

# THE KANSAS IMMIGRANTS II



Division of Continuing Education  
and KANU

The University of Kansas

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## The Kansas Immigrants II

The Kansas Immigrants II follows the highly successful radio series The Kansas Immigrants. The material for this second-year series has been broadcast on radio programs and published as newspaper articles. This bound volume contains the newspaper articles, which differ slightly in form and content from the radio version. A bound volume of scripts is also available for the first-year series. The radio programs for both series are available on audio-cassettes.

The Kansas Immigrants II addresses a number of issues: the efforts of immigrants to assimilate to the larger society while attempting to maintain their own ethnic identity, the occasional violence in the meeting of different cultures in formerly homogeneous communities, and the problem of understanding different family values and lifestyles from one culture to another. It also examines the difficulties in preserving ethnic heritage; the oppression, segregation, and exploitation of ethnic minorities; the contributions of ethnic groups to the arts and cuisine; and the role of the ethnic church or organization in nurturing its members.

The first series dealt with immigration to Kansas prior to 1920; the second-year programs dip back in time to pick up a few early topics but concentrate mainly on developments after 1920. Many of the programs feature representative individuals or ethnic communities, for example, Strawberry Hill, a Croatian neighborhood in Kansas City; Lebanese families in Pittsburg and Wichita; Potawatomi in the Horton area; and Beersheba, a defunct Jewish colony in western Kansas.

Many Kansans today are rediscovering their personal and ethnic heritage. In music, art, literature, oral history and genealogy, these individuals are seeking to understand how their heritage has helped shape their lives. This project provides glimpses into the experiences of many of the groups that have peopled this state. Together the fifty-six programs in the two-year series present a comprehensive view of immigration to Kansas.

Barbara Watkins  
Project Coordinator

## The Kansas Immigrants II

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## 1. Railroads Hailed Kansas' Virtues to Attract New Settlers

The future of America's railroads was tied to the prosperity of the land they crossed, and it was their public relations and promotional gimmicks that attracted thousands of immigrants to the Kansas plains in the 1870s and 80s.

"I never saw finer country in the world than that part of Kansas passed over by the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe road," wrote one editorial writer, who, like many others, was given a free tour of the state by the Santa Fe.

"Corn waist high, wheat in shock, oats in fine condition, and vegetables in abundance," he concluded.

Agricultural growth meant an increase in the produce and crops that the railroads would carry. And, the Santa Fe needed to dispose of nearly three million acres of land granted by the federal government in return for building the rail line through Kansas.

The Santa Fe lands stretched west from near Emporia in alternate sections ten miles wide on either side of the track.

To attract immigrants, railroad companies aggressively circulated booklets and posters depicting the state's virtues.

"Kansas is just in the right latitude for the farmer to make money," said one advertisement. "It is not cold enough to require much shelter or food for cattle and sheep or much labor or expense for fuel."

"Kansas offers people exactly what they are looking for," claimed another. "The climate is the best in the U.S."

"The winters are short, dry and invigorating."

None of these circulars mentioned the droughts, grasshoppers, or summer storms. Many of those people who did come ended up burrowing into the ground in their sod huts to escape the intense summer heat and winter blizzards.

The Santa Fe Land Department offered prospective colonists half-price tickets to take in the state's prospects. Traveling agents were sent across the East, Midwest and even to Europe to drum up individuals willing to settle the railroad's lands.

To entice these colonists, the railroads worked with steamship companies and European land agencies. They appealed particularly to Scandinavian, British, French, and German farmers to consider relocating in Kansas.

The rail lines brought European newspapermen to Kansas and distributed advertisements by the thousands in a variety of languages. They also sent agents to lecture to European factory workers on the merits of Kansas.

The man largely responsible for the Santa Fe's foreign operation was C. B. Schmidt, their "General Foreign Agent." Schmidt's proselytizing adventures among the Mennonites in Russia alone would make a gripping novel.

When he entered Russia in 1875, he traveled by night and hid low by day to escape the czar's agents assigned to prevent his encouraging Mennonite farmers to leave Russia. He had many close escapes.

"On the platform at the Virballen station (just inside the German-Russian border) a dozen or more tall frontier gens d'armes loomed up threateningly through the driving snow-storm in their long gray coats, spike helmets, and guns with fixed bayonets over their shoulders. The travelers were ushered into a smoky room for examination as to their business and scrutiny of their passports," recounted Schmidt.

"Fortunately, I escaped examination of my person and the danger of discovery of my many letters of introduction, which I had strung on a tape and tied around my body underneath my clothes. If they had been discovered, my mission would have been nipped in the bud."

Schmidt's mission was successful. By 1883 more than 15,000 Mennonites had emigrated to Kansas.

The Santa Fe built temporary barracks for them in Topeka and provided special trains to haul the farmers and their goods and machinery to their new lands. And the company gave them free land for their churches and schools.

Observers estimated that these Mennonites brought with them more than two million dollars worth of czarist gold coins sewn into their clothes. They also brought seeds for the hard red "Turkey" wheat that would transform the state into the nation's breadbasket.

"The Mennonites have made Kansas the banner wheat state by 'plowing the dew under.' They have made their section of Kansas a garden of affluence and abundance," said Schmidt.

As hoped and planned, the "Garden of the West" provided the railroad company with enormous business. And, many years later, this wheat would return to its Russian birthplace in American ships contracted to supply the Soviet Union with the basic sustenance of life.



## 2. "God Save The Queen" Resounded in Runnymede

Runnymede, Kansas, was a bit of Old England on the plains of Kansas. Settled by a group of fun-loving British, the small town flourished between 1888 and 1892 and then vanished.

Ned Turnly was an energetic Irishman who bought 17,000 acres near the Chikaskia River, fifty miles west of Wichita in Harper County.

He built a general store and post office and then publicized his venture in England, hoping to attract British gentlemen with capital to invest in his enterprise.

Turnly's original plan was to encourage farming and horse ranching, but an impressive number of businesses sprang up in the small community by 1890.

Entrepreneurs established meat markets, groceries, a drygoods store, livery stables, a lumber yard, creamery, the three-story Runnymede Arms Hotel, and even an aerated water plant to make carbonated soda pop.

The "boys of Runnymede," however, were better known for their adventure-some pursuits.

They held horse races, steeple chases, and shooting matches, and competed in tennis, polo, and rugby. The version of the English hunt substituted coyotes or rabbits for the fox.

A staunch English spirit sparked sporting events.

"Twelve muscular mastodon Englishmen were at one end of a heavy doubled rope and 12 giant American plowmen and blacksmiths with a strong hold on the other end..."

"The way the boys on both sides leaned back, plowed up the ground, pulled and made the rope jingle and crack with pain was a caution while the crowd filled the air with loud hurrahs.

"The American side won the test in two rounds and the sad news was cabled to the Queen who ordered the flag on the house of parliament to be placed at half mast," wrote Englishman Robert Watmough in the Harper Sentinel.

Watmough, whose pen name was the Bird of Freedom, was a colorful character who supplied descriptions of Runnymede activities to the Sentinel. He and his exuberant friends were, however, occasionally too much for the locals.

The Sentinel requested, "If when the Englishmen take the town next, they would leave the uncivilized American citizens a quiet corner, the latter would be everlastingly grateful."

The beginning of Runnymede's end occurred in May 1890, when a fire broke out in a livery stable. Watmough died in the fire.

Some of the spirit went out of the community after the tragedy, but Watmough's death was only one factor in the decline of Runnymede.

Turnly's efforts to get a railroad line from Wichita also failed, as did his plan for foreign investment in land and railroads. The Farmer's Alliance and the People's Party spearheading a new wave of populism in Kansas led strong opposition to foreign investments.

Runnymede could not recover. The colonists quickly dispersed when the future began to look dim. In 1892, the Norwich News advertised the sale of all items from the Runnymede Arms, the once-proud hotel.

Some of the residents returned to England; others went to Wichita or nearby communities.

A fitting epitaph was supplied by a former resident in 1912. "If anyone should find the lost town of Runnymede, ask him to mark the spot with a stone bearing the words, 'We had a good time while it lasted'."

### 3. Beersheba--A Jewish Agricultural Colony in Kansas

Among the hundreds of thousands of Europeans who immigrated to America in the 1880s were Russian Jews fleeing economic, political, and religious repression.

Most of the Jewish immigrants settled the crowded slums of Eastern cities. Some, however, found themselves on their way to the plains of Kansas, part of an effort to establish Jewish farming communities.

Jewish settlers had begun coming to the New World in 1654. By the late nineteenth century they were well integrated into American society. Some established Jews viewed the immigrants as a problem and an embarrassment.

The newcomers did not fit in. They established separate neighborhoods and wore distinctive clothes. They were extremely orthodox in their religious practices and spoke Yiddish.

And there were too many of them--the slums of New York and other large cities were already crowded with poor, Yiddish-speaking refugees.

However, Jewish immigrants were welcome if they were willing to become farmers. To promote the establishment of Jewish agricultural communities, the Hebrew Union Agricultural Society was formed.

One of its leaders was Rabbi Isaac Meyer Wise, the founder of the American reform Jewish movement and editor of The American Israelite, a weekly newspaper published in Cincinnati, Ohio.

"There is but one class of immigrants of which there never comes too many to this country, and that is the class of agriculturalists because the area of arable lands is very large on this continent," Wise wrote.

"There are already too many people in commerce. . . . Immigrants should not come to this country unless they are ready to enter at once upon agricultural pursuits."

In the summer of 1882 almost every issue of The American Israelite carried descriptions of a colony to be established in southwestern Kansas. It was to be called Beersheba.

Beersheba was the first and the most successful of eight attempts to establish Jewish agricultural colonies in Kansas. The others were also located in western Kansas--in Ford, Barber, and Comanche counties. Plans were made to locate the Beersheba colony on Pawnee Creek about 22 miles northeast of Cimarron near present-day Kalvesta.

On July 24, 1882, 24 Russian Jewish families, a total of 60 people, departed from Cincinnati for their homestead land in Kansas.

They arrived in Kansas City the next night, and the event was recorded by a local rabbi in his diary:

"By the liberality of our people, baskets have been filled and put on the depot for the Refugees. . . . At 9:30 P.M. the refugees arrived, men, women and children."

However the rabbi later noted that the colonists did not immediately continue their trip westward:

"We now learn that the land they had in view was situated near Dodge City, a sandy barren district which is not a fitting place for farming.

"The Committee for that reason has resolved to leave the poor here until further investigation can be instituted."

Charles K. Davis, a native of Cincinnati who was traveling with the immigrants, described the week-long stay in Kansas City as a difficult time for the group:

"Our expense at Kansas City was enormous. Every hotel keeper seemed to want all the money we had and overcharged us in every instance. . . ."

Investigators reported that the land was, after all, acceptable. The party proceeded by train to Cimarron and then by wagon to Beersheba. When Davis arrived at Beersheba on August 11, the temperature was 110 degrees. Despite the heat, he was impressed with the country.

In his diary he records that his Sabbath dinner that night consisted of coffee, antelope steak, onions and bread.

"Although the dust and grass was flying all over what we ate, I never enjoyed a meal so much in my life."

To begin farming the settlers needed livestock and implements. The Emigrant Aid Committee of Cincinnati supplied almost everything they needed: steers, cows, sheep, and poultry, as well as horses and agricultural equipment.

The colonists were expected to pay later for all they had received.

The settlers made rapid progress in their first few months. By October they had sunk wells and every family had a sod house on 160 acres.

Leo Wise, son of the Jewish leader in Cincinnati, wrote:

"None can dispute their dwelling. None can dispute their possession, none dare move or disturb them. . . ."

But by 1886 nothing remained of the Beersheba colony.

#### 4. A Jewish Farming Colony in Kansas and Why It Failed

After a visit to a Jewish farming colony on the Kansas plains in 1883, the representative of the Hebrew United Agricultural Society of Cincinnati seemed confident of the farming abilities of the new Jewish immigrants.

The colony, Beersheba, was established by Russian Jewish immigrants in the summer of 1882 under the direction of the Hebrew Society.

" . . . the Great question in which we all take such lively interest-- 'Can Jews become successful farmers?' is virtually solved by our Beersheba colony," wrote the official.

