

THE
STORY
OF
BROMELSICK FARM

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PREFACE

The story of Bromelsick Farm was developed as a term paper for my Junior History Class, Westward Expansion, at Lawrence High School, Lawrence, Kansas. Mr. Berneking is instructor.

Having recently become an Eagle Scout I had camped at Camp Bromelsick many times. The fact that the farm was unique did not really occur to me - it was a fun place to go for a campout. Mr. Berneking, who received his Eagle Scout award when a boy, suggested that I use the Bromelsick Farm as a subject for a term paper.

As I could find nothing that had been previously published about the subject I began my research by contacting people who had knowledge of or who had been involved with Mr. Alfred Bromelsick or the farm in western Douglas County that is now Bromelsick Farm. As the story unfolded my interest increased and I also discovered much interest from the people I talked to about the farm or about Alfred Bromelsick. I have tried to set down some facts which these people know and recall. (Acknowledgements are on Bibliography page.)

I am grateful to many people for assisting in the preparation of this paper. Many people are grateful to Alfred Bromelsick and Bromelsick farm.

George D. Crum

" Camp Bromelsick." A distinctive sounding name and one easily recognizable when you hear it a second time, but what is Camp Bromelsick? What is the importance of Camp Bromelsick? Is it a camp like hundreds of other camps or is Camp Bromelsick different?

The name Bromelsick means several different things to the people of Lawrence, Kansas. To the real old timers it brings to mind the Peoples State Bank when Al Bromelsick was director¹ and then the older people recall the Bromelsick Clothing Store located on Massachussetts Street.² But to the younger people of Lawrence who never knew Alfred Bromelsick or the Peoples State Bank or the Bromelsick Clothing Store the name Bromelsick has been institutionalized as a benefactor to the Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, Explorer Scouts, Girl Scouts and 4-H'ers of Lawrence through the Bromelsick Trust Fund.³ The Bromelsick Christmas Party is looked forward to as a highlite every December.

There are several things unique about the Bromelsick Trust Fund. One is that it was bequeathed to the boys and girls of Lawrence, Kansas and Douglas County, Kansas by a man who remained a bachelor his entire life.⁴ Another is a 160 acre farm purchased by the Bromelsick Trust Fund in 1959 for the exclusive use of Boy Scouts belonging to the Lawrence, Kansas Boy Scout Troops and called Camp Bromelsick.

This article is about Camp Bromelsick. To tell the complete story of Camp Bromelsick Farm it was necessary not only to trace the history of its owners but to find out about the uniqueness of the uses of the farm and how this farm has played a part in the colorful development of this area in the early formation of the State of Kansas .

The Farms history would be meaningless without the involvement of people. People who lived at the farm. Neighbors who knew people who lived at the farm. Scouts and Scouters who have enjoyed camping at the farm. I have been fortunate and I am deeply grateful for much of the material in this article, in being able to talk with several people who were directly involved with the farm in its earlier history down to its present day operation by the Bromelsick Trust Fund.

To understand the most recent chapter in the history of Camp Bromelsick, I have endeavored to find out about the man Alfred Bromelsick so we can attempt to understand the person, who had no children of his own, yet left so much to so many boys and girls. I have interviewed friends and acquaintances who knew Alfred Bromelsick. Also I have had discussions with the trust officers of the Bromelsick Fund to find out the mechanics of the fund as well as to better understand the man and his legacy to young people.

To get to Camp Bromelsick from Lawrence, Kansas, you go west six miles on Highway 40 to Kanwalka Corners and then proceed two miles south and one half mile west. The farm is located in Kanwalka township in Douglas County. The name "Kanwalka" came from the first part of the names of the two rivers which is the watershed of the area, the Kansas River and the Wakarusa River.⁶

The abstract for the farm states its legal description as being " the south half of the southeast corner and the east half of the southwest corner section 2, township 13, range 18."⁷

The succession of ownership of the farm in the abstract shows that a stone building built on the farm on the eastern 80 acres in the 1840's or early 1850's was used as an outpost until 1859. This building was surrounded by stone walls some of which are 7 feet high.

Most of these walls still remain except for the part of the wall in front of the stone building which may have been removed when the gravel road was built. These walls form a rectangle which runs east and west. This rectangle is divided into three sections. The middle section where the stone building was built. The eastern section which was used for gardens and horses and the western section was probably just used for gardens.⁸

The stone wall on the north side is about 5-7 feet high. There are a few spots in the wall which were used for gun ports. One of these gun ports is about 15 feet east of the gate to the north of the house.⁹ There are two other gun ports in the wall west of the house but these are gone since someone with a dump truck backed up and loaded all of the rocks of the wall and hauled them away about five years ago without permission.¹⁰

There were some "underground railroads" in the area at the time to hide slaves,¹¹ but none of these are known to have been close to Camp Bromelsick.

