

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

The meeting was called to order by Senator August "Gus" Bogina at
Chairperson

11:30 a.m./p.m. on April 10, 1986 in room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:
Senator Doyen

Committee staff present:

Research Department: Robin Hunn, Laura Howard, Ray Hauke
Revisor's Office: Norman Furse
Committee Office: Judy Bromich, Doris Fager

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Joe Snell, Executive Director, State Historical Society
Marjorie Schnacke, Historic Topeka, Inc.
Jim French, Olathe
Kempton Lindquist, Intern for Rep. John Solbach
Paul Bahnmaier, President Lecompton Historical Society
Ione Paslay, Lecompton Rebekah Lodge
Margaret Noe, Lecompton Rebekah Lodge
Nellie Glenn, Lecompton Rebekah Lodge
Art Griggs, Attorney, Department of Administration

HB 2587 - Authorizing acquisition of Charles Curtis home by state historical society

Ms. Schnacke distributed her written testimony (Attachment A). There were questions from committee members, and discussion concerning purchase of the property. It was noted that this committee has appropriated \$25,000 toward an option to purchase this property if it becomes available. Ms. Schnacke expressed concern that the Governor will again veto the funding for this purchase.

Mr. French presented his written presentation, and committee members were given the opportunity to question him. (See Attachment B)

HB 3047 - Authorizing acquisition of Lecompton Constitutional Hall by state historical society

Mr. Lindquist presented Representative Solbach's written testimony (See Attachment C). He indicated that Representative Solbach supports the bill. Senator Winter stated that he had appeared with Representative Solbach to introduce the bill.

Mr. Bahnmaier presented his written statement (Attachment D). Senator Winter said his father had volunteered to undertake the raising of funds to acquire the property.

Ms. Paslay presented Attachment E. Committee members were given opportunity to question her.

Ms. Noe appeared in support of HB 3047. Committee members were given the opportunity to question her.

Ms. Glenn presented Attachment F, and members of the committee were given the opportunity to question her.

Mr. Snell presented his written testimony (Attachment G) regarding both of the above measures. He also distributed a letter showing approximate cost of renovating Constitution Hall at Lecompton (Attachment H)

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,

room 123-S, Statehouse, at 11:30 a.m./p/m./on April 10, 1986

HB 2587 and HB 3047 - Continued

A conceptual motion was made by Senator Talkington and seocnded by Senator Johnston to amend HB 3047 to provide that the Lecompton property may be acquired by purchase or by gift. The motion carried by voice vote.

Motion was made by Senator Winter and seconded by Senator Werts to report HB 3047 as amended favorably for passage. The motion carried by roll call vote.

Motion was made by Senator Harder and seconded by Senator Johnston to report HB 2587 favorably for passage. The motion carried by roll call vote.

HB 2997 - Santa Fe building renovation financing, loan from pooled money investment board

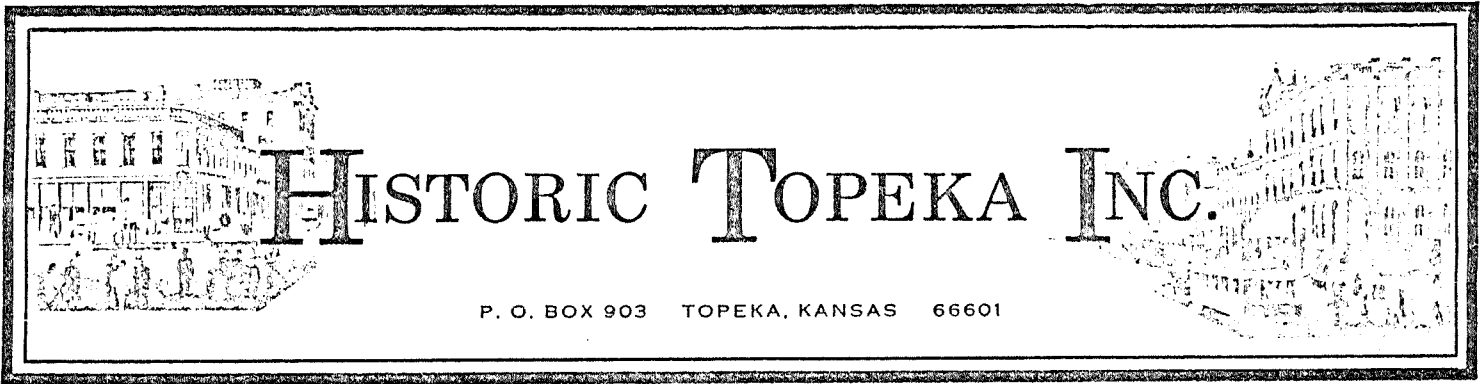
Mr. Griggs presented Attachment I, and reviewed that statement. Following a brief discussion, motion was made by Senator Werts and seconded by Senator Talkington to report HB 2997 favorably for passage. The motion carried by roll call vote.

INTRODUCTION OF BILL

Senator Gaines explained the purpose of Bill Draft RS 2894. He said that if a private concern proposes to build a lodge on a reservoir in the state, this bill will allow them to work with the state to do so.

Motion was made by Senator Gaines and seconded by Senator Werts to introduce the above bill and request that it be referred to Committee of the Whole. The motion carried by roll call vote.

The meeting was adjourned by the Chairman.



April 10, 1986

RE: HB 2587
Charles Curtis Home

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MARJORIE SCHNACKE
PRESIDENT
RUTH K. LAWSON
VICE-PRESIDENT
WILLIAM O. WAGNON
TREASURER
DOUGLASS W. WALLACE
SECRETARY

Historic Topeka, Inc. urges your support of HB 2587, as amended. Historic Topeka is the preservation organization of Shawnee County, responsible for the restoration of the Ward-Meade Home at 124 N. Fillmore, among other projects.

The acquisition of the home of former Vice President Charles Curtis at 1101 Topeka Avenue has gone through your Legislative channels in proper order. It was presented to your Historic Sites Review Board and favorably passed. For a property to meet the qualifications demanded by the Legislature when it set up the policies of the Historic Sites Review Board the property in question must not duplicate other property owned by the State; it must maintain its original appearance; be accessible for visitors; have adequate utilities and be identified with an important aspect of Kansas history.

