

Off-site Community Outreach Presentation

prepared for

Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop, Olathe, KS

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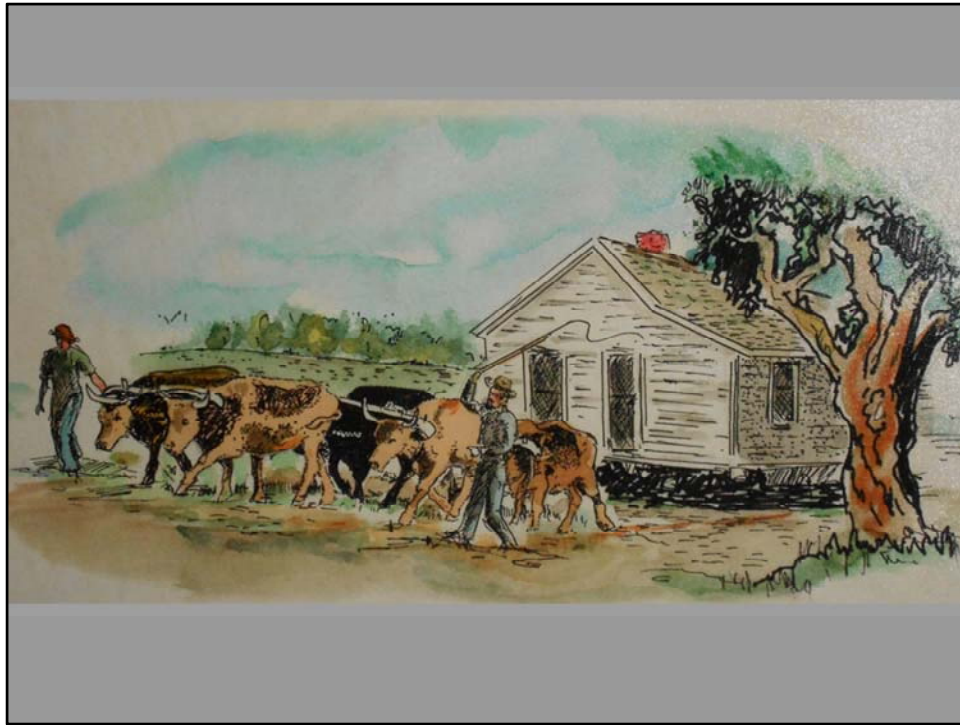
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Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop and Farm is a city-operated historic site in Kansas. Mahaffie House off-site community outreach presentation is designed to be delivered by staff members and accommodate a one hour time slot. The presentation provides this historic site with an opportunity to expand its audience base to include community members who cannot or have not visited the site.

The total presentation package includes two edited versions—one accommodating a 30-minute time slot and the other a 10-minute time slot designed to be recorded and available during off-season hours in the site visitor center, providing visitors with a house introduction during times the house is closed for the season.



“A time... a place. A place in time—through time. Association between the name ‘Mahaffie’ and the site which would become known as the Mahaffie farm began in 1858, when James Mahaffie, an Indiana transplant, purchased a parcel of land near Olathe, subsequently moving a wood frame home the Mahaffies had purchased in town out to the site by oxen.”



“While living in the wood frame home construction commenced on a limestone home, which would be finished in 1865.”



“Today, the limestone Mahaffie house still stands at its original location, a testament to time: What was... what is... and suggesting what may be in the future.”

(Mahaffie collection.)

Mahaffie House:



“Mahaffie House.”

(Mahaffie collection.)

Where Eastern Classical Style...



...Collides with the Romance of the Old West.

“Where Eastern Classical Style...Collides with the Romance of the Old West.”

(Courtesy Bonanza Ventures & KYTV.)



“The Mahaffie house.”

(Mahaffie collection.)



“A classical aesthetic. Even the bench on the front porch knows its place. Compare this house...”



“...with this house, which is reminiscent of an English cottage. In this house, romance abounds, with sweeping roof lines, dormer windows, arches and an exceedingly asymmetrical balance.”



“The Mahaffie house is emblematic of the winner in the early 19th century battle of styles between the romantic and the classical, in which the symmetry of Eastern classical style defeats the asymmetry of the romantic, or picturesque (Johnson, in Downing, 1850/1969). As opposed to the English cottage, the Mahaffie house is perfectly symmetrical. Windows evenly placed and each above or below the other. Doors centered, one above the other. Chimneys perfectly balancing each other on each end of the house. Porch support posts, each side matching the other, with a centered staircase.”



“The Mahaffie house was very similar to what was commonly built in the early to mid-point of the 19th century. Greek Revival architectural style, based on 5th-century-BC Greek temples, spread throughout Europe and the United States during the first half of the 19th century. A general intellectual preoccupation with ancient Greek culture at the time (Britannica, n.d.) along with the heightened sense of ancient Greek democratic ideals in the new republic propelled the popularity of this style. All well and good, but was it enough to preserve this house for posterity? Probably not. It’s not the reason this house is still standing here today. What is, then, so special about this house that it not only survived as long as it has but made it special enough to be preserved as a historic site?”



“Mahaffie House was saved because of its significance as a stagecoach stop, and today it remains the only still operational stagecoach stop left on the Santa Fe Trail open to the public” (Talbot, 2012).



“Rather than an ‘inn’ as we know it today, Mahaffie House served as a meal stop for stage and trail travelers with an occasional overnight guest rolling their bedroll out on the cellar floor” (Talbot, 2012).



“There were also individual travelers and families traveling the trail, who might bivouac overnight somewhere on the Mahaffie farm.”



James and Lucinda Mahaffie

“James and Lucinda Mahaffie. Stagecoach stop operators such as Mr. Mahaffie tended to be prominent members of the community.”