There were two gates in the north wall. One gate is directly behind the stone building and the other about 50 feet to the east. The second gate is beside some places where the stone wall is extended to make two horsesheds. There were two gates in the south wall. Also one gate was in front of the house and the second gate 50 feet to the east. The second gate was filled in with stone and the gate which was in front of the house was removed with that part of the wall.

All of the buildings were built on the southern edge of the eastern 80 acres except for a small stone house which is located in a grove of trees on top of the hill to the west of the lake.¹²

The hill that these buildings were built on is one of the higher points in the area. At the time these buildings were built there weren't many trees around so that you could see for quite a distance in all directions.

The stone building was built in the typical design and architecture of military buildings of that time. The building was two stories and a cellar. Each floor had two rooms with a stairway in the center and also a stairway from the outside to the cellar.¹³

A wagon trail which ran from Bloomington to Lecompton, ran right through the farm. One event that happened on this trail was during the Walkarusa War of December 1855. Thomas Barber, his brother Robert and brother-in-law Thomas Pierson left Lawrence along the California Road (Highway 40) and went west to the Bloomington Lecompton Trail where they turned south. A short distance from there Thomas was killed by two proslavery men, who were riding on the Bloomington, Lecompton Trail.¹⁴ The outpost was a place for the wagons to stop over and to provide protection from the Indians. The gate to the north of the house was where the wagon trail passed through Camp Bromelsick.¹⁵ (See map in appendix)

There are still some places left where you can see ruts that were left by the wagons of that pioneer time. One of these places is down around Peterson's pond which is about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile to the south of the stone house on Camp Bromelsick. There are also a couple of farms nearby which have places where stone was layed so the wagons could cross over what was once a small creek or stream. One is the Peterson's farm which will soon be part of the Clinton Reservoir.¹⁶ Another farm is about one mile south of Lecompton and is owned by Zeke Johanning.¹⁷

The abstract further shows that the farm was preempted from the United States in 1859 by William J. McKinney. Mr. McKinney sold the farm in 1862 to Richard Pickering. In 1864 Mr. Pickering sold the farm to Jonathan B. Williams.

Mr. Williams sold the farm to William S. McCurdy in 1871 and Mr. McCurdy sold it in 1872 to Lewis Mayo who one year later sold to L.B. Davis.¹⁸

Mr. Davis sold the farm to Milton McRill in 1881. Jeremiah H. Grathart bought the farm in 1885. John Unger bought the farm in 1887 and sold it to Peter Eberhart in 1891. Albert Schellhorn purchased the farm in 1896.¹⁹

Mr. Albert Schellhorn fought in the Civil War. He used to keep guns from the war in the attic of the house. Albert Schellhorn's grandson, Richard Schellhorn of Lawrence recalls that the addition to the stone house was put on in the 1890,s which means either Peter Eberhart or Albert Schellhorn built it on. The front porch roof was used as a deck and there was a smoke house to the east of the house and a chicken house was to the north east of the house.

To the east there was a well which had a small building which looked somewhat like an outhouse. This well had an elevator in it and it was used to keep food cold and was a supply for water. The water was connected to the house and to a bathtub. This was one of the first houses in the area to have a bathtub and inside plumbing.

There were three stairways to the cellar. Two in the stone part and one in the wooden part. The barn outside the walls was a three story barn. The first story was used for horses and cattle. The second story was used for feed, oats, wheat and the top floor was used for hay. 20

Around the turn of the century there was an orchard to the north

of the house about 50 yards. There is one apple tree still remaining of this orchard.²¹

In 1910-1912 Mrs. Ralph Colman and Mrs. Schellhorn were members of the Kanwalka Literary Club, which is still in existence today. This group held some of its meetings in the old stone house. Mrs. Colman recalls having seen stone buildings similar to the original stone buildings used as a military outpost at Fort Scott, Kansas.

