

# A Visit to Ellinwood

By Jim Bales

Growing up in Wellington I have heard many stories of the tunnels that went underground here in the city. Supposedly there was a tunnel that went from the pink house on Jefferson Avenue underground to the Smith's Clothing Store on the southwest corner of Washington Avenue and Harvey Street.

This structure was originally called the "marble block building". It was the Glasco Rexall Drugstore when I was a kid. Mr. and Mrs. Harry Smith lived in the pink house at the time. Mrs. Smith was deaf and Mr. Smith wanted a safe passageway so his wife could walk to the clothing store without being hit by a car as she couldn't hear them coming, or so the story goes.

There also were stories of a tunnel, crossing under the intersection of Harvey and Washington. There were banks on three of the corners, so a tunnel was built so they could safely transfer money from one bank to another. The story goes that those tunnels were all filled in when the streets were upgraded, or the buildings were renovated.

Now, I have never seen any actual proof that these tunnels existed in Wellington, but tunnels and basement businesses were a common practice for many of the early towns of the 1880s. That's one of the reasons I made the trip to Ellinwood with the Cowley County Golden Tigers - to tour the underground stores and passageways.

The Santa Fe Trail, which was active from 1821 to 1880, went right through this area so it saw a large number of travelers passing through over the years. From the mid 1860's through the 1880's the Cox cattle trail also passed through there.

The town was named after Colonel John Ellinwood, a civil engineer for the Santa Fe Railroad



Local historian Jim Bales toured the tunnels of Ellinwood, KS.

whom I assume surveyed the town as well as the railroad. The town was established in 1871 in anticipation of the railroad coming.

When the Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe railroad reached the town in 1872, it brought in more settlers who were largely German immigrants that settled in the town.

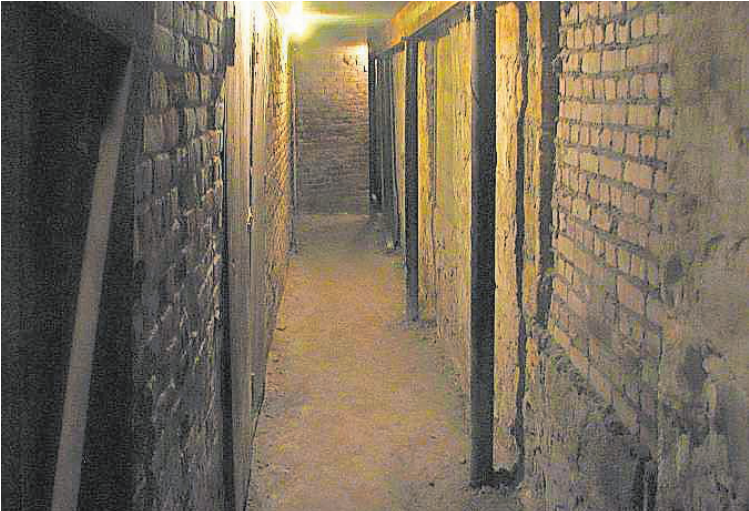
The tunnels originally ran on both sides of Main Street for two blocks and served mainly to supply goods to the businesses downtown as well as serve as coal delivery and storage. But, they also served as passage to the businesses in the basements of the main street buildings.

There were tunnels constructed underneath the railroad platform and tracks to the town proper

where goods and materials could be delivered to the businesses without street traffic. Many saloons, barbershops, bath houses, brothels and other more undesirable businesses were located there.

On our tour, we started at the Historic Wolf Hotel. Built in 1894 by John Wolf, it is a beautiful historic artifact in itself. After a brief entertaining presentation of the town history we descended some stairs at the back of the hall and entered into what they called the library room.

As I understand it, it was used as the city library for a time. It has been decorated with bookshelves filled with books, even the steps have been painted to look like bookshelves full of books. This



room connects to the underground saloon where we had a quick lunch.

It was explained that the saloon was also used as a speakeasy during prohibition. When we exited the front of the bar, we found ourselves in a brick hallway under the sidewalk.

As we continued along the hallway there were other windowed storefronts. Looking up you could see the manhole covers of the sidewalk with colored glass holes letting in sunlight. Some of the stores are not accessible, but you can look in the window and see how business might have been conducted in the 1880's.

After going above ground and crossing the street we entered the back of an antique store, descended more stairs and found ourselves in a blacksmith shop, complete with all the tools and accoutrements used by the blacksmith.

