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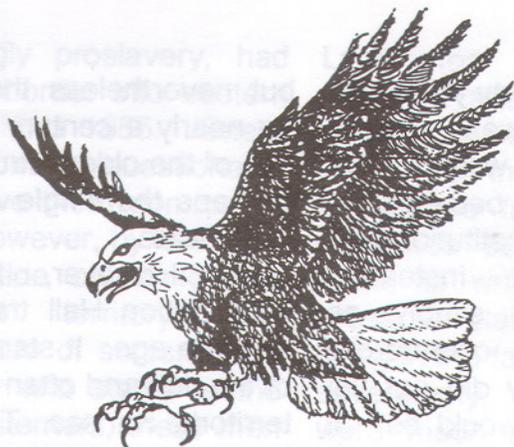
BALD EAGLE

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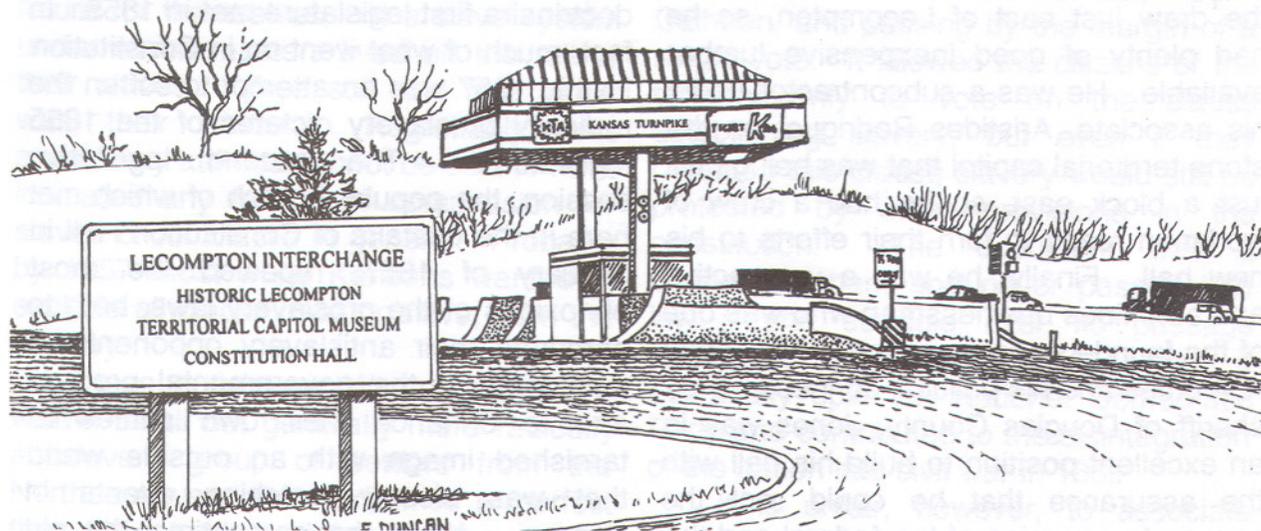


EAOC

VOL. 22, No. 4

LECOMPTON, KANSAS

WINTER 1996



LECOMPTON INTERCHANGE

November 7, 1996, was a great day for Lecompton. The comments made by various dignitaries concerning Lecompton and the importance of the Lecompton Turnpike Interchange made Lecompton residents proud to be from such a great community.

The event began with the Perry-Lecompton High school band and the Lecompton Boy Scout Troop 56 presented the flag. This was followed by a cannon salute by Kansas Civil War Re-enactors.

Sen Ben Vidricksen of Salina and Vice Chairman of the Kansas Turnpike Authority was extremely complimentary about the attendance and expressed how impressed he was with Lecompton and the pride it has for our historic community.

He said Lecompton would make the State of Kansas proud in its promotion of Lecompton. He also was most impressed with the many volunteers who are always willing to help support the city.

The crowd was estimated by the Lawrence Journal-World at between 250 and 300. Kansas Turnpike officials said this was far and away the largest gathering for such an event.

CONSTITUTION HALL: SYMBOL OF TERRITORIAL KANSAS

June 29, 1996 was the second dedication. This time involving the second floor.

The following speech was given by Dale Watts, Research Manager, Historic Sites Division, Kansas State Historical Society.