In 1901 Hugo Hartman, a relative of Albert Schellhorn, owned the farm and in 1902 Albert Schellhorn reacquired the farm.²³ Richard Schellhorn lived in the house in 1913-1914 " give or take a couple of years". He went to school at the stone schoolhouse at the bottom of the hill to the east. The name of the schoolhouse was Barber School and Mrs. Ralph Colman taught there.²⁴

The farm was sold in 1922 to P. Tedlock. Mr. Tedlock sold it in 1923 to the Peerless Oil Company, who sold it to W.C. Wglfkuhl in 1930. These were the depression years and in 1934 the farm was acquired by the Fidelity State and Savings Bank who kept it for four years.²⁵

In 1938 Mr. Elmer Scott bought the farm and lived there until his death in 1949. Mrs. Scott sold the farm to Laverne Bagby in 1958. Mr. Bagby kept it for one year and in 1959 the Lawrence National Bank Trust Department which administers the Bromelsick Trust Fund purchased the land for its present use by the Boy Scouts.²⁶

It is interesting that the last occupants of the house which was used as protection from Indians was an Indian couple.²⁷

The Bromelsick Will provided that the Boy Scout money be used for the purchase of land for camping. Raymond Nichols, Keith Lawton and Riley Burcham were some of the original members of the Bromelsick committee. It took several years for enough money to accumulate for a

down payment on the land. After this money had accumulated the Bromelsick Committee appointed a purchasing committee.²⁸ The members of the purchasing committee were Lowell Risk, Joe Skillman, Fred S. Montgomery, A.E. Woestemeyer, Riley Burcham and Raymond Nichols chairman. This committee was searching for enough level land for 1000 boys to camp and enough wooded land for firewood and land for nature trails. The committee narrowed their selection to three different farms. One was south of Lawrence on Highway 59 on the hill, another was near Six Corners northeast of Lawrence on Highway 24-40 and the third farm was the Bagby farm which is now Camp Bromelsick.³⁰

Improvements have been minimal since the purchase for Scout use. A lake was built for the Scouts on the farm in 1963-64 and a fresh water pump was installed. Gates were built to the farm at the house and to the west about three years ago.³¹ A monument dedicated to Joe G. Skillman is on the prairie part of the land and a trail leading to it has been built. No buildings have been built since the Bromelsick Trust Fund has owned the farm. This is in compliance with a request in Mr. Bromelsicks will.

The caretaker for the farm is H.K.Traul, who has been the caretaker since 1959.³² He stated that the Bromelsick Camp will be right next to where the Clinton Reservoir is being built and quite a bit of land has been taken over by the government around the farm. The reservoir is supposed to cut off one corner of the Bromelsick Farm.³³

Mr. Alfred H. Bromelsick was born February 28, 1878, in Trenton, Illinois, and moved to Lawrence when he was 10 years old.³⁴ His father William Bromelsick was the president of the Peoples State Bank which is where the First National Bank is now located and Alfred Bromelsick served as a director of the bank. William Bromelsick also owned a

clothing store. Alfred Bromelsick graduated from K.U. around the turn of the century.³⁵ He was a member of the Methodist Church.³⁶ After his fathers death he took over the management of the clothing store, which is where the Ben Franklin Store is now located³⁷ and is now a part of the Bromelsick Trust Fund. Income from this building is used to help send scouts to summer camp.³⁸ Mr. Bromelsick became a director of the People's State Bank until it liquidated in the 1920's.³⁹ He was a bachelor all of his life and lived with and cared for his mother until the time of her death.⁴⁰

Three of Al Bromelsick's best friends were Julius Marks, R. C. Miller and Otto Barteldes.⁴¹ Mr. Bromelsick owned a Packard and was interested in buying stocks.⁴² He was an "ardent golfer"⁴³ and frequently played golf with Ernie Pulliam and Glenn Freeman.⁴⁴

Mr. Bromelsick resided at 923 Rhode Island, where he lived his entire life.⁴⁵ He passed away at the age of 72 on April 4, 1950 at 2 a.m. He had been ill for nearly a year and death was attributed to cancer.⁴⁶ The T.D.Funk Mortuary handled the funeral services from the First Methodist Church, with the pastor, Dr. O.E.Allison in charge.⁴⁷ Pall bearers were Julius Marks, Harry Green, Otto Barteldes, Fred Soxman, Howard Day, Ernie Pulliam, Roy Miller, Owen Carl, Tom Sweeney and William Essick.⁴⁸ Mr. Bromelsick was laid to rest in a moseleum at Oak Hill Cemetary.⁴⁹

Mr. Bromelsick donated his entire estate to the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of Lawrence and to the 4-H of Douglas County.⁵⁰

