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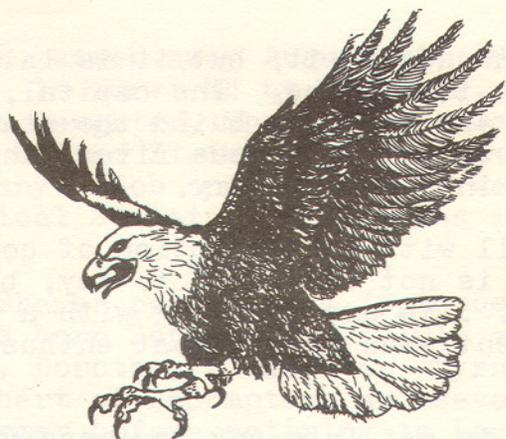
# **BALD EAGLE**

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LECOMPTON, KANSAS

WINTER

1983

## A SOUTHERNER'S VIEWPOINT

A Southerner's viewpoint of the Kansas Situation 1856 - 1857  
The Letters of Lieutenant Colonel A. J. Hoole, C.S.A.  
Edited by William Stanley Hoole.

Axalla John Hoole, of South Carolina, came to Kansas Territory in April 1856. His primary purpose was to help Kansas Territory into the Union as a slave state. Many such people came from the Southern states during the early territorial period with this in mind, and with the financial backing of their home states.

A. J. Hoole lived for the most part while he was in Kansas Territory at the little town of Douglas, which was located near the Kaw River, just east of the "later" Stanton mansion and west of the Allie and Herman Banks' farm. The town was platted and had great future hopes, but consisted of four or five log cabins, and never developed further.

Hoole remained in Kansas until December 1857. During this time he wrote many letters to his family in South Carolina, which were preserved and many years later edited by a relative, W. S. Hoole. They appeared in "The Kansas State Historical Quarterly", 1934, Vol. III, May, pp. 145 - 171. They were found by a Lecompton Historical Society member, Jack Puett, in 1980 while he was doing some research. He had copies made of them which he gave to the Society for their use. The Kansas State Historical Society gave permission for their reprinting.

After Hoole returned to South Carolina, he was elected Captain of the Darlington Riflemen, and soon became part of the Confederate Army. He served in many conflicts in Virginia and Georgia. His last engagement was the Battle of Chicamauga in September, 1863, where he was killed. Ironically enough, it was a Kansas regiment that was responsible for his death.

The following are copies of some of his letters:

My Dear Mother

Douglas City, K.T., Apl.  
14th, 1856

I came to this place last Saturday, after staying at that nasty Abolition town of Lawrence for a week. This is called a City, but there

are only four little log houses in it, but it is laid out into lots for a town, and I expect one day it will be. The capital, Lecompton, is two miles from here, but they are going to build the state university at this place. It is situated close on the Kansas river, and I consider it the prettiest site for a town in the Territory.

I have been quite well with the exception of colds since I have been in the Territory. Betsie is not very well to-day, but she is well enough to be writing a letter . . . We are boarding with a very excellent family named Ellison. The old gentleman is the most enthusiastic Proslavery man I have met with.

I have not been able to get into any business yet, although a man wanted me to work on a house for him in Lecompton last week, at \$2 a day, but I could not get board in the place, and as the job would last but a few days, I did not set it. They are wanting a school in Lecompton but I have not been able to make it up. The fact is, the people here seem to be so taken up with politics, that they can't take time to think of hardly anything else. There is a school wanting here at Douglas, but there is a young fellow from Georgia, who was ahead of me, but I am under the impression that he will not succeed, as there seems to be a sort of split in the neighborhood. If he fails, they say they will make up a good school for me. If I don't succeed in getting a school, I will go at the carpenter's trade which will pay, by-the-bye, better, but as I prefer teaching, even if I make less, I shall try that first as it will be a permanent business and in the other I may sometimes be out of employment, unless I were a good mechanic. I don't think I will ever like this country. The timber is too scarce, but the land is very rich -- any of it will make from fifty to a hundred bushels of corn to the acre; but then the wind is always blowing, sometimes so hard that a man can hardly keep his hat on his head. I don't intend to preempt land, for all the claims worth having are already taken up, but if I like it well enough when the land comes in market, as there will be thousands who will not be able to pay for their claims, I will then buy a place. But I don't think I will ever like this country well enough to settle here, and I don't think, or at least I am afraid, it will never be made a slave state, and if it is not, I will not live here on any conditions.

