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Ellis County German Heritage



Many of the residents of Ellis County are descendants of German immigrants who came from the Volga River region of Russia. They came from Germany to Russia following the end of the Seven Years War in 1763. They were invited to immigrate to Russia by Catherine the Great, who was born in Germany and was the

leader of Russia at the time. The Empress issued a manifesto on December 4, 1762 and sought to strengthen her empire by having immigrants settle and farm the vast steppe regions of southern Russia and the Ukraine. The first invitation was not effective and a second manifesto was issued on July 22, 1763 with many more enticements to lure potential immigrants. She promised freedom of religion, freedom from military conscription, free land and an exemption from taxation. Catherine's invitation appealed to the people in the southern provinces of Germany, who had suffered great economic stress and other problems as a result of the Seven Years War.

From 1763 to 1768 many Germans left their homeland, traveled to Russia and built villages along the Volga River (hence, the name Volga-Germans). Nearly 200 towns and villages were established in Russia and the German immigrants prospered. In 1874 the reigning Czar began to remove the privileges Catherine the Great had promised the Volga Germans. Consequently, the Volga-Germans began to search for a new homeland. In 1875, a scouting party of five men came to America to inform themselves of the climate, soil and living conditions suitable for their farming lifestyle. These scouts found the Kansas plains similar to the steppes region of Russia and a large number of the Volga-Germans decided to migrate to America. In October and November of 1875, many of these immigrants left their villages along the Volga River and traveled to Saratov, Russia to begin their journey to America. The first Volga Germans arrived in Hays the middle of February 1876 and traveled south to settle land along the Big Timber Creek. Liebenthal, located in Rush County, was the first community to be founded on February 22, 1876. A second group arrived on March 1st and founded the village of Catharine. The other communities of Herzog, Pfeifer and Munjor were settled during the spring and summer of 1876. Although they had the same religion, ethnicity and culture, the immigrants continued to focus on life in their individual communities. Just as they had done in Russia, they retained their language with the various dialects that were spoken by the people of each village. Each individual village also retained traditions of food, family, religion and marriage. Being a very religious people, they expressed their creativity in the construction of the beautiful churches they built in their villages.



March 20-21 * Ellis County Polkafest

Fanchon Ballroom - E. Hwy 40 – Hays - 785-625-6653 Email - ccecks@eaglecom.net

23rd Annual Cancer Council of Ellis County Polkafest. Two day polka dance featuring three bands with continuous polka music and dancing. Saturday from noon to 11 pm with drawings for door prizes. Sunday morning polka Mass at 10:30 am is a traditional Catholic service with polka music and German singers. Continuous polka music from noon to 5 pm and a raffle. No membership required. BYOB and sandwiches served at the bar.

May 2 * Holy Cross Commemorative Mass

Holy Cross Church - Pfeifer - 3 pm - 785-735-2395

www.volgagerman.net/pfeifer_ks.htm - Email - gibandcarol@lycos.com

A special Mass is observed each year during the month of May at the Holy Cross Church in Pfeifer. Although the church was closed in 1993 and is no longer an open and active parish, they do celebrate a traditional Catholic Mass service on or about May 3rd. This Mass commemorates the original dedication of the church in 1918, which at the time, was the Feast of the Holy Cross. All are invited to attend.

May 28 *** 30th Anniversary of the Sunflower Chapter of AHSGR

Ellis County Fairgrounds - 1343 Fairground Rd – Hays 785-625-6638 – www.sunflowerchapterofahsgr.net

Email - krupp@ruraltel.net

Includes a traditional Ellis County German meal, polka dancing, historical presentations, guest speakers and genealogy programs about the Volga Germans.

May 31 * Fidelisfest

Cathedral of the Plains - 900 Cathedral Ave - Victoria 785-735-2777 - www.stfidelischurch.com - Email - fidelis@ruraltel.net

Memorial Day in Victoria is a community celebration at the St. Fidelis Church fundraiser! The morning begins with visits to the 5 local cemeteries--Emmeram, Walker, Pfeifer, Vincent & Victoria--followed by an 11 am Mass at St. Fidelis Church. After mass, the festivities begin with a German wedding style dinner served until 2 pm. The Country Store features homemade baked items and a gift shop includes crafts and handmade items by the parishioners. Throughout the day are free kid's games, musical entertainment, a beer garden, hamburger and braut stand, a drawing with BIG CASH prizes and an auction of 200-300 new items donated by businesses and parishioners.

July 11 ** Sunflower Chapter of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia Summer Social

Munjor Parish Hall – 11:30 am-3 pm – 785-625-6638 www.sunflowerchapterofahsgr.net - Email - krupp@ruraltel.net Social hour, refreshments and a special program.

