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SLAVES IN LECOMPTON

Yes, through research, we have found some interesting stories of the early slaves of Lecompton. In the Lawrence Daily Journal World, March 13, 1933, it states "The first census of Kansas, taken February 28, 1855, showed there were 151 free Negroes and 193 slaves. During the years 1854, 1855 and 1856, the slave population increased to over 400, owned by about fifty slaveholders. But when it became apparent that the Free State men were in the majority in Kansas, and the slave code was abolished by the first state legislature, February 23, 1860, the slave owners left the Territory and took their slaves with them.

In 1855, Col. H. T. Titus and George W. Clarke, of Lecompton, jointly owned a slave named Ann Clarke. She ran away to Topeka, but was arrested and returned to her masters; but soon after escaped again and succeeded in making her way, through the underground railway, to Chicago.

Douglas City, a short distance below Lecompton, on the Kaw river, is one of the ghost towns of Douglas county. There were two slaveholders in Douglas City; Mr. Ellison and Mr. Wallis. A slave named Buck Jones, owned by Mr. Douglas, in Lecompton, bought his freedom by working for wages in Lecompton.

The Lecompton Union, (newspaper) in 1856, offered a reward of \$50 for the return of "Judy" a slave, who was supposed to be secreted in Lawrence.

A Mr. Brooks, in Lecompton, in 1855-56, owned four slaves. Judge Rush Elmore of the Kansas Territorial Supreme Court, brought fourteen slaves from Alabama to Lecompton; but soon removed them to his farm, one mile south of Tecumseh, in Shawnee county."

There were slaves in Jefferson County. A man named Skaggs in Kentucky township, owned twenty-seven; but took them to Texas in 1859. Our subject was one of these slaves, as he is listed in the 1855 census, as living with his owner James Skaggs, on the list of settlers on the Kansas Half Breed lands opposit Douglas City, east of Lecompton. Also is listed in this same census Mr. Wm. F. Bayne, whom our subject mentions in his article who was his wife's master.

The following article was found in "The Lecompton Sun" Friday, June 24, 1904. We thought this article would be interesting to our readers, as this slave Robert Skeggs (Skaggs) is buried at East View Cemetery, at Big Springs, Kansas. The home that he bought is now owned by Art and Ethel Petersilie on County Road #1025, northeast of Big Springs in Douglas County.

Robert Skeggs (Skaggs) who lives in the south west part of this township, is the only man on earth who was a slave in the city of Lecompton. Our illustration is a pretty fair likeness of Mr. Skeggs as he looks today. Mr. Skeggs' history would read like a story from another world; as indeed it is. Half of his life was spent in slavery, he having been almost 40 years old when his master told him he was free. The old gentleman say he is nearly 82 years old and the way he first learned his age was at the time of his old master's death when the appraisers were fixing the value of the slaves before dividing the property. His young master gave his age as the same as that of his sister and she was 25. His young master took him at \$700. though the slave trader in his old home in Kentucky said, if they would put him on the block he would start him at \$1800. for he knew his trade would sell him well. He was a blacksmith. His master, James Skeggs, brought him to Kansas in 1853, and they settled and built a cabin in Jefferson county on the farm that Matt Jones sold to Charles Stark a few years ago. Mr. Skeggs remembers when there was only one house in Lecompton and that was a "whiskey house." When he was a slave he hewed, in the timber, the frame work for the house that Mr. Leamer lived in for so many years and was torn down to give place to his present residence. When Kansas was admitted as a free state, his master took him to Texas where he worked six years a slave and two years a free man before he got money to come back to Kansas and see his wife's old master, Billy Baynes, who lived near Williamstown in Jefferson county. The story of Mr. Baynes's help and friendship and the magnanimous way in which he gave Mrs. Skeggs her freedom is a chapter by itself and can not be told at this time. Mr. Skeggs spent his first year of freedom farming on the shares; he got the ninth row of corn or one bushel to the other man's eight. His wife worked for her clothes and victuals and the clothes and victuals of two of his sister's children that she was raising. The second year he got half and that year made enough to "come back" to Kansas.

