

Doniphan Named For War Hero

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HISTORICAL NOTES AND COMMENTS

Society Receives Doniphan Family Portraits Painted by George Caleb Bingham

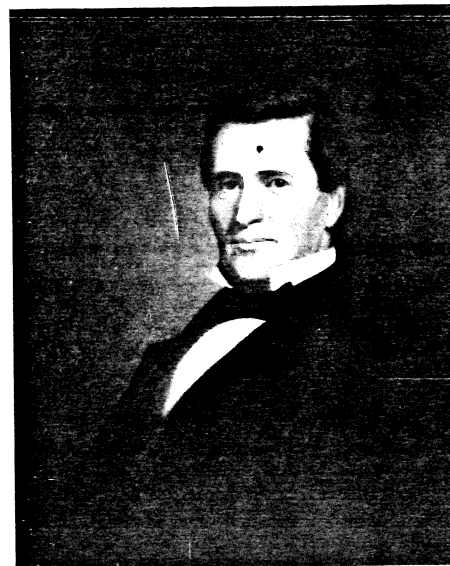
In May 1990, the State Historical Society of Missouri became the recipient of a prized collection of Alexander Doniphan family portraits painted by noted Missouri artist George Caleb Bingham. The four portraits of General Alexander William Doniphan, Mrs. Elizabeth Jane Thornton Doniphan, John Thornton Doniphan and Alexander William Doniphan, Jr., were given on a lifetime loan to the Society by Thornton Hough of Winter Park, Florida. In accordance with the will of his father, Charles P. Hough, the paintings will eventually become the permanent property of the Society. Thornton Hough is a descendant of the Doniphan family in whose possession the portraits had remained since Bingham painted them. The companion portraits of General and Mrs. Alexander W. Doniphan, both measuring 30" x 25", probably were painted by Bingham in Liberty, Missouri, around 1850.

Alexander William Doniphan, soldier and statesman, was born in Mason County, Kentucky, July 9, 1808. He studied law at Augusta College in Kentucky and emigrated to Missouri in 1830. Eventually settling in Liberty, where he opened his law office, Doniphan was elected to represent Clay County in the state legislature in 1836, and again in 1840 and 1854.

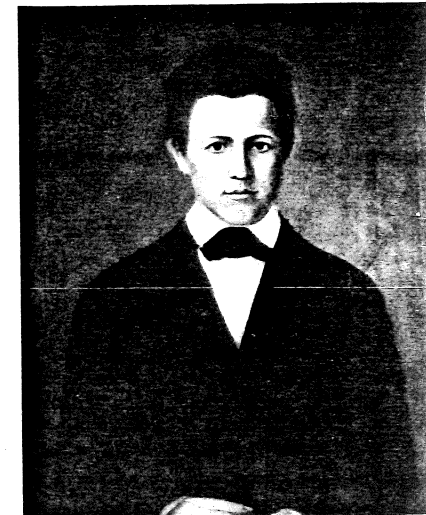
Doniphan took an active part in early military activities of Missouri. As a commander in the 1st Brigade, he participated in the conflict between Mormons and non-Mormon Missourians. In 1838, he refused to execute Mormon prophet Joseph Smith and others of his followers, proclaiming it cold-blooded murder. The Mormons later left Missouri for Illinois.

In May 1846, Doniphan raised troops for volunteer service in the Mexican War. Serving under General Stephen W. Kearny in the Army of the West, Doniphan marched to Santa Fe, Chihuahua and Monterrey, Mexico, where he posted victories in several famous battles. His expedition is considered the longest campaign march in American military history. While in New Mexico, he served as acting governor and helped create a code of organic laws for the new territory that resembled the statutes of Missouri. He also concluded an important treaty with the Navaho Indians.

In 1861, Doniphan served as a delegate to the Peace Conference at Washington, D.C., called by the Virginia legislature to satisfy the states



State Historical Society of Missouri
General Alexander William Doniphan



Alexander William Doniphan, Jr.
State Historical Society of Missouri

Elizabeth Jane Thornton Doniphan
State Historical Society of Missouri



State Historical Society of Missouri
John Thornton Doniphan

of the far South on the slavery issue. That same year, he was elected to the state convention to determine whether Missouri should secede from the Union. Although a slaveholder himself, he opposed secession and remained loyal to the Union.

Doniphan settled in Richmond, Missouri, the county seat of Ray County, in 1868. There he practiced law and served as president of the Ray County Savings Bank. He died there, August 8, 1887.

Elizabeth Jane Thornton Doniphan, the eldest of eight children of Colonel John and Elizabeth (Trigg) Thornton, was born December 21, 1820, in what is now Clay County. She was believed to be the second white child born in that county. Her parents lived at the time in a blockhouse for protection from the Indians. Elizabeth grew up in a prosperous, influential, Baptist family. An industrious reader, she was surrounded by a well-selected library and studied in her home under teachers employed by the family. She and Alexander W. Doniphan were married on her seventeenth birthday, December 21, 1837.

A charming, conversant hostess, Mrs. Doniphan exhibited her domestic talents in the local Clay County Agricultural and Mechanical Society Fair by winning the premium award for a candle matt entry in 1854 and judging the embroidery work in 1855. Her interest in education was evident in her civic contributions of 1847. She served on a committee to secure subscriptions from residents of Liberty Township for a proposed college. She, herself, subscribed \$200 toward the college.

A devout Christian woman, she joined the Disciples of Christ church in Liberty in the 1840s. An invalid several years, she died, July 19, 1873, in her sisters' home in New York City.

The portraits of the sons, John Thornton Doniphan (1838-1853) and Alexander William Doniphan, Jr. (1840-1858), traditionally have been attributed to Bingham. Both portraits, measuring 20" x 16 1/2", probably were painted from photographs after 1860, following the subjects' deaths.

Both sons died at a young age. John, the elder, died of accidental poisoning, May 9, 1853, at the age of 15. Alexander drowned while attending Bethany College in Virginia, May 11, 1858.

The four Doniphan portraits will be prominently displayed in the Bingham Wing of the State Historical Society Art Gallery during the Society's annual meeting, November 10.

Brick Machine

Fayette Boon's Lick Times, January 10, 1846.

A machine has been invented by Mr. Hall, of Coxsackie, N. Y. with which one person can mould 14,000 [bricks] in a day, which are superior to those made by hand.

Information from -
"Kansas an Kansans" - 1928
Pg. 122 & 123
2 newspaper articles
& this article

Doniphan Named For War Hero

Hickison Globe 10-3-83
Doniphan was founded by James F. Forman in 1854. He had come to Kansas in 1843 from Kentucky after a brief stop in Memphis, Mo.

Doniphan got its name from Col. Alexander W. Doniphan. Doniphan, a war hero of the day for his exploits in the Mexican War, was enlisted as a private in the Clay County, Mo., company of the first regiment of Missouri's mounted volunteers. He was elected colonel of the outfit before it left Fort Leavenworth.

On Sunday, Feb. 28, 1847, he and a band of 1,000 volunteer Missourians wiped out a Mexican army of 5,000 in the battle of Sacramento. Only four Missourians were lost in the battle and Doniphan was an instant hero.

The township in which Doniphan is located, Wayne, also got its name from a war hero, Mad Anthony Wayne, who gained his fame during the American Revolution. It was suggested by A.H. Dunning, an early county commissioner who had come to Northeast Kansas from Wayne County, Mo.

Forman, the founder, went to St. Joseph on Nov. 7, 1854 to organize the Doniphan Township Company. His brother John Forman, was made treasurer of the company. James was elected a trustee and was commissioned to survey the town at \$2.50 per city block. He received his payment in town lots.

Even though Joseph Utt had previously built a trading post on the river bank, which was later washed into the river, James Forman built the first formal house in the new settlement. He used old lumber from the wreckage of the steamboat, "Pontiac," for the house.

Doniphan held its first formal election in October 1855. The lone polling place was in the hotel, constructed by Forman. Another brother, Austin, had joined James and John, and together they opened the first dry goods store.

