

DONIPHAN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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News Notes

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November 17, 6:00 pm

Who Welcomed Lincoln?

Doniphan County Historical Society Museum

138 East Walnut, Troy

By Larry Faulkner

Larry Faulkner is our very own expert on Abraham Lincoln's 1859 travels in Doniphan County. He will give some highlights about the local people that met with Lincoln during his time here, and tell us more about his ongoing research.



Pushing through a blizzard on the way to Troy, Kas., the party met Henry Villard, newspaper correspondent, driving a 2-horse wagon. Villard said, "Why, Mr. Lincoln, you are blue and shivering from the cold!" He handed Lincoln a buffalo robe to turn the bitter wind.

This drawing, depicting an incident of Lincoln's visit, was published by *The Kansas City Star*, February 8, 1959.

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DONIPHAN COUNTY FERRIES

The following text is an excerpt from *Ferries in Kansas, Part I, Missouri River, Continued*, by George A. Root published in the May 1933 (Vol. 2, No. 2), issue of *The Kansas Historical Quarterly*, pages 115 to 138. It has been edited for space and includes ferries in Doniphan County.

The next ferry up the river was at **Doniphan**, about three miles above Atchison. The town was organized in 1854 and located on the site of an ancient Kansas Indian village, where Bourgmont, the French explorer, established his headquarters in 1724. A trading post on the opposite side of the river had been established some years earlier by Joseph Utt, and this may have influenced him in selecting this point for a town. During its palmy days Doniphan had a population of about 1,000, had a weekly newspaper, and was quite an important political center, being midway between the mouth of the Kansas River and the Kansas-Nebraska boundary line. The Leavenworth Herald of March 13, 1858, in speaking of Doniphan and its surroundings said: "Smith's bar lies one mile above the town and extends completely across the river, which makes Doniphan the head of navigation for heavy-draught steamers. There are four natural roads leading out into the surrounding country.... A steam ferry has been provided for." The territorial legislature of 1855 passed an act providing for the location of a road from Doniphan to Kelly's ferry, in the northeast part of the county.

Palermo is about five miles above Geary City and fifteen miles above Doniphan, at the mouth of Wolf creek. Two ferries for the new town were authorized by the legislature of 1855. One charter was granted to Loren S. Meeker, Richard Hubble and John W. Mockbee for a term of fifteen years, and the other charter to John Stearwalt, his heirs or assigns, to keep a ferry across the Missouri River opposite Palermo for a period of twenty years. The above ferries were to be regulated by Doniphan County, were for local needs only, and may not have lasted long. Two years later the legislature of 1857 authorized F.M. Mahan and Job V. Kimber to operate a ferry across the Missouri River from Palermo for the term of fifteen years. The next year Barney H. York, George K. Sabin and Frederick W. Emery, members of the Palermo City Company, were given authority by the legislature of 1858 to operate a ferry across the Missouri River at the city of Palermo for twenty years.

Elwood, the first town above St. Joseph, and distant about one mile by river, was laid out as Roseport in 1856, the name being changed to Elwood the next year in compliment to John B. Elwood. The site of the town had long been the landing place of ferries operated from St. Joseph. It was the most natural terminal point in northeast Kansas, and roads radiated from there to the principal towns in that section.

In the fall of 1852 Henry Thompson established a trading post on the west bank of the Missouri, opposite St. Joseph, operating a ferry for his own convenience, and profit in addition. Capt. Ebenezer Blackiston, of St. Joseph, also ran one of the earliest ferries to this point, operating a large flatboat which was worked by hand. In 1852 a steam ferryboat called the *Tidy Adala* was substituted for the old primitive affair.

No doubt there were other ferries operating from St. Joseph to the Kansas shore at this time close enough to afford lively competition for his ferry, for Blackiston advertised in a local paper that the St. Joseph and Elwood ferry had reduced ferriage rates to half price.

