

The LHS Newsletter Archive

BALD EAGLE

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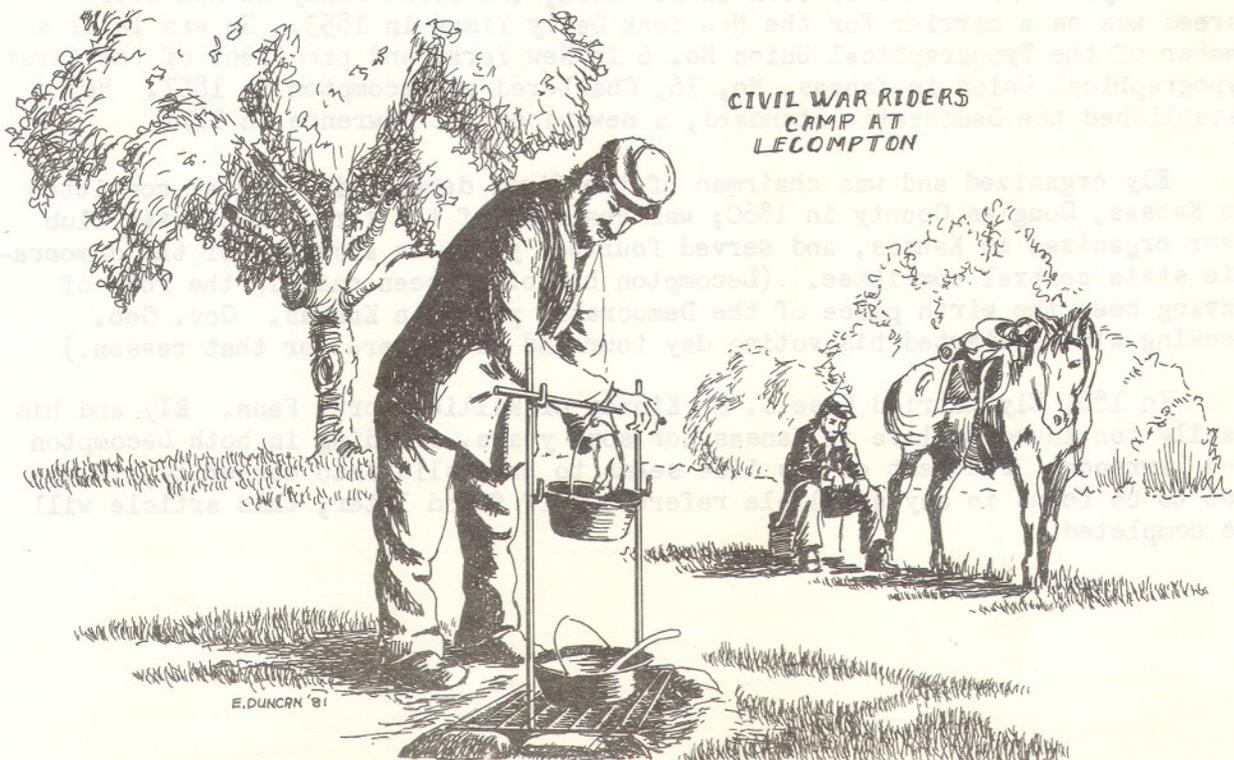




CIVIL WAR RIDERS

The Civil War Riders arrived in Lecompton on May 6 as one stop in their second annual tour of historic sites in Kansas. The Seventh Illinois Cavalry, Company C, is making the journey from Fort Riley to Fort Leavenworth on horseback and in authentic Civil War garb. This expedition, from Ft. Riley to Ft. Leavenworth, is a feature of the "Living History of the U.S. Cavalry." Stops and campsites include the first Territorial Capitol at Ft. Riley, Mill Creek Museum near Volland, Council Grove, Kansas State Historical Museum, the Oregon Trail from Tecumseh to Lecompton (along the scenic river road). From Lecompton the riders will continue their journey to Ft. Leavenworth through Lawrence to visit the Eldridge Hotel and the Elizabeth M. Watkins Community Museum,

While camping overnight in Lecompton, the riders shared a covered dish supper with the Lecompton Historical Society. Accompanying the men was the wife and son of one of them, and they all shared their experiences of the trail with us. The following morning the school children were invited to watch the soldiers cook their breakfast and visit the encampment. About 140 children were present and it was reported to be the best field trip of the year. Before leaving Lecompton the riders toured Lane University and were given a send off with coffee and cookies.



