Summer 2014

# Reflections

*A publication of the Kansas Historical Society and the Kansas Historical Foundation*

REAL PEOPLE. REAL STORIES.

Summer 2014
**VOLUME 8, NUMBER 3**

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**On the cover:** Join Patrick Zollner, Jennie Chinn, and Terry Marmet for A Taste of Southeast Kansas, September 19-20, 2014. This two-day trip explores the rich culture of the area. Browse this issue for the interesting backstory of the region and make your registrations now to secure your place, see page 5.

# Reflections

**The Kansas Historical Foundation is the non-profit organization that supports and promotes Kansas history through the work of the Kansas Historical Society, the state agency. This issue highlights a new joint tour program that goes on the road to highlight unique aspects of Kansas history and culture.**

## *A Taste of Southeast Kansas*

Kansans love a good road trip to delve into the hidden stories and rich diversity of the different parts of the state. A Taste of Southeast Kansas presented September 19-20, 2014, marks the first in a new exciting program opportunity for Kansans and travelers to experience the sights, sounds, and tastes of Kansas, and, of course, the history and culture of a region.

This issue provides the backstory for the exciting and delectable stops on this year's tour. What better way to experience the cultural heritage than through food?

People from Italy were among those to join the mining workforce in the area, which boasts a number of local Italian restaurants. Frontenac Bakery is more than 100 years old. Locals love the delicious baked bread and large cinnamon rolls.

*Loaves of fresh bread from the Frontenac bakery. Courtesy Kansas Sampler Foundation.*

*Bread baking in the bakery's historic brick oven. Courtesy Kansas Sampler Foundation.*

George Vacca was a baker in Italy before he began working in the southeast Kansas coal mines. After injuring his knee in a mining accident, he opened Frontenac Bakery in 1900, using the same family recipe for hard crust bread that he had used in Italy. Four years later he moved the bakery where it stands today and built a brick oven that could accommodate 250 loaves at once.

Vacca's daughter and her husband took over the bakery in 1944, and passed it on to their son and his wife in 1969. The family sold the bakery in 1997. Every time the bakery changed hands, the recipe was passed along. Current owners Michael and Jayme Mjelde purchased the bakery in 2013 and continue the tradition.

Frontenac Bakery produces 500 to 700 loaves of bread every day, baked in the same brick oven. It also features breadsticks, dinner rolls, stuffing, and bread crumbs. The bakery supplies local grocery stores and Chicken Annie's and Chicken Mary's. Day old bread is made into bread crumbs, which the restaurants use for their secret fried chicken recipes.

