



LECOMPTON REENACTORS STORM STAGE -- Brian Matthew Jordan, second from left, had just finished his enthralling "Lecompton Constitution" oration when Don Lambert as a Topeka Free-State Legislator, and Ed Hoover, as Sheriff Sam Jones, both in full Bleeding Kansas finery, began what became a hugely entertaining brouhaha between Free-Staters and pro-Slavers. About 150 people crowded Constitution Hall's second floor for the Bleeding Kansas lecture.

What a Celebration!

Lecompton Constitution Comes Home

The faded, aged parchment that's the Lecompton Constitution, written here on Constitution Hall's second floor in 1857, returned home for the first time in 150 years to a tumultuous debate and a SRO house.

It was a show long in the making. For years, J. Howard Duncan's Lecompton Reenactors have been staging renditions of talks by historic characters like the zealot John Brown, Gov. Charles Robinson and Lecompton Sheriff Sam Jones. Usually they perform at places like Kansas Day at the State Capitol rotunda or for different school classes. This time they appeared at the 7th Annual Bleeding Kansas lecture series presented by the Kansas State Historical Society.

Constitution Hall's Curator, Tim Rues, staged the remarkable program. He brought in a headline historian, a sensational 20-year-old speaker who had

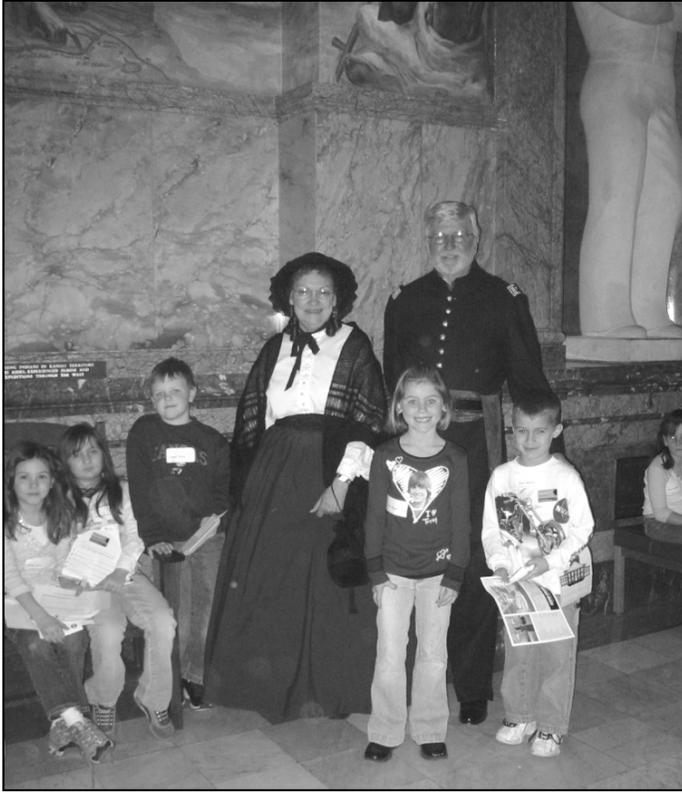
(Continued on page 5)

Upcoming Dates

June 16 – Lecompton High School Alumni Banquet

June 22-23 -- Territorial Days

Lecompton Reenactors Celebrate Kansas Day



Shirley and Alan Jones, elaborately attired as a gentleman's lady and a Union officer, wowed Sue Kabriel's class of second graders from Valley Falls.



Lesa Brose and Michelle Martin told group after group of students about the life and times of zealot John Brown, pictured in John Stuert Curry's rotunda mural, and of how he epitomized the violence of Bleeding Kansas.

Lecompton Historical Society members have settled into the multi-year joys of celebrating Lecompton's and Kansas Territory's 150th anniversary. From 1854, when the Kansas-Nebraska Act created Kansas Territory, until January 29, 1861, when Congress officially named Kansas the 34th state, Kansas' history centered on Lecompton. The events of Bleeding Kansas, the first skirmishes of what would become our nation's Civil War, and the acts of the Kansas Territorial Legislature sitting in Lecompton, framed the issues of the epic struggle.

Today, Lecompton still provides much living history for Kansas. Each January 29th, the State Capitol in Topeka becomes the site of a happy statehood birthday party. And each year hundreds of grade school students ride yellow buses to see the Capitol and learn of Kansas' history.

