

The LHS Newsletter Archive

BALD EAGLE

Volume Twenty-nine, Issue Number 2

Originally Published in LeCompton, Kansas : Summer 2003
Digitally Archived August 2006



BACD



EAOC

VOL. 29, NO. 2

LECOMPTON, KANSAS

SUMMER, 2003



RADICAL UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH,

This photograph shows the interior during a Revival meeting. Notice that the pulpit is located against the north wall. The present door on the southwest wall can be seen in the background. After the congregation disbanded in the 1920s, the building was restored and is now the Lecompton City Hall and Community Building. The limestone building was constructed in 1906 after the original Radical United Brethren Church burned. The *Lecompton Sun*, March 16, 1906, reported:

RADICAL CHURCH BURNS

“About half past eight Sunday morning the Elmore Street church was discovered to be on fire. Flames were shooting from the roof when first seen, and by the time people got there it

was doomed. The windows were broken in and the organ and seats and most of the furniture was saved.

"The origin of the fire is unknown. Rev. Adam Richie had built a fire a short time before and had left and gone home.

"The church was built about 15 years ago costing \$3,000.

"An insurance of \$1,350 was carried on the building and \$150 on the furniture.

"The congregation has decided to rebuild and have plans drawn for a stone building to be heated by a furnace. For the present services will be held in the second story of the Lee Building."

Lecompton Hosts National Assembly

When the church burned it also ignited anew a simmering controversy that had embroiled the church since soon after its founding in 1841. Then, the original constitution drawn up by the National United Brethren Church contained an anti-secret order society clause. In 1885 there was agitation that it be removed from the constitution. A new constitution was drafted and presented to the Annual United Brethren General Conference in 1889. That national conference was held in Lecompton at Lane University.

Bishop Wright, father of famed aviators Wilbur and Orville, presided. Despite a number of conscientious objectors, the new constitution was approved, creating a deep schism.

After the members of the general assembly departed, the question of the desirability of operating under the 1841 or 1889 constitution was an issue each United Brethren congregation faced. In the fall of 1889, a majority of the Lecompton United Brethren congregation decided to accept the constitution of 1889. That congregation continued to meet in the Lane University building. Those who violently opposed the new constitution built a church on the lot north of the old Hotel Rowena (now the city park) building, which was then being used as a dormitory.

The Radicals held their meetings in a new frame church until the fire of 1906. The editor of the *Lecompton Sun* then questioned the need for three local churches. He wrote, "The men have long ago quit struggling to support the church. The work has been turned over to the women. One strong church in Lecompton would do more good than three weak ones."

On July 27, 1906, the newspaper reported, "The contracts have been let for the new Radical Church. A. Christenson of Lawrence gets the stone work, Geo. W. Norwood does the carpentry work and E.G. Day the plastering.

"Adam Richie is hauling the stone and Samuel Hyatt and Beatty Fleenor are doing the quarrying. The stone for the foundation is hauled from Mrs. Harriet Smith's and the stone for the body of the church will come from the quarry on Dr. Leslie's farm."

Two weeks later the newspaper reported that H.W. Sandusky of St. Joseph, a landowner with 15 tenant farmers, "complimented the *Sun* very highly for its efforts to bring the churches together, and greatly favors it. His idea is, that as the United Brethren were first on the field and have an adequate plant, that the religious life of the community should center around it."



A New Stone Church

That Christmas the United Brethren and Radical Brethren held a joint Christmas entertainment, but on Feb. 10, 1907, the Radical United Brethren Church held its first services in the new stone church.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ARISTIDE RODRIGUE, LECOMPTON'S FIRST CITY FATHER AND FIRST PHYSICIAN

In 1854, Colonel Albert Boone, grandson of Daniel Boone, and Dr. Aristide Rodrigue, a prominent Pennsylvania physician, "started to explore the valley of Kansas, their object being primarily to locate claims for themselves and incidentally to select an eligible site for the capital of the Territory," says a history published in 1940 by Lecompton Rural High School's history and typing classes.

The two, in fact, were U.S. government agents charged with determining the location of the capital for the new Kansas Territory, according to the Sept. 15, 1854 issue of the *Kansas Weekly Herald* published in Leavenworth.

The two great friends also were responsible for forming the company that founded Lecompton. But it is the physician, Aman Theodore Michel Aristide Rodrigue, who should be remembered as the first city father of Lecompton, the first physician, and the first contractor to work on the Territorial Capitol building and, from all accounts, the first bon vivant. He was either the second or third postmaster, depending on which historical technicalities you choose. He would probably be a much more famous historical figure but for his untimely death in 1857 and, sadly, some shoddy historical writing starting decades ago.