(Mahaffie collection.)



“A country inn such as this served as a sort of clearing house for community information” (Talbot, 2012).



“The house was built of native limestone quarried on the property” (Lee, n.d.).



“When early pioneers first arrived in Kansas, they were faced with a peculiar difficulty they had not faced in the East: a vast, treeless expanse. Wood for building, shade, fires and food was difficult to find, mostly found in creek beds and river bottomlands. Few trees grew anywhere else in Kansas due to dry conditions and frequent prairie fires. So with trees unavailable, pioneers had to turn to other materials, one of which, seen here in abundance, was sod. If hills happened to be available, a home could be dug out of the side of the hill, known as a dugout. Or, on flatlands, sod squares could be cut in brick-like fashion and used to build homes, which avoided problematic dugouts during times of heavy rains. Prairie fire was perilous in either regard” (Rush County, 2006).



“Something else found in abundance on the Kansas prairie were bison chips. While the pioneers no doubt enjoyed using these for cooking as they burned hot, they probably refrained from building homes with them (Rush County, 2006). If they couldn’t afford to have lumber brought in and finding neither problematic sod or bison chips desirable, these pioneers looked for another source of building materials.”



“Ever industrious, the pioneers soon discovered a layer of rock, not too far deep, perfect for use as a building material. This rock is limestone, made up of the thick deposits of shell remnants from sea life deposited on the ocean floor, lake bottom or river bed where they accumulated (Topeka, n.d.). Limestone proved to be of a fortuitous thickness for creating building blocks-8 to 12 inches. Upon exposure, limestone’s soft and chalky character make it easy to access. Once exposed to air, the edges harden, providing an excellent, weather resistant building material for the pioneers. After experimenting with limestone blocks in their dugouts, the permanent structural potential of limestone was realized” (Rush County, 2006).



“Outcroppings or edges of ravines where erosion exposed the limestone provided excellent locales to harvest limestone blocks and this is where early pioneers began. Using hand drills and hammers, early quarriers sized and formed each block with stone hammers. Drilling a straight line of holes into the limestone, the blocks were pried loose with pinch bars” (Rush County, 2006).



“The Mahaffies most likely would have not had very sophisticated equipment available to quarry the limestone for their house. Later quarriers in the 19th century would have had available equipment like this, on display at the Post Rock Museum in LaCrosse, Kansas. The caption here reads ‘the large tool to the far left is a stone hand drill, called a drilling buck. Men would sit on the bench and crank the handle, twisting the bit into the limestone layer. Laying directly below the hand drill is a bit that was used with the drill. To the right of the drill are some feathers and wedges. Two “feathers” and a “wedge” are used to fracture stone.’ It’s easy to see why limestone quickly became a building material of choice” (Rush County, 2006).

(Courtesy Rush County Historical Society. 2006.)



“Beside the house and to the rear stands the original ice house, also constructed of native limestone.”



“A cellar window on the west side of the house.”



“A cellar staircase leads to a cellar door, also on the west side of the house. The cellar was a significant spot at the Mahaffie farm and one we will visit at length a bit later here.”



“A large addition was made to the back of the house in 1898, after the Mahaffies sold the house and retired. Notice the lack of symmetry in the wooden addition, representative of the re-emergence of the picturesque in the late Victorian era. This was not the first time the house had been added on to however. The Mahaffies had added a rear wing around 1870 and moved the kitchen from the cellar of the original portion of the house upstairs after stagecoach travel was replaced by rail” (Talbot, 2012).



“A large veranda provides a feel of elegance common in the Victorian era. Verandas and porches, often serving as outdoor parlors, became larger and more functional. Porches were fitted on two or three sides of a house. They were outfitted with gliders, swings, rocking chairs, and wicker furniture (Louisiana Studies, n.d.). Mahaffie house represents the combining of two different styles and as such, the merging or overlapping of two different eras. By the time the original portion of this house was completed in 1865, the rigid symmetry of Greek Revival architecture with its limited design vocabulary was fading in popularity due to simple boredom with its wide use, or in other words, too much sameness. The taste for the romantic found variations in the Gothic revival as represented by the rear addition to Mahaffie house which was seen as more appealing” (Pile, 2009).



“The early 19th century was the age of Romanticism, represented here by John Trumbull’s painting *Romantic Landscape* from 1783. Sweeping and flowing lines as seen here are more reminiscent of the English cottage than Mahaffie house. A public exposed to paintings like Trumbull’s and exotic settings in novels of the period like Sir Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe* clamored for something more appealing than a line of perfectly spaced windows over another line of perfectly spaced windows with perfectly spaced pillars in between.”

(PD-ART)



“A perfect example of this shift in popular taste can be seen at Lyndhurst, in Tarrytown, New York. The plan of this house was originally symmetrical. But an 1864 remodel for a new owner saw a complete transformation to a plan of picturesque asymmetry (Pile, 2009). By the time Mahaffie house was finished a year after the Lyndhurst remodel, its style was already on the way out.”

(Photographer unknown, 2005.)



“At Mahaffie, Eastern classical style isn’t just colliding with the romance of the Old West. Mahaffie house itself represents the collision between the classical style of Greek revival architecture and exotic romanticism of the Victorian age. And this collision is more than just a collision of style. At Mahaffie house, the 19th century classicism of pagan Greek culture collides with a Christian mode of design embodied in the very person of the Queen herself, whose name came to be synonymous of the age of the entire second half of the 19th century. Good design was no longer just a matter of aesthetics; it became a moral imperative (Pile, 2009) and is to a large extent why this romantic style known as Gothic revival became a dominate style in church architecture.”