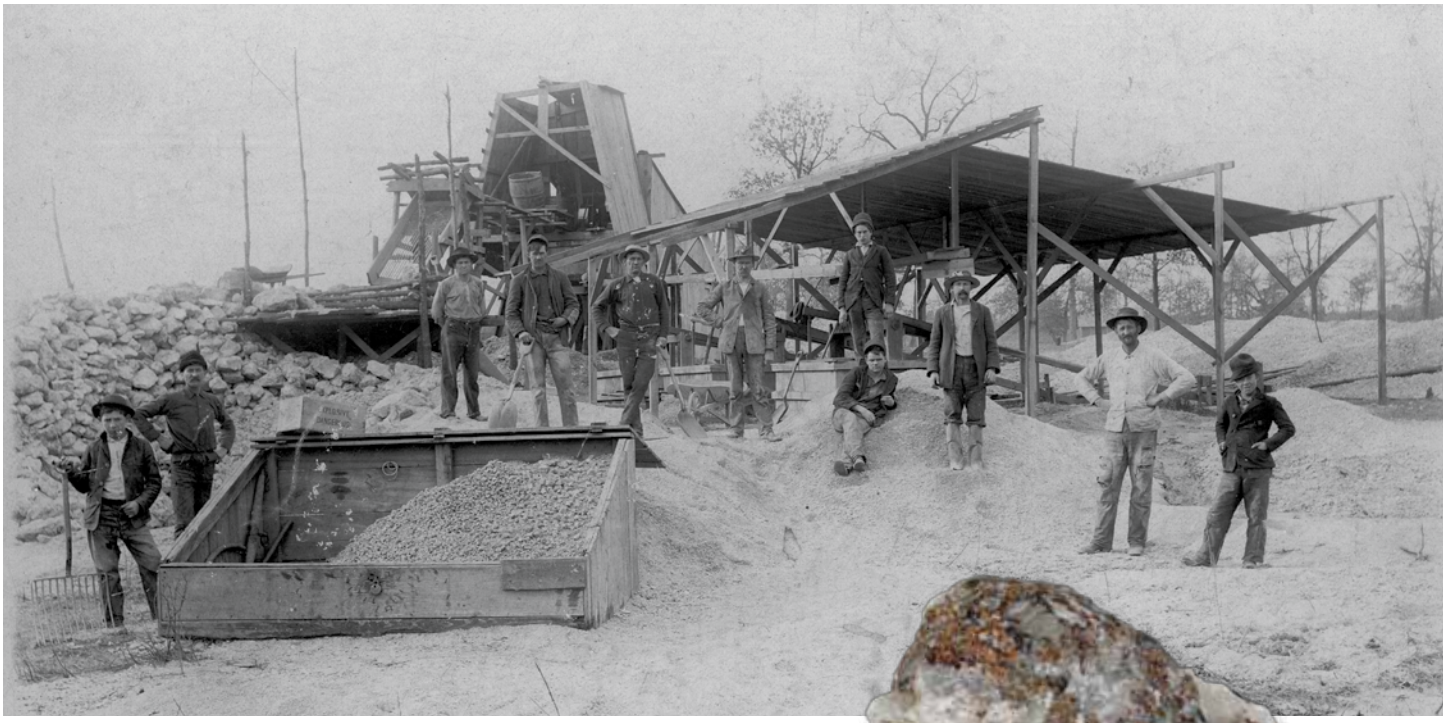
The bakery is in the Kansas Historic Resources Inventory. Administered by the Kansas Historical Society, the searchable inventory features the state's surveyed historic properties and is available at kshs.org/khri.

Taste of Southeast Kansas

Enjoy bread and cinnamon rolls from Frontenac Bakery with A Taste of Southeast Kansas, September 19-20, 2014, among the Kansas Sampler Foundation's 8 Wonders of Kansas Commerce.

# Treasure Hunters: Miners of Southeast Kansas

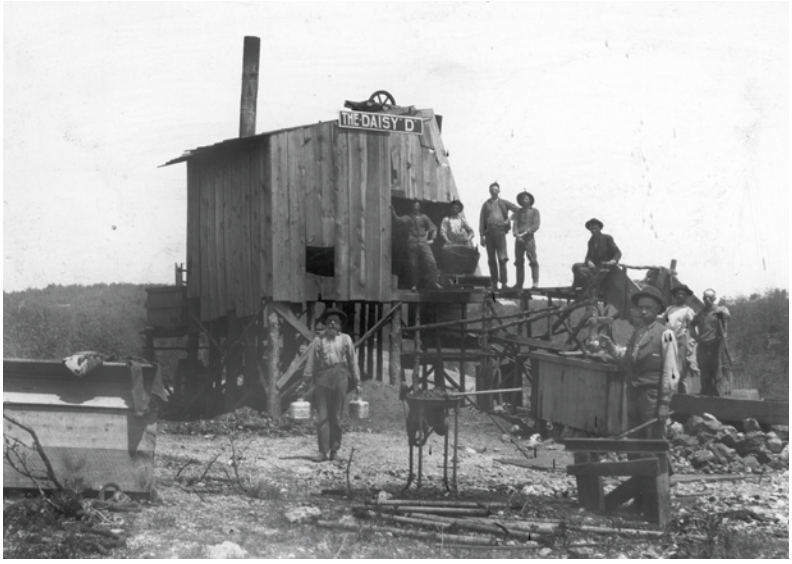
Workers from dozens of European countries were drawn to the lush landscapes of southeast Kansas in the late 19th century. Naturally occurring minerals buried just underground drew these men and their families from places like Italy, Austria, Germany, Yugoslavia, England, Wales, Scotland, France, and Belgium. They put their skills to work in the coal and zinc mines; they shared their traditions with the region, which became known as the "Little Balkans."