Questions of History

Consequently, he is a man wrapped in a historical shroud of mystery. What we know of Dr. Rodrigue is just enough to pose all kinds of now unanswerable questions. Our skilled researcher, Iona Spencer, cannot determine whether the physician ever practiced medicine in Lecompton, whether he commissioned the elegant Rowena Hotel, which number postmaster he was, and on and on.

Even the proper spelling of his exotic, unusual name is in question.

His brother's great granddaughter, Gertrude Rodrigue, now living in Connecticut, refers to him as Aristide Rodrigue (she says it is pronounced A RIS TI DEE ROAD RIG or RO DREEG). Kansas Territorial Governor Geary, approving Rodrigue's estimates as the contractor to build the Kansas Territorial Capitol building, wrote Aristides Rodriques. In a newspaper advertisement for the sale of lots in Lecompton in 1855, the physician signed his name A. Rodrique. On government contracts he signed it Aristides. So it's Aristide or Aristides and it's Rodrigue or Rodrique and you can add an "s" to any spelling of the last name, too. And there's an entry in the 1863 Douglas County Pre-emptions that an A. Rodrick owned land that we know A. Rodrigue owned.

Born August 10, 1810

He was born on August 10, 1810, in Philadelphia. His father, Jacques Andre Rodrigue, was born in 1759 in La Rochelle, France. "The Rodrigues were, as you may know, pro-slavery and Catholic," Gertrude Rodrigue, his great grand niece, wrote in a letter to the Lecompton Historical Society on Oct. 18, 1985. "This stems from the fact that Andre Jacques Rodrigue had been a plantation owner in Santa Domingo with many slaves. There was a slave uprising there in the 1790s and his plantation was burned to the ground. He escaped with his life only because he had been good to his slaves and they helped him escape."

Dr. Rodrigue's wife, the former Ann Caroline Bellas of English-Irish-Welsh descent, was born on May 12, 1811. The two married in Philadelphia on February 8, 1835.

Pennsylvania-Trained Physician

He was a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. Dr. Rodrigue is mentioned twice in the history

of the Parish of St. Augustine, St. Augustine, Pa., both times upon the occasion of his attending a priest's death in the early 1840s. The history says of the second priest, "During his last illness, Father (Smith, who, Gertrude Rodrigue writes, was in actuality Russian Prince Dimitri Gallitzin), as memento offered his friend and physician, Dr. Aristide Rodrigue, his choice between the reliquary already mentioned and a gold watch said to have belonged to his father. Rodrigue chose the reliquary, which is yet cherished as a sacred heirloom by one of his descendants."

Historical research tells us little of the Rodrigues' life before coming to Lecompton other than they found time to have nine children.

We have two accounts of Rodrigues' first trek to Lecompton.

In 1907, Ely Moore, Jr. gave a talk at an old settlers' meeting in Lecompton. In 1853 and 1854 his father was an Army colonel who often used young Moore to carry dispatches. As a result he knew the founding fathers of Bald Eagle, as Lecompton was called initially, and many of the Army regulars stationed at nearby Fort Sackett, including calvaryman J.E.B. Stuart of Civil War fame.

Daniel Boone's Grandson

To Moore's story:

"On or about the 25th of July, 1854, four gentlemen, namely Dr. Aristide Rodrigue, of Hollidaysburg, Pa.; Col. A.G. Boone, grandson of Daniel Boone, the noted hunter of Kentucky; Samuel J. Jones, and, if my memory does not mislead me, Maj. Lyman Evans, until his death a resident of the city, formed themselves into a company, the purpose of which was the location of a town in Kansas, to be situated on the south side of the Kaw River. Here permit me to quote, after more than 50 years have come and faded away, Doctor Rodrigue's description to me of his approach and first view of these beautiful hills and valleys: 'From the time we left the lake, some five miles east of here, until we reached what is

now known as Court House Hill, we rode through a delightful summer shower. When we arrived at this point the sun was some two hours high, the sky blue and cloudless, the tree foliage clean and sparkling, the flowers smiling, and the wild birds proclaiming to us glad tidings of great joy. To the right of us the Grasshopper Creek and the Delaware and Kaw lands studded with mighty timber, to the north of us the blue bluffs on the Delaware reservation, to the east and west the Kansas River in its hurried race to join its sister, the Missouri, and almost at our feet nature had molded with both art and skill a natural habitation for a multitude of God's children. Here where we stand will be our courthouse, and here and on yon western hill the resident portion; there, on that elevated plateau, the capitol of our state, and in the center for miles south will be our business mart. Look, he said to his associates, with what cunning fingers nature has shaped the drainage, which vouchsafes health, and with health, prosperity. Here we will rest, our mission ended. May God bless our endeavors."

