

The LHS Newsletter Archive

# **BALD EAGLE**

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# BAED



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SUMMER

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## DEDICATION ISSUE

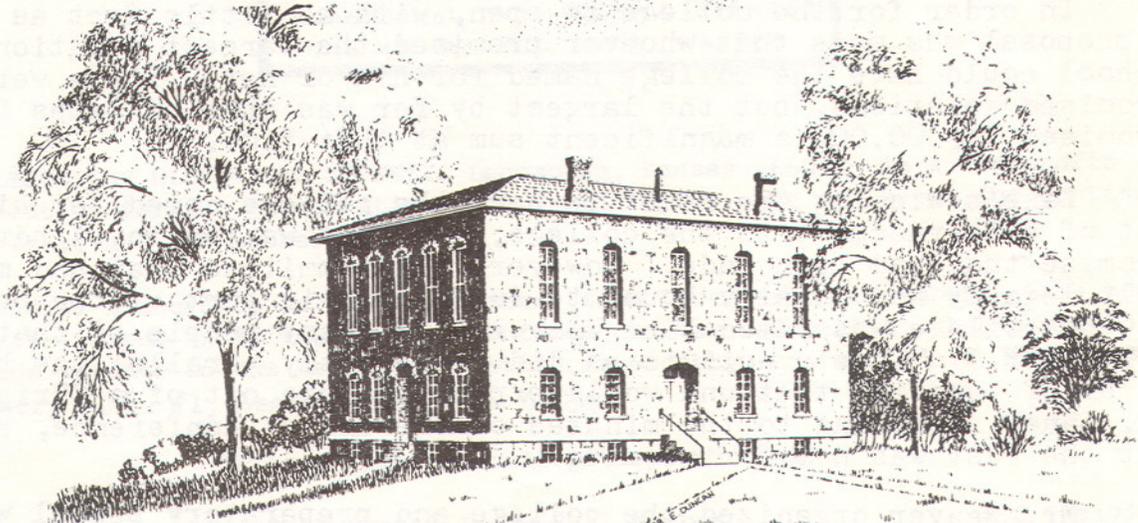
The day we have all been working for has arrived at long last.

THE DEDICATION OF LANE UNIVERSITY WILL BE HELD JUNE 26th, AT 2:00 P.M.

Speakers at the ceremony will include Governor John Carlin, David Eisenhower and other state and local dignitaries. We believe the program will properly honor the people of Lecompton, past and present.

*schedule of activities page 5*

## LANE UNIVERSITY



Lane University Lecompton, Kansas

Kansas was opened as a territory in August 1854 and almost immediately various church denominations sent their representatives to the area to serve as missionaries and to organize churches. Reverend W. A. Cardwell, a United Brethren minister, was sent to Big Springs, Kansas. The Big Springs mission consisted of Big Springs, Lecompton, Tecumseh and Topeka. His method of approach was to organize Bible study groups in homes. He started in Big Springs and Tecumseh and in 1856 he started a group in Lecompton consisting of three people.

Reverend Cardwell saw the territory being flooded with settlers, and became convinced that in order for Kansas to become the great state that her potential indicated she could become, a Christian university was needed. He consulted with other nearby ministers of the same denomination, and they indicated that their opinion was the same. He also discussed his proposal at the scheduled annual conferences of the United Brethren Church that appeared to have started in 1856. The group obtained a charter for such a college in 1858, and immediately sought proper sites, funding, and a president to organize and operate it.

Having heard of Solomon Weaver's expertise in such a capacity, he was then president of an Iowa school, the group contacted him, asked for his help in organizing a college, and persuaded him to come to Kansas for such a purpose. He and his family and a neighbor girl, Julia Hill, later to become Mrs. Frank Kerns, arrived in the early 60's. Cardwell and his committee had canvassed the nearby area and had decided that the large vacant Hotel Rowena in Lecompton, Kansas would make a fine college building. The town had greatly reduced in size since 1857 and was now a quiet orderly place.

The Rowena Hotel had 19 rooms, 2 large halls, 5 lower rooms, dining room, kitchen and basement. It was a three story stone structure 45' by 90', beautifully finished and a marvel at its time. It was completed by B. F. Leslie in 1857, and was intended as a place for the territorial officers, legislators and other important people to stay. However, by late 1857 the legislature would meet at Constitution Hall and immediately adjourn to Lawrence. The county seat, which had been designated as Lecompton, had also been moved to Lawrence. As a result, there were few paying guests, and Mr. Leslie desired to sell. Accordingly, in 1862, with Mr. Weaver's full consent, the college committee purchased the building.