John Forman brought respect for the community when he was named to be a member of the Kansas Constitutional Convention in 1859. James Forman built the first school in 1874. He charged the town \$8,000 for the school building.

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But the decline of Doniphan had already set in. The aging Father Henry was replaced by Father Casimir Seitz, who was the first priest to be ordained in Kansas, and Father Augustine Wirth on June 12, 1857. Within two years time the two new priests decided that Atchison, not Doniphan was destined to become the dominant town on the Kansas side of the river. They left St. John Baptist as a missi-

church and established St. Benedict's at Atchison.

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Fire played a destructive role in the history of Doniphan. It kept the town from becoming firmly established. In 1872 the Brenner elevator burned. It cost \$16,000 when it was built in 1867 and had a capacity of 40,000 bushels. Instead of rebuilding the elevator, Mr. Brenner began raising grapes and making wine, a profession which spread his reputation throughout the Middle West.

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Laughlin and Lynch recovered, but the incident resulted in the disbanding of the Danites.

Across Our Wide Missouri

A Christmas Frolic

Alexander Doniphan's men were expecting to spend a dull Christmas Day, but the Mexicans had other ideas

By Bob Priddy

The Mexican military commander, accused of cowardice, had been taken from the battle area to the capital at Chihuahua. There he was shown the fortifications at Sacramento Pass, fortifications the Mexicans thought would stop the devil-Americans of Alexander Doniphan.

The Mexican officer was impressed with the defenses, but told his fellow officers, "Those Americans will roll over them like dogs. They do not fight as we do."

He knew. He had met the Americans and had been badly whipped. And he was right. The defenses at Sacramento Pass would not stand.

He had experienced the deadliness of Doniphan's men at a place called El Brazito on Christmas Day, 1846. One of Doniphan's men, John Hughes, called it a "Christmas frolic." It was the brief, but dramatic highlight of a march that prompted New York newspaper publisher William Cullen Bryant to liken Doniphan to the great Greek war hero, Xenophon, as a military leader of epic proportions.

Alexander Doniphan, a Liberty lawyer, was an almost automatic choice to head the First Missouri Volunteers when they were formed at Fort Leavenworth on the call from the President at the start of the Mexican War. About 1,350 of the 1,700 officers and men in Colonel Stephen Kearny's Army of the West were Missourians, the majority under Doniphan's command.

It was an army that would become known for its marches through arid plains and killer deserts. The first units left Leavenworth on June 5, 1846, headed for New Mexico. They reached Fort Bent, not far from present LaJunta, Colorado, in late July. The march to liberate Santa Fe began on the first two days of August. New Mexican governor Manuel Armijo was waiting with about 3,000 men at Apache Canyon, 15 miles from town. But his army dispersed and the governor fled south, leaving Santa Fe open to the Americans. On August 18, the Army of the West marched into Santa Fe without firing a shot or taking a casualty.

After securing the town, issuing notices that the Americans planned to stay, and drafting a code of laws, Kearney took some men and headed to California. He left Doniphan in charge of Santa Fe until Col. Sterling Price—later a Missouri governor—could arrive with reinforcements. In the interim, Doniphan dispatched his men throughout New Mexico to make peace with troublesome Indians. That job completed, Doniphan headed south, intending to join up with Brigadier General John E. Wool, who was ordered to take Chihuahua. What Doniphan did not know was that Wool had been diverted to Monterrey to join Zachary Taylor. Chihuahua had not been taken and the path there had not been cleared. Doniphan and his men, who had not yet been fired

upon in this war, were headed into hundreds of miles of deserts dominated by an unconquered enemy.

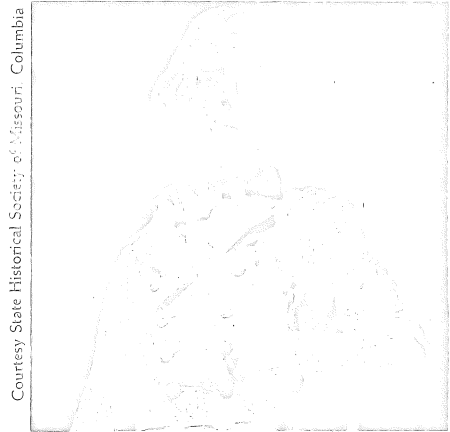
Doniphan was not known as a stern disciplinarian, although at times he ordered his men to exercise more discipline than usual. By Christmas Eve his men had marched to within 50 miles of El Paso, and it was here that Doniphan ordered his men to become more orderly. "Every man was expected to have his gun in best order," wrote Marcellus Ball Edwards, a young soldier from Saline County. "There must be a stop to the excessive noise in camp that we usually have before nine o'clock at night."

The next day was Christmas, a day the troops greeted with frivolity. They fired salutes and sang and casually marched 18 miles. "I had expected to meet with the enemy, there were, as usual, many stragglers along the road, calculating to spend a very dull Christmas; so that when we arrived in camp we had not over four hundred men," wrote Edwards. They pitched camp on a little arm of the Rio Grande river. Most of the troops scattered to find wood.

Edwards wrote in his journal, "Those who had not, were sitting quietly down in the sunshine with a deck of cards to while off the dull moments in camp, which is the universal source of amusement with us."

Some of the soldiers had run into a

New York publisher William Cullen Bryant likened Doniphan to the great Greek war hero, Xenophon. Doniphan's army became known for its marches through arid plains and killer deserts.



Courtesy State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia

Courtesy State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia



few Mexicans earlier and had chased them, capturing an especially fine white horse. Since card games are best played when there are stakes, the horse was made the prize in a game of three-trick loo involving Doniphan and his staff.

Someone noted a dust cloud in the distance and pointed it out to the Colonel who, although thinking it looked suspicious, was not to be taken away from his card game. After playing several cards and reaching the point of almost winning the horse, Doniphan looked up again at that dust cloud. "By God, that looks forked!" Edwards quotes him as exclaiming.

He immediately sent out some scouts and ordered men in camp to form skirmish lines.

"Now a scene of confusion ensued in camp that would do credit to the

pen of any author to describe," said Edwards in his journal. "A few men on horseback galloped up and down the road proclaiming the near approach of the enemy. The bugles sounded the assembly over and over again. The jingling and rattling of arms, the cries 'Fall into line!'—'Get your horses!'—'Fall in on foot here,' etc., drowned every other sound and caused about as mixed up an affair in camp as can well be conceived. Men, of course, had misplaced some of their arms and could be heard asking of others, 'Do you know where my gun is?'—'You've got my sabre!' etc., etc. Captain Reid was away from camp, watering his horse, when the scene commenced. He galloped up to camp and heard the order to fall in on foot. But he despises the infantry service, so he ordered those of his

men who had their horses convenient to mount them. No sooner said than done, sixteen well-mounted men soon appeared by his side behind our line of infantry. Accidentally, I found my mare close at hand and mounted her."

By now the Mexicans had arrived and spread out in a line about two miles long. Their forces were estimated at thirteen hundred, including more than 500 regular dragoons dressed in blue pantaloons, green coats trimmed in scarlet and tall caps plated in front with brass, on the tops of which fantastically waved a plume of horse hair or buffalo's tail. Their bright lances and swords glittered in the sheen of the sun.

Minutes passed as the commanders sized up each other.

Across Our Wide Missouri

Then a Mexican soldier rode toward the American ranks, carrying not a white flag, but a black one decorated with a skull and crossbones and the legend in Spanish, "Victory or Death".

An American interpreter went out to talk with him and was told the Mexican commander wanted to see Doniphan inside the Mexican lines for a conference. If Doniphan did not come willingly, the Mexican said, the army would come get him, with no quarter given. Doniphan's response was reportedly "more abrupt than decorous—to charge and be damned."

Moments later the Mexican firing began, from too far away to be effective. Edwards wrote, "It was seemingly enough to make one's blood flow chill when he saw the long, bold and beautiful front of the enemy, forming a striking contrast with our single rank of footmen."

But the Missourians had a completely different reaction. "Coolness and self-confidence pervaded our ranks. Laughing, talking and jesting, each seemed to vie with his neighbor in telling the best yarn or using the most witty expression."