Colonel Boone's Story

The other account comes from the Lecompton Rural High School history published in 1940. It relied greatly on oral histories but does not cite sources. The narrative of Colonel Boone's and Dr. Rodrigue's selection of the site for the first Kansas Territory capitol reads:

"It was early in the morning when they started and the grass and undergrowth was covered with dew. Colonel Boone told that by the time that they had gone three or four miles they were wet to the skin.

"At length they came to a ridge that terminated abruptly at the river. They climbed to the summit and sat down under a big oak tree to rest. The longer they rested the less inclination they had to go further. 'I think we have gone far enough, Colonel,' said Rodrigue and Boone replied that he was about to say the same thing. As the beauty of the landscape impressed itself more and more upon them they became enthusiastic

and withal prophetic and predicated that in the grand amphitheater of hills before and below would rise a metropolis, the smoke and noise of which would command the admiration of a great state. Railroads would enter here, the river become an artery of commerce and a proud commonwealth should acknowledge its supremacy. Pointing down the slope to the west, Dr. Rodrigue indicated a spot where he declared he would make his home. (That was where the old 'Bald Eagle' graveyard is, where the remains of the Doctor lay for a quarter of a century. More on that later.)

Bald Eagle, Kansas

"Then the question of a name was discussed. Rodrigue suggested "Eureka" but Boone objected; then he proposed "Hazel Doll" and Boone laughed a great rip roaring backwoods laugh and proposed "Poll Moll" by way of amendment. "Oh," said Rodrigue, 'I know what you want. You want it called Boonesborough.' 'No I don't,' said Boone, 'but I consider that more appropriate than your sentimental nonsense.'

"Just then a great bird left its nest in a big sycamore that stood near the mouth of the little creek at the foot of the slope and sailed majestically away over the river. The disputants watched its flight for some time and then Rodrigue, turning to Boone, said, 'Why not call it Bald Eagle?' 'It's a go,' said Boone. 'I'll consent to that much sentiment—we dedicate it Bald Eagle; now let it soar.'"

Back to the account given by Ely Moore, Jr. in 1907. He gives our best description of how Bald Eagle came to be named Lecompton. "Soon after the selection of the town site the parties interested met at Shawnee Mission and formed their organization. Rodrigue becoming president, Boone vice president and Jones secretary-treasurer. They adjourned without deciding upon any permanent name for the city until a meeting of the stockholder should be held.

"During the winter of 1854-'55 Samuel D. Lecompte, of Maryland, was

appointed federal judge of the territory. His advent was awaited with much interest, as his goodness and greatness had been liberally heralded throughout the territory, and thus being on the up wave of popularity reaped the honor of having this named Lecompton."

History Did Him Wrong

Dr. Rodrigue's role now gets mired in conflicting documents. The Kansas State Historical Society's quarterly quotes, The Cutler History of Kansas, 1883, page 351: "The Lecompton Town Company was organized at the Pottawatomie Agency, and consisted of Samuel D. Lecompte, president; John A. Haldeman, secretary; Daniel Woodson, treasurer; George W. Clark, Chauncey B. Donaldson and William R. Simmons. In the spring of 1855 the town company held its meetings in Westport, Mo., and on May 14, 1855, the officers reported to the company that D.H. Harting had surveyed the town site, consisting of 600 acres and had laid out the principal streets and blocks."

Yet there is a major advertisement from Leavenworth's *Kansas Herald* newspaper, dated Sept. 15, 1855, which is signed by A. Rodrigue, president of the Town Co. Its headline: "Public Sale of Town Lots, At Lecompton, Kansas Territory, THE CAPITAL OF KANSAS. On the 23rd of October next."

A City Beautifully Situated

The two-column ad describes a city "beautifully situated on a gradual eminence on the south bank" and talks of the agricultural lands available and the abundance of building materials. It talks of roads and bridges, the recent legislative session that appointed Lecompton both the state capital and county seat and of charters being let for colleges, universities and other literary institutions. It concludes, "At a meeting of the Lecompton Town Co., held at Westport, Missouri, the following persons were duly chosen officers for the ensuing

year: Dr. A. Rodrigue, President; D.L. Woodson, Treasurer; S.J. Jones, Secretary; Trustees: A. Rodrigue, D.L. Woodson, J.C. Thompson, C.B. Donalson, W.M. Thompson.”

There could be a chance that the trustees were elected in addition to the officers, which could mean that Aristide's son, Andrew J., might be the A. Rodrigue, though he was only 19 at the time.

The share certificate is dated July 10, 1856 and signed by Aristides Rodrigue, president. The confusion over who was Lecompton's founding president probably started with Cutler's well-regarded 19th Century Kansas history and it was compounded by the entertaining and exceedingly well researched Lecompton history published by the high school in 1940, which has been quoted in these pages. It also says the town company was organized at the Pottawatomie Agency and consisted of Judge Lecompt, president; John Halderman, secretary; Daniel Woodson, Treasurer; George Clark; Chauncy B. Donaldson and William R. Simmons. Mrs. Julia Kerns has the Charter of Lecompton.” A footnote adds, “Phillis Martin gave it to State Historical Society and has a copy.” The Society cannot now locate it.

