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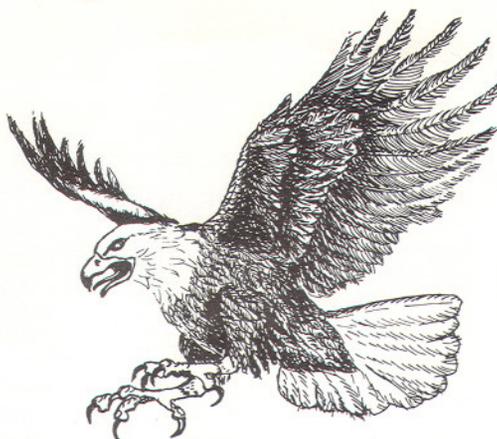
BALD EAGLE

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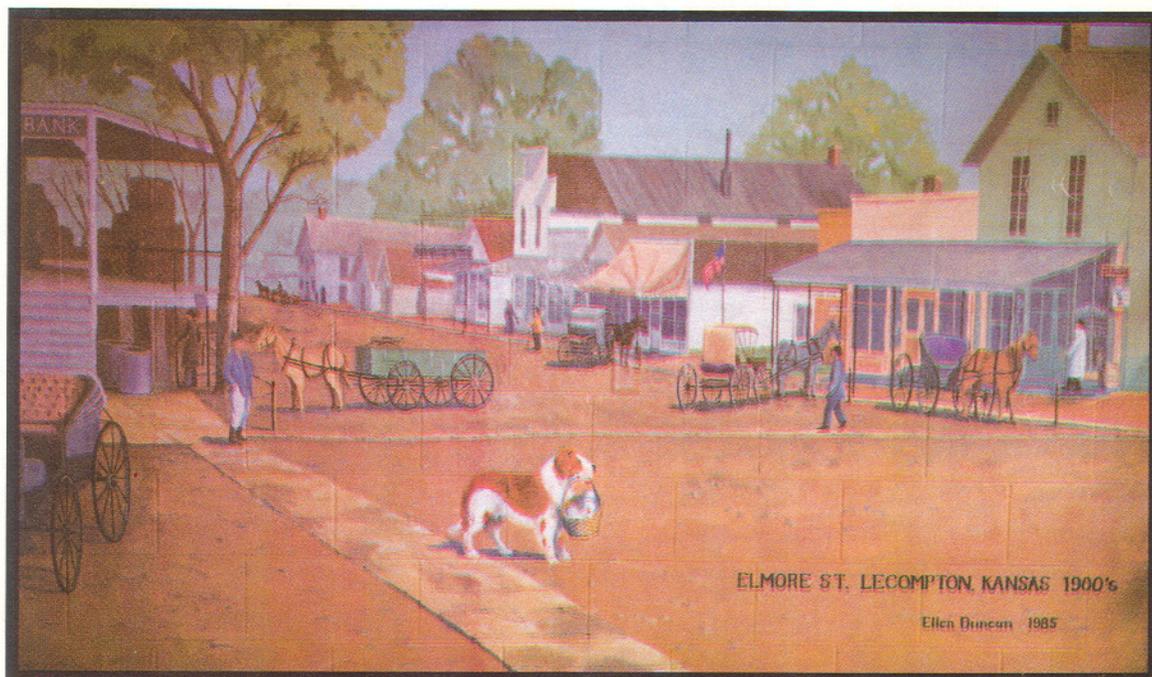
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VOL. 13 No. 3

LECOMPTON, KANSAS

Fall 1987

1910 Elmore Street



The above is a reproduction of a mural in the Lecompton Post Office, that is housed in an attractive, modern building which was built in 1969. The post office has had many locations since its 1855 starting date. It had been housed in several different buildings on the east side of Elmore street, as well as two different sites in the Old Rowena Hotel building on the west side.