“Is Mahaffie house then a house without an identity?”



“Or is it a house with a dual personality?”



“A well-known and influential expert on the country house in the early 19th century, Andrew Jackson Downing, had he lived to see it, may not have viewed Mahaffie’s farmhouse as the ideal, as Downing was more of a romantic. But writing in June of 1850, Downing did observe that ‘the majority of persons will always build for themselves, and, unconsciously, throw something of their own character into their dwellings’” (Downing, 1850/1969, p. xx). Perhaps, then, today...”



“...if we look real close...”



“...closer still...”



“...we can spot some of the things representative of the character of the builder of this house: James Beattie Mahaffie. While not an unconscious act, Mr. Mahaffie did add this element representative of his character when he included his initials—JBM—beneath the date on the cornerstone of the house. When looking around the house, what other unique elements are lying there, just waiting to disclose something of its builder.”



“The broad front porch.”



“Mid 19th century homes generally included generous front porches, serving as an area of transition from public-the street-to private-the home-spaces. This element of the residence would endure through the Victorian era but eventually gave way to the 20th century’s ranch style house, and the introduction of the idea of the patio and private back yard.”



"A window into the past."



“Our time portal to enter the past.”

(Courtesy NASA/JPL-Caltech.)



“The house has a central hall, quite common in the mid-19th century and also a transition space, where the caller could be invited in and then assessed to determine what room was appropriate from there to invite the caller into. What was not common was the staircase you see here. Originally, the house would have had a staircase straight up to the second floor without any turns or landings. Most likely, once entering the front door, about six feet ahead and along the east or right side wall, up went a stair case-straight up. The staircase you see here today was installed after the Mahaffies sold the property in 1883 and was part of a remodel conducted by a subsequent owner around the turn of the century” (Talbot, 2012).



“Something else quite common in the mid-19th century was painting wood to look like something else—even more expensive wood. In this case, the wooden floor planks are painted to look like decorative stone.”



“Whether wood treated as wood or wood painted to look like something else, housework was still essential and that has not changed. The doorway under the stairs was originally the back door of the house. Now, it leads into the addition which again was completed in 1898.”



“This view is from the doorway under the staircase looking back toward the front door of the house. The windows surrounding the front door are known as Federal style side lights.”



“The past few years, much work has taken place at the Mahaffie house returning it as much as possible to how it would have looked in the 1860s. This room, just to the left upon entering the front door, is the parlor. The parlor represented the ‘civilized façade’ (Grier, 1988, p.2) of the resident family. Generally used only for welcoming guests or special occasions, the Mahaffie’s seventh child, Murkle, did pass away in this home as did Lucinda Mahaffie’s mother, Susan Henderson. They both would have lain in this room for a ‘wake’ (Talbot, 2012). Commercial parlors in hotels and steamboats gave way, by the 1840s, to plush parlor cars offered for rail travel, serving as inspiration for the aspiring middle class to mimic in the comfort of their own homes (Grier, 1988). As technology advanced, fireplaces began to disappear, often replaced with a parlor stove, as seen in the rear center here” (Pile, 2009).



“But by the end of 1901 however, Queen Victoria was dead, the Victorian age was ending and the beginning of a new age of ideas in living was born. By 1909, James and Lucinda Mahaffie were dead and buried but someone else occupied this house and most likely they would have had very different views on how this room should appear and what it should be used for. Writing in *Household Discoveries: an Encyclopedia of Practical Recipes and Processes* in 1909, Sidney Morse said of the parlor ‘the old custom of setting apart a best room or parlor to be used only on special occasions...is happily passing away’ (Grier, 1988, p. 211). By the beginning of the 20th century, families had better things to spend their money on than fancy parlor furnishings. One of these things?” (Grier, 1988).



“The automobile”

(Phillips, Tom M. *Oldsmobile*. 1907. Library of Congress.)



“Known during the Mahaffie’s day as the sitting room, what we know today as the family room was the primary living space then as it remains today. What’s unusual about this room is that it contains a staircase down to the cellar, the railing visible here on the left” (Talbot, 2012).



“Period pieces are seen here including a spinning wheel and haircloth sofa, fabric woven of horse hair, typical of the mid 19th century” (Aronson, 1965).



“One of two pieces original to the Mahaffie house is this table.”



“The other is this chair...”



“...with ‘Mahhaffie’ appearing in black on its underside.”



“The original staircase the family used to access the cellar and its kitchen and dining room descended from the family room and was the only interior access to the cellar during the time the Mahaffies occupied the house.”



“Ordinarily, the downstairs staircase in a house of this type would have been in the central hallway but because the Mahaffies ran a stagecoach stop, a staircase in the living area allowed easy access to the comings and goings of customers (Talbot, 2012). The staircase which led from the family room down to the cellar and the kitchen/dining area could be closed off during those times which the dining room was open for commercial business...”



“... in order to keep unsavory characters from entering the family portion of the house from the cellar.”



“Of course, when need be, residents of Civil War-era Kansas were quite adept at dealing with the unsavory. Notice the marble and granite fireplace which isn’t marble and granite at all.”



“The staircase installed during the post turn-of-the-century remodel shows elements of Victorian era styling opposed to the more austere attributes common to mid-19th century design.”



“The upstairs hall appears unusually wide now that the staircase has been moved from the center hall to the corner of the house. Having just recently undergone refurbishment, the upstairs furnishings have not yet been placed.”