Physician, Shopowner, Contractor

Just as with Dr. Rodrigue and Judge LeCompt or LeCompte, there are different spellings in different documents for various persons. We have used the spellings precisely as they appear in historical documents, which accounts for differences such as C.B. Donalson and Chauncy or Chauncey B. Donaldson.

The picture of Dr. Rodrigue that emerges is of a highly regarded physician, as Ely Moore, Jr., said, and a businessman with many and varied interests. He joined with others to open a mercantile store and to become the contractor for the state capitol and other buildings. He served as a commissioner of the Lecompton Bridge Company and on the commission to locate and build a territorial road from Atchison to

a point on the Kansas River opposite Lecompton.

Dr. Rodrigue played an important role in the early days of Bleeding Kansas. Reports are scattered and sketchy. For example, the *Lecompton Union*, in an Extra edition published on April 28, 1856, says:

“At a meeting of the citizens of Douglas County, held at Lecompton, April 25th, Dr. Aristides Rodrigue, late of Pennsylvania, was called to the Chair, and W. Leamer, late of Pennsylvania, appointed secretary.

“Col. Anderson briefly explained the objects, that whereas a certain indignation meeting was held at Lawrence, at which A.H. Reeder and C. Robinson made speeches intended for the express purpose of producing a false impression upon the public mind in regard to the attempted assassination of Sheriff Jones, therefore

“Resolved that the Chair appoint a committee to prepare a full and correct statement of the facts of the entire difficulties and lay them before the public.

“Under this resolution, T.M. Crowder, late of Va., J.M. Alexander, late of Pa., and J.C. Anderson, late of Ky., were appointed said Committee, who after a few hours, submitted the following report, which was unanimously adopted. The meeting then adjourned.

A. Rodrigue, Ch'n.”

Bloodshed at Fort Titus

And when events produced bloodshed at Fort Titus in August, 1856, Leverett Wilson Spring wrote in *Kansas: The Prelude to the War for the Union*: “Sunday, August 17th, Governor Shannon, accompanied by Major Sedgwick and Dr. Aristides Rodrigue, postmaster at Lecompton, rode to Lawrence in the interest of peace-making. Then occurred an unwonted spectacle. After negotiations consuming almost the entire day a treaty of peace was consummated, involving an exchange of prisoners and other acts customary only among recognized

belligerents standing upon an equal footing; the high contracting parties being on the one hand the federal government in the person of Governor Shannon, and on the other a minority of the sub-committee chosen out of the larger committee appointed at the miscellaneous Topeka convention July 4th—Colonel James Blood and William Hutchinson, correspondent of 'The New York Times.' In this transaction free-state audacity reached the high-water mark of the Wakarusa war treaty. The United States stipulated to return the cannon captured by Sheriff Jones at Lawrence May 21st, to liberate five or six men arrested for participation in the attack on Franklin, while the minority of the sub-committee agreed to release Titus and his men."

In the related article on Dr. Rodrigue's business affairs, please note that Dr. Rodrigue had many dealings with several governors of Kansas Territory and appears to have been deeply involved in the most momentous events of those days.

Merry Christmas, 1856

We get a glimpse of the Rodrigue family's home life from a letter written by a young man the Rodrigue's invited to Christmas dinner, 1856. It starts with a Merry Christmas to "friends at home, "I was invited to dine at Doct. Rodrigues this p.m.- They live in a very grand style having a nice double block house, well plastered and warm. Mrs. R. plays the guitar sweetly, dresses fine every day, the Miss R., about 17, ditto. They are from Penn., a fine family and all well educated and formerly used to high bred and refined society in Phila."

There's a good characterization of Dr. Rodrigue in Lecompton's *The Weekly Union*, dated June 12, 1857: DEATH OF DR. RODRIGUE

"Dr. Rodrigue, whose death we are pained to announce, was the first settler of this place, and his loss to our city and community is irreparable—to his esteemed and afflicted family, beyond comprehension.

"To a marked amiability of character, he added the highest order of

scientific acquirement in his profession. Such a man he was that for his loss a bereaved family may indeed weep, a large of circle of friends be afflicted, and the whole country mourn.

"His disease was gastritis. Tranquil in the integrity of a good conscience, and the hopes of Christianity, he died as only the noble and good may die."