Exactly one hundred and forty years ago today this building was under construction. Of course it was not yet known as Constitution Hall because no one had any idea that a constitution one day would be written here. Instead it would have been known simply as Samuel Jones's new commercial building. Even he probably did not yet know exactly what its use would be. It was a venture into financial speculation, which was rampant on the Kansas Territorial frontier. He owned a sawmill in the draw just east of Lecompton, so he had plenty of good inexpensive lumber available. He was a subcontractor under his associate, Aristides Rodrigue, on the stone territorial capitol that was being built just a block east, so he had a crew of workmen ready to turn their efforts to his new hall. Finally, he was a very active and ambitious businessman who was one of the founders of Lecompton. With these resources and his political connections as sheriff of Douglas County, Jones was in an excellent position to build his hall with the assurance that he could rent the spaces to agencies of the federal and the territorial governments that were in the process of moving their operations to the new capital of Lecompton.

By this date in 1856 the front two-thirds of the building probably was well along toward completion, but in the middle of construction Jones decided for some reason that he would need more space. Perhaps it was then that he received a promise that the territorial assembly would meet in his building if it were built large enough to accommodate the delegates and spectators who would attend the next session in January. At any rate, the building was expanded by one-third with an addition to the rear. The haste with which this last section was built is still apparent in the flimsy construction,

but nevertheless the building has stood for nearly a century and a half, making it one of the oldest structures in Kansas and perhaps the single oldest frame building in the state.

However, the significance of Constitution Hall transcends far beyond its mere age. It stands today as a symbol of the rich and often problematic history of territorial Kansas. Too many people have viewed it as merely an annex to the earlier proslavery activities at the Shawnee Methodist Mission where the doctrinaire first legislature met in 1855. In fact, much of what went on in Constitution Hall in 1857 was an attempt to soften the radically proslavery dictates of the 1855 legislature. The second legislative session, the popular branch of which met here in the upstairs of Constitution Hall in January of 1857, repealed the most obnoxious of the proslavery laws, both to persuade their antislavery opponents to participate in the governmental process and to enhance their own somewhat tarnished image with an outside world that was closely watching events in Kansas. About the same time the old proslavery Law and Order Party held a convention here in the hall during which it transformed itself into an arm of the National Democratic Party. The extension of slavery into Kansas Territory no longer was to be the primary goal of the party, but rather it was to support the program of the national party, which revolved around the pivot of popular sovereignty under which slavery was to be defused as a national issue by allowing the people of each territory, such as Kansas, to decide for themselves whether or not to embrace slavery.

Meanwhile, downstairs in Constitution Hall slavery was being undermined by the activities in the United States land office. Settlers from nearby Missouri, generally

moderately to strongly proslavery, had swarmed across the border into eastern Kansas during 1854 and 1855. Sheer numbers, plus some questionable political practices, gave them dominance in territorial affairs. However, by late 1856 and into 1857, the tide of immigration changed and the territory was overwhelmed by a wave of settlers from the Ohio River Valley and states to the north. As typical Westerners, these men and women had no use for slavery. They favored small farms upon which individuals could build a secure financial future for themselves, not a slave system under which masters lived off the toil of their slaves. "Free soil and free labor" was their motto. Regrettably, this antislavery attitude cannot be said to have indicated any feeling of compassion for slaves or for blacks in general. Probably by 1857 most white Kansans wanted to exclude all blacks, free or slave, from the territory.

These antislavery Westerners, along with a small but generally more radically antislavery group of settlers from the Northeast, used the land office to perfect their titles to their claims. Although the land office officials were all ardent Democrats, there is no evidence that they ever allowed politics to influence their proceedings. Ely Moore, the register, and William Brindle, the receiver, sat as judge and jury in disputed cases. They were accused of being slow in arriving at their decisions, but they weighed the evidence and awarded the land according to the strength of the claimants' supporting testimony, whatever their political persuasion. Thus, the growing antislavery majority was able to build a solid economic base from which they could seize control of the territorial government.

In large part of the proceedings of the

Lecompton Constitutional Convention were an attempt to thwart the coming antislavery victory, or at least to delay the seemingly inevitable proslavery defeat. During the fall of 1857 the convention delegates struggled, right here in this room, to write a document that would preserve slavery in Kansas while not flying in the face of the doctrine of popular sovereignty, to which many delegates were much more committed than they were to slavery itself. The final result was a compromise, opposed even by the president of the convention, John Calhoun, and passing by the margin of a single vote. It allowed the citizens of the territory only to vote on the clause establishing slavery, but even if they defeated this clause slavery would still be protected by other provisions in the constitution. The document was a desperate sham and never passed into law. The struggle over its passage spread to the national level where it eventually split the National Democratic Party and contributed to the disintegration of the nation into civil war in 1861.