That the Jewish race can become again an agricultural people is established beyond any reasonable doubt. We have the satisfaction of knowing that our colony is a grand success, and an honor and glory to our cause . . . ."

During their first year the colonists dug wells and built sod houses. They also built a sod synagogue, which may have doubled as a schoolhouse, and held services in it every Saturday and on special holidays.

"The synagogue was a long building dug in the bank of the creek about 50 feet long. It was in rooms and I think they used one to dance in when there was a wedding. I remember being there to several of these affairs. When there was a wedding everyone was welcome," recalled A. J. Meyers, an early resident of the area.

The colony's religious leader was Rabbi Edelhertz, a tall, square-shouldered man who carried himself erect and walked with his hands clasped in front of him. His appearance was distinguished by his carefully trimmed beard, skull cap, and long robe.

The colony also had a superintendent named Baum. Appointed by the sponsors in Cincinnati, Baum was a stern taskmaster. Even though the colonists were at first unruly, they became docile under Baum's leadership.

"Baum was a very tall man and walked very straight and proud and they all seemed to be afraid of him," Meyers recalled.

The future of Beersheba looked promising in the spring of 1883. The settlers got along well with the farmers in the area, who welcomed the settlers as allies in their conflict with the cattlemen, who drove their stock along a major trail nearby.

"There are several Americans settled in the immediate neighborhood. These gentlemen speak of our colonists in terms of highest praise. These neighbors have always done all in their power to assist with their advice," reported the official from Cincinnati.

The cattle trail played a role in Beersheba's eventual decline, although the colonists had no direct conflict with the cattlemen.

In the spring of 1884, the settlers leased part of their land to a company that wanted to enlarge the trail. They did not seek permission from the leaders in Cincinnati and the sponsors were enraged at this show of willful independence.

To punish the colonists, superintendent Baum was ordered to sell all of their livestock and implements.

Charles K. Davis, a native of Cincinnati who had accompanied the group to Kansas two years earlier, bitterly protested the cruelty and injustice of the sponsor's action.

He argued that the neighboring farmers had also agreed to the transaction and that the colonists were left with plenty of land to cultivate. His pleas went unheard.

With no means to work the land, settlers began to leave Beersheba. Some returned to their claims when they had saved up enough to buy a few cows and horses. However, by January 1886, there was little left of the colony.

Beersheba's failure was due to a variety of causes. The settlers lacked farming experience, they were plagued by high interest rates and a harsh climate, and the colony was located twenty miles from the nearest railroad.

The attitude of the Cincinnati sponsors toward the immigrants also contributed to its failure. Impatient to have a well-ordered showplace, they did not provide the immigrant farmers with money, up-to-date advice on farming, sophisticated machinery or the freedom to make their own decisions.

Possibly the colonists would have naturally gravitated into other occupations. During the last year of the colony's existence, several of the settlers had, in fact, gone into business in the nearby town of Ravanna.

Eventually most of these businessmen and other colonists settled in urban areas such as Dodge City, Wichita, and Kansas City.

However, Rabbi Edelhertz, the religious leader of the colony, remained in the Beersheba area. Perhaps he had become attached to the country.

A man who grew up in Hodgeman County recalled what his father knew about the rabbi's love for the land:

"He was intoxicated with the beauty of the prairies, sunrises, and sunsets, and the acres and acres of beautiful flowers. He would sit on the bank of Pawnee Creek at night and commune with nature and the stars."

## 5. An Immigrant Woman Found Hard, Lonely Life

In 1908 a woman came from Eastern Europe to Chicopee, Kansas, to marry an immigrant Slovenian coal miner. She immediately regretted her decision.

Her story has been told by Mary Molek in "The Immigrant Woman." The book is fiction, but all of its incidents are based on the experiences of the author, who patterns the immigrant woman's oldest child on herself.

The biography is not a conventional one. Few of the people in the book are given names.

The author described it as "Bits. Snatches. Parts. A collage. A biographical journal. . . . Not sequential; not orderly, nor logical, nor predictable. . . . A patchwork quilt."

The mother is referred to only as the Immigrant Woman. The daughters are called the Oldest, the Middle one, the Youngest. The husband, who is seldom mentioned, has no name either.

Still, this disjointed story is held together by these constant themes: the Immigrant Woman's high ideals, her loneliness, her self-sacrifice, and, most of all, her hard work.

Her new home in Chicopee, Kansas, was a treeless mining town--crude, ugly, and inhospitable.

"If I had known, I'd never have come. Never left my homeland! The promises he made! The letters he wrote! The country I'd come to! This! This isn't what he promised me!"

She wanted to call off the wedding and return to her home country, but she discovered that her husband-to-be, who had taken the mining job to pay his own passage to America, had been forced to borrow money from his landlady.

He admitted to her, "No, I don't have any money. Half of the money--half of the money for your steamship ticket I borrowed from Mrs. Baska. She paid your way over, really. We can't go back! Not 'till we pay up our debts!"

And so the wedding went off as planned. More debts were accumulated for a dress, hat, and wedding supper.

Soon the Immigrant Woman was expecting a baby, so the couple moved from Mrs. Baska's rented room to a tiny company shack. At that time between two and three thousand miners and their families lived in Chicopee. Most lived in company houses.

The Immigrant Woman's husband had written, "In America everyone lives like a king." But the company houses were no palaces.

She recalled to her children, "We were stepping into pools of dust, soil pulverized by the buggy wheels that made the tracks. I looked to the right and to the left of me. Nothing but company houses. . . ."

"Side by side--like rows of boxes with V-shaped roofs. Unpainted wood, warped and blackened. Some of them had a pathway leading up to the door; it was made of rocks. Others had nothing.

"No trees. Scarcely any grass. . . . I shuddered. That place was your father's home, and it would be my home, too, . . . ."

When the baby came, the Immigrant Woman was alone. No doctor attended her. The husband was working in the mine. Not even a neighbor was there to help. The child, a girl, survived.

The father was disappointed by its sex. A boy could have helped in the mines.

In a few years a boy was born. By this time the family had moved to Mineral, Kansas, another mining town in the Cherokee-Crawford coal fields. They shared a four-room house with another family.

When the baby boy was three months old, he died from pneumonia. The mother, who was ill herself, was unable to care for him. No one lent her a helping hand.

Even though she had two more children, both girls, she never recovered from the death of the boy.

The Immigrant Woman came to America alone, and she lived most of her life in spiritual and psychological isolation. At first she had hoped to return to Slovenia, but inescapable debt finally made it clear that she could never go back.

Her mother's death cut her last ties to her childhood home.

She gained no comfort from religion. She went inside a church only to have her children christened.

She had few friends among her fellow immigrant families. Many of her neighbors were saloon keepers and bootleggers, and she was too proud and protective of her family to associate with them.

Throughout her life she sacrificed everything to spare her children from the trap she found herself in.

To the Oldest daughter she said "I'm giving you the chance. I do all the work you could do to help me, just to give you time for homework. That's your only job: homework.



"Some day you'll have to earn your own money. You'll have to do it with learning.

"I can't help my self. We're all caught: can't live and can't die. Can't live here and can't go back."



## 6. How an Immigrant Woman Survived

The Immigrant Woman described by author Mary Molek found life in America meant constant work and constant sacrifice.

The daughter of Slovenian immigrants, Ms. Molek described in a fictionalized biography, "The Immigrant Woman," what her mother endured to keep her family clothed and fed.

"She did everything, every day, year after year, from pre-dawn to dark. She never rested. She dug in the garden; she fed the chickens; she milked the cow; . . . she slopped the pigs; . . . she washed out clothes and heavy overalls on a washboard in a tub. . . ; she made all their clothes--even their coats; she made her own soap; she ground corn into meal. . . ."

The mother also worked for pay as a seamstress to help get the family out of debt. She charged a quarter to sew a simple housedress; a tailored dress was a dollar. For herself she stitched a dress out of four flour sacks and wore it day after day.

Some times were particularly hard. When her husband was on strike or black-listed from the mines because of his union activities, there was no money. Then she had to sell the garden vegetables, eggs, and butter and let the family go hungry.

Even the children worked for pay. When the oldest was about six, she earned a few pennies as an errand girl.

"After work hours, a boarder would remove the top cover from his miner's pail and order the child to the saloon across the road. For a nickel, the pail was filled with draught beer. . . ."

"The beer delivered, she would occasionally get a tip. But always at a price. That price was amusement. The tip, a copper penny, rolled across the floor planks to the most inaccessible spot. . . . The amusement: watching the child scramble for it against all odds, never giving up, even if a finger gushed blood across the splinters.

"A penny was a fortune, to be retrieved at any and all costs. Into the piggy savings bank it went, along with all the others."

The five saloons in the Immigrant Woman's neighborhood were run by miners. Tired of working underground, they had converted part of their homes into saloons.

During prohibition the saloon keepers became bootleggers. There was little risk since the whole community was involved and it was easy to pay off the police.

But the Immigrant Woman was shocked when her husband suggested that they "go into the liquor business." She told her daughters:

"I wouldn't think of it! Never! Never! I couldn't stand the disgrace that would follow you girls for the rest of your life. You'd never, never live it down.

"Your father said that we can't live off what other people say. But I refused, absolutely. We'll live honestly, . . . even if we all have to scrub floors."

Living in the midst of the saloons contributed to the isolation of the Immigrant Woman and her family. She disapproved of the saloon keepers and refused to let her children associate with their children.

Her pride and high principles extended beyond disapproval of her neighbors, however. Even when financial pressures were at their worst, she refused to accept even 25 cents more than she had asked for sewing a dress.

She strongly supported her husband in his union activities. She refused to compromise or court the favor of those in power to get him a better position in the mines.

She told a friend, "'No Rosie, that's one thing I won't do. No matter how bad things get. I'm not giving myself to that mine boss and that one and that mine foreman, just so my husband can have a better job. Never! Not if we all starve to death.'"

Despite all the hard work and saving, the family was still in debt when the oldest daughter graduated from high school in the mid-1920s.

Two major setbacks had occurred: a cooperative grocery store in which they had invested \$500 went bankrupt; and their barn was burned down by neighbors who suspected that a child molester was living in it.

The husband, who had tried to make a living farming, was forced back to the mines.

Ironically, it was because of the debt that the oldest was encouraged to go to college to become a teacher.

The Immigrant Woman reasoned, "Maybe, just maybe, if high school was completed in three years, college could be done the same way; and she'd still only be eighteen when she was all finished.

"Then. . . 'big money' from high school teaching could really pay off all the family debts and keep the family going on from that time forward. . . ."

The plan worked. With the aid of work scholarships and loans, the oldest graduated from what is now Pittsburg State University in Pittsburg, Kansas.

After three years of teaching, the debts were "paid in full. . . . The family had its freedom from the grocer's bill."

Many years later the daughter felt compelled to tell her mother's story.

In her biography she comes to terms with her own rigid upbringing and shows how so many proud, hard-working immigrant women survived during the first two decades of this century.



## 7. Radley Jolly Club Was Social Center for Kansas Mining Community

Marcet Haldeman, banker's daughter, prestigious girl's school graduate, actress, and manager of the family banking business in Girard, Kansas, had little in common with the poor immigrant miners for whom she founded the Radley Jolly Club.

But she did have a sense of social commitment, and in 1915 started the Jolly Club as an organization for young people in the mining camps of Crawford County, Kansas.

Haldeman described this area of southeast Kansas.

". . . the miner's rickety shanty squats next door to the comfortable, well-built farmhouse and in the pastures the Italians' goats graze side by side with the Holsteins of native Kansans.

". . . men from twenty countries, speaking as many languages, mingle but seldom mix--in this county is to be found every brand of lawlessness from simple traffic in corn-whiskey to the most cold-blooded murder."

She was inspired and encouraged by her aunt, Jane Addams, the pioneering social worker who had founded Hull House, a settlement house in Chicago. She was also influenced by Emanuel Julius, whom she married in 1916.

Julius had moved to Girard to work on the nationally known socialist newspaper The Appeal to Reason. This radical paper advocated better education, shorter working hours, and higher pay for miners.

Marcet got the idea of starting a youth club while she was at a movie.

"The young banker found herself depressed when she realized that a picture show such as this was the only harmless recreation available for the miners. She must act and she did that very night.

