DONIPHAN CITY
DONIPHAN COUNTY
KANSAS

A GHOST TOWN WITHIN A GHOST TOWN

La Bonne Terre
August 10, 1996
DONIPHAN SITE (14DP2)

On June 30, 1937, five permanent members of the Smithsonian Archeology crew for the summer of 1937, arrived at Doniphan, Kansas in Doniphan County to examine site (14DP2). The crew included: Dr. Waldo R. Wedel, Director; Marvin (Gus) F. Kivett, Assistant to Dr. Wedel and also the crew's cook; Kenneth (Ken) Orr, Surveyor; Hugh V. Stabler and Richard (Gates) V. Slattery.

They set up tents on a crest of a high bluff overlooking the Missouri River Valley. The campsite had previously been a farmstead, but long since abandoned. They found the town of Doniphan nearly a ghost town. It had a general store with a post office in one corner. The only water available was a town pump, located across the gravel street from the general store. Each morning, while Gus was fixing breakfast, someone had to drive down to the general store to get milk, pick up the mail, and fill the 10-gallon water can. Groceries were "dirt cheap" during the Depression years, so they ate fairly good. Eggs at the general store sold for 12¢ a dozen, so they ate a lot of scrambled eggs. Another item they ate a lot of were pancakes topped with Karo syrup. These were cheap and filling. Coffee was a must. They always had plenty of coffee with every meal. They ate on tin plates and drank their coffee from discarded tin cans. These cans made very good coffee cups. Usually the noon lunch consisted of a limitless number of delicious peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. In the evening they ate a lot of beans. Meat was scarce due to its relatively high price. On one occasion when the crew were having guests, Slattery was sent to the general store to purchase 14 pork chops which would provide 2 apiece. Slattery was shocked and speechless when he had to pay a total of 75¢ for all 14 pork chops. Such terrible prices.

Their camp was close to their work. They began by shovel testing the bluff behind the camp. They soon found a midden area, laid out a trench line, and very soon were excavating cache pits of various sizes. After only an hour or two, they found metal in the pits and realized that they had found a historic contact site. In a nearby apple orchard, Dr. Wedel and Gus had found evidence of an earthlobe. The entire crew pitched in to remove the overburden and they soon found the fire place location. They had no idea on how large the earthlobe might be and their only means of moving the dirt other than throwing it as far away as possible with their shovels. They had no wheelbarrows to move the dirt in and they did not want to have to move the dirt twice, which occasionally happen. This earthlobe turned out to be huge, measuring 36 feet across and 30 inches deep in most of the area.

Shortly after House #1 was completed, work on House #2 was started. This was a smaller earthlobe than House #1. The cache pits were excavated, leaving the walls intact, the same as they did with the post holes. In this way, the excavations did not destroy the integrity of the feature and after it was backfilled, it can be re-examined at some future date by simply removing the fill dirt.

A total of 14 cache pits were excavated at site (14DP2. A summary of dimensions and contents of pits opened are listed on the bottom of next page. The cache pits were located down-slope and to the west of the other features, and were clustered around a historic farmstead. The pits were discovered by a road-cut made by the landowner.
James D. Eighmey, a former employee of the Kansas State Historical Society, wrote in his papers on the Doniphan site in 1986 the following: In light of the examination of the cultural materials excavated by Waldo Wedel it seems that the basic conclusions of Wedel's report that the Doniphan site exhibits at least three, probably four components:


4. Late Woodland, "Kansas City" Phase: Burned Daub, Ceramics.

The crew, after filling in all the excavations, broke camp on July 24, 1937, and moved north to the townsit (they referred to it as a village) of Sparks, Kansas, also in Doniphan County, where they set up camp. From this camp they began their excavations at the Fanning site (14DP1) which was a large Oneota village that contained numerous cache pits and middens. They excavated 46 cache pits at this site. Pit #10 was a very high, with a diameter of 7 feet, 10 inches (2.39 meters). The depth was 5 feet, 6 inches (1.67 meters). The crew finished up at site (14DP1) on August 14, 1937 and went to Manhattan in Riley County, Kansas for excavations in that area.

### Summary of dimensions and contents of pits opened at the Doniphan site (14DP1)

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SUMMARY: The Doniphan site (14DP2) has a rather puzzling aspect inasmuch there appears to have been occupants of several cultures. Eighmey indicated three, possibly four and this conclusion was formulated from the findings by Dr. Wedel.

It should be noted that a burial site was uncovered on this site. It was up the slope from where the cache pits were located. The burial sites had been documented much earlier and Dr. Wedel reported that they were a target for early anatomy students looking for skeletal material. The burials were the favorite target of pot-hunters for many years. This practice is no longer legal and carries a very stiff penalty.