The New Postmaster

Aristide became postmaster on November 1, 1855, succeeding George Taylor who had been postmaster of Douglas before Lecompton where the post office was established on September 5, 1855. His eldest son, Andrew J., succeeded him in that job. A State Historical Society article written by George Washington Martin said, "About four o'clock in the afternoon of April 9, 1857, George W. Martin walked into Lecompton, then a proslavery town and the territorial capital of Kansas. He found lodging at the Locknane boarding house, cooled his burning feet and rested his weary limbs, and then before sundown he started out to take in the town. He stopped at the postoffice to inquire for any mail that might have come for the family in the three weeks they were on the way, and was surprised to recognize in the postmaster, Andrew Rodrigue, a former citizen of Hollidaysburg. The recognition was mutual. The postmaster, a proslavery man, seeing a copy of Hollidaysburg Standard in Martin's mail, at once began a tirade against Martin's preacher friend, the good Doctor Junkin. The memory of that farewell-to-the-old scene, with Doctor Junkin's prayer, rose up in the mind of Martin. He was only a boy, not quite 16 years old, but his manner of resenting the insult showed that he was able to take care of himself. His red hair and Irish-Scotch temper were not given him in vain. The postmaster threatened to throw him out, but there is no recorded history that tells anything of this kind happening. Martin got into the game of history making quite early. This may be said to have been the first religious war in Kansas."

If that postmaster were Aristide he had only two more months to live but if it were Andrew, he would have been 21 years old then and it would seem strange to refer to him as a former citizen of Holidaysburg, which he probably left two years earlier at the age of 19.

Just who was the Lecompton postmaster then is an intriguing question? Andrew didn't become postmaster until June 20, 1857, just nine days after his father, Aristide died. It may have been that Andrew was filling in for an ailing father?

Andrew's Murder

Andrew then had less than a year to live. There's an interesting account of his death in the April 10, 1858 issue of the *Herald of Freedom*, published in Lawrence, Kansas:

"An Affair at Lecompton

"Last Saturday, about 3 o'clock p.m. Andrew Rodrigue, in company with J.J. Strickler, met James Thompson, keeper of the Star Saloon, near the land office in Lecompton, who asked Rodrigue if he had made a certain report in relation to him. Rodrigue replied that he had, and added that it was a 'd—n good joke.' Thompson called Rodrigue a 'd—d liar,' upon which Rodrigue struck Thompson a back-handed blow over the mouth. The latter then coolly drew a large dirk knife from his pocket, and opened it—Strickler perceived his intention caught hold of him, but let go his hold when he thought Thompson had abandoned his object. As soon as Thompson was free, he deliberately approached and thrust the blade to the hilt into Rodrigue's left side; then hastening to his saloon, took the contents of the money drawer and fled. Both are Pro-Slavery men, and Rodrigue until very recently has been Postmaster of the place. Free State men who were imprisoned for treason two years ago will remember that he refused them their letters. Rodrigue died on Wednesday morning from the effects of his wound. Thompson is still at large."

Andrew's Murderer Convicted

On July 4, 1861 the *Lawrence Republic* newspaper reported that William E. Thompson was tried for the murder of Andrew Rodrigue and found guilty of manslaughter in the third degree.

A few months after Andrew's death, Ann Caroline Rodrigue reported to Probate Court as administrator, presenting an accounting of his real and personal property, much of which he must have inherited from his father, Aristide, the previous year. She listed an ownership or half ownership in 16 city lots and the SE quarter of Sec. 2, township 12, Range 18 in Kansas Territory. Additionally, one large double wagon, \$100; 3 yoke of oxen, \$225; one horse, \$40; Accounts against Jones Evans & Co., \$160.55; L. McArthur, \$20; John Calhoun, \$42; S.J. Jones, \$39. Total: \$626.55.

She listed Andrew's heirs: Esther Aline Rodrigue, Ann Caroline Rodrigue, Clara Virginia Rodrigue, Florence V. Rodrigue, Hugh Bellas Rodrigue, Michael A. Rodrigue and his mother, Ann Caroline Bellas Rodrigue.

A Nun, A Doctor, But No Kansans

Ann would become a nun, Michael a physician. Mrs. Rodrigue, then 46, would leave soon for the East Coast with the still living children, none of whom returned to live in Lecompton.

Lecompton Historical Society records report, "Aristide and his son, Andrew J., were exhumed and shipped back to rest in the Rodrigue Mausoleum in the Hazelwood Cemetery, Rahway, New Jersey. The reason for the move from what had been called Bald Eagle Cemetery at the time of Aristide's and Andrew's death (Aristide had been on the cemetery's founding commission) was that the cemetery was moved to make way for the rock crushers in 1942."