NANCY HASKELL BLACK
MARILYN BROWNING
TIMOTHY J. CARKHUFF
BYRON COOK
ANDREA GLENN
FAITH B. GREENWOOD
MARC W. LAHR
DON LAMBERT
ED LOVE
MYRNA K. PREISNER
MARY ROWLAND
JOHN E. SALISBURY
LEE SCOTT
ADRIEN Y. SPENCER
LOIS S. SPRING
BARBARA STANLEY
JAMES C. TURNER
JAMES R. WARD
KAREN P. WELCH
CAROL K. ZACHARIAS

How lucky we are that this home is located in a most fortuitous location - right on Highway 75 adjacent to our State Capitol complex. But time is of the essence. Topeka Avenue is fast growing to the south with new businesses coming on. The home is in good shape, however, Historic Topeka is willing to pay for the services of Gould & Evans, Lawrence architects, a firm knowledgeable in the field of restoration to make a comprehensive survey if it is determined that such is needed. The present owner is taking very good care of the property now but that does not insure that overnight some national organization could not come in and decide that this location is prime for their business. It would be too late for the Legislature to act then. You are only in session for four months.

We need your help now. This is the time to think together positively for Kansas. This home is strategically located near the State Capitol complex - not in some isolated residential location. We find it very sad that we have nothing to honor the man who was a member of the Indian Tribe from whom our State took her name - a statesman who was a Congressman, Senator, Senate Majority Leader and Vice President.

We urge your support of the recommendation of your Historic Sites Review Board and HB 2587, as amended.

ADVISORY MEMBERS

ELIZABETH AND RICHARD WARD

Marjorie C. Schnacke

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STATE OF KANSAS



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
State Capitol
Topeka 66612-1590

John Carlin Governor

January 17, 1986

Marjorie C. Schnacke
President
Historic Topeka, Inc.
PO Box 903
Topeka, Kansas 66601

Dear Marge:

Thanks very much for your recent letter concerning the Charles Curtis Home. You are not, by the way, the first to write to me regarding this subject.

I hope you understand that my line item veto last Session was in no way an expression of opposition to the preservation of this distinguished building. I was fighting the money battle then, as I am this year. Since the present occupants and owners of the building are caring for the structure adequately, I felt the decision on the funding to purchase it could be deferred.

I admire your commendable perserverance in this matter, Marge. While there is no recommendation for money in my budget this year for acquisition of the building, if an appropriation comes to my desk this Session for that purpose, I will certainly take a new look at it.

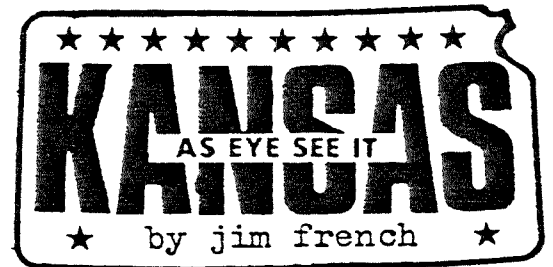
Again thanks for sharing your concern with me on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "John Carlin", written over the typed name and title.

JOHN CARLIN
Governor

JC:meo



1501 Sunvale Terrace
Olathe, KS 66062

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:(Senate Ways & Means) Apr 10, 1986
Re: HB #2587 - the saving of the Charles Curtis home @ 1101 Topeka, Topeka

My name is Jim French. I live in Olathe. I was born on a farm in Central Kansas - Stafford County. I am proud to be a 4th generation Kansan!

I wish to visit with you about Kansas' most famous NATIVE born son. No - - 'tis not Eisenhower, for he was born in another State.

This famous native born Kansan came into this world about a year before Kansas became a State, on the banks of the Kaw River, in what we now call North Topeka. A special bit of proof of his pioneer background, yes, he was born in a log cabin with a dirt floor.

If he were living today, we could consider him an under-privileged minority. He was not black, nor Spanish speaking...but an American Indian. He served Kansas longer than any other in an elective position in our Nation's Capitol. Charles Curtis - he had no middle name nor initial - perhaps it was proper for one born to such lowly birth - yet he rose to power in his time, perhaps - only exceeded by the seven Presidents he served. His home for 30 some odd years still stand and you can see it from this building as you look to the southwest.

I hope you will approve the effort to SAVE this home. It is a non-partisan effort. It would be nice for my children and my grandchildren - and yours, too - to be able to visit this home and be told of the times that most important issues of the United States were discussed here - - maybe, even decided here!

On a cold winter period 52 years ago, it was on Kansas' 73rd birthday, a lonely man, well into his seventies, came back to his native State to execute his last will and testament. During his 54 hour train ride, I am sure he was thinking of his past. Heavy on his mind was how to tell to his only full sister, Elizabeth, and to let the world know of the importance she was to his life... and in some way that he could reward her for the loyalty she had shown over many years...and of her carefully keeping and maintaining his largest single possession in the world. In his will he said, "for managing my old home place at 1101 Topeka over so many years, I leave \$10,000. to my sister, Elizabeth". She had lived and cared for his home for 10 years, at least, after his wife had died, and she would do this for another two years before he passed on. \$10,000 was the salary of Kansas' Governor

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for one full term at that time.

Money had always been a scarce commodity in Curtis' life. He had started earning it by shinning shoes in the old Union Pacific depot in North Topeka, by selling apples and oranges (on shares) to the train passengers, for 8 years as a jockey - professional jockey @ \$50. a month - by driving a hack at night while studying for the bar examination. (As a jockey he appeared in most of the County and Regional Fairs of our State.)

