

History buff



Staff photo by Sarah Midgorden

Allana Parker, the curator of design for the Riley County Historical Society, stands outside the Goodnow House on Claflin Avenue.

Curator packs lots of information into educational trunk

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Allana Parker became fascinated with history as a child when her father took her to museums. Now, she works for one.

Parker, 27, is the curator of design at the Riley County Historical Museum, and not surprisingly, introducing kids to history has been a big part of her mission.

Parker, along with Brandy Berg from the Riley County Extension, put together the Third Grade History Trunk, which is a tool area teachers can check out from the museum to teach children about local leaders in the region's history.

The History Trunk contains "detective packets" that include copies of primary documents and photos of leaders such as Isaac Goodnow, who immigrated to Kansas in 1855 to establish Manhattan as a free-state community. He

also was a founder of Bluemont Central College, or, as it is known today, Kansas State University.

The other six figures the history trunk investigates are Amanda Arnold, Minnie Howell Champe, George Filingier, John Pipher Sr., E.B. Purcell and Harry P. Wareham.

The lesson plan ties these figures to the state and national headlines of their times, along with other developments, such as when Manhattan first got electricity in 1890.

The teaching aid also fulfills state education requirements and covers figures from all over the county — not just Manhattan. It started last spring and this school year is the first full year it is available for teachers.

"It's important," Parker, who's worked at the museum for two years, said. "We've had a really great response from it."

She said after the kids learn about local historical figures from the history

"When you start reading about what people experienced, it really helps put your life into perspective. I think for me, that's the biggest thing."

— Allana Parker

trunk, some will visit the museum and practically lead the tour themselves.

"It's pretty cool and reinforces that it's working."

Museum director Cheryl Collins said Parker's energy has been an asset.

"We've been really pleased to have her on our staff," Collins said. "She brings a lot of skills and knowledge that I think have been really helpful. (She

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