CIVIL WAR RIDERS
CAMP AT
LECOMPTON

E. DUNCAN '81

ELY MOORE, EARLY LECOMPTONITE

Ely Moore was born in New York City, N. Y., Dec. 1, 1833, and resided there until 1853 when he went west to the area soon to be known as Kansas Territory. He traveled with his father, whom President Pierce had made a colonel and put in charge of the "Five Tribes of Indians" who were fighting with the Osages and Pottowatomie tribes. The President hoped the difficulties could be settled by the time Kansas became a territory and then his father was to be governor of the territory. Young Ely was to do liason work with his father.

They arrived at Westport, Mo. May 27, 1853. After a brief stay there, they took up quarters at Shawnee Mission. Soon young Ely was sent to Washington to deliver a letter to the President concerning political conditions in the area. After delivering it, he returned to New York City where he remained until June 1854, when he returned to Kansas, adopting it as his future home. He went to the Miami Indian Mission southeast of Paola. The day after arriving there, he was sent to Fort Leavenworth with an order for three companies of dragoons to drive the trespassers from the Miami Reservation. Three of the officers in charge of the dragoons, that were later sent in answer to the request, were Maj. John Sedgwick, Capt. Delos Sacket and Lieut. J. E. B. Stuart. (All three of these officers were later stationed at Camp Sacket in Lecompton.)

To get to Ft. Leavenworth, Ely had to cross the Kansas River which was in flood. Some one told him of a ferry along the river to the west of the present site of Lawrence. He followed the river until he found the ferry operator, skinning a 75# eat fish. He willingly offered to take Ely across the river in his ferry, which consisted of a twenty foot long sycamore log, with a center excavation five feet long and three feet wide, with a single paddle to guide and propel it. The horse had to swim along behind. The ferryman was William R. Simmons, the first white man to settle at Lecompton. Ely continued on to Ft. Leavenworth where he delivered his request for troops.

Ely moved to Lecompton May 1, 1856 where he was deputy register of the Land Office from 1857-1860. Ely was a member of the wagon train that went to Denver to search for gold and to plat the town. His memoirs are the source of that story. As he had been born in New York, the first money he had ever earned was as a carrier for the New York Daily Times in 1852. He was later a member of the Typographical Union No. 6 in New York, and president of the first Typographical Union in Kansas, No. 76, Chartered at Lecompton in 1857. He established the Democratic Standard, a newspaper, at Lawrence in 1871.

Ely organized and was chairman of the first democratic central committee in Kansas, Douglas County in 1860; was chairman of the first democratic club ever organized in Kansas, and served fourteen years as a member of the democratic state central committee. (Lecompton has often been cast in the role of having been the birth place of the Democratic party in Kansas. Gov. Geo. Docking always started his voting day tour and rally here for that reason.)

In 1861 Ely married Rose S. Mc Kinney of Williamsport, Penn. Ely and his family continued to live in Kansas for some years, residing in both Lecompton and Lawrence. The rest of his life seems to have slid into obscurity, it was not to be found in any available references-if found later, this article will be completed.

COL. ELY MOORE-FATHER OF LECOMPTON'S ELY MOORE

Col. Ely Moore was born in Sussex County, N. J., July 4, 1798. He died at Lecompton Jan 27, 1861. He served 5 years in the printing business in New York City, and served as a proof reader for the Bible. He was elected to Congress in 1834 and served 2 terms. He was surveyor of the New York port from 1839-1845, when President Polk appointed him marshal for the southern district of New York. In 1853 President Pierce appointed him minister to England, this he refused to accept, preferring the Indian agency in Kansas. In coming to this position he was to settle the Indian affairs, and then be the first territorial governor.