One of them, J.T. Wayne, suddenly found his rifle's ramrod shot out of his hand. "By God, they'd better shoot a fellow!" he proclaimed.

Doniphan had deployed his men well. One unit was sent to the left to hide behind some weeds and gopher hills. Those men were told to hold their fire until the Mexicans were right upon them. Another unit of American cavalry was moved to another fairly well-hidden location.

The Mexicans advanced steadily on the American troops, "till the sound of bullets over our heads reminded me of a hail storm," wrote one witness later.

Suddenly both ranks of Americans opened fire, and the dignity of the Mexican units crumbled. "Anyone who dislikes to spoil a pretty thing would have pitied them. How altered their appearance, which but a moment before was so beautiful and imposing! Now a rider could be seen quickly leaving his seat, or a

war horse bounding high in the air and falling.... They faltered—turned to the right as if to make a descent upon the wagons."

But more Americans were waiting within the wagons and Reid's squad, with Edwards in it, charged into the midst of the disorganized Mexicans, turning their advance into a rout.

A unit of cavalry from Howard County went after the only cannon the Mexicans had and quickly seized it, a weapon Edwards said was "as near of no account as anything could be."

The Mexicans retreated out of sight, and by the time Reid was ordered to find out where they were going, they were so far away that the fatigued American horses could not chase them farther.

The Battle of Brazito, a little arm of the Rio Grande, was the first conflict for the First Missouri Volunteers under Doniphan. Although many of them had been in battle before—under Richard Gentry in the ill-fated effort against the Seminole Indians in the Okeechobee swamps nine years earlier—this was the first time they had been confronted in the open by an impressive and threatening enemy. Doniphan praised the men for their coolness under fire, and the men praised their leaders for guiding them to an invigorating victory on what otherwise would have been a dull Christmas day.

Doniphan later wrote from El Paso that his units suffered only seven wounded. The battle lasted only half an hour, but it struck fear into the hearts of the Mexicans, who showed the disorganization that would further manifest itself at the Battle of Sacramento Pass.

When the battle was over and the celebration had died down, Doniphan and his staff resumed their card game. Unfortunately, during the battle, the prize—the white horse—had disappeared.

Two days later, the Americans reached El Paso, where they were greeted by a delegation of citizens and escorted peacefully into town. A house-to-house search turned up five tons of powder.

The First Missouri Volunteers were now 1,200 miles from home. They had walked most of that distance. They had no money. The equipment was showing signs of wear and the only orders they had were three months old.

In the two months that he was at El Paso, Doniphan learned Wool had not captured Chihuahua. So, in early February, the First Missouri headed into the desert again, determined to take Chihuahua. After an arduous march—a march the War Department didn't want Doniphan to make, but they found it impossible to get the new orders to him—the Missourians reached Sacramento Pass, 15 miles from Chihuahua. The 2,800 Mexicans outnumbered Doniphan more than two-to-one. So confident were the Mexicans of victory that the townspeople had made rope handcuffs to be used to take American prisoners into the city in disgrace.

The Americans, true to the prophecy of the officer who had seen them at Brazito, rolled over the Mexicans like dogs and hours later marched into Chihuahua.

It was their last great fight, the last battle of their epic. The Missourians had marched and fought for 2,100 miles and suffered only three killed in battle. By the end of the march their one-year enlistment was almost done. None re-enlisted.

In the spring, they were sent home via New Orleans, where their grizzled and sunburned features and tattered clothes created a sensation. They were heroes and Doniphan was their leader. But he modestly said all he ever did was gather his men together and turn them loose upon the enemy.

Someday while driving through central Missouri south of Jefferson City, you may pass through a small settlement named for a battle that proved to Missourians they could take the best the enemy could throw at them, and put that enemy to rout so easily the confrontation became known as a "Christmas frolic."

Merry Christmas from Brazito, Missouri. □

Mackenna Morgan
Hometown Frontiers

Fax #

Alexander William Doniphan

575 589 4277

Interview questions

Missouri is a long way from El Paso. How was Alexander Doniphan chosen to lead his volunteer troops so far from home?

It took a long time to get to El Paso. What did the militia eat? Did they carry it with them? Did they know where water was? How was the route they took determined?

After reading about both his children dying, I tried to find out what they died of but couldn't find any further information. Do you know what his children died of? They both died at 16. Were they twins?

It was interesting to find out that he defied the order to execute Mormon founder John Smith. Was he or his wife Mormon?

Did he encounter Apaches or any other Indians on his way to the southwest?

He was outnumbered by the Mexicans 3 to 1. How was he able to defeat the Mexicans? Did he use any particular strategy?

I have asked many of my friends and family if they know who Doniphan Drive in El Paso is named after and no one has known. Is Alexander Doniphan very well known in Missouri? Is he better known in Liberty, Missouri?

1830 settled in Lexington, Missouri's moved to Clay County, Liberty, Missouri in 1833 - He was a criminal lawyer. Elected to Missouri Legislature in 1838

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Alexander drowned while attending Bethany College in Virginia
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*Very well known as a Lawyer + Legislature
Lived in Liberty 1833 - Elected to Missouri Legislature in 1838
in 1854 moved to Richmond, Missouri where he
resided until his death in 1887. Buried in a
Liberty cemetery.*

Charles R. Kuehs.

Among those who have stood by Doniphan in bright and gloomy times, is the subject of this sketch, Charles R. Kuehs, who was born in Saxony, Germany, in 1847. From the age of 13 to 17 years, he went through the rather trying time of apprentice at the blacksmith's trade. He came to Cleveland, Ohio, in 1867, and in 1868 to Doniphan, where he went to work for Schletzbaum & Schnell, as a blacksmith. In 1870 he married Mrs. Mary Werner, who at that time carried on the stove and tinware business, which was continued by him until 1875. In that year, two mercantile firms of the town went into bankruptcy, which practically left Doniphan without a store. This being an opportunity for starting a new store, Mr. Kuehs opened up with a stock of General merchandise, and has carried on the business successfully ever since. He has three times been appointed postmaster at Doniphan, and has now held the office for about sixteen years in the aggregate.



Miss Frances E. Katner.

Frances E. Katner was born in Doniphan County, near the town of Doniphan, and this County has always been her home. In early life she attended the District school; then attended Park College, at Parkville, Missouri, one year; Mrs. Monroe's School, at Atchison, one year; and one year at the Holton Normal. She then taught school for five or six years in different parts of the County; and afterwards taught for one winter in Scott County; while homesteading a claim out there. Returning to Doniphan County, she again began teaching, when she was elected County Superintendent, to fill a year of Oliver Edwards' unexpired term, and was re-elected for the two ensuing terms, the last of which is not yet completed. She is zealous in the cause of education, and in elevating the standard of the County schools, and her administration of the office has been characterized by great energy.

General Alexander W. Doniphan.

[The following sketch of Gen. A. W. Doniphan, in whose honor our County was named, was furnished by Col. John Doniphan, of St. Joseph.]