"Miss Haldeman arose and went from seat to seat; urging upon one miner after another the formation of a club," reported the Topeka Daily State Journal in 1916.

The young miners in the audience responded to the idea. Haldeman made plans to locate the club in Radley, a large mining camp about 20 minutes by street car from Girard.

There she rented a hall above a "nickel show" and furnished it with books and magazines, pool tables, and materials for learning homemaking skills. Since many of the young people in the community spoke little English, the hall soon became an important center to learn and practice their new language.

Marcet was determined to understand the young people of Radley. She knew French and German, but decided to study Italian as well. She also tried to learn about the mines.

"Last Sunday a group of my boys showed me through the mine. . . . I have always had a horror of tunnels, but I felt that I simply must understand the conditions under which my boys work," she related.

No amount of study, apparently, could have prepared her for everything she encountered at the Jolly Club.

Haldeman recalled a personal experience.

"Last Wednesday evening, I had some of the girls in to sew on our curtains. . . . and as we were working away Mary Lewis said suddenly:

"Say, Miss Haldeman, you know Jo?"

"Yes," I answered as the picture of that vivid, wistful Italian flashed before me, "Yes. Why?"

"He killed a girl," Mary replied. "Do you care?"

It seems the boy, Jo, had shot the girl he loved and had been sentenced to 99 years in the federal penitentiary. After serving four years, his friends managed to get him pardoned.

"He is one of the best Club members I have and whenever I dance with him and realize how full of vibrant, joyous youth and strength he is and then reflect that in many states the same verdict . . . would have meant death . . . my very soul cries out against capital punishment," Marcet Haldeman declared.

Marcet never seemed to lose enthusiasm for her work at the Jolly Club, even though she got little support from her friends in Girard and had no experienced older person to turn to for advice.

However, the club was a success among the people of Radley. Eventually Haldeman purchased seven acres of land for a community center building, baseball diamond, tennis courts, and recreation grounds.

Gene DeGruson, curator of the Haldeman-Julius collection at Pittsburg State University, talked to some of the surviving members of the club.

"There are still a lot of people who attended that Radley Jolly Club. Those that I traced down are now retired vice presidents of banks, that sort of thing . . . .

"They can still give us a picture of such things as the Valentines Day Dance in 1916. It meant a great deal to them. These memories are among their family treasures."



Haldeman insisted that she was not a lady bountiful, but was merely trying to help the miners develop a community spirit. What she provided was organized recreation and social contacts for the miners of Crawford County.



## 8. Farming Required All of Immigrants' Energy

With a few English lessons under his belt, Erich Fruehauf, a twenty-five year old German-speaking immigrant, left his home, his brothers, and his mother, whom he would never see again, for the overseas journey to Hudson, Kansas.

Reaching New York by boat, he stocked up for what he thought would be the short train trip to Kansas, purchasing two oranges and three buns.

As Fruehauf stepped off the Santa Fe at the Hutchinson depot May 20, 1926 at 2 A.M., he felt far removed from his Czechoslovakian homeland.

"I carried my luggage to the waiting room. It sported several benches and a lone, fly-specked lightbulb on the ceiling. . . . Not a soul around. I and the dim light above represented an island in the darkness of an unknown new world. . . .

"Out there in the darkness must be the farm where I hoped to find a future, the farm on which I had staked all I had."

Fruehauf had earned his Ph.D. in agriculture at the University of Leipzig in 1924, but post-World War I inflation and lack of family connections had hindered him in securing employment in his field.

Swallowing his pride, Fruehauf wrote to the cousin of a friend, Robert Hupe, in Hudson, Kansas to see whether there was agricultural work in America.

When Fruehauf reached his final destination in Stafford, Kansas, Hupe was there to meet him.

Robert Hupe was born in Germany's Harz Mountains in 1863. At the age of nineteen he renounced his Prussian citizenship and sailed for America. Hupe was one of the first generation of Kansas farmers.

Shortly after his arrival to the family farm near Ellinwood, Kansas, his uncle died, leaving him the only breadwinner. The rest of the family included his aunt, her twelve-year-old son and her very old mother-in-law.

Together they lived in a dugout in Stafford County. There they survived the famous blizzard in the winter of 1886-87, burning dried cow chips, corn fodder, and ear corn to stay alive.

In the spring, Hupe hired out as a cowboy and was given a team of oxen in payment. Fruehauf later described how Hupe and his young cousin planted a corn crop by hand.

"They opened a slit in the soil with a spade, dropped a kernel of corn in it and then covered the soil with their shoe. They were lucky to have timely rains that year. The corn yielded well; they had a start."

Robert Hupe soon became a naturalized citizen. In 1892 he bought his own farm with a \$1600 mortgage.

He diligently built up the farm, planting fruit trees, establishing a windbreak, digging a well, and building a barn, corral, granary, and chicken house. Like many other immigrants, he saved for years to bring his boyhood sweetheart from Germany so they could finally marry.

Later, disaster struck. Hupe lost his wife in childbirth and his son and oldest daughter died of scarlet fever. He had little heart to take on more debts or more work.

Then, Erich Fruehauf arrived to help on the farm in 1926, taking some of the burden off Hupe's shoulders. Fruehauf married Hupe's daughter Hedwig and like Hupe, became a naturalized citizen as soon as possible.

Though both men were immigrant farmers, the challenges and rewards each expected were different. For the pioneer settlers and first-generation farmers, luxuries were rare. All their energies were needed just to survive.

But when Fruehauf came to the Hupe family as a second-generation farmer, he was employed on an established 240-acre farm. The back-breaking work of the pioneers was over but life was still not easy.

Planting and cultivating the corn and wheat, harvesting, threshing, and plowing the stubble were all exhausting work. The sweat flowed on hot summer days until all granaries were filled.

By the 1920s, the farm family still could not expect many of the comforts of modern civilization. Electric lights, gas, city water service, and indoor plumbing were conveniences that they had only heard or read about. They were promises of the future to work and yearn for.

But in the decades to follow, technology brought enormous change to the lives of immigrant farmers and to the whole state.

## 9. Progress Changes the Immigrant's Life

The ring of the phone, the combine's whirr, and the tractor's rough hum signaled a new era of life for the settled immigrants in rural Hudson, Kansas.

The telephone changed a lot of things. Now eight or nine farmers could talk to each other without hitching up the buggy and driving to a neighboring farm. It brought easy access to the outside world.

With a rapid turn of the crank that set off a long signal, the operator could make public announcements along the line.

"The mill has a load of coal on the track. Cheaper direct from the car. Must be unloaded by tomorrow.

"Witt's store has just received a shipment of nice cabbage for sauerkraut. Come and get it."

The phone brought the world a lot closer--sometimes too close. Each party had a special coded signal but anybody could listen, and they did. Some people couldn't let a ring go by without picking up the receiver. Making a date over the phone was like putting an ad in the paper.

By the late 1920s farming had become mechanized. For many farmers, combines and tractors replaced the harvest help hired for a dollar a day. The teenage boys hired in the past went to high school and then moved to the city.

Keeping up with the new technology also required considerable amounts of cash. The old pioneer policy "Pay cash or do without" was changed to the motto "Buy now and pay later."

Then Wall Street collapsed. Along with the foreclosure and sliding prices for farm produce, Kansas farmers like Erich Fruehauf were hit with another blow: the "black blizzards" of the 1930s.

The government's demand for all-out wheat production, made possible by the new machinery, combined with low rainfall to create disaster.

Fruehauf remembered how the prairie winds whipped the bare plowed soil:

"In the West where there was neither trees nor vegetation on the ground to slow down the wind, the rolling sand filled in roads, piled dunes into the fence rows, buried implements in the fields."

"The dust entered our houses through the finest cracks around doors and windows and through keyholes. It settled everywhere.

"Housewives hung wet sheets inside doors and windows to trap the dust. . . . Nostrils and eyes of our cattle were encrusted with mud. . . . A rabbit running through the pasture stirred up a trail of dust. . . .

"Soon [dust clouds] blotted out the sun, leaving the county in an eerie dusk reminiscent of a total eclipse. . . ."

In many cases, the old immigrant pioneers and their sons and daughters became the migrants of the 1930s. Many farmers of western Kansas gave way to the Depression and dust. Some traveled east; others to California.

Those who stayed faced the dangers of dust pneumonia and worse. A reporter for Collier's magazine found only "famine, violent death, private and public futility, insanity and lost generations."

Erich Fruehauf weathered the Depression and the Dust Bowl. The 1940s brought electricity and its benefits to rural Kansas. But the new decade also brought World War II, which affected everyone.

Fruehauf recalled, "In my neighborhood the farmers of German ancestry became understandably concerned and apprehensive, when the Government rounded up the Japanese population of the West Coast and took them to detention camps out of fear they would sympathize with, and probably aid the enemy.

"I am glad to recall that citizens of German background were never openly discriminated against in Kansas."

But Fruehauf's dream of handing over his farm to the third generation was shattered when his son took a job in the oil industry.

In his fifty years on a western Kansas farm, Erich Fruehauf witnessed the change from producing everything possible for the family to commercial production of cash crops for the market.

The land that could be homesteaded free or bought for \$10 in 1884 now brought hundreds of dollars per acre. The single-family farm began to give way to corporate farming.

A poor but resourceful immigrant could probably no longer hope to own his own farm in Kansas.

## 10. Strawberry Hill's Ethnic Heritage Lives Today

The name evokes images of the countryside and wild strawberry patches, but Strawberry Hill lies solidly in an urban setting, near the business district of Kansas City, Kansas.

The community has been the home of Slavic peoples since before the turn of the century. Its atmosphere is distinctive. The hilly streets are lined with small houses on narrow lots.

Many of the houses are so close that you could lean out of a window and touch a neighbor's home. Low fences surround the well-tended lawns and flowers.

Many church steeples are visible. The spire of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in particular stands out.

Croatian inscriptions on building cornerstones and some of the business names--Skradski's Funeral Home; Grisnik's sausage shop, for example--reflect Strawberry Hill's ethnic heritage.

In the 1890s, immigrants streamed out of Yugoslavia to America seeking a more prosperous life. Many Yugoslavs, particularly those from Croatia, came to Kansas City to work in the meat packing houses.

"They were being supplied through the Cunard line. They hired agents in Austria, who then went out and recruited young men, and women too, to come work in the stockyards," explains Bill March, professor of East European Studies at the University of Kansas.

These immigrants worked long hours for little pay--as low as three and one-half cents an hour. The stench in the plants was often overpowering and the work was dangerous.

Accidents were common, and virtually nothing was done for employees who were disabled by them.

Many of the immigrants knew no English. The long hours left little time or energy to study the language of their new country.

The immigrants first settled in a small area known as "the Patch," which was little more than a collection of shacks on dirty streets near the Fowler & Armour packing plants on the Kaw River Bottoms.

In this environment, it was easy to lose heart, but the new immigrants maintained their ties to the church, the community, and their heritage. By sticking together, they could adjust and survive.

The population of the Patch grew and families started moving out when they were financially able. Then, the flood in 1903 destroyed many homes on the Bottoms, so people moved up to the Strawberry Hill bluffs.

"Strawberry Hill was, in its first period, before the second generation grew up, simply a transplanted village. These people lived a village life," said March.

"They would still buy pigs, slaughter them in the winter in the backyard, make sausage, ham, cure ham in the attic, make their own wine in the basement.

Attracted by the availability of hillside homes and several other ethnically-oriented Catholic churches in the vicinity, the Yugoslav immigrants soon wanted to establish a church of their own.

Since most were Croatian, they wanted a Croatian Catholic church where they could worship in their own language and with their own traditions.

Father Martin Krmpotich came from Croatia in 1900 to become the pastor of the new parish built on a hill overlooking the Kaw. In 1908 a famous Croatian fresco painter arrived from Zagreb to decorate the interior. Later, many of his beautiful frescoes were severely damaged in a fire in the church in 1932.

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church became the focal point of a rapidly developing ethnic and cohesive community. In 1925, St. John's Catholic Club was organized.

Young people were drawn to the club by the gymnasium and numerous athletic and social activities, and baseball, football, and basketball teams.

Many young men from Strawberry Hill, who later participated in sports on the college and professional levels, began their training on St. John's Catholic Club teams.