Walking along under the sidewalk, you end up in the barber shop, where the barber also served as the dentist. Followed by the laundry/bath house. Clearly this was the place to be if you needed a haircut, a tooth pulled, your laundry done and a bath.

It was 15 cents for the bath, 5 cents if you opted to use dirty water. The bathhouse was furnished with

a bed behind a divider wall for extra activities.

While I have been to many historic places, these rooms felt authentic, right down to the smells and the dust on the furnishings. Overall it was a wonderful walk back through time and 1880's history.

Oh, I almost forgot. After the tour we went upstairs in the Wolf Hotel and got a peek at the B and B rooms, which are available for guests. They are very nicely decorated in Victorian Era furnishings, a great place for a day trip or weekend getaway.

As a hard core history nerd, I highly recommend it!



Photos submitted

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**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Published in Wellington Daily News  
May 22, 29, June 5, 2025

**IN THE THIRTIETH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT, SUMNER COUNTY, KANSAS PROBATE DEPARTMENT**

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF

ANDREW P. LEDDY,  
Deceased

**Case No.: SU-2024-PR-000081**

PURSUANT TO K.S.A. CHAPTER 59

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

THE STATE OF KANSAS TO ALL PERSONS CONCERNED:

You are hereby notified that a petition has been filed in this Court by Janet M. Leddy, duly appointed, qualified and acting Executor of the Estate of Andrew P. Leddy, deceased, requesting that Petitioner's acts be approved; account be settled and allowed; the heirs be determined; the Last Will and Testament be construed and the Estate be assigned to the persons entitled thereto; the Court find the allowances requested for attorneys' fees and expenses are reasonable and should be allowed; the costs be determined and ordered paid; the administration of the Estate be closed; upon the filing of receipts the Petitioner be finally discharged as the Executor of the Estate of Andrew P. Leddy, deceased, and the Petitioner be released from further liability.

You are hereby required to file your written defenses thereto on or before June 12, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. in the District Court in Wellington, Sumner County, Kansas, at which time and place said cause will be heard. Should you fail to file your written defenses, judgment and decree will be entered in due course upon the petition.

JANET M. LEDDY, Petitioner

Dennis P. Wetta, #15027  
MARTIN, PRINGLE, OLIVER,  
WALLACE & BAUER, L.L.P.  
645 E Douglas, Suite 100  
Wichita, KS 67202-3194  
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Attorneys for Petitioner

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June 5, 2025

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**NOTICE OF ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT BEFORE THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WELLINGTON, KANSAS**

Notice is hereby given that on **Tuesday, June 24, 2025**, the Wellington Planning Commission, in the Council Chambers of the City Administration Building, 317 South Washington, Wellington, Kansas, at **6:00 p.m.** will hold a public hearing to consider a zoning ordinance addition:

Applicant: City of Wellington, 317 South Washington Ave. Wellington KS 67152

Request: *To approve amendments to the City of Wellington Planning Commission ByLaws originally adopted in October 2024.*

*Any comments or questions may be directed to the Building & Codes Department located at 317 South Washington, or by telephone at (620) 326 3871, no later than 5:00 p.m. on the date of the meeting, or you may appear in person to express your views on the day of the meeting.*

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**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Published in Wellington Daily News  
May 22, 29, June 5, 2025

**IN THE THIRTIETH JUDICIAL DISTRICT SUMNER COUNTY, KANSAS PROBATE DIVISION**

In the Matter of the Estate of:  
MICHAEL ALLEN HELM,  
Deceased.

**Case No. SU 2025 PR 000027**

Pursuant To Chapter 59 Of Kansas Statutes Annotated STATE OF KANSAS COUNTY OF SEDGWICK

**NOTICE OF HEARING & NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

THE STATE OF KANSAS TO ALL PERSONS CONCERNED:

You are hereby notified that a Petition has been filed in this court by Evan M. Helm, as potential heir of Michael Allen Helm, deceased, praying for the determination of the descent; and you are hereby required to file your written defenses thereto on or before Thursday, June 26, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. of said day, in said court, in the City of Wellington, in Sumner County, Kansas, at which time and place said cause will be heard. Should you fail therein, judgment and decree will be entered in due course upon said Petition.

Evan M. Helm /s/  
EVAN M. HELM Petitioner

PREPARED BY:  
Arlene M. Burrow /s/  
ARLENE M. BURROW, #20498  
Attorney for Petitioner

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ENAN M. HELM Petitioner

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