A. W. Doniphan was descended from a Spanish cavalier, who gained distinction in the Moorish wars of Granada, and emigrated to Scotland. His sons were at Jamestown with John Smith, in 1607. Loyalty to Charles the 1st caused banishment to Virginia. They settled in the Northern Neck of Virginia, and Joseph Doniphan, the father of A. W. Doniphan, was a Revolutionary soldier from Fauquier County, and at the battle of Brandywine had a brother killed, who fell in his arms. He emigrated to Kentucky in 1791. A. W. Doniphan was born in Mason County, Kentucky, July 8, 1808. His mother, Anne Smith, was a grand-daughter of Sir Sidney Smith, an Englishman, who came to Virginia in 1706. At the death of his father, Thomas S. Doniphan, the father of Col. John Doniphan, of St. Joseph, took the control of the family, and in 1815 sent A. W. Doniphan to Augusta, Kentucky, to live, where he graduated in 1828, at the Augusta College, and in 1830 settled in Lexington, Missouri; in 1833 removed to Liberty, in Clay County, where he soon became eminent as a criminal lawyer. In 1838, as a Brigadier General, he received the surrender of Joseph Smith and the Mormon forces. Afterwards he became the attorney of the Mormons. He was a member of the Missouri Legislature in 1838, 1840, and 1854, and a member of the Peace Conference in 1861. In 1846, at the breaking out of the Mexican War, he commanded the First Missouri Regiment, as Colonel, and marched from Fort Leavenworth to Santa Fe, Chihuahua, and to Monterey and the mouth of the Rio Grande, and returned by the Gulf of Mexico, Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, home, in July, 1847, having marched 3,200 miles by land, and travelled over 3,000 by water, through an enemy's country, and fighting several battles; and at Sacramento, on the 28th day of February, 1847, with 925 Missouri troops, attacked 4,300 Mexicans in an entrenched position, at the crossing of the Sacramento River, eighteen miles from Chihuahua, and defeated them after a three hours' fight, with a loss of 300 killed of the Mexicans, and about the same number of prisoners; capturing a specie train and all camp equipage. After his return home, he continued the practice of law until 1862, when he removed to St. Louis, and was appointed pension agent; and in 1868 he removed to Richmond, Missouri. He died in 1887, in the 80th year of his age. As an orator, he was not excelled in American history; and as a warrior, his march is not equaled in the history of the world. Col. Benton, in his speech of welcome to the Missouri veterans at St. Louis, in July, 1817, said their achievements exceeded those of Xenophon, and were unequalled in ancient or modern times. The career of A. W. Doniphan as a lawyer was really more wonderful than as a military man. He defended one hundred and eighty-two men for murder, and never had a client hung; and Governor Woodson, in a public speech in St. Joseph, said he had heard Clay, Marshall, and Meniffee, the great orators of Kentucky, and General Doniphan was the peer of them all.

Lewis and Clark's Expedition.

The expedition sent out by President Jefferson to explore the Louisiana Purchase, left the mouth of the Missouri on the 14th day of May, 1804, with one bateau and two pirogues, and forty-three men and officers. The expedition ascended the Missouri River to its head waters, near what is Virginia City, Montana, and after burying the canoes in which they had travelled from the falls of the Missouri, at the present site of Fort Benton, crossed the Rocky Mountains, and descended the Clearwater to the Columbia, and reached the Pacific Ocean on the 16th of November, 1805, after travelling 4,133 miles. They wintered there, and returned by the same route, and reached St. Louis on the 18th of September, 1806. This was one of the most fearless and successful explorations known to history. As they went up the river, they took dinner on the 4th day of July, 1804, at the mouth of Independence Creek, in the lower edge of Doniphan County, and gave the name to the stream which it has borne ever since. That night they encamped on the Missouri side, at an abandoned Indian village, near what is now called the Narrows, (just above Rushville,) then a large prairie, long since washed in the river. The next day they passed Black snake Hills; passed the mouth of the Nodaway, (then at Amazonia,) and encamped that night on Nodaway Island; on the 9th, passed Wolf Creek, on the larboard or south side of the Missouri. On the 11th, passed Tanico Creek, (Tarkio); and on the 14th, the Weesh-ha-to-non, now the Nishnabotna.

I take the foregoing from a quaint volume entitled "A Journal of the Travels of Lewis and Clark, of the United States Army, from the Mouth of the Missouri River, through the Territory of North America, to the Pacific Ocean, during the years 1804, 1805, and 1806." It has the name of Joseph Doniphan (my grandfather) written in it, under date of September 10, 1807.

JOHN DONIPHAN.

7-3-08

Doniphan County 'father' is famous Missourian; to be honored in Liberty, Mo.

By Paul Stewart
Chief reporter

The man who bears the name of this Northeast county — Alexander William Doniphan — soon is to have his bust in the Hall of Famous Missourians.

The ceremony is part of the Bicentennial Celebration on Wednesday, July 9, at Gano Memorial Chapel, William Jewell College, Liberty, Missouri. The program is being co-sponsored by the Clay County Commission, Clay County Millennium Historical Board, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and the college. It will include the presentation of the A.W. Doniphan community leadership award.

Some informational excerpts regarding Doniphan were found in the *Illustrated Doniphan County - 1837-1915*, an April 6, 1916 supplement to the *Weekly Kansas Chief*. The supplement is available for review at the District 1 Library in Troy.

In selecting a name for Doniphan County, the early settlers honored themselves by naming the county after one of the most famous characters in the annals of American history. A.W. Doniphan was a patriot, a warrior, and an orator of the highest attainments. His deeds of valor in his country's cause stand out today as pre-eminent among the great military characters who have engraved their names on the pages of American history. Great national leaders have said that his achievements during the Mexican war were unequalled in ancient or modern



Alexander William Doniphan

times.

Born in Mason County, Kentucky on July 8, 1808, he lived in Augusta. At the age of 20 he was graduated from the Augusta college, and in 1829 was admitted to the bar as a lawyer. In 1830 he settled in Lexington, Missouri, and moved to the Clay County seat, Liberty, Missouri, in 1833. By the age of 25 he became eminent as a criminal lawyer.

Doniphan had considerable experience as a lawmaker also, being elected to the Missouri Legislature in 1838 and 1840 [representing the Whig Party]. His powerful personality and oratorical attainments commanded the respect of the members.

At the breaking out of the Mexican-American War in 1846, General Doniphan was put in command of the First Missouri [volunteers] Regiment, and marched his men through New Mexico and to the mouth of the Rio Grande. He fought several battles in

the enemy's country, the most notable of which was at Sacramento on February 28, 1847, when, with 933 Missouri troops he attacked 4,300 Mexicans at the crossing of the Sacramento River, and defeated them after a three hour fight. His losses were insignificant.

General Doniphan returned home by the Gulf of Mexico, the Mississippi and the Missouri rivers, and arrived during the month of July 1847, after having marched 3,200 miles by land, and traveled over 3,000 miles by water.

In 1854 he again was elected to the Missouri Legislature. In 1868 he moved to Richmond, Missouri, where he resided until his death in 1887. He was buried in a Liberty cemetery.

Although well-known as a military man, his career was even more wonderful as a lawyer. It was said that he defended 183 men for murder, and not one of them ever went within a shadow of the gallows.

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a Kentucky county. Doniphan, Linn, Atchison, Marshall, and Ander-
son were Missouri men. No other area furnished as many names for
the first Kansas counties as did the states of Virginia, Kentucky, and
Missouri. Most of these names represented men of distinction.

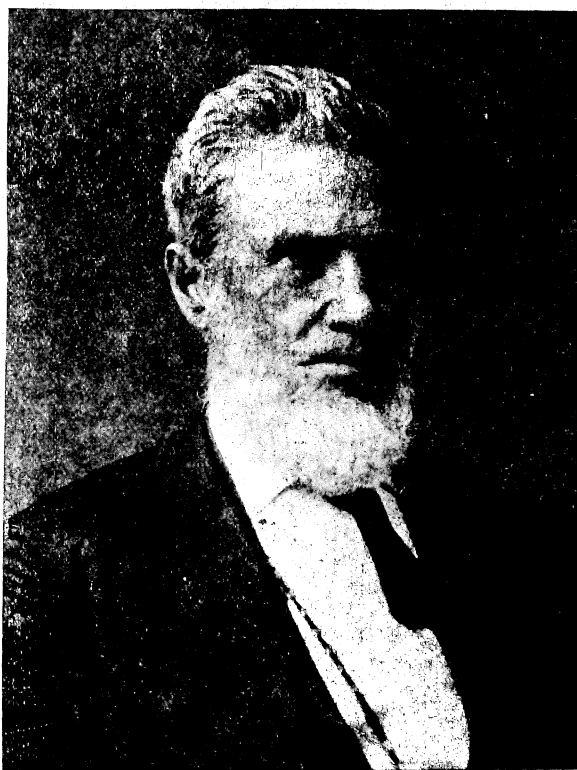
Doniphan County, named for Colonel Alexander W. Doniphan,
was the first Kansas county to be named. According to tradition, a
Doniphan ancestor was a Spaniard who had come to England during
the time of Ferdinand and Isabella. His Spanish name of Don Afonso
was corrupted into Doniphan.⁵ Colonel Doniphan, born in Kentucky
of a Virginia family, continued the westward migration into Missouri.
He organized a Missouri regiment for the Mexican War. Although he
enlisted as a private, he was a natural leader and was soon elected
colonel and commander. "My men are rough and ready," he said, and,
being hunters from Missouri, they could hit a squirrel in the eye at a
hundred paces.⁶ As for the marksmanship of the Mexican soldier, we
may judge the rumored instructions of an American officer to his men:
"If you see a Mexican aim at you, stand still!" Doniphan enhanced his
reputation by bringing back from Mexico a cannon as a souvenir. He
named it "Old Sacramento," but in Kansas it was named "Old Kicka-
poo" and was said to have fired "the first shots both for and against
slavery in the United States."⁷ With his Kentucky-Missouri back-
ground, Doniphan, the "Soldier Statesman," was a proslavery man,
yet a member of a peace commission in Washington to avert civil war.
He was a distinguished man about whom Lincoln made the comment,
"You are the only man I ever met who, in appearance, came up to any
previous expectations."⁸