The emphasis of the club was not only on athletics. Maintaining and strengthening the Croatian heritage was also vitally important. With this goal in mind, the club sponsored many cultural activities.

The 1920s were prosperous years for the people of Strawberry Hill. The meat-packing industries flourished. More than ten thousand workers were employed by the plants in Kansas City, Kansas.

Yugoslav-owned businesses sprang up as more money became available. In contrast to the untrained immigrants of a few years before, the Croatians became small businessmen and skilled workers. The hard times were not over, however, for the Depression loomed ahead.



## 11. Strawberry Hill Still a Community for Immigrants

For the Yugoslavian immigrants who came to work in the Kansas City meat-packing plants and who settled in Strawberry Hill, the Depression years hit hard.

Although the 1920s were prosperous and the immigrants were able to enjoy some of the prosperity for which they had left their homeland, many of them subsequently lost their jobs.

The ones who kept jobs suffered severe wage cuts--sometimes as much as two-thirds of their previous earnings.

In one way, residents of Strawberry Hill were lucky. The sense of community they had nurtured over the years meant less suffering for them than for many people in the United States.

Neighbors were generous with each other, and the various social clubs organized picnics and dances where people could forget their troubles.

Families became skillful in stretching their pennies. They collected driftwood along the river and chipped ice in winter. They also collected grain and coal in the railroad yards.

It was a common sight to see women trudging up the hill balancing the heavy loads on their heads.

World War II brought radical changes and renewed prosperity to Strawberry Hill. Jobs became plentiful in the packing houses and other industries, ensuring an economic security unknown to the first Yugoslavian immigrants.

But the war took its toll. Many of the young men who left the Hill to fight never returned.

In the late 1940s, the membership of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church reached an all-time high of 760 families. The Hill became crowded with the men who had come back from war, married and started families. Some began moving away.

Increased earnings, brought about by post-war prosperity, prompted more families to move into new homes with modern conveniences, not located in Strawberry Hill. However, the ones who left maintained many of their ties to the old neighborhood, particularly their membership in St. John's Church.

But those who left were changed by their move to suburbia, much as the rest of the country changed.

"A whole change in lifestyle started to take place in all communities, particularly working-class, blue-collar communities in the United States in the period of the 50s, mid-50s on. A new opportunity, a new drive to move out

of these communities," explained Bill March, professor of East European Studies at the University of Kansas.

However, the biggest threat to the community occurred in 1957, when about 125 homes in Strawberry Hill had to be razed to make way for construction of an intercity viaduct.

Many of the dislocated people had lived in their houses for years and were reluctant to leave the area. About one-fourth of them were able to relocate on the Hill, but many were forced to leave the community.

"By cutting out a good chunk of the community physically, this accelerated this outward mobility and spread it into the suburbs," March said.

The remainder of the Croatian neighborhood is now small; threatened by zoning regulations and other ethnic groups moving into the area. Yet the sense of loyalty to the community and its heritage remains.

Yugoslavian immigrants still arrive. Many of these newer immigrants, most of whom are skilled workers, live outside Strawberry Hill. But they help maintain Yugoslavian culture through contacts with churches and social organizations.

In many ways, the life of the community still revolves around the churches, especially St. John's.

St. John's Catholic Club still organizes social and cultural events and attempts to preserve the Yugoslavian heritage, primarily through a musical group known as the Tamburitzans.

Made up of young people from St. John's parish, the Tamburitzans were organized in 1968 to keep Croatian music alive in Strawberry Hill and to give the parish youth something to do.

One of the volunteer workers has reported that of all the young people who had participated in the Tamburitzans, not one had ever been in serious trouble.

The group performs native folk dances and plays the tamburitza, a traditional Yugoslavian stringed instrument similar to a mandolin. They give concerts throughout the Kansas City area and have performed twice in Yugoslavia.

The community enthusiastically supports the group. Many people selflessly volunteer their time and talents on its behalf. Parish women laboriously make and embroider the flowing costumes, while the dancers spend hours mastering their routines.

The future of Strawberry Hill is uncertain, but for the present it remains a cohesive, ethnic community.

Many people share the sentiments of Matt Skradski, who owns the local funeral home and has resided in Strawberry Hill for many years. "I was born on Strawberry Hill; I've lived here all my life, and I intend to die here."

## 12. Prisoners of War Only a Memory Now

Only the water tower stands today at the former Phillips prisoner of war camp near Salina. Cattle graze silently nearby. The blocks that once supported the barracks are still visible but have sunk several inches into the ground over the past 40 years.

In 1943 Camp Phillips was a busy place. Every week trains appeared carrying German and Italian prisoners of war. The Army decided that it was cheaper to bring the prisoners to the United States than to haul food and supplies to them in Europe or Africa.

Ships that had taken American soldiers to the European front were used on the return trip to transport prisoners far from the battlefields.

About 4,000 prisoners, all enlisted men, were detained at Phillips. There the atmosphere was relatively tranquil. According to one Army officer on duty, the Germans were hard to get to know but the Italian prisoners were happy-go-lucky.

"Those Italian boys were tickled pink to be in the great state of Kansas. I can still remember those spring mornings when I'd stand on the side of the road and watch a truck convoy of Italian prisoners go roaring off to work," he recalled.

"Those boys would be singing, playing mandolins, and just shouting for the pure joy of it. If they weren't men damned happy to be alive, well, they sure didn't act like it."

In contrast to Phillips, the atmosphere was tense at Camp Concordia, which housed 5,000 Germans, including numerous officers. Many of these prisoners were members of General Rommel's Afrika Korps.

Camp Concordia was conceived as a model POW camp. In fact, however, the environment was dangerously oppressive. Within the barbed wire, remembered one prisoner, "it was Nazi Germany again."

The Nazis among them subjected the prisoners to stringent control. Many prisoners were beaten up for "unpatriotic behavior," and several were tormented into committing suicide.

"The Nazi organization was similar to the Gestapo. Courses were organized in military and ideological training; personal conversations were monitored to detect dissenters. Many prisoners kept a club by their bed for protection and used buckets at night rather than dare the dark trip to the latrine," explained Judith Gensberg, author of "Stalag USA."

"The Nazis controlled the camp university curriculum as well. They monopolized camp media, censored reading and film material, quashed any sign of anti-Hitlerism, and threatened violence to those who dared protest."

To counteract the Nazi influence, the Army moved forty-four of the Nazi leaders away from Concordia.

They also removed Nazi books, encouraged church attendance and transferred responsibility for the education of the prisoners from the prisoners themselves to the Army and the University of Kansas. KU accredited many of the camp's educational courses.

The prisoner of war camps had smaller branch camps in areas where the prisoners would be available for farm labor.

One branch of the Concordia camp, at Peabody, contained 150-200 prisoners during the war. Some local citizens strongly opposed the arrival and supposed coddling of the POWs.

Others were thankful to have the additional labor, particularly during planting and harvesting seasons.

The farmers were warned not to converse with the prisoners and particularly not to discuss political events or the war. Most often, prisoners were fed like any other farm hands and worked 10 hours a day.

The Geneva Convention forbade overwork or abuse of prisoners. But their emotional disturbance from the war was still evident.

If an airplane flew over low when prisoners were working in a field, they would automatically drop to the ground.

As time passed, both the farmers and the prisoners tended to drop their guard and their relationships became more friendly. The "education" that the POWs received while working and living in close contact with small-town America was probably more enduring than any course.

By late 1945 most of the camps were closed and the prisoners returned home. Later, a few came back to Kansas to live permanently; many have come to visit; others wanted to permanently erase memories of their years of imprisonment.

Now the empty stone guard towers stand looking out over wheat fields. That's as it should be, one Army officer commented.

"I'm glad it's gone back to grass out there. That's what the land was intended for, anyway, not holding men who fought."

### 13. Equality in Education Was Sheldon's Dream For Topeka

Despite the lip service given to freedom and equality, education for blacks was inferior in turn-of-the-century Topeka.

Although many white Kansans had fought to free the slaves in the Civil War, many of these same people objected to sending their children to school with blacks; some on moral grounds, others for economic reasons.

Blacks were assigned to separate and usually substandard schools.

As early as the 1860s, the Kansas State Teachers Association had resolved to admit black children to public schools on the same terms as whites.

Local newspaper editors argued that if blacks grew up in ignorance, they would fill the "station houses and jails."

"A community cannot afford to allow any of its members to grow to maturity without education, and as a consequence, liable to fall into the vices and crimes which ignorance generates," one editor wrote.

"It is a measure of self-preservation to see that they have opportunities for instruction."

Despite teachers' resolutions, the concern of editors and others, the issue of the education of blacks in Kansas received little attention before the turn of the century.

The state legislature rarely dealt with the issue until 1879.

In that year, the legislature took an important step and authorized cities with populations greater than 15,000 to maintain separate elementary schools for black children and prohibited segregated secondary schools.

Although smaller communities were not legally permitted to maintain separate schools, many blacks continued to attend segregated schools because of public pressure, the potential for violence, or as a matter of choice.

Several legal cases in the 1890s provided additional sanction for racial segregation in the schools. There was also little public debate over the merits of integrated education at this time.

Despite these legal setbacks, blacks continued to seek an education. They sought to use their education to prove to the white community that they were hard working, reliable and worthy of equal treatment.

This tremendous faith in the value of education was supported in resolutions of the State Mass Convention of Colored People.

"We resolve that all adults as well as children, use all means in their power to secure an education," declared one resolution.

"No race of people can prosper in this country. . .who do not cherish and foster education and no uneducated people have ever prospered permanently," another statement read.

Charles Sheldon, a white minister in turn-of-the-century Topeka, was determined to better the education of blacks.

He supported their efforts to prove themselves to white society. Sheldon was a clergyman who preached the brotherhood of mankind and he tried to practice what he preached.

In 1893 Rev. Sheldon opened a kindergarten for blacks in a section of Topeka called "Tennessee Town," which was settled by former slaves who left that state after the Civil War.

The school, a free library and reading room were part of his Congregational Church's efforts to aid the black neighborhood.

In this venture, Sheldon met a young black named Elisha Scott. Born in 1890, the youngest of thirteen children, Elisha lived by his wits. He sold coal by the bushel and herded cows.

He later worked his way through the Kansas Technological Institute. Charles Sheldon helped, supplying him with clothes, spending money and encouragement.

Scott graduated from Washburn Law School in 1916, the only Negro in his class. Although the minister had hoped that Scott would follow his lead into the clergy, Scott's fame as a lawyer quickly grew.

One of the first blacks to seek state office, he ran--and lost--as the Republican candidate for state attorney general in 1930.

Despite his growing wealth and prominent status, Scott never forgot the problems of his race. In court he fought the exclusion of blacks from Newton's swimming pool, from Coffeyville's kindergarten, and from movie theaters and schools in Topeka.

As important as his battle to gain racial equality, Elisha Scott fathered three sons who also became lawyers. The two youngest, Charles and John, stayed in Topeka and continued Elisha's practice.

Building on their father's work, the efforts of the Scott sons were instrumental in winning one of the most important legal confrontations in the nation's history, the case of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka.

#### 14. A Matter of Justice—Brown vs. Board of Education

In 1951 Oliver Brown, a member of Topeka's black community, filed suit in the United States District Court of Kansas against the local school board.

Brown was dissatisfied that his daughter, Linda, was bused to a school even though another school was closer by.

"There is no sense in me having a daughter who has to go clear across town, walk seven blocks up a dangerous railroad crossing, cross a busy street, stand in the cold and rain to catch a school bus, when there is a school so close by."

Brown's feelings about his daughter's schooling were so strong that he walked with her one September morning to Sumner School, the nearby elementary school for whites. When Brown tried to enroll her in the third grade at Sumner, he was refused.

Although rocking boats was not Oliver Brown's habit, he took his case to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Except for military service, he had lived all of his thirty-two years in Topeka without getting involved in the NAACP or any other political organization.

More than most blacks, Brown's economic situation was secure. As a union-member welder and military veteran, he was protected to some extent against economic reprisal. As an assistant pastor of the St. John's African Methodist Episcopal Church, he was part of the black establishment in Topeka.

But in 1951 Oliver Brown rocked the boat. Joined by the parents of nineteen other black children, he filed suit against the Topeka school board.