“The view today from the upstairs hall door holds only faint similarities to the view the Mahaffies would have had in the 1860s. They most likely would have seen the porch railing, as the porch was probably used as a sleeping porch during the hot summer months, and fields of crops would also have been common then. From there the similarities dwindle. The view then would have afforded lots more prairie grass and considerably less trees. And although the Mahaffies may very well have seen vehicles traveling down the highway, the highway would not have been Kansas City Road but rather, the Santa Fe Trail, which lies underneath today’s pavement and the vehicle might have been a wagon or stagecoach, but certainly would not have been a white pickup truck.”



“Looking back from the front door toward the back of the house we see what would have been the upstairs back door during the Mahaffie residency. Exiting this door would have led to perhaps a rear porch or an exterior staircase. Today, this door leads to the rear addition to the house” (Talbot, 2012).



“One of what would have been four upstairs bedrooms when the Mahaffies lived here but one of only three in the original section of the house today as one bedroom was sacrificed in favor of that Victorian era staircase. The wall colors you see today are representative of colors persons of similar social status may have used in the mid-19th century. Owners subsequent to the Mahaffies in the late Victorian era may not have maintained these color palettes, as color tastes gradually shifted from ‘bright and daring toward’ the ‘heaviness and gloom’ we tend to associate with Victorian” (Pile, 2009, p. 268).



“The view out of this bedroom window may have been similar then to what we see today, although in the 1860s, perhaps you would be looking out over an orchard rather than a garden on this side of the house” (Lee, n.d.).



“Small in comparison to today’s standards, these rooms are common in size for their time period. This house is not a mansion-just a nice farmhouse. This view stretches from the front bedroom on the east side of the house, across the hall to what then would have been the front bedroom on the west side of the house. Today, there is only one bedroom on the west side of the house, again because of the staircase re-arrangement” (Talbot, 2012).



“Thick walls helped keep warm air in during winter.”



“A house with four bedrooms for, let’s see now... James and Lucinda Mahaffie, Lucinda’s mother, Susan, and over the course of 20 years, eight children born to James and Lucinda. Of course, not all of the children lived here at once. Two of the older children, Isabelle and William, married and moved before this house was completed (Talbot, 2012). Notice the expensive oak crown moldings framing the ceiling. Or is it oak?”



“This wallpaper, like that which we saw downstairs in the parlor, is a reprint of a mid-19th century wallpaper. While the invention of cylinder printing techniques during the Napoleonic age of Empire styling led to an increase in the use of wallpaper, these patterns, with their demonstration of respect for natural subjects...”



“...are very reminiscent of the influence of William Morris in their simplicity and dignity (Pile, 2009). 19th century middle class families would have found wallpaper affordable so an upper class family such as the Mahaffies could very easily have afforded it” (Talbot, 2012).



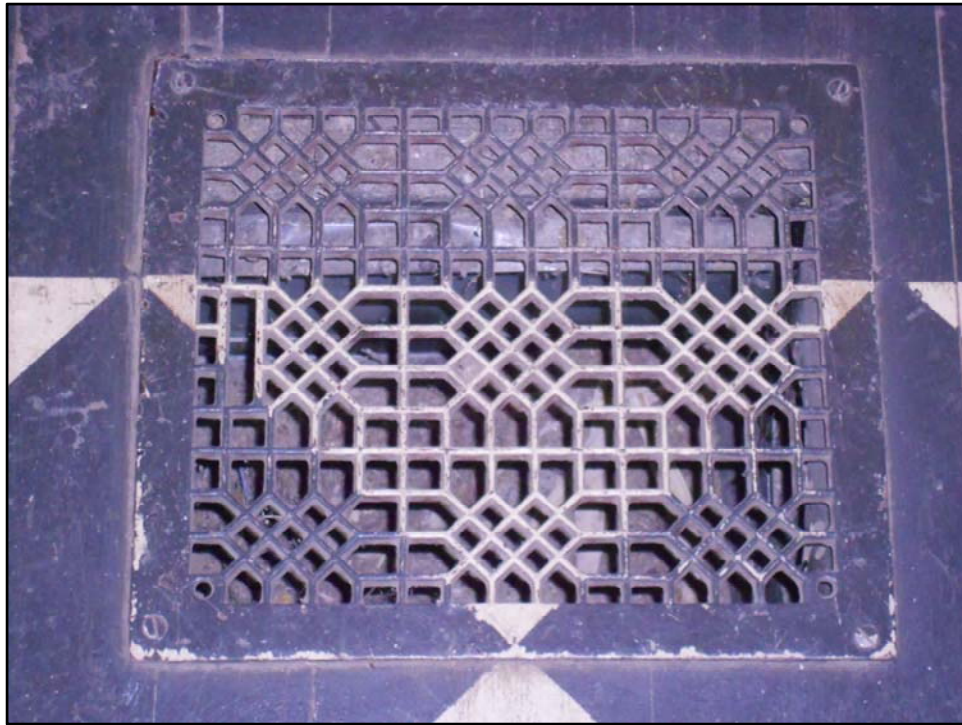
“Now we’ve moved into the addition built on after the Mahaffies retired and sold their farm. The moldings in this room have a distinct Victorian era flare.”



“But reaching the rear of the addition and the service areas, you can see how surprised Martha is when she realizes how different the moldings are in this part of the house.”



“Also typical of the Victorian era is the narrow, rear staircase with landing.”



“Anything other than a fireplace or wood-burning stove would not have been from the Mahaffie era. Perhaps subsequent owners installed an oil or coal burning furnace. If they did, it most likely was placed in the cellar. The addition has a first-floor kitchen so it is possible a furnace could have been installed in the cellar of the original portion of the house by subsequent owners.”



“This staircase leads from the central hall to the cellar and is underneath the Victorian era staircase which replaced the original staircase so these stairs would not have been in the house while the Mahaffies lived here. The Mahaffies would have used the staircase leading from the family room to access the kitchen and dining room in the cellar.”