When the present postmaster, Janice Rake, took office, she was

intrigued by the large blank white wall on the west side of the entry. As she was a mural fan, she consulted with Ellen Duncan, a local artist, about it. They decided that if it were painted, the topic must be of historical significance, as Lecompton is so rich in that area. The idea of recreating the town as it looked before the business buildings burned in 1916 was suggested, and decided upon as a suitable theme. Ellen then consulted with Herman Banks and Faye Glenn

concerning the various Lecompton merchants of the 1900 era and their locations. Lane Museum had a number of photos of the street and a drawing was made from them. The size of the mural was to be 6½ feet by 9 feet.

Next came financing the project. It was a sizable challenge. Many local people offered various donations to a committee set up for that purpose, as did Hamm's Quarry and the Lecompton Historical Society. Enough money was soon raised. Acrylic paint was used on the mural and it was completed in 1985. The mural is a delight to all who enter the post office each day. There have also been numerous groups who have toured the town, and as they knew of the mural, included it in their tours.

The mural depicts the west side of Elmore Street, the Rowena Hotel and the bank were located there in early 1900's. On the east side of the street from north to south are: Spangler's Drugs, Brisbane Watch Shop, George Connell home (Lecompton Sun editor), Ike Hartup Shoe Shop, Lecompton Mercantile Company (J. H. Kimmel, Mgr.), Leamer Dry Goods, Iliff Mercantile, Todhunter Meats, Mikesell Barber Shop, U.S. Post Office, Lecompton Sun, Dr. Chamber's office, Thos. Lee Hardware, and M.E. McCoy Dentist.

Perhaps the part of the mural that seems to create the most interest is the large Saint Bernard dog carrying a basket. Mrs. Iliff, a local store proprietor, owned the dog. She went to the store daily, and her big dog escorted her. She took a basket with her to bring home the daily groceries and mail after work. The dog soon learned to carry the basket for her when it was empty on the way to the store, and then full on the return. Mrs. Iliff became ill and was unable to go to the store. Each day at the time she and the dog normally left the house, the dog would procure the basket and go to the door, scratch to be let out, and bark accusingly at Mrs. Iliff

because she did not make ready to leave the house. Finally, one day she opened the door for him, the dog picked up the basket, stepped out and after waiting a few moments for her, went on alone, down the street to the store. He scratched on the door there, and was let in. He waited for awhile, and then took the basket to a clerk for groceries. Mrs. Iliff's son, who was in charge of the store at that time, suggested an item be put in the basket, and the dog be let out to go home. The dog took the basket, went out the door, trotted home, and scratched on the door upon arriving there. The door was opened for him, so he entered the house, and deposited the basket. Each succeeding day he made the same trip with the basket, and as Mrs. Iliff became aware of how trustworthy he was, she started putting a grocery list and money in it. The dog also learned to pick up the mail at the post office, so Mrs. Iliff had her own private delivery service. The dog was so large and so protective of its charge that no dog or person would have challenged him.

This service continued until after some weeks Mrs. Iliff could return to work at the store. One individual of the parish said that the dog's name was "Scotty." That is the story of the dog in the mural as told by people who knew him.

The stores all burned in June 1916 and a copy of an article from the Thursday June 22, 1916 "Lecompton Sun" describes it:

DISASTEROUS FIRE

About one-thirty o'clock, Tuesday morning as Dwight Goddard, third-trick operator, was on his way to the depot he discovered a fire in Jake French's meat market. He aroused Mr. French and then went for Ross Iliff. An alarm was turned in and in a few moments the fire department was on the ground.

Before the fire was under control,

a little before four o'clock, eight frame buildings had burned, being everything between Thos. Lee's Hardware store and Hartup's shoe shop, with a loss estimated at \$20,000 to \$30,000 partly covered by insurance. The cause of the fire is not known.

The wind was from the east and in a few moments the Mikesell barbershop and post office were ablaze. On north the Iliff's store was burning fiercely. Dr. C.C. Kerr's office being covered with iron withstood the flames, until most of the contents were removed. A bucket brigade was formed and every effort was put forth to save the Lee store; for if it had caught fire the whole south and west portions of the town would have been threatened. Coupled with the efforts of the bucket brigade was the chemical engine, which, at the right moment, was effectively turned on the flames. The heat set fire to A. Hildenbrand's warehouse and cream room which carried the flames to his store, which was the last building to catch fire, and there it burned itself out. The fire fighters kept looking at the storm and saying "if it would only rain." But the rain did not come until the danger was passed. When it did come it came in torrents and with it a strong breeze.

