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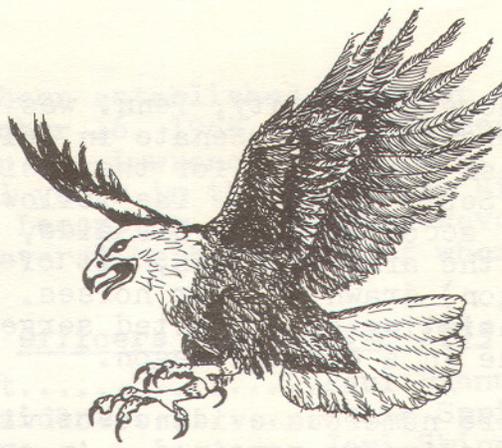
# **BALD EAGLE**

**Volume Eleven, Issue Number 1**

Originally Published in Lecompton, Kansas : Spring 1985  
Digitally Archived August 2006



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VOL. 11 NO. 1

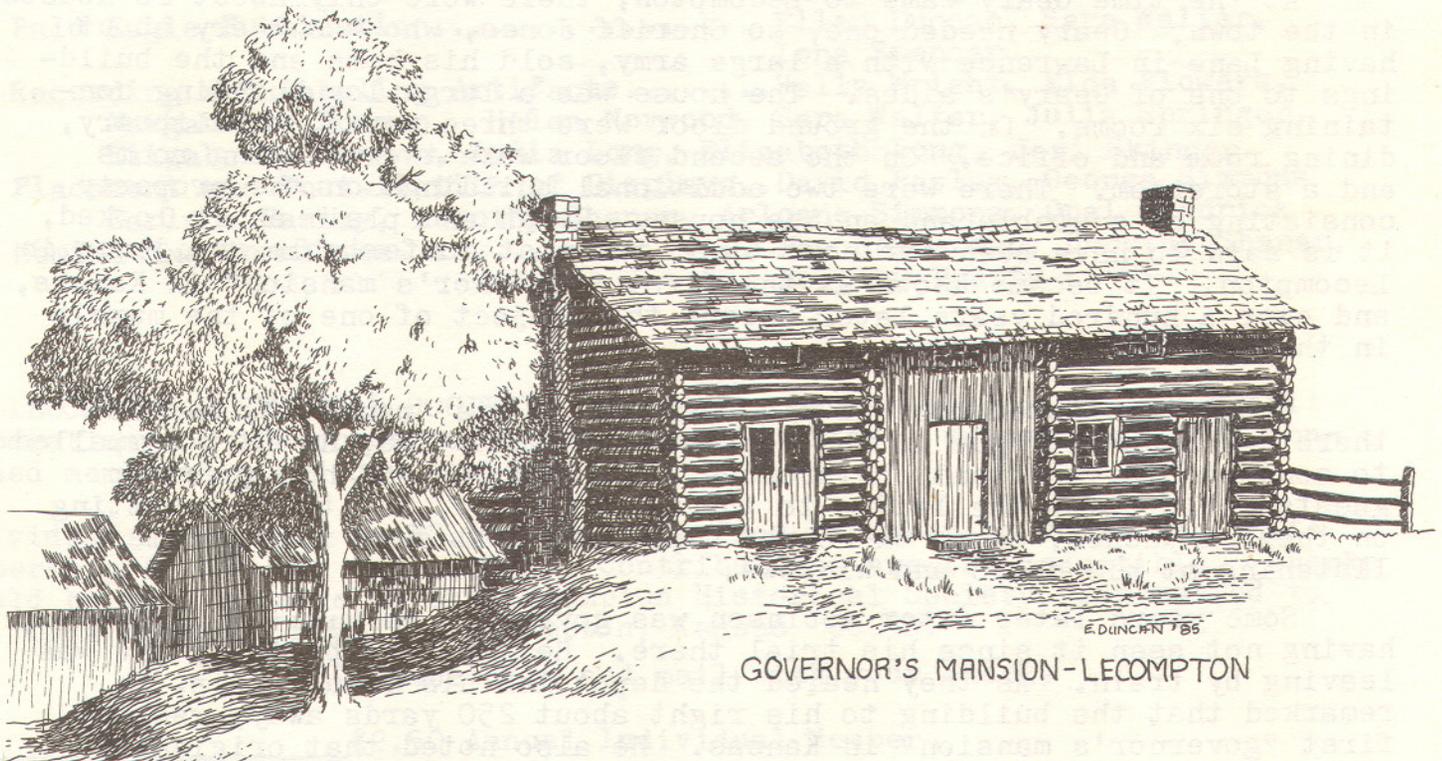
LECOMPTON, KANSAS

SPRING

1985

## GEARY AND THE "GOVERNOR'S MANSION"

Congress had hoped to end the slave debates when it passed the Kansas-Nebraska Bill in 1854, however the debates in those bodies became more bitter. The climax came when Charles Sumner, a Massachusetts senator, delivered an address in the Senate on "The Crime Against Kansas", and frequently referred to what was happening in Lecompton, aiming his tirade against Senator A. P. Butler. A nephew of Butler attacked Sumner on the floor of the Senate, beating him with a gold headed cane, so that he was seriously injured.



GOVERNOR'S MANSION-LECOMPTON

Charles Robinson was known to be in jail in Lecompton for what the North felt was unjust reasons. The Kansas Territorial militia under Governor Shannon was, according to various sources, attacking all free state people. The territory of Kansas appeared to be completely out of control. As a result, President Pierce was urged to remove Shannon from office and appoint a new territorial governor.

John W. Geary of Westmoreland County, Penn. was selected for that post with the unanimous approval of the Senate in July 1856. His qualities of firmness and fairness suited him for the position. He arrived at Fort Leavenworth, K.T., Sept. 9, 1856. The following day he started for Lecompton, the capital, accompanied by his aide, John Gihon, three friends and Lieut. Dunn of the army dragoons, all of whom rode in an ambulance (army covered wagon) drawn by four horses. The lieutenant was in command of an escort consisting of a mounted sergeant of the dragoons and six infantrymen who rode in a covered wagon.

Along the way there were numerous evidences of violence, many houses had been destroyed and only chimneys remained. An occasional rider could be seen, but he would hurriedly scurry to cover. They finally reached the north side of the Kansas river, across from Lecompton. "Ferriage" was difficult due to low water, so it was some hours before the south shore was reached. An armed and mounted sentinel guarded the Lecompton landing area, and he demanded to know who they were. They gave their credentials and were soon allowed to pass on.