His daughter Linda remembers.

"I couldn't understand why we could play with [our white and Mexican] friends all summer and then I couldn't go to school with them."

The focus in Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education was whether legally enforced segregation was permissible under the United States Constitution.

In 1951 in the District Court of Kansas, the three-judge court decided in favor of the board of education. The judges reasoned that the black and white schools in Topeka were substantially equal in physical facilities, curriculum and teachers' qualifications.

But the Court decided that segregation did have a negative effect on blacks' motivation to learn.

Yet because of legal precedent and the finding of substantial equality in programs and facilities, the District Court ruled that the black children were not denied equal protection of the law under the Fourteenth Amendment.

The plaintiffs decided to appeal. The United States Supreme Court heard Brown's appeal along with similar cases from South Carolina, Virginia, Delaware and the District of Columbia.

The case was argued before the Supreme Court in 1952 but not decided until 1954.

"Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race . . . deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities?" the justices asked.

"We believe that it does," came the unanimous decision.

"To separate them from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone.

"We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."

Thus the Supreme Court required that desegregation be accomplished with "all deliberate speed."

Former University of Kansas law professor Paul Wilson was the state's assistant attorney general assigned to argue the case before the Supreme Court.

"For me, [this case] is less important for what it says about the law than for what it says about America. . . . [T]he greater significance of Brown is its reflection of the ability of America to re-examine its cultural patterns and values and to declare new principles that seem more consistent with maturing concepts of justice."

However, the Brown case was only part of a larger picture.

For example, about the time of the Brown decision, a black member of the Kansas House of Representatives set out on a vacation trip across Kansas with his family.

They were refused lodging in motels and had to sleep in their car. When restaurants refused to serve them, they bought sandwiches or food in the grocery stores.

Most difficult was the refusal of service station owners to allow them to use their restrooms on the trip.



For blacks, these were common experiences.

As a result of the Brown case and following decisions, the law would no longer allow white Americans to humiliate blacks by excluding them or setting them apart.



## 15. The Black Church: A Cultural Institution in Kansas

For two centuries the black churches in this country have been "the most important Negro cultural institution," serving as social, political and educational centers for the black communities.

From the 1860s, the black churches in Lawrence, Kansas, have been central to the lives of the city's black residents, providing a common meeting ground and refuge for people fleeing to the new free state. The churches were a supportive network that helped members adjust to their subordinate status.

The early membership of St. Luke's African Methodist Episcopal Church included escaped slaves, ex-slaves and their children.

Many reached Lawrence through the underground railroad system. A stone building that was the church's first site served as a hiding place for many male citizens, both white and black, during Quantrill's raid.

The histories of Lawrence's thirteen black churches are also filled with stories of gospel singing, evangelizing and fund-raising activities. Later, civil rights issues, political campaigns, and interracial projects have unified the church members in common causes.

One prominent member of the First Regular Mission Baptist Church, Ethel Moore, 93, recalled the kindergarten class organized by her church to help educate the young black children.

"Our church had one of the first kindergarten schools. The teachers were people that were members of the church or the community. It was sort of an outgrowth of a Sunday school. It was really in the weekday that they would teach you your alphabet and have a big board that they could teach you how to print your letters."

The memories of some of the older members of the black churches reflect the many activities that the church provided.

The church was also a social center. Mrs. Moore remembers with great delight the all-night barbecue in the early fall. In a grove near the church, the men dug a pit, burned hickory logs down to coals and hung a pig on a spit over the fire.

"On Sunday night after the night service they planned to spend the rest of the night over there building up the fire and putting the pig on to roast," Mrs. Moore recalled.

"The ones that were supposed to be the best cooks--I can remember them having the swabs fixed on hickory sticks where they dip it in the vinegar and seasoning and things, and brush the meat and turn it when necessary.

"It was an all-night job and one of the things the kids liked to do. It was a good legitimate excuse for staying up late."

For Mrs. Moore and her friends church work meant making money for the church. One of the money-raising groups was the sewing circle. They bought the church bell and pulpit furniture.

But for many church members the music was the best part. Edna Wallace, a longtime member of Lawrence's Ninth Street Baptist Church, remembered.

"Back then they really sang and clapped. They never took lessons or anything like that. But some of them had wonderful voices. Back then we had church!

"Three or four of the deacons could pray, too. They talked to the Lord and really meant it. They just went to the ceiling and came back."

Many of the black churches' younger members have urged their church to play an active political role. This is not a new idea. Black ministers led the first Negro uprising against slavery and have long worked to better the lot of their people.

Especially after World War I when blacks became more urbanized, the concerns of the church became more secular: less emphasis was placed on salvation after death, and more attention was paid to the blacks' economic, social and political problems.

Since World War II the churches have led in civil-rights activities and strongly supported such organizations as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. In Lawrence, blacks and whites joined in the Lawrence League for the Practice of Democracy to promote the brotherhood of all races.

Paula Holmes, a young member of St. Luke's AME Church, expressed her feelings about the church's role in politics.

"The church--all churches--should be involved with more than the spiritual aspects of a person's life.

"Children who don't have the free meal program in schools, the voting issues, the housing issues--all of those kinds of things can be addressed by the church because people come together on Sundays, on Wednesdays, for prayer meetings, for regular worship service.

"You've got an ideal opportunity there to address the issues that are going on in the local community as well as on a national level."

Despite occasional strife within the church membership, economic hardship and racial oppression, black churches have provided a solid foundation for the black community.

Reverend W. S. Sims, retired minister of the Second Christian Church in Lawrence, described the heart of the church's mission.

"The thing that's going to make us come together and be in unity, one with another, we're going to have to do what Christ told us to do in the book of books, The Bible.

"Come, let us reason together,' He said."



## 16. Kansas Potawatomi Preserve Heritage

For one group of Kansas immigrants, "the great melting pot" was a place to cook fry bread, not to lose their identity in.

So observed James Clifton, a historian who has studied the Potawatomi Indian tribe of Kansas, the "Prairie People," many of whom still live on reservation lands near Mayetta, north of Topeka.

The Potawatomi have stubbornly resisted attempts to change their traditional culture, but disagreement over land ownership has fanned the flames of factional conflict and perpetuated a heated controversy within the Kansas Potawatomi tribe for more than a century.

Clifton, author of "The Prairie People," described the Kansas Potawatomi as the "most culturally conservative of all modern Potawatomi."

"The Kansas Potawatomi are one of the most stubborn people I have ever met; they are firmly, bitterly, and successfully resistant to enforced cultural change, outside domination, and assimilation," Clifton wrote.

Originally from the Great Lakes region, the Potawatomi were gradually pushed westward to Kansas through a series of nullified treaties and forced moves and eventually were resettled on a reservation north of Topeka.

As early as 1855, one agent for the Bureau of Indian Affairs reported on their resistance to change.

"The Prairie Band oppose, thwart, and defeat every measure of improvement. They are hunters, despise farming, and denounce those who cultivate the soil," the agent wrote.

"This band arrogantly claims ownership of all the land and declares that the other bands have no rights here, nor to the annuities, they being permitted to participate in them only as a courtesy of their condescending brothers."

Beginning in 1861, the Prairie Band leaders rejected a government plan to divide into sections the community-owned lands. As a compromise they retained an eleven-square-mile area of their old reservation north of Topeka as undivided corporate property.

Later, the Dawes Allotment Act of 1887 gave the president authority, without the tribe's consent, to allot land to individuals and to make them U.S. citizens. If an Indian refused to select an allotment, an Indian agent would assign him one.

Conservative elements of the Prairie Band, under the able leadership of Wakwaboshkok, successfully resisted allotment of their land until the end of the century. But the impact of this act was to force the Indians to give up their hunting life and become farmers.

Marty Kreipe, a member of the Prairie Band, commented on the effects.

"In the old way you have a family that includes more than just Mom, Dad, and the kids--maybe Grandma and Grandpa. They live close together and lots of people watched after the kids," said Kreipe.

"When the allotment came up, they took a grid and put it over the land and then you have to live maybe a mile away."

"And grandpa may live way over on the other end of the reservation. And your aunt, who the child may call 'Mother' and think is Mother is going to be way off somewhere else. It splits the families up."

Historian Henry E. Fritz agreed.

"The Dawes Allotment Act condemned reservation Indians to poverty for many generations. It also deprived them of the power to make important decisions concerning their lives."

Ultimately, the reservation lands were divided not only among the tribal members but also among a variety of other individuals with dubious claims to the status of Prairie Potawatomi.

By 1896 nearly a quarter of the allotments had been sold to whites. Today, some 17,000 acres--22 percent of the original reservation--are still held by Potawatomi. The other 78 percent has gradually been sold to non-Indians.

Many of the land recipients did not live on the reservation. They were viewed by BIA agents as more acculturated to the dominant society; more progressive in their ways.

"On all the reservations the Indians that went along with whatever the white people wanted were progressive. And the ones that didn't were the troublemakers--'progressive' implies progress and progress to the white people is intrinsically good," Kreipe said.

Frequently, "progressive" tribal members joined hands to support the activities of the Indian agent or the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The conservative element, on the other hand, has resisted change.

These members of the reservation community have promoted participation in such traditional activities as the Dream Dance religion, the Native American Church, clan ceremonials and shamanistic practices.



The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 heightened tension between the progressive and conservative groups.

This legislation was designed to end the practice of allotment, improve economic conditions on the reservation, reduce the power of the agent and the bureaucracy, and to initiate a system of participatory democracy.

Although these were goals of Wakwaboshkok and his followers forty years earlier, the culturally conservative leaders of the Prairie Band rejected this governmental attempt to change traditional ways.

Despite the substantial loss of land and the factionalist conflict, the Mayetta Reservation has served as a refuge for the Prairie Band.

The effects of the conflict seem not to have spread beyond the political arena. Several hundred tribal members live on the reservation. New housing and jobs have brought others back home. Many Potawatomi also live in nearby cities.

Although many Kansas Potawatomi are poor, their culture remains unique and viable. The ties among these people are close even though many of the young leave the reservation community to obtain education and employment. Older individuals often return to the community when jobs become available or when they retire.

The Potawatomi still hunt, trap and fish. They plant and put up traditional Indian crops such as corn and squash.

Ancestral names are commonly bestowed on the young and native religions provide a unity for the people.

In the face of formidable opposition, the Prairie Band has held to its heritage.



## 17. Lebanese Establish Supportive Network in Kansas

The year was 1902, and the ship bound for America was filthy and overcrowded. As she tried to make herself and her young daughter comfortable, Martha Fersen must have had doubts about what she was undertaking. She was leaving her husband and other children behind in Lebanon in the hope of earning enough money in America to send back home.

It was unusual for a woman to come to America by herself to earn money; but the economic and political situation in Lebanon was dismal and many Lebanese saw America as the land of opportunity.

Some left to escape oppressive conditions at home, while others intended to stay only long enough to make their fortune and return to native towns and villages.

After arriving in America, Martha and her daughter Mary managed to get to Pittsburg, Kansas, where they had relatives. Although Martha was pregnant and knew no English, she began to work as a peddler among the towns and coal mining camps that dotted the Pittsburg area.

Many of the Arab immigrants who made their way to Kansas around the turn of the century came as peddlers. Most of them, like Martha, were from Lebanon, and they settled primarily in Pittsburg and Wichita.

Peddling was dusty, exhausting work, but Michael Suleiman, professor of political science at Kansas State University, explained the benefits.

"One way to make money in a hurry is to peddle--that is, to carry clothes and material that you can sell quickly. Even if you didn't have the money, then you got that from somebody else who trusted you and gave you this equipment. You went out and sold it. When you came back, you returned the money and got more."

Peddling was a new line of work for the Arab immigrants. Most of them came from a rural background and had farmed small plots of land in Lebanon. Why, then, didn't they become farmers in Kansas, as so many other immigrant groups had done?

"By and large they didn't take up farming, because farming in this country . . . meant isolation," Suleiman said. "It meant that you had to be by yourself away from many people, away from the centers of cities and towns and so on. They're not used to that. They're very family-oriented people. They're very social people. Therefore, they wanted to be where people were."