Is the Doniphan site (14DP2) the site of the large Kanza Indian village that was visited by the Frenchman, Etienne Bourgmont in 1724? I don't think so! Most of the historical accounts indicate that the large village lay to the south side of the Independence Creek streams confluence with the Missouri River.

Loren Eiseley and Waldo Wedel with Pronto in House #2 pits at the Doniphan site (14DP2), 1937.
Contour map of portion of Doniphan site, 14DP2, showing location of historic caches and burials and prehistoric house sites excavated by U.S. National Museum, 1937. Stippled bands indicate roads.
Man with cane is Waldo R. Wedel. Standing next to Mr. Wedel is former Kansas State Historical Society Archeologist, Bill Lees, now with the Oklahoma H.S. Other individual in picture unknown. Picture taken at the archeology dig at Lindsborg, Kansas - June, 1993.
1868: 1869.

DONIPHAN COUNTY,

KANSAS,

HISTORY AND DIRECTORY

FOR

1868-9:

CONTAINING,

THE STATE CONSTITUTION; A CONCISE HISTORY OF KANSAS; ALSO OF DONIPHAN COUNTY, AND SKETCHES OF EACH VILLAGE IN THE COUNTY; CITIZENS' AND BUSINESS DIRECTORY; REVENUE AND POSTAL INFORMATION, LEGAL FORMS, ETC., ETC.

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DONIPHAN GRADE and HIGH SCHOOL - DONIPHAN, KANSAS

1873 - 1930
PHOTO BY JIM HUSS

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC CHURCH - DONIPHAN, KANSAS

1947
E. B. FORD GENERAL STORE - DONIPHAN, KANSAS
Photo by Jim Huss

DONIPHAN GENERAL STORE - DONIPHAN, KANSAS - 1947
Photo by Jim Huss

NICK SCHAFF FILLING STATION - DONIPHAN, KANSAS
1947

Man holding dog is Nick Schaaf. Man with hat is Andy Braun. Picture taken July 19, 1947
St. John the Baptist Catholic Church

Doniphan, Kansas

When Bishop Miege visited Doniphan in the summer of 1850, a group of Catholics approached him to send a priest and they promised to donate property for a church. But the Bishop had no priest to send to Doniphan until Father Henry Lemke happened to come to Leavenworth early in 1856. The Bishop appointed Father Lemke to Doniphan. He furnished a chalice, vestments and a Jesuit Breviary, and promised to give $500 to help build a church. On July 4, 1856, Father Henry made preparations to take his mission.

Shortly after his arrival in Doniphan Father Lemke wrote to Abbot Wimmer: "I arrived here in the beginning of July. They have started a town which must develop into an important place if the progress made to date continues, perhaps another Cincinnati or St. Louis .... Our dear Bishop strives with praise-worthy foresight to get a firm foothold wherever settlements are made. He had bought three lots here. When I came here, he gave me a recommendation to one of the members of the town company, in which he praised me as a man who could draw many new settlers and contribute much to the growth of the city. Therefore he donated three additional lots to me. I purchased six more lots at the original price of $50 as a special favor. I own therefore, a full block of twelve lots with a frontage of 308 X 264 feet, in the most beautiful part of the town, at an elevation of a hundred feet above the river. I immediately started building on this ground so that I might have a roof over my head before winter sets in."

Father Lemke celebrated Mass at the Doniphan House and later in a wooden hut originally intended for a carpenter shop. The Doniphan parish extended north to the Nebraska line, west to the Rocky Mountains and south, part way to Leavenworth. His parishioners were in many settlements throughout the area. The distances were great, roads were bad and many times he walked miles to care for the people. A man, at the age of sixty, could easily become despondent with all the hardships and work in pioneer surroundings. But Father Lemke had dreams that more confreres would join him and eventually found a monastery. He wrote his Abbot that it would be a shame to give up the place since the community had many Catholics. He asked for more priests to come and help with the mission. The Abbot sent Father Augustine Wirth and Frater Casimir Seitz to Kansas. On Easter
Sunday, April 12, 1857, Father Lemke went to Leavenworth to meet the two conferees. The Bishop appointed Father Augustine in charge of the Doniphan Church. Frater Casimir remained at Leavenworth until his ordination on April 26, 1857. Father Casimir Seitz was the first priest ordained in Kansas. He said his first Mass at Doniphan on the following Sunday.