This ferry had the distinction of crossing one visitor in 1859 who later became a world-wide figure -- Abraham Lincoln, then on a visit to Kansas during his first campaign for the presidency. Hon. D.W. Wilder, in a letter to the secretary of the Kansas Historical Society, dated December 3, 1902, stated that Abraham Lincoln, Mark W. Delahay and he, who were in St. Joseph at the time, "all sat in the dirt waiting for the ferryboat." They crossed the river and that evening Mr. Lincoln spoke to an audience packed in the dining room of the hotel at Elwood and spent the night in the town.

Just how late the St. Joseph & Elwood ferry operated we have not discovered, but probably it ran up to the time of the bridging of the Missouri.

Wathena landing, approximately three miles above Elwood, probably was the location of the next ferry to the north, though definite information is lacking.

Whitehead, about two miles north of Wathena landing, had the next ferry. James R. Whitehead had been a trader at that point before the settlement of the territory. Later a town sprang up, named for Mr. Whitehead, which was incorporated in 1855. That year the legislature granted him a license to operate a ferry with landing at the town and exclusive rights for a mile above and a mile below the town. In 1859 the name of the town was changed to **Bellefont**, though there was some talk of giving it the name of Oxford. The town has long since disappeared, and a map of that locality thirty years later marks the location as "Belmont Bend."

Another ferry was started on the Kansas side of the river in 1867 in the northeast corner of Burr Oak township, Doniphan County. On February 11, that year, J.W. Young, John Hutchinson, Thomas B. Ree, F. Garner, and H. Lyday formed a corporation known as the Columbus & Amazonia Ferry Company, for the purpose of operating a ferry on the Missouri River, commencing at the boat landing opposite the town of Columbus and extending down the Missouri River to the lower end of Sand Slue Island, their ferry to run across the river starting at a point within said bounds and to have a landing at or near the town of Amazonia in Missouri. The principal office of the company was to be at Columbus, Doniphan County. Mrs. Mary M. Holston, of Burr Oak township, wrote of her experiences in Doniphan County for the Troy *Chief*, in 1916, stating that her father on

March 1, 1855, crossed the Missouri River at Amazonia on a flatboat steered with oars.

Kelley's ferry was probably the next crossing point above **Columbus**, and, according to Geo. J. Remsburg, was operating in the fifties. This ferry was located at the upper end of Burr Oak bottom, in the northwest corner of Burr Oak township, about ten miles northeast of Troy and seven miles west of Amazonia. A territorial road was established from the town of Doniphan to this point in 1855.

Iowa Point, about fourteen miles up the river from Amazonia, was the next point of crossing. In 1855 John S. Pemberton and Harvey W. Foreman were authorized by the territorial legislature to keep a ferry across the Missouri River and have a landing on the west side on land reserved and secured to the board of foreign missions of the Presbyterian Church by a treaty with the Iowa Indians. This reservation had been purchased by John S. Pemberton and Harvey W. Foreman, and they laid off the town of Iowa Point.

Another ferry was projected for Iowa Point in 1858, the legislature that year authorizing W.D. Beeler, C.M. Williams, William B. Barr and R.M. Williams to operate a ferry across the Missouri River at the town for a term of fifteen years. The company operated under the name of the Iowa Point Steam Ferry Company and in 1860 had its charter amended by the legislature by striking out the word "steamboat" and inserting the words "steam or flatboats".

The next ferry above Iowa Point was on **Rush Island**, about three miles up the river. The legislature of 1860 authorized John H. Utt and W.D. Beeler to keep a ferry across the Missouri River, at a point on Rush Island, opposite Forest City, Mo., with the privilege of landing on the main shore above said island, in Doniphan County.

