

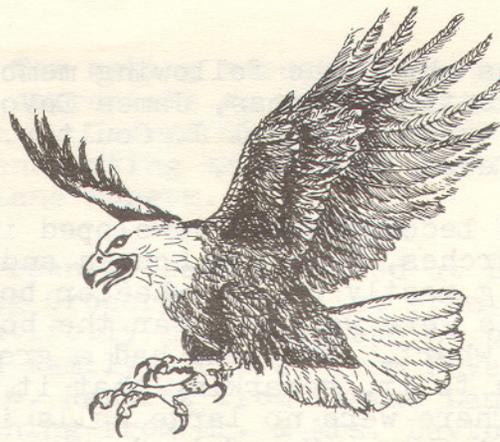
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BALD EAGLE

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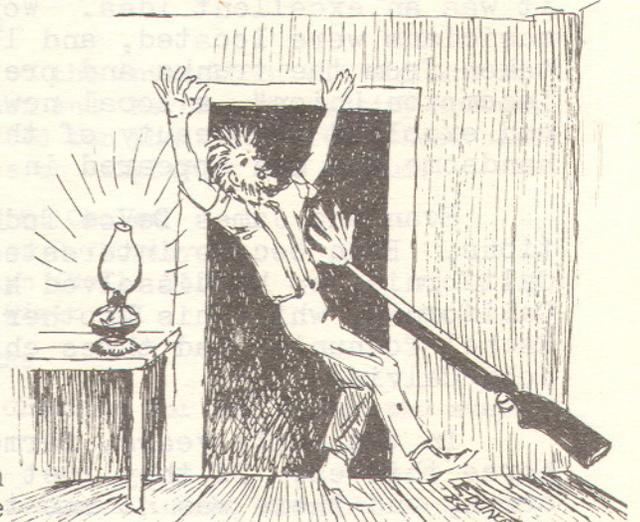
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THE TODHUNTER FAMILY

The Kansas-Nebraska Bill, authored by Stephen A. Douglas, provided that Kansas Territory would be opened for settlement in May 1854. However, the Congress of 1853 had nearly passed such a bill, so the people in near-by Missouri who wished to obtain cheap land went into the territory that year to select choice farms on the supposition that the Congress of 1854 would authorize the opening of the territory.



The Untimely, Accidental Death of James DeVoe Todhunter!

Some of these 1853 claim seekers were James DeVoe Todhunter, Evan Todhunter and perhaps Will Todhunter. The Todhunter family had been living near Carthage, Missouri and were desirous of procuring more and larger farms. They must have entered the territory near Westport as they drove on the California Trail westward, constantly scanning the near-by areas for a location that met their wants. After about fifty miles, a spot some distance north of the trail, appealed to them. They drove to the site and were pleased with the lay of the land, the water prospects, and the fact that they could see for miles in all directions.

They marked the proposed claims with stakes, built cabins, dug a well and planted trees. One day as they worked, a contingent of U.S. Cavalry came by and asked what right they had to be in the territory as no one had the government's permission to seek claims at that time as it was still Indian land. Upon drinking the water from the new well, they gave them permission to stay providing they would give water, on request, to the army or to the people who were enroute to California on the near-by road. This claim was located about two miles south of what later became the City of Lecompton.

In the late fall some of the brothers returned to Missouri to prepare the rest of the family for a move to the new location. In the spring of 1854 they came back with their families and goods to the new homestead.

The 1855 Lecompton census shows the following members of the Todhunter family: Evan, John, Valentine, Thomas, James DeVoe and Amanus. With them had come an orphan of 13 years, Rachel J. Coulter. In 1857 she was united in marriage with James DeVoe Todhunter.

By this time (1857) Lecompton had developed into a sizable town with stage lines, hotels, churches, business houses and there was considerable river traffic, consisting mostly of sidewheeler boats. One day as Mrs. Todhunter and two friends were walking near the boat dock, she noticed a huge boat tied to the wharf. The boat had a great bare deck. She called her companions' attention to it, remarking that it would make a wonderful place to have a ball. There were no large halls in the town then, and entertainment was at a minimum. Her friends were enthusiastic about the suggestion, so they approached Governor Geary with the proposal of using the boat deck for a dance floor. He contacted the boat captain who thought it was an excellent idea. Word of the proposed ball spread like wildfire, musicians were located, and long unused ball gowns and dress suits were taken from the trunks and prepared for the evening's festivities, "The Lecompton Union", a local newspaper, reported the ball a great success and extolled the beauty of the women and their dresses and remarked how handsome the men appeared in civilized dress.