August 13-14 * Herzogfest

Honey Braun Park -Victoria -785-735-4851 www.herzogfest.com Email – marome@ruraltel.net

Celebrate the German heritage of this Volga German community with polka music, concerts, parade, talent show, free swimming, food booths, kids pedal pull and fireworks show. Event features free entertainment on Friday and Saturday night with national recording artists and local bands. Saturday includes a 5K Run/Walk, parade, traditional German Welcome & Toast, horseshoe tournament, bingo, pinochle, beer and food booths, polka music, German singers, talent show and fireworks. Food booths include fried noodles and beans, cream dumplings, brauts, beirocks, German sausage, galushkies, kuchen, green bean dumpling soup and much more. Saturday afternoon Polka Mass at 4 pm is a traditional Catholic service with polka music and German singers. Free - All are invited to attend.

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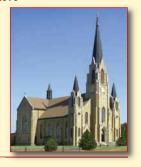
September 12 🐲 Feast Day Celebration of the Exaltation of the Cross

Holy Cross Church - Pfeifer - 3 pm - 785-735-2395

www.volgagerman.net/pfeifer_ks.htm

Email - gibandcarol@lycos.com

The Exaltation of the Cross Feast Day is on September 14th and the Holy Cross Church in Pfeifer will hold a special Mass to celebrate this feast day. Although the church was closed in 1993 and is no longer an open and active parish, they do hold a traditional Catholic Mass service in the month of September to commemorate The Exaltation of the Cross Feast Day. All are invited to attend



September 12 💥 German Feast

St. Anthony Community Center - Schoenchen - 4-7 pm 785-628-3968 - www.volgagerman.net/Schoenchen ks.htm

Email - sauerkraut@gbta.net

Enjoy a traditional Ellis County style German meal while you listen to old time German music including polkas and waltzes. German buffet includes green bean dumpling soup, sauerkraut soup, German sausage, ham and beans, noodles, homemade bread, pies, kuchen and other desserts. Country Store with handmade items, raffle and prizes. Call 785-625-6465





September 18-19 💥 Midwest Deutsche Oktoberfest

Ellis County Fairgrounds - 1343 Fairground Rd. - Hays 785-625-5394 - www.midwestdeutschefest.com

October 1 *** FHSU Homecoming/Oktoberfest

Frontier Park - South Main - Hays - 785-628-8201

Volga German Society Oktoberfest held in conjunction with the Fort Hays State University Homecoming weekend. German food, traditional tapping of the keg, over 80 booths, polka music and entertainment.

October 3 ** Sunflower Chapter of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia Annual German Meal Banquet Meeting

Munjor Parish Hall - 11:30 am-3 pm - 785-625-6638 www.sunflowerchapterofahsgr.net - Email - krupp@ruraltel.net Social hour, fundraiser, traditional Volga German Meal, raffle and program.

October ** Kansas Round-up of Chapters: The American Historical Society of Germans from Russia

Call for date & location.

785-625-6638 – www.sunflowerchapterofahsgr.net

Email - krupp@ruraltel.net

Gathering of all the Kansas Chapters of AHSGR to share historical programs, attend workshops and listen to guest speakers. Includes historical presentations, state and local speakers, genealogy programs, German singing and Folklore about the Germans from Russia.

September 18-19 💥 Midwest Deutsches Oktoberfest

Ellis County Fairgrounds - 1343 Fairground Rd – Hays 785-625-5394 - www.midwestdeutschefest.com Email - dorzweiler@ruraltel.net

Activities begin at 9 am on Saturday morning with the opening ceremonies, German singers, welcome and tapping of the keg. Över a dozen booths sell various crafts, souvenirs, German products and . Volga German books. Many food vendors set up on the



festival grounds to serve traditional Ellis County German foods including galushkies, baked bread and sweet treats, beirocks, kuchen, spitzbuben, sauerkraut and fried noodles. Local clubs and organizations serve funnel cakes, brats, BBQ beef sandwiches, green bean and dumpling soup, German sausage, homemade jellies and jams, cinnamon rolls, smoked meats and dumplings. A parish style German meal for lunch and supper is served on both days with generous portions. Yearly commemorative steins and beer mugs are available for sale and several beer booths are set up on the festival grounds. Four or five polka bands provide continuous polka music for non-stop polka dancing and entertainment all weekend. The crowning of the prince and princess is at 1 pm followed by a traditional Ellis County wedding march. Other activities during the weekend include wheat threshing demonstrations, antique tractor and machinery displays, demonstrations of German craft and customs, games and dancing lessons. The Sunday morning polka Mass is a traditional Catholic service with polka music and German singers. A dance contest on Sunday afternoon brings out the youngsters to compete for the selection of the prince and princess for next year. A crowd favorite is the polka jam session held Sunday afternoon with all the bands and other audience members joining together for one final set of polka songs to finish out the weekend.