When the Arab immigrants began peddling, it was not unusual for women to peddle along with the men. In the Lebanese community there was no shame attached. Working for the financial good of the family was the important thing (although Martha's particular situation was not typical).

Women were able to work outside the home because families were close knit and lived together. Consequently, there was always a female relative around to care for the children. It would have been unthinkable to have babysitters outside the family. Everyone naturally assumed the responsibility of helping other family members.

Martha gave birth to a son in 1903, the first Lebanese child born in the Pittsburg region. She returned to Lebanon in 1911 with her son, but her daughter Mary remained behind.

Now married, Mary helped her husband, Henry Farris, run their restaurant, the "Busy Bee." The business thrived.

Showing the generosity so typical within Arab families, Mary and Henry encouraged her brothers and sisters in Lebanon to join them, offering both financial and emotional support.

Back in Lebanon, Martha again faced separation from her children, but agreed to let some of them come. Personal considerations were not as important as a chance for a more prosperous life in America.

Mary and Henry Farris became the "leaders" of the Lebanese community in Pittsburg. When Henry's illness forced them to sell the Busy Bee, Mary set up a grocery store next to their house.

Just as her mother had begun peddling with only a few items, Mary opened her store with four bottles of milk, one stick of bologna and one case of pop. Like many other Arab immigrants, she prospered. Mary ran her store for thirty-two years.

A proud granddaughter still recalls Mary's popularity.

"Every child who had ever come into the store . . . loved her and called her grandma. When she died in 1958, her funeral procession was the longest ever seen in Pittsburg. Everyone came to tell 'grandma' goodbye."

## 18. Lebanese Traditions Transplanted to Kansas

Kansas seems an odd destination for Arab immigrants, but some found their way to its cities at the turn of the century. Their descendants remain to contribute to Kansas' cultural mixture.

"Many of the people who came to Kansas really didn't start out saying, 'Gee, I want to go to Kansas.' They were peddling, and they were moving out West from the East Coast," said Michael Suleiman, professor of political science at Kansas State University.

Many Middle Eastern immigrants who came to Kansas in the early 1900s worked as peddlers, walking from town to town with a small supply of goods.

"You want to hit areas where you don't have other peddlers. And after a while, you come to a community, especially if you had come to it two or three times, and you figure, 'This is not a bad place to live.' So you settle down," Suleiman said.

The family is extremely important within the Arab world; as soon as one person settled in a particular spot, others followed. The early Lebanese immigrants wanted their families with them and often helped relatives back in Lebanon to emigrate. Because of this unique pattern of migration, almost the entire population of villages would be transplanted to America.

Many of the Lebanese who settled in Wichita came from Marjayoun in southern Lebanon. Others from Marjayoun settled in Tulsa and Oklahoma City. Every Labor Day weekend, Lebanese Americans from these cities hold a reunion.

It's a lively social occasion with Arabic dancing, entertainment and Lebanese food: a time for fun, but above all, a time to reinforce family ties that are so important.

For almost thirty years, non-Arab residents of Wichita have had the opportunity to literally get a taste of Middle Eastern life. The two local Eastern Orthodox churches, to which most of the predominantly Christian Arab Americans belong, host Middle Eastern dinners.

St. George's holds its dinner in the fall; St. Mary's in the spring. The women of the church work for weeks beforehand, preparing baklava, cabbage rolls, kibba, spinach pies, stuffed grape leaves and lamb dishes for the 3,000 people who attend each year.

Arab immigrants who first came to Wichita started with almost nothing. They were often uneducated and unskilled, with almost no command of English.

Today their descendants are represented in almost every profession: medicine, law, retailing and food services. The Ali Baba Bakery in Wichita,

which makes pita and other specialty breads, serves a six-state area and is owned and operated by Lebanese Americans.

Some have become active in government. Robert T. Stephan, attorney general of Kansas, is of Lebanese background.

The Lebanese have prospered in America for many reasons: hard work, closely knit group support, a common religion and shared values. They married within their own community and so extended their family ties. They did not suffer the isolation and loneliness that crushed so many other immigrant groups.

Sometimes the large, extended family proved overwhelming, as one young woman recalled.

"I grew up and was raised in Wichita, and I always wanted to leave here. I felt smothered by having so much family. I didn't feel like I had my own identity.

"So when I did go away to college, I think I went through some kind of identity crisis to the point where I really missed many of the things I thought I hated.

"When it came down to getting married and deciding where we would live and where we would raise our family, there were certain things about my background that I really wanted my children to have, and that's the strong family ties--the emphasis on family.

"I wanted my children to know their grandparents like I knew my grandparents. That was a very special relationship for me--it was a highlight for me in growing up."

Although the Lebanese community has remained a tightly knit one, there have been changes. Young Lebanese Americans now marry outside their nationality and religion with an ease that would have been unthinkable to the early settlers. In addition, over the last fifty years, a new kind of Arab immigrant has been coming to America.

The earlier settlers were primarily Christian. They came with limited skills and little education, and they were unaware of the meaning of nationalism.

The newer immigrants are predominantly Muslim. Many came as students, and in general, they are well-educated and have entered all professions.

They are politically sophisticated and have helped the older immigrants to see that being politically active is important, that it is the American way.

Through them, other Arab Americans have learned to view their cultural heritage with pride and respect.

Despite changes, the Arab Americans have retained certain qualities. "By and large, the things that have been retained are good ones: the emphasis on the family, the good healthy social relationship, the concern for other people," said Suleiman.

They have adapted to American life very well, but Arab Americans have not lost sight of their heritage, their rituals and their tradition.





## 19. Mexican Americans Are Latest and Largest Immigrant Group to State

The last major immigrant group to enter Kansas--the Mexican--is also becoming the largest.

Mexican-American communities can be found in all parts of the state: in the Argentine area of Kansas City and Topeka's "Little Mexico" in the east, to Wichita and Emporia in the south, and to Dodge City and Garden City in the west.

The history of Mexican immigration is closely related to the history of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad in the state. Most Mexicans were employed at some point by the railroad. Their communities were usually located along the railroad lines, often literally on the wrong side of the tracks.

Jesus Ramirez, who came to Kansas to work on the railroad in 1916, recalls his early days of hard labor:

"There was much work to do for the railroad. But it is never in the books or papers that the Mexicans built the railroad. And we had no machines, only hands."

As early as 1903, the railroad began hiring Mexicans to work in its extra labor and section gangs. By 1907, Mexicans were actively recruited to come to the United States to work.

They were often met at border towns by recruiters who tried to entice them into signing with their companies by promising transportation, a home and work.

One eighty-year-old man recalled his experience when he arrived in El Paso in 1917.

"There were two employment offices in which Mexican people come in. You sign your name and then they tell you, 'All right, you stay here. You come back to this office every day for your meals. We have to have so many men to transfer you out to where you want to work.'

"So you stay there about a week or maybe three days--it all depends how many men they needed . . . When they have the amount of men they needed, they shooed them out to different places, different jobs."

At first, those who ventured northward to work in Kansas were the "solos," single men or men traveling without their families. Those hired as laborers on the extra gangs were on the lowest rung of the employment ladder in the railroad hierarchy.

They were used primarily on a short-term basis to work up and down the line on repairs and to lay new track. They were laid off every fall before bad weather set in.

They were then taken back to Texas. Many would return to their families in Mexico to wait until they could be rehired in the spring. Some would work in the sugar beet fields near Garden City; others were lured by jobs in the salt mines at Hutchinson and Lyons, the meat-packing houses in Kansas City and Wichita or the coal mines of Parsons and Chanute.

The men who found work on the section crews had a somewhat more stable existence than the nomadic track workers, although they, too, normally worked only on a seasonal basis.

These crews were charged with maintaining a ten-to-twelve-mile section of track. They usually lived alongside the track.

By 1912, the Santa Fe began hiring Mexicans to work year-round as laborers in the railroad shops and roundhouses. As a result, the workers were able to settle down and form more permanent communities.

At first, Mexican railroad workers were housed in boxcars beside the tracks. Boxcar colonies sprang up along railroad sidings in Topeka, Kansas City, Emporia, Chanute and other cities.

These were replaced by section houses, crudely built but better than boxcars. The men were encouraged to send for their families. One former railroad worker remembered the section house in which he and his family lived.

"It was a cement house, but it had enough rooms, and there was enough ventilation, windows, doors. We had two small rooms and a long room. The bath was the same thing--a big washtub for everybody," he said.

"We didn't have no electric lights--we had kerosene lamps . . . the heat was produced by the heaters that we bought and the stove in the kitchen."

Apart from the railroad recruiters, what prompted Mexicans to cross the border in the early part of the century?

"Most immigrants came to Kansas seeking better jobs . . . In 1907, Mexico's economy was victimized by a severe depression, and many workers . . . were laid off," said Robert Oppenheimer, professor of history at the University of Kansas.

"By 1910, the harsh conditions of poverty and the Mexican Revolution motivated many workers and their families to leave Mexico for at least temporary, if not permanent shelter in the United States."

With the Revolution and the disorder that engulfed Mexico, many Mexicans cut their ties to the old country. Some no longer had relatives in Mexico or had lost touch with friends. As they began to put down roots and start families here, their interest in going back to Mexico dwindled.

By 1917 and the coming of World War I, even more Mexicans were attracted to the United States. Jobs became plentiful because of severe labor shortages in the railroad industry.

But the labor boom brought on by the war was followed by the Depression. Although many Mexicans returned to Mexico at this time, the majority remained in Kansas.

"They worked whenever possible in industry or at odd-jobs. More females and children worked to help support the family," said Oppenheimer.

"In May, for example, children often left school as their families traveled to harvest beets and wheat, and they returned to school in October to November.

"Finally, families, friends, and relatives often shared their meager earnings so that all would have something."



## 20. Equality Not Yet Realized for Mexican Americans

The status of Mexican Americans in Kansas has improved since they first arrived in large numbers around the turn of the century to work as railroad laborers, but equality has not yet been realized.

The Mexicans settled into boxcar colonies that sprang up along railroad lines in several Kansas communities. Later, section houses were built by the railroad to replace the boxcars, and the immigrants began moving into other housing nearby.

This movement took place within a small area, and the more permanent settlements took on the character of Mexican villages.

A description of the Kansas City, Kansas, community, or "barrio," known as the Argentine could also describe the barrios in Topeka, Emporia, or wherever the Mexican immigrants settled.

"Segregation was the rule, whether in residential, educational, religious, recreational, or social circles. Mexicans lived in a world apart as 'urban villagers' . . . they remained in a Mexican setting and continued to function more or less as they had in Mexico . . . They remained intensely loyal to their families, their religion, and to their native communities."

Many of the residents of one barrio were from the same area of Mexico. An estimated 60 to 70% of the Mexican Americans in Topeka came from Guanajuato in central Mexico. A large number of those in the Argentine were from Michoacan, also in the central region. This wholesale relocation helped cement the bonds of community solidarity.

Mexicans have been criticized for their apparent clannishness. People complain that many immigrants never learn English or try to assimilate themselves into American life. But, what did the Mexicans have to look forward to when they ventured out of the barrio? They found they were not welcome in many restaurants, schools, theaters, barber shops, swimming pools and churches.

For example, in Lyons, Kansas, Mexican Americans recalled that they were only allowed to swim in the public pool on the day the water was changed. "We had to swim like hell before the water drained out," recalled one former resident.

When they first came to the United States, most Mexicans were illiterate in English. Children starting school were given virtually no help in English and had to struggle along as best they could.

"I remember starting the first grade at the age of seven . . . with nothing but Spanish as my first language," recalls one Mexican-American.

"They detained me in first grade two straight years, and then when I finally got into the second grade, they passed me from the second grade to the third grade. And there again, I was retained another two years.

"And the reason why I failed all the time was by the time I learned to speak English, to learn the alphabet, to learn to read, to learn to write, I was just getting further and further behind."

Many Mexican children never overcame the language barrier, because most schools for Mexicans were segregated. In addition, many felt that an education or even a high school diploma would do them no good. They still wouldn't be able to get better jobs.

After World War II, some of the barriers began to crumble. Returning Mexican-American servicemen were no longer willing to remain outcasts in the society they had fought for.

Mexican Americans also reaped benefits from the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Slowly, Mexican Americans were becoming more visible outside the barrio.