“We saw this set of stairs going down into the cellar earlier and we see them again here as a point of reference as now we can observe these stairs...”



“...from the inside of the cellar. Stagecoach passengers would use these stairs to enter the dining hall of the Mahaffie house and to re-emerge after taking their meal to reboard the stage.”



“This is the dining hall as stagecoach passengers would have seen it when entering from the exterior staircase. The kitchen is in the background. Notice the staircase at the end of the row of tables descending from the family room. These stairs would not have been accessible to stagecoach passengers during dining hall business hours, protecting the Mahaffie family’s privacy.”



“Stagecoach passengers and other travelers wishing to dine at Mahaffies would have entered through this door. Hanging kerosene lamps were used to provide light. A pan of water was provided for washing up...”



“...and a board of checkers for entertainment. An interesting assortment of garments and accessories can be seen hanging on the wall. Outer wear for cold weather along with a locking traveling case can come in handy when traveling by stage, where there are no enclosed windows to protect from the elements and nothing to protect the valuables of sleepy travelers from traveling fingers. A multi-colored mail bag can be used to differentiate between short and long distance mail destinations.”



“Meal preparation in the 1860’s was challenging both physically and mentally. Lucinda Mahaffie’s day probably began well before daybreak as she built a fire in the wood cookstove and started breakfast for her children and husband. The rest of her day would be full of trips up and down the cellar stairs to get water and wood, to the garden for fresh vegetables, to the ice house where the fresh milk and butter were kept, and perhaps a walk to the smokehouse for slices of bacon to add to the beans. While she cooked, she would need to keep an eye out for the safety of her younger children and herself around the fire – long, full skirts created a real fire hazard and crawling, climbing babies were also in danger of being burned by the hot outer surface of the stove. Cleanliness and food safety were almost non-issues” (Bonat, 2013).



“This kitchen setup is similar to the kitchen setup Mrs. Mahaffie, her daughters and their hired help would have utilized to prepare meals for not only stagecoach travelers but local bachelors and trail travelers as well (Bonat, 2013). Rather than by the customer, the menu was dictated by whatever Mrs. Mahaffie would cook; and whatever Mrs. Mahaffie cooked was dictated by whatever happened to be available that day to eat. If you didn’t have a stagecoach ticket, expect to pay twenty-five cents for a meal” (Talbot, 2012).



“As a stagecoach passenger, your meals and hotel were included in the ticket you purchased from the Barlow, Sanderson, & Co. Stageline-your meals in a kitchen like this, though usually not this fancy; your hotel in your seat on the stagecoach, as it ran 24/7. If you were lucky, you might have 20 minutes to eat, use the outdoor privy and get back on the stagecoach (Talbot, 2012). I can’t tell. Are those ristras hanging in the background?”



“Notice the flooring today is stamped concrete, styled to appear as packed earth, as the Mahaffie floor was dirt, hard packed by heavy usage (Talbot, 2012). In an era where sanitation was an emerging idea, diners suffering from ‘summer complaint’ most likely would fare better on our floor today than on the Mahaffie’s dirt floor. Lucinda’s dirt kitchen floor continually produced dust and mud and there were no window screens to keep the flies away. She would have labored to make do with her environment and her supplies. Running to the grocery store for a last minute ingredient was not an option. Lucinda’s supplies came mostly from the farm itself. She cooked seasonally, using fresh ingredients as they became available and filling in with those items she had preserved earlier. Fruits and vegetables could be dried and hung from the kitchen ceiling, beets and sauerkraut pickled in glass jars, onions and turnips packed in boxes of sand, and hams and bacon salted and smoked and left to hang in the smokehouse. Canned foods were primarily luxury items and not widely used” (Bonat, 2013).



“Add Mrs. Mahaffie...”

(Mahaffie collection.)



“...and her fixin’s...”

(Mahaffie Collection.)



“...to the Mahaffie dining room...”



“...and these stagecoach passengers will be quite satisfied. No doubt Mrs. Mahaffie’s kitchen served up far superior dinners than what was standard fare for travelers in their day until Fred Harvey revolutionized the way travelers dined.”

(Courtesy Nicholas Traub.)



“While keeping busy feeding family and passengers, Lucinda also found time to churn enough butter to sell hundreds of pounds each year to customers in town and to travelers passing through. Her energy and ingenuity contributed greatly to the Mahaffie family’s success and are a creative example of what it means to work from home” (Bonat, 2013).