November 7 * Antonino Fall Feast

Our Lady Help of Christians Church – Antonino – 4-7 pm 785-623-4561 - www.volgagerman.net/Antonino_ks.htm Email - dgrss49@hotmail.com

Old fashioned German roast beef dinner with all the trimmings. Home baked cakes, pies, rolls and cookies are served and are also available through the raffle drawing. Craft items, canned goods and handmade holiday gifts available to purchase. Call 785-625-5494



November 11 * Lanternfest

Cottonwood Star – 216 W. 7th – Hays – 6 pm 785 656 2744 - www.cottonwoodstar.com - Email - gwyn.marie@me.com

The festival of lanterns is a German tradition that takes place in the evening on or around the Feast Day of St. Martin where parents, families and neighbors gather together for a small, neighborhood parade led by St. Martin and his white horse. The participants sing traditional songs in the glow of handmade candle-lit lanterns. Children make paper lanterns, learn the lantern songs and sing as they walk through the neighborhood with their lanterns that symbolized the light St. Martin brought into people's lives. The story of St. Martin will be told around a small bonfire and during the parade of lanterns as participants enjoy apple cider, popcorn, making caramel apples and baked goods to fill everyone's tummies. \$5 for each family.

December 12 ** Sunflower Chapter of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia Christmas Potluck

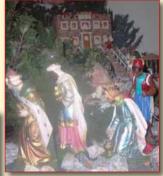
Munjor Parish Hall – 11:30 am- 3 pm - 785-625-6638 www.volgagerman.net - Email - krupp@ruraltel.net

Social hour, refreshments, lunch and a special Christmas program.

December 12, 19, 26 ** Little Town of Bethlehem Christmas Nativity

St. Boniface Church in Vincent presents their Little Town of Bethlehem Christmas display on Sunday afternoons in the month of December. Hundreds of handcrafted items, miniature houses, shells, rocks, bridges, streams, animals and figurines





make up this large nativity scene that has been displayed since 1927. Sundays 2-5 pm - Free admission. Tours are available by calling 785-735-2767 or 785-735-9258.

Bukobina Society of the Americas Museum

718 Washington • Ellis, KS 67637 785-726-3388 • 785-726-4620

Hours: Open daily by appointment owindholz@ruraltel.net

www.bukovinasociety.org

Admission: Free – donations accepted.

The museum provides information about the history of the German immigrants who arrived from Bukovina, which is currently part of Romania and the Ukraine. They originally migrated from Germany to Bukovina in the late 1700's and early 1800's. After one to two generations of living in Bukovina, land became scarce and many of the German

BUKOVINA SOCIETY

immigrants came to the United States as well as Canada and South America.

The origins of the Bukovina Society of the Americas in Ellis, Kansas, began over the course of several days in the fall of 1988. On September 26-29, Paul Polansky, O.M. Windholz and Irmgard Hein Ellingson met for the first time because they were interested in the heritage of the ethnic German people from Bukovina, Austria.

Paul Polansky, whose Schneller grandfather was among the colony of Bukovina Germans who settled in Yuma County, Colorado, had collected information about his ancestors and was interested in meeting descendants of the Bukovina Germans of the Ellis area. Polansky located the Bukovina ancestry of O.M. Windholz and wrote asking to meet him in Ellis.

It was the first assembly of the Bukovina Germans of the Ellis area since emigration over a hundred years ago and most had only limited oral history of their heritage. From a brief news article in the local paper, a large crowd greeted Polansky at St. Mary's School Auditorium where they were fascinated to see slides of his travels to the former Bukovina, a risky adventure during the Communist era. After his presentation, people were able to view their family tree on his laptop containing thousands of Bukovina German names.

On December 10, 1988, the Bukovina Society was formed and a heritage festival was conducted on July 19-22, 1989. A Bukovinafest is now conducted every three years. The Society is international in scope



and cooperates with other Bukovina organizations around the world. Its members number over 500 from 25 countries. The society website contains data bases with 291,000 names and continues to grow the organization and provides a wealth of information.

To arrange a visit to the museum, please contact the following volunteers from the Board of Directors.