In 1956 there were 300 Girl Scouts in Lawrence, Kansas, sixth grade and under. Twenty acres of land was bought in 1956 and three years later twenty acres more were bought. This land is what is now called Hidden Valley. All of this land was bought with Bromelsick

money from the Bromelsick Trust Fund. A building was constructed with Bromelsick money. One third of the Bromelsick Trust Fund income is for the Girl Scouts of Lawrence. With the addition of Hidden Valley there are now 1800 Girl Scouts including Senior Scouts in Lawrence.⁵¹

The 4-H use their money from the Bromelsick Trust Fund in three ways. One way is the 4-H Fair where 47% of the premium money is Bromelsick money. Three or four delegates are sent each year to State Camp and to the State Fair. The Bromelsick Fund also provides money for bus fares to Rock Springs, the 4-H camp.⁵²

The policy of the Directors of the Bromelsick Trust Fund has been that no new buildings or structures are to be erected. Also, that no repair or renovation to the present buildings should be made.⁵³ To restore the present stone house as a monument to the memory of Alfred Bromelsick and the individuals who have given of their time and abilities to develop and administer the Bromelsick Camp and the Bromelsick Trust Fund would be very fitting in the opinion of the author of this article.

Will the Clinton Reservoir affect the camp's effectiveness in providing these worthwhile experiences for Boy Scouts? Will the appreciative increase in the value of the land due to its proximity to Clinton Reservoir present a situation where it would be profitable to sell the present Camp Bromelsick and purchase another site and have a good amount of money to swell the Bromelsick Trust Fund so as to benefit more and more boys and girls? These are decisions facing the Trust Officers of the fund. The wishes of the Boy Scouts through registered Scouters(the adults) will be asked.⁵⁴

Scouts and Scouters who have had the benefit of camping at the

farm probably will be sympathetic to keeping Camp Bromelsick where it is, at its present location, to build on traditions and memories of men already established.

"Bromelsick Camp" or "Bromelsick Farm", (the names are used interchangeably) is perhaps "different" than most farms. It's place in the historical development of this part of Kansas is unique and colorful. One can see in looking over the list of owners that perhaps the farm was typical and that there were "good times" and "bad times" in the operation of the farm.

The farm's "claim to fame" however, is in its present function as "Bromelsick Camp" in its service of providing a natural type outdoor "roughing it" environment for the hundreds of Boy Scouts who camp there each year. The foresight and the desire to provide something for young people by Alfred Bromelsick is one of the happier stories of modern times.

FOOTNOTES

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Riley Burcham | 28. Raymond Nichols |
| 2. Ibid. | 29. Donald Decker |
| 3. Ibid. et al. | 30. Nichols, op. cit. |
| 4. Ibid. et al. | 31. Traul, op.cit. |
| 5. Dixon Haught | 32. Ibid. |
| 6. Mrs. Ralph Colman, et al. | 33. Charles Reese |
| 7. Abstract for property | 34. Lawrence Journal World |
| 8. H. K. Traul | 35. Julius Marks |
| 9. Ibid. | 36. William Warren |
| 10. Ibid | 37. Glenn Freeman |
| 11. Colman, op.cit. | 38. Burcham, op. cit |
| 12. Traul, op. cit | 39. Ibid et al. |
| 13. Colman and Traul, op.cit. | 40. Marks, op. cit. |
| 14. Nichols, Alice | 41. Ibid. et al. |
| 15. Crafton, Allen | 42. Ibid |
| 16. Traul, op. cit | 43. Lawrence Journal World |
| 17. Zeke Johanning | 44. Ernie Pulliam |
| 18. Abstract, op. cit. | 45. Freeman, op. cit. |
| 19. Ibid. | 46. Warren, op. cit. |
| 20. Richard Schellhorn | 47. Lawrence Journal World, op. cit. |
| 21. Ibid | 48. Ibid. |
| 22. Colman, op. cit. | 49. Warren, op. cit. |
| 23. Abstract, op. cit | 50. Burcham, op. cit. |
| 24. Schellhorn, op. cit | 51. Mrs. E.R.Hall |
| 25. Abstract, op.cit. | 52. Mr. Van Meter |
| 26. Ibid. | 53. Burcham, op.cit. |
| 27. Mrs. Lowell Risk | 54. Ibid. |

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Crafton, Allen. Free State Fortress
2. Nichols, Alice. Bleeding Kansas
3. Lawrence Journal World April 4, 1950, Front Page
4. Abstract
5. Other sources

To the best of the author's knowledge the subject of this paper has not been published, therefore, most of the material appearing in this article is from interviews with people knowledgeable about the subject. The following persons contributed information credited where possible in footnotes or gave the author a "lead" as to where to secure needed information.