Upon arrival at Westport, Mo. on the Kansas territory border, he found political strife, not between the pro-slavery and free-state men, but between the men of the South, proper, and the border slave states; many, even though slave owners, were against slavery extension. This showed that the South was not unified in making Kansas a slave state. For these reasons, Mr. Moore wrote a letter to President Pierce, telling him that as he was opposed to the extension of slavery, he could not accept the position of territorial governor. As a result Andrew Reeder was appointed, He later accepted the appointment of register of the land office at Lecompton, which he held until his death in 1861.

Written by Ione Spencer and Sara Walter

LECOMPTON FIRST CALLED BALD EAGLE

The Kansas-Nebraska Act passed by Congress in 1854, made the area into a territory that was open to settlement. Prior to this time, the land was considered Indian territory, and no one but Indians would reside there permanently. Other people could obtain permission from the U. S. Government, with offices at Ft. Leavenworth, to pass through the area, or remain in the area for a limited time only. With the passage of this act, Indians were placed on reservations and other people could now settle in the Kansas-Nebraska territory. This condition interested many men and women who had a desire to obtain cheap land and also those who were interested in Kansas becoming a slave state, as well as those who wanted it to be a free state. As a result many emigrants started for Kansas.

Perhaps the first actual settler in the Lecompton area was William R. Simmons who started a ferry across the Kansas River near where Lecompton was later situated. He was permitted to remain in Kansas as early as 1852 because of the useful service he performed as a ferryman, as it aided the army as well as people crossing the plains to California.

In the fall of 1854, Dr. Aristides Roderique and Nathaniel Boone set out to explore the valley of the Kansas River for the primary purpose to locate claims for themselves and to select an eligible site for the capital of the territory.

They traveled in their own conveyance, had a driver who did duty as a cook and when night over took them, they camped. In the absence of roads they simply followed the river. When they came to what is now known as Lake View, they decided to stop and explore the area on foot.

They started early one morning and the grass and underbrush were covered with dew. By the time 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 its summit and sat down under a big tree to rest. The longer they rested, the less inclined they were to go further.

"I think we have gone far enough, Colonel", said Roderique. Boone replied "I was about to say the same thing". As the beauty of the scene before them impressed itself more and more on them, they became very enthusiastic that in the amphitheater of the hills before and below them a great city would arise, and would arouse the admiration of the whole state. Dr. Roderique pointed down the slope where he would make his home; Boone said it was difficult to make a choice among so many beautiful locations, but that he would stay somewhere.

Then the question of a name for the city was discussed. Roderique suggested "Eureka", but Boone objected. Roderique in pique then suggested "Hazel Dell". Boone not to be outdone proposed "Pell Mell". Roderique responded, "Oh, I know what you want, you want to call it Boonesboro".

Boone retorted, "No, I don't, But I consider it more appropriate than your nonsense".

Just then a great bird left its perch in a nearby tree, and as the two men watched its flight, Roderique turned to Boone and said, "Why not call it Bald Eagle?"

"It's a go", said Boone, "Let's call it that, let it soar!"

The men were pleased with the location and topography of the site. It was well drained and near a large source of water. Its valley was surrounded by seven hills, which reminded them of the great city of Rome, Italy, and made them feel that the success of the city yet to be built would match that of Rome.

Boone and Roderique returned to Missouri where they organized a town company. The officers were: Judge Lecompte, President; John Halderman, Secretary; Daniel Woodson, Treasurer; and George Clark and Chauncey Donalson, members of the Board. In the spring of 1855, they sent D. H. Harting to plat the town on 600 acres that had been obtained from various agencies. Lots were put up for sale and the town started. As it was the hope of the town company as afore-stated that this town would be the capital of Kansas, the name was changed from Bald Eagle to Lecompton, as it was felt that Bald Eagle was an undignified name for a capital. The name was derived from that of Judge Lecompte, a federal judge then serving Kansas Territory.