Marcy McClelland-Hays, President tmlenterprises@sbcglobal.net O. M. Windholz-Hays, Vice President Pat6363@yahoo.com Shirley Kuppetz-Ellis, Secretary 785-726-4620

Art Honas-Ellis, Treasurer 785-726-4824

Norma Lang-Ellis, 785-726-3346 Joe Erbert-Ellis, 785-726-3165

Historic Iron Crosses

Numerous iron cross grave markers are located in the cemeteries throughout Ellis County near the outskirts of the communities. For additional information call the Hays Convention & Visitors Bureau at 785-628-8202.

www.haysusa.net or www.volgagerman.net



The tradition of using wrought iron crosses for grave markers goes back at least to the 1600s in Ăustria and Bavaria. The most prominent use of the ornate wrought-iron grave crosses were by the Germans who immigrated from Russia to Western Kansas. South Dakota and North Dakota. The ornate and decorative crosses were made of steel and various pieces of iron by local Volga German blacksmiths. Using a hammer, anvil and forge, these early artisans crafted crosses of iron, steel and other metals, often from pieces of scrap material. The cross represented the sacred and the iron represented strength -attributes of the pioneers they honored. The iron crosses were particularly suited as prairie

monuments. Unlike wooden crosses, those made of wrought iron or other metals were tough enough to withstand prairie fires, storms and

even time itself.

St. Fidelis cemetery, located just north of Victoria has the most iron crosses with 110.

Antonino - 13

Catherine - 68

Hays - 28

Munior - 70

Pfeifer - 50

Schoenchen - 32

Walker - 16



Most farms had a blacksmith shop on site and the crosses could be made in the winter when the farm work was slow and the heat of the forge was more tolerble. Some parts such as crucifixes were ordered from large cities. Most of the local crosses were forged and not cast.

To the casual observer, one might interpret the blacksmith artists were trying to convey a celebration of life of the deceased with the beautiful scrollwork of sunbursts, vines, roses, lilies, angels and hearts. Behind every cross there was a story and for each story, the crosses could continue to preserve the memories of those loved ones they paid tribute to.

Holga German Haus

100 W. 7th • Hays, KS 67601 Sharon Behrman 785-628-2624

Hours: T-F 10 am-5 pm

Call for summer and weekend hours codirector@elliscountyhistoricalsociety.org www.elliscountyhistoricalmuseum.org Admission: Adults \$4. Children \$1 (3–12 years)

This home is located on the grounds of the Ellis County Historical Society Museum and is a replica of the size and type of home the early Volga German settlers built. When the first immigrants arrived to establish their villages, they quickly constructed a small dug-



out sod shelter. The ground would be excavated to a depth of three feet, with the prairie sod blocks used to form the walls. Trees and saplings formed the rafters and support for the roof. The sod shelters were used until a more permanent house of native limestone rock could be built. This house was built from information obtained through diaries and other documentation



passed down to the descendants, and is furnished with authentic household items which were used by the Volga German settlers. The exterior of the home is made of the native postrock limestone that was quarried in Ellis

County. The interior of these style homes contained two rooms: a small room containing the "mud stove" and the cooking utensils, and a large room which served as the living, dining, and sleeping area. The interior walls were plastered with clay and whitewashed with Lebaster, a type of plaster of paris. A ladder provided access to the area in the open half attic for the children to sleep.



Volga German Immigrant Statue

10th & Cathedral Ave Victoria, KS 67671 785-735-2259

Across the street from St. Fidelis Church is a life size statue depicting Germans Immigrant from Russia. This piece was sculpted by Hays artist Pete Felten in 1976 and is titled "Volga German Family". It is made of Silverdale Limestone that was shipped from Arkansas City, Kansas. The commemoration of the statue was held in conjunction with the 100th

anniversary of the Volga Germans arriving in Ellis County. Pete Felten reviewed numerous old photographs to create a piece of art that represented the strength and solidarity of these immigrants. The American Historical Society of Germans from



Russia National Headquarters in Lincoln, Nebraska was so impressed with the statue, they commission Felten to create an exact replica which now stands outside their front entrance to welcome visitors to their facility.