The only hotel in the town was reached about eleven p.m. There Geary was met by Secretary Woodson, ex-Judge Elmore and other prominent citizens. The town was in an uproar due to a recent visit by James Lane and 500 men who had come to rescue Robinson and the other treason prisoners. The Cavalry from Camp Sackett had persuaded them to leave, but there was still great apprehension that he might return.

At the time Geary came to Lecompton, there were only about 20 houses in the town. Geary needed one, so Sheriff Jones, who was leery about having Lane in Lawrence with a large army, sold his home and the buildings to one of Geary's aides. The house was a large log building containing six rooms. On the ground floor were three rooms, the library, dining room and office. On the second floor were two sleeping rooms and a storeroom. There were two additional buildings on the property consisting of a stable and an ice house. Rough and plain as it looked, it is said to have been for some time, the most comfortable residence in Lecompton. It became known as the first "governor's mansion" in Kansas, and over a hundred years later became the subject of one of the murals in the Capitol.

Geary transacted most of his business in his "mansion", and as there was much intrigue in the territory at that time, he felt compelled to conduct his important conferences upstairs. He and his guest or guests would climb the ladder to the second floor, and there squatting on their haunches, carry on secret diplomacy well away from people listening at his doors and windows.

Some years later after Robinson was governor, he visited Lecompton, having not seen it since his trial there. He had come by train and was leaving by train. As they neared the depot for his return trip, he remarked that the building to his right about 250 yards away, was the first "governor's mansion" in Kansas. He also noted that originally it had been a log building, but that since then, someone had added a room built of stone, that greatly increased its size.