May I suggest other items that might have crossed his mind as he reflected upon the more than 40 years he had served Kansas and the Nation as a Congressman, a U. S. Senator and as Vice President:

1. As a young prosecutor, he was selected by the State to go into Southwestern Kansas (still in its primitive state) where there was no railroad, and hired a horse and buggy to get him to the County seat town of Hugoton to prosecute the murderer of a former Speaker of the Kansas House of Representatives. (Col. Wood)
2. or of the two times he journeyed to the non-railroad town of Phillipsburg to settle a dispute between opposing railroad interests.
3. or of the times he watched the construction of the Arthur Capper mansion across the street north and of the years it served as our Governor's mansion - - - it is gone now to house a new building of concrete.
4. No doubt he remembered his many political skirmishes including the fact that his original Congressional district went southwest from Topeka to include Emporia and Eldorado...and how an unfriendly Legislature changed the boundaries so that only Shawnee County was still in his district of thirteen counties in Northeast Kansas.
5. Certainly he recalled the thirty happy years he spent in his "old home place" @ 1101 Topeka - and the wedding of his oldest daughter was performed here in a military affair to a young Lieut. from Fort Riley - how his half-sister (the lady who served as his official hostess after his wife died in society conscious Washington,) had her marriage performed in this home. He spent two forlorn years in this home preparing his campaign to regain his lost Senate seat (1913-15). (To explain, U S Senators up until 1912 were elected by their respective State Legislators. That year, a slight modification came as U. S. Senators were elected by the people by NOT by a majority of the people. One had to carry a majority of the 165 legislative districts. Curtis did not carry this majority, although he did win the popular vote.) The election of 1914 was his come-back attempt. It was in this home that 200,000 personal letters were prepared, folded addressed, inserted stamped and mailed.

His half-sister, Dolly Gann, tells in detail about this work in her autobiography published in 1933 - and how the many friends of his three children spent evening after evening in this labor...and many of YOU know the drudgery of this work...the difference was then there was NO mechanical means to assist...and the first class stamps were 2¢.

Upon Curtis' reelection and his return to Washington in 1915, he was immediately elected as his party's "whip" in the Senate. When Henry Cabot Lodge died, he was elected Majority Leader, the FIRST in a leadership role for any Senator from west of the Mississippi River.

He always referred to his constituents as his "folks" for he had developed a memory for so many Kansans. I doubt if he placed much emphasis upon his role as the leader which granted Kansas full title to the 7,900 acres of the Fort Hays military Reservation...or of providing the leadership for a bill which passed after hanging around in the back rooms for 45 years which provided the funds which paid for our Historical Society building at 10th and Jackson...and getting President Taft here to lay the cornerstone...or goading the Army to provide the funds to save Kansas' first Territorial Capitol on the grounds at Fort Riley...or to pigeon-hole the acts which would have called for the complete demolition of Ft. Leavenworth and Ft. Riley...or to carry the bill that is now called the 19th Amendment (women's right to vote) which had been hanging around Washington for at least 30 years. To him, this was his work for his "folks".

Our William Allen White in his biography of Calvin Coolidge, takes two whole chapters to describe his intimate knowledge of Curtis, starting with time in the 1890's as they traveled together in a horse and buggy over the pastures of Butler County, and, how Curtis prepared himself for each stop - - clear up to the time in the 1920's when he was Majority Leader in the U. S. Senate - - and provided his knowledge to the workings of government to Presidents.

One Washington scribe of the time put it, "his polls of the Senate voting were uncommonly accurate".

It is still virtually unknown of his 90 day trip to Japan and the Phillipines in 1905 and of his recorded forecast of Japanese intent to dominate the Pacific... in December 1941 his forecast came true! Additionally, he travelled to the then building Panama Canal in 1907, and his knowledge of the problems there, were important insights that encouraged Congress to continue the necessary funding.

I also doubt he placed any special significance to the "SAVING" of the 76 piece complete silver service from the de-militarized USS Kansas in 1925. And, still today, our Governor and other leaders borrow this set from the Historical Society to use on important and ceremonial occasions...perhaps each of you have supped from this set.

We have a tendency today, to compare the time spent in Washington, by our

Representatives and Senators today with other times. Except during World War I, Congress then was only in session about six months a year. So, Curtis spent a great deal of time here in Kansas for he NEVER purchased any property in Washington

It is with a great deal of joy that I receive many letters from people who have a personal memory of some incident in their life with some incident in the life of "Indian" Charles Curtis. A Lady from Parsons had received a Brownie Box camera for her 12th birthday, and still has her snapshots of Curtis appearing in the tiny town of Dunlap in Morris County. Another told me of her remembrances of her Country school days near Wakefield when the teacher bundled up all her students in February 1936, to walk the $\frac{1}{2}$ mile to a home with a battery operated radio in order that the students could hear the State-wide hook-up of the funeral services of Charles Curtis - the first and only funeral service held in our State Capitol building. (Although others have lied in state on the Second floor)

There is no doubt but what he was disappointed - yes, deeply disappointed, when his party refused him the nomination for President in 1928. But like the good political soldier that he was all his life, he accepted the second spot. His son, Harry, had a car ready when the convention was complete in Kansas City as he wished to "go home" to rest. When he arrived in Topeka some two hours later, the press of the day, reported that 30,000 people were gathered here on the south lawn of this building to welcome "their Charley" home.

A letter I received just recently from a lady clear out in Satanta (I speak of this area with much affection as I lived in Liberal for twenty years) said, "I lived in that lovely home for some time (a sleeping room) upstairs. What a beautiful home and worthy of restoring and saving". No doubt, she was thinking of the years that this home was a "rooming house".

Perhaps few of you have ever been in this home, attached to this statment is a re-production of a photo of a part of the interior of this home taken on the day that the Governor appointed Historic Site Review committee inspected this home, and recommended to YOU and the Governor...of its purchase.

There a number of People living today that were guests in this home when Curtis lived there - Alf Landon, Frank Carlson, Harry Darby, Henry Bubb and two great nieces who spent their teen-age years there.

Not very long ago when I visited the Harry Truman home in Independence, Mo, it was most noticable that we vistors were asked "not to touch anything with our bare hands". The ones who conduced the tours all worn cotton gloves. Of course I ask why? The answer - the vapors from the human hands is destructive to woods of this age. The Curtis home is about ten years older than the Truman home. And according to these experts, every day that passes without proper protection of this fine old building is destructive.

As I hear remarks about how "old buildings are not expected to last 100 years" I just remember that this building when through the most destructive tornado 20 years ago (June 1966) and lost only a few shingles and with no structural damage.

There are some distant relatives right here in Kansas that have some of the original pieces from this home. Curtis' father was one of 14 children that all lived to adulthood here in the Capitol City of Kansas. There is a Curtis cemetery near the Soldier creek in North Topeka.