The area near Lecompton, by the river bridge, is still inhabited by the bald eagles, and as many as 25 have been counted here during their residency in the winter. The town may have rejected their name, but they welcome them in residence.

Researched and written
by Sara Walter

President — JULIA SPINGER
Editor — ELLEN DUNCAN
Geneological Writer — IONA SPENCER
Historical Writer — SARA WALTER

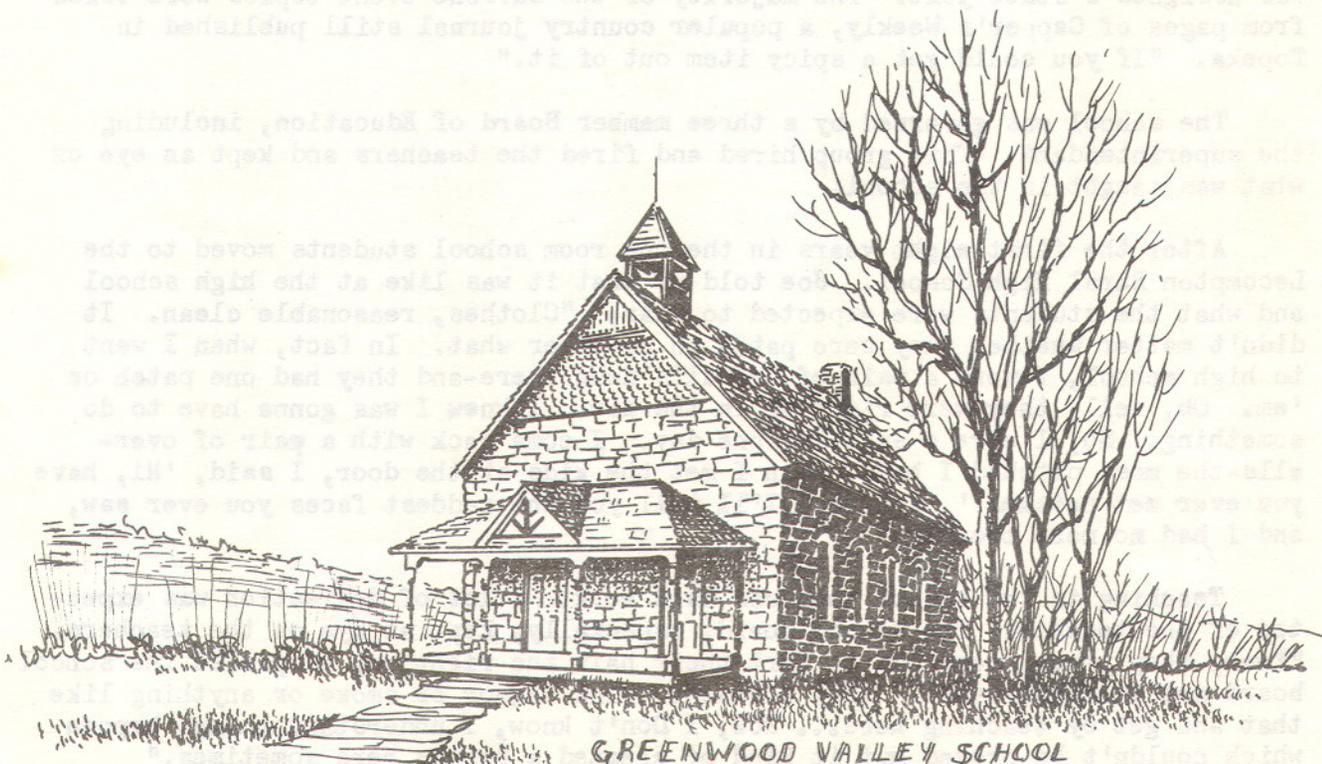
"DOG HOLLER" SCHOOL ALSO KNOWN AS GREENWOOD VALLEY

Between the Kansas River and 40 Highway, in a little valled where a century ago was open prairie, there is an old schoolhouse which is almost hidden from view by cedar trees and tall grass. The building is located in a rural area which has some of the most historical sights in the state. We noticed it awhile back when we were driving down a weathered gravel road between Big Springs and Lecompton.

