. The article "offers a history of cats and a de-
—continued on p. 6 ➔

bunking of cat myths, superstitions, and neurotic fears." He also contributed writings to the *American Feline Society, Inc.* to which he and Ethel belonged. In 1947 Crawford published what is arguably his most-loved book, *Cats in Prose and Verse*.

"The cat lives his own life; he expects you to live yours. He respects you, if you are worthy of respect, as a different type of being, but he has no desire to imitate you. He wants to be, not a person, but a cat; he is satisfied in his own cathood."

He inscribed the book to his wife. The Crawfords had many cats throughout their life together, but one that stands out in particular is his Persian cat, Huckle, who lived to be 17½ years old. Crawford often left cards and notes to Ethel, signing them "Huckle." Names of other cats he had were Blue Wind and Chica.

In June 1951 at the age of 63, Crawford resigned his editorship of *Household Magazine*. Shortly

thereafter the Crawfords purchased a trade magazine for writers called *Author & Journalist* and relocated the headquarters from Boulder, Colorado, to Topeka. Mrs. Crawford helped Nelson with the publication. As Crawford explained, "She has a sure sense of the public reaction and I value her opinion." After they purchased the magazine the publication grew steadily. Crawford's personal qualities of critical literary taste, wide cultural interests, and liberal mind, set the tone and attracted well-known contributors to the magazine.

The Crawfords sold *Author & Journalist* in July 1959 in order for Nelson to take up "a professorship at Dr. Karl Menninger's School of Psychiatry in Topeka." Crawford's career came full circle with this job, as his main focus was teaching scientific writing to the psychiatry students. Crawford continued in this role until his death in June 1963 at the age of 75. Ethel passed away in 1969. Both Nelson and Ethel are buried at the Topeka Cemetery.

Nelson Antrim Crawford spent his entire career dedicated to creating journalism that was factual and readable for the average person. He contributed to more than 200 magazines and journals, edited thousands of articles and books, and edited the *Encyclopedia of Britannica*, the *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, and the *Columbia Encyclopedia*. Well-known to his national contemporaries, Crawford was also respected by a wide range of authors and thinkers of the day, ranging from H.L. Mencken to Sinclair Lewis to Arthur Capper. But it was perhaps in his adopted state of Kansas where his impact is most felt and seen, especially in the house he and Ethel resided in at 2202 SW 17th Street, Topeka.

Author-educator, Nelson Antrim Crawford had a significant impact on educational institutions, writers, and readers not only locally but nationally. This house represents a historical landmark of Crawford's legacy and enriches Topeka's history.

Personal insights by Feature Article's author Jewel Makda:

Years ago I had researched the history of the home as part of a college assignment. My interest in learning more was sparked by the built-in cat door. I wanted to learn more about the person who had this house built and the story behind the cat door. Being a cat lover myself and learning of Crawford's passion for felines had created sort of a mutual bond.

When I learned the home could potentially qualify as being listed on the National Registry of Historic Places, it then became a personal goal to make it possible. I had already done a significant

amount of research and this was an opportunity to dig deeper.

Ever since we have owned the home, we have strived to maintain its integrity and bring back as much of its originality. Knowing it will be forever preserved and protected not only gives me a wonderful sense of accomplishment but also pays tribute to Crawford and his accomplishments. The unique home has been a mystery to many. Now anyone can learn about its history let the mystery unfold.

I want to support:

- ☐ Heritage Education for kids
- ☐ Shawnee County Preservation
- ☐ Historical Programs/Lectures
- ☐ Bus Rental Grants for School Field Trip (to help make field trips possible)
- ☐ Ritchie House restoration and maintenance



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I also want to renew my annual membership:

- ☐ General Membership \$35
- ☐ Patron Level Membership \$50
- ☐ Renovator Level Membership \$100
- ☐ Sustaining Level Membership \$150+

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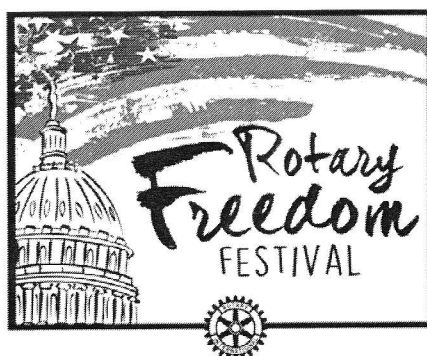
Shawnee County Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) organization. FEIN 48-6141221 ☐ I wish to be anonymous

**New SCHS Members/
Donors, since Feb. 2018:**

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Remember the **Shawnee County Historical Society** when you make your donation to **Topeka Gives** on **June 4** at Fairlawn Plaza Mall.



The **2018 Rotary Freedom Festival** will be **Saturday, June 30**. Its purpose is to recognize our history in Topeka, learn from it, and grow in understanding as we build the momentum to move forward.

There are a number of activities planned for this year's festival. They

will take place throughout the day. A number of local groups, including Shawnee County Historical Society, are involved in these plans for the day.

We'll be a part of a **Freedom Walk from Brown v. Board National Historic Site to Downtown Topeka**, with a **stop at the Ritchie House**. We will provide bottled water here to walkers, and will give a **15-minute history presentation**, from the Ritchie House steps, adding insight as to the historical significance of the Ritchie family and their fight during territorial days to end slavery. **Walkers will probably be stopping at the Ritchie House just after noon.**

Other stops will include a stop at the Colmery Memorial on Kansas Avenue, Constitution Hall (across Kansas Av. from the U.S. Post Office) and the Great Overland Station on the north side of the Kansas River.

Planned events include food trucks, live music, a beer garden and

Visit the **Downtown Rotary Club web site** for event details as they are made available to the public: <http://www.topekarotary.org/>

Mark You Calendars

Preservation Awards —Saturday, May 12 (*details below*)

Ice Cream Social —Sunday, July 22

Annual Meeting —Sunday, December 2

Preservation Awards Event:

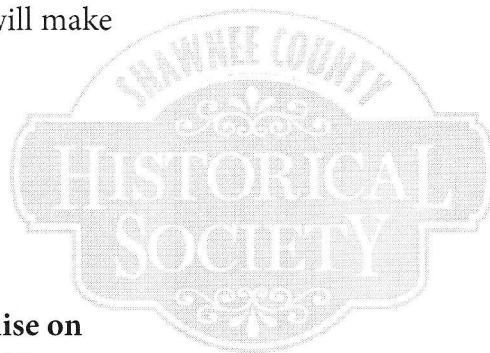
The Shawnee County Historical Society presents its **Annual Preservation Awards** to worthy property owners and historical preservationists. The 2018 event will be held on **Saturday, May 12**, at **The Pennant**, a new Topeka restaurant, downtown, at **915 S Kansas Ave.**, beginning at **2:00 p.m.**

In addition to the Preservation Awards, we will have **Documentary Presentations** from February's **Kansas History Day** student competition at **Washburn University**. Senior students from **Susan Sittenauer's classes** at **Seaman High School** will make short multimedia documentary presentations.

Senior Documentaries:

1. "Reverend T.J. Jemison: Breaking Barriers in Baton Rouge,"
by Madeline Hulsing and Xianne Williams
2. "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue: The Fight for Equality in the United States Military," by Michael Conaway and Noah Belt
3. "Saving the 'Boat People': The United States and Vietnam's Compromise on Vietnamese Refugees With the Orderly Departure Program," by Kim Vu

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