A letter written by Robert R. Stephens, superintendent of Hazelwood

Cemetery, Rahway, N.J. to Gertrude E. Rodrigue on July 29, 1971, lists the names of the Rodrigue family interred in the Rodrigue Mausoleum. They include:

“Aristide Rodrigue, second son of Jacques Andre and Marie J. Rodrigue, born in Philadelphia, Pa., August 10, 1810, died in Lecompton, Kansas, June 11, 1857;

“Andrew J. Rodrigue, eldest son of Aristide and Caroline Rodrigue, born in Pittsburgh, Pa., Dec. 22, 1835, died in Lecompton, Kansas, April 7, 1958;

“Ann Caroline Bellas, wife of Aristide Rodrigue, born on May 12, 1811, died on April 2, 1888;”

Also, five other children or grandchildren.

The above mausoleum is located on lots 169-170-171 and 172, Section A. These lots were purchased by Caroline Rodrigue. The last known owner was Miss Lillian Gray, #1452 Union St., Brooklyn, N.Y.

The vault is now sealed with no future interments.

-- John Peterson

VISITORS TO LECOMPTON

Recent visitors to Lecompton included Richard Shankman, who is regularly seen on Fox News, CNN and MSNBC featuring historical reports. Also **Carl Selinger** of New York, who is writing a screen play concerning the time period from 1857 to 1861. He was looking for historical information about Lecompton.

LECOMPTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The **Lecompton Historical Society** meetings are held the second Thursday of each month. We eat at 6:30 p.m. at the Territorial Capital Museum. Please bring a covered dish and your table service. Coffee and tea is furnished. The dates and programs are as follows:

June 12-Lori Miller, from Audio Reader

July 10-Musical Program

Aug. 14-Anne Haehl-Story Teller

Sept. 11-Greg Sundel-On Dinosaurs

Oct. 9-Harold Reihm-on Quantrill's Raid

Nov. 13-Steve Jansen-Lawrence History

No meeting in December as we have Christmas Vespers on the first Sunday, which is Dec. 7th.

Then in January and February, we have no meetings due to the cold weather.

The 2004 Lecompton, Kansas Sesquicentennial Celebration

The tumultuous days of Bleeding Kansas began on May 30, 1854, when the U.S. Congress created Kansas Territory and determined that those people living in Kansas had the right to decide whether the soon-to-be state of Kansas would be admitted as a slave state or a free state.

That same year, 1854, Lecompton was founded. The city became the capital of Kansas Territory in 1855. Lecompton, in fact, would be at the center of seven years of “bleeding” Kansas violence. As historians have said, it was where “the first shot of the Civil War” was fired. And it was in our city’s historic Constitution Hall that the “Lecompton Constitution” was enacted and sent to Congress in 1856.

These important events helped form our nation and our people and they are the reason we members of the Lecompton Historical Society work with pride to preserve our heritage. So it is precisely one year less one day from now that Lecompton, Kansas will begin its sesquicentennial observance of these nationally significant events. We have a head start on the rest of the United States as other noteworthy “Civil War” events won’t reach the 150-year mark, enabling sesquicentennial observance, until months and years after Lecompton again can fire “the first shot.”

The national Civil War Sesquicentennial starts here in 2004. Then, with each passing day and year, more and more of the momentous events of the Civil War will become 150 years old, enabling more cities and states to stage observances.

BUT IT STARTS HERE—on May 30, 2004. Join us in planning for Lecompton’s sesquicentennial. This is a first call to all who might be interested. If so, join us the second Thursday of each month at Lane University Museum.

Paul Bahnmaier, President
Lecompton Historical Society

**LECOMPTON POSTMASTRESSES
and POSTMASTERS**

The Post Office was established at Douglas (east of Lecompton on the River Road), March 3, 1855. Then was moved to Lecompton on Sept. 5, 1855. Numerical order and date of appointment.