In 1968, Jim Martinez of Hutchinson became the first Mexican-American city commissioner and mayor in Kansas. In the 1970s, D. C. Garcia became the mayor of Garden City.

Mexican Americans have become teachers, social workers, lawyers, engineers, government employees and owners of restaurants and businesses.

Through annual "fiestas" in many communities, non-Mexicans get the chance to learn about the heritage of their Mexican-American neighbors. Numerous fiestas are held on September 16, Mexican Independence Day.

Garden City, the Fiesta Capital of Kansas, has had a fiesta on this day for about 55 years.

The Topeka Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe hosts its annual celebration in July. The public is invited to sample Mexican food and enjoy Mexican dancing and music.

Despite some strides, professor Robert Oppenheimer believes Mexican Americans in Kansas are still subject to prejudice and discrimination.

"Generally Mexican Americans remain in large numbers in the lower economic strata of Kansas society. Until prejudices are understood and dealt with, Mexican Americans will have only limited potential of upward mobility in Kansas, and as they become our largest ethnic and racial minority, their integration will become an increasingly more important issue with which we must deal."

## 21. Ethnic Festivals Flourish in Kansas Communities

Whether in farm towns, colleges or cities, ethnic festivals have the same function: to bring people together in a community project and provide them with a link to a common history.

Many communities in Kansas that were founded about 100 years ago by immigrants celebrate their ethnic heritage in much the same way that most Kansans celebrate their American heritage every Fourth of July and at such typically American festivals as county fairs and rodeos.

So in addition to cotton candy and hot dogs, John Philip Sousa and bluegrass, the festival-goer in this state can find Russian borsch, German zweiback, Czech polka bands and Serbian tamburitzaans.

Bethel College, founded by Swiss and German Mennonites from Russia in the 1870s, holds an annual two-day festival. It serves as both a college homecoming and heritage celebration for the Mennonites around Newton.

Weekend activities include craft demonstrations, art exhibits, historical pageants, a learning fair and worship services.

The highlight for many visitors is the noon meal on Saturday. More than a thousand people are served traditional Swiss, German and Russian food including a double bun called zweiback, borsch (a vegetable soup), sausage, rye bread and fruit soup called cherry mus.

The nearby community of Goessel, population 500, celebrates its Mennonite heritage in its July Country Threshing Days.

A visit to the historic Alexanderwohl Church, named after a village in Russia, and a tour of the six-acre Mennonite Heritage Complex built in 1974 are features of the two-day festival.

Farming and rural skills are celebrated at this fair, even though by 1969 only about six percent of the people living around Goessel still made their living solely by farming.

Another college event that combines fall homecoming with an area-wide ethnic celebration is the Oktoberfest at Fort Hays State University. Like the festival at Newton, the Hays Oktoberfest features outside display booths and traditional German Russian food.

Hays and the surrounding small towns--Catherine, Munjor, Pfeifer, Schoenchen, Liebenthal and Victoria (originally Herzog), were founded in the mid-1870s by the Volga Germans--German Catholics who emigrated from Russia.

During this country's 1976 bicentennial year the people in each of these villages also celebrated the centennial of their ancestors' arrival in Kansas.

The climax of the week-long observance was a three-hour pageant called "Exodus to Freedom," depicting the religious persecution these people suffered before coming to America and the difficulties they encountered in farming the Kansas prairie.

Kansas also has a Czech festival. In the 1870s, Czech emigrants settled around Wilson. Each July this farm town of 900 hosts as many as 15,000 visitors during the After Harvest Czech Festival.

The town comes alive with a parade, carnival and continuous Czech music and dancing.

Particularly colorful are the Wilson Czech dancers--young people who do traditional dances like the Flying Dutchman.

Several local restaurants serve noon meals of traditional Czech food. Thousands of nut sugar cookies called "Kolaches" are sold singly and by the dozen.

Not all the ethnic festivals in Kansas are rural or small-town celebrations.

In Topeka, the Our Lady of Guadalupe Church sponsors a week-long Mexican fiesta.

The Mexican American community was established around the turn of the century when many men found work there with the railroad. Since then, the community has spread far beyond its old barrio.

Still, the Mexican Americans celebrate their heritage in a fiesta which includes carnival rides, Mariachi and Conjunto bands and lots of chili, tacos, tostados and burritos.

In the Strawberry Hill section of Kansas City, Kansas, St. George's Orthodox Church sponsors a Serbian fair held two days in late November.

St. George's was established in 1906 by Serbs who had emigrated from Yugoslavia to work in the meat-packing houses around Kansas City.

Today, the Serbian population is more dispersed, but the church remains a cultural center.

The fair, named "Visit a Village in Serbia," includes a tour of the church, folk dancing, traditional tamburitzan music and the sale of Serbian pastries and crafts.

The Swedes of Lindsborg celebrate their heritage every other year in their Svensk Hyllningfest.



"It reaches into various segments of the community. It brings in young people and older people. The whole scheme is attached to the origin of the community," explains historian Emory Lindquist, a Lindsborg native.

"It has been a vehicle for perpetuating certain aspects of immigrant life that otherwise might have disappeared.

"It has introduced a very lively, contemporary interest in the heritage and is truly representative of a legacy that has made a contribution to the American scene."

The Svensk Hyllningfest is perhaps the best known of all ethnic festivals in Kansas. Lindquist's description of it could apply to each of the ethnic festivals in the state.



## 22. Svensk Hyllningfest and Kansas Folklife Festival Celebrate Ethnic Arts

One of the oldest and perhaps best known ethnic celebrations in Kansas is the Svensk Hyllningfest, a Swedish festival that has been held in Lindsborg every other year since 1941.

Like the fall festivals at Newton and Hays, this event is held in connection with college homecoming events--the parade, football game, and alumni get-togethers of Bethany College.

Lindsborg has a strong Swedish tradition, celebrated in the religious services, music, folk dancing, arts, crafts and food of the Svensk Hyllningfest.

One of the most popular events of the three-day festival is the smorgasbord served to more than 900 people.

Prepared and served by local townswomen according to standard Swedish-American recipes, it includes such delicacies as limpa (spiced rye bread), smoked salmon, pickled herring, ostaka (cheese pudding) and fruit soup.

Folk dancers dressed in traditional red stockings, dark shirts or knee pants, white peasant blouses and colorful vests, are also festival favorites. The high school group--the Lindsborg Swedish Dancers--perform intricate routines; the grade schoolers perform simple folk games and dances.

Even visitors from Sweden are fascinated by the festival activities. A group of native Swedish dancers who came to the festival in 1979 found that some of the customs observed are from 100 years ago--known to modern Swedes only from books.

Emory Lindquist, a native of Lindsborg and past president of Bethany College and Wichita State University, explained the origin of the festival.

"The name of the festival is derived from the Swedish word 'hyllning.' You honor, you recognize, you esteem someone if you use the word 'hyllning.' So the Swedish festival is a tribute to the Swedish immigrants and their contribution to the great symphony of American life."

Lindsborg was founded in 1869 on land purchased by a Swedish colonizing organization committed to the doctrines of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Since the early days, the Lutheran church and its leaders have been important in Lindsborg history.

Pastor Olof Olsson, the first minister of Bethany Lutheran church, came from Sweden in 1869 to help found the town. In addition to being a distinguished preacher, he was the first member of the Kansas House of Representatives from McPherson County.

His successor at Bethany Lutheran, Carl Swensson, founded Bethany College in 1881.

In the next year, Swensson established what is now a well-known Lindsborg tradition--the choral presentation of Handel's "Messiah" each year at Easter.

The Swedes who settled Lindsborg were loyal Americans who appreciated the religious freedom and economic opportunities they found here, but they also were loyal to their Swedish heritage.

"We do not wish, even if it were possible, which it is not, to build a little new Sweden in this country. That would be as childish as it would be wrong, but on the other hand, we do not wish to become Americanized at the turn of the hand," wrote Swensson in 1887. Swensson must have expressed the feeling of the majority of Swedes, for they continued to stick together and use their native language well into the twentieth century.

Lindsborg was, indeed, a Swedish community.

A Swedish-language newspaper, the Lindsborg Posten, was published continuously from 1897 to 1930.

The Bethany Lutheran Church used only Swedish in its services until 1928, when it began having one service in English and one in Swedish. Church minutes were written in Swedish until 1934.

It was not until 1941, the year the Svensk Hyllningfest was established, that English was used exclusively for the major morning church services.

Many of the Swedish traditions observed in Lindsborg and in festivals such as the Svensk Hyllningfest are examples of cultural revivalism, attempts to reintroduce customs of the first-generation immigrants.

For example, since the early 1960s, two traditional Swedish holidays have been publicly observed: the St. Lucia celebration, December 12, which marks the beginning of the Swedish Christmas season, and the Midsummer Day celebration, June 20. These festivals involve costumes, pageants and dancing, but are much smaller affairs than the Svensk Hyllningfest.

A unique celebration of ethnic arts is the Kansas Folklife Festival in Topeka. One of its main goals is to help perpetuate traditions that still survive in unbroken continuity from the past.

Held each September since 1979, it is a non-commercial event sponsored by the Kansas State Historical Society.

According to its executive director, Joseph Snell, the festival is "a celebration of the many cultural traditions of Kansas as seen, heard, and tasted through the music, dance, song, crafts and food of ethnic groups across the state.

"The rich sampling located here on the festival grounds represents a wide range of traditions brought to the state by immigrants, carefully nurtured and passed on from generation to generation."

This gathering of artists and performers in the state capital includes representatives from almost all the communities discussed here and in previous installments of the Kansas Immigrant Series: tamburitza orchestras from Strawberry Hill, a Czech brass band from Wilson, a Volga German dance group from the area around Hays--to name a few.

The Kansas Folklife Festival is one event not to be missed.



### 23. Kansas' First Colleges Founded by Churches

America's first colleges and universities--Harvard, Dartmouth, Yale and Princeton among them--were founded not by state legislatures or colonial governments but by churches.

To the German Mennonites who settled in central Kansas in the 1870s and '80s and other early European immigrants, modern-day Kansans owe a debt of gratitude. They founded the state's first colleges.

Today, a total of more than 10,000 students are enrolled in Kansas' 20 private church-related colleges, most of which were founded one hundred or more years ago.

The first colleges in Kansas were established before statehood in 1861.

Baker University in present-day Baldwin City was founded by Methodists in 1858, five years before its larger neighbor 15 miles to the north, the University of Kansas, was founded by the state legislature.

Some of the earliest colleges in Kansas were founded as mission schools for Indians.

St. Benedict's, now called Benedictine College in Atchison, was founded by Catholic missionaries in 1859 as a mission school.

Present-day Ottawa University grew out of a mission school established with a grant of 20,000 acres of land to the Ottawa Indians in the 1860s.

However, it was the arrival of large numbers of immigrants from Europe in the 1870s and '80s that hastened the birth of several more church-related schools.

Typical of these was Bethel College founded by German Mennonites in 1887.

Offering free land and financial assistance, Newton city officials persuaded the Mennonites to move their small academy from nearby Halstead and expand it. The officials clearly saw the advantages--educational, cultural and economic--of having a college in their community.

Another example of a college founded in the wave of European immigrants arriving in Kansas in the late 1800s is Bethany College.

One young man in particular was responsible for the foundation of Bethany College. Carl Swensson, 24-year-old pastor of Bethany Lutheran Church, thought a Christian education was essential to the well-being of the Swedish community of Lindsborg.

"I saw how God had blessed our settlements in this beautiful and liberty loving state," he wrote.

"But how our children and youth should obtain the necessary Christian education was a question not easily answered.

"Without the elevating influence exerted by a good school to mold the character of students and people, we would clearly be in danger of sinking into worship of the almighty dollar and materialism."

Colleges like these and Kansas' other 15 private church-related schools have contributed to the cultural, religious and economic life of their own communities and the state as well.

Bethany College's annual Easter Week Messiah Festival is an example of this college's contributions to Kansas.

More than 400 voices from the college and Lindsborg area come together to sing Handel's "Messiah," a tradition launched more than 100 years ago by Carl Swensson and his friends.

Kansas' private colleges have also attracted and educated many of the state's most famous artists and successful businessmen.

The term "private" serves only to distinguish them from "public" universities, which are supported for the most part by public monies.