LOSSES

The bulding occupied by the French Meat Market, in which the fire started, was, with its contents, a total loss. It was a relic of territorial days, and was owned by Topeka parties. It was valued at \$1500. Al Mikesell's barber shop and contents were a complete loss. This building and post office building were owned by Mrs. M.M. Iliff, and were insured, for \$500. The Dr. Kerr office building was owned by Dr. H.L. Chambers of Lawrence. It was insured for \$500, and held at \$1500. Dr. Kerr estimates his loss at \$150. Thos. Lee sustained a loss of \$1000 to the stock by moving the stock out, which exposed it to the rain which fell almost immediately after it had been removed. The Iliff

Mercantile Co. was the largest loser. Their stock and fixtures amounted to about \$10,000 and the building was worth \$2,500. A. Hildenbrand's stock was largely saved, yet the loss will likely exceed the insurance of \$1000. The building was built in the days when Lecompton was to be the western metropolis, and is probably the oldest building used for mercantile purposes in the state. For fifty years Wm. Leamer conducted a store in it. It was owned by the Leamer estate. The postoffice loss was not great, as most of the stamped paper is kept in the Bank. There was a loss of postal cards, and some of the fixtures were burned. A postoffice inspector will come and check up affairs.

By daylight the majority of the men, whose business' had been injured by the fire were arranging to resume. The post office improvised quarters on the first floor of the old dormitory. Hildenbrand arranged for a part of the remaining space and Ross Iliff for the rest. They began getting the parts of their stocks saved on the floor, awaiting the insurance adjusters. The Iliff Merc. Co. ordered a new stock. J. A. French had a shipment of bread on the "plug." Dr. Kerr has fitted up rooms on the second floor of the dormitory. Al Mikesell went to Topeka, Tuesday morning to purchase a new equipment for his barber shop. He will set up his shop in the room above the Thos. Lee Hardware Store.

NOW FOR A BIGGER LECOMPTON

While the fire was a big blow to Lecompton it was in no sense a knock-out and is nothing from which the town cannot recover. Many other towns have suffered greater disasters only to arise to be better towns than they had ever been. Lecompton can do this. The Sun feels sorry for who have lost their buildings, but it has long felt that these buildings were a handicap to the growth of the town. Now that they are gone, they should be replaced by substantial ones meeting the

requirements of the city ordinances that will be a credit to the town. It is a time of testing and if we all meet the condition in a big way and pull together then a more prosperous Lecompton than we have ever known will result and what seemed a calamity will prove a blessing.

President Pleased

Territorial Day was a fantastic success due to the dedicated volunteers of this organization. This great event would not have been possible without your efforts. Lecompton was featured in the Lawrence, Topeka and Kansas City newspapers, radio, and television stations. It was great publicity.

The Missouri Civil War Re-enactors Association's knowledge and expertise of the Battle of Fort Titus was depicted in the professional standards set forth by the organization. The style show was well received before a standing room only crowd in the chapel. They did a terrific job.

Thanks goes to Jason Dexter for being chairman of the battle re-enactment; David and Darlene Pasly for being in charge of a most successful ice cream social; Connie Robertson and Lila Bartel who were in charge of Territorial Day and to the following businesses and people who helped in some way to make this event possible: Frito Lay, Kroger Country Store, Neil Sorensen, Teets Egg and Poultry, Watkins Products, Dillons, Oshe Meats, Carol and Les McCune, Clyde and Helen Kampschroeder, Dick Hubert, Wilma Tibbs, Darrel and Joyce Colton, Iona Spencer, Marguerite Bowman, Doris Matney, Vickie Roberts, Janice Rake, Rich and Karen McConnell, Opal Goodrick, Bill and Marcella Anderson, Margaret and Ross Wulfkuhle, Sally and Chuck Wright, Mae and Wally Holderman, George and Arloene Simmons, Kate Johnson, Linda and Van Eisenhut, Stephanie Steenman, Joyce and Bruce

