

MANHATTAN'S HISTORIC LANDMARKS & DISTRICTS

Rocky Ford School



Rocky Ford School, 1969 Barnes Road

An example of the one-room schoolhouses that once dotted the Kansas landscape, the Rocky Ford Schoolhouse was originally built in 1903 and rebuilt in 1927 after a fire. The schoolhouse is constructed from native limestone in the folk vernacular style, a

unique characteristic for stone schools of the Midwest.

The schoolhouse originally served District 70 until 1937 and housed students from first to eighth year. A typical school day began at 9:00 am and lasted until dismissal at 4:00 pm. The curriculum consisted of reading, spelling, arithmetic, geography, orthography, language, and grammar, with one teacher responsible for teaching all levels of the curriculum. Students were allowed two fifteen minute breaks and a one hour lunch break. Any grade under a B was considered “unsatisfactory” and parents were encouraged to “remedy such defects.”

The schoolhouse has seen several major renovations, the most prominent being the reconstruction after a devastating fire in 1927 destroyed all but the limestone walls.

Reconstruction stayed true to the original architectural elements, materials, and style in the original building. Electric lighting was installed in 1928. After District 70 was consolidated with Strong District 1 in 1937, the schoolhouse was used as a community center until 1965. From 1969 to 1989, Manhattan artist Jim Hagan leased the school as a studio and gallery. In 1987, the USD 383 donated the schoolhouse and surrounding property to the Riley County Historical Society. The building now serves as a museum, allowing area students to gain an understanding of education in a one-room schoolhouse.

*Source: Kansas State Historical Society
National Register of Historic Places - Nomination Form*