White Cloud, about seven miles up the river from Iowa Point, boasted one of the few steam ferryboats on the Missouri in Kansas, and one of the best of its class along the river. On April 18, 1858, Joshua Taylor purchased a small side-wheel steamer and started from Wellsville, Ohio, with the intention of establishing a ferry at White Cloud. His arrival at that point on June 3 was greeted by the firing of anvils by an enthusiastic crowd and a reception on the levee. Mr. Taylor shortly formed a partnership with J.W. Moore, naming their ferry the White Cloud Steam Ferry and their boat the *White Cloud*. During the immigration to Pike's Peak and the far West their ferry enjoyed a good business. Following the drouth of 1860 this patronage must have fallen off considerably, for during August, 1861, the proprietors made a special effort to encourage passage over their ferry, offering to cross all teams going from Kansas to Missouri to mill and returning, at a considerable reduction from usual rates, if paid in cash; or, they offered to receive flour in payment at the regular ferriage rates, figuring the farmers would be the gainers by availing themselves of this chance. Messrs. Taylor and Moore operated the boat until the spring of 1862, when they sold it to Ozias Bailey, who ran it until

1867, when it met with an accident common to all Missouri River boats, and was so badly wrecked as to render it unfit for further service. Mr. Bailey had formed a partnership with C.W. Noyes, and in May, 1868, Messrs. Bailey and Noyes built a new boat, giving it the same name as its predecessor.

This ferry has had a long and interesting history and there isn't room to note all the changes in ownership up to the time the last boat operated from White Cloud. The following-named boats (perhaps others) saw active service during the life of this ferry. The *White Cloud*, *Roy Lynds*, *Winona*, *Harry Lynds*, *White Cloud Belle*, *Jewell*, *Nancy Lee*.

A flatboat ferry was operated at White Cloud for a number of years by a Tennessean named Stonecyphers.

This is the last ferry location on the Missouri River before reaching the Nebraska-Kansas boundary line.

TREASURER'S REPORT

NOVEMBER 8, 2022

OCT 11 BALANCE	\$36,776.92
INCOME:	
October interest	3.15
Dues	20.00
Income total:	\$23.15
EXPENDITURES:	
Expenditures total:	\$0
NOV 8 BALANCE	\$36,800.07
CD #6519 (for Save Our Liberty Project	\$7,601.93
CD #7175	\$6854.

OCTOBER MEETING MINUTES

Held at Doniphan West Elementary Library
28 guests and members present

Thanks to Glendon Hartman for the program and Faye and Todd Miller for refreshments.

President Jason Midyette reports that after conferring with representatives of the Iowa and Sac & Fox Mission that the following artifacts will be transferred to their collection: printing press model, books, and a brochure. A motion to donate the items was approved.

Glendon Hartman is donating pictures he took of buildings on Main Street in Highland that were recently demolished.

Help is needed with maintenance issues at the museum in Troy: the toilet is leaking, the kitchen sink has leaked, and sidewalk brick needs to be replaced. It was discussed that some of these repairs should be paid for if no members are able to take care of them. A spring maintenance day will be planned to take care of some exterior items.

Mary Johnson regretfully announces she has to resign as Secretary. Anyone interested in the position should let an officer or board member know. Thank you to Mary for her years of dedication to the society.

SOUP SUPPER DEC. 1 6:00

Dine by candlelight and enjoy music by accomplished local musicians Melissa Blanton and Katie Thompson at this commemoration of Abraham Lincoln's visit to Doniphan County in 1859. Members are asked to bring a variety of soups and cookies. There is no electricity or running water at the Tenant-Baker House, so soups will be kept hot on the wood-burning cookstove. Tableware, bottled water and bread/crackers will be provided by Mary Johnson. A free will donation is requested.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

The tentative date for the Christmas party is December 12. More information will be sent after the November meeting.

2023 OFFICER ELECTION

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Officers for 2023 will be elected at the November meeting. We need someone to take over the Secretary position. Jason would like to take a break as President. Assistance is appreciated. Meetings are planned by officers and board members in January.

Please continue to support your Doniphan County Historical Society. *Your membership is greatly appreciated.* Please consider receiving this newsletter by email to keep our mailing costs low.

DONIPHAN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

Detach and mail with payment to: Anna Midyette, PO Box 197, Bendena, KS 66008

All Memberships are \$10.00. This is a: Renewal Membership New Membership

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City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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