



**FRANKLIN COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**
OTTAWA, KANSAS

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WWW.OLDDEPOTMUSEUM.ORG
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 20, 2016

Author to discuss secret societies during Kansas Territory era on October 27

Ottawa, Kansas--Author and historian Todd Mildfelt will look at the prevalence of secret societies during the Kansas territorial period and their impact on events during Bleeding Kansas. The program, which is free and open to the public, will be held at the Old Depot Museum on Thursday, October 27, at 7:00 p.m. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.

As Free-Staters, abolitionists, pro-slavers, and other factions competed for control over the Kansas Territory, they formed clandestine groups that strategized ways to promote their causes. The Danites, an abolitionist organization, found its way to Franklin County in 1857 when future U.S. Senator James Lane himself initiated several new members in the now-defunct town of Ohio City.

Todd Mildfelt grew up in Richmond, Kansas and has lived most of his life in Franklin County. He developed a deep interest in history at an early age that has remained throughout his life. Todd has taught school for thirty-four years and is currently employed by the Southeast Education Service Center (Greenbush) as a special education teacher. He published his first book, *The Secret Danites: Kansas' First Jayhawkers*, in 2003 and followed it with two books for young readers about the Underground Railroad in Kansas: *Wagon Train to Freedom* in 2011 and *Almost to Freedom* in 2013. Todd has been a featured speaker at the National Underground Railroad Conferences in Topeka and Little Rock, Arkansas.

This program is part of the Old Depot Museum's current exhibit, *Secret Societies: A Search for Fellowship, Knowledge & Security in Early Ottawa & Franklin County*, which is on display through November 13. For more information, contact the museum at (785) 242-1250.

The Old Depot Museum strives to educate visitors about the importance of trains in small towns and the history of Franklin County, Kansas. It is operated by the Franklin County Historical Society.

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