When the Bogus Legislature named Marion County, it was to honor
General Francis Marion, a South Carolinian and a hero in the American
Revolution. Marion's success as a raider against the British and his
escapes into the swamps gave him his nickname of the "Swamp Fox."⁹
In 1790 he participated in the making of the South Carolina constitu-
tion, and he served two terms in the state senate. Marion County was
at first only a narrow strip a hundred miles long which reached to the
Oklahoma border. It disappeared in 1857. When the county was re-
vived in 1860, it had the same name, but this time the name had a new
source, Marion County, Ohio, also named to honor the general.¹⁰ The
Marion community now considers General Marion as the original
source of its name rather than the Ohio home of Sam Wood.

The national leader of the proslavery movement in Kansas was
Senator David R. Atchison of Missouri,¹¹ and for him Atchison County
was named. Atchison was a forceful and confident man who rode
roughshod over opposition. He weighed over two hundred pounds but

formed that he must surrender his arms. This he avoided by a trick, turning over the antiquated and harmless fusils taken from the Mexicans in the recent skirmish.

The action of Captain Cooke demoralized Snively's forces. Many of his men returned directly to Texas. And when Captain Cooke retraced his steps to Fort Leavenworth he carried about forty of the Texans with him as captives. Something like sixty of Snively's force soon elected Warfield as their commander and pursued the caravan of traders, then well on their way beyond the Cimarron. At the Point of



COL. A. W. DONIPHAN

[From Photograph Owned by William E. Connelly]

Rocks, twenty miles east of the Canadian, they abandoned the pursuit, and went back to Texas. And the interference of the Texans with the Santa Fe trade was at an end. Santa Anna, then President of Mexico, issued a decree on the 7th of August, 1843, closing the port of New Mexico to all commerce. That decree was superseded by the order of March 31, 1844. And ninety wagons carrying goods valued at \$200,000, taken out by nearly 200 men, found their way from Missouri to Santa Fe the following summer.

DONIPHAN'S EXPEDITION

The most important military expedition to pass over the Santa Fe Trail was Doniphan's Expedition. To Santa Fe it was commanded by General S. W. Kearny, who went on to California. Colonel Alexander W. Doniphan was left in command of the expedition. This whole mili-

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tary movement is known in history as Doniphan's Expedition. It was organized at Fort Leavenworth in the spring of 1846, as a part of the American forces of the Mexican war. The volunteer force was made up on the frontier of Missouri, various counties of that state contributing companies. It was called the First Regiment Missouri Mounted Volunteers, Mexican War. Alexander W. Doniphan had joined the Clay County company as a private, but in the selection of officers he was elected colonel of the regiment. Congreve Jackson was lieutenant-colonel, and William Gilpin was major.

The regiment marched from Fort Leavenworth on the 26th day of June, 1846. It crossed the Kansas River at the mouth of the Wakarusa. From that point it marched south to the Santa Fe Trail, coming into that historic highway at Black Jack Point. The location known by that name to the Missourians is not the point of the same name where John Brown met and captured the Boarder-Ruffians. It is the elevation overlooking the valley of Coal Creek, and where the Fort Scott Road crossed the Trail. The Town of Brooklyn, now obsolete, was laid out there. The regiment followed the Trails and arrived eight miles below Bent's Fort and crossed into Mexican territory on the 29th of July. The final stage of the march to Santa Fe was begun from Bent's Fort on the 2d of August. Santa Fe was entered on the 18th day of August, 1846, and New Mexico was taken without the shedding of a drop of American blood. Colonel Doniphan made a successful campaign against the Navajo Indians and then invaded Mexico from the north. He defeated the Mexicans at Brazito, north of El Paso, which post fell into his hands in consequence. On Sunday, the 28th day of February, 1847, he fought the battle of Sacramento, twelve miles north of Chihuahua. This was not the greatest battle, but it was the most remarkable battle ever fought by Americans. An army of 5,000 Mexicans was attacked and destroyed by an army of Missourians, less than a thousand strong. And the Missourians lost but four men killed and eight wounded. Colonel Doniphan took possession of Chihuahua, which he held until ordered to report to General Wood at Saltillo. The expedition returned to Missouri by way of New Orleans.

How possession of New Mexico was secured without a battle has never been told. The story has been withheld by the War Department at Washington. This author learned of the existence there of the valuable documents. Access to them was long denied. But perseverance finally prevailed, and in May, 1910, I was permitted to make copies of those papers—the only copies ever made. They tell a thrilling story, and a story of great importance to the history of the country. It is the most important incident connected with the Santa Fe Trail. Because of their value they are set out here:

WAR DEPARTMENT,
WASHINGTON, June 18, 1846.

Sir:

At the request of the President I commend to your favorable consideration the bearer hereof, Colonel James W. Magoffin. Mr. M. is now and has been for some years a resident of Chihuahua and extensively engaged in trade in that and other settlements of Mexico. He is well acquainted with the people of Chihuahua, Santa Fe and intermediate country. He was introduced to the President by Col. Benton as a gentleman of intelligence and most respectable character. The President has had several interviews with him and is favorably impressed with his character, intelligence and disposition to the cause of the United States. His knowledge of the country and the people is such as induces the President to believe he may render important services to you in regard to your military movements in New Mexico. He will leave here for Santa Fe immediately and will probably overtake you before you arrive at that place. Considering his intelligence, his credit with the people and his business capacity it is believed he will give important information and

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A HISTORY OF DONIPHAN COUNTY SCHOOLS

(from a book written in 1893)

The following text was transcribed from chapters on the history of education in individual Kansas counties found on pages 123-128 in:

THE COLUMBIAN HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN KANSAS...

compiled by Kansas educators and published under the auspices of the Kansas State Historical Society, for the Columbian Exposition.

(Topeka, Kan. : Hamilton Printing Company : E. H. Snow, state printer, 1893)



HISTORY AND GROWTH OF SCHOOLS, BY COUNTIES

DONIPHAN COUNTY

by Miss Frances E. Katner, county superintendent

DONIPHAN COUNTY -- Doniphan county was organized in 1855. The first county superintendent, John Bayless, was elected in 1859, and served four years. He organized school district No. 1, at Wathena, April 21, 1859. Mr. Benjamin Harding, the first teacher legally licensed to teach in the county, took charge of the school. Mr. Harding gives an account of his first certificate, as follows: "I received my certificate, the first he ever issued, from Mr. Bayless, in 1859. Went on horseback to Highland, ate dinner with him, when he had his daughter bring her school books, and from them he questioned me till he was satisfied. There was no fooling about him." A frame building had been erected for school purposes in 1857, and school had been maintained in it in pioneer style up to the time of organization. A new schoolhouse, built in 1867, and afterwards used for the colored school, has since been torn down, and a fine brick structure erected in 1870, at a cost of \$10,000. We must return to Mr. Bayless in 1859. I shall ask you to go back even before his time—to 1837, when the Presbyterian Board of Missions planted a mission under the hands of that self-denying and devoted man. Rev. S. M. Irvin, among the Sacs and Iowa Indians. The lands of these tribes occupied what are now Doniphan and Brown counties. A number of grammars and text-books in the Indian language were set up and printed, the literary and typographical work being done by Revs. Wm. Hamilton and S. M. Irvin.