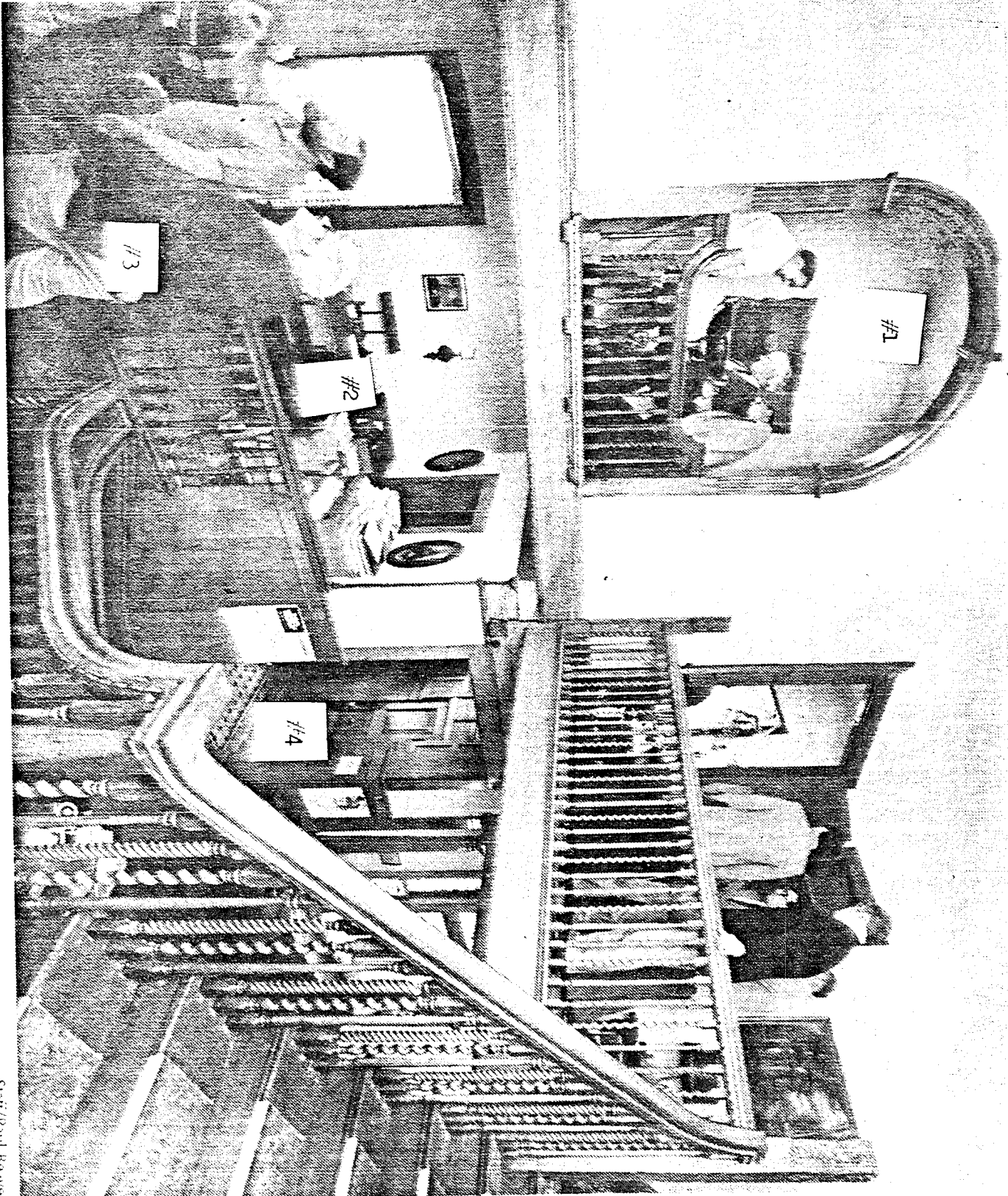
Charles Curtis is buried here in Topeka in the Cemetery out here on East 10th Street, beside his wife who preceded him in death of a dozen years with a very simple stone that merely says, "Charles Curtis

Vice President

1929-1933."

I thank you.

This photo was taken from the second of two landings on this stair case, note the unusual carvings of wood spokes holding up the bannister. #1 is a small alcove that the invalid Mrs. Curtis watched the social events going on on the First Floor, including, perhaps, the wedding of her oldest daughter and the wedding of her husband's half sister. #2 is on the level of this location. #3 These two men are looking up at a a multicolored leaded window. #4 shows a small side front door for use by a carriage driver. This home was built in 1878 by a Topeka Contractor and was, no doubt, used as a "show house". Charles Curtis had his legal residence in this home for about 30 years. He served 14 years in the Congress as a member of the House, 20 additional years as a U S Senator and 4 additional years as Vice President. Reports have this home costing \$4,300 and was the second most expensive home built in Topeka either that year or up to that year.



Members of the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review toured the former home of the late statesman Charles Curtis Saturday, to study whether the state should purchase the home at 1101 Topeka Ave. The

board later recommended that the house be purchased by the state. The house is now owned by insurance agent Gordon Toedman, who has not put the building up for sale but says he is willing to negotiate.

—Staff/Paul Beaver

CONSTITUTION HALL, LECOMPTON

For much of her territorial period (1854-1861) Kansas was the scene of a national struggle between proponents and opponents of slavery.

From the very beginning of the United States the north and south very carefully balanced their respective power as states were admitted to the union. If a slave state entered, a free state followed shortly thereafter, keeping representation, at least in the U.S. senate, equal. As the north developed its industrial might it began to assume supremacy. A series of compromises was agreed upon in Congress to retain the balance as much as possible.

By 1854 there were 16 free states in the union and 15 slave states. When Kansas and Nebraska territories were created that year it was provided that the residents of each territory would decide whether slavery would be permitted or denied at the time statehood was achieved. It was generally assumed that under this "popular sovereignty" provision Nebraska would be a free state. Kansas, on the other hand, was questionable.

During the territorial struggle, then, the events in Kansas were of national, and to a great extent, international significance. The outcome would affect the future of the United States.

Free State proponents settled the towns of Lawrence and Topeka, among others, while proslaveryites claimed Atchison, Leavenworth and Lecompton as their strongholds. In fact, Lecompton served as the territorial capital from August 8, 1855, until statehood was attained and a capitol was actually placed under construction. Though never completed as the capitol it was eventually finished and became Lane University. There the parents of Dwight D. Eisenhower met as students and married. The Lecompton Historical Society,

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with some state financial assistance, has restored the building and operates it as a museum.