The outside of this little school is yellow and large stones nearly a foot across make up most of the building. They are made from natural limestone which was probably dug and cut on that very spot. If you look inside you'll see a chalkboard on the west end which is much like the ones used today. Around the edges and scattered on the once dirt floor, there are several weathered benches and chairs. The old stove sits in the very center of the room—once proud and now looking condemned.

The school has seen many changes. It was open during the time when teachers were supplied a horse to make their daily trip across the valley which was then known as "Dog Holler." From 1855 to 1960 two terms of three months each were held in the building. Almost 60 different teachers served the school for one or more terms.

On the benches around the stove that were neatly arranged at the time, sat anywhere from 15 to 65 students, age 5 to 25. One of them was Joe Logan, a life-long resident of the area. One day this winter Joe was kind enough to meet us at the school and in his interesting way of putting things and relaxed Kansas accent, reincarnated the school setting the way it was when Joe attended the school from 1924 to 1928.



GREENWOOD VALLEY SCHOOL
"DOG HOLLER" 1904

As Joe talked with us, it became clear that activities of the whole area centered around the school. There were community meetings there, church on Sundays and repair days when the school needed it. Joe remembered helping his father and other neighbors deepen the well on one occasion.

The way Joe described his school days sounded like hard work. First he'd tend to his dad's cows, run his trap lines and then head to school where he would light the stove and pump water from the well. When we asked him how he got to school, he said, "Walked! Walked, run, turned sommersaults--anything you felt like doin' when you headed towards the schoolhouse."

As for the teacher's errands, "Well, I don't know, I got paid. The teacher didn't do it. She paid me three dollars a month. Gettin' down to school, I'd come right up the creek, grab me a few limbs, and I had a fire right quick."

This was before school started, but running trips to the well and woodshed was done during school, from 9 to 4, and especially during recess. School hours were not spent casually. As Joe tells us: "Now on Friday afternoons, that was another very educational process we had here. I don't know whether they did it in all schools or not, but we had arithmetic, well, sort of competition. We had geography competition and spelling bees, spelling competition and sometimes kind of current events."

Religion? "Well a little bit, not much. Usually, with some teachers you read the Bible. Now we had a catholic teacher here once, and there wasn't too much read from the Bible. But of course we said the Lord's Prayer and saluted the flag, that was about the extent of it."

The schools management, as far as books, was controlled by the state. The was assigned a state text. The majority of the current event topics were taken from pages of Capper's Weekly, a popular country journal still published in Topeka. "If you could get a spicy item out of it."

The school was governed by a three member Board of Education, including the superintendant. This group hired and fired the teachers and kept an eye on what was taught in the school.

After the first eight years in the one room school students moved to the Lecompton Rural High School. Joe told us what it was like at the high school and what the students were expected to wear: "Clothes, reasonable clean. It didn't matter whether they were patch on patch or what. In fact, when I went to high school, I wore a pair of overalls down there--and they had one patch on 'em. Oh, well, they were right up in the air. I knew I was gonna have to do something. So, I wore a suit for one day. I come back with a pair of overalls--the most patched I had. When I met the kids at the door, I said, 'Hi, have you ever met patchkes?' And boy, I'll tell you the reddest faces you ever saw, and I had no more trouble."

Teaching in the school then was hard work. A lot of dedication was expected of the teacher. The school board, especially, kept an eye on the teachers. "Yeah, they pretty near had to part their hair the right way to please the school board and superentendant. They couldn't drink liquor or smoke or anything like that and get by teaching here... Now, I Don't know, I understand things happen which couldn't be proved but it kind of created a ripple here sometimes."