The statehouse lecturers were members of the Lecompton Reenactors, a vibrant troupe of actors who bring to life the stories of the historically famous Kansans of territorial days. "We love to participate in Kansas Day because it is a day for children," said J. Howard Duncan, a retired environmental engineer and the playwright who founded the historical reenactors organization.

The Bald Eagle salutes the Lecompton Reenactors, who in many ways are fast becoming the statewide historical face of Kansas Territory through dozens of presentations annually. Kansas Day at the Capitol illustrates the troupe's impact. Gov. Katherine Sebelius asked the Lecompton group to help with the statehouse celebration. The only other two groups at the party



At the Kansas Territorial Museum, Lecompton Reenactor Bonnie Fugett entertains Lecompton grade schoolers.

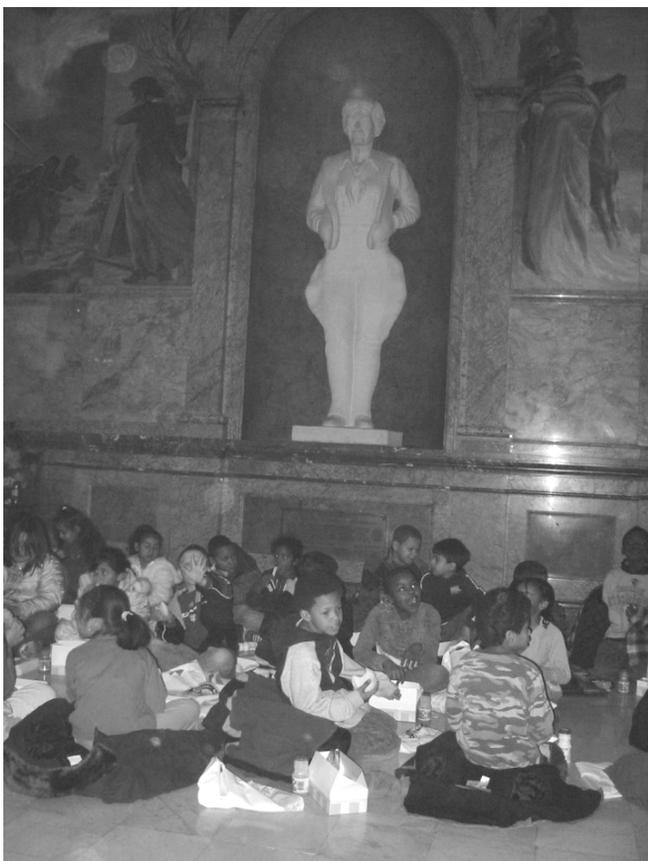
Reenactors Star in Appearances

were paid members of the Kansas National Guard and Kansas Air Guard.

State Official Says Thanks

Mary Madden, the Kansas State Historical Society's director of Education and Outreach Division, said she received many "positive comments" about the Lecompton Reenactors performances. She added, "I would welcome them all to return next year. The final count for the day was a very respectable 979 visitors. I am so pleased with the creative opportunities we can offer Kansas students on Kansas Day."

It's interesting that the Territorial Capitol Museum at Lane University in Lecompton also had school children visit on Kansas Day. So while some of Lecompton's reenactors were in Topeka, another group was making Lecompton's history come alive in the beautifully restored museum and, down the street, in Constitution Hall, the town's state and national historic site.



Kansas Day student visitors before the rotunda statue of aviatrix Amelia Earhart. They were brown-bagging from lunches provided by Dillon's Supermarkets.

LHS Monthly Meeting Programs for 2007

On the second Tuesday of most months the Lecompton Historical Society meets at the Kansas Territorial Capital Museum in the basement of the Lane University building. Program chairwoman Beverly Vandye's lineup:

March 8—Mike Koker and friends, small animals from the Topeka Zoo, will perform, talk and entertain.

April 12—Noted local humorist Marsha Henry Goff will read a letter about the "Lecompton Constitution" that her great grandmother sent to President Buchanan.

May 10—Debbie Cochran will describe her trip to Africa.

June 14—Tim Rues will discuss his activities as curator of Constitution Hall, Lecompton's national and state historic site.