By June the attendance at Doniphan had grown so that the little chapel was already too small. The fathers had located other mission stations at Bendena, Atchison and St. Patrick's and Father Augustine made a circuit of the river towns as far north as Omaha. The staff was so small that the people only received occasional visits from the missionaries. When the missionaries were at home in their little priory they lived a simple life with frugal furnishings. The combination chapel and residence was 72 feet long and 16 feet wide with a porch running its full length. Half of this was used for a church and the remainder was divided into rooms. "We have the nicest view from the hill .... We can look down the Missouri River and see steamboats coming at a distance of eight miles," wrote Father Augustine.

Abbot Wimmer visited the priory November 4, 1857. He visited the missions and stayed with the fathers four days. Father Lemke left Doniphan on November 24, 1857.

Exploring the missionary field to the north and south of Doniphan, Fathers Augustine and Casimir, on every occasion were blessed with favorable results. There were about 150 Catholic families in Doniphan County and about sixty families in Atchison County. Father Edmund Langenfelder came in 1858 and gradually more help came for care of the missions which numbered twenty-three stations by 1860.

By the end of 1858 Prior Augustine decided to move the priory to Atchison. The cornerstone of the Atchison building was laid on May 29, 1859. Brother Francis wrote: "Three of us walked down from Doniphan that morning. There was a terrible rain the night before, but the morning was beautiful and we picked an armful of wild flowers on the road, which to deck the altar." On September 1, 1859, the little community abandoned Doniphan.
The little chapel and house at Doniphan burned on the night of October 28, 1863. A handsome brick church 26 X 50 feet was constructed on a new site in the west part of the town by Father Timothy Luber in the year 1867. The whole block on which the church stands, comprising about two acres, and one of the finest sites in the city, was donated to St. John's by the Mayor, Honorable Adam Brenner of the city of Doniphan. Adam Brenner built the first grain elevator in Kansas and also started the Doniphan vineyards. His brother, Jacob Brenner, started the central vineyards and Jacob's son, George, had the Bellevue vineyards. The Brenners had over 100 acres in grapes. This family was the leading support and mainstay of Doniphan and St. John's Church.

In 1891 the Reverend Herman Mengwasser, O.S.B., undertook to build a new addition, 24 X 36 feet, to the church which was to serve as sanctuary and sacristy. In 1892 Father John Stader, O.S.B., had stained glass windows installed. In 1909, under the pastorate of Father Alphonse Filian, the church was frescoed and adorned with large paintings. In 1962 Father Placidus Kiefer redecorated the church interior. In 1965 new pews, altar and lectern were added and an electric heating system was installed by the present pastor.

In 1912, with the aid of Thomas Flannigan who attended the first church, the original site of the priory was located by a group of St. Benedict's College students under the supervision of Father Lambert Burton. Only a hedge of osage orange marked the location where the early fathers started their missionary work. In 1952 Father William Maat and a group of Brothers from St. Benedict's Abbey erected a nice marker on the site of the excavated foundation.

SITE OF FIRST CATHOLIC CHURCH IN DONIPHAN

1856 - 1863

The first Catholic church in Doniphan, Kansas, was erected in the summer of 1856 under the leadership of Father Henry Lemeke. The church and rectory was erected within the boundaries of a full city block containing 12 lots that had a frontage of 308 X 264 feet, in the most beautiful part of the town, at an elevation of a hundred feet above the river. The church and rectory was destroyed by fire on the night of October 28, 1863.

In 1912, with the aid of Thomas Flannigan who attended the first church, the original site was located by a group of St. Benedict's College students under the supervision of Father Lambert Burton. Only a hedge of osage orange marked the location where the early fathers started their missionary work. In 1952 Father William Maat and a group of Brothers from St. Benedict's Abbey erected the marker shown in the above picture on the site of the excavated foundation.
From

MONTGOMERY'S
ILLUSTRATED DONIPHAN COUNTY

FIRST WINE MADE

It might interest your readers as a matter of local history, to record that the Brenners were not the original wine makers of Doniphan. When Captain Etienne Vengard de Bourgmont, commander of the French colony of Louisiana, visited the Kansa or Konza Indian village where Doniphan now stands, in the summer of 1724, these Indians brought him great quantities of grapes, of which his men made good wine.

On July 15, 1724, Bourgmont recorded in his journal at the Kansas village: "Fourteen of our indians have dropped down in our camp with fever. Our hunter arrived at 4 o'clock loaded with deer. M. de Bourgmont has prepared medicine for the sick indians. The Canzes (Kansas) brought us a quantity of grapes, which we made into wine, of which we drank all day, finding it very good. They came also to our camp, inviting us to feast with them.

These grapes were undoubtedly the common wild summer grapes that still grow in abundance along the Missouri river bluffs. Lewis and Clark in July, 1804, while passing the border of what is now Doniphan County, recorded that "one the shores were great quantities of summer and fall grapes (vitis aestivalis and v. cordifolia), berries and wild roses (rosa setigera)."