Evan and James DeVoe Todhunter were partners in their farming operations. Evan became interested in the stories about the gold fields of California, so he dissolved his partnership with DeVoe and headed for California, while his brother remained on the farm. James DeVoe and Rachel Todhunter had three children, Alice Cladora, Mary E. (Mollie) and John Calvin.

In the early years, farmers were constantly having to guard against horse thieves. If they lost their horses, they had no means of raising crops, and there was no one to hire to do the work. At one time the thievery was so prevalent that a large corral was built north of Herman Banks' farm and south of the Stanton mansion. Armed guards watched the horses the owners brought them day and night. James DeVoe Todhunter attempted to solve the problem in his own way. He kept several loaded guns in the corner of the cabin and upon hearing a disturbance of any kind near his barn or corral, would seize a gun and hurry to the source of the commotion. On the evening of June 2, 1864 such an occasion arose. Mr. Todhunter hurriedly seized a gun but unfortunately it slipped from his grasp, discharged as it hit the floor, and shot him. He died immediately and was subsequently buried in the Migliaro cemetery. His daughter, Mary, was buried there in 1866.

Mrs. Rachel Todhunter stayed on the farm with her children. On October 28, 1869, she married William R. McCarty. To this union was born six children: Hattie, Minnie, Arthur, Charles, George and Sarah. Mrs. McCarty lived on the farm until her death October 26, 1910. She was survived by her husband and seven children. She was noted for her sweet disposition, her kindness to others, and her interest in the community. A member of the family continued farming the land. George R. McCarty tended it for many years. He was known in the community for his apple orchard. He often stored his apples in the basement of the High School, now the Lane University Museum. He kept a barrel of apples in the hall, so that the students could have an apple to eat whenever they wished, and need not bother the barrels in the storeroom.

The farm was noted for being the one with the longest continual owner-

ship and residence in one family in the state of Kansas. After George's death his wife Gertrude sold it in 1961.

In 1896 John Calvin Todhunter and Lula Mae Hopkins were married at Dover, Kansas. They had two children, Faye Luella (the beloved Miss Faye of local teaching fame) and Roy DeVoe Todhunter. Faye L. married Harvey Glenn and they continued to reside in Lecompton. Roy DeVoe married Emma Thompson, they had two children Sue and John.

Mrs. John C. Todhunter (Lula) was local postmistress from June 17, 1915 until April 21, 1922. At the beginning of her tenure, the post office was located in a building on the east side of the street. In April 1916 all those buildings burned and the post office was relocated in the northeast corner of the old Hotel Rowena. Other businesses were also given space until another building could be erected.

Mr. J. C. Todhunter operated a livestock business from about 1891 to 1909 when he sold his business to Dan O'Donald and H. D. Larimer. He then purchased the city meat market from C. W. Sehon but later that year sold it to W. E. Morris and moved to the family farm.

The only remaining Todhunter in the Lecompton area is Faye Todhunter Glenn who resides just south of the city limits on the old "Robert Steele Highway".

Sara Walter and Iona Spencer

From the Lecompton Sun, March 27, 1919

"Saturday morning, W. R. McCarty died at his home south of town after an illness of several months. He was one of the few remaining men who lived in this vicinity when the editor of the "Sun" came to Lecompton.

For many years Mr. McCarty was active in all the interests of the community.

He was born in Bracken County, Kentucky, January 7, 1841. He was the sixth oldest of eleven children. In 1849 he migrated with his family to Lee County, Iowa; here they lived until the spring of 1857, when they moved to Linn County, Kansas. He remained with his parents on their farm until the spring of 1861, when he enlisted in the Sixth Kansas Cavalry. He remained in service three years and nine months. He was taken prisoner and sent to Tyler, Texas, where he was guarded for nine months. The suffering of the soldiers was intense and on account of the fearful privations their health was greatly impaired. The Civil War being over, he returned to his home. In 1868 he came to Lecompton, Kansas, where he entered Lane University. He married Mrs. R. J. Todhunter in 1869. He departed life March 22, 1919. The service was held at his home."