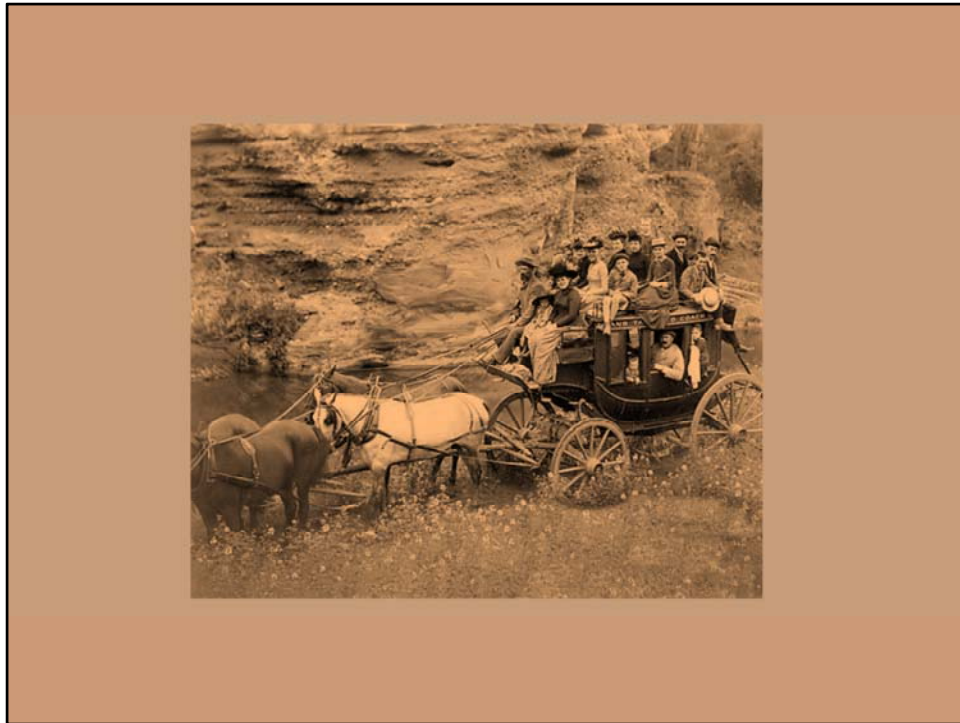
(Mahaffie collection.)



“When the house operated as a stagecoach stop, the wooden wall in the background did not exist. The staircase behind it was added at the time of the remodel in 1898. So during the time the Mahaffies ran the stagecoach stop, there was room for yet another row of tables and chairs (Talbot, 2012). But why such a big room...”



“...and so many chairs for just a half dozen stagecoach passengers? Isn't that all that would fit on the stage?”



“Aahhhhhh...”

(Grabill, John. 1889. *Tallyho Coaching*. *Sioux City party coaching at the Great Hot Springs of Dakota in horse-drawn stagecoach carrying formally dressed women, children, and men*. Library of Congress.)



“More than for passenger comfort, the stagecoach stopped at pre-designated stops to switch out to a new team of horses. Once they sat down to eat, passengers had only as much time as it took for the driver himself to finish his meal, and for the Mahaffie boys to hitch a fresh team of horses to the coach. Typical meals consisted of stews, fried meats and potatoes, puddings, and biscuits – items that could easily be stretched or divided if extra visitors arrived or saved for the next day on the rare occasions when the stagecoach didn’t run full (Bonat, 2013). This meant that when the stage was ready to go...”



“...passengers needed to be ready to get back on the road. In any event, on the way out of the house and back to the stagecoach...”



“...passengers would have seen outbuildings behind the house similar to these, which include the white smoke house, far right, red blacksmith shop, center, and tan peg barn, beyond the blacksmith shop.”



“Farms of the mid-19th century rarely included a blacksmith shop but the Mahaffie farm had one right on site. Why was this? Well, one clue is that the blacksmith’s wages were paid by the Barlow, Sanderson & Co. Stageline. Barlow, Sanderson & Co. could ill afford any stagecoach downtime-mainly because they had a contract to carry the U S Mail. The blacksmith was needed to assure coach and horses were up and running ‘round the clock as the stagecoach ran 24/7.”



“The peg barn is just that—a barn built with wooden pegs. The oldest structure remaining at the Mahaffie farm, although the exterior has been reclad...”



“...the interior dates to around 1860-several years before construction of the limestone house.”



“The ice house at the Mahaffie farm is also an original building. Thick, limestone walls, below grade flooring and just the fact that it was full of ice afforded the mid-19th century farm at least some semblance of refrigeration.”



“Ice harvesting included marking for cutting rows of blocks.”

(Courtesy Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society.)

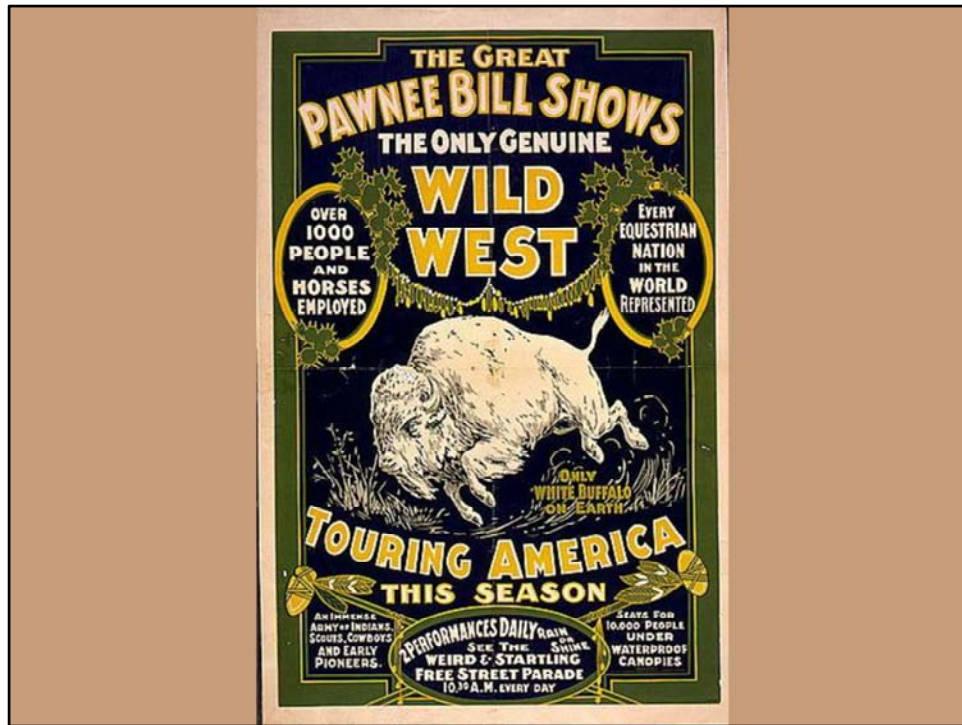


“Harvesting equipment included ice cutting saws and long poles for directing the ice blocks through channels cut in the ice to retrieval points.”

