

# ALBUM

## JOHNSON COUNTY MUSEUM

Volume XVII Number 4

Fall 2004



George Hodges (right) and unidentified colleague demonstrate the path to good roads. Circa 1905-1915. Johnson County Museum Collection.

## The Will of the People: Kansas Governors from Johnson County

In this election year, the news is dominated by political races at all levels of government. Over the last century and a half, Johnson County has been a major contributor to the political scene within the state of Kansas. The first governor of Kansas Territory made his headquarters here, and since then five Kansas governors have hailed from Johnson County.

### TERRITORIAL GOVERNOR

Johnson County's role as a locus of political power in Kansas dates from the earliest days of the territory. From late 1854 to the summer of 1855, the Shawnee Methodist Mission housed the office of the first territorial governor. Unlike state governors, territorial governors were under no obligation to the voters, but only to the President of the United States, who appointed them. President Franklin Pierce, a Democrat, chose as the first territorial governor of Kansas a Pennsylvania lawyer named Andrew Reeder. At age 47, Reeder had never before held public office. He

arrived at Leavenworth on the riverboat *Polar Star* in early October, 1854, and for a short time lived at the fort. Late in November, the governor's office moved to the Shawnee Methodist Mission. The first territorial legislature was elected the following March, and the governor's relationship with that body was a tumultuous one. Perhaps hoping to escape the border hub-bub, Reeder moved the legislature to Pawnee, a townsite near Fort Riley, but the legislators soon moved themselves back, reconvening at Shawnee Mission on July 16. Pro-slavery advocates perceived Reeder as less and less sympathetic to their cause. On July 27, the legislature signed a request to President Pierce asking him to remove the governor. This he quickly did, and Reeder left office August 16.

Reeder remained in Kansas for another year after his ouster, associating with the "unofficial government" of freestaters and generally endorsing their cause. Under threat from proslavery sympathizers, Reeder escaped Kansas in the spring of 1856 and returned to his law practice in Pennsylvania. He defected to the Republican Party, campaigning actively

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## DONORS TO THE COLLECTION

The Johnson County Museum thanks the many generous people and organizations whose donations have been added to the permanent collection since the last newsletter.

Barbara Baker  
John Cameron  
Vickie Charlesworth  
Priscilla DeVault  
Dorothy P. English II  
Betty Novak  
Bill Remaley  
Mrs. Rose Stolowy  
Dorothy Van Booven  
Hannes Zacharias

Somerset Elementary School  
Shawnee Journal-Herald  
Shawnee Mission Community Service Board

## NEW ACQUISITIONS

The Johnson County Museums collects artifacts from all periods of the county's history, from early settlement through the present day. The following items are among the many recent donations to the permanent collection.

### ROES BY ANY OTHER NAME. . .

This photograph of Isabella Roe and her great-niece Ellen Roe McKenzie is one of several portraits of Roe family members recently donated by Betty Novak. Isabella Roe died in 1962 at the age of 106. She was a daughter of John Roe, a prominent Johnson County farmer and businessman. The Roe house, completed in 1891, stood at the corner of Roe Avenue and Johnson Drive until 1958, when it was razed for road construction.



### GREENWOOD GRADUATES

Members of the 1952 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduating class at Greenwood School pose with their teachers. Priscilla DeVault donated the photo, which includes the image of her husband, Joseph Benjamin DeVault, Jr. (third from right). Also included in the donation is an autographed card from Kansas governor Edward F. Arn. It accompanied a letter from the governor about an upcoming class visit to the statehouse in Topeka.



### THE SUN SETS ON SOMERSET

This school flag is among a large collection of Somerset Elementary School memorabilia recently donated to the Johnson County Museum. The school, located at Somerset Drive and Belinder in Prairie Village, was closed at the end of the 2003-2004 school year after 50 years of operation.



### Johnson County Museum

Friends of Johnson County Museums  
Marc Erickson, President

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#### Museum Staff:

Mindi Love, Director  
Dr. Anne Marvin, Curator of Collections  
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Mary Dwyer, Marketing & Development Officer  
Kathy Daniels, Assistant Curator  
Russ Czaplewski, Collection Manager  
Tristan Smith, Office Manager  
Laura Grinstead, Lanesfield School Site Manager  
Stephanie Clayton, Historical Interpreter  
Andrew Dunehoo, Historical Interpreter

### LET'S MAKE A DEAL

Dorothy Van Booven donated this wooden yard sign. It advertised the house that her family purchased at 5020 Nall, Mission, in 1963. Steve Vogli & Co., an Overland Park real estate office, operated in the early- to mid-1960s.



## WISH LIST

The Museum is still seeking items related to business history in the county. These might include promotional giveaways, business histories, photographs of business events or functions, business ledgers, and so on. If you have any business history items that you wish to donate to the museum's permanent collection, please call Anne Marvin, Curator of Collections, at 631-6709.

# MUSEUM NOTES

## MUSEUM RECEIVES \$90,000 FEDERAL GRANT

United States Senator Pat Roberts announced that the Johnson County Museum will receive a \$90,745 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, through a competitive federal grant program called *Museums for America*. Only XX of the XXX museums that applied for funding received awards.