July 12—Martha Parker will present a program about the Underground Railroad in Douglas County, Kansas.

August 9—Midge Grinstead, Lawrence Humane Society manager, talks about her many friends and her job.

September 13—Charlene Droste will decipher how best to dig up health care information on the Internet.

October 11—Raucous Ron Meyer and his Band. Country music at its best.

November 8—A talk by Tom Averill, Washburn University professor of engineering.

Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area

Bleeding Kansas is one of the major themes of the new National Heritage Area commemorating a period of U.S. history when Lecompton played a major role. The Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area has been approved by Congress and signed into law by President Bush. The area includes 26 Kansas counties and 12 Missouri counties. The next step will be the development of a Management Plan by 2008. Currently, committees are working on a Website, Civic Engagement, Building Bridges, Resources, Landscape, and Tours. The new Freedom's Frontier area is expected to be a boon to economic development and tourism.

History Comes Home

Document was key in events that led to the Civil War

By Tully Corcoran

The Capital-Journal, February 12, 2007

Reprinted with permission

LECOMPTON — Like the first time around, the Lecompton Constitution's stay in Lecompton was short. Unlike the first time, no one died because of it.

The 1857 document, which is on the short list of events that led to the Civil War, returned to the room in which it was drafted, Lecompton's Constitution Hall, Saturday and Sunday. Hundreds of visitors from throughout the area viewed the pro-slavery document and attended a speech by Civil War historian Brian Matthew Jordan, of Gettysburg College.

Had the eight-page Lecompton Constitution been approved by Kansas and Congress, Kansas would have entered the union as a slave state.

"It created a firestorm in the nation's capital," said Tim Rues, Constitution Hall curator. "The Lecompton Constitution ended up fracturing the Democratic party."

As it was, the constitution passed in the Senate and failed in both the House and, after three votes, in Kansas. It represents a time in Kansas during which the state saw multiple capital cities, two functioning governments, fraudulent elections and outright massacres.

At that point, Rues said, nobody knows what exactly happened to the Lecompton Constitution until a former editor of the Lecompton Union and National Democrat newspapers, Alfred W. Jones, turned up with it in 1875 and donated the document to the New Brunswick Historical Club of New Jersey through Rutgers University.

In 1957, the 100th anniversary of the constitution's drafting, Rutgers donated the constitution to



Anthony S. Bush / The Capital-Journal

From left, Ellie Burkhart, of Lawrence, Virginia Wulfkuhle, of Topeka and Margaret Wulfkuhle, of Lawrence, examine the 1857 Lecompton Constitution on Sunday at Constitution Hall in Lecompton. The document was on display in the room where it was drafted.

PRESERVING THE CONSTITUTION

Darrell Garwood, the preservation officer at the Kansas State Historical Society, helped restore the Lecompton Constitution for public display. Here are the steps that were taken:

- Removing metal grommets at the top of the document to prevent rust from staining the paper.
 - A chemical cleaning to remove grime at a conservation lab, much like the dry cleaner.
- "In essence, they gave it a bath," Garwood said.
- Using a nonabrasive, Play-Doh-like eraser to remove stains.
 - Storage in an acid-free folder inside a storage vault at 50 degrees with 40 percent humidity, "pretty much 24/7."
 - Finally, Garwood said, "parchment can last 400-500 years."

the Kansas State Historical Society, where the parchment paper document has rested in protective, acid-free folders for the past 50 years.

The Historical Society lent it to Constitution Hall as part of the "Bleeding Kansas '07" series of lectures and dramatic interpretations sponsored by Constitution Hall.

On the second floor of Constitution Hall, the Lecompton Constitution rested over the weekend in a glass case and in mostly readable condition thanks to years of cleaning and preservation.

One of the visitors was Susan Marchant, a fifth-generation Topekan, who could hardly have been prouder of Kansas' history.

"It's a fascinating history, and I think many people just don't know how truly pivotal Kansas was in many respects of American history and certainly in Civil War history," Marchant said, "It did begin here."

The appearance was a unique one for the document, which likely won't pay another visit to its birthplace until 2057 for its bicentennial celebration.

"Most of us, speaking for myself," Rues said, "won't be able to see it on its bicentennial. I might be willing, but I may not be able."