*Above, Daisy D Mine, Cherokee County, circa 1890; right, mineral sample from local mines.*

These European miners began to arrive in the 1870s. They learned that the red, rusty coal near the surface could be strip mined and was good for cooking and blacksmithing. The black, oily coal buried under about 200 feet of sandstone was accessed through deep mining and suited for fueling steam locomotives. This workforce helped the area become the industrial center of the state.

Coal companies created communities for the workers near mining locations. Some were temporary camps with dirt roads and shacks. "Rickety cabins, such as the miners live in, are easily knocked down and set up again, or put




*Daisy D Mine, Cherokee County, circa 1890.*

on wheels and moved across country," wrote Mary Wood-Simons in 1911. "In one instance, the mule shed of the old camp found itself metamorphosed into miners' shacks in the new camp." Others were more permanent with houses, schools, retail, blacksmiths, and churches, which later became towns or hamlets. They adopted names like 42 Camp, Blue Goose, Buzzard's Roost, Dogtown, Foxtown, Frogtown, Little Italy, Pumpkin Center, Red Onion, and Water Lilly.

Kansas miners played a key role in supplying lead and zinc needed during World War I and World War II. During the boom years, coal companies made large profits, which spurred workers to want increased wages and better conditions. When they staged strikes, the Kansas Supreme Court placed the mines under state control. Volunteers were brought in to replace the strikers to satisfy the state's need for coal. A group of women who were related to the strikers marched in protest in 1921. The marchers in this "Amazon Army" were considered heroes who risked arrest to support the strikers' efforts.

To protect workers from dangers, the state inspector of coal was established in 1883. As part of the regulation, boys younger than 12 years of age were prohibited from entering mines. An explosion at a mine near Frontenac in 1888 resulted in the death of 44 men and boys in Kansas' worst mining disaster and led to further regulations to improve working conditions and increase safety for the miners.

After peak production in 1926, most of the mining ended by 1970; all closed by 1997. Kansas miners produced 50 percent of all zinc and 10 percent of all lead mined in the United States, carrying to the surface nearly 2.9 million tons of zinc and 115 million tons of ore. A 1977 law was implemented to return the former mines to useful productive land.

Many stories, photographs, inspection reports, and records of these miners are preserved in the collections of the Kansas Historical Society.

*Zinc Smelters, PIttsburg, 1909.*

Taste of Southeast Kansas

Tour the Miners Hall Museum in Franklin with A Taste of Southeast Kansas, September 19-20, 2014, and discover more about this fascinating aspect of the state's history.

# A Taste of Southeast Kansas

You are invited to join the Kansas Historical Society on a

KANSAS

ROADTRIP

**September 19-20, 2014**

Experience a distinctive part of the state through its food, culture, history, wildlife, and recreational areas. Crawford County is a paradise for fishermen who cast their lines in the pit lakes of Kansas' mining country. The bounty of old world food choices that came with the original ethnic settlers are a food lover's dream. Historic sites offer the chance to walk in the footsteps of many well-known American reformers. Their stories enhance our understanding of Kansas. Join us in the Little Balkans in September.

*Limited seating ...*

**Sign up now before it is too late!**

## Friday, September 19

- Meet at Lamplighter Inn, Pittsburg, 11 a.m.
- View former pit mines while understanding the geology of the region
- Eat Italians sandwiches from Palluca's picnic style
- Walk on the only sidewalk in the historic register
- Experience one of the only remaining mining company houses, view authentic artifacts on the original location of Franklin mining hall, site of the Amazon army march
- Follow the footsteps of Emanuel and Marcet Haldeman-Julius and their guests Upton Sinclair, Jane Addams, and Will Durant
- Marvel at the work of the civilian Conservation Corps at Crawford State Lake
- Dine on world-famous fried chicken and traditional German sides at Chicken Mary's