The grant will allow the Museum to develop, in collaboration with the Johnson County Library, an interactive, fully-searchable database of the Museum's collection of 10,000 historic images of Johnson County. The grant will also allow for the creation of [www.jocohistory.net](http://www.jocohistory.net), a comprehensive web site devoted to the history of Johnson County. The Museum and Library envision the web site to be a complete resource of information and resources of the county history's from all the various county, city and community historical societies and agencies. "Accessible records and collections promote lifelong learning in Kansas," said Senator Roberts. "These funds will allow Johnson County to preserve history and strengthen the community."

The grant will be matched by \$148,000 provided by both the Museum and the Library in the form of staff salaries and marketing expenses to promote the completed project. The matching funds are part of both institutions' regular operating budgets. The project will take place over a two-year period and is expected to be unveiled at public events in October of 2006.

## A NEW VISION

Many of you have undoubtedly read articles in local newspapers over the past few months about a proposal to create a Family Cultural Center which would include a history museum, children's library and a participatory arts program. The proposal also called for merging the

Johnson County Museum and the Johnson County Library. To help the boards and staff evaluate this opportunity, the Museum will be engaging in a year-long strategic planning process, to be paid for by a \$19,500 grant from the Johnson County Heritage Trust Fund. We hope to create a new vision for the Museum to grow and reach more Johnson Countians with the unique and interesting history of our communities. The concept of the Family Cultural Center is one of many ideas the Museum boards and staff will investigate.

We want this process to be as inclusive as possible and so we're asking for your help. In late October, you will receive a membership survey in the mail asking for your opinions on a variety of issues affecting the Museum. Please take a few minutes to complete the survey and return it. Also over the next year, we plan to host several community forums to present reports on the progress being made and to invite you to share your ideas and opinions. I strongly encourage you, as a member of the Friends of Johnson County Museum, to attend one or all of the forums. Your feedback is invaluable to us and we sincerely want to know your thoughts. We look forward to what will surely be an exciting year ahead for the Museum and hope you will join us in creating a plan for a stronger and larger community history museum for Johnson County.

## BECOME A TIME TRAVELER

Museum members can now enjoy a new benefit of membership! When you join or re-new your membership in the Friends of Johnson County Museum, you will now be eligible to receive discounts at museum stores and free or reduced admissions at over 100 history museums and historical societies in 42 states. Beginning on October 15<sup>th</sup>, the Johnson County Museum will be a part of this exciting reciprocal program called *Time Travelers*. The program was started by the Missouri Historical Society in St. Louis and offers discounts at places like the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, the Colorado Historical Society in Denver, the Chicago Historical Society and the New York Historical Society in New York City. To learn more about the program and to see a full list of the participating museums, visit our web site at [www.jocomuseum.org](http://www.jocomuseum.org).

# VERNON'S NOOK

A very distinctive and rare example of architecture can be found in Antioch Park (6501 Antioch Road.) Known today as Administrative Buildings A and B, the unusual English cottage style structures were once part of a country estate called *Vernon's Nook*.

The name, *Vernon's Nook*, came from the builder and original owner of the home, Grace Vernon. She purchased the scenic property on April 2, 1923 with the intent of building an English country

style home. The estate eventually featured several other buildings including a guest house, stables and tenant housing. Starting in 1931, the property changed hands several times during the years until the final owners, Geraldine and Lathrop Backstrom, Sr., sold it in 1956 to the Johnson County Park and Recreation District. Antioch Park, which opened to the public in 1958, consists of 44 acres of land, two lakes, the original home and associated buildings from the estate. Today, the two remaining original structures, the home and



*Vernon's Nook* estate house, 2004. Johnson County Museum Collection.

guesthouse, house some of the administrative offices for the Johnson County Park and Recreation District. A large wrap-around porch was added to the main home in later years to provide additional outdoor picnic table space. Although the porch does change the outward appearance at first view, it cannot hide the unique architecture of the building itself.

The architecture of the house is a very distinctive sub-set of the Tudor architectural style called English Cottage. *Vernon's Nook* showcases a defining feature of this style, a false thatched roof consisting of a composition roofing material that is rolled around the eaves and rakes of the roofline to mimic the look of a thick layer of thatch. Other English Cottage features visible at *Vernon's Nook* are sash windows divided into several panes, and dormer windows. This home features a very distinctive curved "eyebrow" dormer that further emphasizes the rounded edges of the roof. Most examples of this style of home date from the 1920s and 1930s, although it was never a common style anywhere in the United States. Preserved within the county's parkland, *Vernon's Nook* is a unique treasure that adds to the diversity of the built environment in Johnson County.

## ANNUAL CAMPAIGN PARTNERS

Many thanks to the following corporations and foundations who have contributed to the success of the Museums through the Annual Campaign.

## BENEFACTORS

(\$5,000 and above)

V & H Charitable Foundation

## SPONSORS

(\$1,000 and above)

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American Family Insurance, Steve Taylor  
Summit American Insurance

## THE 41-DAY GOVERNOR

Frank Leslie Hagaman's 41-day term as Governor is one of the more curious episodes in the state's history. Although now largely forgotten, events leading the Hagaman "administration" caused some at the time to proclaim that back-room deal making robbed Hagaman of his political due.

Hagaman, a Johnson County attorney and active Republican, had served in the state legislature for a number of years and in 1950 was serving his second elected term as the Lieutenant Governor of Kansas. Frank Carlson, a Concordia Republican, was serving his second term as governor. When Kansas Senator Clyde Reed died in 1949, Carlson appointed Kansas City businessman Harry Darby to serve out the term. In 1950, Carlson campaigned for U.S. Senate and won. Darby then resigned his seat to allow Carlson to gain seniority in the Senate. Carlson, whose gubernatorial term was to end in January, 1951, resigned the governor's office in late November, 1950. Lieutenant Governor Hagaman was sworn in to fill out the governor's term. Hagaman served 41 days. Since the legislature was not in session during that time, his main duty was to shepherd the new state budget to completion before the next chief executive took office.