Sources:

- Isely and Richards, The Story of Kansas State Printer, Topeka, Kans. 1953.
- The Story of Lecompton by the Class of 1940.
- The Lecompton Sun, May 26, 1891; Nov. 29, 1907; Feb. 12, 1909; Feb. 19, 1909; Oct. 21, 1910; Oct. 28, 1910.
- Kansas Historical Quarterly Vol XViii, 1950
- 1855 and 1860 census of Doug. Co., Lec. Twp.



"God Bless Us,
Every One!"

MERRY CHRISTMAS

This is the season of the year when we should forget all our little worries, our prejudice against our fellow man and really get down to brass tacks and try and realize how little, how very small, our grounds for grievances are.

We live in a land where we have liberty, protection and plenty. We have friends and acquaintances with whom it is a pleasure to associate.

But far above all other thoughts we should remember what Christmas stands for. It is taken for the anniversary of our Redeemer, who came on earth to save us from our sins. From Him flow all the blessings we enjoy in this life and He is the author of all we hope to enjoy in the life Eternal.

WE WISH EVERYONE A MERRY CHRISTMAS.

(The above taken from the "Lecompton Sun" Thursday, December 25, 1924)

SANTA CLAUS' LETTERS

The following Santa Claus' letters appeared in the "The Lecompton Sun" December 21, 1906. The Lecompton Mercantile Company newly owned by Mr. J. M. Kimmel, after buying out Leamer & Leamer asked for Santa Claus' letters which he would publish. Here are a few that were published.

Dear Santa Clause I want a doll a doll bed and table and chairs and some canday. Well i must close Hoping you will call at my house I am yours Respt. Thelma Cardwell.

Dear Santa I want a little play house doll sled slate doll table Princie Henry

Dear Santa, Please bring me a little train and a drum and candy and peanuts oranges and lemons. Roy Lewis

Dear Santa, will you please bring me a horse and buggy and oranges and peanuts and a little horse and harness to drive and a go-cart and all kinds of things. Good by. Guy McClanahan

Dear santa claus, I want for christmas a knife a game of dominoes, your little friend Darrel McCall

Dear Santa Clause I want you to bring me a little 5¢ drum and a turtle, watch and 10¢ worth of English Walnuts 5¢ worth of Christmas candy. This is all, So good bye, from Dottie Dulin

Dear Santa, I am so glad you will be here again will you please bring me an automobile and train and some candy and some for Bertie and Sister too. Ralph McRae

Dear Santa, I made up my mind to write to you tonight. I want a big automobile, a ballon, an air ship and a foot ball. How cold is it up there? Take me home with you when you come here.

How old are you, you will have to crawl through the window, because you can't get down the chimney. You are the only fellow that I know that discovered the North Pole. Are you coming here in an airship, ballon or what? I hope you wont lose anything by the time you get here. Are you married? If you are please bring your wife along. I think you would look better if you had your beard cut off. What do you live on up there?

If you get very hungry, drop me a postal and I will send you some onions. Well I will have to close for to-night, so good bye. LeRoy Spangler

Dear Santa, Please bring me a big ball and a sled, I want set of dishes, a drum, a table, set of chairs and doll that will sleep. I want sum candy and automobile.

I guess I will close my letter now. Bye Effie Mohatt

The following letter was taken from the Lecompton Sun, Dec. 9, 1915

Dear Old Santa Claus: This is what I want for Christmas--a blue silk dress trimmed in fur, one dolly and buggy, a pair of skates, a slate, a sled, and a Shetland pony and cart, also a kodak and bracelet. Frances B. Drake

President's Notes

Thanks to each of you for your loyal support, another eventful year at Lane Museum is about to draw to a close. As of the end of November, we have had 2,926 visitors and 47 guided tours. This means that visitors to Lane and Lecompton will number 4 times our population. Why do they come here to Lane and Lecompton? Because this is being recognized as one of the truly outstanding museums in Kansas. It is a shining example of the love, loyalty and dedication all of you have for this historic community. YOU have made this all possible.

If, by chance, you are not already a member, we have a very hard-working Membership Chairman in Iona Spencer, who will gladly accept your membership!