In order for the college to open, with as little debt as possible, a proposal was made that whoever promised the largest donation to the school could have the college named for him or her. There were many promised donations, but the largest by far was that of James Lane who promised \$3,000.00, a magnificent sum at that time.

Lane's winning the right to have the college named for him was a bit of embarrassment to the college, and many wanted to withdraw the promise that had been made. However, the committee that had made it, felt legally and morally bound to fulfill their part of the bargain, and so the college was named Lane University. Many people of that period felt that Jim Lane's activities did not exactly parallel the hoped high level of behavior that one would expect to come out of a Christian college. Mr. Lane, according to the minutes of the annual conference, sent \$2,500 but the rest was not forthcoming.

Mr. Weaver organized the college and preparatory school with 5 professors, and the terms on a quarterly basis. The first year there was only one term. During the early years, the school population for both the college and preparatory school averaged 121. A regular university course was offered. There were 9 departments, classical; philosophical; scientific; literary; commercial; normal training (teachers); preparatory; music and art; and ministerial. For several years after its founding, there were no graduates, as few students had the financial backing to stay a whole year. However, in 1878 there were 4 graduates, and many followed.

College expenses in 1884-85 consisted of one term tuition \$5.00, \$8.00 for 2 terms; \$10.00 for 3 terms etc. Fees per term were \$2.50; room in dormitory - furnished, \$3.75 per term; board per week \$2.00. Each furnished room had a bed, a stove, table and chairs. There were also special rates for private families. The degrees conferred were B.A., B.S., Master of Arts and Master of Science. Written exams were held at the end of each month, and public oral exams at the close of each term.

The first board of directors consisted of Mr. Bower, F. B. Hill, W. A. Cardwell, H. M. Green, H. D. Hully, J. H. Bonebrake, D. K. Lawrence, E. M. Thornton, D. T. Mitchell and G. W. Zinn. The first president was Weaver, succeeded by David Shuck in 1866, and N. D. Bartlett in 1869, and others.

In 1865 the state of Kansas deeded a partially built stone building that had been intended as the Capitol of Kansas, 10 acres of land plus cut stone, pine lumber and much other building material to Lane University. As Lane was usually low on funds, it wasn't until much later that the building was completed.

About 1877 Horace Herr came to Leocompton to be a circuit rider in the Big Springs area. He chose to house himself and his family in the Lane dormitory. It was here his penchant for hard work was noted by the local United Brethren congregation that met in the assembly room of the college each Sunday. In 1880 or near that date he was selected to be pastor of that congregation and to also counsel the students. His congregation soon informed him that they much preferred a separate church from the college and suggested he try to get funding for it. He canvassed the church members and raised a sum large enough for a start. The Lane University officials, upon hearing his plans, suggested that he use the money raised, with the addition of an amount that the college could provide, and complete the partially built capitol that had been given them by the state. As the church congregation agreed, the funds from both sources were pooled, people from the town and the students all worked together and the building was completed. This building consisted of two full stories and a half story basement. It had 4 rooms and 2 large halls on the 1st floor, 2 rooms and an assembly room, called the chapel, on the top floor, and 4 work rooms in the basement. Of course, at that time, it was heated by stoves and had outside plumbing.

The completed building was dedicated in June, 1882 by Bishop Kephart. It was used by Lane University until 1902 when it was moved to Holton Kansas.

Lane, while never large, established a reputation for thoroughness of work done. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction maintained he could always pick out the exam papers sent in from the Lane students, as they were so superior. From this school, after perhaps only a few months, or perhaps years of training went teachers, businessmen and women, ministers, musicians, dentists, doctors and great fathers and mothers, better prepared because of this training.

It was here in 1884 that Ida Stover met David Eisenhower, and it was here in this town that they were married, and later after moving to Texas had a son named Dwight David Eisenhower. It was from here that Will Hoad went to Ann Arbor, Michigan to head a college department.

Henry Wenrich left here, attended Kansas University and headed the Zoology department at Penn State. George Evans, who was in school here two years, helped build the Kansas Capitol - and was required to furnish \$1,000,000 bond. John Arthur Shields, who received training here, became a prominent national prohibition leader and later founded the Phi Kappa Delta fraternity. (There are many others, but they have not been brought to our attention. If you know any, please communicate with us.)

