



# NEWS RELEASE

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**REAL PEOPLE. REAL STORIES.**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **HISTORIC SITES BOARD OF REVIEW ANNOUNCES NOMINATIONS**

**Includes Thirteen National and Three Kansas Register Nominations**

TOPEKA, KS— The Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review held its regular quarterly meeting at the Kansas Historical Society in Topeka on December 1. The board recommended the addition of 13 listings to the National Register of Historic Places. These nominations will be forwarded to the office of the Keeper of the National Register in Washington, D.C., to be evaluated by their professional staff. If they concur with the board's findings, the properties will be included in the National Register. The board also approved the addition of three listings to the Register of Historic Kansas Places and three National Register multiple property documentation forms, which provide historic context for similar properties and streamline the nomination process for future National Register listings. Below are summaries of the nominated properties and multiple property documentation forms.

### **NOMINATIONS TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

The National Register of Historic Places is the country's official list of historically significant properties and Kansans can feel proud to have a large and growing representation of these tangible links to our past. Listing in the National Register can qualify a property for financial incentives such as rehabilitation grants and tax credits.

#### **Besse Hotel – Pittsburg, Crawford Co.**

The Besse Hotel, built in 1926, is a 12-story fireproof concrete structure located at 121 East 4th Street in downtown Pittsburg. It is being nominated to the National Register for its architectural and historical significance as a grand early-twentieth century hotel constructed in a small southeastern Kansas city. The hotel was the vision of several prominent local businessmen who believed the project would promote the prosperity and civic pride in the growing southeast Kansas community. When outside developers did not materialize to fund the project, the local citizenry rallied to purchase the site and to fund construction of what remains Pittsburg's largest commercial building. The design by architects W. T. Schmitt and Hawk & Parr of Oklahoma City utilized a traditional three-part building form, popular Late

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Gothic Revival architectural ornament, and a modern ziggurat massing. They also provided the Besse Hotel with the latest technologies for life safety and visitor convenience, such as a fireproof reinforced concrete structure and private baths in each room. The Besse Hotel closed in 1979. It is being rehabilitated for use as apartments.

**North Topeka Avenue Apartments Historic District – Wichita, Sedgwick Co.**

Built within a span of four years from 1926 to 1929, this cluster of four apartment buildings at 625, 630, 631, & 632 N Topeka Avenue share common features of design and construction. The buildings are being nominated to the National Register for their architectural significance and for their reflection of popular trends in multi-family housing seen in Wichita and nationwide during this period. All are rectangular in plan and two or three stories in height with brick-clad exteriors and flat roofs with modest parapets. While the buildings illustrate vernacular interpretations of Colonial Revival, Craftsman, Tudor Revival, and Art Deco architecture applied to multi-family buildings, their form and materials also share many traits with Tapestry Brick commercial blocks constructed during the 1920s. One of the buildings is a stacked flats apartment building with a single residence on each floor. The other three buildings are conventional low-rise apartment buildings that house between 15 and 24 residential units organized around a double-loaded corridor. The vaguely commercial-style brick facades and their uniform setback from the street distinguish them from the single-family homes that dominate the blocks in the immediate vicinity. From the late 1920s, when these buildings were constructed, through the start of World War II, the apartments housed a mix of single men, single women, and married couples who worked a variety of jobs. Tenants tended not to live in the buildings for any length of time, and the apartments experienced especially high turnover in the early 1930s.