This story is odd enough, but even odder circumstances cast their shadow on Hagaman's peculiar position. Newspaper stories of the time indicate that Hagaman felt that he had paid his political dues and should be the Republican nominee for governor in 1950. An editorial in the *Leavenworth Times* (7/24/50) intimated that the Harry Darby camp, in league with *The Kansas City Star*, ordered Hagaman not to declare his candidacy, as it would fragment the Republican Party. The Darby camp backed Edward Arn, a lawyer from Wichita.

Whatever "orders" may have been issued, in January Hagaman took his opportunity during Kansas Day, an annual Republican gathering in Topeka, to step up and announce his candidacy for governor. An uproar ensued, followed by a rough-and-tumble campaign that ended with Hagaman's defeat in the fall Republican primary. The day after Hagaman's swearing-in as interim governor, a Topeka newspaper columnist remarked, "They will hang ex-Governor Hagaman's picture in January, although some people still think he was framed last Kansas Day."

*continued from page 1*

for John C. Fremont (the first Republican candidate for president) in 1856. Reeder served as a delegate to the Republican National Convention in 1860.

Reeder's "term", between being commissioned on June 29, 1854, and dismissal by Pierce in late July 1855, was a mere 13 months, a short and rocky political tenure. Johnson County's next



During his stay in Johnson County, Reeder allegedly lived in this house that still stands at 10910 West 60<sup>th</sup> Street in Shawnee. A restaurant, Governor's Meeting House, now occupies the building. *Johnson County Museum Collection.*

governor managed to build a much more illustrious career for himself on both the state and national levels.

## A REFORM CANDIDATE

John P. St. John, a Union veteran of the Civil War, moved to Olathe from Illinois in 1869. He soon set up a successful law practice and, like many Grand Army of the Republic veterans, remained a staunch Republican. In 1872 he was elected to the Kansas Senate and in 1878, Kansas Republicans nominated St. John as their candidate for governor. He won by a large margin and was re-elected in 1880.

St. John was a popular politician, well known for his oratorical abilities. Kansans named towns and a county for him, and he received 62 invitations to speak at 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebrations around the state in 1880. His administration was noteworthy for investment in new state buildings including the Topeka reform school, the Osawatomie hospital and the west wing of the statehouse. Appropriations were made for large additions to the Kansas State School for the Deaf in Olathe, and coal mines in Lansing were opened to create jobs for inmates. St. John was also noted for providing jobs, housing and aid to the thousands of indigent blacks immigrating to Kansas from the south.

Undoubtedly the most significant legislation during St. John's terms stemmed from the governor's stance as an ardent prohibitionist. St. John advocated a constitutional ban on the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors, and the legislature followed his lead. The measure was ratified by a majority of the voters in November, 1880. As head of state, St. John hosted a number of "water banquets," at which no drinks stronger than water were served. Distinguished guests included former president Ulysses S. Grant, who may not have fully appreciated the governor's teetotaling tendencies.

In 1882, Governor St. John received an unprecedented nomination for a third term. Due to a combination of a third-party challenge (from former governor Charles Robinson of the Greenback party), the third-term issue, and St. John's strong stance on both prohibition and woman suffrage, Democratic candidate George Glick emerged victorious.



John Pierce St. John. *Johnson County Museum Collection.*

Kansas' prohibition governor soon gained fame on the national stage. In 1884, St. John was so disappointed at the failure of the Republicans to include a prohibition plank in their national platform, he left the party and accepted the Prohibition Party's nomination for President. St. John campaigned energetically, particularly in New York, which he considered a key state. Nationally, St. John and his running mate received 150,626 votes, with 25,000 in New York State. The result was that Grover Cleveland, the Democratic candidate for president, carried New York by fewer than 1200 votes and consequently won the presidency. We would recognize St. John as the Ralph Nader of his time—he was widely vilified for deserting the Republican Party and pulling votes away that might have guaranteed a Republican in the White House. The backlash in Kansas was swift and sure, resulting in the legislature rechristening the county that bore his name. Undeterred, St. John continued his career as Prohibition advocate, traveling over 350,000 miles to make some 4,500 speeches for the cause.

Over time, the bitterness over St. John's "betrayal" of the Republicans faded, although he remarked, "I believe I have been hanged in effigy more times than any other, and offered enough tar and feathers, to corner the market." St. John died at his home in Olathe at the age of 83 in 1916. The city honored his memory ten years later with the naming of John P. St. John Memorial High School, erected at the corner of Park and Water.

## THE GOOD ROADS GOVERNOR

Although officially of the Democratic persuasion, the next governor from Johnson County pushed for social reforms and government services that had been dear to the heart of St. John. George Hodges, a successful Olathe businessman, became governor in 1913, only the second Democrat ever elected to that office. His victory was not easily won—in the closest statewide contest ever, Hodges beat opponent Arthur Capper by only 29 votes. Hodges won with 167,437 votes (46.6%), beating Capper's 167,408 (46.5%) and Socialist George W. Kleihege's 24,767 (6.9%).