To add to that were problems that women had teaching, especially with the older kids. "I've seen a ruler put a blue streak across the back of a hand, that'd last for three days, and nothing said about it. But the guy needed it, and the teacher was always wise enough, and there were enough people there that if he needed it, and he got it, it didn't do him any good to holler. That was when women couldn't get a teaching job in county schools. Some of the boys were 18 and 19 years old, and they'd just give her a hard time sometimes."

Even under these circumstances, teaching as a profession was popular. It required a college education for a long term certificate, but not all teachers attended college. "My mother graduated from the eighth grade, and all her education was from schools like this; she took a teacher's examination and got her a certificate. My Aunt Grace did the same, my Aunt Laura, she did the same. Of course she went to college and got a better certificate, a life certificate. And Aunt Grace had her life certificate when she got married. It required a lot."

"I have a teacher's certificate myself; I have a second grade certificate. I got it when I got out of high school, and I had a school over here in Richmond."

Joe shared with us his philosophy of rural education: "We in the country like to get the better teachers, people with a little horse sense. Now, anybody can study books and get a book learnin', that's the old sayin', but some people has got to know the difference between book learnin' and plain horse sense, in other words, what'll work and what won't."

The rules in this small school were similar to the rules we have now, with the exception of rules we overlook today. When Joe went to school, most everybody had dogs; that's how the school got its original name of "Dog Holler." According to one description we read, if you sat at the school late in the evening or early morning, you could hear the bay of all the neighbors' coon hounds. Dogs sometimes presented a problem at the school during the day. "Well, there was one dog, got in there for a little while. A kid got it in there for about thirty minutes and teacher saw it. You know, it's a fright, them dogs are your best friend, all the time except during school time. You'd be surprised how many lonely little eyes looked in that door and they'd follow you in if they could."

There was also a rule against smoking, both in the school and in the outhouse which sat in a pasture east of the school. "Every once in a while it got to foggin' a little bit and the school teacher'd go out, if she was a woman and tap it a little bit - 'get outta there'. Then she'd go in and sit you in your seat. Oh, they'd get to smokin' up a storm in there sometimes, hedgeroots is terrible but they make a smoke. Oh yeah, hedgeroots, grapevine, cornsilks, and if they got caught, that was the teacher against the kids. Usually she could tell who it was 'cause she was playin' with the rest of 'em and the others was down there."

A trip to the little building out east was sometimes a hurried trip. "We had them outside ones that you went out there, you knew what you was goin' for, and by the time you got there you knew what it smelled like and as soon as you could, you got outta there. The breeze was pretty cool."

Joe Logan has a certain style about him that only could have been developed in a country school. Though this wasn't much different in some ways than from the schools today, it would be good to have an educator like Joe described. It would preserve a style that many don't realize ever existed. Unfortunately in our area the last of them have been consolidated including Greenwood Valley #24.

The acre on which the school stands is now in the possession of John Powell who lives nearby. After talking with Joe we now see it as more than just an abandoned stone building.

Researched and written by Sergio Androde

Editor's Note: We thought it might be interesting to our readers to see a listing of teachers of Dog Holler, as many of them are familiar as friends and relatives. This information is from "Rural Schools and Schoolhouses of Douglas County, Kansas" by Goldie Pipers Daniels and was provided by Sara Walter.

TEACHERS OF GREENWOOD VALLEY SCHOOLS

Patrick Geelan taught several years as did Isabella Cummings in an older stone building of this district, (No. 24) Mr. Quigley was teacher when the stone building of this story was erected in 1896. T. A. Crouch, O. Bayles taught in 1898. Lottie Brune, J. S. Brooke carried on until 1901. J. M. Day, A. C. Rohler, S. B. Katherman, Myrtle Henry, Jennie Shepherd were listed years ending in 1910. Louis Schott, Nellie French, and Elmer Shirley up to 1920. During the 20's Anne Hamming, Lila Tudor, Margaret La Mont, Irene Slavens, Myrtle Suiter, Maybelle Slavens. The 30's had Roy Armstrong, Julia Mc Caffrey, Virginia Colman, Louise Clark, Grace Kellogg and Sara Slavens listed. In addition to previous teachers, new faces were Marguerite Miller, Vesta Bahnmaier, Lulu Dexter, Margaret Wilson, and this concluded the 40's. The 50's brought Daisy Winfield, Betty Roark, Margaret Lucas, Thelma Kerkman, Colleen Johnson, Louise Menzies, Belle F. Welter taught during the school's last term.