Mr. Skeggs and his wife are well respected by their neighbors. They are honest, peaceable, hard working, colored people. They own the farm where they live and owe no man a dollar. They are kind and hospitable and bear no resentment to the system that kept them in slavery so long, and yet so long ago that a new generation has grown up that never saw a human being that was once called the property of others. Mr. Skeggs often comes to town when he has business here and never otherwise, for he is in no sense a loafer. He has promised to attend the celebration at Lecompton, July 4th, and if his wife is able to come he will bring her along.

The old man says that when he was informed by his master he was free, he did not have a cent in the world, did not know where the next meal was coming from, "but I didn't worry. I knew if I could make a living for myself and him too, I could get along some way with him left off."

Col. Nace, Mr. & Mrs. Wm. Leamer, and a few other old settlers remember Mr. Skeggs from slavery days and they say his word is reliable.



Robert Skeggs

The Lecompton Sun--Thursday, March 14, 1918

Iona Spencer

Happy Hollow--Route carrier John Day made the first mail delivery with his new Ford Friday. With the able assistance of the patrons who helped crank it occasionally, he beat his old "hoss power" record by nearly two hours. Happy Hollow now feels that it is trotting in the modern class.

CAMP SACKET (SACKETT)

Camp Sacket, a United States military camp, was located about four miles west and south of Lecompton. It was a contingent of cavalry from Fort Leavenworth sent to the location to keep peace around Lecompton and to monitor the near-by road between Lawrence and Topeka. A high hill just to the south of the camp was a continuously manned, both day and night, as a look out post to watch for fires or fighting. The camp has been reported as having from 50 to 500 inhabitants--the number varying with the need at the time, as well as the number of troops that could be spared by the command at Fort Leavenworth.

The camp was named after a Captain Sacket, who originally set up the camp. It was first referred to as Captain Sacket's camp, and finally as Camp Sacket. From time to time the camp would be completely cleared, then later when troops were available, it would be again repopulated with perhaps a different commanding officer. Captains Cook and Smith each were in charge of the camp at various times. J. E. B. Stuart of confederate army fame, was stationed there for a period. He was a West Point graduate, who in 1861 resigned his United States Commission, in order to serve in the confederate army. He was a very successful officer, but was killed in the battle of Gettysburg.

The camp was located by two small streams and near a gushing spring--a large water supply being needed. The only shelter of course was tents, some of which had a long strip of material covering as many as three tents, providing an open, shady place to sit between the tents. The horses were in a temporary corral a short distance away, where they were under constant guard.

In August 1857, a constitutional convention was to meet at Lecompton to write a state constitution. When the delegates started to enter Constitution Hall, they found their way blocked. James Lane had brought between 200-300 Free-state supporters to Lecompton to prevent the proposed convention. He and his co-horts ringed the hall and would let no one enter. A rider was sent to Ft. Leavenworth to appeal for help. Camp Sacket was temporarily vacant due to the army being needed elsewhere. It was odd that Lane's small army could stop the supposedly large band of "cut throats" that reputedly populated Lecompton--but they did. The army sent back the message that their troops were all busy, but that by late September or early October they could send a troop back to Camp Sacket, that could protect the delegates so that the convention could proceed. This they did and made possible the writing of the Lecompton Constitution.

It was to this camp the so-called "treason" prisoners were taken in 1858. As a result of a grand jury investigation, five men of the free-state group, were accused of taking on duties of a state government, and causing trouble in the territory. One of them was Charles Robinson. He had heard of the hearing, so he and his wife, Sara, decided to go to the East and seek help. They left by boat at Leavenworth, but their departure became known and United States Marshall Donelson (or Donaldson), Judge Lecompte, and an army officer with a small group of soldiers, met the boat at Lexington, Missouri and took Mr. Robinson prisoner, while Mrs. Robinson was permitted to continue her journey.

The Lexington townspeople were angry about John Brown's deeds, and as Robinson was also a Free-stater--wanted to hang him. Marshall Donelson and the cavalry troop convinced them that they should let the courts try Robinson. They took him to a hotel, and that night Donelson slept outside his door in a chair, Judge LeCompte lay on the floor against the door on the inside, and the army officer slept in the bed with Robinson! No one would get past them to get Robinson.