In the year 1854, a treaty was made with the Indians, removing their claims from this part of their lands, and the country was open for settlement. The missionaries, thoughtful and prayerful as to how they could best prepare for the coming population, decided to found a college whose corner stone should be the Bible, where a "pure faith and true science" would be taught. In May, 1857, a little school was commenced in a log cabin, (the first house built on the premises, which had been occupied for a time as a preemption house,) where the town of Highland now stands. Two ministers, two elders and a dozen pupils made up the first session of a school that, to the present, has never lost a school day. The next year, the log cabin was exchanged for a neat and comfortable frame building, and the schoolhouse became a Presbyterian academy. In 1858, a liberal charter from the Territorial Legislature

was obtained, under the title of Highland University Company. The further history of this institution need not be traced, although we may add that, in 1866, a large brick building, the one now in use, was built, at a cost of \$4,000.

The average yearly enrollment of this institution has been for some years about 100 students, and among its graduates we find men of prominence, as well as men of ability and integrity. Among the early corporate members of this institution we find the name of John Bayless, the first superintendent of public instruction of Doniphan county. He had come to Kansas in 1855. He was public-spirited, and interested in the development of the new State. He was organizer, having built, with little assistance, one of the first churches in Broome county, New York. He organized 21 school districts in Doniphan county, the last, 21, was attached to the district which includes Troy, the county seat.

Mr. Bayless was a man of strong conviction, holding his peace for no man and in no presence, when principle called his to utterance. Politically, he was a Whig, later a Republican and Abolitionist. He returned to Pennsylvania in 1865, where he died in 1873. His work, so well begun, has kept pace with the development of the county. All honor to the pioneers! to the pathfinders! They were a sturdy, staunch race. They have made our present civilization possible.

In 1863, Mr. C. C. Camp, a bright young man of ability, was placed in charge of the schools. He was district attorney at the time, and was appointed first, afterward elected, to the office of county superintendent of public instruction, with the understanding that he would be expected to do as little as possible and keep the schools going. It was the time when men and even boys were training and hurrying to war to determine the question of schools or no schools; and those who were compelled to stay at home to carry on civil government filled as many places as possible.

During the four years he held offices, he organized 20 school districts, making 41 numbers; but some had lapsed.

The courthouse burned in 1867, and all early records were destroyed. Mr. Camp gives some interesting reminiscences of those early days. He says: "Teachers were so scarce that I had to be very careful not to reject any one who was sent by a school board for examination. One incident in this connection I well remember. A school district sent for examination a man whom I had long known as wood chopper and teamster. I commenced his examination, with many misgivings, by asking with what branch he was best acquainted. he said he was something of a mathematician, so I followed this lead. He answered readily all questions as to the primary rules of arithmetic, showed a perfect knowledge of fractions, explained all the intricacies of decimals, percentage, and interest; gave the rule of square root. I asked him to give the reason for this rule. He immediately did so, and I immediately gave him his certificate.

"A large part of the original population of Doniphan county came from the Southern States, and many of them were opposed to being taxed to support schools. So many Union men were away in the army, that in one instance they voted against the tax and closed the schools. In this emergency they came to me. I told them to rally the war widows, and let them vote in place of their husbands. From that time forward no schools were closed for want of tax levy."

Mr. Camp adds that he was paid from \$36 to \$50 per annum, and very modestly says he thinks they paid him very well for all the services he rendered. Humility, thou art a jewel! Mr. Camp afterward returned to Fredonia, N.Y., where he now resides, still as much interested in Doniphan county and her schools as in his numerous financial affairs.

In 1867, Rev. Gary Hickman, a Presbyterian minister of the old style, highly educated, yet eccentric, was elected county superintendent. He and his pony are remembered by many even yet. He called the first institute ever held in the county, in 1867. It was held in the M. E. Church, in Wathena, and the teachers sat upon board benches. D. W. Brown, from Troy, Rev. T. H. Dinsmore and three or four others from Highland, went, and with the Wathena teachers, formed an institute. To tell how it was conducted would be a puzzle now. About this time, two advanced school-girls, from Wathena, walked down to see Mr. Hickman, about two miles distant. One was to teach in the Wathena schools, if she could get a certificate. With many misgivings, they met him, and told their errand. He asked them some simple questions, that a third-reader pupil could easily answer, and said: "Now, girls, if you will make me a real nice bow, and say, 'Thank you,' I will give you each a certificate for 12 months." He held the office until May, 1868, when he resigned, and Mr. D. W. Brown was appointed to succeed him. He was a practical schoolman, and served four years and four months. During this period, he devoted his entire time to the work. The war was over. The schools, freedom's handmaid, had been neglected while freedom herself was in danger.

The educational affairs of Doniphan county, in common with those of other places, were in a chaotic condition. The most of the schoolhouses were little better than stables, and but two or three were what could be called seated. There were no records in the office; the county was imperfectly districted; the text-books in use were a mixture of everything published at the time. Mr. Brown arranged with Wilson, Hinckle, & Co., of Cincinnati, to bring about uniformity. The company furnished the books gratis, exchanged new ones for old, and paid the freight both ways. Mr. Brown, in his buggy or on his horse, brought around the new books, and took away the old ones. Well do we remember one little country school and its pupils that were made so happy one spring day in 1869. The books were a revelation to us, and for weeks and months they were an inspiration. A number of new districts were organized, and the boundaries of many more changed. Many new schoolhouses were erected, and as many more improved, reseated, and furnished with appropriate apparatus.

He held "institutes," as they then called them, of one week's length, usually in August, each year, at Troy, Wathena, White Cloud, and Highland. In these institutes the teachers did the best they could with what they had to do with. No funds were provided. The teachers acted as volunteer instructors, and were all entertained with true, open-hearted hospitality by the citizens of the town. They had a good time, exchanged methods, instructed each other, and all felt the good results. The examinations, usually written, and at stated times, were conducted by an examining board.

Mr. Brown says he left the teachers, as a class, much improved. This, in part, was due to immigration. He made a complete record of the districts as he found them and as he left them. He made many changes. He did it without consulting policy or public opinion, and was frequently censured and often unjustly blamed. Those who know most of his work consider him one of the best schoolmen who have been in the county. He was a native of Vermont, and now resides near Troy. He resigned, on account of ill health, in September, 1872, when he was succeeded by D. D. Rose.

Mr. Rose held the office six years and four months. He carried on the work left by his predecessor, was educated in the common schools and academies; like him, he began teaching at 19 years of age, continued in this work until the war, and served through the entire time as a soldier. He came to Doniphan county in 1866, as did Mr. D. W. Brown.

Mr. Rose held short institutes at East Norway, Highland, Severance, and White Cloud; and in 1877, he held the first annual normal institute of one month, at Troy, in August. It was conducted by Prof. John Wherrell, assisted by J. A. Lane and Miss Wherrell, and enrolled over 100 teachers.

The normal institute met with great favor. The young teacher was better prepared for his work; and to the more experienced teacher it brought new methods, a professional insight, and a keener relish. It afforded an opportunity for weaving a stronger professional bond of sympathy to unite those engaged in the work. The normal institute of 1878 was conducted by Prof. H. D. McCarty, assisted by J. A. Lane. Township associations had been organized as early as 1871. In Iowa and Wolf River townships they were especially successful. They met every two weeks, at different schoolhouses. On Friday night there would be a gathering for a lecture and some discussions, and on Saturday the teachers spent the day in class drills. Mr. Rose was succeeded in 1879 by Mr. Edward Heeney, who conducted the affairs of the office with vigor and ability. In August, 1879, the institute was conducted by Professor McCarty, assisted by O. C. Hill. This was one of the largest ever held in the county, having on the roll 140 names. During the session, the Doniphan County Teachers' Association was organized. Mr. Edward Heeney was chosen first president. This county teachers' association has had its seasons of prosperity and adversity, but has had its regular meetings each year, and has been a great factor in the growth of the school work.