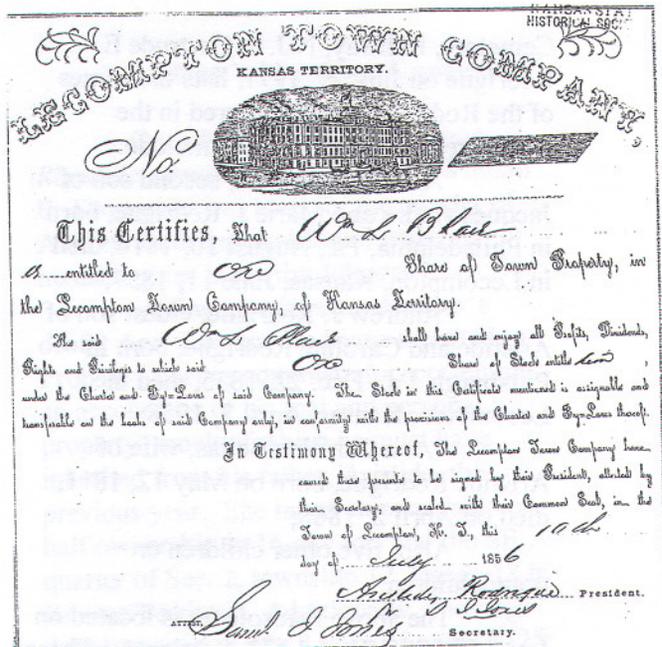
1. Andrew McDonald, March 3, 1855
 2. George W. Taylor, June 2, 1855
 3. Aristide Rodrigue, November 1, 1855
 4. Andrew J. Rodrigue, June 20, 1857
 5. James S. Rucker, February 8, 1858
 6. William McKinney, March 19, 1860
 7. Maxwell Thorp, July 25, 1861
 8. Jedediah Olmstead, March 5, 1864
 9. Allen J. Parish, August 22, 1864
 10. Frederick B. Hill, June 28, 1865
 11. George W. Smith, June 15, 1869
 12. Saluda B. Watson, November 19, 1869
 13. Laura N. Pate, February 7, 1872
 14. Abraham B. Heisey, October 22, 1875
 15. Laura N. Pate, June 2, 1876
 - Laura N. Pate Zinn, August 21, 1876
 16. Fannie L. Connell, April 4, 1877
 17. William R. Smith, May 27, 1893
 18. Johiel H. Bonebrake, May 24, 1897
 19. Maud M. Iliff, December 23, 1902
 20. Lula M. Todhunter, June 17, 1915
 21. Robert B. Slavens, April 21, 1922
 22. Agnes T. Laptad, November 4, 1933
 23. Frank Walter, January 23, 1936
 24. Louis W. Crady, November 1, 1943
 25. Roland I. Kraft, October 2, 1959
 26. Janice M. Rake, August 7, 1982
 27. Victoria J. Roberts, March 26, 1988
 - Victoria Roberts Bahnmaier, February 14, 2002
- The Post Office was established at Douglas on March 3, 1855. The name was changed to Lecompton on September 5, 1855

**LECOMPTON ALUMNI BANQUET
Saturday, June 21, 2003**

Will be held at the Lecompton High School Gym and the following classes will be honored: 2003, 1993, 1983, 1973, 1963, 1953, 1943, 1933.

Please send your reservation to the Lecompton Alumni Association, Box 63, Lecompton, Kansas 66050, by June 14, 2003. Meals are \$15.00 per person. Social Hour 5:00 - 6:00 p.m. and Dinner 6:00 p.m.

The Territorial Capital Museum and Constitution Hall will be open from 11:00 a.m. until 5:30 p.m.



A Lecompton Town Company Certificate signed by Aristide Rodrigue

**CIVIL WAR HISTORY
HISTORIC LECOMPTON
TERRITORIAL CAPITAL FESTIVAL
Saturday, June 28, 2003**

Friday, June 27th.

6:00-9:00 p.m. (Family Night)
Carnival & Games-Ottaway Amusement Inc.
Registration for Turtle Race & Frog Jumping

Saturday, June 26th

- 9:00 a.m. Pioneer Skills Living History & Demo.
- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Blacksmith | 8. Tattng |
| 2. Mountain Man | 9. Beadwork |
| 3. Spinner | 10. Potter |
| 4. Musicians | 11. Stone post |
| 5. Artist | 12. Marble Lady |
| 6. Woodcarver | 13. Kaw River Fishing |
| 7. Broom Maker | 14. Shoe Making |
| 15. Lace Making. | |

Battle of Fort Titus

The Battle of Fort Titus will be re-enacted by members of the Kansas and Missouri Re-Enactors Association on June 28th and 29th at 1:30 P.M. east of the Museum. This will be followed by the play, "Kansas Territory" written by Howard Duncan at 2:30 P.M.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Life Members:

Phillip A. Godwin
Sally Thompson (Salisbury)
Joyce Dexter Beresford (Rentfro)
Norma Lynch (Damm)
Russell Hoffer and
Mary Jane Hoffer (Spielman)

OBITUARIES

Bylaska, Vera Jean, 56, died Fri. Feb. 21, 2003 at a Lawrence hospital.

She was born Oct. 10, 1946, in Holton, the daughter of John William and Lura Irene Holloway McAlexander.

She graduated from Lecompton High School in 1964 and Kansas State University with a major in English in 1968.

She worked at Kansas University from 1984 until her death, starting as a research assistant and later as an Account specialist in the Controller's office.

She was a member of the Lecompton United Methodist Church and a Life member of the Lecompton Historical Society.

She married William Paul Bylaska on Feb. 21, 1971, in Lecompton. They later divorced.

Survivors include her mother; two sons, William Paul Bylaska, Jr., Lawrence and John Robert Bylaska, Lecompton, and a sister, Janice McAlexander, Lawrence. Burial in Maple Grove Cemetery west of Lecompton.

Oldham, Claudette Mary "Teenie", 63, died Mon. Mar. 17, 2003 at a Lawrence hospital.