A large wood frame structure now known as Constitution Hall was originally built to house the first general land office in the territory. The second floor became the meeting place for the U.S. District Court as well as two territorial legislative sessions and possibly others. In the fall of 1857 it housed a constitutional convention which produced a document allowing slavery in Kansas should she be admitted to the union. Eventually that constitution was not accepted by Congress.

Because Kansas was the scene of this national struggle between slavery advocates and abolitionists and a prelude to the Civil War was fought within her boundaries the significance of Constitution Hall is outstanding. It has been suggested by some historians that it, next to Shawnee Indian Mission in Fairway and the statehouse, is the most important historic structure in the state.

Under provisions of K.S.A. 75-2726 Constitution Hall has been nominated for state acquisition. A study has been completed and presented to the governor and the leadership of the legislature. The Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review examined the study and the property and conducted a public hearing on the proposal. On February 15, 1986, by unanimous vote (11-0) the Board recommended that the property be acquired by the state.

The Executive Committee of the State Historical Society, though officially opposing acquisition of further properties until those already in the system are rehabilitated, felt that Constitution Hall was of such significance that it should be acquired. Several members of the Executive Committee have legislative experience and are familiar with the fiscal considerations involved. The Committee consists of Dr. Donald F. Danker,

professor of History, Washburn University, president; Glee Smith, attorney, Larned, first vice-president; J. Eric Engstrom, attorney, Wichita, second vice-president; Helen L. Smith, museum curator, Colby, immediate past president; and Roy Wilford Riegle, attorney, Emporia; Floyd R. Souders, retired newspaper publisher, Cheney; Calvin Strowig, businessman, Abilene; Clifford R. Hope, Jr., attorney, Garden City; Dr. Homer E. Socolofsky, professor of history, Kansas State University; Paul E. Wilson, professor of law, University of Kansas; Dr. James L. Forsythe, dean of the graduate school, Fort Hays State University; Dr. William H. Seiler, professor of history, Emporia State University and Harry J. Briscoe, retired general manager of the Santa Fe Railway, Topeka.

The staff of the State Historical Society feels that Constitution Hall provides an excellent opportunity to interpret the various facets of the Free State proslave struggle. Though it housed a proslave legislature and constitutional convention that concept was defeated and Kansas espoused the cause of freedom. The conflict was one of divergent and complicated issues requiring a great deal of examination and exposition. Constitution Hall will provide Kansas that opportunity as well as one to interpret the significance of U.S. land policies in the development of Kansas.

Board to review Lecompton building

By JOHN CHAMBERS
Capital Journal state editor

The State Historical Sites Review Board will meet today in Topeka and Lecompton to consider a request for the state to acquire historic Constitution Hall in Lecompton.

Dick Pankratz, director of the Historical Preservation Department of the Kansas Historical Society, said the board will meet at 8:30 a.m. in the Coronado Room of the Holiday Inn City Centre.

After reviewing a report of the historical and architectural features of the building which once housed the territorial legislature, the board will leave for Lecompton at 9 a.m. to spend about 45 minutes examining the building. No hearing will be conducted in Lecompton, Pankratz said.

The board will return to Topeka for a public hearing about 10:45 to 11 a.m. on the proposal. The meeting will continue after lunch.

During the meeting, the board will decide whether to recommend to the governor, the speaker of the House of Representatives and the president of the Senate that the state acquire or not acquire the property, Pankratz said.

By law, the board has one year after a petition has been filed to submit a recommendation to the governor and Legislature.

Also included on the agenda are requests for

listing six properties on the National Register of Historical Sites and Places, and two properties on the State Register of Historic Sites, Pankratz said.

Pankratz said the properties proposed for national registry include: Case Library at Baker University, Baldwin City; Charles Duncan house, 933 Tennessee, Lawrence; Leavenworth Carnegie Library, 601 S. 5th, Leavenworth; old Santa Fe Depot, 781 Shawnee, Leavenworth; Richard Howe house, 315 E. Logan Ave., Emporia; and Wisconsin Street Historical District, both sides of the 700 block of Wisconsin, Cawker City.

Properties proposed for state registry include the John E. Frost house, 935 Western, Topeka, and Conway Springs Spring House, Conway Springs.

Constitution Hall is owned by the Lecompton Rebekahs and serves as a meeting place for that lodge, as well as the Lecompton IOOF and Masonic lodges.

The formal request for state acquisition of the property was filed by Ione Paslay, noble grand, for the Rebekahs. Paul Bahnmaier, president of the Lecompton Historical Society and a member of the IOOF, will represent the lodge at the public hearing.

Paslay said the lodge decided to ask the state to acquire Constitution Hall because the building "was badly in need of repair and our lodge was

not able to do it. We want the building preserved."

She said people from around the country have come to see the building.

A film crew from Dallas County Community College, Mesquite, Texas, has obtained the lodge's permission to film part of an introductory American history course, American Adventure, for public television Aug. 5-7 in and around Constitution Hall, Paslay said.

According to a history of the building compiled by Larry Jochims, staff historian for the state historical society, Constitution Hall was a two-story building which had a U.S. land office downstairs and was one of the meeting places of the territorial legislature when Lecompton was the capital of the Kansas Territory.

The second floor also housed the U.S. court at that time.

Its name came from the apparent use of the building by a constitutional convention to draw up a state constitution in 1857.

Later, ownership of the building was transferred to individuals, to Lane University and finally in 1894 to the Lecompton IOOF lodge. The IOOF transferred the property to the Rebekahs in 1946.

An undertaker, F.C. Bartlett, rented the first floor for \$2.50 a month in 1902. In 1905 the Missouri and Kansas Telephone Co. moved into the lower floor. In later years the building served as a voting place.



Kansas State Historical Society



Stall/Keith Mays

Constitution Hall, Lecompton, will be considered by the State Historical Sites Review Board today for state acquisition. The site of a state constitutional convention in 1857, the building in about 1902 housed a mortuary on its bottom floor, top photo, and now is a meeting place for three lodges, bottom photo.

Editorials

*In God We Trust**Lecompton legacy*

A Lecompton organization has asked the state to acquire Constitution Hall in that town. If there is a surprise in that request, it is that the historic building has remained in private ownership this long.

