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# BALD EAGLE

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# BACD



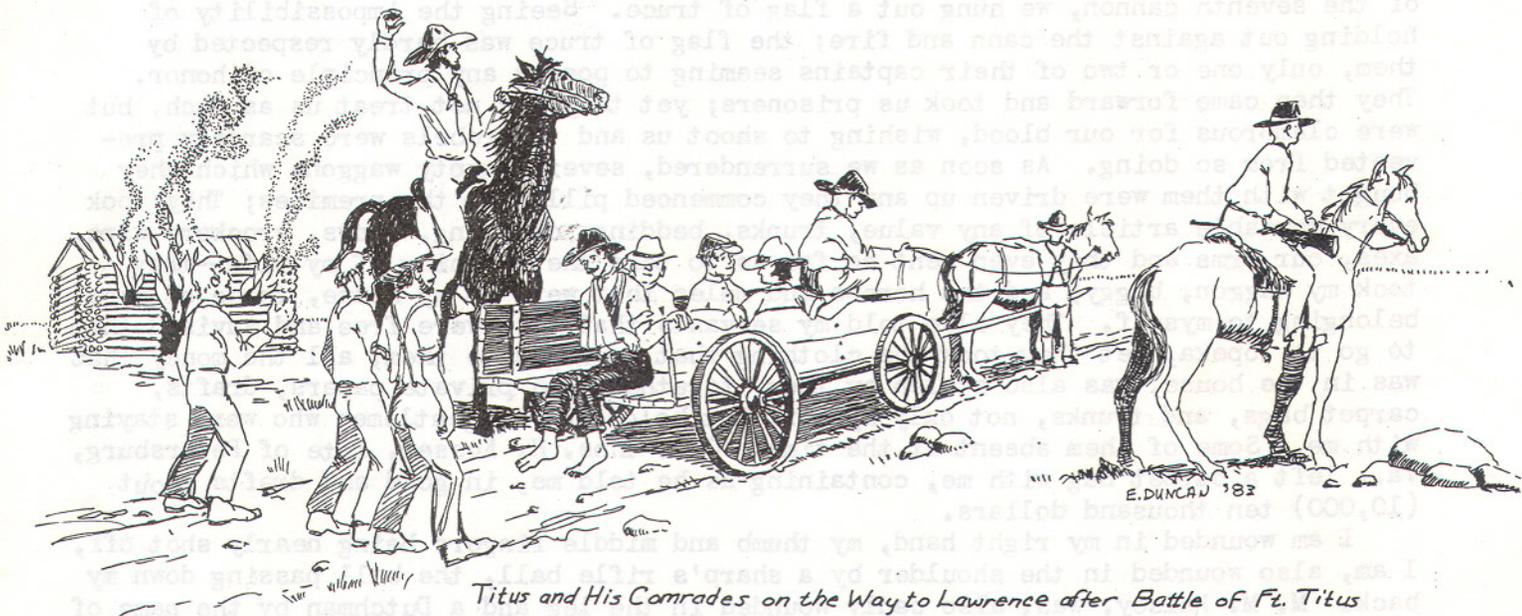
# EABCE

VOL. 9 NO. 3

LECOMPTON, KANSAS

FALL

1983



*Titus and His Comrades on the Way to Lawrence after Battle of Ft. Titus*

## BATTLE OF FORT TITUS: AN EYE WITNESS ACCOUNT

It is frustrating for Lecomptonians who are knowledgeable about the early history of our state, to read the available histories of Kansas. Rarely is Lecompton mentioned and if it is, only in a negative way. Recently, Raymond Gieseman of Washington, D. C. presented to the Lecompton Historical Society, two rolls of Micro-film he made of materials concerning early Lecompton, that he had found in the Library of Congress. Among them were depositions written by Colonel Titus, and David Kendall, telling how the free-state hordes, attacked Titus, destroyed his home and took him and his friends prisoner. Col. Titus was somewhat of a "soldier of fortune," he loved a battle, and came to Kansas in the mid 1850's to take part in the pro-slavery—anti-slavery contests. At the time of the attack, he lived in a cabin by a small stream south of town on what was later known as the Nace farm. This incident took place in 1856 and was later known as the "Battle of Fort Titus". The depositions give a good description of the skirmish. The spelling and punctuation are copied exactly as found, no corrections were made.