It was in these buildings the United Brethren annual conference was held 1865 -- 66 -- 67 -- 69 -- 72 -- 75 -- 83 -- 89 and 92. The building's size and nearby dormitory made it an ideal place for a gathering of that size. Some of the ministers trained here were the Rev. Wemmer, McAferty, Deevers, Coblenz, Halbert, Testerman, Al and John Hope and many others.

In 1902, when the university appeared to be in financial trouble, it combined with a college at Holton, Kansas and the two were the recipient of a large donation as a result of their merger. The colleges were soon moved to Kansas City, Kansas, then later combined with the United Brethren college at York, Nebraska. The last move was from York to La Mars, Iowa where the school operates at the present.

The United Brethren Church assumed certain Lane University obligations and, as a result, became the owners of the present Lane University building. It was used as a United Brethren Church and Sunday School, and for certain high school classes until 1919, when it was sold to the local high school district to be used entirely as a high school. In 1927 the high school district expanded and a new building was completed in 1928 and the old Lane building was abandoned.

The building fell into great disrepair, and was considered a menace until 1968 when the Lecompton Historical Society was organized under the presidency of William J. Smith with the primary purpose of restoring the Lane University building. Now in 1982, after 14 years of arduous planning, under the presidencies of Smith, Dale Gregg, Oscar Gowing, Charles Perkins, Julia Springer and Paul Bahnmaier, the building is beautifully restored and ready to be rededicated to public service and to assume it's rightful place in Kansas history.

The people of Lecompton have been wonderfully blessed to have had such a fine university in their midst because it made them aware of the benefits of education and caused them to feel the need to send their sons and daughters to higher education centers, even though great sacrifice was necessary. They were among the few small towns that had a public high school. They still benefit from the wonderful music heritage that Lane bequeathed them. There have been many local artists that may not have become famous, but enjoyed their skills and training in their own way.

Lane University we still salute you!

Sara Walter

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Many tedious hours of Elda Flowers, Iona Spencer and Ruth Harshberger have gone into the production of delightful little dolls, dressed daintily from head to toe in Territorial dresses, and Edna Bahnmaier Doris Matney, David and Darlene Paslay have constructed a flag display depicting Lecompton's historical heritage. The dolls and the flags will be for sale on Territorial Day.

## Territorial Days Activities Scheduled

Parade	10:00	A.M.
Kid Contests	10:30	"
Horseshoe Pitch	9:00	"
Church Dinner	11:00 - 5:00	P.M.
Spencers' Music	4:00 - 5:00	"
Lane University Dedication	2:00	P.M.
Bingo	4:00	"
Greased Pig & Pole	6:00	"
Street Dance	9:00	"
(Country All-Stars)		

A variety of food stands and games all day. Quilt show is planned, also.

In honor of Lane University's completed restoration and dedication, the Lecompton United Methodist Church will hold a special Sunday worship service in the Lane University Chapel on Sunday, June 27th from 10:30 to 12:00 Noon.

The Church will not have Sunday School on this date in order to allow for the longer Church service.

The special service will include guest speakers; the retired Bishop Don Holter and Rev. Peter Hanson (son of the former Margery Day), and special music will be offered by the church choir and a quartet of local young men.

After the morning service, an old-fashioned basket dinner will be held on the grounds of Lane University. We invite everyone to join us on this day.

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### JAMES HENRY LANE

James Henry Lane was born in Lawrenceburg, Ind., June 22, 1814. His father was Amos Lane, a noted Indiana politician. He had two older brothers, John Foote Lane, born May 1, 1810 and George W. Lane, born Nov. 7, 1812. The Lanes were of the stock called by Prentis "The from everlasting to everlasting Scotch-Irish". Amos Lane went to Ogdensburg where he met and married Miss Mary Foote. It was his mother that James H. Lane owed most of his genius. Whatever education her son obtained she imparted. In the days of Lane's boyhood, Indiana was the frontier. In this frontier school did Lane become familiar with the motives and forces to move men, especially frontiersmen. The exaggerated style of speech, the boisterous and aggressive manner, the personal courage, the iron constitution, these were the inheritance from his environment on the frontier. In this school Lane was well learned. Lane was born leader of men.