Very early the next morning, the cavalry troop boosted Robinson on a horse, and all took off for Leavenworth at a full gallop. Upon arriving at Ft. Leavenworth, they found the people there very hostile, also, so Robinson with a good escort was hustled off to Lecompton. Unfortunately, word of John Brown's massacre at Osawatomie had just arrived and the Lecompton people were livid with rage. A large group encircled the building where Robinson had been taken, and threatened to tear it down. When LeCompte and Donelson had met Robinson at Lexington, they had shaken hands, and he had given them the Masonic secret hand shake, so they knew him to be a Mason. They went out into the crowd of men, and said that he was a Mason and deserved a court trial. As a result the crowd gradually lessened and Robinson was taken to Camp Sacket where he was held from May until the middle of August.

The prisoners wives were allowed to stay with them, one of the wives had her cook stove brought out from Lawrence, to make her cooking chores easier. The cavalrymen were kind to the prisoners and brought them wild game, strawberries, plums, grapes, etc. to supplement their provisions. In the same chapter in some books, the cavalrymen will be portrayed as both kind and bestial.

In August, Robinson and the other men were tried and acquitted, so as soon as they put up a \$3,000 bond, that promised they would not again commit treason, they were to be freed. While this was in process, James Lane gathered together 700 men, several cannons and many Sharps rifles and headed for Lecompton to free Robinson and the others. He placed his men on a ridge just east of the city of Lecompton. At daybreak he started shooting at the town. The Lecompton men grabbed their arms and the town cannon and headed for the shelter of the partially built capitol. After a half hour of exchanged shots the cavalry from Camp Sacket rode into town with 50 mounted men under Captian Cooke. He approached Lane on the hill and suggested quite firmly that he go back to Lawrence, which he did with his 700 men and watched by 50 U. S. cavalrymen.

The next year when a group of Missourians were coming from the east to attack Lawrence, Captain Cooke brought his cavalrymen down to protect Lawrence. Charles Robinson brought all the wine he could find, and hurried out to the temporary camp to treat all the officers who had been so nice to him!

After the Missourians left and the cavalrymen had returned to Camp Sacket, things quieted for a short time, until Captain Walker-heading a Free-state group, attacked Ft. Titus. The soldiers at the camp, upon hearing the shots, headed for the near-by source. From a hill near the fracas they watched the fight, not taking any part. The attack was soon over, and Walker left the area with his prisoners without any interference from the cavalry.

There seems to be no single in depth journal of Camp Sacket's happenings, only excerpts here and there in various books. The best sources seem to be

Robinson, Sara T. D. L., The Interior and Exterior of Kansas
Robinson, Charles, The Kansas Conflict
Blackman, The Life of Charles Robinson

The Lane University Museum has a large cannon ball found in the Camp Sacket area. Also they have been the recipient of a nice display of artifacts recently found there by Jerry Emberlin of Shawnee Mission, Kansas and Jim Coppenbarger of Overland Park, Kansas. Both men are history buffs and use a metal detector and a shovel to find the artifacts.

Sara Walter

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PRESIDENT'S NOTES

The Lecompton Historical Society continues to grow and prosper. This would not be possible without the dedication and hard work of members in this area and those living in other states. With over 400 members in 30 states, we are privileged to have such an outstanding membership. The loyalty former residents of Lecompton have for this community is something many cities envy. Each and every one of you are important to the success of this project. Your ideas are always appreciated and welcomed. We are presently nearing the opening of Lane University for another exciting summer of tours and visitors to our historic town. Our goal is to promote Lecompton and Lane University to any one who will listen to the story of our nationally historic city. If you know of any group interested in touring Lane University please contact any historical society member for information. There will be new and different displays this summer that will compliment those presently on display.

Recent donations to Lane University include the following items. Early 20th century dresses, trucks, picture frames and antique farm equipment by Allie and Herman Banks. Eisenhower buttons by Ross and Margaret Wulfkule. Ration stamps which belonged to Henry and Bill Leslie by Mr. and Mrs. Bill Leslie. A wooden bowl and saw cutter brought to America by George Shaw's Grandmother in 1850. A bullet from Dennis Nelson (coach Nelson's Son) which he had removed from a tree located near Lane University while in the sixth grade in Sara Walter's room. A doll buggy which dates at least to 1917 and was owned by Helen Hart and donated by Harry Hart and the late Annabelle Keeler Hart. A coverlet for the buggy was made and donated by Ruth Harwood. The Lecompton Historical Society wishes to thank each of the above mentioned people for their contribution to the Lane Museum.

