

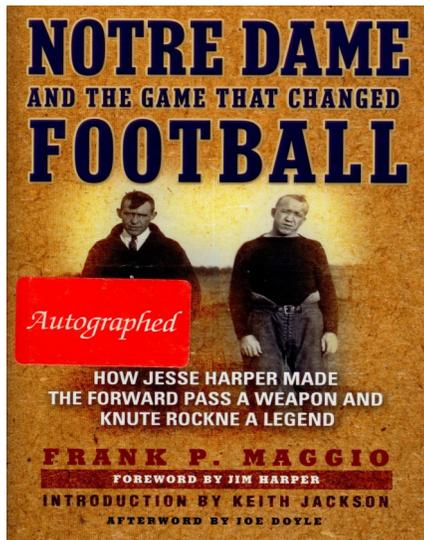
# The Clark County Historical Society

P.O. 862 Ashland, KS 67831  
620-635-2227

December 2013  
<http://www.pioneer-krier.com/>

Board of Directors  
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## Jesse Harper



Jesse was born on December 10, 1883 in DeKalb county, Illinois. The family moved to Mason, Iowa about 10 years later as his father was in the cattle business there.

Jesse at the age of 16 went to Morgan Park Academy in Chicago and after graduation,

he later moved to University of Chicago. This is where in 1902 he started his freshman football career. In 1905 his team won the Western Championship, a big game at the time. In 1906 he moved to Alma College as a coach.

It was about this time that football had become a very ruthless game. Many people were seriously hurt and the government was taking notice. There was a proposal in congress to outlaw the game.

By the summer of 1913 Jesse was head football coach for Notre Dame. He was developing a play in football that had not been successful in the past. Along with a couple of players, Knute Rockne and Gus Dorais, he developed the forward pass. This broke up the line and changed the game, almost eliminating the dangerous line which caused so many injuries. That season Notre Dame played West Point which was a major power house, winning the game 35 to 13. This set in motion the way the game has been played since.

In 1917 the war was starting to take most of the players and this was Jesse's final year at Notre Dame.

In 1916 Harper's father-in-law Melville C. Campbell had been in poor health and asked Jesse if he would return to the Kansas cattle ranch near Sitka, Kansas. Jess was ready for a change and agreed, in the spring of 1918 he moved to the ranch. The ranch had 20,000 acres in Clark County Kansas. He moved his family to Wichita and worked the ranch while commuting between his family and ranch, for days and weeks at a time, this continued for a few years.



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The old ranch house was rock and was made up of two old school houses that were moved in together.



In 1925 Jesse wrote to coach Rockne at Notre Dame asking if there was a

place for him there as there was trouble in the cattle business and problems with Mr. Campbell.

Jesse stayed in an advisory role over the next years. In 1931 Rockne was killed in a plane crash in Kansas. Jesse drove to the crash site and identified Rocks body. After the death of Rocke, Jesse was approached by Notre Dame to come back and take over the football program. The depression had hit the Campbell ranch and it was mortgaged for more than it was worth. The bank repossessed the note and Jesse used his salary of \$12,000.00 to buy it back at 50 cents on the dollar.

Jesse left the school in 1934 with Rocke and Jesse having the best win records in the school history. Jesse was elected president of the Kansas Live-stock Association (1930-1931). In 1958 he was honored with the Helms Hall of Fame Award as a college football coach.



Jess Harper passed away on July 31, 1961 at his ranch in Sitka, Kansas He was 77 years old. He was survived by his widow, Melville and sons Mell, Jim, and daughter Katharine.

Note; there is a display in the Museum honoring Jesse Harper. Come in and visit the museum.

There is a book by Frank P. Maggio, "Notre Dame and the Game That Changed Football" that has a complete story and details of Jesse Harper. The library can get it for you to read. Some of the details of this article came from the book. We have information in the museum that is included also in the article.

### Clark County Kansas, 1887

Clark County had six towns, 12 post offices, approximately 10,000 people, 40 school houses, five churches, seven newspapers and 11 townships. There were 624,000 acres with a tax valuation of \$1,005,000.00 and a very small county debt. There was room for unprecedented prosperity, wealth and room for 50,000 more residents. Ashland had a population of 1200 and 300 homes, three banks, three newspapers, four dry good stores, six groceries, three Hotels, three restaurants, two lumber yards, 16 real estate and loan offices, eight lawyers, three doctors, and many other businesses.