In 1880, Professors McCarty, Hill and B. F. Nihart conducted the institute. Mr. Heeney went down with his party, in 1881. He has the honor of being the only Democrat who has held this office in Doniphan county. He is a native of the county and still remains here, handling, not boys and girls, but other hardware.

Mr. H. F. Shaner, in 1881, took up the work, and zealously and skillfully managed it for six years. He was Pennsylvanian by birth, but had been actively engaged in the school work of the county for 12 years. His energy and public spirit, which he had shown as a teacher, served him well in a higher capacity. The county associations were largely attended, the schools were carefully supervised. He encouraged teachers to read professional literature and organized a teachers' reading circle, which was moderately successful for two years. He set up a high standard before the teachers.

The normal institutes conducted during the term of his office were in charge of the following instructors: 1881—O. C. Hill and B. F. Nihart; 1882—L. M. Knowles and B. F. Nihart; 1883—B. F. Nihart and O. E. Olin; 1884—L. M. Knowles and D. E. Lantz; 1885—O. E. Olin and William Wheeler; 1886—O. E. Olin and William Wheeler.

The work of these six years is highly estimated. Mr. Shaner married one of the best teachers, and left the profession. He lives in Chicago, engaged in railroad work.

He was succeeded by Oliver Edwards, another Pennsylvanian, a graduate of Lebanon College, Ohio, a professional teacher, and an old soldier. During the two years of his term, his ability and his upright life impressed themselves upon the work and upon all who knew him. He died upon the eve of his reelection, in November, 1888, and was succeeded by A. R. Graves, by appointment. Mr. Edwards first published the association program for the entire year. This outlined the work ahead, and, in consequence, the teachers were better prepared. The plan has been followed since.

Institutes were held as follows: In 1887, conducted by O. C. Hill; 1888, by O. E. Olin; and 1889, by W. H. Johnson.

Mr. Graves laid the plans for the better gradation of the county schools. This was taken up earnestly by the teachers, and by his successor in office, Miss Frances E. Katner, November 19, 1889, and proved a most helpful move. The schools were brought into better system, the required studies were placed in all the schools, and graduation from the country schools introduced.

A reading circle was organized in 1881, with 70 members, and one in 1892, with 50 members. Associations are generally well attended.

Institutes were held in Troy, as follows: In 1890—L. L. H. Austin, R. N. Pemberton, Mrs. Flo. V. Menninger; 1891—Ida A. Ahlborn, R. N. Pemberton; 1892—A. P. Warrington, I. B. Morgan.

The library movement seems at this time, 1893, to be the newest and most popular wave that has come to the county educationally for a long time. It is delightful, and bids fair to leave in its wake libraries in all the best school districts in the county.

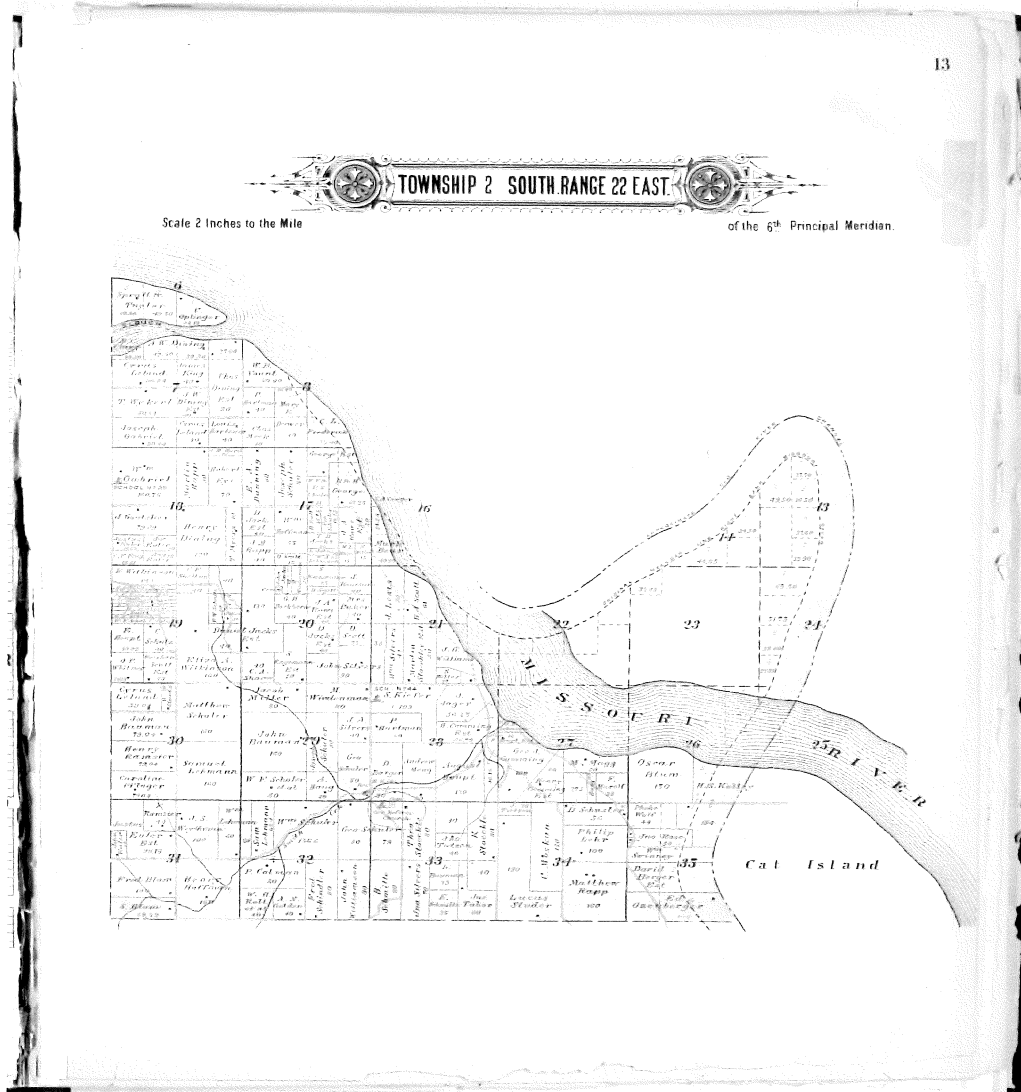
We have briefly reviewed the school work of the county, and have done it imperfectly. Much credit is due the superintendents and the institute workers, but to the faithful teachers must the palm be given. They have all these years worked quietly, earnestly, and thoughtfully. Many of them have given the best years of their lives, their vigor, their energy, to the building up of a great work. Their names may be unwritten for you and me to heedlessly gaze upon, yet their work is written in the hearts of hundreds of men and women who hold their old teachers in grateful remembrance. They have not had wealth, and perhaps have lost health; but we have risen by the sacrifices they have made. In the long, long years to come, when the Angel of Progress reviews the deeds of the ages, to find to whom credit is due, then, and not till then, will the earnest, patient, faithful teacher know the magnitude of the work he has done.