Jordan, a 20-year-old sophomore at Gettysburg College who has written one of the few biographies of Franklin Pierce, spoke for an hour Sunday afternoon to an audience of about 100 that overflowed the second floor.

Following Jordan's address, members of the historical society performed a re-enactment of a fictional debate between Free Staters and Lecompton residents.

Lecompton Constitution Comes Home

(Continued from page 1)

wowed the Bleeding Kansas crowd in 2005. Young Brian Jordan did it again, receiving a prolonged, standing ovation, but as he finished a troupe of Sesquicentennial actors in full regalia stormed the stage.

It was superb theater.

John Brown Lives

Reenactors Don Lambert, Charlene Winter, and Chris Meinhardt gave spirited Free-State speeches decrying the Lecompton Constitution and its pro-slavery intent. In the back of the hall a strong voice yelled, "Insurrection!" And Lecompton's Sheriff Sam Jones strode to the stage, sending the Free-Staters into the crowd, calling them "thieves, murderers and liars."

The crowd was drawn into the squabble and the serious violence of that long-ago period was palpable. Abolitionist John Brown, portrayed by Allen Shirrell,



Great—Great Uncle Lot Pugh Patty

William Patty presented the fifth of the five Bleeding Kansas 2007 lectures in Constitution Hall. His description of the adventures of his great-great-Uncle Lot Pugh Patty during the Bleeding Kansas years was vivid. Lot Pugh Patty was born in 1821 and came to Leavenworth, Kansas Territory, in 1854. A physician and outspoken anti-slavery leader, he practiced medicine during the 1855 Cholera outbreak. In January 1856, he was elected to the Topeka Free-State Legislature. Following the John Brown Pottawatomie Massacre, he sent his wife and children to Kentucky. He was present July 4, 1856 when Federal troops prevented the Topeka Legislature from meeting. He was harassed, his life threatened and he was one of the 150 Free-Staters thrown out of Leavenworth in Sept. 1, 1856. He journeyed to Indiana and Ohio where he recruited men to join him in the fight for a Free-State Kansas. He moved to Tecumseh in 1856 and remained in Kansas for the rest of his life.



Brian Matthew Jordan, keynote speaker for the celebration of the return of the original 1857 "Lecompton Constitution" to Constitution Hall, stands before the presentation case. With him, from left to right, State Sen. Marci Francisco, Paul Bahmaier, Lecompton Historical Society president, and Tim Rues, curator, Constitution Hall.

and General James Lane, played by Tim Rues, gave rousing talks.

Sherrill left the stage singing "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," and Rues recreated Lane's famous speech to the Free-State legislature sitting in Topeka. He called the Lecompton Constitution adherents "villains, villains, villains," and then pulled a huge Bowie knife from a boot holster and waved it menacingly overhead.

Great theater and the crowd of about 150 loved it.

Historian Jordan's lecture concisely described the historical events that led to the Kansas Territorial Legislature passage of the "Lecompton Constitution" in 1857. He said the document led directly to the celebrated Lincoln-Douglas debates of 1858 and, inevitably, to the four years of Civil War.

A copy of the Gettysburg College student's speech is available at both the Territorial Capital Museum in Lane University and at Constitution Hall. Jordan's talk is considered to be a masterful description of the significance and historical importance of the Lecompton Constitution.

He said that soon-to-be President Lincoln proclaimed that the Lecompton Constitution went against the morality of our nation's founders. The Lecompton Constitution fractured the Democratic Party of Stephen Douglas, he said, and demanded that popular sovereignty be a local solution to the much larger question of slavery.

Jordan answered questions from the audience before the onslaught of Lecompton Reenactors stormed the stage. He watched their inspired performance with a huge smile on his face throughout.

He finally concluded, "I feel so privileged to be sitting in this historic place where this historic document was forged."

-- John Peterson

OBITUARIES

Blake, Alice Lee passed away Dec. 9, 2006. She was born Jan. 10, 1911 at Lecompton to Fred and Cora Lee Moore. After the sudden early death of her mother she was adopted by her father's sister, Cora Alice and husband Boyd P. Scott.

She married Dr. Henry S. Blake, Jr. on Aug. 29, 1935 in a double ring ceremony with her husband's sister Elizabeth Blake and Homer Hiebert. They were married 55 years when he passed away. She was preceded in death by her sisters, Wilma Morris and Elizabeth Hiebert.