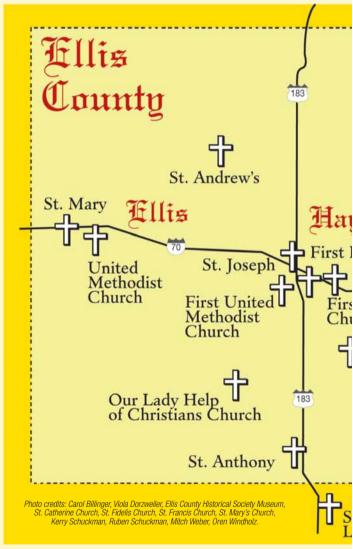
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Sunflower Chapter of A.H.S.G.R

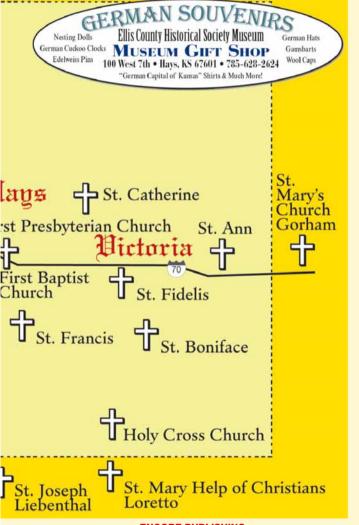
American Historical Society of Germans from Russia

785-625-6638

www.sunflowerchapterofahsgr.net www.ahsgr.org



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Historic German Churches of Ellis County, Kansas

Hays City was founded in fall of 1867 and the first churches in Ellis County were built during the late 1870's and 1880's. The majority of these first churches were small wooden frame structures that were later replaced by larger and more impressive limestone rock churches. Because many of the first citizens were railroad workers, saloon owners, soldiers and even desperados, the early days of Ellis County were wild and dangerous. With the arrival of Volga German settlers and other religious families in Ellis County, the community gradually quieted down as these pioneers brought with them strong religious and family beliefs. Immediately upon



completion of their simple homes, the people began building their church to hold worship services. The hardworking people that settled in this area were proud of their faith and it is evident in the beautiful

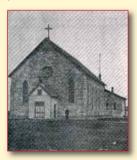
churches they built in Ellis County.



A visit to the beautiful historic Volga German and Bukovina German churches in our area will provide you with a glimpse of our history and an understanding of the strong religious values of the early settlers in Ellis County. The Roman Catholic influences, artistic gothic style and beautiful stained glass are the most dominant features, yet each church is

unique in it's own way. The individual history and stories that

can be learned by visiting these churches is very fascinating and it makes one appreciate their beauty even more. The foresight and hard work that went into building these churches proves they stand as a symbol of faith for our early pioneers. We invite you to visit each of the churches, but keep in mind that most are active parishes with Sunday services, weddings and other religious activities that take place on a daily basis.





Holy Cross Church

1701 Sarratov P.O. Box 5 Pfeifer, KS 67660 785-735-2395

This beautiful church is an artistic example of Romanesque Gothic style architect and is known as the "The Cross in the Valley". This church is actually the third church that was built by the Volga German settlers of Pfeifer. The first church in 1879 was a small simple frame structure and the second church in 1891 was a small stone church. In 1911 plans for the financing and building of a new church were made. A church fund drive began in 1916



in which each family was accessed a two cent levy on every bushel of wheat sold. The "Two Cent" church as it became known was built by the local parishioners under the direction of Father Peter Burkard at a total cost of \$56,000. It was solemnly blessed and dedicated on May 3, 1918. The church is laid out in the form of a cross. The sanctuary is the head, the transepts are the arms and the nave is the body of the cross. The main steeple rises above the wheat fields 165' high and is topped by a gold cross. The two side steeples are 100' high. The main entrance and it's two single entrances as well as transept entrances were made of Bedford Stone, Gothic Arches and Florentine Pillars capped with carvings of wheat heads. The original communion railing is hand carved and features doors enhanced by carved figures of "The Manna in the Desert, Christ Feeding the Multitudes, The Death of Joseph and The Annunciation". In 1922 life size statues carved of native wood from Munich Germany were procured. The altars were constructed from ordinary crate wood by local craftsman John Schlitter.



He also carved the ornamental gothic spires on the side altars to match the main altar. Due to World War I, stained glass was impossible to get and it was not until 1962 under the guidance of Father Emil Sinner that the interior of the church was decorated and stained glass windows installed. The stained glass windows depict

scenes from the old and new testament and two larger images, "Christ the King" and "Mary Our Queen" tower over the transept balconies. Over the main entrance is a magnificent mosaic of the Last Judgment, designed by the Venetian artist, Bianchie. In 1993 the decision was made by the Diocese of Salina to dissolve the parish and on July 6, 1993, the last regular Mass was held at Holy Cross Church. In order to maintain and preserve the church and cemetery the remaining few parishioners formed Holy Cross Charities, Inc., a non-profit corporation that relies solely on contributions to preserve the church and keep it open. Open daily. Tours by appointment. 2010 Masses: May 3rd - 3 pm, Sept 12th - 3 pm.