Beresford, Sherri Neill, Dick and Alta Walter, A.K. and Charlene Winters, Pat and Eurelda Iestas, LaVerne Wilson, Oliver and Daisy Wingfield, Ron and Diane Meir, Shirley Funk, David Boose, Lavina Hanna, Matt Bird, Nicole Dexter, Erin Dexter, Margie Hildenbrand, Dorothy Shaner, Margaret and Harold Jaspersen, Jean and Frank Cozad, Avis and Don Miller, Ceceil Roberts, Charles and Donna Vausbinder, Laura and John McAlexander, Christine Kraft, Betty and Bob Woods, Dan and Minnie McAfee, Dick and Winnee Wingfield, Jeannie Markly, Rick Paslay, Ralph and Jean Davis, Edith Schellhorn, Wilbur and Helen Hildenbrand, Jessie McConnell, Deanna Shirar, Fay Tally, Bernie Bower, Ione and Charley Paslay, Audrey Maust, Jeri Skinner, Elizabeth Johnson, Sara Walter, Lydia Long, Ruth Harshberger, Edith LaDuke, Opal Hohberg, Ruth Ice, Allie Banks, Helen Crady, and Howard & Ellen Duncan.

Continued interest in preserving our heritage is shown by the following items that have been placed in the Lane University Museum: (1) Handkerchieves by Mary Mathews, (2) Book and pictures by Connie Robertson, (3) Margaret Whittimore paintings by Mr. & Mrs. Frank Carlson, (4) Picture by Mae Holderman, (5) Horseshoes by Ruth Harshberger, (6) Lecompton History by Fay Glenn and typed by Margureite Bowman, (7) Letter written by Laura McClanahan given by her son Fred McClanahan, (8) Two Collectors books by Duane Robison, (9) Old Newspapers by Bob Weeks, (10) I.O.O.F. Lodge 413 Seal by George Davis, and (11) Dinner bell by George Bevins.

Paul Bahnmaier



Isaac M. Day was the first missionary to live in what became Kansas in 1828. He was of the Baptist persuasion.

Thomas Kemp in 1857 assisted in threshing the first bushel of wheat grown in Jefferson county.

1895 CITY LAWS

If A.J. May, D. Baughman, Dr. J. H. Bonebrake, or the other members of the 1895 Lecompton City Council could have seen ninety years into the future, there is little doubt that they would have been repulsed by what they viewed as a 1985 lack of morals. Paradoxically what is interesting is that the morals of 1895 Lecompton expressed by actions of the City Council have some shocking aspects for those of us who follow 90 years later. Of particular interest is City Ordinance No. 50 which was adopted by the Council May 13, 1895. Its descriptive title was "An Ordinance for the suppression of bawdy houses and street walkers and for the punishment of vagrancy and defining the duties and powers of the City Officers in relation thereto."

Section 4 stated: "It shall be unlawful for any prostitute or unattended or suspicious female to parade the public streets or alleys of this city after night, or to congregate with others on the streets or public places, or to wander abroad in the night time, or to be found about the streets or public places in the city, or to be found about stores, or other places at late hours without lawful business, and without giving a good account of herself; and any person so offending shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and fined in any sum not exceeding fifty dollars." (Note: Eight hours of manual labor was valued at \$1 total.)

What is striking about that section of the ordinance is the blatant discrimination against essentially all women of the community who were not engaged in prostitution. Can you with your appreciation of today's values imagine what it would be like to be a woman then and not have freedom beyond your home when the sun had set? As laws are unfortunately often noted for doing, no doubt Ordinance No. 50 was

far more strict than its enforcement pattern. It was likely intended to be available when needed, in the judgement of the City Fathers of course, and not typically applied. Even so, it must have been a repression to know that you could not legally go downtown to the stores for evening shopping unless you had a specific immediate need in mind. And you might be inclined to ask why the men were exempt from such municipal wisdom? While I don't know about you, I will take the present times.