Alice was a 82+ year member of the First United Methodist Church and recently received an award for being the longest standing member of the church.

Survivors include three children: a daughter Susan and husband Onis Lemon, a daughter, Sally Bentobji and a son Henry III and wife Ruth Blake, all of Topeka; nine grandchildren and 14 great grandchildren.

Burial in Mount Hope Cemetery in Topeka.

Wallace, Harriet "Betty" Johnson, 92, passed away Jan. 21, 2007. She was born Aug. 14, 1914, in Wamego and later lived on a farm east of Tecumseh.

Betty attended Topeka's Bethany College and graduated from Topeka High School in 1931.

Before her marriage, she taught school at the Milliken and Oak Grove one-room schools in Tecumseh.

She was married to James D. Wallace on Sept. 5, 1938. He preceded her in death in 1990.

She is survived by her son, Douglas Wallace of Topeka, a nephew, John R. Strain of Junction City, Ks.; a niece, Patricia DeLapa of Fayetteville, NC., and great and great-great nieces and nephews.

Burial in West Lawn Memorial Gardens Cemetery, Topeka.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

New Life Members:

Virgil King and wife Bonnie (McMurrian) King
Carl Paslay and wife Kathy (Whaley) Paslay
Raymond Schimmel
Mary D. (Dresser) Burchill
Louis Burmeister and wife Rosalyn (Rowell) Burmeister
Loretta Vee Weaver
Christine King
Gale Elliott
Marie K. (Paslay) Neill
Ruth M. (Selch) Corzette
Joe Dean Christy and wife Jacqueline Sue (Sokola) Christy
Robert Keith Stanwick
and wife Beverly (Bonfield) Stanwick
Doris (Newman) Norwood
Judith (Bates) Bryant by John J. Bryant, Jr.
John J. Bryant, Jr. by friend Courtney Mikesic

Sean G. Welch by wife Katherine 'Kate' Welch
Rhonda M. Banks
Judy Ann (Dillon) Dexter by her husband Jason Dexter
Robert Kaser and wife Aamyie (Eckert) Kaser
by Grandmother Marquita "Mark" Christy
Aaron Kaser and wife Tina (Williams) Kaser
by Grandmother Marquita "Mark" Christy
Tim J. Walter by parents Richard & Alta Walter
John Calhoun McCord
Roland B. Hoffer and
Rodney B. Hoffer and
Royall Hoffer by parents Russell & Mary Hoffer
Erma (Wulfskuhle) Worley
Vicki (Davis) Leochner
John R. Blaska and
William P. Bylaska and wife Christie L Bylaska
by their grandmother Lura McAlexander
Warren Wilson and
Marcus Wilson by mother Elaine Wilson
Steve Hennessey
Gerald R. Long
Mark Boose by Marquita 'Mark' Christy & Freda LaDuke
Scot W. Clement
Regina Y. (Banks) Clement
Samantha G. Clement
Julie D. Clement
Sharon S. (Coffman) Nowlin
Robert "Bob" Pollom
Cynthia G. Treaster
Marci Francisco and Joe Bickford
Gale (Lineberry) Elliott
Stephanie E. Cardwell

NEW LIFE MEMORIALS

Godfrey, Dick F. and Pauline (Mears) Godfrey
by daughter Paula Johnson and son Richard Godfrey
Winter, Charles B. and Jessie (Trowbridge) Winter
by son A. K. and Charlene Winter
Notice: Ladies when joining as a Life Member,
please include your maiden name.

Sesquicentennial Excitement

Back in the early 1980s the Lecompton Historical Society first began offering Life Memberships. In 1982, there were 72 new lifers; in 1983, 64; in 1984, 56. Since then the number of new "lifers" for most years has run in the 20s.

Now comes 2006, a big Sesquicentennial Year, and a big membership drive spearheaded by the Bald Eagle. New Life Members in 2006: an even 100.