George Hodges had risen from the poverty of a fatherless home to a successful business partnership with his brother that included a chain of eight hardware stores and fourteen lumber yards as well as banking interests and ownership of a newspaper, the *Johnson County Democrat*. George Hodges' political career began with two years' service as an Olathe city councilman. In 1904 he was elected to the Kansas Senate. Hodges was instrumental in passing legislation giving women the vote and he also introduced a good roads bill that became law in 1907. Kansas was the first state in the country to have such a law, which provided for the construction of hard-surfaced roads with funding through county and township governments.

As governor from January 1913 to January 1915, Hodges continued his reform efforts. He appointed a number of women to key state positions and increased state support for education. The Hodges administration also pushed through legislation supporting better schools, stronger regulation of business, and the upgrading of state hospitals and prisons.

The election of 1914 again pitted Hodges against Arthur Capper, and this time Capper won. Hodges returned to his businesses in Olathe and never again sought elective office, although he remained active in civic life. Hodges died in 1947 at the age of 81.

## THE INTERIM GOVERNOR

These days Johnson Countian Frank Leslie Hagaman is known, if at all, as the man who served as governor for 41 days in 1950-51. His short executive career, however, belied long years of service to the

*continued on page 7*

# Thank You!

# Thank You!!

# Thank You!!!

The Johnson County Museum would like to thank the many individuals and organizations that donate their time, energy and heart to the success of the Museum. From September 2003 to September 2004, 1638 hours were contributed to benefit the Museum. Volunteers led tours through The 1950s All-Electric House, worked with the Museum's collections, helped install exhibits, assisted with mailings, conducted education programs at the Lanesfield School, helped with special events, managed the Museum's clippings files and served on the Museum's boards. We thank you all!!!



Freelyn McGee (left), gives 1950s All-Electric House tours every week and helps at special events.

### Museum Advisory Council

Calvin Engelmann - Chair  
Nancy Wallerstein - Vice-Chair  
Bill Anthony  
Chip Corcoran  
Oscar Johnson  
Benjamin Mann  
Joyce Rabas



Barb Baker (left) helps Assistant Curator Kathy Daniels (right) manage the Museum's clippings file.



Friends Board member Robin Burch (left picture) and Board Member Heather Woodson (center, right photo) and her children Charlie (left) and Gillian (right) Long handed out balloons at the 50th Anniversary for the All-Electric House.



### Friends of Johnson County Museums

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Cassie Mundt volunteered at the Museum of History for the National Honor Society program and ended up working the summer as one of our part-time Historical Interpreters.

## Volunteers for Johnson County Museum

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# THANKS FOR YOUR FRIENDSHIP!

The Friends of Johnson County Museum was established in 1987 as a not-for-profit organization to support exhibit development, educational programs and special events for the Johnson County Museum. The following individuals, organizations and businesses supported the Friends with a contribution over the past year.

We are very thankful for your generosity and your friendship! Thanks!

## Best Friend \$250 & up

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Cynthia L. Horn \*  
Betty Hougland \*  
Donald & Dorothy  
Hougland \*  
Judge Gerald & Evelyn  
Hougland \*  
Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence  
A. Hughes \*  
Virginia Hutton \*  
Charlie Hyland \*  
Donald & Gloria  
Inbody \*  
Mary Kay Ingenthron \*  
Sandy Jacobs  
Susan Jarsulic  
John M. Jenia \*  
Myra Jenks \*  
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Johnson \*  
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Elisabeth Kanter \*  
Richard Karsten \*  
Sue Kennedy \*  
Laura Kinsey \*  
Meldon & Carrie  
Kirk \*  
Barbara Kleinman \*  
Rose J. Klusman \*  
Jay & Linda Knox \*  
Joyce Kochersperger \*  
Bill & Naomi Kramer \*  
C. Lee & Dorothy  
Kroh \*  
Ann Thomas & Roger  
Lambson \*  
Al Lane \*  
Ellen B. Laner \*  
Mr. & Mrs. Solomon  
Lang\*  
Norm Ledgin \*  
Johnna Lingle\*  
Mary Linse \*  
Ronald & Dorothy  
Lowe\*  
Eleanor Lowe \*

Ronald & Dorothy  
Lowe \*  
Mr. & Mrs. Ray B.  
Luhnnow, Jr. \*  
Margie Lundy \*  
Ruth O. Lynn \*  
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas  
Manning \*  
Ross & Jana Marshall \*  
Helen E. Mathews \*  
Vicky & Howard Mayer  
Freelyn & Betty  
McGee \*  
Marjorie Meador \*  
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Medina \*  
Ralph & Maryellen  
Meeker \*  
Jack Miller \*  
Trish Miller  
Monica Moll \*  
Mark & Mary  
Mollentine  
Maron Moore \*  
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Murphy \*  
Gertrude Myers \*  
Rich & Fran Nelson \*  
Barbara Neufeld \*  
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Donald Nigg \*  
Marty Nolte \*  
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Mary Jo O'Brien \*  
Bill & Katherine  
O'Connor \*  
Tim & Donna  
Owens \*  
Catherine A. Parris \*  
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Floyd & Carolyn  
Perkins \*  
Doris P. Pierce  
Norma Pesch \*  
Imogene L. Player  
Virginia Price Owen \*  
John T. Ramsey, Jr. \*  
Debbie Randolph  
Annette M. Redler \*  
John Rich \*  
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Richardson \*  
Mrs. Bernice Richter \*  
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Paul & Lorene Rieke \*  
Mary Ellen Rixey \*  
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Janice Russell \*  
Jim & Marion Russell \*  
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Ed & Bonnie  
Schmiedeler \*  
Jean & Edward  
Schmitt \*  
Don & Phyllis  
Schultz\*