## Saturday, September 20

- Leave at 8:30 a.m.
- Smell the aroma of bread baked in old world ovens at Frontenac Bakery, dine on cinnamon rolls bigger than a fist
- Discover why Clarence Darrow and Kansas Governor Henry Allen were in media spotlight at the historic Hotel Stilwell
- Enjoy fried ravioli from Josie's in Scammon
- Climb the largest electric coal shovel in the world
- Ride through lush wildlife areas that are part of reclaimed mine lands
- Take a personal look at life in a mining camp through stories and songs at the miner's memorial

# A Taste of Southeast Kansas Registration Form

**Registration closes September 1, seats are limited**

Please detach registration form, copy, or print from website, kshs.org/taste_of_kansas, and mail to Membership Services, Kansas Historical Foundation, 6425 SW 6th Avenue, Topeka KS 66615-1099. For further information contact 785-272-8681, ext. 221; membership@kshs.org.

Name _____

Address _____

City_____ Zip_____

Phone _____ _____

Please print guest(s)' first and last names to appear on nametags.

_____ _____

**Members**

Early bird by August 16 $135 x # _____ participants = $ _____

After August 16 $150 x # _____ participants = $ _____

**Nonmembers**

$210 x # _____ participants = $ _____

Price includes all food, local transportation, tour guides, and performances, does not include lodging. A Kansas Historical Society special room rate of $72 is available at Lamplighter Inn, 4020 Parkview Drive, Pittsburg KS 66762. Make reservations early by calling 866-478-4660. Rooms are limited and special pricing is available only through Monday, September 1, 2014.

**Purchase membership**

Household: $60 _____ = $_____

(allows all family members to tour southeast Kansas for member price)

Individual: $40 _____ = $_____

Donation: $ _____

Make checks payable to the Kansas Historical Foundation

Or please bill my: ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard (check one)

Credit card number _____ Expiration date_____

Signature_____

We reserve the right to change or cancel scheduled events based on participation or dangerous conditions. The Foundation does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to, access to, or operation of its programs. We request prior notification to accommodate an individual's special need. Please indicate any special accommodations required:

_____

# "University in Print": Girard's Little Blue Books

Girard, Kansas, was home to a small publishing company that rocked the world by introducing the pocket paperback in the early 20th century. The husband and wife team of Emanuel and Marcet Haldeman-Julius wanted to create an affordable "university in print." They inspired future writers like Louis L'Amour, Saul Bellow, and Studs Terkel. They sold between 300 and 500 million Little Blue Books. They made popular and classic literature available to the general public in the 1920s and 1930s.

*Emanuel and Marcet Haldeman-Julius*

Marcet Haldeman was from Girard, attended Bryn Mawr College, and spent time on the New York stage. She returned upon the death of her mother to manage the family business, the local bank. Emanuel Julius was from Philadelphia, the son of Russian Jewish immigrants. He moved to Girard to work for J. A. Wayland's socialist newspaper, the *Appeal to Reason*. The couple married in 1916, hyphenating their names, a suggestion of Marcet's activist aunt, Jane Addams. They began writing short stories together and purchased the newspaper Jack London called the "Temple of the Revolution" in 1919, which offered a mail order list of 175,000 subscribers.

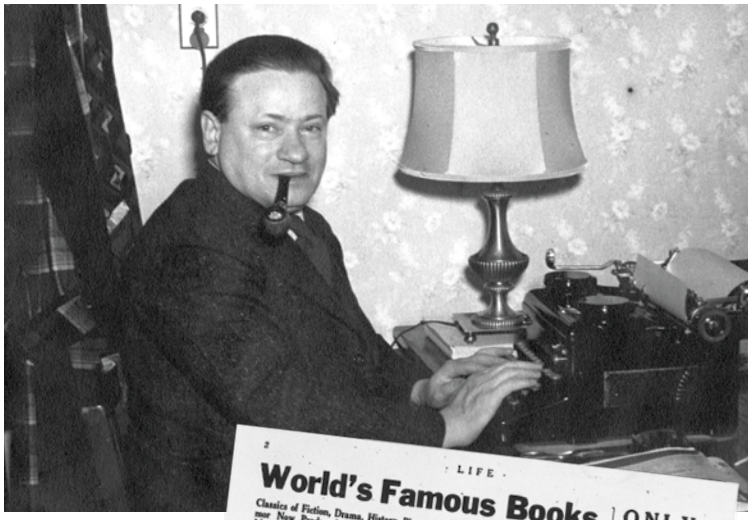
They soon received thousands of orders for their books, eventually printing 80,000 copies every eight hours. Subscribers spanned the world and called Emanuel the "Caesar" of book publishing and the "Henry Ford of literature." They developed scintillating titles for their self-help books and advertised in newspapers and magazines like *Life*, *Popular Science*, and *Ladies' Home Journal*. Their authors included Goethe,