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|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Riley Burcham | 11. Julius Marks |
| 2. Dixon Haught | 12. William Warren |
| 3. Mrs. Ralph Colman | 13. Glenn Freeman |
| 4. H.K.Traul | 14. Ernie Pulliam |
| 5. Zeke Johanning | 15. Mrs. E.R.Hall |
| 6. Richard Schellhorn | 16. Mr. Van Meter |
| 7. Mrs. Lowell Risk | 17. Mrs. Fred Montgomery |
| 8. Raymond Nichols | 18. Dr. Ted Kennedy |
| 9. Donald Decker | 19. Judge William Paddock |
| 10. Charles Reese | 20. Watson Library |

The authors gratitude and thanks is extended to all who assisted in furnishing the material that went into the preparation of this article.

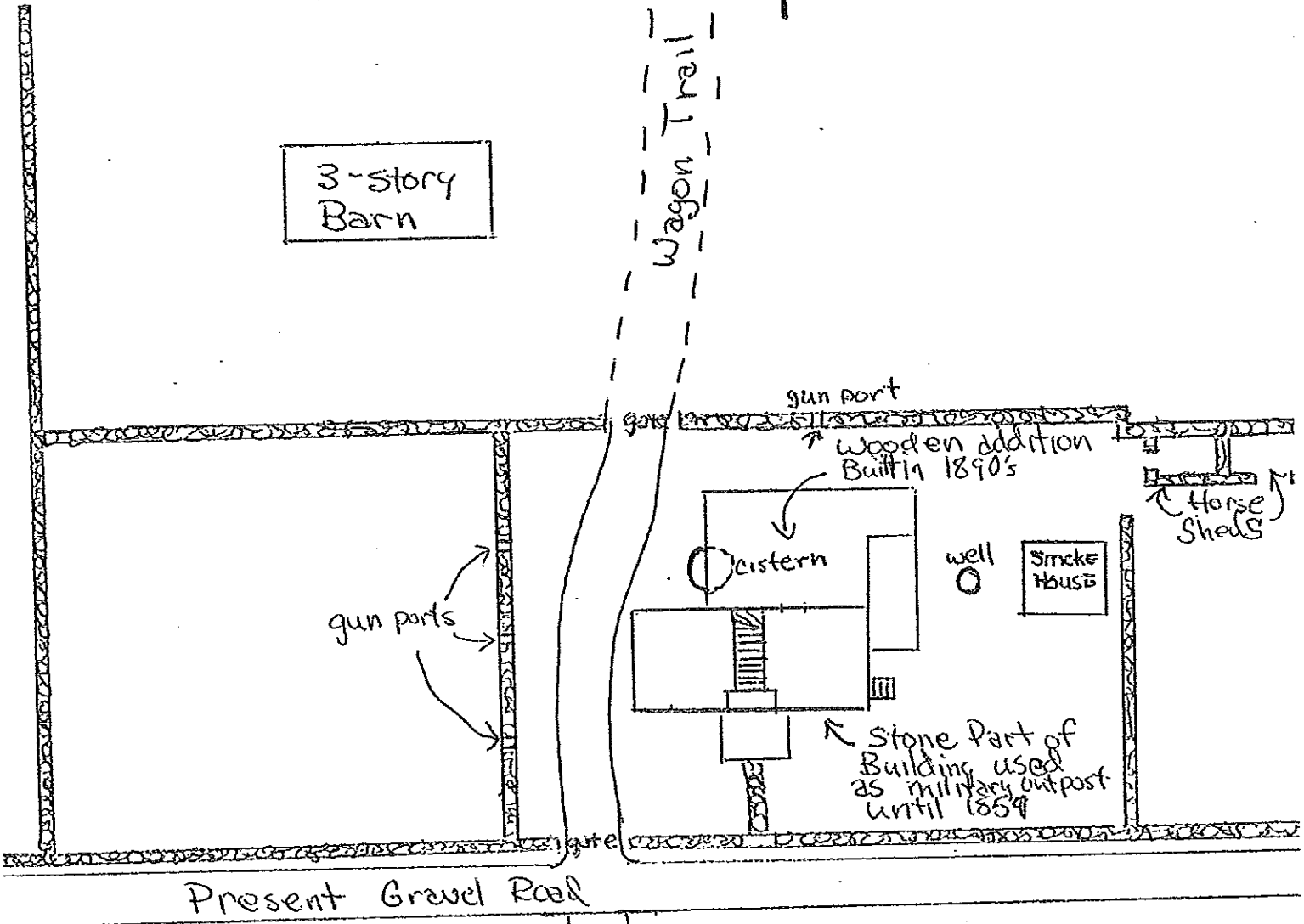
George D. Crum