I was introduced to the Governor last Thursday. He seems to be a very friendly sort of man, but I don't think he is very smart. He seemed to take a good deal of interest in me, and was very anxious that I should get board in Lecompton, but I was unable to do so.

My dear Mother, you need not be afraid . . . This is a very good neighborhood. We are boarding with a good clever Methodist family. The circuit-rider stayed here last night. I had formed a very poor opinion of the morality of the Territory when I was at Lawrence, but I find the people up this way fare better. At Lawrence almost everyone I met was profane, but here it is quite different. I have not made use of an oath since I have been in the Territory, and I don't intend to be guilty of that practice any more if I can help it. Betsie makes me read the Bible sometimes, and I intend, when I can rent a house and go to ourselves, which I hope to do soon, to read it regularly . . . .

The people in this Territory have very poor houses, generally built of logs with rock chimneys. The one we are boarding in is three log houses built in a row -- the middle one of which is the kitchen where the Negroes

stay. They have four or five Negroes. If we stay here this summer, we will have plenty of ice as Mr. Ellison has put up a good deal of it.

The people here are just fixing to plant their crops. Trees are put out about like they were when we left Darlington. The nights here are still quite cool, but I have not seen frost for some time.

Write me all the news, every little particular will be interesting to me . . . Your ever affectionate son, Axalla

My dear Mother

Lecompton, K.T., Sept. 12, 1856

I must write you a few lines to let you know how I am getting along, though I have but little hopes of your getting this as letters for some time past have been miscarried or stopped on the way -- but I will make the venture --

I have been unwell ever since the 9th. of July.....I thought of going to work in a few days, when the Abolitionists broke out and I have had to stand guard of nights when I ought to have been in bed, took cold which . . . . caused diarrhea, but. . . .I feel quite well (now). Betsie is well --

You perceive from the heading of this that I am now in Lecompton, almost all of the Proslavery party between this place and Lawrence are here. We brought our families here, as we thought that we would be better able to defend ourselves when altogether than if we scattered over the country.

Lane came against us last Friday (a week ago to-day). As it happened we had about 400 men with two cannon -- we marched out to meet him, though we were under the impression at the time that we had 1,000 men. We came in gunshot of each other, but the regular soldiers came and interfered, but not before our party had shot some dozen guns, by which it is reported that five of the Abolitionists were killed or wounded. We had strict orders from our commanding officer (Gen'l Marshall) not to fire until they made the attack, but some of our boys would not be restrained. I was a rifleman and one of the skirmishers, but did all that I could to restrain our men though I itched all over to shoot, myself. I drew a bead a dozen times on a big Yankee about 150 yards from me, but did not fire, as I knew if I did, the boys all around me would do the same, and we had orders not to fire until the word was given -- We had 400 men and we learned after Lane had drawn off his men that he did not have more than 700; had we known it, the regulars would not have arrived soon enough to have kept us from fighting, but we were acting on the defensive, and did not think it prudent to commence the engagement. I firmly believe that we would have whipped them, though we would have lost a good many men. I did not see a pale face in our whole army, every man seemed keen to fight. I for one, did not feel as nervous as I am when I go to shoot a beef or a turkey.

I was in bed when the news came, and the confusion calling the men to arms awoke me. I sprang up, seized my gun, told Betsie to go with the rest of the ladies where they would be out of danger, and went to my post in line. I was so weak that I could scarcely walk, and after I took my position, I sat down waiting for the word to fire. I believe it helped me, for I have been improving ever since -- but enough of this --

Gov. Geary arrived here night before last; he is a fine looking man,

six feet two inches high, seems to be about forty years old. He issued his proclamation disbanding all armed bodies in the Ter. I hear that Lane and his men say that he has gone too far to back out now and will resist the U.S. troops. That is just what we want, as by that means we will get rid of all his last recruits at any rate. The Gov. also said in his proclamation that the laws of the Ter. shall be enforced. I think he is all right--at least I hope so.

But my dear Mother, I must close as the stage has come. You must not be uneasy about me, as I hope our difficulties here will soon end, and we will all get to our work soon -- I am more uneasy about making money than I am about being killed by the Yankees, though the times looked pretty squally for the last three weeks.

Betsie sends love to you and all the rest of the family . . . .  
My love to you, my very dear Mother. Your Affectionate son.