William Shakespeare, Voltaire, Émile Zola, H. G. Wells, Jack London, and Henry David Thoreau.

They lived in comparative luxury in a large two-story house just outside Girard. Seafood was shipped in and the backyard boasted a swimming pool. There they hosted many well-known people including Upton Sinclair, Clarence Darrow, Anna Louise Strong, and author Will Durant.

Their fans included Colonel Frank Borman, Admiral Richard Byrd, W. E. B. DuBois, Margaret Mead, and Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia. The business had declined by the time of Marcet's death in 1941. Emanuel remarried and continued publishing. He died in 1951 and their son, Henry, continued the business for a time.

The Haldeman's bank and church, the Carnegie library, and Wayland's house are among the local properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Haldeman-Julius house is listed in the Register of Historic Kansas Places.



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man-Julius Company, Dept. 29, Girard, Kansas.

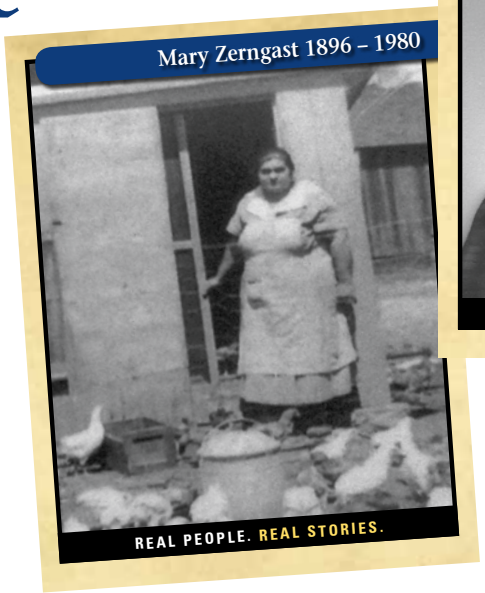
*Top to bottom; Emanuel at typewriter; ad in* Life *magazine between 1920 and 1940; Emanuel and Marcet Haldeman-Julius with Clarence Darrow, 1925.*

Taste of Southeast Kansas

Explore Girard, drive by the Haldeman-Julius house listed in the Register of Historic Kansas Places, pictured at right, and discover how this community touched the world with A Taste of Southeast Kansas, September 19-20, 2014.

*Real People. Real Stories.*

# Chicken Mary and Chicken Annie




Two women in southeast Kansas made legendary fried chicken. They each turned their skills into successful businesses, located within a few hundred yards of each other. On a rural Crawford County highway, which locals affectionately call Chicken Dinner Road, Chicken Annie's and Chicken Mary's have been serving fried chicken dinners for more than 60 years.

Ann Pichler's husband, Charley, worked in the mines and was disabled in a mine accident in 1933. Ann first worked as a seamstress and sold ham and veal cutlet sandwiches. In 1934 she began serving chicken dinners out of her home, even before the house had electricity. Charley helped prepare meals and served as bartender and cashier. On Saturdays Ann and her four children moved furniture out of the living room to accommodate more customers. People danced to the jukebox and drank beer. As the business grew, they added more rooms and tables. They eventually moved to a different house and kept the restaurant in the original location. When Ann and Charley retired in 1961, their daughter and her family took over the business. Chicken Annie's relocated in 1972 to a new building down the street where the family still serves chicken dinners today.