Douglas County  
Kansas Territory

H. T. Titus; of lawful age, being produced, and sworn, states as follows: On Saturday morning the 16th of August about 5 1/2 o'clock I was attacked at my residence about a mile and a half from Lecompton by about five or six hundred men who were led by several captains, by name Capt. Walker, Harvey, Chaw, Craw Cutler, and others; names not known. The most of these men were those sent in by Jas. H. Lane for the ostensible purpose of wiping out the pro-slavery party and taking possession of the Territory by force of arms. They were armed with Sharp's rifles, Colts repeaters, and bowie knives, abt the time of the attack, I had thirteen men including myself, who had been camped around my residence for several weeks, the most of them young men who had been engaged at their respective homes in clerking, and were waiting for business to open, so as to obtain employment. We fought them in defence of our lives and property, for about an hour and a half when they planted their cannon and fired seven times, the balls going through and through the house, shattering everything in their passage. They, also loaded a waggon with hay, ran it against the house and were about to fire it so as to burn us out. At the firing of the seventh cannon, we hung out a flag of truce. Seeing the impossibility of holding out against the cann and fire; the flag of truce was hardly respected by them, only one or two of their captains seeming to posses any principle of honor. They then came forward and took us prisoners; yet they did not treat us as such, but were clamorous for our blood, wishing to shoot us and the rebels were scarcely prevented from so doing. As soon as we surrendered, several empty waggons which they bought with them were driven up and they commenced pillaging the premises; They took every moveable article of any value, trunks, bedding, clothing, plows, crockery ware, axes, our arms and they even went so far as to take the clothing of my wife--they took my waggon, buggy, and the horses and mules that were at my house, three of them belonging to myself. They also told my servants that they were free and advised them to go to Topeka, yet they took the clothing that belonged to them; all the money that was in the house, was also stolen by them, together with private papers, drafts, carpet bags, and trunks, not only my own, but belonging to gentlemen who were staying with me. Some of them absent at the time. Col. Thos. H. Kosser, late of Petersburg, Va., left a carpet bag with me, containing as he told me, in gold and drafts about (10,000) ten thousand dollars.

I am wounded in my right hand, my thumb and middle fingers being nearly shot off, I am, also wounded in the shoulder by a sharp's rifle ball, the ball passing down my back. M. M. Halsey, was, also badly wounded in the leg and a Dutchman by the name of F. Becker was shot dead, as he run from the camp to the house. We were placed in a waggon and conveyed to Lawrence, wounded, as I was barefooted, my shirt and pants being my only clothing. While in Lawrence we were continually threatened by the rebels with hanging, shooting and &c. and they had to place a company in the town to protect us from the rebels who had sworn and were clamorous for our blood. Indeed, when we were exchanged, it was with considerable difficulty, that their Captain Walker escorted us out of town without violence to our lives. We were subjected to every possible threats, though some treated us with kindness.

Learning that, the excuse they have for the attack upon my residence, is that I burned the house of one Smith, I need only for the facts in the case refer to the affidavit of M. H. Dozier, accompanying this. This man Smith had voluntarily left his claim some months ago, when I was jumped by a citizen of Lecomton who never took possession of it. When Mr. Dozier in the latter part of July entered upon it. So far as their fabrications about the burning of the house, or horse stealing by myself are concerned, they are false, as can be substantiated by the testimony of many respectable and responsible citizens. The fact that five or six hundred men attacked me in my residence with only thirteen men is proof positive that I was made a victim to their determination to wipe out the pro-slavery men in the Territory; together with the

depredations committed by them as stated above. It having often been affirmed by the opposite party that I am a Southern man by birth, I state that I was born and raised in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania and did not remove to the South till some years after I was twenty-one. While I was in the hands of the enemy, Capt. Walker informed me that at first they did not intend to attack me, but Lecompton; that such was their original design, but knowing that I was at home and had gone the night before with a small party to the assistance of Maj. Treadwell, they determined to make me a victim first and then march to Lecompton.

H. T. Titus

Sworn and subscribed to before me a Justice  
of Peace in and for Douglas County, Kansas  
Territory this 25th day of August A. D. 1856  
Robt B. Nelson, J. P.