Appleton formed in 1885, now had a dozen stores, two banks, one newspaper, large hotel, a land and loan office, scores of homes with everyone making money. The Methodist Church was organized late December, 1886 out of the Garden City Kansas district. The first pastor was a man named Baird. He preached one sermon and was never heard from afterwards.

In June 1889 Cal Ward moved one of the homes from Appleton to the present site of Minneola. The Rock Island Railroad had purchased land and was laid out a few miles north of Appleton. The homes in Appleton were moved and many paid for by the Minneola Town Company. This lessened friction and bitter fights were prevented. As of today there is no trace of the old town site.

In June 1887 the Arkansas Valley Town Company started the town of Manning. Two stores were opened and a new school house erected here. The school began with 22 scholars and Mrs. M. E. Devenney the teacher. In 1889 the name was changed to Acres. In the next few years there was a general store, elevators, and in 1909 a post office was added with a post master by the name of F. W. Dawson.

## Lexington

In December of 1886 Ben Stephens moved a small house built by Francis Schell and Nathan Harden, to the new site of Lexington. It had been built on his place near the new town site two years earlier. He also built a business building the next year. This was the beginning of shaping the town of Lexington.

Other businesses soon followed which included restaurants and hotel. An estimate of the total number of building on the town site have varied from 40 to 60. There was a record of 29 buildings with 21 homes and 18 businesses that were located at that time.

Eventually total of 73 businesses have been recorded to have been located at the town site. Some of these were newspapers, real estate, loan and insurance, coal dealer, merchants, and farmers.

In early 1887 it seemed that the railroad Denver, Memphis and Atlantic would be built from Mullinville south to Lexington. Then another proposal was made, and with some politics from Ashland got the railroad route was changed to go from Wichita to Coldwater and to Ashland with a extension to Englewood. This then bypassed Lexington some 8 miles to the south.

As this was the last hope of making Lexington thrive, by the 1900's most of the lots had reverted to the county on the backs of the tax payers.

In later years the county released its interest to C. E. Harden and B. L. Stephens followed suit and also released his interest to Harden. The last to leave was the first one to settle in the township. Stephens moved his interest and business to Ashland. Lexington continues on as an active community, and in later years built a community center which is still actively used today.

## Kansas trivia

The Kansas Indian word 'kanza' which has a meaning of south wind, is the origin of the state name Kansas. A native American tribe called 'the people of the south wind' was the original inhabitants.

Kansas was the first state to raise a African American Infantry Regiment military unit.

During the years of the Santa Fe Trail, the Arkansas River Kansas river served as the border between the United States and Mexico.

Mine Creek Battlefield was the name of the site where a major Civil War battle in Kansas was fought?

## Museum News

The Museum has had many visitors this summer from all across the country. Our attendance is up as there are more vacationers traveling this year than in the previous couple of years. We hope this trend will continue. It is also our hope to find more volunteers to spend time in the museum. In the past many have worked different projects that have made the museum a success. If anyone would like to donate some time there are many opportunities and interesting things to do.

The Museum has been tasked very heavily with the loss of funds for operations next year. The funds used to pay operation expenses are down by nearly 20 %, which was already at a minimum operating level.

The board has worked on a project to help fund the museum this year. There is an opportunity for anyone who has old metal, scrap iron, such as a farm open silo or ditch that has been used for dumping machinery, wire and other metal objects, to donate this to the museum. We have a company that would like to remove this, and proceeds would fund the museum for operating expenses. Contact the museum if you would like to have this kind of junk cleaned up and help the museum in the process.

We have a wonderful Museum, and it is here because of the support of its members. We look forward to all of the members and friends coming in to visit the museum.

Pioneer-Krier Museum  
P. O. Box 862  
Ashland, KS. 67831  
Return Service Requested

**Endowment Fund**

The Pioneer Museum is grateful to those who have remembered us by making contributions to the newly established endowment fund. This can be done with individual contributions and through estate planning. This fund has grown each year. Hopefully some day this fund will have grown to the point that it will support the museum.

**Join the  
Clark County Historical Society**

Lifetime Memberships are only \$25.00

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Phone No. & Area Code \_\_\_\_\_

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Please send to:  
Clark County Historical Society  
P. O. Box 862  
Ashland, Kansas 67831

Phone: 620-635-2227

(Cut out and mail)

**Yes, I would like to help the  
Clark County Historical Society.**

Enclosed is my donation of  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ to be used for the Pioneer-  
Krier Museum.

(Please make checks payable to the Clark County  
Historical Society.)

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