John Hoad, of Southern Pines, North Carolina, recently gave the Museum a beautiful, rosewood melodeon. The melodeon was originally bought in the 1850's for use in the Episcopal Church at Lecompton. When the church was closed, the instrument was given to Mrs. Frances Ann Christian Evans, whose family had donated \$500.00 toward building the church. Frances and her husband, James Davis Bruce Evans, had come from Richmond, Virginia in 1856 and homesteaded a quarter section of land here. After the church was closed, Frances placed the melodeon at Lane University for their use. Eventually, she gave the melodeon to her daughter, Gertrude, who married Francis Hoad, who then passed it on to their son, William. He took it to his home in Ann Arbor, Michigan. From there, it was taken to the home of William's son, John, who lived in Southern Pines, N. C. John brought it back to Lecompton and the Lane University Museum, where it is truly home again. This beautiful, historic instrument has had tender, loving care for over a century and a quarter, and we are so proud and pleased to have it on display at Lane in Lecompton. Other relatives living in this area include Bruce Hoad, who taught Music in the Lecompton schools at one time and is now in the Music Department at Kansas University, and Gertrude Brodhag, Alice Hoad and Laura Miller Fisher of Topeka. The generosity of the Hoad Family is very much appreciated.

We are honored to have received several items from the St. Peters Catholic Church in Big Springs, even though we are saddened because of the reason that the future of the building in its present site is in doubt. We are privileged to be in the position to preserve some of the heritage of this area landmark. The following items have been placed in Lane Museum: Stained glass windows by the Theodore Sulzen Family, Mary A. Kreipe Family, T. F. Kreipe Family, William T. Kreipe Family, Clarence Melton Family, and three entry way windows by Marcella and Bill Anderson in memory of her sister Mildred Kreipe McAnaw. Also, 3 pews from the original church have been given by Arolene and George Simmons. We have also received 5 pews from the present church, an ornate newell post and stair railing, the choir railing and confession door. We plan to display these treasured items in the Museum, so they can continue to be enjoyed and appreciated.

We soon will have a very informative and interesting Civil War Diary available for public reading. Sara Walter has spent many hours translating this hand-written Diary which was kept by John Scott in 1864. He came from Ovid, New York and served in the Army of the Potomac. He was a grandfather of Wilma Scott Morris. This Diary is something history buffs will relish being able to read, and we appreciate Wilma allowing us to use it, and we also appreciate Sara translating the dim script so it can be read easier by the rest of us.

The wedding of Sharon Conway and Rance Roberts was held in Lane University Chapel, Saturday evening, November 10th. We extend our best wishes for their future together. This is the fifth wedding to be held in our beautiful Chapel.

Once again, the Lecompton Historical Society will have a display about Lecompton and our rich history at the Topeka Travel and Tourism Show which will be held at Topeka in January. We also will have a display for two weeks the last of March in the lobby of the First National Bank in Topeka. Thanks to Connie Norwood Stilson for making the arrangements for the bank display. These are just a few of our efforts to promote Lecompton and its history, and to let people know what an interesting community we live in.

A beautiful, console Kimball piano has been presented to Lane University from the Raymond Ice Memorial Fund. This adds to our musical instruments available for use in the Chapel. Thanks to the Raymond Ice Family and Friends for this much appreciated donation.

Mark your calendar for June 29th and plan to be present for some reminiscing and fun at the annual Territorial Day celebration in Lecompton. This celebration seems to grow every year, thanks to the help of everyone who gets involved.

The annual group Christmas photograph will be taken at the December 13th meeting. This picture will be on display on the entrance desk for a time and then placed in the permanent record to be preserved for the future.

Work is presently in progress on the museum roof. The construction is being done by Dan Rockhill & Sons, and Stevenson Roofing. The Kansas State Historical Society is so impressed with the technique of the preservation work in progress that Mr. Rockhill has been asked to present a report on his work at Lane University to a Preservation Convention in San Francisco next September. This will mean some publicity for our museum and community.

In September, Garland Boose, whose honorary Indian name is Chief Fire Eagle, gave a most informative talk about his heritage. He displayed a unique collection of Indian artifacts. At the October meeting, Karen Carlin, wife of Governor John Carlin, presented the film she promoted to show how beautiful and interesting our State of Kansas really is. At the November meeting, Historical Society members, Malcolm Smith and Rich McConnell brought their very enthusiastic Scrapwood Band and Cloggers, who presented a delightfully entertaining program.