www.volgagerman.net/pfeifer ks.htm

Our Lady Help of Christians Church - Antonino

Drawer 1000 Hays, KS 67601 785-623-4561

In October 1904, thirty members of the St. Francis Church in Munjor, who lived on farms 7-10 miles west of Munjor, met to discuss establishing a



parish and new village closer to their farms southwest of Hays. The new village was located on a site atop a scenic hill nine miles southwest of Hays, eight and a half miles west of Munjor and ten miles north of Schoenchen. They wanted to name their new town St. Anthony, but because there was already a town named Anthony in Harper County records show that "Saint Antonino" was the name applied for in 1905. However, because of postal regulations in place at that time, the post office took the "Saint" off the name. Unlike the earlier settlements which experienced considerable difficulty in locating supplies, the Antonino founders received the gift of a frame building. A decade earlier, the "Gold Mill" hotel had been constructed to serve the boom town of Chetolah, following the discovery of gold on the Smoky Hill River. The Ellis County gold rush evaporated quickly and Chetolah became a ghost town in 1894. Using lumber from the defunct gold mine, Antonino residents donated most of the labor. Built at a cost of about \$3,000 over a period of less than four months, the original wood frame church measured 80 by 30 feet and was 18 feet high. Fr. Maurus Schebler, Antonino's first priest, offered the first Mass on March 25 1905. Bishop John Cunningham dedicated the new Parish, Our Lady



Help of Christians, in October 1905. Overcrowding in the 1905 church became the main reason for the construction of a new church in 1951. Under the guidance of Fr. Flavian Meis, the parish built a much larger church, using many of the matérials from

the original church. A Gothic-in style building with an attached fiveroom rectory, full basement, indoor restrooms, electrical wiring and
kitchen facilities was constructed. A buff color exterior nicely
complemented the area's generous use of stone for buildings and
fence posts. Many local parishioners donated their labor and most of
the cost of materials came from private donations. At a cost of slightly
over \$70,000, the new church facility was dedicated on May 26, 1952,
by Bishop Frank Thill. The community of Antonino celebrated its 100
year centennial in 2005. Our Lady Help of Christian's parish continues
to be the center of the community and a Fall Feast is held each year on
the first Sunday of November. Active parish, open for tours by
appointment.

2010 Masses: Sat - 4pm.

St. Ann

Hwy 40 & Walker Ave. Walker, KS 67674 785-735-2777

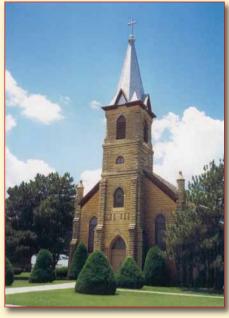
The early Catholic villagers of Walker were members of St. Fidelis Church in Victoria. On January 10, 1904, they held a meeting to discuss the building of their own church in Walker. It was decided that every communicant had to quarry, haul and furnish ten loads of stone to begin construction. Building began on March 28th and on June 11th, Bishop Cunningham laid the cornerstone. The church was completed in

November of 1905 with the dedication celebrated on Thanksgiving Day, November 30th. The cost of the church and contents was estimated to be \$12,000. This small church has beautiful stained glass windows and the Sanctuary has one of the most impressive natural dark wood altars of all the Ellis County Churches. Today the church remains active and open despite a small number of parish members.

Open by appointment 785-735-2721.

2010 Masses: Sun - 7:30 am.

www.volgagerman.net/walker_ks.htm







St. Anthony

Arapahoe & Church St. Schoenchen, KS 67667 785-625-5451

The first church services in Schoenchen were held in private dwellings until a structure could be built. Construction of the first church began in 1879. The stone walls were already completed when, in the spring of 1880, a heavy rain



caused the foundation to settle, cracking the walls so badly that the structure was abandoned. In its stead, a temporary wooden frame church, 30x18x9 feet was erected in the fall of 1881. The cornerstone of the current stone church was laid April 18, 1900, and the church was dedicated June 13, 1911. To quarry the native limestone blocks was a difficult task since the only tools they had were hand drills, wedges and sledge hammers. All adult men pledged to help one day a week towards the construction of the church. In addition to the volunteer labor, every parishioner over 12 years of age was assessed \$40 towards the construction. The church features Gothic windows, gold-capped arch, abutments and unusual crown shaped light fixtures. St. Anthony Church was scarred by fire on two occasions. The first blaze erupted by a floor furnace near the front of the church in the early 1920's. The second fire was in the rear of the church in 1932. After each fire, the church was rebuilt and arches were placed in the ceiling after the last fire. Active parish, open for tours by appointment.