orchard



3-story
Barn

Wagon Trail



Site plan of Bromelsick Farm
Showing Buildings and
rock fences

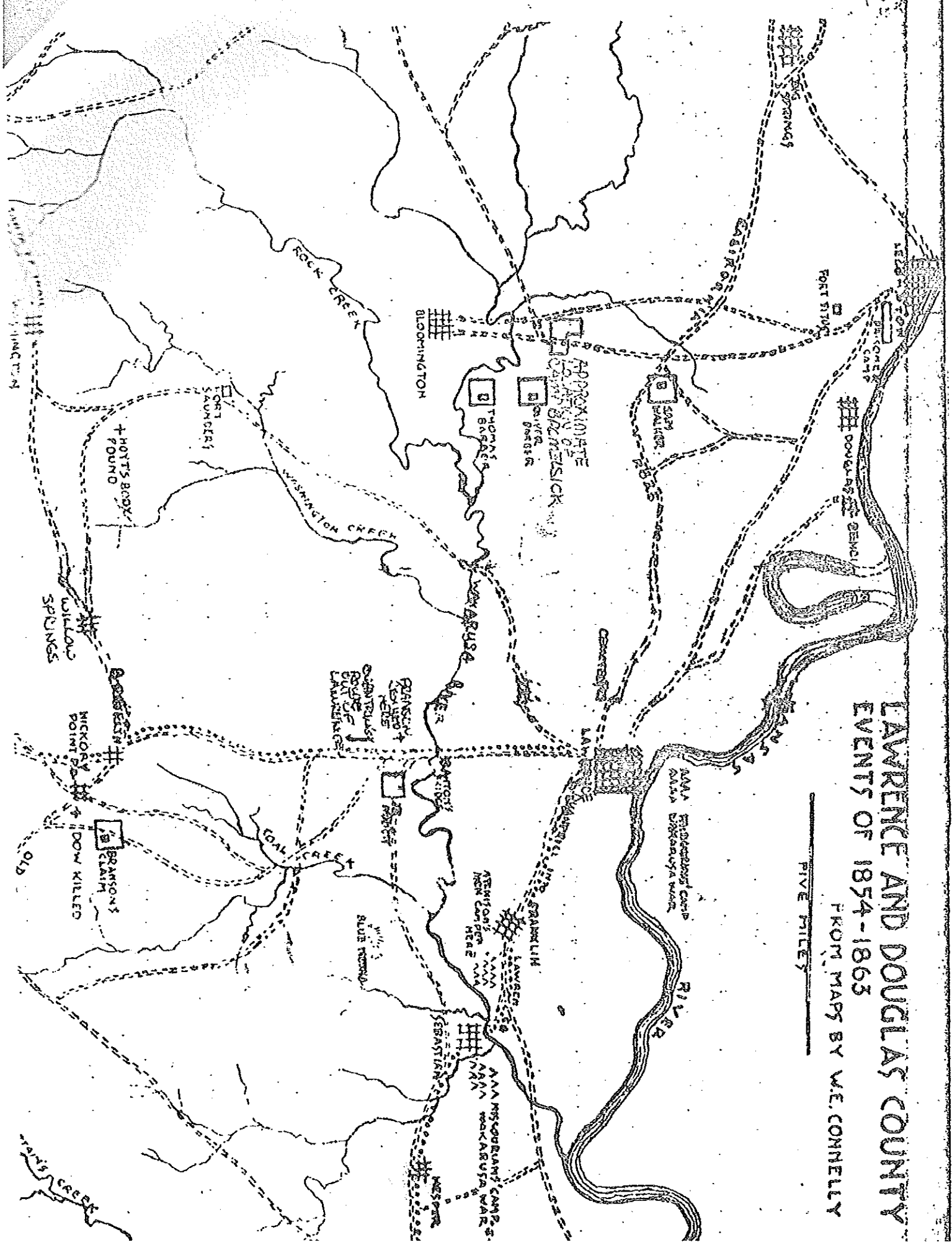
To



LAWRENCE AND DOUGLAS COUNTY EVENTS OF 1854-1863

FROM MAPS BY W.E. CONNELLY

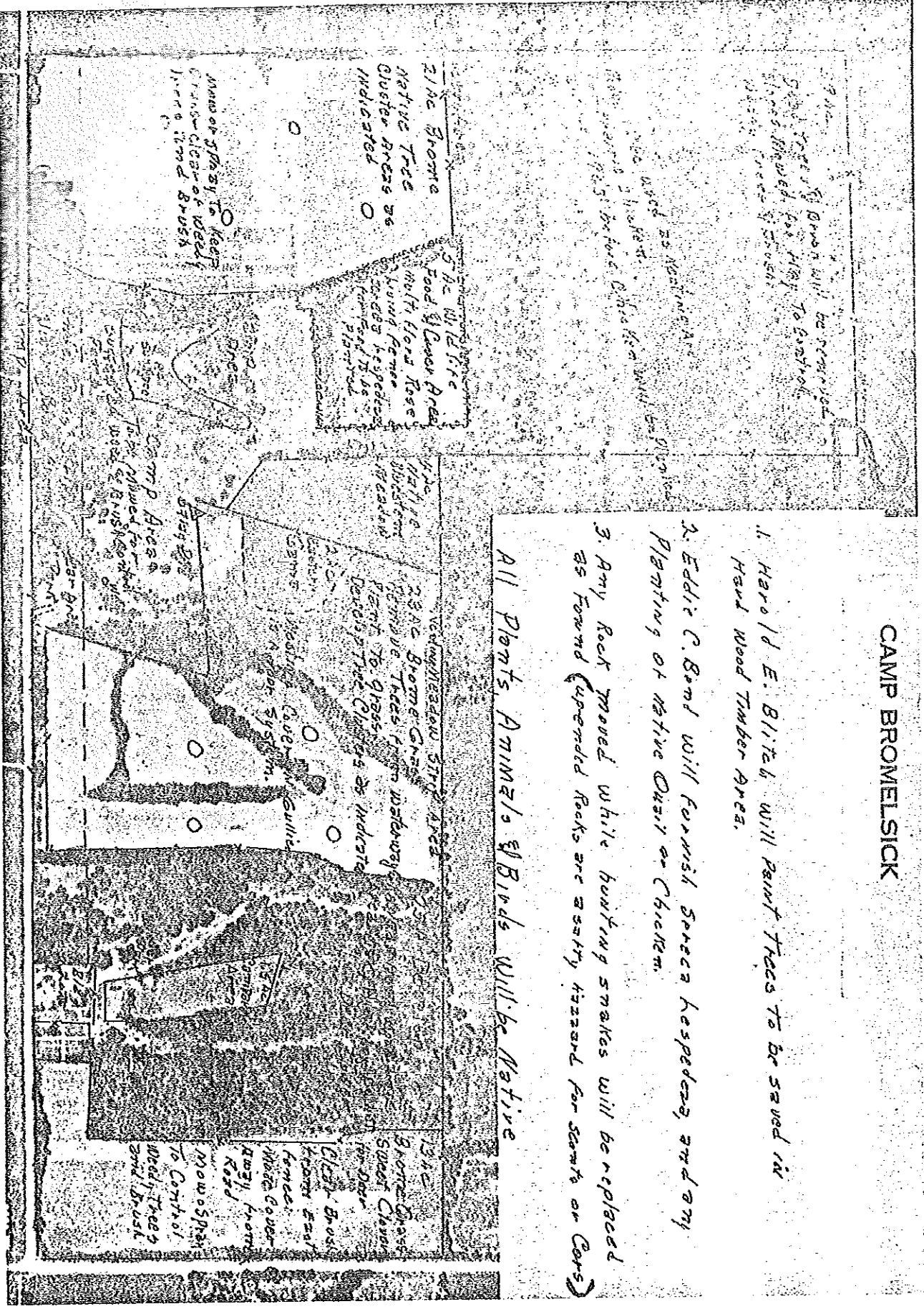
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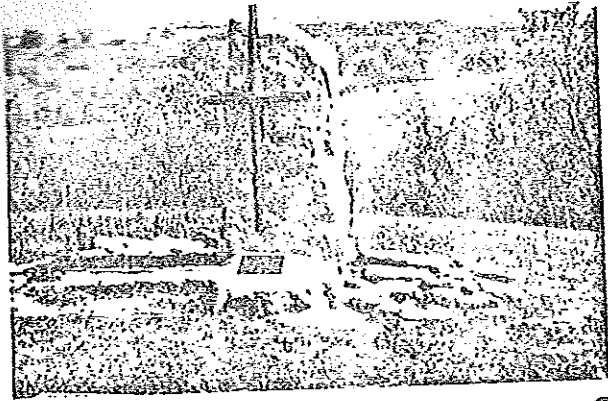