Howard Duncan

LANE DEDICATION

Lecompton is rich in national fame and the history of events which transformed the Civil War from a political power struggle into a shooting battle. It was on this very soil that free-staters and southerners sought control of Kansas Territorial politics and with that each side hoped to sway the balance of national power in Congress. The President and executive wing of federal government intended a southern victory. Hundreds of federal calvary troops and artillerymen were stationed in Lecompton from 1856 thru 1858 to protect the Territorial government against a rising tide of free-staters. The population of Lecompton approached 5000 people, many of them connected with or benefitting from the governmental activities necessary to develop a new territory which extended westward to Utah and the continental divide. The City of Denver, located in the goldfields of western Kansas was named for Territorial Governor James Denver.

This dream of extending the South came to a practical end in 1859 when the Territorial Legislature adjourned to Lawrence and a formal end in 1861 with the establishment of Topeka as the Capitol when Kansas achieved statehood.

The bitterness of this pre-civil war struggle is difficult for us to relate to 125 years later. Friend became foe and brothers denied relationship. One aspect of this bitterness is that the true history of Lecompton was to a large degree suppressed. The victorious free-staters had struggled so long and with such personal intensity, that grudges were still being carried to graves beyond the turn of this century. History books were the stories as told by the victors. Only scant remnants of the losers' tales survived.

Today there are no axes to grind. We all value the world's greatest democracy and unequivocally subscribe to the tenet of equal rights for all persons.

As we dedicate Lane University Museum today, we intend to enjoy the past of Kansas Territory and the present of a pastoral lifestyle in a beautiful setting where we each know by name and care for many dozens of our neighbors. The American dream has flourished in soil which failed to sprout extension of southern slavery.

(Presentation made 26 June 1982 at the dedication of Lane University Museum by J. Howard Duncan, Mayor of Lecompton.)



Charles Robison was the first governor of the State of Kansas. He was elected 6 December 1859, but did not take the oath of office until 9 February 1861.



OLD LECOMPTON

We regret that we have not the pictures of all the old historical buildings and spots here to reproduce in this issue, but we will briefly name

a few of them.

The old penitentiary building still stands. It is quite a commodious old stone structure on North Holderman Street and is now used for a skimming station. If inanimate objects could speak this old building would have a thrilling story to relate.

On the south bank of the river near the depot is another stone building which has a history connected with it. Within its walls have been perpetrated heinous crimes of the blackest hue. It is at present the home of Rev. W.T. Snyder and family.

Southeast of town is situated the commodious stone structure built on the Southern Palatial style and known far and wide as the Governor Stanton residence. It is the largest dwelling house in this part of the state if not in the entire commonwealth of Kansas. Within this somber old palace dwells Mrs. Rogers and her son and family.

On Col. Nace's farm south of town is the site of an old fort, where, so we are informed, quite an important battle was fought. The old fort is converted into some use which is better adapted to peaceful and useful pursuits.

West of South Whitfield Street, south of Rev. O.A. Chapman's farm, is an old cemetery which has the distinction of having decayed within its domain the bodies of men who lived during the forepart of the century just come to a close, one soldier being buried there about 1820.

On the western slope of the northern end of the hill east of town is another cemetery which has graves containing the dust of citizens long since forgotten.

Farther south on this same eminence is the spot where General Lane covered the town with his cannons and threatened to mow the streets of Lecompton if his requests were not granted. One of the cannons is today in the possession of parties in our community.

The old ferry across the river here was for many years the principle highway over the Kaw between

Leavenworth and the Southwest. As a result streams of prairie schooners were transported across the river daily.

(Taken from the COLLEGE ORACLE, published weekly at Lane University, Lecompton, Kansas, Thursday, June 6, 1901.)