2010 Masses: Sat - 5:30 pm.

www.volgagerman.net/schoenchen_ks.htm

St. Boniface

Grants Villa Road & Vincent Ave Vincent, KS 67671 785-735-2777

Parishioners of St. Fidelis Church in Victoria who lived several miles south of town wanted a church that was closer to their farm homes. Due to the German speaking people involved with the formation of the parish, the church was named after the great Apostle of Germany, St. Boniface. The dedication of St.



Boniface. The dedication of St.
Boniface Church was held on December 18, 1907, and the town site of Vincent was platted in 1910. Although the town never grew to include much more then the church, school and a grocery store, the church flourished during the 52 years Fr. Callistus Ractenwald served at St. Boniface. During that time, he handcrafted thousands of items for a display he called Little Town of Bethlehem. In 1927 he began assembling the pieces for the nativity scene and each year he added more rocks, shells, figurines, statues, miniature houses and pieces to create a display resembling the city of Bethlehem. The rocks and shells came from 105 different countries and Father Callistus collected pebbles and mineral rocks from all 50 states to decorate the nativity. Each year since his death in 1980, members of the parish set up the large display during December. The display is approximately 15' wide and 12' tall and fills the entire front right portion of the church. The details of the display are what make it so impressive and the variety of features include streams, deer, trees, bridges, water wells with rope and bucket, dogs, sheep, birds and many miniature small houses and buildings. Christmas time draws thousands of visitors to see this wonderful display which is open 2-5 pm on Sunday's in December and on New Years Day. Tours are available by calling 785-735-2767 or 785-735-9258.

2010 Masses: Winter-Sun - 5:30 pm, Summer-Sun - 7 pm. www.volgagerman.net/vincent_ks.htm

St. Catherine

1662 Martin Catharine, KS 67627 785-625-5091

www.volgagerman.net/Catherine.htm During the spring of 1876 a small group of immigrants from Katharinenstadt Russia began to establish the village of Catharine. Other families continued to arrive and the first Mass was celebrated in the summer of 1876. In 1879 a stone building built as a school was also used for Sunday services. It wasn't until May 1890 that work began on the current church with the corner stone laid on June 29. The parishioners provided much of the labor for the construction. They guarried and hauled the limestone from as far as 15 miles away. On Oct 6, 1892, the Rev. John J. Hennessy officiated at the ceremonies of the church dedication. During the next several years, the pews, altars, and pulpit were installed. Church furnishings were obtained as the parishioners became more prosperous. Statues, crosses, vestments, angels and other items were added to make it a beautiful and divine place of worship. Active parish, open for tours by appointment - 785-625-5394. 2010 Masses: Sun - 9 am.











UNSERE LEUTE VOLGA GERMAN SOCIETY

Oktoberfest in Conjunction with
Fort Hays State University Homecoming
HAYS FRONTIER PARK
785-735-2230

St. Francis

883 Moscow St. Munjor, KS 67601 785-625-5314

st_francis_church@hotmail.com www.volgagerman.net/munjor ks.htm

Construction of the first church, a frame building 41' by 20', began in the fall of 1877 and was completed in February 1878. In 1883, the church was enlarged by adding another 16'. During the 1880's immigration from Russia continued and the congregation at Munjor grew. In 1889 church members decided it was time to build



a new church and construct it of native limestone. The cornerstone was laid on Passion Sunday 1889, and by December of that same year the roof was completed. The church was dedicated in 1890 in honor of Saint Francis of Assisi. The church is 105' long, 49' wide and 50' high. The 60' high tower was designed for a steeple, but due to a lack of funds, the steeple was not completed until 1906. This church and its members were faced with a great tragedy on February 5, 1932, when



the church burned. Many of the interior furnishings were saved by the parishioners, but the altars, organ, bells and stained glass were destroyed by the fire. The church was restored with the same appearance it had prior to the fire with the exception of the steeple which was never

replaced. On June 3-5, 1946, the windows were replaced and are among some of the finest stained glass windows in Kansas! Active parish, open for tours by appointment.

Daily masses Tue & Th 8 am and weekend Masses: Sun - 8 am.



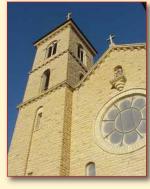
St. Fidelis

900 Cathedral Ave. Victoria, KS 67671 785-735-2777

fidelis@ruraltel.net

www.stfidelischurch.com

St. Fidelis is the largest of the historic churches in Ellis County and was built in 1908-1911 of native limestone. The stone was quarried from a site seven miles south of Victoria. Each block was dressed and faced by hand, hauled to the site by wagons and lifted atop the walls by horsepower. Almost a million



pounds of cement was mixed by hand and moved in by wheelbarrows. The 18 granite pillars were brought in by railway from Vermont.