## *President's Notes*

Another successful season at Lane Museum has passed and we are pleased to report that over 2,000 visitors toured the Museum this summer. They have come to Lecompton from 61 cities and towns in Kansas; from 26 other states, and from 2 foreign countries. We have had 28 specially escorted tours from nearby towns, including Westmoreland and Pomona, Kansas. Many of these visitors have stated that they had never been to Lecompton before and were pleasantly surprised to find a Museum of the stature of Lane Museum here. If we can help 2,000 visitors come to that realization every year, we can reach our goal of making Lecompton and Lane University Museum a household word! With the continued help and support of all of the dedicated volunteers in our group of historians, we will never again hear the statement "Where's Lecompton -- I never heard of it." The future of Lecompton is very bright and The Lecompton Historical Society is proud to be a part of this community.

This issue of the "Bald Eagle" is being mailed to nearly 1,000 households and we thought it would be a good time to tell you just what The Lecompton Historical Society and Lane University Museum are all about. The main purpose is to successfully operate the Lane University Museum and Library. This work is accomplished with all-volunteer help of the members, who are ever hopeful that their efforts will be beneficial to our community and to the visitors who come our way.

We are proud to have each and every one of our 446 members, which on a per capita basis, would rank us as one of the largest historical societies in America. These members come from nearly every state in the Union -- folks who still want to be involved with this historic little town where they were born, or went to school, or where their folks were born or went to school, or the many visitors who come, see, and then want to become involved, too. We can never say it enough that you, the loyal members from near and far, have given this organization the strength necessary to be a success.

Some of the special activities this past season include the following: two lovely weddings held in the Chapel; participation in the Douglas County Quilt Show; operated a booth at the Douglas County Fair; held a special Open House for the Alumni Banquet and also for the Territorial Day

celebration; hosted Senator Nancy Kassebaum for a dinner and speech; had a lecture on "Firewood" by Earl Van Meter, County Agent; hosted 28 special tours of the Museum. We also plan to participate in the Kansas Tourism and Travel Show to be held in the Municipal Auditorium in Topeka on January 7th and 8th.

As you can see, our organization is an "involved" group of people!

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Several projects have been completed during the past 3 months at Lane. Forrest Springer has constructed a beautiful kneeling bench to be used for future weddings held in the Chapel. We appreciate this, Forrest, and know all the "kneelers" will, too.

When next you visit Lane Museum, you will see that we now have a very impressive and smooth roadway at the west Halderman Street entrance. A special thanks to David Paslay for overseeing the laying of the asphalt to accomplish this great improvement.

Also, a large red rock (very large) was removed from the west slope of the old football field and has been installed at Lane's west entrance, and we sincerely thank Herb Roberts, Jason Dexter, Daryl Colton, David Paslay and George Simmons for helping with this project. Attractive shrubbery has also been planted there.

On September 8th, U. S. Senator Nancy Kassebaum visited Lecompton, toured Lane Museum and gave a most informative speech followed with a question and answer session. Also present were State Senator Winton Winter, State Representative John Solbach and County Commissioner Beverly Bradley. Thanks to the following people who helped with this presentation: Connie Stilson, Dorothy Shaner and Elizabeth Johnson, publicity; Elda Flowers and Julia Springer for the music; Carol McCune and her Blue Birds who presented the flags; Don Willis for providing the speaker system, and to the many members and guests who provided the tremendous supply of good food enjoyed at the covered dish dinner.

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The following items have been donated or loaned to Lane University Museum during the past 3 months: Mrs. Earl Endacott (wife of the original director of the Eisenhower Museum in Abilene) has presented us with a collection of Dwight Eisenhower memorabilia, including a bronze bust and other significant items; a class picture from Bill Schroyer; a small china commode from Wilbur and Helen Hildenbrand; pictures from Elda Flowers; a sewing rocker from Wayne Stover; an antique plane from Wally Holderman; two Glenn School class pictures from Kenneth and Ester Matney; a beautiful oil painting of the old Lecompton Grade School (the one that burned) from Ella Stanwix; an historic newspaper announcing World War I Armistice from Maxine Dark; a drink dispenser from Rowena Horr; 4 small hand-carved antique cars from Dee Gibbons; a quilt made by Elizabeth Horton Jackson donated by Herb and Audrey Rogers; a copy of the Bahnmaier family genealogy from Ula Armstrong and Lavina Chegwyn; the Henry Davidson family Bible given by Mrs. Marie Hill; an original 1861 newspaper reporting that Kansas had become a State, and an 1858 document debating the proposed Lecompton Constitution from Marvin Everett.

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We now have on display a Bald Eagle who very much resembles the emblem

on the cover of our "Bald Eagle" paper. He came to us through extraordinary efforts of Elda Flowers and her son, Don, who made a special trip to Colorado to bring him to Lane Museum. He is a beautiful and impressive bird--representing our National Emblem--and we are so proud to have him overseeing us from his perch in the North Museum room.