It is unfair, however, to associate Constitution Hall only with the unfortunate birth of the Lecompton Constitution. The convention was the last victory in Kansas Territory for the proslavery faction and it proved to be very hollow. Even before the Constitution was completed, the antislavery forces won control of the territorial legislature. They entered Constitution Hall in triumph in December of 1857 when acting governor Frederick Stanton called them into special session to devise a strategy for defeating the Constitution. Then in January of 1858 the antislavery majority dominated the third regular session of the legislature as it met in Constitution Hall to begin the dismantling of the old proslavery government. By that time slavery was

nearly dead in Kansas, although the attendant political conflict flared up sporadically, especially in the southeastern counties of the territory.

No assessment of the importance of Constitution Hall as an historic building can be complete without at least brief consideration of the people who have been involved in its history. Samuel Jones, its builder and first owner, is remembered today only as the sheriff of Douglas County who was the greatest of the persecutors of antislavery "martyrs" in territorial Kansas. Actually, Jones was a competent lawyer, businessman, and town developer who went on to play a significant role in the history of New Mexico. Although an ardently proslavery Virginian and apparently profane in his speech, he is not known to have harmed physically any of his antislavery opponents. To the contrary, it was Jones, not any of his supposed victims, who was nearly killed. He was shot in the back and seriously wounded while trying to enforce territorial laws in Lawrence in 1856.

Several of the territorial governors have been misunderstood and condemned both by their contemporaries and by later students of Kansas history. Especially Robert Walker and Frederick Stanton deserve better treatment because of their overlooked evenhandedness and self-sacrifice during the political turmoil surrounding the Lecompton Constitution. Walker discarded fraudulent ballots after the election of October 5, 1857, thereby giving control of the third territorial legislature to the antislavery party. His fairness resulted in his removal from office by President Buchanan. Stanton, the only chief executive of the territory actually to own slaves, called this new legislature into special session in December, 1857, thereby allowing them to develop

procedures that eventually led to the defeat of the Lecompton Constitution in 1858. Stanton, too, lost his position because of his sense of fair play. Without Walker's and Stanton's courageous intervention, the Lecompton Constitution might well have become the law in Kansas Territory contrary to the wishes of a large majority of its citizens.

Ely Moore and William Brindle deserve to be remembered for maintaining the integrity of the U. S. land office. They fought over politics between themselves, with Brindle being more strongly proslavery, but they co-operated in deciding impartially the many complex land disputes that came before them. Brindle even put aside his support of slavery because he disagreed with the sometimes rough tactics of the proslavery Law and Order Party. At considerable risk of injury or death if discovered, he kept antislavery associates from Lawrence informed of the actions and plans of their enemies in Lecompton.

John Calhoun, president of the Lecompton Constitutional Convention and one of the most vilified men in Kansas Territory, should receive credit for doing everything within his power to submit the Lecompton Constitution in its entirety to a vote of the people. In this he was supported by Judge Rush Elmore, a slave owner. Regrettably, Calhoun and Elmore fell one vote short of achieving their goal, and as a result the Constitution was branded as a fraud by antislavery forces throughout the North. Calhoun received much of the blame for the fiasco, even though he had worked with all his might to avoid it.

Many other territorial luminaries who frequented Constitution Hall could, and perhaps should, be mentioned, but time is too short. Attention must be reserved for individuals and groups from later

generations who have contributed to the legacy of the building. William Leamer and other businessmen conducted commercial activities here, thus providing an economic reason for its survival. Lane University officials saw it as a suitable dormitory for their students, who introduced new life into the old structure. For half a century the men of the Odd Fellows conducted fraternal and social activities within its walls and shared its spaces with the Masons, the Grand Army of the Republic, and the Modern Woodmen of America. After the Odd Fellows' resources were exhausted, the ladies of the Rebekahs picked up the load and worked hard to keep the building in repair for another forty years. The efforts of all these people, as well as those of the hundreds who kept the Hall alive as a community social center for almost 150 years, must be recognized. It is the story of this long succession of people, territorial and post-territorial, and of their moments shared in Constitution Hall that we are telling in the second-floor exhibits that we are dedicating today.