**Ablah House – Wichita, Sedgwick Co.**

The Streamline Moderne-style double residence located at 102-104 Pinecrest Avenue is being nominated to the National Register for its unique architectural design and for its association with a prominent Wichita family – the Ablahs. As young boys, Lebanese brothers Fauzie (Frank) and Hafiz (Harvey) Ablah immigrated to the United States by way of Canada in 1907 with their parents and siblings. The family first located on the west side of Wichita among other Lebanese immigrant families. Their father Jabbour worked as a peddler, as did many of the approximately 30 Middle Eastern immigrant families in Wichita. Gradually, many of them developed storefront retail businesses. In 1911, Jabbour broke from the tradition of clustered ethnic settlement and moved his family east across the Arkansas River to open Ablah Dry Goods, Clothing and Fancy Work on East Douglas Avenue. This move marked the beginning of a 60-year family business that Frank and Harvey would carry on and that would have a significant effect on Wichita. Having experienced financial success and desiring a larger residence for their growing families, the brothers built the unique double residence on Pinecrest Avenue. Although prevalent in commercial and public buildings, this style is uncommon in Wichita residential neighborhoods. The flat-roofed dual residence is situated on a corner lot and is built in two intersecting units on a plan that is neither L- nor U-shaped. Smooth surfaces and horizontality typify the Streamline Moderne style. The Ablah residence achieves this in an unusual way in that the ground floor wall surface is variegated brick, but

the upper façade is clad in metal sheeting and painted with silica-textured paint. The Ablah family owned this property until 1996.

**Eagles Lodge #132 – Wichita, Sedgwick Co.**

The Eagles Lodge #132 building, located at 200, 202 S. Emporia, has a rich social history associated with the Eagles fraternal organization and a long-time Wichita funerary business. It is being nominated to the National Register for its social history and for its architectural significance as a good local example of the Beaux Arts style on an early twentieth century building. The building was constructed in two phases beginning in 1916. The first two-story section, built for a cost of \$11,000, originally housed a grocery store and an Eagle's fraternal lodge. At the time of its dedication on November 29, 1916, the lodge consisted of a "large lodge room, a smoking room, a women's rest room and a kitchen." The Eagles held regular meetings at this building on Tuesday nights, but by 1927 the lodge was no longer listed in the city directory at this location. Historic research and use of space indicates that a 1921 addition, built of reinforced concrete with brick facing, was constructed for \$19,550 with a new tenant in mind. The Flanagan-Bourman Funeral Home occupied the first floor of the addition, where they continued business until 1986.

**Parsons Katy Hospital – Parsons, Labette Co.**

The Katy Hospital, located at 400 Katy Avenue, was among approximately 40 major railroad hospitals nationwide operated by nearly 20 different railroad companies. Four of these hospitals, including the Parsons Katy Hospital, were located in Kansas. The other three Kansas railroad hospitals, operated by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad, were located in Ottawa, Mulvane, and Topeka. The Parsons hospital was constructed in 1922 under the auspices of the St. Louis-based Missouri-Kansas-Texas (Katy) Railroad Employees' Hospital Association. This association organized in 1913 and operated the Parsons hospital until its closing in 1985. Dallas architects Robertson and Griesenbeck designed the hospital in the popular Colonial Revival style and incorporated elements that were emerging in modern hospital design. A nurses' home was added to the site in 1927, and it was designed to be a relatively small-scale Colonial Revival building to convey the appearance of a single-family residence. In 1967, an addition was added to the hospital building. The Labette County Medical Center purchased the site and continues to operate the Katy Clinic in the 1967 addition. Plans are being developed to rehabilitate the hospital building and former nurses' quarters. The two buildings are being nominated to the National Register for their architectural significance as good local examples of the Colonial Revival style and for their association with early twentieth-century health care.

**Burr House – Dodge City, Ford Co.**

Built in 1927, the residence located at 603 West Spruce is being nominated to the National Register for its architectural significance as a good local example of the Dutch Colonial Revival style and for its associations with successful Dodge City businessman and real estate developer Hiram Burr. Considering his ancestral ties to Aaron Burr and New York, it is fitting that Hiram chose the Dutch Colonial Revival style for his new home. This style was inspired by the simple buildings constructed by Dutch immigrants who settled in New York's Hudson River Valley. Interest in Colonial traditions swelled after Philadelphia's 1876 Centennial Exposition and the

associated restoration of Independence Hall. Approximately ten percent of Colonial Revival homes have gambrel roofs and, thereby, fall into the category of Dutch Colonial Revival. Unlike most examples with one gambreled mass, the roof of the Burr House is cross-gambreled. In addition, unlike most examples found in Kansas, which tend to be frame construction, the Burr House was constructed of brick. The home is situated on a sizable lot just blocks northwest of downtown Dodge City on Boot Hill. The home's design conforms to the terrain of Boot Hill, which slopes downward from north to south. The current owners operate a bed and breakfast out of the home.