Currently owned by the Lecompton Rebekahs, the building has passed through the hands of individuals, businesses, Lane University and the IOOF lodge. It has housed a mortuary, a land office and a U.S. court.

But it draws its pertinent historical significance from the occasion in 1857 when it housed a constitutional convention, which drew up an unsuccessful state constitution. That constitution would have established Kansas as a pro-slavery state and set Lecompton as the Kansas capital.

It didn't happen. But the attempt was

an important chapter in the political tug-of-war over the slavery issue and the colorful history of how Kansas became a state.

The Rebekahs in Lecompton have petitioned the state to acquire Constitution Hall. The building has fallen into serious disrepair, and members of the organization want the structure to be preserved.

A site now on the Fort Riley military reservation housed a pro-slavery constitutional convention and the first territorial legislature. That building is now a fully restored landmark.

Constitution Hall in Lecompton deserves the same attention. Undertaking care of the building would be an excellent historical project for Kansas during the state's celebration of 125 years of statehood.



name is Paul Bahnmaier, President of the Lecompton Historical Society. I would like to thank the Senate Ways and Means Committee for the opportunity to address you concerning Lecompton Constitution Hall. This building is a National Landmark -- and I would like to stress NATIONAL LANDMARK! In order to qualify as a National Landmark, an event of national significance had to occur in the building which affected the history of the United States. That EVENT would be the writing of the Lecompton Constitution. Few people realize that 3 presidential administrations were influenced by events which occurred in Lecompton; -- President Pierce sent Territorial Governors and Secretaries to Lecompton. President Buchanan's administration is judged by historians for his failure to handle the Lecompton situation. The Lincoln-Douglas debates discussed the Lecompton issue, without which President Lincoln may never have been elected president.

Horace Greeley said "That more debate was held in the United States Congress concerning the events in Lecompton than any other issue debated before that body, to that date." I would like to show you some of the speeches made by different United States Senators and Representatives from throughout the United States concerning the Lecompton Constitution.

Lecompton and Western Douglas County are considered to have a great growth potential, being located half-way between Topeka and Lawrence,--accessible from Hiway 24 and Hiway 40, and enhanced by the possibility of a future turnpike exit at Lecompton Road. This would make Constitution Hall a tourist attraction readily available to travelers from coast to coast. Presently, the Lecompton Historical Society is operating the Lane University Museum. This past summer, over 3,000 visitors toured the Museum, and it is our belief that the two historic attractions in Lecompton would complement each other. While people of this generation are busy searching for their own family roots, it would be sad, indeed, if the State of Kansas should fail to recognize its own territorial beginnings.

I believe the opinion expressed by the Editor of the Topeka Daily Capital that an excellent historical project for Kansas during its celebration of 125 years of statehood, would be the preservation of Lecompton Constitution Hall.

Future generations will appreciate your positive recommendation to the Kansas Legislature to acquire Constitution Hall as a property of the State of Kansas. If anyone would like to visit this historic landmark, less than twenty miles away, please let us know.

Thank you!

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THE KANSAS CITY STAR.

Founded September 18, 1880, by William Rockhill Nelson

JAMES H. HALE, Publisher and Chairman of the Board

JAMES W. SCOTT, Editor, Editorial Page

Member of the Associated Press.

Kansas history in Lecompton

An effort is under way in the Kansas Legislature to preserve a building in which a pivotal struggle occurred over whether Kansas would enter the Union as a free or slave state. Constitution Hall in Lecompton is considered by some historians to be the most significant existing structure related to the intense territorial conflict between abolitionists and pro-slavery forces.

Nearly 130 years after that confrontation, latter-day lawmakers have legislation to authorize the Kansas State Historical Society to purchase, restore and operate the 24-by-50-foot, two-story white frame structure as a historic landmark.

Slavery was the burning issue in Kansas and in the nation as the territory attempted to become a state. The Lecompton constitution of 1857, one of four, would have put Kansas on the slavery side. Congress rejected Kansas' bid for statehood under that document, but on Jan. 29, 1861, admitted the

territory under a free-state constitution. The Civil War broke out a few months later.

The 130-year-old hall, now privately owned, is in poor condition. Renovation would cost an estimated \$164,000. After that, plans call for the legislative chamber on the upper floor to be refurbished. A legislator's desk from territorial times would be used as a model to reproduce appropriate furniture.

The preservation would mesh nicely with retored Lane University, also located in the northwest Douglas County town of about 600. That building was started as a territorial capital, but was abandoned during early construction. It later was completed and served as an educational facility. Two students who met while attending classes there and later married were Dwight D. Eisenhower's parents.

Far too many structures of historical interest have been lost. That need not happen to Constitution Hall in Lecompton.

Thursday, February 20, 1986

4

The Topeka Capital Journal

Opinion

Editorials

In God We Trust

Lecompton legacy

A Lecompton organization has asked the state to acquire Constitution Hall in that town. If there is a surprise in that request, it is that the historic building has remained in private ownership this long.

Currently owned by the Lecompton Rebekahs, the building has passed through the hands of individuals, businesses, Lane University and the IOOF lodge. It has housed a mortuary, a land office and a U.S. court.

But it draws its pertinent historical significance from the occasion in 1857 when it housed a constitutional convention, which drew up an unsuccessful state constitution. That constitution would have established Kansas as a pro-slavery state and set Lecompton as the Kansas capital.

It didn't happen. But the attempt was

an important chapter in the political tug-of-war over the slavery issue and the colorful history of how Kansas became a state.

The Rebekahs in Lecompton have petitioned the state to acquire Constitution Hall. The building has fallen into serious disrepair, and members of the organization want the structure to be preserved.

A site now on the Fort Riley military reservation housed a pro-slavery constitutional convention and the first territorial legislature. That building is now a fully restored landmark.

Constitution Hall in Lecompton deserves the same attention. Undertaking care of the building would be an excellent historical project for Kansas during the state's celebration of 125 years of statehood.

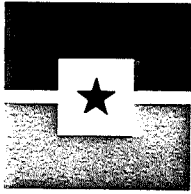
I am Ione Paslay, Lecompton Rebekah Lodge

Since 1894 -- almost 100 years -- it has been the responsibility of the Lecompton Odd Fellow and Rebekah Lodges to keep their meeting hall in presentable condition. The time has come when members of the Rebekah Lodge are no longer physically or financially able to properly maintain this historic building, although they are most anxious to see that it is preserved for future generations to enjoy, and have taken appropriate steps to assure that result by giving the State of Kansas the opportunity to acquire the building.