(Courtesy Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society.)

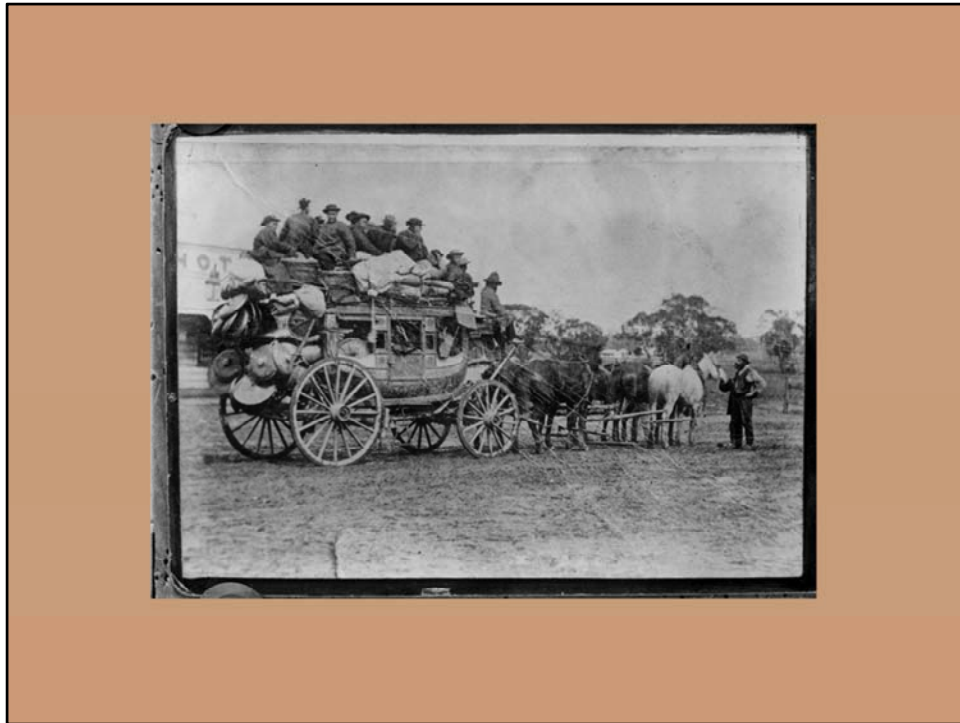


“Whether for the allure of Eastern classical style or for the romantic symbolisms of the old West, Mahaffie remains a popular destination for visitors seeking a ride back into our past.”



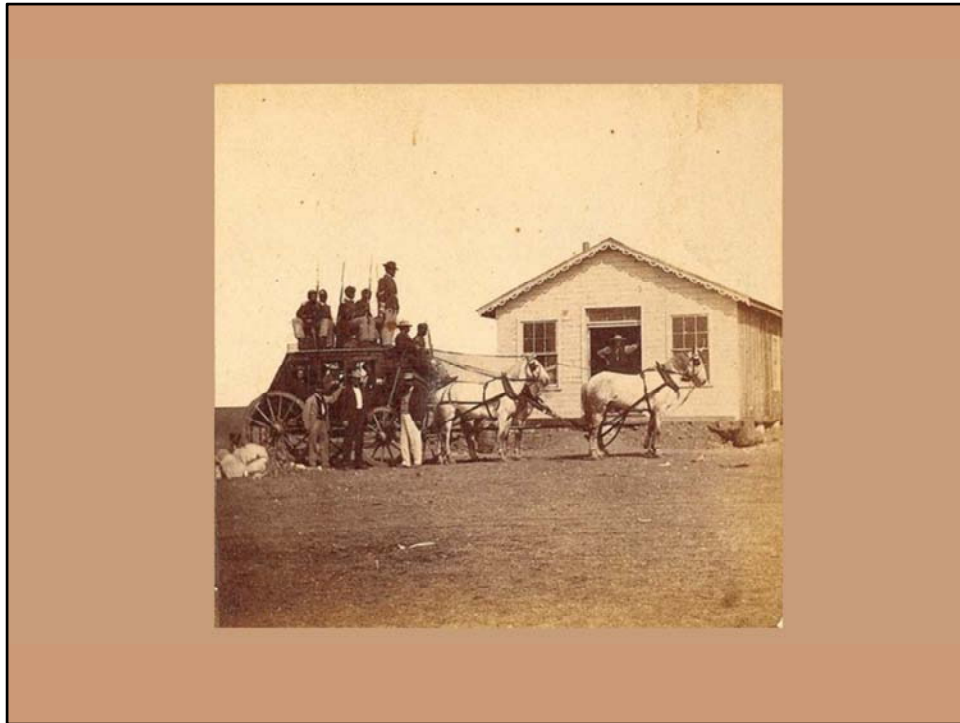
“And while many of the myths of the Old West endure...”

(The U.S. Lithograph Co. 1903.)



“...the hardships encountered in travel by stagecoach isn’t one of them. In October, 1877, the *Omaha Herald* published its *Tips for Stagecoach Travelers*, some of which could still come in handy when traveling today. Included on the list, the *Herald* recommends the best seat is the one next to the driver, spit on the leeward side and if you have anything to drink, pass it around. Never shoot on the road as it might frighten the horses, don’t discuss religion or politics and don’t point out where murders have been committed-especially if there are ladies present. And don’t imagine for a moment you are going on a picnic” (Wells Fargo, p. 11).