**Buffalo Hotel – Garden City, Finney Co.**

Located at 111-117 Grant Avenue, the Buffalo Hotel is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places for its architectural significance as a good local example of commercial Italianate architecture and for its association with town founder Charles Jones. Jones was a driving force behind Garden City's early success and developed the Buffalo Hotel in 1886 to promote the town as a thriving and growing center. Garden City only had one hotel prior to 1886 – a house that had been converted from the home of William Fulton into the "Garden City Hotel" or "Occidental Hotel." Jones' new Buffalo Hotel provided additional housing to transients, offered a meeting place for locals, and attracted newcomers. The hotel was part of Jones' effort to focus the community's commercial activity along Grant Avenue. Jones opened an adjacent commercial block in October 1885 and soon thereafter completed the Buffalo Hotel. To design both buildings, Jones hired architects J.H. Stevens and C.L. Thompson of Topeka. They also designed Carter's stone block, the county courthouse, the Southard Block, and the Stevens Block. Ironically, Stevens and Thompson also designed the Windsor Hotel, the building commissioned by Jones' rival that put the Buffalo Hotel out of business.

**Hotel Dale – Coffeyville, Montgomery Co.**

Built in 1924, the six-story Hotel Dale located at 206 West 8<sup>th</sup> was Coffeyville's tallest building and served as a first-class business hotel. Just nine years earlier, the town's 54-room Eldridge Hotel was razed creating a demand for hotel space in the subsequent years. The local Chamber of Commerce organized a committee in 1921 that worked for three years to seek outside capital. Plans to attract outside developers failed and the committee looked to the community. Through community-wide fundraising drives and the help of key businessmen and community leaders, the Hotel Dale became a reality. A.C. Wiser of the Kansas City architectural firm Shepherd and Wiser designed the building in the Italian Renaissance Revival style. Located at one of the "best business corners in Coffeyville", at street-level the building features brick veneered pilasters with ornamented terra cotta columns delineating each storefront bay. Wiser utilized the building's height to accentuate the Coffeyville brick; the entire building is faced in local red brick. The hotel is being nominated to the National Register for its association with community planning and development in early twentieth century Coffeyville.

**Kinsley Civil War Monument – Hillside Cemetery, Kinsley, Edwards Co.**

Kinsley craftsman and Civil War veteran David A. Lester created Kinsley's Civil War Monument in 1917. Located in Hillside Cemetery, the concrete sculpture is one of only three

known multi-figure Civil War monuments in Kansas. The others are the Sedgwick County Soldiers and Sailors Monument (1913) in Wichita and the Soldiers and Sailors Monument (1918) in Hutchinson, and both are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Large multi-figure Civil War monuments like these are most often made of stone, and, because of the cost to build them, are generally found in more prosperous metropolitan areas. With no known formal art training, Lester's creation made of concrete is truly vernacular and unique. Lester alone designed and executed this hand-built monument at the age of 74. Built for a cost of \$1,100, the monument was officially unveiled on Memorial Day in 1917. This handmade "grassroots" memorial sculpture fits within the greater national trend of memorialization in that it is dedicated to the "common soldier and sailor" rather than military generals or political leaders. Kansas Historical Society Archeologist Randall M. Thies published an article in *Kansas History* in 1999 about the Kinsley monument, its method of construction, and its creator entitled, "Civil War Valor in Concrete: David A. Lester and the Kinsley Civil War Monument." This monument is being nominated to the National Register for its artistic significance.