The Lecompton City Council recently selected the name Rowena Park for the area south of the Lecompton Community Building. This is the site of the Rowena Hotel and original location of Lane University. The Lecompton Historical Society would like to thank the council for helping promote the history of our community.

The Lecompton Historical Society is presently selling Superior Bowl Cleanser. We have found this product to be a super product for cleaning a commode. If you are interested in this product contact one of our members.

Cluck Wright recently addressed a group at the 1st Presbyterian Church in Topeka and the Hi-Twelve Club of Lawrence. Elda Flowers and Leverne Wilson hosted the Fostoria Senior Citizens for a tour of Lane University. Several groups have made arrangements for tours of Lane and if you know of any group interested in a program or tour please contact a member.

The Lane University Library is open every 1st and 3rd Wednesday from one to three P.M. Sara Walter, Elda Flowers and Lydia Long would be glad to show you our large collection of historical and non historical books.

The west entrance to Lane University recently received an improvement with the addition of an 8 foot white pine donated by Earl Wilson from his Christmas Tree Farm west of Lecompton. Les and Dorothy Shaner, Raymond Hoffsommer and Robert Goodrick helped in planting the tree. We certainly appreciate Mr. Wilson's interest in helping make the area around Lane as attractive as our museum. The idea came from Dorothy and her continuing effort to beautify Lecompton.

The Lane University Museum was recently the scene of the first cultural event for our building. The County Gazette from Nashville Tennessee gave an original Bluegrass Music Concert before a capacity crowd. The event was a great success and it is hoped the first of many cultural events to take place in Lane University. Thanks to Rich and Karen McConnell for making the arrangements for this event. During intermission our society sold refreshments donated by the membership. Helping with the selling of the food were: Maxine Dark, Arloene Simmons, Doris Matney, Julia Springer, Iona Spencer, Marguerite Bowman, Wilma Tibbs and Richie McConnell.

The Lecompton Historical Society will be participating with the other Historical Societies in Douglas County in a quilt display in the Watkins Museum at Lawrence in April. This will be an opportunity for people of this area to display their quilts. If you have a quilt you would like to have displayed please contact a Lecompton Historical Society member for further information.

The Lecompton High School Alumni Reunion will be held May 28th. Officers this year are: Earl Kasson, President; Jerry Schmitt, Vice President; and Bonnie Decker Anderson, Secretary-Treasurer. This could be one of the most important reunions in recent memory.

Don't forget Territorial Day will be June 25th. Don Willis is Chairman and would like any suggestions for that special day.

A recent new member of the Lecompton Historical Society is Mrs. Sandra Lane Johnson of Dixmont Maine. Mrs. Johnson is the Great Granddaughter of James L. Lane. It is great to have a member of the Lane family as a member of our society.

Paul Bahnmaier

The Lecompton Sun-March 30, 1894

Rather a novel marriage occurred last Sunday at Big Springs, James Northrop of Dover and Miss Gertie Nichols of Big Springs drove up to the door of Justice Stone and without getting out of the buggy were made one by the aforesaid justice. Time was the quickest on the record of Mr. Stone. It was as effective as the whole afternoon had been consumed by the doings.

The Lecompton Sun-November 11, 1904

There was a man by the name of Joe Walter
His head got in a whirl, about a young girl;
So he went to her mother and sought her;
And got him a wife, for the rest of his life;
And now they have a new daughter.

Taken from The Lecompton Sun-Friday, April 11, 1902

ARBOR DAY

Last Friday was Arbor Day and there was more trees set out than for several years previous. A row of trees were set along the west side of Elmore street. The public schools took the most lively interest in the planting of memorial trees, that was ever manifested in the city. The trees were planted for Longfellow, McKinley, Roosevelt, Washington, Columbus and Hawthorn. The board planted a tree in memory of Mr. J. Ferris. If the trees all grow as we hope they will. We will, in a few years, have nothing to do on arbor day but rest and recount the great deeds of our illustrious citizens who assisted in the observance of arbor day, 1902.