NEW ITEMS DONATED TO TERRITORIAL CAPITAL MUSEUM

- Framed List of Lecompton Postmaster Appointments 1855-1988, Certificate Appointment of Victoria J. Roberts as Lecompton Postmaster 1988, Nameplate, by Vicky Roberts Bahnmaier
- Eisenhower First Issue Envelope & Stamp, Nixon & Eisenhower Photo, Eisenhower March Sheet Music by memorial funds for Alice Lee Scott Blake
- Albums of Rendevous photos and other Lecompton events, Big Springs Church photos, Tours of Lecompton Sites, Photo Governors' Sign Dedication, 2 Handpainted Christmas Plates by Shirley Holderman Funk
- Hand Drill Press by George & Rita Transmeier Mathews
- Fort Titus Poster by Lecompton Historical Society
- Tape of Rev. Ken Baker delivering prayer for Ks. House of Representatives by Rep. Tom Sloan
- Black Knit Bonnett, 1930's dress, 3 issues Journal World newspapers, Lecompton Jaycees' Vest by Carl Bahnmaier
- Korean War Posters by estate of Col. Fred Middleton
- Collar and Cuff Set, Linen Collar, Crocheted Collar by Helen Norwood
- Eisenhower Key Chain by memorial funds for David VanDyke
- Books, "Lincoln and Chief Justice Taney" and Lincoln Speeches & Writings 1832-1858 by Lecompton Historical Society
- 2 Lecompton High School Baseball Trophies by Paula Godfrey Johnson
- Stereoscope by memorial funds for Evelyn Turner Goodrich
- Photos of The Spring at Big Springs, Watson Church, Bud Newell on tractor by Helen Frye Hildenbrand
- Lecompton Owl Yearbooks 1953, 1954, 1955, School paper "Cruiser" Dec 1954 issue by Donna McClanahan Harding
- Lane University Information 1893 by Tim Rues
- Picture of Bill and Dale Faust by Elaine Wilson
- Picture of Sarah Dummer Holley by Elsie Middleton
- 1905 Grade Card for Maud Bunce by Paul Linnebery

*****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 \$10.00 per year for individual membership and \$14.00 for a family membership. The dues are from December to December. Life membership is \$100 per individual. Contributions are tax deductible. Checks should be made payable to the Lecompton Historical Society, and mailed to Georgia Trammel, Chairman, 11 N. 2064 Rd, Lecompton, KS 66050

- () \$10.00 Annual Individual Membership
- () \$14.00 Annual Family Membership
- () \$100.00 Individual Life
- () \$50.00 Individual Memorial Membership

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PLEASE NOTIFY US OF ANY CHANGE OF ADDRESS

It costs Lecompton Historical Society at least .92 cents for a change of address and the newsletter returned for .78 cent for a postcard to notify us of your change of address, and your newsletter will be thrown away.

If you have moved and do not get your newsletter, this is why.



—photo by Jan Peterson

OLD WOODEN CROSS – Big Springs’ United Methodist Church Pastor Paul Stevens and Old Church Cleanup Chairman Dan Fox called on a cast of willing characters to highlight the remains of the old limestone church. The picturesque relic sits south of US HWY 40 and immediately across from the church and parsonage. There was a time when the fearless members of the congregation wondered whether poison ivy might stymie their cleanup efforts.

Lecompton Historical Society

President *Paul Bahnmaier
 Vice President *Rich McConnell
 Secretary *Vicki Roberts Bahnmaier
 Treasurer * Betty Leslie
 Board Members * Leah Kuhlman, George Simmons
 Keith Noe, Jason Dexter,
 Duane Wulfkuhle, Ron Meier
 Curators *Opal Goodrick, Ann Dunnaway
 George & Arloene Simmons, Darlene Paslay
 Membership Ass'ts. *Sandy Nichols
 Bald Eagle Editor *John Peterson

Mailing Labels *Sandra Nichols
 Program *Beverly VanDyke
 Membership *Georgia Simmons Trammel
 Genealogy & Historical Researcher *Iona Spencer
 Photographer * Shirley Funk
 Tours *Charlene Winter
 Funding *Mae Holderman
 Illustrator *Ellen Duncan
 Assistant Treasurer *Sherri Neill
 Kitchen *Vicki Leochner
 Memorials *Ruth Ice

Change Service Requested
 Published by
 The Lecompton Historical Society
 Lecompton, Kansas

Non-Profit Organization
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID
 Permit No. 1
 Lecompton, KS