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Black Jack, Kansas Scrapbook, 1930-1974

Special Collections, Leonard H. Axe Library

Black Jack, Kansas Scrapbook MS 400

Overview of the Collection

Title	Black Jack, Kansas Scrapbook
Collection Number	MS 400
Creator	Bob Black
Dates	1930-1974
Collection Size	1 Linear Foot
Scope and Content	The Black Jack, Kansas Scrapbook includes newspaper clippings telling the account of the battle and town of Black Jack, as well as some history of Black Jack-area families including O'Neil, Von Tries, Black, and Pearson. Most clippings are from the *Wellsville Globe* and the *Ottawa Herald*. Photographs are included.
Name and Location of Repository	Pittsburg State University, Special Collections & University Archives, Pittsburg, Kansas.
Access Restrictions	This collection is open for access

Historical and Biographical Note   The Battle of Black Jack was the first armed conflict between proslavery and antislavery forces in the United States. The battle near Baldwin City on June 2, 1856, had implications far beyond Kansas Territory. Some call it the first battle of the Civil War. The Kansas-Nebraska Act had opened Kansas Territory in 1854 and allowed citizens to determine whether Kansas would be a free or slave state. The territory soon became a battleground between those who supported slavery in the territory and those who opposed it. On May 21, 1856, Sheriff Samuel Jones, the first sheriff of Douglas County, and a posse of 750 proslavery men raided Lawrence. In retaliation, John Brown and a small group of men— including some of his sons—violently murdered five men living on Pottawatomie Creek on May 24, 1856. Accompanied by a proslavery militia, Henry Pate set out to find Brown. He captured two of Brown's sons and held them prisoner. On June 2, Brown's free-state militia attacked Pate's men encamped on the grounds. About 100 men engaged in a three-hour battle, which led to Pate's surrender. The battle further divided the nation's already-polarized abolitionist and proslavery factions. As politicians, newspapers, and citizens watched the story of "Bleeding Kansas" unfold, hints of a larger potentially violent conflict to come became increasingly evident. The Battle of Black Jack is significant for its association with abolitionist John Brown. Both the battle and the coverage of the battle in the nation's newspapers introduced John Brown, who called for armed insurrection to end slavery.

Bob Black was born in 1943 in Nashville, Tennessee, to John and Mary (Collins) Black. Bob graduated from Ottawa High School (Kansas) in 1961 and went on to earn a Computer Science

degree from Kansas State University in 1972. In 1972 he began his career at Missouri Pacific as a programmer analyst. Shortly after this, he moved to Pittsburg, Kansas to start the first ServiceMaster franchise in Pittsburg. He later formed Alternate Systems, initially a mail distribution service and later a cleaning company. Bob "Blue" was known for his vintage Harley motorcycles. Bob served in the U.S. Marine Corp from 1964-1967, with 13 months of foreign service during the Vietnam War. He was decorated with multiple medals and badges. For years Bob lived near Scammon, Kansas in the old historic Gay Parita Ballroom building, which had been renamed the Blue Parita. He passed away in 2021. This scrapbook was found among his personal items.

Series
The collection contains primary sources and secondary sources and is arranged into the following series:

1. 1 Scrapbook
2. Loose photographs and documents