James Lane was well over six feet tall. His eyes were dark and restless, and when he was aroused they burned with the depth and intensity of charcoal fires. His features were good--forehead high, nose finely cut, mouth firm, chin and jaw square and heavy. His arms were long, and every old-time Kansan delighted to tell of his long and bony forefinger and its potency in all Kansas political affairs.

In the fall of 1842, he was married to Miss Mary E. Baldrige, a grand-daughter of Gen. Arthur St. Clair.

Lane studied law and was admitted to the bar, but in 1846 he abandoned a fair professional practice to enlist as a private in the 3d Indiana Volunteers, then organized for the war in Mexico. He was soon chosen colonel, and at the battle of

Buena Vista commanded a brigade and highly distinguished himself. When the year's term of service expired, he returned home and raised the 6th Indiana Volunteers. In 1848 he was chosen lieutenant-governor of Indiana, and in 1852 member of Congress and elector at large on the Democratic ticket. In 1855 he went to Kansas, and was chosen chairman of the executive committee of the Topeka convention which instituted the first state government of Kansas. He was subsequently president of the Topeka constitutional convention, and was elected by the people to be major-general of the free-state troops. In 1856, he was elected to the United States Senate by the Legislature which met under the Topeka constitution, but the election was not recognized by Congress, and about the same time he was indicted by the grand jury of Douglas county for high treason on account of his participation in the Topeka government, and was forced to flee the Territory. In 1857, he shot a neighbor named Gaius Jenkins, in a quarrel about a well, for which he was tried on a charge of murder, and acquitted. In March, 1861, he was elected to the United States Senate by the Legislature which convened in pursuance of the constitution under which Kansas was admitted into the Union. After the adjournment of Congress in July, 1862, he was appointed commissioner to superintend the enlistment of troops in the West.

On July 11, 1866, at the age of 52 years and 19 days, he took his own life, leaving his wife Mary E. Lane, a son James H. Lane, Jr. his daughter Annie Johnson and Thomas who was only 15 years of age at the time of his death. He was preceded in death by his eldest daughter Mrs. Adams and a son, whom he buried near the log cabin when he first settled in Kansas on his claim. When Gaius Jenkins took over Lane's claim, he removed the stone and then farmed over the child's grave. With this ill-feelings already against Jenkins, that when they had the dispute over the well, it could have been the real reason for killing Mr. Jenkins.

(The above biography was taken from articles out of the Kansas Historical Society quarterlies and submitted by Iona Spencer)

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Julia Springer and Chuck Wright are doing their part in "spreading the word" about Lane University, making presentations at luncheon events in Topeka, Lawrence and Perry.

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The horrid, old ghostly-looking dead tree which has stood at the west entrance of the high school ground for many years is gone! It took several hours of hard work by George Simmons, Howard Duncan, Roy Paslay and Charlie Paslay to remove it -- but that area sure looks nice, now. Just goes to show you what happens when somebody cares about things.

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Volunteers Ralph Porter and Denzil Hackathorn, with the help of Paul Bahmaier and David Paslay did a super job of mowing the high school lawn and park area. The big, school mowers were used and trimming properly done, resulting in a beautiful improvement to the area. In addition, Ralph and Denzil then proceeded to mow the elementary school yard. Good work, fellas!

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St. Peters Catholic Church at Big Springs has very graciously loaned the Lane University Museum 5 pews to use in the Chapel balcony. They have also loaned 3 beautiful religious statues for display.

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Don't be alarmed about recent news items regarding the lawsuit filed by The Lecompton Historical Society. The Board is just interested in getting a satisfactory roof installation. There was a substitution made by the contractor which was not approved by either The Lecompton Historical Society or the State Preservation Department. This must be corrected. It would not be fair to all those people who have volunteered their time and donated their money to accept the unspecified roof and inferior installation of the roof.

Lecompton artist, Ellen Duncan, has painted 4 murals depicting the following historical scenes: "The Founding of Lecompton," "Lane at the Lecompton Constitutional Convention," "The Battle of Fort Titus" and "The College, Lane University." Ellen has outstanding artistic ability which she has so graciously shared in many ways for the benefit of The Lecompton Historical Society.

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We are indebted to Forrest Springer for securing the flag poles, refinishing the tables and making coat racks and hall trees. He has also constructed 4 beautiful, sturdy bookcases for use in the office. The lumber for 2 of the bookcases was donated by Mr. and Mrs. George Simmons from ash trees on their farm. David Boose donated his time to plane this native lumber for Forrest to use in building the bookcases. Thanks so much to everyone involved in this project.