On May 8, 1859, Lewis Henry Morgan, a noted ethnologist, visited Kansas. He traveled by side-wheeler up the Kansas river, stopping along the way to examine the flora and fauna of the area, but his main interest was the study of the lives of the Indians. In his journal which he kept, he makes this observation:

## GRADUATES FOR THE YEAR OF 1925

Ruth Baughman, Elton Dark, Harold Foree, Jennie Grauel, Wilbur Hildenbrand, Marguerite McCall, Warren McCall, Flossie McRae, Earl Maust, Ruth Nace, Marie Paslay, Julia Shirck, Maybelle "Duggie" Slavens, Sara Dummer.

### ALUMNI BANQUET

May 25, 1925

The Seniors of 1925 were pleasantly entertained Saturday evening by the Alumni Association at the I. O. O. F. Hall. The hall was decorated in green and white crepe paper with green and white candles on the tables. The year "25" was placed above the east door in colored electric light bulbs. There were 58 present, of which 12 were Seniors. All the class of '25 was present except Warren McCall. A three-course banquet was served by the U. B. Ladies' Aid, consisting of pear cocktail, chicken fricasee, potatoes on half shell, peas in timbales, winter salad, Parkerhouse rolls, high school special, coffee, mints.

William Richards was toastmaster and Mary Nace welcomed the call of '25, to which Maybelle Slavens responded. Laura Taylor played a piano solo. The toast, "Perpendiculars and Horizontal," was discussed by Zella Iliff, and Curtis Sehon handled "Hot Numbers" with asbestos gloves. Clarence Smith foretold the "Future of the Organization." The Alumni Quarette rendered a selection.

Officers elected for the following year are: William Richards, President, Julia Shirck, secretary and treasurer; Clarence Dark, advisor.

Those present from out-of-town were: Dena Baughman, Alice Smith, Phillip Sehon, Madge Rothberger, Winter Ingham, Darryl McCall, Richard Richards, Lenora Schroyer, Helen Hunter, Laura Taylor, Frank Taylor, Irene Simmons, Kathryn Robinson, Gladys Winter and Ruth Fager.

By Iona Spencer

## *Presidential Notes!*

The fourth busy and exciting year at Lane University Museum is about to begin. Some new displays are being planned, including some recently acquired historical objects. We are happy that groups who do tour Lane Museum are always glad they took the time to visit one of the outstanding museums in Kansas. If you know of a club or group interested in such a tour, feel free to contact Sara Walter or Julia Springer.

The Lecompton Historical Society participated in the Tour and Travel Show in Topeka on January 12, 13 and 14. We were, by far, the smallest city represented at the Show, but our "Eisenhower Wedding" display drew many interesting comments. This event not only promoted our history and museum but does help the City of Lecompton receive recognition. We did find that although many people have visited our community, there are still a lot of folks who have absolutely no idea where to locate Lecompton. Name identity will never come easy because of our location, but with the continued effort of each of you, we are making great strides toward our goal of letting people know where we are. Thanks to Karen and Rich McConnell, Daryl and Joyce Colton, Karen and Malcom Smith, Jason and Avrill Dexter, Donna and Charles Vausbinder, David and Darlene Paslay, George and Arloene Simmons, Doris Matney, Wilma Tibbs, Iona Spencer, Dorothy Shaner and Opal Goodrick for their help in making this a successful event again this year.

Ray Gieseeman, from Washington, D.C., recently visited the museum and presented us with nearly 30 Congressional speeches (in their original covers) about Lecompton and the Lecompton Constitution. These addresses by different U.S. Senators and Representatives are only a small sample of the volumes

of material about Lecompton available for reading in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. It is another example of our rich, historic heritage. Our history should not take a back seat to any place in America'

We have also received a lock box from Raymond Nichols which belonged to his father, which was kept in the vault and used by him when he did his banking at The Lecompton State Bank. Dan Cain has given a picture of Mr. and Mrs. John Day, which belonged to his mother, Mabeline Belcher Cain. We do appreciate these items and your interest and concern in the Lane University Museum.

The December issue of the Kanhistique contained the article from a recent "Bald Eagle" about the Lecompton Ferries. The editor of that publication has asked permission to use the story of the Todhunter Family which appeared in the last issue of the "Bald Eagle". They also expressed that they would like to do a pictorial story using our brochure. Thanks to our editor and illustrator, Ellen Duncan; historical writer, Sara Walter; and geneological writer, Iona Spencer. These women do an outstanding job that takes a considerable amount of time to produce the finished product, and it is an honor for these articles to be featured in the Kanhistique, a publication of state-wide renown.