(Photographer unknown. c.1860. *Stage coach laden with luggage and many Chinese people en route to the gold field*. State Library of Victoria.)



“In Mark Twain’s famous account of stagecoach travel recorded in *Roughing It* , he describes the coach as ‘a swinging and swaying cage of the most sumptuous description - an imposing cradle on wheels.’ Of the many streambeds they crossed, Twain writes ‘every time we flew down one bank and scrambled up the other, our party inside got mixed somewhat. First we would all lie down in a pile at the forward end of the stage, nearly in a sitting posture, and in a second we would shoot to the other end and stand on our heads’ (Wells Fargo, p. 8). For Washington Irving, ‘a stage coach carries animation always with it, and puts the world in motion as it whirls along’ (Irving, p. 28). This photograph is from the famous Alexander Gardner collection taken on Gardner’s trip to the West in 1867. Note the buffalo soldiers guarding the stagecoach.”

(Gardner, Alexander. 1867. *U. S. Express Overland stage starting for Denver from Hays City, Kansas. 580 miles west of St. Louis, Mo. From Across the Continent on the Union Pacific Railway, Eastern Division . U. S. Express Overland stage with African-American soldiers on guard against attack.*)



“Today, the Mahaffie Farm and Stagecoach stop suggests how a 19th century relic from our past can not only survive, but flourish as a relevant model of the 21st century museum.”



“A place where contemporary stagecoach passengers...”



“...can fill their yearning for just a taste of that romance of the Old West.”



“Standing guard, Greek Revival architecture, the standard in early 19th century American architectural style, remains today a standard of majestic and classical building style. Large fluted columns, scrolling capitals, colonnades, porticos, and friezes characterize this architecture. Its characteristics of strength, grace and richness are seen in the design of our federal and state buildings throughout the countryside” (USC Press, n.d.).



“Architectural qualities of Greek Revival style are design elements found in the U S Capitol, the White House and in state and county buildings dotting the landscape, and here at Mahaffie house, reminiscent of the ancient temples of Greece--majestic, timeless reminders of the roots of democracy.”

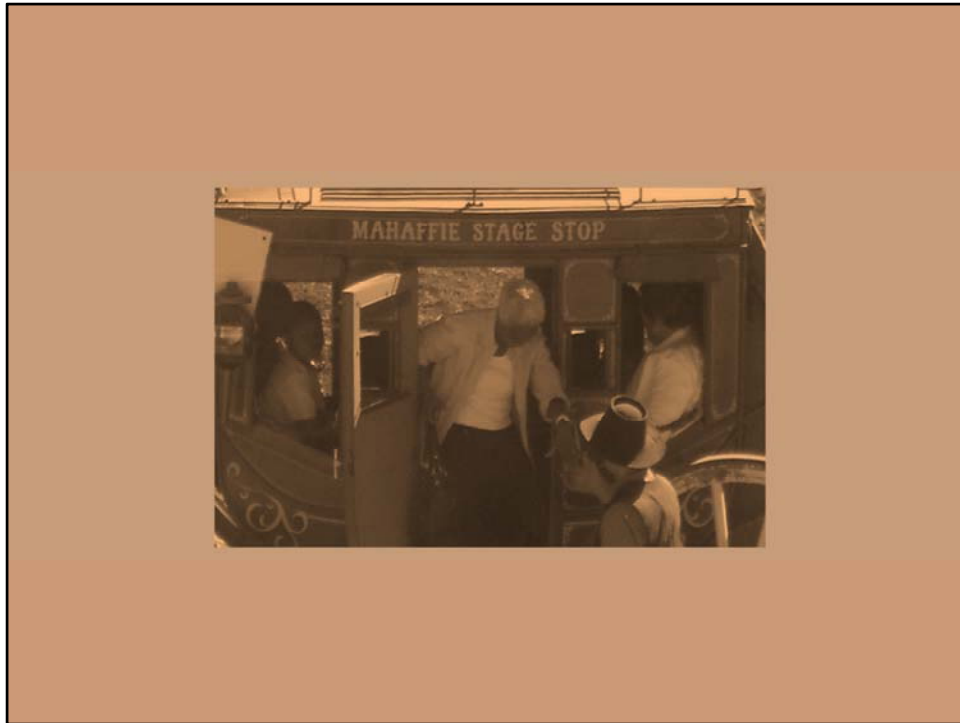


“Instilled by those roots of democracy, the air of adventure and romance which captured the imagination of a nation in the 19th century...”



“...and which remained embodied in the form of the stagecoach beyond its originally intended usefulness...”

(Glembin, John. *The Old Stagecoach*. Oil on canvas. Johnson, Eastman. 1871. Courtesy Milwaukee Art Museum. www.mam.org.)



“...continues to instill a sense of adventure and romance in our minds and in our imaginations.”



“As T K Whipple observed, ‘all America lies at the end of the wilderness road, and our past is not a dead past, but still lives in us. Our forefathers had civilization inside themselves, the wild outside. We live in the civilization they created, but within us the wilderness still lingers. What they dreamed, we live, and what they lived, we dream’”
(Whipple, p. 215).



“Fortunately, the stage rides on at Mahaffie, bringing to life the experience of travel in the Old West.
And it’s at Mahaffie Farm and Stagecoach Stop...”



“...where the buns-busting fun never rests...”



“...and where romance wins out, represented by that mythical stage riding off into that mythical Western sun that never sets...”

(Caldecott, R. 1886. *Old Christmas From the Sketch Book of Washington Irving*. Project Gutenberg.)

Mahaffie House:

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Where Eastern Classical Style Collides
with the Romance of the Old West*

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