She was born Nov. 14, 1939, near Lawrence the daughter of Claude L. and Minerva M. Delgadillo Myers. She graduated from Lecompton High school in 1957 and Clark School of Business in Topeka in 1958.

She worked for the state of Kansas, Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. The University of Kansas and the Kansas Lottery Finance Dept. before retiring in Dec. 2001.

She was a member of the Lecompton United Methodist Church and a member of the Lecompton Historical Society.

She married James N. Oldham on Sept. 12, 1959, in Lecompton. He survives.

Other survivors include two daughters, Sharon O'Trimble, Perry, and Suzy Bradley, Olathe; a brother, Claude Myers Jr., Topeka; Three sisters, Mary Manis, Topeka, Regina Andrews, Lawrence, and Katherine Flood, Mount Morris, Mich; and four grandsons. She was preceded in death by a son, Jerry James Oldham, in 1994.

LaDuke, Arthur E., 76, Lecompton died Sun. April 6, 2003 at his home. He was born Mar. 31, 1927, in Lawrence, the son of Raymond B. and Edith E. LaDuke. He graduated from Vinland High School in 1945.

He moved to Lecompton and farmed there for 56 years. He served on the Rural Water District No. 3 Board for 21 years, Lecompton Township Board for 16 years and was a Life member of the Lecompton Historical Society. He served in the U. S. Air Force

*****Please Clip and Mail With Your Check*****

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.

Dues are \$5.00 per year for individual membership and \$7.00 for a couple's membership. The dues are 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 Georgia Trammel, Chairman, 11 N. 2064 Rd, Lecompton, KS 66050

()	\$5.00 Annual Individual Membership
()	\$7.00 Annual Couple's Membership
()	\$50.00 Individual Life or Memorial Membership
()	Other Contribution \$ _____

NAME _____ Address _____
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It costs the Lecompton Historical Society .92 cents for a change of address and the newsletter returned or .70 cent for a post card to notify us of your change of address, and your newsletter will be thrown away. If you have moved and do not get your newsletter this is why.

in the Korean War as a staff sergeant from 1952 to 1956

He married Freda N. Kingsley on Jan. 2, 1954, in Fort Worth, Tex. She survives of the home.

Other survivors include two sons, David, Lecompton and Gary, Lawrence; a daughter, Sherilyn LaDuke, Lecompton; a sister, Dorothy Jean Neil, Manhattan Beach, Calif; and two grandchildren. Burial in Maple Grove Cemetery west of Lecompton.

Shiffer, Louise (Clarke), 89, of Kettering, Oh, died Feb. 10, 2003 at the home of her daughter Nancy Shiffer. Louise was born Feb. 23, 1913 in Custer, Okla. the daughter of Frank and Minnie Heise Clarke. Her parents were married in Lecompton, Dec., 1904. She graduated from Lecompton High School in 1930.

Louise and her husband Jerry moved to Little Rock, in 1947, then in 1980 moved to Clearwater, Fla. where he died in 1986. Lousie then moved in 1996 to her daughter's in Ohio.

Besides her daughter she is survived by a son, Danny Shiffer and two grandchildren and one great grandchild.

Clough, Vivian G., 81, Clinton, died Mon. April 28, 2003, in Lawrence.

She was born Mar. 16, 1922, in Clinton, the daughter of Thomas Henry and Goldie Vivian (Jones) Hout. She graduated from Liberty Memorial High School in 1940.

She gathered information from tombstones for the Douglas County Cemetery book. She was a member of Adah Chapter No. 7 Order of Eastern Star in Lawrence and Baldwin, member of two quilting clubs. Lawrence Genealogical Society, Topeka Genealogical Society, Lecompton Historical Society, Kansas State Historical Society, Clinton Historical Society and Union Cemetery Assn., in Kansas City, Kan.

She married LaVere Surber on Oct. 28, 1942. They later divorced. She married Donald Clough on June 21, 1952, in Lawrence. He died Nov. 1, 1976.

Survivors include a sister, Julia Nadine Christie, of Clinton, and several neices and nephews. Burial in Clinton Cemetery.

Woodman, Betty Jean, 67, Tacoma, Wash. died Fri. April 25, 2003.

She was born Nov. 22, 1935 in Lecompton, Ks., the daughter of Russell and Dora Worley. She had lived in Tacoma since 1974. She was a member of Convent Celebration Church had been a member of the Lecompton Historical Society.

She married Rolland Woodman on July 9, 1953, in Topeka. He survives of the home.

Other survivors include a daughter, Tracie Stubblefield; a son, Keith Woodman, two brothers, Charles Worley and Robert Worley, both of Lawrence, Ks.; and a granddaughter. Burial in Tahoma National Cemetery in Kent.

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|--|---|
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