David Paslay designed and constructed a six-foot lighted star which was placed on the roof at Lane University during the Christmas Season. It was a terrific idea and really lit-up the entrance to Lecompton. A beautiful native 12-foot Christmas tree found on the Charlie Paslay farm, was decorated and placed in the Chapel for our annual Christmas picture. Thanks to Charlie and Ione for the tree and to Dorothy Shaner, George and Arloene Simmons, Kevin Johnson, Robert Shaner, Opal Goodrick, Eddie Teets, Ralph Davis and David and Darlene Paslay for helping decorate it. The men in this group also moved the beautiful console piano, which was given to Lane Museum from the Raymond Ice Memorial Fund, up the stairs to the Chapel.

We sadly report the death of --

George Marvin Everett, passed away Wednesday, January 16th, at Virginia Beach, Virginia. He was born December 10, 1917 in Williamstown, Kansas, the son of Cleve and Gertrude Masters Everett. Marvin taught auto-mechanics in the Norfolk School System. He was a Deacon in the Kempsville Virginia Baptist Church, and was a Boy Scout leader for many years. He was a World War II U. S. Navy veteran. He was a member of the Lecompton Historical Society and had given several items pertaining to Lecompton which he had located in Virginia. He is survived by his wife, Deanie; two daughters, Onella Hoggard and Catheline Biggs; three sons, James, Robert and George, all of Virginia. Also surviving is a sister, Mae Holderman and a brother, Wilbur; seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. A memorial fund was established in his honor at the Lane University Museum.

Don't forget Territorial Day, June 29th. Connie Robertson has agreed to head the Committee, and Evelyn Willis will be Secretary-Treasurer. We can count on them to make it another great celebration this year.

Future Lecompton Historical Society meetings will be March 11th, April 11th and May 9th. Remember that the covered dish dinner starts at 6:30 with the meeting beginning at 7:30. We hope to see you at some of these meetings.



Telephone Callers.....Ione Paslay, Darlene Paslay,  
Doris Matney, Wilma Tibbs, Lydia Long, Julia Springer, Arolene  
Simmons, Mary Nelle Lasswell

LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

I want to thank all who have renewed their memberships. If you have not renewed your membership, please do so as soon as possible, as we do not want you to miss a single copy of our newsletter. I want to especially thank the following for becoming life members. Also to thank those who have made memorial contributions in memory of their loved ones, who will be remembers by many of their friends and relatives.

- Susan "Sue" (Kropp) Henry--This life membership was given to Sue for her Christmas present in memory of her husband Robert "Bob" Henry, by his parents Betty (Henry) and Francis Kennedy.
- Peggy (Letcher) Reppte--This life membership was given to Peggy by her grandfather Dale Bartlett
- Rosemary Bartlett--This life membership was given to Rosemary by her father-in-law, Dale Bartlett.
- Leona "Lea" (Jones) Brunkow--Lea is a granddaughter of Matt Migliario Thurman Edmonds of McLouth
- Ruth (Schroyer) Cole of Lawrence
- Eudric P. "Dick" Hubert and Barbara N. (White) Hubert of Lecompton
- Alvah John Pletcher and Verna B. (Kent) Pletcher of Rt. 1, Lecompton

MEMORIAL LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

- Otis E. Hennessey--Given by his wife, Mrs. Georgia Hennessey; son George Stephen Hennessey and son Richard; and Grace Hennessey.
  - William Benjamin Glenn and Sarah Lucinda (Wimer) Glenn--Given by their daughter Wilma (Glenn) Tibbs. This is also my grandparents.
- Iona Spencer, Membership Chr.

President - PAUL BAHNMAIER	Historical Writer - SARA WALTER
Editor - ELLEN DUNCAN	Typists - JERI SKINNER and
Geneological Writer - IONA SPENCER	OPAL GOODRICK

Published by  
The Lecompton Historical Society  
LECOMPTON, KANSAS 66050  
Address charge requested.

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