Bedford limestone for the doorways, bases and capitals of the pillars came from Indiana. This majestic church is built in the shape of a cross

220' long and 110' wide at the transepts, or lateral arms. The twin bell towers are 141' tall and can be seen from miles around. The seating capacity of 1100 made it at the time of the dedication on August 27, 1911, the largest church west of the Mississippi River. The church was named "Cathedral of the Plains" by William Jennings Bryon when he visited during his presidential campaign on July 19, 1912. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and was honored as "One of the 8 Wonders of Kansas" on January 29, 2008. Active parish - open daily



6:30 am – 8:30 pm. Free self guided tours. Tours available by appointment.

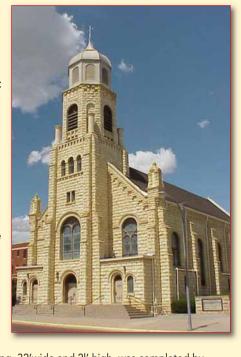
2010 Masses: Daily T, Th, F - 6:45 am; M & W - 7 pm. Sat-5 pm, Sun-10 am.



St. Joseph's Church

210 W. 13th Hays, KS 67601 785-625-7356 stjoseph@eaglecom.net www.stj-church.com

The first Catholic Church in Hays was a simple wooden frame church that was fortytwo feet long and twenty-two feet wide built in March 1879. Prior to this church being built, services were held in the military barracks at the Fort. Soon the parish outgrew the first church and construction of a new church began in the spring of 1886. The cornerstone was laid on August 15th and this new stone church,



which measured 72' long, 32'wide and 21' high, was completed by

Christmas 1886. On March 6, 1887, it was dedicated by Rev. Fr. Anastasius, O. M. Cap. and on September 4, 1887, it was consecrated. In the next five to ten years, the St. Joseph's church experienced rapid growth and a larger church was needed. The cornerstone of the current church was laid in November 1901 and the formal dedication took place on June 12, 1904. Active parish -

open daily. Tours available by appointment. 2010 Masses: Sat - 5 pm, Sun - 7:30 am, 10 am.







St. Mary's

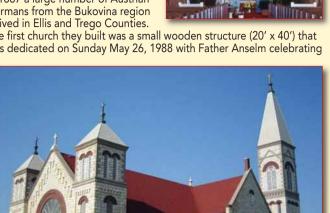
703 Monroe Ellis, KS 67637 785-726-4522

stmary@gbta.net

www.stmarysofellis.org/church

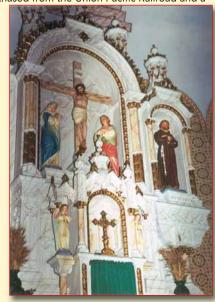
In 1887 a large number of Austrian Germans from the Bukovina region arrived in Ellis and Trego Counties.

The first church they built was a small wooden structure (20' x 40') that was dedicated on Sunday May 26, 1988 with Father Anselm celebrating



the Mass. With arrivals of more German Catholics, a larger church was needed. On November 1, 1898, the land north of Big Čreek and east of Monroe Street was purchased from the Union Pacific Railroad and a

second church was built. The parishioners wanted to build a really substantial edifice and in 1905 began having stone cut and hauled from quarries six miles south of Ellis. Bishop John F. Cunningham laid the cornerstone for the present day church on June 27, 1909. By August of 1911 the church was ready for occupancy though far from completed or furnished inside. The cost to this point was estimated at \$35,000. Through the next 10 to 20 years additions were made, side altars added and new stained glass windows were installed. The statuary was



imported from Munich, Germany, and in 1922 a magnificent pipe organ was installed. Active parish - open daily. Tours available by appointment.

2010 Masses: Sat - 5:30 pm, Sun - 9am



FEATURING:

- 100% smoke free
- Business center
- Exercise room
- Free deluxe breakfast
- Free wireless internet
- Bar with lounge onsite
- Indoor pool & hot tub

785-625-9322 1001 E. 41st St. Hays, KS





FEATURING:

- 100% smoke free
- Business center
- Exercise room
- Free deluxe breakfast
- Free wireless internet
- Onsite laundry
- Indoor pool & hot tub

785-625-2700 1011 E. 41st St. Hays, KS





FEATURING:

- Newly remodeled
- Free deluxe breakfast
- Free wireless internet
- Dogs welcome
- Indoor pool & hot tub
- Non-smoking rooms

785-628-8008 2810 Vine St. Hays, KS