The following is a summarized report of the schools of this county for the year ending June 30, 1892: School population between 5 and 21 years, 4,716; number of different pupils enrolled, 3,537; average daily attendance, 2,108; number of districts organized, 69; number of clerks reporting, 68; number of teachers, male 41, female 46, total 87; average length of term, in weeks, 28; average number of mills levied for school purposes, 11.2; number of persons examined, 75; number of applicants rejected, 9; number of first-grade certificates granted, 13; number of second-grade certificates granted, 29; number of third-grade certificates granted, 19; number of temporary certificates granted, 5; average age of persons receiving certificates, 23.5 years; number of teachers employed holding State certificates 2,

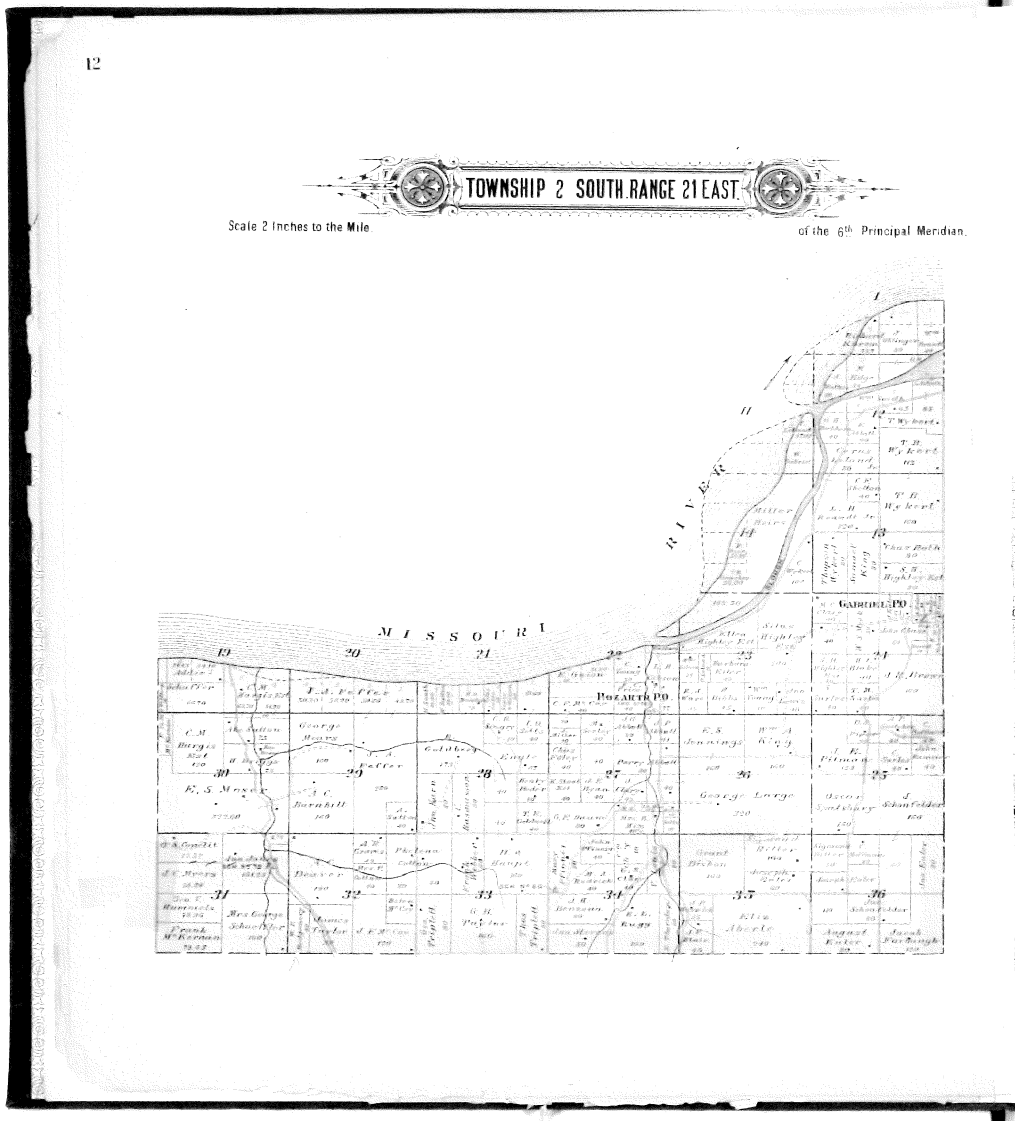
first grade 28, second grade 42, third grade 15, total 87; average salary paid male teachers, \$44.60; average salary paid female teachers, \$39.15; estimated value of school property, \$80,000; bonded indebtedness, \$4,800; receipts by treasurers for school year, \$40,058.86; amount expended for school purposes, \$34,875.63; balance in hands of district treasurers, \$5,183.23; amount institute fund received, \$302; amount institute fund expended, \$257.75; amount institute fund on hand, \$44.25.

Transcribed by Rita Troxel, Kansas State Library -- January, 2003

Plat book of Doniphan County, Kansas - 13



Plat book of Doniphan County, Kansas - 12



Plat book of Doniphan County, Kansas - 3

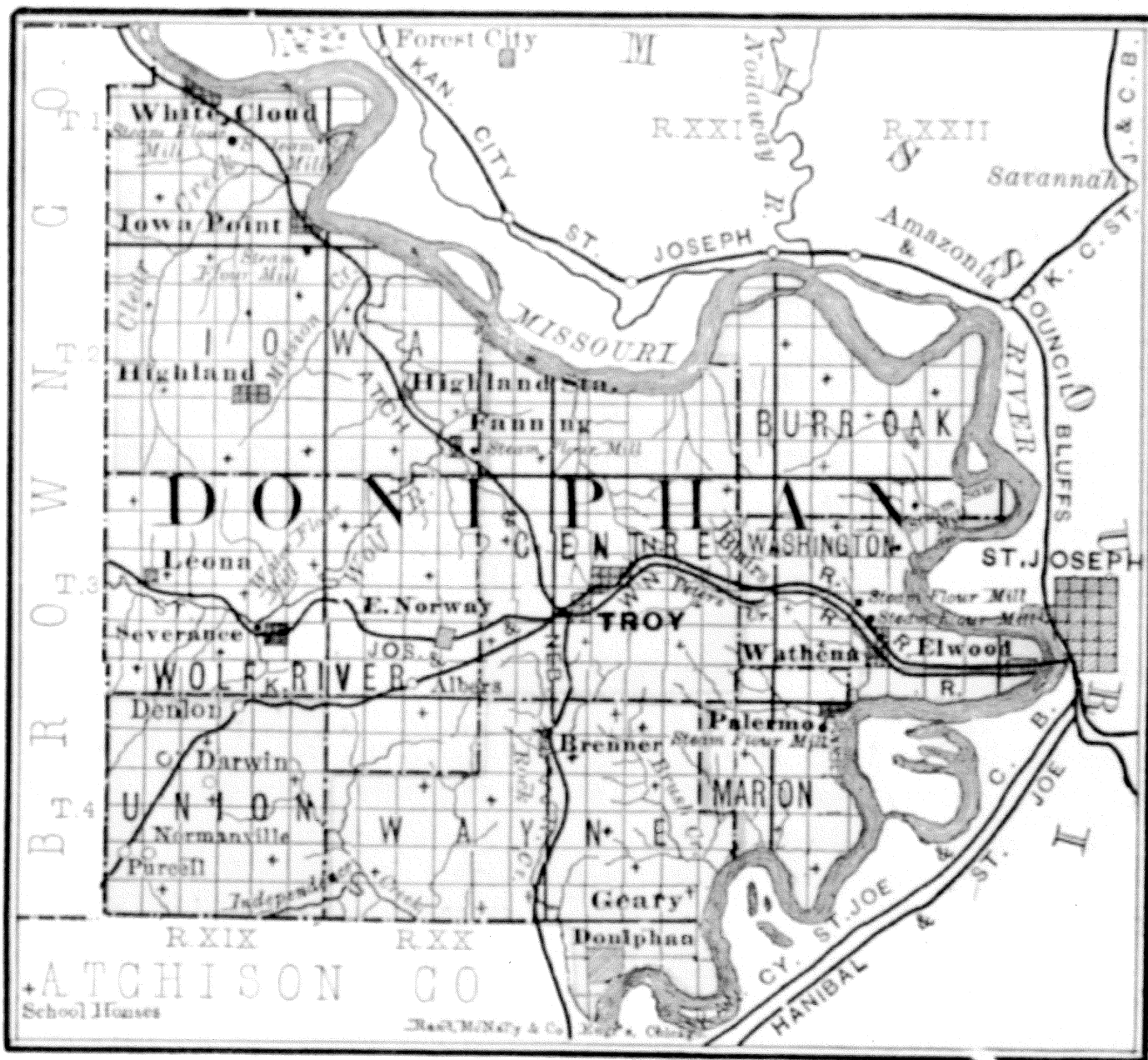


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Doniphan County Schools Bibliography

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