Lane is a United Methodist Historical Site

At our February meeting, Lane University was presented a plaque from the United Methodist Historical Society designating Lane as the United Methodist Historical Site Number 75.

The presentation was made by Reverend Neil Herdrick, pastor of Grandview United Methodist Church, Kansas City, Kansas.

We hope persons interested in United Brethren Church history will take the opportunity to visit Lane.

LANE DEDICATION

The dedication of Lane University has been set for next summer. It will be on June 26, 1982. Keep this date in mind when planning your vacation for the summer of 1982.

JULIA SPRINGER'S SALAD

2-3 oz. packages Raspberry Jello

Dissolve thoroughly with 1 c. boiling water

Add 1 can (Wilderness Brand)

Cherry pie filling

Add 1 large can crushed pineapple (not drained)

Mix well with Jello; top with chopped black walnuts

Territorial Day. Activities Scheduled

June 27, 1981

- 10:00 Parade
10:30 Kid Games turtle race, frog race, tricycle drag, bicycle drag, games galore
10:30 Horseshoe Pitching Contest
11:00-2:00 Dinner- United Methodist Church
2:00-4:00 Lane University Building Open House (no displays until the dedication
June 26, 1982)
4:00 Spencers Blue Grass Band
4:30 Bingo
5:00 Homemade Ice Cream Social
5:00 Tug-of-war
9:00 Drawings for \$50 and \$100 Savings bond
9:00 Street Dance

All during the day, there will be various booths and rides along the main street in Lecompton.

VISITORS AT LANE

Lane University was visited on Feb. 28, 1981 by Rep. Mike Hayden, Atwood; Rep. David Miller, Eudora; and John Vogel, Retired after serving 18 years in the Kansas Legislature. They were greeted by Mr. & Mrs. Charles W. Wright, Paul Bahnmaier, Opal Goodrick, and Julia Springer and were shown to date progress on the building.

On the 7 th of May, Topeka Civic Nucomers; Junker's a group of 32 women toured Lane University and were served coffee and homemade cookies. Before the tour a brief history of Lane, Constitution Hall and the Jail was presented to them. This was the Society's first tour group.

FIFTH GRADE URGES CITY CLEAN-UP

Thanks goes to the fifth grade class who made posters for display in the windows of our business district to urge the citizens to spruce up our community. It is important that our city look clean for outsiders and visitors but it is far more important for it to look nice for ourselves. Pride comes from within and each of us can feel the pride which comes from a job well done if we individually do our best to make our house, yard, and business place as neat and clean as possible. Thanks, posters makers, for reminding us, and thanks store owners, for displaying posters, and thanks citizens for responding! (It's not too late to do so yet!)

Zella W. Iliff

Zella W. Iliff, a Life member of the Lecompton Historical Society, died Wednesday, April 15, at Topeka.

She was born Oct. 13, 1886 at Lecompton, attended Lecompton public schools and graduated from Lane University. She was always interested in the renovation of Lane University.

First cousins surviving are Helen Eberhart Oberhelman, Madge Hill Rothberger, Helen Sehon Pallom, Curtis H. Sehon, Julia Sehon Springer.

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 Miss Jeri Skinner, Secretary, Box 56, Lecompton, Kansas 66050.

(Please clip and mail with your check)

_____ \$2.50 Annual Individual Member _____ \$50 Individual Life member
_____ Other contribution

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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