The Lecompton Sun--Thursday, January 10, 1918

"WHO IS WHO"

Tuesday, a daughter was born to Mr. and Mrs. Ray Morriss. As Mr. Morriss' brother married Mrs. Morriss' mother, the baby's birth makes a great mix-up in relationships. Which as we figure them make;

Otis Morriss grandfather to the baby; uncle to the baby; father of the baby's mother; brother to the father; husband of the grandmother; and brother-in-law of the mother.

Ray Morriss is the baby's father; is the uncle's brother; son-in-law of the baby's grandfather; son-in-law to his own brother; brother-in-law to the grandmother; husband of the mother.

Mrs. Ray Morriss is the mother of the baby; wife of the father; daughter of the grandmother; sister-in-law of the grandfather; stepdaughter to the grandfather; stepdaughter to her own mother; sister-in-law of her own mother. Mrs. Otis Morriss is the grandmother, is the baby's aunt; mother of the baby's mother; is sister-in-law of the baby's father.

The Lecompton Sun-Friday, November 8, 1907 TO ARREST SWEARERS

The council Monday night instructed the city marshal to arrest everyone heard swearing on the streets. This is a good thing. Sensitive people are unable to pass along the streets at night without being shocked at the language heard. Marshal Scott says he is going to enforce the order to the letter.

The Lecompton Sun-Friday, March 20, 1908

In a recent conversation with Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Leamer they told The SUN that when they came here in 1856, there were only two trees in sight, one was the large elm that stands in their pasture and the other was near where Mr. Hood lives. The surrounding hills were covered with a thick growth of hazel brush.

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 is not correct as shown on this copy of your Bald Eagle, please let us know.

The Lecompton Sun-Friday, September 3, 1909 Those Here 32 Years Ago

The death of Captain Vincent, Sunday, brot the question to the SUN of how many of the married people of Lecompton and vicinity are here now that were here when the editor of the SUN came here thirty-two years ago. Those that he can recall are: Mr. and Mrs. William Leamer, Mr. and Mrs. George W. Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Charles McClanahan, Prof. N. B. Bartlett, Mrs. M. M. Iliff, Mr. and Mrs. George W. Smith, Mrs. Ellen Ferris, Mr. and Mrs. Alex Glenn, Mrs. Virginia McCall, Mrs. Thos. Hartup, Mr. and Mrs. Fran D. Hoad, Mr. and Mrs. E. P. Harris, Mrs. J. G. McClanahan, Mrs. J. G. Heise, Mrs. William Brown, Mrs. John Brown, Mr. and Mrs. William Henry, Mrs. R. E. Boothe, Mr. and Mrs. George W. Duncan, Mrs. Columbia Cook, Dr. and Mrs. Lewis, Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Smith, Mr. J. B. Cunningham, Mr. and Mrs. W. R. McCarty, Mrs. Pat Cummings, Mr. W. B. Harris, Mrs. J. C. Vincent, Mr. William Young, Mrs. Jane Fitzpatrick, Mr. and Mrs. B. F. Moore and Mrs. Sulzen.

Again, we want to thank all who have either renewed their membership or have joined since we mailed out our last Bald Eagle in December. We appreciate your support of our Society and the donations made to help keep our beautiful Lane University Museum operating.

Again, we are proud to add the following names to our Life Membership list.

Joe & Ruth (King) Stauffer	Walter B. & Ibba (Saylor) Stauffer
Janice M. (Fewins) Rake	Minnie (Lutz) Sutton
David & Margaret (Baughman) Noe	Betty Jo Charlton
George & Arloene (DeKat) Simmons	Sara (Slavens) Walter
Faye (Boose) Ayers	Doris (Hiatt) Matney
Doris (Holloway) Sindt	Hazel B. (Bertschinger) McClanahan
Dwight C. Atkinson	Jimmy L. Johnson
Bill & Marcella (Kreipe) Anderson	

Also, we would like to make note that we have over 400 members, 158 being Life members. We too, would like to mention how proud we are of our four young members who have taken an interest in preserving the Lecompton History. They are as follows:

Cheri McCune	Richie Wingfield
Elizabeth Long	Tricia Spencer

Iona Spencer--Membership Chairman

We would like to also mention the passing of the following:

Fred Wilson November 26, 1982 and Mary (LaRue) Ross November 22, 1982

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