Albin & Adrienne  
Schweers\*  
Bettie Sue Scott\*  
Alfred & Mary  
Seamands \*  
J.D. and Opal  
Shankel \*  
George & Mary  
Seamands \*  
Agnes Shellhammer \*  
Wallace & Susann  
Shinkle \*  
Bonita Siemens  
Mrs. Geraldine  
Silvers \*  
Bob & Aletha  
Simon \*  
Sharon Sjoblom \*  
Arthur and Kay  
Smith \*  
Bill and Sally Smith  
Linotte Smith \*  
Mary Kay Smith \*  
Peggy Smith \*  
Arthur & Kay  
Smith \*  
Dick & Margaret  
Southall \*  
Wilson & Ailie  
Speer \*  
Susan Staes \*  
Dianne Starcke\*  
Stewart Stein  
Mary Stewart \*  
Sally Stokes \*  
Sherie Surbaugh \*  
Jean Swanson \*  
John W. Switzer \*  
Norine K. Talley \*  
The Sweet Life at  
Shawnee  
Betty L. Thompson \*  
Charles Thompson \*  
Dr. Norma Thorp \*  
Vaughnie G. Tinsley \*  
Keith Tolson \*  
Thayer & Dorothy  
Townsend \*  
David and Nancy  
Turnbull  
John & Evelyn  
VanGoethem\*  
Helen Voigts \*  
Anna Walker \*  
June Walker \*  
James & Connie  
Walsh \*  
Marjorie Webb \*  
James Wheat \*  
Loretta A. Wilder \*  
Karin Winn \*  
Leroy & Mary  
Wisner \*  
David C. Wysong \*  
Martin & P. Darlene  
Yocum  
Hannes Zacharias \*  
Zarda Brothers  
Holdings, LLC \*  
Ann & Matt  
Zimmerman  
Frieda Zipperlen

\* denotes renewing  
members

continued from page 4

people of his county and his state.

Hagaman was born in Illinois in 1894 and grew up in Kansas City, Kansas. After serving in the Army during World War I, Hagaman earned a law degree and returned to Wyandotte County, where he set up practice. In 1935, he and his wife moved to a home on Wyncote Lane in far north-east Johnson County.

In 1938, Hagaman ran as a Republican for the state legislature. He was elected for four consecutive terms, serving as a member of the legislative council, Majority Floor Leader, and Speaker of the House. Hagaman was elected to two terms as Lieutenant Governor of the state in 1946 and 1948.

“Les” Hagaman was well-liked by both constituents and fellow politicians. He was an effective advocate for his home county as well. During his first legislative term, Hagaman introduced eight bills of local concern and all eight of them became law. These included the first local zoning law in the state, permitting the zoning of suburban areas for the protection of residential property through the action of township zoning boards. Other bills permitted extension of Kansas City bus service farther into Johnson County, enabled greater funding for volunteer fire departments and provided money for restoration of the north building at the Shawnee Methodist Mission in Fairway.

In the fall of 1950, the sitting governor, Frank Carlson, ran for and won a U.S. Senate seat. Carlson resigned the governorship in late November. As Lieutenant Governor, Hagaman took over for the remainder of Carlson’s term. His swearing-in ceremony took only 14 minutes, and his term lasted 41 days, until the newly-elected Edward Arn took office in January. The legislature was not in



Frank Leslie Hagaman, Governor from November 28, 1950 to January 9, 1951. Johnson County Museum Collection.

session during this period and Hagaman’s duties consisted mostly of shepherding the state budget through its final stages of preparation.

After his brief reign as state executive, Hagaman returned to practice law in Johnson County. He died on June 23, 1966.

## NATIVE SON

John Anderson was the first governor from Johnson County who was actually a native. Born on a farm near Olathe in 1917, Anderson graduated from Olathe High School in 1935. He attended K-State and K.U., earning a law degree in 1944. Anderson then worked in the office of Federal Judge Walter A. Huxman (a former Kansas governor) and in 1946 started his own law practice in Olathe.

Soon thereafter, John Anderson began his political career, running successfully as a Republican for the office of county attorney. His involvement in some high-profile cases helped him win the 1951 race for the Kansas Senate. In 1956 Anderson was appointed to fill an unexpired term as state attorney general, and he won election to the same office in 1956 and 1958.



Governor John Anderson (left) and Johnson County Commissioner Harry King, Jr., at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the DeSoto bridge, 1964. Johnson County Museum Collection.

In 1960, Anderson won the gubernatorial race, defeating the incumbent Democratic governor, George Docking. His bid for re-election in 1962 also was successful. Anderson and his family were the first to occupy Cedar Crest, the newly-renovated governor’s mansion in Topeka.

Anderson was known for his tough stance in criminal cases, and as governor he refused executive clemency for the two men convicted of the Clutter family murders in southwest Kansas (immortalized by Truman Capote in *In Cold Blood*.) Governor Anderson also backed many changes in education, as school district unification took place across the state, several vocational-technical schools were organized and the University of Wichita joined the regents system under the new name of Wichita State University. Anderson also oversaw improvements in the state highway system and state psychiatric and medical facilities.