#### **Lowell Elementary School – Kansas City, Wyandotte Co.**

Lowell Elementary School is located in the Riverview Neighborhood at 1040 Orville Avenue and is being nominated for its architectural significance as a Classical Revival-style school designed by prominent architect William W. Rose. The school's original eight classrooms were built in 1898, but a Rose-designed addition in 1905 unified the façade. He also consulted on a 1922 addition to the building. Common features of the Classical Revival style evident on Lowell include pediments, pilasters, engaged columns with decorative capitals, and cornice line dentils. Beaux Arts features include ballustraded windowsills above the entrances and arched windows. Named in honor of poet James Russell Lowell, students in grades one through seven attended Lowell Elementary School until 1980 when it was used as a warehouse. The building is being rehabilitated for use as apartments. Rose's other Kansas City-area designs include the Carnegie Library (demolished in 1966), the Kansas City High School (later named Wyandotte High School, destroyed by fire in 1934), Whittier Elementary School, Dunbar Elementary School, Hawthorne Elementary School, and Memorial Hall.

#### **Wilmer House – Winfield, Cowley Co.**

Located east of downtown on Winfield's main east-west thoroughfare, this large Craftsman-style house is being nominated to the National Register for its architectural significance and its association with Dr. F. M. Wilmer, a prominent local physician. Wilmer graduated from Chicago's College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1896 and moved to Winfield in 1903 where he limited his practice to the eye, ear, nose, and throat. The Cowley County Medical Society recognized him for his 50 years of medical practice in 1946. Dr. Wilmer was a member of the Chamber of Commerce, the First Methodist Church, the county and state medical societies, and the American Medical Association. The house and rear garage at 1310 E. 9<sup>th</sup> were built for Wilmer and his family in 1917. The house utilizes a simple form with natural materials while displaying elements of Craftsman influence in the use of triangular brackets along the roofline, large square columns on the porch, wide overhanging eaves, and built-in interior features. The Wilmer family resided in this house for 47 years – from 1917 to 1964. The house remains a single-family private residence.

**St. Michael School and Convent – Collyer, Trego Co.**

The St. Michael Catholic Parish of Collyer traces its roots to the late 1870s when the town's first settlers arrived. There is some dispute as to when the first church building was erected, but church records note the first baptism took place on December 10, 1884. A large stone church was erected in 1909 and was replaced by the current stone church that was built in 1942. Under the direction of Father Michael Dreiling, parish leaders hired C.C. Smith of Salina to design the school building. Site preparation for the school's construction began in the fall of 1916, and the building was dedicated the following year. The church struggled, however, to retain teachers at St. Michael School, primarily because the living arrangements called for the Sisters to live on the school's third floor. Almost immediately the parish leaders began planning for the construction of a convent. The two-story brick convent was erected between the school and the church in 1925. Several Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia arrived in the fall of 1926 to teach at the school. The two St. Michael buildings compliment one another architecturally. They are made of the same red brick and feature a similar square block form with a hipped roof. The school includes limestone and brick accents that provide a more sophisticated appearance, while the convent is more simply styled to resemble a residence of the period. As was typical of schools of the period, the St. Michael School featured a symmetrical façade with a central entrance as the dominant architectural expression. The school's Craftsman characteristics are primarily reflected in the building's form, low roof pitch, and third-story dormers. Similarly, the convent features a low-pitched roof and includes subtle expressions of the Craftsman era including exposed rafter tails and multi-light wood windows. The St. Michael School and convent, located at 700-704 Ainsle Avenue, are being nominated for their architectural significance as good local examples of the Craftsman style and for their association with local parochial education.

**Constitution Hall, Topeka – Topeka, Shawnee Co.**

Built in 1855 and located at 427-429 S. Kansas Avenue, Constitution Hall, Topeka is being nominated to the National Register for its association with the 1850s Free State constitutional movement in Kansas. Although it features a front façade added in the early twentieth century, this two-story Territorial period building is largely constructed of native limestone and features a vernacular method of construction prevalent during this period. It is historically significant for its association with events in the Kansas Territory, from 1854 when this land was opened for U.S. settlement, to 1861 at Kansas's statehood and the beginning of the Civil War. Shortly after the United States opened the Kansas Territory, the antislavery "Topeka Constitution" was written and approved in Constitution Hall. The first of the Kansas constitutions, this document was rejected by the Southern-dominated Congress and thereby not accepted by the appointed Federal officials of the Kansas Territory. Nevertheless, it set the course for the Wyandotte Constitution under which Kansas entered the Union of states in 1861. The building served other functions dedicated to the antislavery cause. It was a storage place for firearms, the boxes of Beecher's "Bibles," which were in reality rifles to aid in the Free State cause. It was used in the support of a chief fugitive escape route northward. Plans for the building include restoration and interpretation.