GREAT CHRISTMAS GIFTS

The Historic Lecompton Afghan is now available at the museum. The cost is \$35.00 plus \$2.28 tax and \$4.00 for mailing. The proceeds will all go for a war memorial for those in Lecompton, Big Springs, Stull and Kanwaka areas. We have sold over 200 of the first 225 ordered. We are going to order more and they will be in with plenty of time to be mailed for Christmas gifts.

NAME

City

State

CHRISTMAS VESPERS

The annual Christmas Vespers will be December 8th at 2:00 P.M. Music will be by community singers Frances Sanford, Cindy Daniels, Laura Smith, Tim Berendsen, Cheri Daniels, Megan Tate, Jessica Hodson, Erin Wisdom, Kim and Mike Stewart and Skip & Robin Saylor, the Community Youth choir.

ADVERTISEMENT IN AAA

Triple A of America flew a representative from Florida to visit and tour Lecompton November 9th. The unannounced visit is part of Triple A's on site tour of prospective communities for placement in their tour guide. He was most impressed with the community and said we would be in the 1998 guide.

MUSEUM GIFTS

Thanks to the many people who continue to donate historic items to the museum.

1. Susie Richardson-Painting by Lois Hayes, Tea Leaf bowls, straight edge razor, & Historic booklet.
2. Charles Sivits-U. S. Army W. W. 1 First Aid kit.
3. Leo Bidinger-Congressional Record book.
4. Robert Schmitt-Book "A Century of Sports" with autographs of Phog Allen, John Wooden and Adolph Rupp.
5. Frances Sanford-Recital picture
6. Mrs. Robert Anderson-Book "Paradise Lost"
7. Susan Tate-Letters from 3rd grade
8. Lecompton Methodist Church-Old Latch Key.
9. Mrs. Billy Joe Smith-Letter written in 1853 in Lecompton.
10. Roberta French Estate-McClanahan family homestead painting.

11. Rebekah Lodge 698-Memorabilia.
12. Margaret Fuston-Blue Bottle.
13. Marcella Anderson-Wedding dress worn by Grandmother, Wedding dress worn by mother and dress made in Germany in 1903.
14. Merta Fulton-1940's Lecompton High school pictures.
15. Marge Schmitt-Historic news clippings.
16. Art LaDuke-2 unique Iron toys.
17. Virginia Rothwell-Afghan in memory of Raymond Rothwell.
18. Mae Holderman-J. R. Watkins bottle and Pictures of Turnpike dedication
19. Donna Harding-Hedgeman McClanahan's High School memorabilia.
By Paul Bahnmaier, President

Taken from the Lecompton Sun-Friday, June 26, 1919

A Large 8th Grade Graduation

Never before in the history of Douglas county schools have so many pupils who get their mail from the Lecompton post office been graduated from the 8th grade.

If our school board gets busy this should mean the largest freshman class for our high school that it has ever had.

The names of those graduating:

- Dist. No. 19- Young or Star-Frances Bahnmaier, Lecompton, Rt.3
 Dist. No. 24-Greenwood Valley-Louise Lancaster, Lecompton; John M. French, Jr., Lecompton
 Dist. No. 33-Glenn-Frank Luckey, Lecompton, Rt.2
 Dist. No. 35-Mound-Rosa Roller
 Dist. No. 36-Lecompton-Fred W. Smith, Olla Carter, Helen Carlson, Dana Morriss, & Roy Todhunter, all of Lecompton.
 Dist. No. 40-Yarnold-Esther Unger, Lecompton, Rt.2
 Dist. No. 48-Deer Creek-Elsie Eberhart, Lecompton, Rt.2
 Dist. No. 69-Crowder-Nellie Armstrong,

- Lecompton, Rt. 3
 Dist. No. 70-Winter-Wilma Evans, Christeen Schroyer & Cecil Richards, all of Lecompton, Rt.3
 Dist. No. 72-Big Springs-Hazel Noe, & Theodore Holloway, Lecompton, Rt. 1
 Dist. No. 73.-Jones- Emma Buchheim, Edith Buchheim, & Paul Anderson all of Lecompton, Rt. 2

CLASS OF 1938

Pauline Baughman, Ruth Bertschinger, Audrey Boose, Helen Connole, Betty Jane Traxler, Charles Boydston, Denzel Gibbens, Earl Glenn, Clifford Hartman, William Henry, Jr.