CAMP BROMELSICK

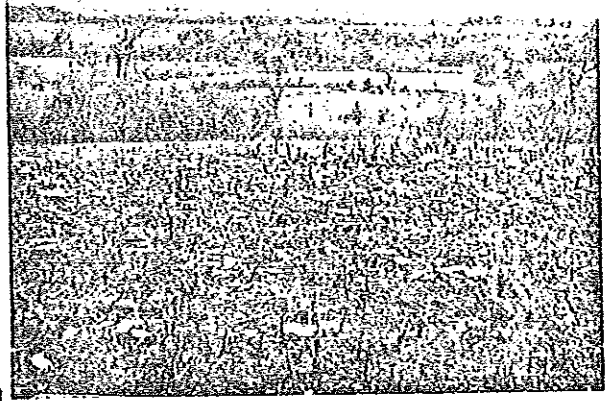
1. Harold E. Blitel will paint traps to be saved in Hard Wood Timber Area.
2. Eddie C. Bond will furnish Soreca keepers, and any planting of native Quail or Chicken.
3. Amy Rock moved while hunting snakes will be replaced as found (suspended rocks are safety hazard for seats or cars)

All Plants Animals & Birds will be Native

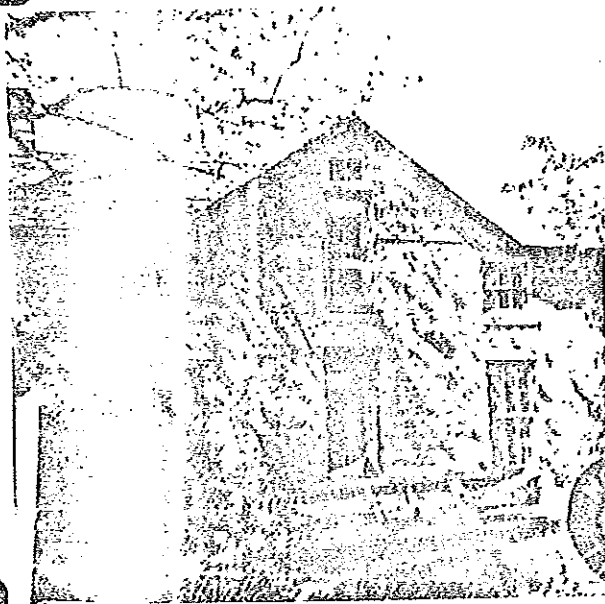




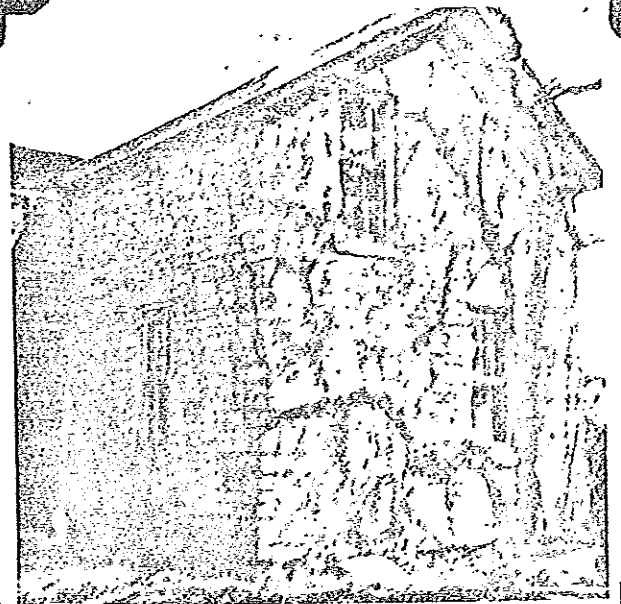
SKILLMAN MONUMENT



VIEW FROM PRAIRIE
OVERLOOKING WERTZ'S
LAKE



FRONT VIEW OF
STONE HOUSE



REAR VIEW
OF STONE HOUSE

Mr. Wilfred Hadi
1211 Monterey Way
Lawrence, KS 66049

H

John R. Scott
1017 Walnut St