John Anderson did not seek a third term in 1964, choosing instead to return to his law practice in Overland Park. He has continued through the years with his law practice and farming in Johnson County.

## MANAGING THE UNMANAGEABLE

Robert Bennett, the last governor from Johnson County, became the state’s chief executive officer at a time when the government had grown complex and unwieldy. Bennett’s lengthy experience in elective office helped him to deal with the demands of statewide service. Prior to winning the gubernatorial election in 1974, Bennett, a practicing lawyer, had spent ten years as mayor and city councilman in Prairie Village. He had been elected to the Kansas Senate for three terms, serving from 1965 to 1974, one year as president of the senate.

The 1974 election is notable for two political firsts—it was the first time that candidates for governor and lieutenant governor ran as a team, and the first run for a four-year term. The race was a colorful one. Much comment was made about Bennett’s beard, and whether it was a political liability (he was, in fact, the first Kansas governor elected in the twentieth century with whiskers.) The combination of Bennett’s learned vocabulary, beard and Johnson County origins caused some across the state to view him as an elitist. On the other hand, his Democratic opponent was Attorney General Vern Miller, known for his flashy participation in drug raids and other dramatic law enforcement scenes.

Bennett did, in fact, win a narrow victory over Miller, and proceeded to try to streamline state government. He sought to hold down bureaucratic growth, achieve balance in appointed positions based on gender, race and geography, and to balance rural and urban concerns.

During Bennett’s term, the Republican Party lost political control on a number of fronts. Running for re-election in 1978, Bennett narrowly lost the race to John Carlin, the Democratic Speaker of the House of Representatives. Governor Bennett returned to Johnson County, where he continued in the legal profession until his death in October, 2000.

## TO LEARN MORE...

*Kansas Governors* by Homer E. Socolofsky. University Press of Kansas, 1990.

*Prohibition: A History* by Robert Smith Bader. University Press of Kansas, 1986.

[www.kshs.org/research/topics/politics/essay\\_governors.htm](http://www.kshs.org/research/topics/politics/essay_governors.htm)  
An overview of Kansas governors, on the website of the Kansas State Historical Society.

- 8. two
- 5. KERRY
- 4. Washington
- 3. vote
- 2. governor
- Down
- 10. John
- 9. elephant
- 7. George
- 5. Topeka
- 1. eighteen
- Across

# FUN FACTS ABOUT GOVERNORS FROM JOHNSON COUNTY

Governor George H. Hodges of Kansas, declares there is nothing more restful after a strenuous day of State business than an evening at home with the Edison Disc Phonograph. The chief executive of the State spends some of his happiest hours listening to the disc while in the enjoyment of family felicities.

*Edison Phonograph Monthly*  
March, 1914

In simple ceremonies at the State-house, Lt. Gov. Frank L. Hagaman will be sworn in for a 41-day interim term as the state's 31<sup>st</sup> chief executive. It will be only the second time in the state's history that a lieutenant governor has replaced a governor who resigned. [Hagaman replaced Governor Frank Carlson who was elected to the United States Senate].

*Topeka Daily Capital*  
November 28, 1950

Topeka women are commenting on how well-dressed the governor's wife is. So far we've only seen Mrs. [Frank] Carlson in formal dresses, but they are certainly smart and well chosen of excellent fabric and beautifully made. Mrs. Carlson is not very tall and her figure is small and trim. She wears her clothes well and her accessories are just right.

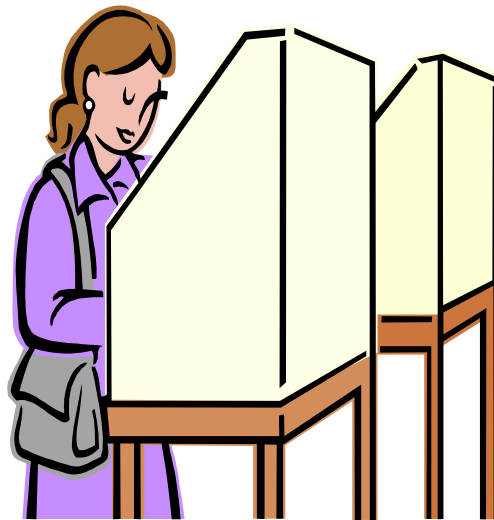
*Topeka Daily Capital*  
ca. 1947

Born in Indiana on February 25, 1833, [Governor John P.] St. John soon followed on an adventurous career of a young man in a young country. He traveled to Mexico, Central America and Hawaii. He fought in the Indian Wars in California and was a Lieutenant colonel for the Union Army during the Civil War. During the Civil War, St. John led a humanitarian campaign to deliver railroad carloads of food and clothing to more than 50,000 slaves who escaped to Kansas from the South.