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A very thoughtful gift from Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Porter was the donation of 2 Empire style tables and a Library table for use at Lane. One has been placed in the center hall and one has become very important in the office where we do all the cataloging and conferring and "visiting."

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Thanks to Terry Hope for doing such a beautiful job of wallpapering the office. Terry was in the last class to graduate from dear old Lecompton High in 1970, and we're sure he never once thought he'd ever be wallpapering in the dilapidated old Lane University building. Terry donated his time, and we appreciate every minute of it.

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Marie Paslay Neil worked hard to secure 2 telephone switchboards for the Lane Museum. They were donated by the Retired Telephone Employees of Topeka and we thank them, too, but without Marie's help, we would never have received these interesting items.

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Thanks to Mrs. Sara Walter for the antique victrola which will be placed in the Music Room. Still works, too!

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Mrs. Allie Banks has donated her lovely bisque doll which was made in Germany in 1902. She is wearing a beautiful dress of blue material from Mrs. Maybelle Hall, and is also wearing a pin which Mrs. Banks won for finishing second in the Leavenworth County Spelling Bee in 1916. The restoration of "Miss Alice" was magnificantly completed by Martha Lou Robb.

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Mr. and Mrs. Bob Norwood have donated a very interesting hand-made spindle cradle which has been beautifully restored by Mr. Ronald Robb. Martha Lou made a darling coverlet to complete the project and it will be an excellent addition to the Museum. Thanks so much to all 4 of you good people!

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Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Schmitt have given many programs and other items which pertain to Lane University and Lecompton High School. Also, a violin which was played for many years by his grandfather, Mr. George Johnson.

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Mrs. R. Dale Dickson, of Topeka, has given Lane Museum an apothecary jar which was used in Lecompton when her parents operated the General Store from 1907 to 1914. As her parents, the Sillamon's, were married here in Lecompton, Mrs. Dixon has also given her mother's beautiful wedding dress to be displayed.

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Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wright have made available a walnut, double podium for use in Lane Chapel. At the time Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Gibbens lived in the Lane University building, Clyde used it as a work table to repair watches. It is believed to have been originally constructed by Mr. Ed Day. It was eventually sold to Chuck Wright at the Gibbens' sale. Les Shaner did a beautiful job of refinishing the pulpit for Chuck and Sally Wright and they have donated it to Lane in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Stauffer.

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Others who have contributed items to be displayed, and for which we are also very grateful, are: Mrs. Irene Sanford for dishes and other items; Several books from Mrs. Lucy Large; A porcelain bald eagle from Mrs. Levena Carter; A set of stainless steel flatware and encyclopedias from Mr. and Mrs. David Paslay; Books from Mrs. D. E. Smith; A veterinarian kit from Larry Mathews; Lecompton High School pictures of Mrs. Ruth Steinmetz and classmates from Mr. Bob Steinmetz; Books, a family Bible and miscellaneous clothes from Mrs. Delores Deitrich Golladay.

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The Lecompton Historical Society has purchased a commemorative plate which will be sold as a souvenir of the Dedication of Lane University. The plate has 6 drawings of historic buildings of Lecompton, with the Union and the Confederate flag crossed in the center section. There will be a 100 word history of Lecompton on the back of the plate. 4 of the sketches were done by Ellen Duncan.

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An "S.O.S." from Arloene Simmons, who is working very hard trying to locate pictures of Lecompton High School classes prior to 1943. If you have a Senior class picture from this era, please call Arloene at 887-6284.

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John W. Holt, Supervisor of Publications for the Cities Service Gas Company of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, recently visited Lane University as a guest of Forrest and Julia Springer. Mr. Holt is writing an article for the "Dispatcher" a magazine published bi-monthly by Cities Service Gas Company. It is about retirees and how they can keep active. As Forrest is retired from Cities Service after 29 years, the article will feature Forrest and Julia as they discuss the many aspects of their involvement in the Lane University restoration project. We are so lucky that these two active retirees are putting their knowledge and expertise to good use for the benefit of Lane University Museum. Believe me, they never quit!