We, the the senior class of Lecompton Rural High School, being of uncertain age, and sound mind or partly so, and about to pass from this life of association with crabby teachers, unruly Freshmen, highbrow Sophomores, and temperamental Juniors, do hereby give and bequeath, restore, and will to the remaining classes of said Lecompton Rural High School the following property.

First: The entire Senior class wills its abilities in athletics, music, typing, and the outstanding accomplishment in the different classes to the Seniors of 1938-1939..

Second: Cliff Hartman wills his basketball shoes to anyone who can fill them. He also wills his ability to vamp women to Harold Bertschinger.

Third: Pauline Baughman wills her ability to capture a freshman boy friend to Phyllis Sanford. Her ability to go to sleep in class and not be caught to Charles Sulzen.

Fourth:Earl Glenn wills his knack to get to World History on time to Fritz McClanahan and his ability to show no ill effects from staying up late at night to Tommy Bahnmaier.

Fifth: Helen Connole wills her feminine ability to get letters from college boy cousins to Mary Nelle Lasswell.

Sixth: Charles Boydston wills his line crashing ability to Chic Sale and Bill Hudson. Also his ability to get through high school in four years to Wilford Chiles.

Seventh: Ruth Bertschinger wills her singing ability to Doris Holloway and her ability to pass

speed tests in typing to Leo Anderson.

Eighth: Denzel Gibbens wills his ability to play football, basketball, and made the track team to Dale Glenn and Clare J. Colman.

Ninth: Audrey Boose wills her ability to charm and capture a freshman Jayhawker and to apple-polish the Biology teacher to Betty Hodson and Jane Potter.

Tenth: Betty Jane Traxler wills her ability to manage a ranch and get dinner on time for the cowboys to Oneta Hibner.

Eleventh: Bill Henry wills his ability to raise beef cattle to Cowboy Joe and his fiancee. Also his ability to make good grades to Charles Anderson.

Twelfth: The sponsor, Daisy Evelyn Bair, wills her technique to keep orderly and interesting classes to the rest of the faculty.

We, the Senior Class, declare this to be our last will of Lecompton Rural High School in the year

DOUGLAS COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Superintendent of Schools-Harold C. Fisher.

1. **Lake View**-School Board--Albert Brune, Owen Mitchell, Earl Skinner of Lawrence

Teacher: Della McGee-Salary: \$80.00 monthly

15. **Kanwaka**-School Board--Olin Button, Carl Hird, Frank W. Houk, of Lawrence.

Teacher: Margaret Fritzel-\$85.00 monthly

19. **Young-Star**-School Board-Frank Walter, William Reynolds, Pete Bahnmaier of Lecompton.

Teacher: Mary Alice Stubbs--\$65.00 monthly

26. **Old Belvoir**-School Board--Lloyd Fitzpatrick, Leslie J. Demeritt, Hans Lassen of Richland
Teacher Loretta Shaw, \$70.00 monthly

33. **Glenn**-School Board-Starr Glenn, Howard Sanford, J. E. Matney of Lecompton
Teacher: Rosemary Scheier, \$75.00 monthly

35. **Mound**-School Board--August Walter, W. H. Anderson, of Lecompton, Russell Koehler, Richland. Teacher: Mary Sparks--\$60.00 monthly

36-**Lecompton**-School Board-Frank Carlson, John Banks, Charles Foree of Lecompton
Teachers: Harold F. Summers, Prin. \$95.00 mon.
Dorothy Sanford, \$90.00 monthly

Ruth Sawyer, \$90.00 monthly

Helen Norwood-\$90.00 monthly

40. **Yarnold**-School board: Theodore Buchheim, H. O. Wulfkuhle, George Houk, of Lawrence
Teacher: Jewell Kirby-\$60.00 monthly

48. **DeerCreek**-School Board: Albert Hildenbrand, Elmer Nichols, & Frank Selch,
Teacher: Mrs. Edith Ludlam--\$70.00 monthly

69. **Crowder**-School Board--Jack Grimes, Lawrence L. H. Rogers, Lecompton, J. M. Crowder, Lawrence
Teacher: Irma Kahle-\$70.00 monthly

70.- **Winter**-School Board-Newt Hamlin, C. B. Winter, W. R. Colman
Teacher: Edna Reekie \$70.00 monthly

72. **Big Springs**-School Board-M. F. Ice, R. F. Buck, Gus Hartman of Lecompton
Teacher: Eunice O'Brien-\$70.00 monthly

73. **Jones**-School Board-Samuel F. Buchheim, Elmer Bahnmaier, Theo. Walter of Lawrence

NO SCHOOL.