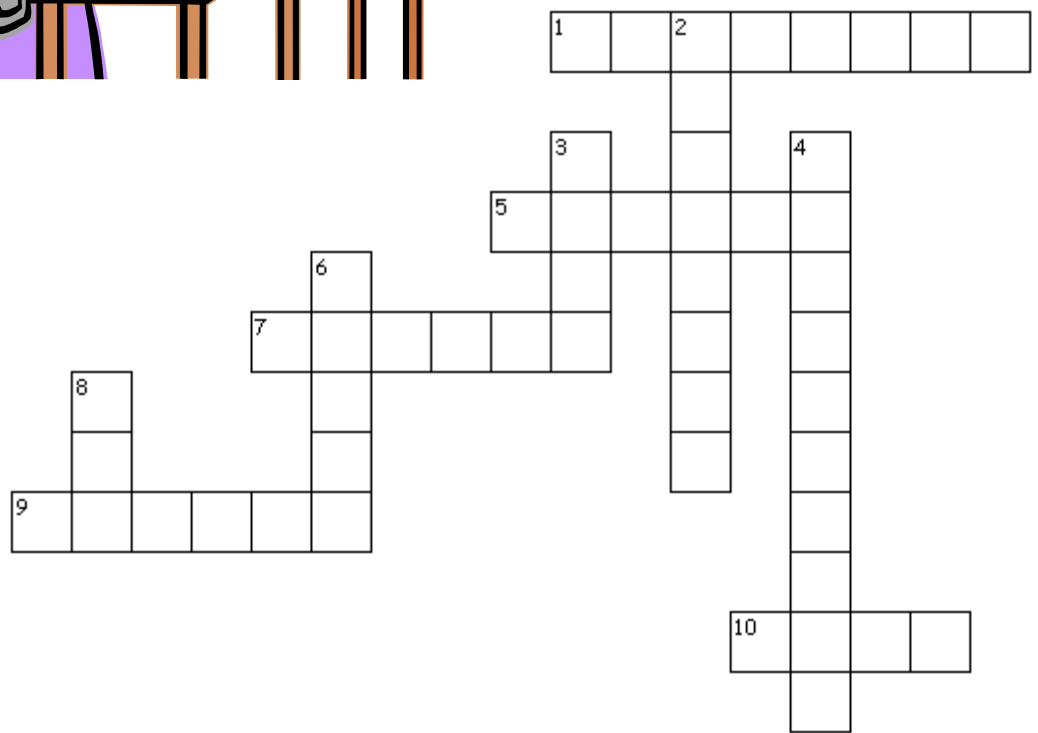
*The Kansas City Star*  
March 8, 1992

## PEEK INTO THE PAST...

### Election Day Fun!



You don't need to be 18 years old to learn about voting and the government. Complete the puzzle of government vocabulary.



**Across**

- 1. Age you need to be in order to vote
- 5. Capital of Kansas
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_ W. Bush, President of the United States
- 9. Animal that represents the Democratic Party
- 10. John P. St. \_\_\_\_\_, early Kansas Governor

**Down**

- 2. Office Kathleen Sebelius holds
- 3. What people do on election day
- 4. George \_\_\_\_\_, the first president of the United States
- 6. John \_\_\_\_\_, Democrat running for President
- 8. The number of senators from each state

Answers on page 7.

### TO LEARN MORE...

**Tag along** with your parents when they go to the polls to vote. You will be able to see the democratic process first hand. Remember – no voting until you're 18!

**Visit** these great websites to learn more about Kansas governors and government:

[www.firstgov.gov/citizens/topics/voting.shtml](http://www.firstgov.gov/citizens/topics/voting.shtml)  
The U.S. government's official web portal has information on voting for all Americans.

[www.kshs.org/people.governors.htm](http://www.kshs.org/people.governors.htm)  
The Kansas State Historical Society's website has information on all the Kansas governors.

[www.ksgovernor.org/kansas\\_kids.html](http://www.ksgovernor.org/kansas_kids.html)  
This is the official website of Governor Kathleen Sebelius. There is even a link to a kid's page with Kansas games!

# HISTORY MYSTERY

The students of Greenwood School posed with their teacher, Thelma Rafferty, in 1921. Only two students were identified when the photograph was shared with the Museum by Helen (Metz) Hiebl. The fifth girl on the left in the second row is Daisy Merrit and the seventh girl on the left in the second row is Helen Metz. If you recognize the individuals in this photograph please contact us at 913-631-6709. We appreciate your assistance!



# MONROVIA: A LITTLE BIT OF CALIFORNIA IN JOHNSON COUNTY

Parts of a hidden community named Monrovia can still be found, tucked within the city limits of present day Shawnee. The community of Monrovia was started in 1908, when Remi Caenen sold 40 acres of land for \$8,325 to James A. Rose, a real estate developer. Before moving to Kansas, Mr. Rose had lived in two California cities, Monrovia and Pasadena. When he plotted the land, he chose to commemorate his time in California by dividing the land into two distinct communities, Monrovia for the north tract and Pasadena to the south.

Over time, the name Pasadena was discontinued and the name Monrovia represented the

entire community. In 1912, James Rose died and Remi Caenen bought back the land. The lot prices were reduced, ranging from \$100.00 to \$125.00 each. With this change in price, the land sold rapidly, starting a thriving community.

The settlement of Monrovia included a 40 acre tract of land bounded by 57<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, Halsey Street on the east, Johnson Drive to the south and Long street to the west. Later, a 20 acre tract south of Johnson Drive was added and became home to several Monrovia businesses. Over the years a few of the commercial buildings have been replaced by newer buildings, but enough still stand to mark the place where Monrovia once flourished.

This little settlement also featured a noteworthy Johnson County landmark-the Caenen Castle, still standing at 12401 Johnson Drive (featured in the Spring 2003 *Album*.) At the time, Monrovia included amenities such as a garage, grocery stores, a park, a service station and a fire station. In 1956, Elizabeth Barnes, a noted local history columnist, wrote that "Monrovia today boasts quite a complete assortment of business concerns, selling merchandise and service of sufficient variety that, if the settlement should suddenly be cut off from the rest of the world by some catastrophe, it could survive comfortably for a time." Although Monrovia survived for 52 years, the neighboring town of Shawnee was rapidly expanding. Despite some protests by local residents, the community of Monrovia was officially annexed by the City of Shawnee in 1960.