Mary Zerngast's husband, Joe, also worked in the coal mines around Pittsburg. By the early 1940s Joe was in failing health and could no longer work in the mines. Mary began serving chicken dinners to customers at her kitchen table. Word spread and soon it was impossible to seat everyone in the house. In 1945 Joe and Mary purchased a pool hall, which they moved and named Joe's Place. Joe died in 1961 and Mary suffered a stroke later that year. Their son and his wife took over the business and managed it with Mary's advice. Chicken Mary's was built in 1966 at the same location and the family remains involved in the business.

A friendly rivalry between the two restaurants was highlighted on the Travel Channel's Food Wars. Chicken Mary's and Chicken Annie's invite visitors to stop by and choose their favorite.

Try this delicious chicken with A Taste of Southeast Kansas, September 19-20, 2014, among the 8 Wonders of Kansas Cuisine.

# A Path to Safety: Franklin Sidewalk

Enid Gardner was six years old when she was walking home from school in Franklin in 1928. The young girl darted into the street and was "almost instantly killed by a motor car." Teachers and children witnessed the tragedy and agreed something needed to be done to provide safety for pedestrians.

The mining communities of Arma and Franklin are located two miles apart in Crawford County and connected by schools and businesses. With the decline of the mining industry in the late 1920s, many of Franklin's businesses closed and schools were consolidated. Students and workers from Franklin walked two miles along busy U.S. 69 to Arma. Pedestrian accidents and deaths increased along that stretch of highway. With the death of young Enid, the communities resolved to build a sidewalk that would "help greatly in the safety of pedestrians."

The three-foot wide sidewalk was built in 1936 with federal funds. From the south edge of Arma, it stretches south 1.7 miles to the south edge of Franklin, running parallel along the east side of U.S. 69. People heavily used the sidewalk as they walked from Franklin to Arma and back. In 1970 a school bus route was established and student use of the sidewalk declined. Now residents use it as a walking path.

In 2007 the Franklin Sidewalk was listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its associations with local transportation history, the only sidewalk in the United States listed individually. It appeared in the Guinness Book of World Records in the 1950s and '60s as the longest sidewalk connecting two towns in the United States.

*Above, the historic Franklin sidewalk connects Arma and Franklin, giving pedestrians a safe passage along the highway.*

Taste of Southeast Kansas

Take a walk on the Franklin Sidewalk with A Taste of Southeast Kansas, September 19-20, 2014.

# Fire Devil: 788th Company, Civilian Conservation Corps

On June 9, 1935, a group of young men arrived at Farlington in Crawford County to begin a large-scale effort—building a new lake. At first they faced effects of the Dust Bowl; then flooding with constant rain. Many from Kansas, these men were members of the 788th Company of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).

*788th Company working in Finney County, 1934.*

The CCC was among the most popular of New Deal programs during the Great Depression. Congress established the Emergency Conservation Work Act in March 1933. Unmarried, unemployed young men between 17 and 28 had several different opportunities to participate in the program. They were provided shelter, clothing, food, and $30 in monthly wages; they could keep $5 and were required to send $25 to their families at home. The program eventually included unemployed military veterans.

The 788th Company formed in 1933 at Fort Riley. Often required to fight fires, the company gained the nickname Fire Devil, which became the name for its semi-monthly newsletter. The company's first major effort was to complete a dam in Finney County. When that work was completed, the company moved to Crawford County.

The day's work began with bugle call at 5:45 a.m., mess, and roll call. After evening meal, the men had many recreational choices including baseball, tennis,

orchestra, boxing, pool, going into town, and reading. They were always expected to dress neatly and behave appropriately even when off duty.

Over time their accommodations improved with sidewalks, painted barracks, a cooling unit in the mess hall, a fireplace in the recreation hall, and flush toilets in the bath house. A case of diphtheria in 1935 required quarantine for the entire camp.