## **REGISTER OF HISTORIC KANSAS PLACES LISTINGS**

The Register of Historic Kansas Places is the state's official list of historic properties worthy of preservation. All Kansas properties that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places are also listed in the Register of Historic Kansas Places; however, the state register also recognizes properties that are significant to our state's heritage yet do not meet National Register eligibility standards. Listing in the state register can qualify a property for certain state-funded financial incentives, such as rehabilitation grants and tax credits.

### **Ranson Hotel – Medora, Reno Co.**

Located at 4918 E Main, the Ranson Hotel is a two-story wood frame building built in 1905 and adapted in the 1920s to accommodate a service station drive-thru. The building was approved for listing in the Register of Historic Kansas Places for its role in the growth and development of Medora. The building housed the first business in Medora Junction, platted in 1905 and housed subsequent businesses, including a service station and grocery store that illustrate Medora's evolution from a railroad town to a highway town. In the late 1800s, the St. Louis - San Francisco Railway (Frisco), a line that provided regional service to the Ozarks and Southern Plains, made plans to construct a new rail line through the area. The line would run southeast to northwest, perpendicular to the Rock Island line. Because passing through Medora, which then lay northeast of the Little Arkansas River, would have required multiple river crossings, the railroad chose to bypass the community, instead crossing the Rock Island line on property owned by William H. Ranson. When the Frisco was built, the Rock Island Railway announced plans to relocate its depot to the junction of the two rail lines, southwest of Medora. In October 1905, William and Mary Ranson, then owners of the land surrounding the new rail intersection, filed a plat for Medora Junction, a new town to be located west of the junction of the two rail lines, across the Rock Island tracks from the moved depot. They actively developed the new town, building its first hotel and grocery store. The Ransons placed their new hotel at the prime junction of Main Street and the Rock Island rail line, across the street from the depot. The later expansion of Kansas Highway 61 was a mixed blessing for Medora Junction. Although it provided important highway access, it required the demolition of an entire block of Medora. As a result, the Ranson Hotel is the only remaining original commercial building of Medora Junction.

### **Kansas Soldiers' Home Cemetery – Fort Dodge, Ford Co.**

The Kansas Soldiers' Home Cemetery, located at 11560 Highway 400, is the final resting place of veterans, spouses, and civilians from the Civil War, Indian Wars, Mexican War, Spanish American War, World War I, World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War eras. The cemetery was approved for listing in the Register of Historic Places for its association with the Kansas Soldiers' Home and for its reflection of local social history. The cemetery occupies three acres of land and is divided into three sections: Civil War, Spanish American War, and World War sections. The land includes hundreds of headstones, two outbuildings, two monuments, two park benches, a flagpole, wrought iron gate and fencing along the highway, and a sandstone wall surrounding the remainder of the cemetery. The headstones, which are arranged in east-west rows, include both government issued and handmade markers. In January 1890, Fort Dodge was deeded to the State of Kansas for use as a Soldiers' Home. The first three veterans were admitted to the Soldiers' Home on February 7, 1890. Most of them were Civil War

veterans, while others were veterans of the Mexican and Indian Wars. Eventually, dependents and relatives of veterans were admitted, along with Confederate and African American veterans. Due to the passing of the residents at the Soldiers' Home, along with their dependents, a need for a cemetery arose. Many veterans from the Soldiers' Home who passed away while in residence had made previous arrangements to be interred at the Soldiers' Home Cemetery. The government purchased modest headstones for the graves of all pensioned soldiers; however, relatives were expected to mark the graves of others.