Deaths

Mrs. Wilma A. Fleming, 84, of Lenexa passed away July 26, 1987 in Overland Park, Kansas. She was born January 6, 1903 at Lyndon, the daughter of William A. and Millie Carpenter Bair. She and her husband were in the grocery business in Topeka and Lecompton more than 50 years. She was a member and former officer of the Rebekah Lodge in Lecompton, a member of the United Methodist Church at Lenexa, and a charter and life member of the Lecompton Historical Society. Wilma was very involved in community activities when she lived in Lecompton and was a strong supporter of Lecompton wherever she lived. She married Fred A. Fleming May 9, 1923. He died July 30, 1972. Survivors include a son Robert, two daughters Mrs. Corrine Childs and Mrs. Doris Belden, three brothers Orlan, Leland, and Maurice, a sister Lucile, 11 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren. Memorials to the Lecompton Historical Society. Burial was at Mount Hope Cemetery in Topeka.

Mrs. Helen M. Hoots, 74, Ozawkie, formerly of Topeka, died May 12, 1987. She was born November 23, 1912 at Lecompton, the daughter of A. Frank and Virginia E. McCall McClanahan. Mrs. Hoots was a member of First Southern Baptist Church in Topeka and the Lecompton Historical Society. She was married to Melvin A. Hoots August 19, 1956 in Topeka. He died August 31, 1983. Survivors include a daughter Becky A. Hoots, four sisters, Mrs. Mary Cree, Mrs. Betty Bradfield, Mrs. Roberta French and Mrs. Madalyn Scott, and a brother Frank McClanahan. Burial was in Maple Grove Cemetery at Lecompton.

Mrs. Ruby Grammer, 78, of Lawrence died May 22, 1987 at Lawrence. She was born August 17, 1908 in Lecompton the daughter of Charles Delbert and Bessie Brizban Rist. She attended Lecompton and Lawrence schools. She was a member of the Lecompton Historical Society. She married Walter Grammer June 1, 1926. He died April 9th 1983. Survivors include four daughters, Mrs. Beulah Anderson, Mrs. Wilma Stone, Mrs. Phyllis Wood and Mrs. Shirley Harris, five sons, Wesley, Gerald, Alfred, Wilford and Darrell, two sisters Mrs. Ethel Newson and Mrs. Nettie Curtis, 32 grandchildren and 41 great grandchildren. Burial was in Memorial Park Cemetery in Lawrence.

William Chester Lewellen, 75, died March 18, 1987 at Encinitas, California. He was a native of Lawrence and worked for the J. Walter Thompson Advertising Agency in Los Angeles and was head of advertising and promotion for California Raisins in Europe. He is survived by his wife Agnes of Del Mar. He was the son of Sally McCarty Lewellen. He was a long time supporter of the Lecompton Historical Society. Cremation and inurnment was in Evergreen Cemetery, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Membership Report

Our membership is still growing and we want to take this time to thank all our members for supporting our society and making it such a success. As to date, our Life membership totals 327, our Memorial membership is 67 and our annual dues paying memberships are 418, making a total of 812.

New Life Members

James H. Lane --- California
Harry Buchheim and wife Malverna
(Senior) Buccheim --- Stull, KS
Naoni (Wilson) Chiles by husband Duane
--- Lawrence, Kansas
Paul Boerger --- Sedgwick, Kansas

Memorials

Reverend Horace D. Herr --- One of the early circuit rider preachers sent to the Kansas Territory. He joined in with the United Brethren preacher to help raise money to build the United Brethren college, which is now Lane University Museum. He preached in the Lecompton, Big Springs, Richland, Clinton and Tecumseh communities. He published a book on his life and ministry while in Lecompton. The book is called "Harvey Vanore".

Isaac L. Hartup and his wife, Lillian

"Lillie" (Haines) Hartup --- "Ike" was a shoe repairman in Lecompton many years, having his shop, where Carl Bahnmaier now lives. He was a very active United Brethren church member and he also served as town marshal.

Clarence Henry Smith --- born in Lecompton, took a teachers course in High School and started teaching in 1917. He went into World War I and after serving his time, returned to Lecompton and taught 4th-5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. He was principal of the grade school many years.

Eldred Gaskill Day --- Donated by Elizabeth Day Jefferson.

Ione Spencer

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

Individual membership is \$2.50 per year, from December to December, while a household membership is \$5. 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 * * * * *

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