\*\*\*\*\*

Douglas County  
Kansas Territory

Personally appeared before me. R. B. Nelson, a Justice of the Peace, in and for the County afore said, and on this 23d day of August, 1856, David Kendall, who being duly sworn, departh and says that on the morning of the 17th of August, 1856, I was called upon by Governor Shannon to carry a dispatch from him to Major Sedgewick of the U. S. Army. I, immediately mounted a horse and started with the dispatch with as much expedition as possible. I got within half a mile (or near that distance) of the Major's Camp, when I was intercepted by three men on horseback, who ordered me to halt, which I did. They then asked me where I lived; I, told them at Lecompton. They then asked me where I was going? I answered that I was bearer of a dispatch from Governor Shannon, to Maj. Sedgewick. Upon learning this they ordered me to dismount and asked for my papers and arms. I requested to be allowed to keep them as they would be of no value to them and were of importance to me. As to, arms, I had none. They then ordered me to mount my horse and go with them. I asked them where they were going, but they would not answer. I asked their names, as also their Captains name. They would not answer any questions that I propounded in any manner at all satisfactory. In passing by B. S. Hancock's house, he came out and said to my captain "you have got one of the damned scoundrels, hold on to him," and upon nearing the road leading from the California Road to Lecompton, I discovered large bodies of men in waggons, on foot and horseback. They proceeded with me down the road, until we came to Mr. Todhunter's field. There were large quantities of men and waggons standing there. I also saw number of men standing in different places near Col. Titus house. I, also observed the house to be on fire, and learned that the Col. and men had surrendered. Upon learning this the principal part of the men began to move down towards the house, amongst them myself and captors, whilst going, I was frequently greeted with the remarks that they would hang me or shoot me, or some other equally unpleasant remark. When we reached the house, it was completely enveloped in flames, whilst we were halted I noticed some of the men carrying off a dead man from the house that was burning. I, also saw number of them carrying off goods which I had good reason to believe were the property of Col. Titus. Amongst the goods, was a clock, a landscape painting, bed clothes, trunks, and I, also saw one man with a shawl which I supposed belonged to Col. Titus lady. They also took away five horses, one carriage and harness, all belonging to Col. Titus. Col. Titus and the men who assisted him in defending his house, were placed in waggons with the exception of six or eight, who were ordered to foot it, myself among them. They took my horse, or the horse that I was riding, which belonged to an old gentleman who happened to be in Lecompton at the time. I have not seen or heard of the horse since. When we reached Lawrence, they placed us in the basement of the building in which the "Herald of Freedom," was printed with the exception of Col. Titus and M. M. Halsey, both of whom were severely wounded in defending the Col-

onel's house. While we were prisoners, they treated us gentlemanly and courtiously.

I requested Capt. Walker one of the leaders of the band and also Col. Eldridge to release me, as I was not taken fighting against the party. I particularly requested them to enter into an investigation of my case, all of which requests, they refused to grant, but kept me until all the balance were released.

David Kendall

Sworn and subscribed before me, a Justice of Peace in and for Douglas County, K. T. this 23rd day of August 1856.

R. B. Nelson, J. P.

### THE PRIDE OF LECOMPTON

This bridge was built during the years 1898 and 1899 at a cost of between \$14,000 and \$15,000. It is said to be the highest and the longest bridge in the state of Kansas and of course the people of Lecompton are proud of this distinction and are always pleased to speak of "our bridge." It is a steel bridge and, well put together, able to withstand the highest floods. It opens up the fertile valley north of the river to us and brings the two communities together.

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

### THE WATERMELON FEAST A SUCCESS

(Taken from the Lecompton Sun: September 1, 1911)

The watermelon feast given Saturday by the business men, in place of the usual harvest home picnic, was a great success.

It is a safe estimate that there were more than a thousand people who came to partake of the melons and to have a social afternoon. There were many present from Lawrence, Topeka, Perry and surrounding towns.

Three hundred home grown melons were served to the crowd by the following young ladies; Misses Ella Brass, Beulah Edmonds, Irene Hoffsommer, Minnie Walter, Rosie Nuffer, Gladys Deskins and Jessie Jackson.

Clinton and Lecompton played a close and exciting game of ball on the ground back of the Chapel, which the home team won by the close score of 11 to 20.

### HARVEST HOME PICNIC

(Taken from the Lecompton Sun: September 1, 1927)

August 25 and 26 were two days seemingly set apart by some one who had more power than the three men who set the day of Aug. 25 and 26 for our Annual Harvest Home Picnic for the Tuesday before the picnic it rained, and the next day, well it just rained most all day. But why worry about the weather for it couldn't have been better than Thursday and Friday.