There they moved 284,000 cubic yards of material to create the 1,350-foot long, 65-foot high dam. In addition to dam building, the men cleaned underbrush and trees from the site and built a 280-foot wide spillway, gate tower, two access bridges to use for hauling materials, and roads. At least one of the workers was killed during the process. They completed their work on December 29, 1939. Covering 150 acres at Crawford State Park, the lake today offers spectacular views and excellent fishing.

During the nine year program, more than 3 million men participated in the CCC nationwide, which ended in 1942 as the military draft began. The Kansas Historical Society's collection includes photographs and newsletters published by various CCC companies.

*At left, top to bottom, grader used in the dam construction; the* Fire Devil, *one of the many CCC newsletters in the collections; below, bronze statue at CCC Memorial.*

View the lush beauty of Crawford State Lake with A Taste of Southeast Kansas, September 19-20, 2014.

*Curator's Choice*

# Pittsburg's "Social Center": Hotel Stilwell

From the decorative balcony of the Hotel Stilwell in Pittsburg, many visiting dignitaries took the stage. Among those who gave speeches from this vantage point were presidential candidates, William Jennings Bryan and Eugene Debs; President Theodore Roosevelt, and civil rights leader Susan B. Anthony. The thriving Pittsburg was becoming the industrial center of southeast Kansas when Hotel Stilwell was completed in 1890.

The city's boom due to the coal and zinc mining industry drew investors from the East and appropriate accommodations were needed for these important visitors. Arthur E. Stilwell was a prominent resident and railroad entrepreneur who helped finance the building. The architectural firm J. B. Lindsly and Son of St. Louis designed the building in the Romanesque Revival style. C. W. Green of Wichita was the contractor. Since there were no local brick companies, Green built a plant and manufactured the vitrified bricks on site.

The red brick building features limestone trim and a flat roof with parapet. On either side of the entrance is street side space for five storefronts. Stilwell hoped the griffin, located above the stone entrance and balcony, would guard the building.

Inside, the entrance, lobby, dining room, and halls were highly ornamented. The lobby features a shallow glass dome and cast iron columns. In 1926 the hotel was remodeled to add more modern accommodations. The hotel was a popular place for meetings and receptions and has also been an important venue in major news events. During a coal strike in 1919, the Kansas Supreme Court gave the state control of the mines and Governor Henry Allen moved his office there to contain the situation. In August 1925 attorney Clarence Darrow was visiting his friends Emanuel and Marcet Haldeman-Julius. He held a press conference in the hotel to answer a judge's queries related to the Scopes trial on the teaching of evolution.

The hotel was nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in 1980 for its association with the economic growth of Pittsburg during its formative years as the mining-related industrial center in Kansas and as the social center of the community.

Taste of Southeast Kansas

See the beauty of Hotel Stilwell through A Taste of Southeast Kansas, September 19-20, 2014.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Online at kshs.org/calendar**

**Through August 31, 2014**
*Speaking of Quilts* exhibit • Kansas Museum of History, Topeka

**July 26**
West Fest: National Day of the Cowboy • Kansas Historical Society, Topeka

**July 26**
Museum After Hours: A Night of Country • Kansas Historical Society, Topeka

**August 7**
Preserving Topeka: Loving Your Stuff: Collectibles • Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library, Topeka

**August 8**
Sundown Film Festival features *Blue Hawaii* • Kansas Historical Society, Topeka

**August 9**
Historic Sites Board of Review • Kansas Historical Society, Topeka

**August 31**
Pony Express Festival • Hollenberg Pony Express Station State Historic Site, Hanover

**September 12**
Sundown Film Festival features *Ferris Buller's Day Off* • Kansas Historical Society, Topeka

**September 19-20**
A Taste of Southeast Kansas • Kansas Historical Foundation

**September 20 – November 3, 2014**
*Día de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead) exhibit • Kansas Historical Society, Topeka

**September 26**
Museum After Hours: A Night on Madison Avenue • Kansas Historical Society, Topeka


## Summer 2014

**VOLUME 8, NUMBER 3**

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*Kansas Memory*

Women lay out and paste pages for a publication at the Haldeman-Julius Company in Girard, 1930s.
kansasmemory.org/308164

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