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4-10-86



CENTER FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS
Dallas County Community College District
4343 North Highway 67, Mesquite, TX 75150-2095
214/324-7784

January 24, 1986

Mrs Ione Paslay
Rt. 1, Box 146
Lecompton, KS 66050

Dear Mrs. Paslay:

As I explained to you briefly on the telephone, the Dallas County Community College District is developing an introductory American history course for television THE AMERICAN ADVENTURE. This course will consist of self-study materials and a series of 26 half-hour programs. Telecourses are an effort to extend college level learning to those unable to participate in traditional on-campus classes. In addition to their use locally, our courses are utilized by some 600 colleges in 48 states and are broadcast on the PBS Adult Learning Network. We expect this course to air beginning in the fall of 1987.

Some of the programs in our series will focus on aspects of the political events in Kansas prior to the Civil War.

We are requesting permission to do some video recordings in and around Constitution Hall.

The time required for doing the video recordings is about half a day. We would like to begin as early in the day as possible. We plan to be in the area on the 5, 6 or 7 of August, 1986.

There will be five people on the location crew, they are: Producer, Historian, Storyteller/Talent, Cameraperson and Soundperson. The equipment we will be using will be minimal, a portable video camera, recorder and a few portable lights. None of the equipment requires special, additional electrical power other than standard wall outlets. Out of doors we use battery power.

I hope that permission can be arranged. Please call or write me if you require additional information. Thank you.

Sincerely,

David Molina
Assistant Producer

History For All, At Constitution Hall

My story is short --- though history tells much more
Of when Abe Lincoln and Steve Douglas appeared on the floor
Of the United States Congress to argue the fate
Of territorial slavery --- the point of debate

The South favored slave, and the North favored free
The folks in Lecompton were told how to be.

They put up a building to provide a nice hall
Where legislators could meet and decide on it all.
They wrote a Constitution,-the best that they had
To vote "with" or "without" slavery was what was so bad!

The voting was fraudulent --- ballot boxes were stuffed
The Governor left the Territory -- the President huffed and puffed.
The election was repeated,--and though it turned out right
Lecompton lost its chance to be capital,-almost over-night.
Among remnants left behind was the Constitution Hall
A building, if it could talk, could surely tell it all.

It served many users --- they came and they went
Each occupant making a small payment of rent.
It was used as a Land Office, a Hotel and for Schools,
The U.S. Court, an Apartment House, and a Hardware with tools.
The telephone office, the Masons, and the town Undertaker,
Doc. Bonebrake, Lane Dormitory, and a good Carriagemaker.
The Grand Army of the Republic even rented some space
Then once again famous as the town's voting place.

In 1894, it became our beloved Lodge Hall
Meeting there winter, summer, in spring and the fall.
It's survived many Lodge members whose voices ring out
Through pages of the Minute Book, and stories told about.
But the time has arrived when help is a MUST ---
To preserve this historic building. It's a matter of trust.
It's served a good purpose for the members and me
But we want the State to buy it for new generations to see.

I may have confused history --- so this statement could rhyme,
But CONSTITUTION HALL DESERVES TO BE SAVED ---

And thanks for your time!

By: Marian Opal Goodrick
Narrated By: Nellie Glenn

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4-10-86

STATEMENT OF JOSEPH W. SNELL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
APRIL 10, 1986, IN RE HOUSE BILLS NO. 2587 AND 3047

As I am sure many of you recall I have been before several legislative committees in the last two years asking that the state adopt a program for the planned stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration and development of the 18 state owned historic sites which the State Historical Society now manages. The Society is responsible for some 30 structures (ranging in size from the Memorial Building to a well house at the Cottonwood ranch) which are on the National Register of Historic Places and the Register of Historic Kansas Places and 27 more non-historic structures, located on those sites and in Topeka. Many, some of the most historically significant in fact, are in dire need of major repairs and structural stabilization.

Because of the importance of these sites to a proper understanding of and appreciation for the Kansas heritage, the Society has for two years proposed a long range plan which will bring all structures and sites up to an acceptable physical level, provide additional security through live-in curators, and enhance interpretation through the construction of modern visitors centers and exhibits.

We face, for instance, repairs totaling \$1,173,400 to stabilize the historic structures at three properties now in the state system and an additional \$4,067,000 to develop and restore the sites, during, hopefully, the next ten years.

It was with this in mind that the Executive Committee of the State Historical Society passed the following resolution at its June, 1985, meeting:

"It shall be the policy of the Kansas State Historical Society not to support state acquisition of additional historic sites until those currently

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owned by the state and administered by the Society are stabilized to a condition wherein they are protected against further significant deterioration. If, however, properties proposed for state acquisition are, in the opinion of the Executive Committee, endangered and/or have overwhelming significance to the history of Kansas and her people, the Society will support their acquisition, providing additional funds for stabilization and maintenance are appropriated."

Under provisions of K. S. A. 75-2726, the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review which is not a part of the organization of the State Historical Society but is rather an independent body whose members are appointed by the governor and state statute, considered reports on the Charles Curtis house in Topeka and Constitution Hall in LeCompton prepared by the staff of the State Historical Society. The reports examined the historic significance of the properties, the cost of their acquisition, the cost of their repair, the cost of their operation for the next five fiscal years, and the cost of their interpretation. The Board examined the properties in person and conducted public hearings in Topeka. After due consideration the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review recommended to the governor and the legislature that the state purchase both the Curtis house and Constitution Hall. It was the Board's position that any commitment to purchase the properties must be accompanied by the funding necessary to perform urgently needed stabilization work.

In light of the study, the recommendation of the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review and its own June, 1985, resolution, the Executive Committee has directed me as executive director of the State Historical Society to support state acquisition of Constitution Hall. The Executive Committee felt that the property was of extreme historical significance and was also endangered because of its existing condition and the inability of its current owners to afford the costs necessary for its stabilization.

Personally I believe Constitution Hall in Lecompton to be one of the most significant remaining structures in our state. The only property which might be more significant is the Shawnee Indian Mission and Manual Labor School in Fairway which is already in the state system.