The exhibits were all good and a goodly lot of things were exhibited.

The ball games were very interesting each day. Thursday Clinton played the Grantville team and was defeated. After the game two junior league teams from Lawrence played a very interesting game.

The Grand March given by Margery Dillon, Pauline Baughman, Garnett Messenheimer, Ilene Glenn, Norma Jane McClanahan, Ida May James, Violet May Dunn, Margaret Gibbons, Homer McClanahan, Donald Michael, directed by E. J. Mill, the music was furnished by Tom Dick and Martha James, was a feature of the first evening.

The second day Perry played Belvoir and defeated them. After this game the base-

ball fans were entertained by another junior league game one team from Topeka and the other from Lawrence.

The Lawrence Chamber of Commerce misunderstood the dates somehow or other and failed to appear with their entertainment for the first night, so everything fell back for local talent. The second night the Lawrence people gave us a short entertainment then the Topeka Merchants Association took charge.

The boys industrial school band gave excellent music the second day.

The stands all did a pretty good business. The lunch stand served 72 chicken dinners besides taking care of their short order trade.

There were visitors from far and wide, glad to get back again and see the jolly, enthusiastic, progressive people of Lecompton and the neighboring districts.

Next year with the same three efficient men, R. M. Gray, Geo. F. Bahmaier and Mack Watts to handle things, we will have a better and bigger picnic than ever before. There are only about 358 days left. Let's keep working.

#### HARVEST HOME PICNIC'S

(Taken from the Lecompton Sun: September 5, 1929)  
Lecompton Fair

The Lecompton Fair was enjoyed two nice sunshiny days by a great number of people from far and near. Both stands were well patronized the refreshments by the Fair Association and the ladies of the Rebekah lodge.

The entertainments and ball games were good. Miss Agnes White was exceptionally good as a reader and entertainer. Prizes were given as follows: To the youngest person on the grounds, Juanita Morris; person coming the farthest, E. R. Elkins, Glendale, Calif.; couple most recently married, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Richards; couple married the longest, Mr. and Mrs. A. F. Kerns, Lawrence.

Friday was home-coming day for former Lane University students. There were 33 registered. An old picture, between 35 and 40 years old, and a group picture of the Athenian and Calliopean Literary Societies were placed on a table with the book and names and many interesting remarks were made. Lane University was moved away in 1903. The officers of the association certainly deserve praise for the success of the fair.

## *President's Notes*

The second season for Lane University Museum is currently under way, and it certainly is gratifying to see people coming for a second and third time to visit the museum. As of August 1st, we have had visitors from one foreign country, 24 states and 55 different cities in Kansas. Lane Museum is creating lots of interest in Lecompton - a most historic city. We are still amazed at the number of phone calls inquiring as to the location of Lecompton and we are happy to furnish directions as we feel the public is becoming more aware of the historical significance of the Lecompton area.

Recent visitors to Lane Museum were Douglas County Commissioners Beverly Bradley, Nancy Hiebert and Bob Neis. We very much appreciate their interest and support of this museum and their many kind words were exhilarating for those who were present for their visit. Please remember that each of you from this area, and reaching into all the 50 states, have made this museum a reality. Without your interest and support this project could never have been accomplished, and to each of you we will forever be grateful for your loyalty. We only wish you could be present and hear the various complimentary remarks about the displays and the building.