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Some "thanks and more thanks" to the following people who are helping in so many ways to meet our deadline: To Chuck Wright, who met with and received permission from the Topeka City Commission to use the Parks and Recreation Bandstand for the Dedication Ceremony on June 26th; To Opal Goodrick and Maxine Dark for making the red covers for the 36 pews in the Chapel; To David Paslay and Forrest Springer and Paul Bahnmaier for installing the three flag poles; To Mary Nelle Lasswell for the battery operated wall clock for the meeting room; To Dorothy Shaner and Opal Goodrick for donating and planting two shrubs near the historical sign at the entrance to Lecompton; and to the following people who have worked so hard on two recently appointed work days at Lane:

Mr. and Mrs. David Paslay  
Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Paslay  
Dorothy Shaner  
Mr and Mrs. George Simmons  
Howard Duncan  
Lydia Long  
Edna Bahnmaier  
Mr. and Mrs. Forest Springer  
Opal Goodrick  
Ralph Porter  
Sally Wright  
Raymond Hoffsommer

Richard and Richie McConnell  
Elda Flowers  
Sara Walter  
Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Goodrick  
Wilma Tibbs  
Doris Matney  
Marguerite Bowman  
Ione Spencer  
Roy Paslay  
Marjorie Hildenbrand  
Paul Bahnmaier

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Wilma Tibbs has presented a framed picture of her 1924 class picture at Lecompton High School to Lane University, along with a beautifully carved table.

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LECOMPTON CONSTITUTIONAL

(Taken from the "Kansas Historical Collections" Vol. XVII 1926-1928)  
The story of "Wild Bill" James Butler Hickok by Wm. E. Connelley

At the election for the Lecompton Constitutional, December 21, 1857, a Kentuckian called "Shanghai" and one of the worst of the border ruffians, voted 25 times for that infamous instrument. He mounted a whisky barrel and said he was going to vote 25 times more that day, and offered to bet \$100.00 that he was the champion voter present. His challenge was accepted and the money put up. The opponent then established the fact that he had in his possession a business directory of St. Louis, and that he was voting in alphabetical order and had only got half way through the "A" list. He had cast nearly one hundred votes, so "Shanghai" lost. The manner of voting was unique even for border ruffians in Kansas. A hole was cut in the ceiling above the ballot box. The voter went into the garret and thrust his hand through the hole. In his hand was a ballot, and he called out a name. The election officers took the ballot and recorded the name, but did not see the voter at all.

"Shanghai" later lived at Atchison, Kansas and was made famous by Senator John J. Ingalls, who used him as the principal character in his wonderful essay "Catfish Aristocracy."

Iona Spencer

President - PAUL BAHNMAIER  
Editor - ELLEN DUNCAN  
Geneological Writer - IONA SPENCER  
Historical Writer - SARA WALTER

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 member  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other contribution

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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

27 NEW LIFE MEMBERS IN 1982 ---- If you would like to add your name to this distinguished group, a Life Membership in The Lecompton Historical Society can be purchased for \$50.

Mrs. Wilma Morris	Mrs. Wilma Tibbs
Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Hildenbrand	Mrs. Margery Day Hansen
Marjorie Hildenbrand	Elizabeth Bahnmaier
Mr. Curtis Sehon	Mrs. John Neuschafer
Mr. Harley Dark	Dr. and Mrs. Fred Winter
Mr. Ed Lindquist	Fred Hill Winter
Mr. and Mrs. D. F. Colton	Laura Gibson Winter
Mr. and Mrs. Denzel Gibbens	Mr. George V. Chiles
Mr. and Mrs. Osborne K. Webster	Mr. George M. Clem
Mr. and Mrs. Walter Wulfkuhle	LeRoy W. and Bette Fleenor

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Rolland Kraft, who passed away recently, will be sadly missed by many. He served the Lecompton people as postmaster for many years. He was a good friend to the Lane University project and the Lecompton Historical Society, always willing to do a little bit extra to accommodate people. Rolly always took note of anything out of ordinary occurring at the Lane University project as he made his daily walk across the area on his way home.

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Lane University Museum will have some wheat harvesting tools over 120 years old on display. Thanks to Edwin Hildenbrand for restoring and bringing in these items which were used by his ancestors. The cradle is still in good condition and the crosscut saw and scythe looks like hard work for the user.

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The enthusiasm shown by members and friends of Lane University is so encouraging to everyone. Mrs. Wilbur Hildenbrand (Helen) donated an unusual article called an "ice shaver". Herman Banks brought in a sack of "goodies" -- ever see an automatic gopher shooter?

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Mr.H. Neal East, brother of Mary La Rue Ross died recently. He resided in Palm Springs, California. Mary has been a member of the Historical Society for several years. The Society expresses their sympathy.

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