

History of Franklin County, Kansas Territory
By the Hon. Daniel M. Valentine, Associate Justice, Kansas Supreme Court

FCHS Headlight
June 2006

“On the Fourth of July of this year [1855] a celebration of American Independence was had at Springfield (now Centropolis) on Eight Mile Creek. This was the first Fourth of July celebration held in the county. It was a small affair however, not more than twenty person being present.” [p.9]

“{John Brown} commanded at Lawrence September 14, 1856, and participated in many other adventures in Kansas. He was the dread of border ruffians and proslavery men, and whether they feared him most or hated him most probably would not have been told. Whether the killing of the Doyles and Wilkinson and Sherman was right may be questioned. But there can be no question but that John Brown believed it was right, and greater men than John Brown have been mistaken. It is not necessary to justify these acts in order to award to John Brown the sincerest convictions and the purest of motives. St. Paul before his conversion to Christianity persecuted the Christians in all good conscience. Stonewall Jackson in the late rebellion prayed to God every night and morning for the success of his arms although engaged in an unholy war for human slavery and yet no one ever questioned Stonewall Jackson’s sincerity. But to come a little closer to home: Dr. Joseph Cusic, a leading proslavery man living on Hickory Creek, an honest, upright, Christian gentleman, pure in everything except that he was a proslavery man, was so much offended on July 4, 1860, because in an address of mine delivered on that day I incidentally mentioned slavery in not the most flattering terms, that he left the grounds where the celebration was held as soon as those words were spoken, and would not hear the remainder of my address. In 1856 one fourth of all the ministers of the gospel in this country believed in human slavery and preached it. I speak of these things merely to show that good men and Christian men may be terribly mistaken and being this mistaken may in consequence thereof commit terrible crimes.” [p.13]

These quotations are from D.M. Valentine’s “A History of Franklin County, Kansas Territory” transcribed by Deborah Barker and published in **The History of Franklin County, Kansas**, 1993, Curtis Media, Dallas, TX.

Valentine’s two descriptions of July 4th celebrations and his musings about John Brown are very timely. Since this article appeared in 1993, the FCHS has obtained an old transcript of the Valentine story, which contains some additional pages. DCB