The Monrovia Fire Station, circa 1957. The building still stands at 12321 Johnson Drive, currently used by the City of Shawnee Parks and Recreation Maintenance Department. Photograph courtesy of The Shawnee Fire Department.

## ENDOWMENT GIFTS

We thank those who have invested in the Museum's future with donations to the Endowment Fund.

- Eliot & Marcia Berkley
- Paul and Dorcas Doering
- Exxon matching gift for Dick and Gloria Haberkorn
- Paul and Barbara Gorman in memory of Ruth Hervey
- Ralph Hays
- IBM Foundation matching gift for Randall and Helen Ferguson
- Norm Ledgin in memory of Florence E. Westhoff
- Mindi Love in memory of Corinthian Nutter
- Janet Vaughan in memory of Corinthian Nutter
- Joan Barkley Wells in memory of Marguerite Wells
- Donna Williams

## JOIN US!

We invite you to be part of the Museum's future by joining the Friends of Johnson County Museum. The Friends support exhibit development, educational programs and special events. Your membership and other contributions are tax deductible.

Your membership brings you the following annual benefits:

- **Free admission to The 1950s All-Electric House**
- **Quarterly newsletter, ALBUM**
- **10% off museum store purchases**
- **50% discount on programs**
- **Invitations to Members' Only events**

Name _____ Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25-49 <b>Friend</b> <input type="checkbox"/> \$50-99 <b>Good Friend</b> <input type="checkbox"/> \$100-249 <b>Really Good Friend</b> <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 and up <b>Best Friend</b> <input type="checkbox"/> I am making an additional contribution of \$_____ in honor/memory of _____ <input type="checkbox"/> My company matches charitable donations. The matching form is enclosed. <input type="checkbox"/> Please send me information about volunteer opportunities.
<input type="checkbox"/> Enclosed is my check for \$_____ payable to <b>Friends of Johnson County Museum.</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Please charge \$_____ to my credit card. <input type="checkbox"/> Mastercard <input type="checkbox"/> Visa	
Acct. Number _____ Exp. Date _____  Signature _____	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Return to 6305 Lackman Road, Shawnee, KS 66217.</b></p>

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 www.jocomuseum.org  
 Tues-Sat 10:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
 Sunday 1:00 - 4:30 p.m.  
**ADMISSION IS FREE**

**THE 1950s ALL-ELECTRIC HOUSE**

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 for  
 children 12 and under

**LANESFIELD SCHOOL HISTORIC SITE**

18745 S. Dillie Road  
 Edgerton, KS 66021  
 (913) 893-6645  
 www.jocomuseum.org  
 Tues - Sun 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.  
**ADMISSION IS FREE**

## THE SECRET DANITES



*The Secret Danites: Kansas' First Jayhawkers*, by Todd Mildfelt. Todd Mildfelt Publishing, 2003

Prior to the Civil War there was the infamous battle over Bleeding Kansas. Anti-slavery and pro-slavery sentiments led to numerous heated battles throughout the new territory of Kansas. Secret societies, such as the Blue Lodges and the Dark Lantern began to emerge on both sides. One such anti-slavery group was known as the Danites. The Danites formed as a political and military organization to protect the free state settlers, rid the state their enemies, and usher fugitive slaves to safety along the Underground Railroad.

After reading of an alleged massacre that took place in Franklin County, near Ottawa, author Todd Mildfelt jumped feet first into the Kansas State Historical Society's manuscript collection and researched numerous newspapers. After studying copious notes by a man named Charles Leonhardt, Mildfelt noticed that he was detailing the work of a secret anti-slavery group. This group, pre-dating the infamous Jayhawkers, was called the Danites and was led by the infamous General James Lane.

Among Leonhardt's papers were portions of an unpublished manuscript telling the history of the secret society. Mildfelt has taken it upon himself to tell Leonhardt's story of the Danites. The story begins the moment he steps into Kansas Territory. Not long

after his arrival, Leonhardt meets James Lane who personally inducts him into the Danites. Leonhardt soon learned the group's secret grip, signs, ciphers and oath.

Originally, the group formed as a defensive group but Lane began to move the group into a more political realm, refusing to take action against atrocities. The Danites broke apart with Leonhardt joining the more radical branch. The more radical Danites began conducting raids throughout Kansas Territory on known pro-slavery households, driving them into Missouri or assassinating them. As the time of Bleeding Kansas began to come to a close and the secret group was no longer needed, Leonhardt moved to Cincinnati to attend law school. Upon his 1860 graduation, he returned to Kansas and joined the transportation of freed slaves from Lawrence, Kansas, to Iowa. Leonhardt followed up his Bleeding escapades by serving in the Union Army during the Civil War before finally settling down in Louisville, KS.

*The Secret Danites* blends Mildfelt's research with numerous quotes from Leonhardt as well as other settlers from the region. Famous Kansas figures such as Charles Robinson, James Lane and John Brown all came in contact with either Leonhardt or the Danites. These characters, along with both well-known and long-forgotten battles, weave together an immensely interesting tale of derring-do and espionage nearly one hundred years before we ever heard of James Bond or the Cold War.

*Editor's note: This book is for sale in the Museum of History's Museum Store. Members get a 10% discount.*

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