Many items have been added to our displays during the last three months, as either donations or on loan. These items include the following: An antique horse drawn sleigh (refinished by Paul Garber), also framed maps of the United States from Paul and Neva Garber; Fireplace equipment, kitchen pump and other antique yard tools by Mae Holderman; Cream separator by Dick Hubert; Cylinder desk by Sara Walter; Bear hair-covered gloves and raccoon hat by Bill and Marcella Anderson; Handmade clock for the Chapel by Carol Springer; Cylinder records and WW II tokens by Iona Spencer; 1893 Lane University Yearbook by Mrs. Ray Saylor; Cut glass by Ione Paslay; Cut glass by Susie Richardson; Antique push lawnmower by Wayne and Bobbie Kellum; Two kerosene lamps by David and Darlene Paslay; Fossil, a Broadaxe Class picture and Saw set by Robert Walter; a Santa Fe Locomotive Bell from the Santa Fe Railway Company (with the help of Wilbur Hildenbrand); Lantern used in Lecompton Depot given by Maybelle Slavens Hall; Vinegar cruets and butter dishes by Opal Goodrick; Class picture and Class ring by Henrietta Anderson; Cut glass and pendants by Julia Springer; Vinegar cruets and dishes by Dorothy Shaner; Pictures and quilt made by Sarah Temby Truan before 1868 given by Mrs. Grace B. Brasher and the family of Rev. and Mrs. F. W. Bertschinger; a friendship quilt made by the ladies of Greenwood Valley for Virginia Coleman Smith, who taught school there; a log cabin quilt made by Mary McClanahan Brikley (Great Aunt of Roberta McClanahan French), also pictures from Roberta French; a Tablecloth by Helen Norwood; Tobacco cutter from Wilma Fleming; a Quilt made by Emily Browning, grandmother of Opal Goodrick and Mary Nelle Lasswell; Pictures from Elizabeth Day Jefferson; Pictures from Donald Baughman; a Lard press and old iron boiler from Arloene and George Simmons; a unique wooden drainpipe by Norbert "Swede" Hershell; Pictures by Dorothy Baughman; a wood tooth rake from the Rebekah Lodge; Pictures from Virginia Rainbolt; Books from Evelyn Willis; Doll by Cynthia Shepherd; Clothing from Ralph and Mae Shepherd; Clothing from Louis Eyth; Clothing from Edison Weston; Antique cake plate and Sewing rocker by Henrietta Slusser; Old Sewing machine and sock darner by Mrs. Howard Hill; Fireplace from the home of Arthur Capper was given by Mr. and Mrs. Donald Pratton with the help of Lois Hildenbrand Conley (to be installed soon).

Items such as those listed above are what has helped make Lane University one of the best museums in Kansas, and we thank everyone for remembering Lane when you have items and momentos to add to the displays!

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The Lecompton Historical Society meets the second Thursday of each month with a covered dish dinner at 6:30 P.M. followed with a business meeting and program at 7:30 P.M. The next meetings will be: Sept. 8th; Oct. 13th; Nov. 10th and Dec. 8th. Please circle these dates on your calendar and plan on attending. If you are in this area, you will be most welcome at any of these meetings.

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The Library is open the first and third Wednesday of each month from 1 to 3 P.M. Plan to visit and browse through the Library, or just spend the afternoon visiting with our Librarians Sara Walter, Lydia Long and Elda Flowers.

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The Lecompton Historical Society has installed a directional sign, made by Draque Carver, at the intersection of U.S. Highway 40 and the Lecompton Road 1029. Thanks to Jason Dexter, Everet Dexter, Daryl Colton, George Simmons, David Paslay, Tom Goodrick, Bill Anderson and Paul Bahmaier for installing the sign. A new floor on the west porch at Lane was recently completed by David Paslay and Forest Springer. Shrubs have been placed by the historical signs at the east and west entrance, which has certainly helped improve those areas. Information placques†

have been installed on the cornerstones located on the west side of the building.

Ray Geisman from Washington D.C. visited Lane and donated two rolls of micro-film to the museum. He has researched many articles about Lecompton from the different archives in Washington D.C. Some of the articles appear in this issue, and we appreciate his interest in Lecompton.

Iona Spencer is publishing a book of information about the cemeteries at Lecompton and also the two located in Big Springs. If you have information, stories or obituaries about individuals buried in any of these locations, please let her hear from you in the near future.

The ice cream social was a success! Thanks to Maxine Dark for organizing the event and to each of you for donating cakes, ice cream and volunteering your time at Lane University and helping with the social. Your efforts make things happen that would not be possible otherwise.

The Lecompton Historical Society participated in sharing a booth at the Douglas County Fair. We sold our souvenirs and generated publicity for the museum. Thanks for all the help at this activity.

Another lovely wedding at Lane: Burke Allen Wood, son of Mr. and Mrs. Bob Wood, Lecompton, and Susan Alana Nichols, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Nichols, Lecompton, were united in marriage with a beautiful ceremony in Lane Chapel on July 27th. Rev. Eugene Seely presided at the service.

Plans are being made for a visit from our United States Senator Nancy Kassebaum sometime in August. It will be an area-wide meeting at which everyone will have an opportunity to ask questions and participate.

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

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