The frame structure could very well be the oldest such structure in Kansas. To my knowledge only the Pony Express Station in Washington county, which is also a state owned historic site, approaches the age of Constitution Hall.

It was in Constitution Hall that a territorial convention favoring the institution of slavery in a state called Kansas met and drew up a constitution which was presented to the Congress of the United States along with an application for statehood.

Fortunately Kansas was not admitted under that document but had she been slavery would have been permitted within her boundaries and had the Civil War followed in that case, Kansas could very well have been a member of the Confederate States of America rather than the Union.

One's mind can envision all sorts of things that would have altered the course of American history, and, indeed, that of the world, if Kansas had become a slave state. Would there have been a Civil War? Would slavery have been abolished? Would the United States have developed and emerged as the power she is had those eventful years happened in a different sequence or not have happened at all?

I can think of no other historic site in Kansas which I, personally, could support for state acquisition in good conscience given the current condition of our other state owned sites and the state's immediate financial outlook.

Constitution Hall is important, extremely important. By being placed in the state system it would allow the Historical Society the opportunity to

interpret the awful struggle between free state and proslave forces during our territorial period. It lends itself perfectly to that purpose because it is located in Lecompton which served as proslave territorial capital of Kansas and it is close by Lane University, a structure which was planned to have been the permanent capitol of Kansas had we permitted slavery but which was turned to other uses when completed and which today serves as a fine museum operated by the Lecompton Historical Society. The state assisted financially with the rehabilitation of Lane University, by the way.

Constitution Hall will also allow the Society to interpret land offices and their importance in Kansas because it once served that purpose also.

I support the purchase of Constitution Hall provided that a minimum of \$126,653 be authorized for its immediate stabilization and repair. I can support the acquisition even though our other sites are endangered because of its significance to all Kansans and to all Americans. I would hope, however, that should Constitution Hall be acquired and funds for its rehabilitation be provided, that the legislature will remember that we have other sites which need similar help just as badly.

The acquisition of Constitution Hall, its stabilization and the commencement of a long range program to rehabilitate our other already owned historic sites will demonstrate Kansas' commitment to her heritage.

Because of my Executive Committee's resolution, the financial requirements we face at the existing state owned sites and the ability of the present owner to maintain the property I must go on record as not supporting state acquisition of the Charles Curtis house.

STATE OF KANSAS



DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
Division of Architectural Services

JOHN CARLIN,
Governor
JOHN B. HIPPEL,
Director

625 Polk
Topeka, Kansas 66603
(913) 233-9367

April 2, 1986

Mr. Joseph W. Snell
Executive Director
State Historical Society
120 West Tenth Avenue
Topeka, Kansas 66612

Dear Mr. Snell:

In response to your request to phase costs for preserving Constitution Hall, I offer the following:

The work to be undertaken has to be done in a certain sequence which we have tried to establish. The first part is to stabilize the existing building; to strip the finishes from the existing walls, floors and ceiling and to replace and/or realign the existing framing members and to shore up the foundation.

Estimated costs for phase one:

CONSTRUCTION	\$59,000
CONTINGENCY	5,900
MISC. COSTS	1,500
	<u>\$66,400</u>

The next step would be to install new electrical and mechanical systems, insulate and finish the walls and ceilings, construct new exterior stairway and East porch, replace or repair doors, windows and siding and repaint the exterior.

The cost of that work, escalated to fiscal '88:

CONSTRUCTION	\$98,900
CONTINGENCY	4,900
MISC. COSTS	2,100
	<u>\$105,800</u>

The second phase is quite costly, I know, and probably some of the work could be deferred to a third phase. The following scheme defers until fiscal '89 the interior finishes and new exterior stairway:

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Jr. Joseph W. Snell
April 2, 1986
Page Two

Phase Two: (Fiscal '88)

CONSTRUCTION	\$65,000
CONTINGENCY	3,200
MISC. COSTS	1,300
	<u>\$69,500</u>

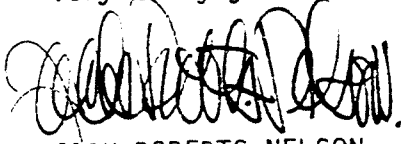
Phase Three: (Fiscal '89)

CONSTRUCTION	\$36,500
CONTINGENCY	1,800
MISC. COSTS	1,000
	<u>\$39,300</u>

Joe, I assume we will be doing the work with our own staff so no architectural fees have been included. If you prefer to hire a private firm, you should add a fee of 11% times the construction estimate to each phase.

Let us know if we may be of further service.

Very truly yours,



JACK ROBERTS NELSON
Chief Architect
Planning Section

JRN:dp

STATE OF KANSAS
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
JOHN CARLIN, Governor
ALDEN K. SHIELDS, Secretary of Administration
Room 263-E, Capitol Building
(913) 296-3011

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senate Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Art Griggs, Chief ~~Attorney~~ *AG*

DATE: April 9, 1986

SUBJECT: H.B. 2997 - State's Santa Fe Facility

Enactment of this bill would provide the final phase of funding for renovations in the State's Santa Fe Facility. Specifically, the bill would:

1. Lapse the FY 1987 State General Fund appropriation of \$3.03 million made by the 1985 Legislature to finance renovation of the facility.
2. Authorize a loan from the Pooled Money Investment Board to the Secretary of Administration in an amount not to exceed \$4.53 million to make renovations to the facility.
3. Provide that commencing on January 1, 1988, the loan shall bear interest at a rate which would be fixed each January 1 at a rate equal to the current inactive account rate.
4. Provide that commencing in calendar year 1988, the principal and interest shall be repaid in payments payable annually in the month of March over a period of 15 years.

Based upon the current inactive account interest rate of 7.17%, the state would incur annual debt service payments of \$502,720 for a period of 15 years, commencing in FY 1988. Assuming it would be necessary to increase the rate charged to state agencies for the rental of building space in order to finance the debt service obligation, the rate would have to be increased by approximately \$.75 per square foot. However, any rent increase for FY 1988 will depend upon the fiscal situation at that time and the anticipated demands against and resources available in the State Building Operating Fund.

Past funding, plus the funding provided by H.B. 2997 would bring the total renovation costs to \$6.1 million, which represents the approximate amount of renovations costs estimated at the time the Legislature authorized the purchase of the facility.

AG:kh

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