*****Please Clip and Mail With Your Check*****

THE LECOMPTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, Lecompton, Kansas 66050, is a non-profit corporation for the preservation of historical sites. We are eager for continued membership and new members.

Dues are \$4 per year for individual membership and \$6 for a couple's membership. The dues are 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 Iona Spencer, 1828 E. 100 Rd. Lecompton, KS 66050

- () \$4.00 Annual Individual Membership
- () \$6.00 Annual Couple's Membership
- () \$50.00 Individual Life or Memorial Membership
- () Other Contribution \$ _____

NAME _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

84. **Beloir-School Board**-R. J. Woodward, M. D. Connole, Fred W. Lobb, Richland.
 Teacher: Mary Anderson-\$80.00 monthly
#4-Lecompton High School-School Board--
 Geo. F. Bahnmaier, Mrs. W. B. Stauffer, Fred H. Nace
 Teachers-H. L. Paslay, Prin. \$157.50 monthly
 Vernon G. Hayes-\$125.00 Monthly
 Arloa Summers-\$110.00 monthly
 Jennie L. Doane-\$110.00 monthly
 Daisy E. Bair-\$120.00 monthly

HARRELL, JOHN E, 77, Lecompton, died Thursday, Oct. 24, 1996. He served in the Pacific Theater in the Army during World War 11. He was born Feb. 17, 1919, at Lawrence, the son of James M. And Edith Willey Harrell. He was a member of the Lecompton United Methodist Church. He married Geraldine Holloway on Nov. 20, 1971. She survives.

Other survivors include two son, John Harrell Jr. and David Harrell; a daughter, Judith Pinegar; three stepdaughters, Evelyn Wingert, Sherry Michael and Georgia Freeman; a stepson, Lawrence G. Anderson; a brother, James M. Harrell jr. 10 grandchildren; and 3 great grandchildren. Burial was in the Maple Grove Cemetery at Lecompton.

OBITUARIES

DARK, Margaret Bahnmaier, 97, Lecompton, died Tuesday, Oct. 8, 1996 at Lawrence. She was born July 29, 1899, at Lecompton, the daughter of Charles Bahnmaier and Elizabeth Buchheim. She married Samuel Dark on Sept. 11, 1921. He died Nov. 27, 1981. A son, Clayton dark, died Aug. 25, 1986, and a daughter Mary Green, died April 23, 1996. She was a member of Big Springs United Methodist church and the Lecompton Historical Society.

Survivors include two sisters, Frances Wulfkuhle and Florence Mitchell, both of Lawrence; six grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; four great-great-granchildren and three step great-great grandchildren.

Burial was in the Maple Grove Cemetery at Lecompton.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Remember that December is when your memberships are due. Please try to have your dues in by February, 1997

We now have 713 Life and Memorial memberships and 438 due paying members, making a total of 1,156.

Life Members:

Keith David Noe
 Carol Ann (Byrne) Noe by Margaret Noe
 Corwin E. Sperry

- | | |
|---|---|
| President* Paul Bahnmaier | Historical Writer * Sara Walter |
| Vice President * Rich McConnell | Genealogical Writer & Membership * Iona Spencer |
| Secretary * Vicki Roberts | Illustrator*Ellen Duncan |
| Treasurer * Betty Leslie | Tours*Charlene Winter |
| Board Members * Maxine Dark, Bruce Beresford | Funding*Mae Holderman |
| George Simmons, David Paslay, Ralph Davis, Ron Meier | Program *Elaine Boose |
| Curators * Marguerite Bowman, Opal Goodrick, Dorothy Shaner | Assistant Treasurer *Sherri Neill |
| George & Arloene Simmons, David & Darlene Paslay | Kitchen * Helen Hildenbrand |
| Membership Ass'ts. *Duane & Dorothy Wulfkuhle | Memorials* Ruth Ice |
- *****

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