### **Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church – Ellinwood vicinity, Barton Co.**

Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church is located five miles north of Ellinwood in Barton County. The building was approved for listing in the Register of Historic Kansas Places for its architectural significance. Built in 1892, Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church is an example of a Gothic-influenced gable-front, two-story brick building. It exhibits the characteristic centered gable front entrance on the west elevation and five Gothic-influenced stained glass windows on the side elevations. A semicircular apse is located on the rear elevation. The parish traces its roots to back to a June 4, 1875 mass at the home of William Kliesen. The parish grew quickly and by 1891 they had outgrown their wood frame building. Bishop John J. Hennessy dedicated the new brick church building and celebrated the first Mass on May 17, 1892. The parish closed in 1986, and the Saints Peter and Paul Heritage Association now maintains the property. A tornado struck the property on May 4, 2007, and the church sustained the loss of the bell tower and steeple and a significant amount of damage to the roof and interior ceiling. The owners have since capped the bell tower and are in the process of repairing the interior.

## **MULTIPLE PROPERTY DOCUMENTATION FORMS**

The board approved three National Register multiple property documentation forms, which are designed to streamline the method of organizing information collected in historic resource surveys and research for future National Register listing and preservation planning purposes. The form facilitates the evaluation of individual properties by comparing them with resources that share similar physical characteristics and historical associations. Information common to the group of properties is presented in the historic context, while information specific to each individual building, site, district, structure, or object is placed on an individual registration form. These three documents simply provide historic context and no properties have yet been nominated as part of these documents.

### **Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Residential Resources of Manhattan – Manhattan, Riley Co.**

This document is based on information resulting from two field surveys initiated by the City of Manhattan and extensive archival research. The document includes four associated historic contexts: (1) Development of Manhattan: 1855-1945; (2) Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Development Patterns: 1855-1940; (3) the Evolution of Residential Architecture in Manhattan: 1855-1940; and (4) Architects, Builders, and Craftsmen in Manhattan: 1844-1940. This history of Manhattan discusses the development of the city's residential neighborhoods, reveals patterns in architectural styles and trends, and includes a list of associated property

types and registration requirements. This document was partially funded by a Historic Preservation Fund grant through the Kansas State Historical Society in partnership with the City of Manhattan.

**Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Vernacular Stone Houses of Manhattan – Manhattan, Riley Co.**

This document is also based on information resulting from two field surveys initiated by the City of Manhattan and extensive archival research. The abundance of historic stone houses in Manhattan revealed the need for the development of a history relating to this more specific property type. The document includes three associated historic contexts: (1) Nineteenth Century Development of Manhattan: 1855-1900; (2) The Evolution of Residential Architecture in Manhattan: 1855-1900; and (3) Late Nineteenth Century Vernacular Stone Houses in Manhattan: 1855-1900. Discussion of the city's development includes key information about early architects and builders in Manhattan and their use of limestone to erect residences. This study of stone houses reveals patterns in architectural style, common forms, and trends in changes and modifications to the buildings. A list of associated property types and registration requirements is included. This document was partially funded by a Historic Preservation Fund grant through the Kansas State Historical Society in partnership with the City of Manhattan.

**Designs of Architects William Pratt Feth & Myron Kauffman Feth in Leavenworth, Kansas, ca. 1895-1942 – Leavenworth, Leavenworth Co.**

This document is based on archival research and a field survey of known Feth-designed properties. This document is a unique product in that it is the first in Kansas recognizing the contributions of a particular architect or firm to his community. Most multiple property documents are specific to property types like theaters, residences, schools, or bridges. This father and son designed more than 60 buildings in Leavenworth from 1895 to 1942. Their work included such landmarks as the Leavenworth County Courthouse, the Leavenworth City Hall, and the original Leavenworth High School. The document includes three associated historic contexts: (1) The Designs of William P. Feth, ca. 1895-1919; (2) The Designs of Feth and Feth, 1920-1930; and (3) The Designs of Myron K. Feth, 1931-1942. A list of known Feth-designed properties, associated property types, and registration requirements is included. The survey of Feth-designed properties and this document were partially funded by a Historic Preservation Fund grant through the Kansas State Historical Society in partnership with the City of Leavenworth and the Preservation Alliance of Leavenworth.

For additional information on the National Register program, contact the State Historic Preservation Office at 785-272-8681 ext. 240 or visit [ksks.org](http://ksks.org).

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