The Lecompton Historical Society booth at the Douglas County Fair was well taken care of this year, thanks to Sara Walter, Jeri Skinner, David and Margaret Noe, George and Arloene Simmons, Mae Holderman, Shirley Funk, Wilma Tibbs, Doris Matney and Iona Spencer. A big "thank-you" to Wally and Mae Holderman, David Paslay, Dorothy Shaner, Arley Leach and Jeff Goodrick for their mowing and trimming of the high school and Lane area. Also, thanks to

Forest and Julia Springer for making necessary arrangements to acquire the Kimball piano. We all do appreciate so very much the hard work of Bill Anderson, David Paslay, Rich McConnell, George Simmons, Ralph Davis and Jeff Goodrick for their man-power in transporting the church pews, the Earl Bahnmaier organ and the Kimball piano to Lane Museum.

The following items have recently been received at Lane University Museum: an 1835 Bible and a Fleming Grocery price list from Ester and Kenneth Matney; a class picture and a beautifully made needlepoint picture of roses from Roberta French; school and family pictures from Faye Glenn; a 1923 Bible Class certificate and U.M.W. Reports from Elaine Daniels; several items of well preserved period clothing from Mr. & Mrs. Dayton Decker; and several Lecompton High School programs from Kathleen Schneider. Thanks to you all for your interest and support of Lane Museum.

LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

Our Life Membership is growing and it's all due to the interest of all who are involved in the preservation of the history of Lecompton and the Lane University Museum. Our thanks to you all and to the following names listed for their support. These names will be added to our Life Membership Plaque, which is on display at the museum.

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Madge (Hill) Rothberger | Duane D. Chiles |
| Elizabeth (Day) Jefferson | Charles R. Worley |
| Dr. Elaine (Hall) Mischler | Marilyn (Hall) Darrow |
| Sara R. Walter Young | Phil Wizer III |

MEMORIAL LIFE MEMBERS

- Bartlett Brown Day--Memorial given by Vernita (Day) Chestnut for her father and step-mother.
- Nancy Jane (Glenn) Day
- Ethel Leary--Memorial given by Jimmie Johnson
- Martha Caldwell
- Mabel Caldwell
- Lenore (Caldwell) Upham
- Fred T. Hildenbrand--Memorial given by his wife Beulah Hildenbrand

Our Life Membership now total 262 and our membership is over 500.

THE LECOMPTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, Lecompton, Kansas 66050 is a non-profit corporation for the preservation of Historic Sites. We are eager for continued membership and new members!

Individual membership is \$2.50 per year, from December to December. Life membership is \$50 per individual. Contributions are tax deductible. Checks should be made payable to the Lecompton Historical Society, and mailed to Mrs. Iona Spencer, R.R. #1, Lecompton, Kansas 66050.

(Please clip and mail with your check)

_____ \$2.50 Annual Individual Member.

_____ \$50 Individual Life and Memorial Life Member.

_____ Other Contribution

Name _____ Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Note: If your name or address is not correct as shown on this copy of your Bald Eagle, please let us know.

A chair brought to Lecompton by the grandfather of Elizabeth Day Jefferson and Lecompton Town Band buttons have been donated to the Museum.

We sadly report the deaths of two of our historical society members:

Calvin Junior Maust died Sunday, September 30, at a Topeka hospital. He was born May 4, 1919 at Lecompton, the son of Dr. Calvin H. and Mary Gouhner Maust. He was employed for 41 years as a civil engineer for the State Department of Transportation. He married Audrey Boose, May 2, 1942, at Lecompton. She survives. Other survivors include a son, Robert Maust, and daughters Janice Marshall, Joyce Dickson and Joan Ribordy and eight grandchildren. A brother, Paul Maust and sister, Maxine Fowler also survive. Burial was in Maple Grove Cemetery at Lecompton. "Junior", as people in this community knew him, was a loyal supporter of his home town and Lane Museum. He was a life member of the Lecompton Historical Society. When any of his family was visiting, he always brought them to our meetings or to visit the museum. His presence will be missed at our meetings.

Starr Glenn passed away November 12. He was born November 21, 1892 at Lecompton, the son of Thomas and Minnie Humbert Glenn, and spent his life in the Lecompton community. He married Mabel Cole, November 21, 1916. She survives. Other survivors include a son, Ivan Glenn, Lecompton, and three daughters, Maxine Dark, Lecompton; Eileen Eichman, Linwood, Calif.; and Ruby Eichman, Lewiston, Idaho; nine grandchildren and 20 great-grandchildren. Graveside services will be at Maple Grove Cemetery, Lecompton November 14th. Starr was a retired farmer and carpenter, and served many years on the Lecompton Township Board and Glenn School District Board. He was a life member of the Lecompton Historical Society.

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