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Mr. Pedro Hernandez, Topeka, was the 2,000 visitor to tour Lane Museum during this summer season. He was presented a souvenir Lecompton plate from Denzel Gibbons, one of our volunteer tour guides.

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The original marble placque given to the Museum by the U. M. Church Board has been installed near the south door entrance, adding to the historical cornerstone collection arranged in the landscaping near the building.

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Wilbur and Helen Hildenbrand celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with an Open House at the Shawnee Heights Methodist Church, November 6th. Hosting the event were their children Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hildenbrand of Tupulo, Miss., Mr. and Mrs. Terrence Levings, Davenport, Iowa, and Richard Hildenbrand of Topeka.

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Future meeting dates are December 8th, February 9th and March 8th. To avoid some possible bad weather, there will not be a meeting in January. Everyone is welcome to come to the meetings. They start with a covered dish dinner at 6:30 P.M., followed by a business meeting and program.

Late additions to Lane University Museum include: Antique dishes and train from Mary Mathews; very old farm equipment from Nettie and the late Henry Leslie; hand made straw hat made by Mrs. Octave Istas; very old newspaper articles from Bill and Marcella Anderson. Thanks to you your Museum continued to grow and prosper in 1983.

#### IN MEMORIAM

Raymond Ice passed away on August 11, 1983 after suffering from cancer. He was born May 26, 1916 in rural Douglas County and is survived by his wife, Ruth, and two sons, Jerry of Lecompton and Richard of rural Lawrence and 5 grandchildren. Raymond Ice was a County Commissioner from 1968 to 1972 and served this community well. He was a member of the Douglas County Fair Board, the School Board and was a 4-H Club leader. He was presently serving on the Douglas County Agriculture Stabilization and Conservation Board. He was a Life Member of the Lecompton Historical Society and was most supportive of that organization. Memorials in his name were made to the Lane University Museum and the Douglas County Visiting Nurses. Burial was in the Stull Cemetery.

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Robert (Bob) Crawford passed away August 22, 1983 following a tragic fire at his residence. He is survived by his wife, Betty Rose Smith Crawford, a son, Mikhail, and a daughter, Shantal. He was born September 12, 1944. He had served in the United States Marine Corp and was presently employed by a soft water company. Bob and his family were long-time supporters of The Lecompton Historical Society. Burial was in Maple Grove Cemetery at Lecompton.

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Albert Leslie (Les) Shaner passed away September 20, 1983 following a heart attack. He was born September 14, 1915 at Lebo, Kansas. He is survived by his wife, Dorothy, a daughter, Myrna Beth of Homedale, New Jersey, and a son Robert of Lecompton, and several grandchildren. He was a carpenter and a farmer before retiring to Lecompton to operate the Village Antique Store. He was a member of the Carpenters' Union, and The Lecompton Historical Society. Les was always available to help install, repair or refinish whatever project might need his special talents at Lane Museum, and we will miss him very much. Services were held at the Lecompton United Methodist Church on September 24th. Burial was in the Big Springs Cemetery. Memorials in his name were made to the Lane University Museum.

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Karl M. Kreider, a former Lawrence businessman, died Wednesday at his home in Boulder, Colo. He was 87. Mr. Kreider was the son of J.W. and Emma Kreider, who operated the Lecompton State Bank here for many years. He was a Life Member of the Lecompton Historical Society and was most supportive of this organization. Survivors include his wife, Una, a daughter Margaret and granddaughter, and a son, Stanton, all of Colorado. Memorial services will be in Boulder. Cremation is planned.

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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

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

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MEMORIAL LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

Robert B. Slavens and Mabelle M. (Spangler) Slavens

We are proud to announce that five of the six surviving children of the above couple are Life members of the Lecompton Historical Society. They are Maybelle (Duggie) Hall, Sara Walter, Irene Hoffsommer, Nellie Brown and Henrietta Anderson. There is another daughter Edith Ward.

Henry W. Spangler and Nancy Ann (Messenheimer) Spangler

A son of this couple, LePort Spangler is a Life Member.

Harry C. Hall and Pearl Elizabeth (Thompson) Hall

A son Wayne Hall was a Life Member, now deceased and another son Verne Hall is a Life Member.

LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

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

Rev. Paul and Dorothy (Lane) Kapp  
Charles Vausbinder

Paul and Irene (Roller) Hoffsommer  
Arthur E. & Freda (Kingsley) LaDuke

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