All of Kansas' private colleges have interdenominational enrollments, and no church affiliation is required for admission.

They contribute to the economic well-being of their communities, adding some \$50 million each year to the Kansas economy. Dependent on their own resources, Kansas' church-related colleges use virtually no tax dollars to pay their bills.

Today, these colleges provide students a truly different option--an educational environment in a small community with close student-teacher relationships--and possibly even a link with their ethnic heritage.

Emory Lindquist, a native of Lindsborg, former Bethany student and president, and emeritus president of Wichita State University, said the state's private colleges contribute to educational and cultural plurality.

"I feel there would be a real danger of a lower common denominator prevailing in higher education if these alternatives were not possible.

"Moreover, private colleges, by their very nature, are communities less populated than public universities," he said.



"This in turn affords some opportunities for students to share directly in the community life of a college campus.

"I am very encouraged by the vitality as well as by the achievement of private colleges in our time," he continued.

"This is a verification of the fact that American democracy can be enriched by providing alternatives in the field of higher education."

Dr. Lindquist sees not only a history of accomplishment but a future of promise for private higher education in Kansas.



## 24. Haskell Indian Junior College Continues Cultural Traditions While Bolstering Curriculum

They come from more than 100 tribes located all over the United States to attend Haskell Indian Junior College in Lawrence, Kansas, the only junior college operated by the federal government for Native Americans.

The government founded Haskell as a boarding school for young Indians in 1884 to compel the Indian's assimilation of American Indians into white society.

The regulations of the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1884 gave clear instructions to BIA agents:

"Agents are expected to keep the boarding schools filled with Indian pupils, first by persuasion; if this fails, then by withholding rations or annuities or by such other means as may reach the desired end."

In 1883 Congress appropriated money for the establishment of three boarding schools. Through the influence of a Kansas congressman, Dudley C. Haskell, chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Indian Affairs, one of the schools was located in Lawrence.

Congressman Haskell succeeded in persuading his fellow lawmakers that one of the schools should be built in Lawrence because of its central location to the Indian reservations in the Midwest.

Eager to have the school located in their community, the people of Lawrence raised \$10,000 for the purchase of 280 acres southeast of town and donated it to the federal government as a site for the school.

In its first year of operation in 1884, the school offered its students a regimen of agricultural training and labor.

In 1890, the school's name was changed from the United States Indian Industrial Training School to Haskell Institute, in honor of Congressman Haskell.

For many of its students, living at Haskell was a traumatic cultural experience. Indian ways were discouraged.

Students were required to wear uniforms and the boys were given close-cropped haircuts. They woke up early in the morning to the sound of reveille and went to bed at night to the sound of taps.

The granddaughter of a student in 1904 recalled her grandmother's experiences.

"Anything Indian was discouraged. Once my grandmother was caught speaking Potawatomi. They had her write 'I will not talk Indian' several hundred times on her slate," she said.

In succeeding years, Haskell began to offer courses in teacher training, business and trades, leading to a high school degree.

In the 1920s, Haskell Institute became well-known throughout the United States for its athletic teams and famous athletes.

It was also known for its music program. The Haskell band, choir and orchestra were invited to perform in cities like Chicago and St. Louis.

The Haskell football team played competitively with opponents such as Notre Dame, Michigan and the University of Kansas. In its first 34 years, the team lost only three home games.

Among the players were John Levi, an All-American, Rabbit Weller, Buster Charles and Tiny Roebuck--all famous in their time.

In fact, Levi and Weller have been inducted into the American Indian Athlete Hall of Fame as well as the Kansas All-Sports Hall of Fame.

Like most of America's schools and colleges, Haskell underwent dramatic changes in the 1960s and '70s.

In 1970, the school's name was officially changed from Haskell Institute to Haskell Indian Junior College. The curriculum was bolstered so that students could transfer to four-year colleges and universities after completing two years at Haskell.

The current president of Haskell Indian Junior College is Gerald Gipp, a Standing Rock Sioux. Many of the faculty members are also Native Americans.

Haskell is well-equipped to teach the languages and culture of Native Americans. Among the school's academic units is the American Indian Study Division, offering courses in the languages of the Navajo, Lakota and Cherokee, as well as Indian art and history.

Rob Daugherty, chairman of the division, described the curriculum:

"We offer American Indian studies as cultural enrichment to educate one tribe in the ways of other tribes. In some of the grassroots areas at home, this isn't taught anymore."

Haskell students no longer have to fear punishment for speaking an Indian language or exhibiting traditional culture.

In many respects, Haskell Indian Junior College resembles all other junior colleges in the United States.

However, many of its students still face dramatic cultural changes when they arrive on the Lawrence campus.

To deal with these challenges, Haskell offers its students extensive instruction in skills to help them cope with college courses and experiences.

Though many things have changed at Haskell since its founding in 1884, certainly one quality has remained constant: an unshakable pride among its students in their ethnic heritage.



## 25. Illegal Immigrants Part of Kansas Ethnic Mix

Each year the United States admits 750,000 immigrants. Others, perhaps many times the legal number, enter the country illegally; most of them come from Mexico.

Once across the border thousands of the illegal immigrants head for Kansas, where they hope a job is waiting for them.

Robert Oppenheimer, professor of history at the University of Kansas, described the population of illegal immigrants in Kansas:

"We have no way of counting who they are or when they come.

"In the mid-1970s, for example, as many as 10,000 migrant workers moved into the five or six southwestern counties of Kansas to do farm labor. Most of them are illegal aliens.

"In Kansas City there are at least 100 or more illegal aliens who come into the city looking for work and are counted every month by various agencies.

Supporters of illegal immigration argue that these people are doing jobs that native Americans are unwilling to take on.

In Kansas, illegal immigrants may be found working in irrigated agriculture in the southwestern part of the state, in Kansas City restaurants and in Garden City or Liberal meat-packing plants.

Illegal aliens are important in certain kinds of work.

"I know a little clothing factory where they rounded up 21 illegal aliens one night and sent them back to Mexico. The next week nineteen of them were back working in the same place," said one Los Angeles garment cutter.

"Of course they're going to keep coming. Without the Mexicans, our factory would have to shut down. If they don't find a way to get across, we'll help them."

Kansas has a similar situation.

"Kansas employers, particularly the employers in the southwest, prefer to have these kinds of people available for various reasons," said Oppenheimer.

"One is that they create an excess of labor, which means that you can have a lower wage fare or keep the minimum in certain kinds of jobs for which you don't want to have to pay poor people high amounts of money.

"You can't ask a person for citizenship papers; you can't ask a person if he is a legal resident of the United States. It's against the law.

"The law requires that you can't have illegal aliens, but at the same time it also requires that you cannot ask people if they are aliens."

Critics of employing illegal aliens argue that they are depriving others--particularly young blacks and Chicanos--of work and are straining the nation's resources in difficult times.

An official of the United States Labor Department pinpointed the problem.

"Such employment [of illegal aliens] is concentrated primarily in the service, trade and other low wage industries and at the lower end of the occupational scale.

"Here they provide serious competition to American citizens who are unskilled and uneducated. These aliens depress wages and impair working conditions and increase the burden on American taxpayers through additional welfare costs.

"They constitute for employers an unskilled group, ripe for exploitation--aggressive, enterprising workers with low wage demands and few if any complaints about working conditions."

Professor Oppenheimer argued that dealing with the illegal alien would be costly.

"Basically the state prefers a status quo: we won't pay attention to you if you don't pay attention to us.

"It costs a considerable amount of money. Once the person has been taken into custody, the law requires that he be returned to the country of origin.

"I don't think the state of Kansas is likely to spend the money to round them up, keep them, house them, feed them and then send them back to Mexico."

Given this difficult situation, what are the prospects for these people?

"Generally, for the poor people in the economy it makes it very difficult, of course, to force any kind of effort to improve labor conditions for people at the lower end of the scale, whatever their ethnic origin and background.

"They become in a sense a continuing immigrant force that was brought into the United States 100 years ago to have the same function. A certain significant amount of alienation exists between these new immigrants and other people at the lower end of the scale--whether they've been here in the United States for fifty years and are not citizens of the United States, or whether they are of Mexican ancestry, or black or white.



"The reason these people are coming is because the Mexican economy is so poor. They come largely because there is no alternative for them in Mexico."

In assessing the impact of this immigrant group, it is important, Professor Oppenheimer asserted, not to confuse the illegal immigrant with the Mexican-American community already in residence.

"There's a difference between these new immigrants and the Mexican-American community, or Chicano community, which has been here for three or four generations and whose great activity is to really become a part of Kansas society.

"But even many of these individuals who have been here a long time still feel alienated and marginal in Kansas society. The Mexican-Americans watch the new people coming in with no language abilities, no skills. Many of them come from a rural atmosphere and have difficulty living in an urban area. These new immigrants are as alien to the Mexican-American community as they are to the rest of the Anglo population."



## 26. Present-Day Immigrants Contribute to Kansas' Ethnic Variety

Kansas, largely settled by immigrants some one hundred years ago, continues to attract new arrivals, but offers them a much different life than found by their predecessors.

No longer is the land wide open to settlement; no longer is government committed to the ideals of laissez-faire or society to turn-of-the-century individualism.

Early immigrants to America often crossed the ocean in a ship's steerage, risking death at sea and disease. Then they traveled inland by rail and covered wagon. Some of today's arrivals enjoy the comforts of jets and ocean liners, while others come by bus or on foot.

Some leave to escape economic hardship, political chaos or persecution in their native countries.

Others come to join relatives or because they think life is better in this country.

American TV and movies create impressions abroad of wealth, of trendy clothes, opulent living, two-car garages, and gadget-filled kitchens.

But things were different in the past.

Even with its wide-open prospects and promises, Kansas in the early twentieth century could be a rough and complex place.

Gene DeGruson of Pittsburg State University described the population mix in his hometown.

"The 1900 census delineated something like 51 different nationalities. There was a population of close to 12,000 in Pittsburg at the time.

"So many of the coal camps would be made up of a single nationality. Saturday nights were a free-for-all.

"The French would fight the Germans who would fight the Austrians, and so forth. There was a great deal of animosity among the various ethnic groups.

"It wasn't the pretty picture that you so often get--of coming to America and melting together in one great group."

The risk for today's immigrants is less than for their predecessors. The adjustment process is made easier by housing and rent subsidies, food stamps, welfare, special language classes and other government services.

Today many ethnic groups congregate in the state's cities and have become a significant influence.

Homer Socolofsky, professor of history at Kansas State University, described the situation for black immigrants to the state.

"Blacks have increasingly concentrated in three places: Wichita, Topeka, and Kansas City. I think two-thirds of all blacks are now in those three cities. It's been a movement to the city like in many other areas."

In Kansas, as elsewhere, young urban blacks have led the way in modeling ethnic identity. They have meshed race, class and their African heritage into a powerful image radiating social and political consciousness.

Similarly, many other new arrivals have been attracted by the opportunities in the city.

The arrival of Cubans in Kansas after Castro's takeover was described by Professor Socolofsky.

"A lot of them were upper-class or from professional groups. Quite a lot of Cuban doctors worked in Topeka for instance for a long time. Now they are dispersed over much of the country."

Many of the professionally trained Cubans have blended into the urban landscape.

Other more recent Cuban arrivals have come with fewer skills. Many of them congregate in Miami, living a difficult existence.

A third group, the Vietnamese, have come mostly in family units since the Vietnam War. Many of these Vietnamese were in the army or employed by the American government in their native country and would have been in danger if they had stayed.

Church groups in Kansas and elsewhere united to support a Vietnamese family or two, providing transportation to this country, housing, help in obtaining jobs and food.

Like many Vietnamese, the Nguyen family of Lawrence has quickly adjusted to the American way of life. Mrs. Ngoc Tho Nguyen described her family's philosophy.

"If you work hard in this country, you can have enough food to eat and a house to live in. In other countries I think they work hard but they still do not have enough food to eat.

"But in this country, if you work hard, you will have success."

Like many immigrants of early and current generations, the Nguyens are blending into their new environment--learning new ways, but keeping many of the old.

Together these immigrant groups bring to Kansas a rich diversity of languages, religions, and customs.



## The Kansas Immigrants II

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