If Lewis and Clark converted any of these grapes into wine, they do no mention it. They seem to have been well supplied with whisky and probably saw no necessity for other stimulants. On July 4, 1804, amid these natural arbors of native grapes, they discovered Independence Creek and so named it in honor of the day, which they celebrated by an evening gun and an additional gill of whisky to the men.

The wine made by Bourgmont and his men in what is now Doniphan County, nearly two centuries ago, was in all probability, the first ever made. At the time of its consumption, it was probably in the stage of fermentation that Germans call "Feder Wesser" (feather white, sparkle), or the Swiss "Suser" (Sparkle). We can well imagine how these adventuresome Frenchmen smacked their lips when, after a long abstinence, they got hold of such a refreshing beverage in this Doniphan wilderness. Little did these explorers dream, however, that the locality where they made their camp and imbibed the wine of the wild grapes would some day be covered with cultivated vineyards and would become famous as a wine-making seat. Just 141 years after Bourgmont's visit, Adam Brenner, prompted by flattering reports and inducements held out by the Kansas Horticultural Society, commenced planting on they very site of the old Kansa Indian village. The Doniphan vineyards, and established a wine industry that became famous throughout this section of the country.

GEORGE J. REMSBURG
"No reliable statistics of the acreage of vineyards in the counties were taken previous to 1881."

"In 1881, we find Doniphan county in the lead with 384 acres. It was also first in acreage in '82, '84, '85, '89, '91, '92, and '93, with varying acreage, from 414 to 567. It was second in '87, '96, and '98, with 480 and 537 acres, respectively. It was third in '83, '95 '97 '99, and 1900, with 414, 457, 497, 450 and 351 acres, respectively; fourth in '86, and '94, with 335 acres and 308 acres, respectively. Thus Doniphan county was first in acreage for ten years, second for three years, third for five years, fourth for two years, standing third in 1900, with 351 acres."

"To-day--1900--the leading counties are: Wyandotte, 538 acre; Sedgwick, 404 acres; and Doniphan, 351 acres."
GEORGE BRENNER, proprietor of the Bellevue Vineyards, came to Kansas, June 7, 1860, and located in Doniphan, of which city he is the present Mayor. He is a member of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church of Doniphan. Mr. Brenner was born in Deidesheim, Rheinpfalz, Bavaria Germany, September 5, 1842, and lived in his native town until he came to Kansas. Mr. Brenner was married in October 1866 in Doniphan to Miss Eugenia Frank, a native of Pittsburgh, PA. They have five children, whose names are: Estella, Mary, Edna, Amelia, and Anna. When Mr. Brenner first came to Doniphan he was a clerk for his uncle, Adam Brenner, in the general merchandise business. He remained with his uncle three years and then went to Atchison, where he was a book-keeper for D. C. Robbins for two years. He then returned to Doniphan and took an interest with his uncle in the grain and agricultural implement business. In 1867 he removed to Iowa Point, Kansas, where he opened a branch of the house of A. & G. Brenner. He remained at Iowa Point about one and a half years. He then returned to Doniphan, bought out his partner's interest in the business and ran it on his own account for about one year. In 1869 he planted his first vineyard which then embraced only five acres. Bellevue Vineyard now occupies about forty-five acres, and the total manufacture of wines accounts to 25,000 gallons annually. In the busy season over fifty hands are employed at Bellevue Vineyards. The name "Bellevue" was given by Mr. Brenner to his grounds, from the commanding position and beautiful scenery of the surrounding country viewed from his place. The grounds gradually slope from where his home is centered, which is laid off with beautiful grape arbors of different lengths. One of especial mention extends 150 feet and is thirteen feet wide by ten high, fairly laden with the luscious fruit. Surrounding are his vaults, packing and storehouses. This year he is making decided improvements, expecting to do a larger business than of any preceding year. He is truly a self-made young man and has a local standing as a social and business man to be envied by any. He uses every effort to sustain the high character and standing of the rapidly growing reputation of the Brenner wines. Though the yards of Jacob, Adam, and George Brenner adjoin each other and the manufacturing and selling of the produce are separate, yet in every degree all the wines possess the same high qualities. That grape culture has proven in this section of the country a success beyond a doubt by the Messrs. Brenner, and that to this industry Doniphan must attribute its leading support and mainstay, is shown by the number of acres in grapes now in cultivation around here. There are over 100 acres which this year will yield 1,000,000 pounds of grapes, producing 75,000 gallons of wine and requiring many casks, ranging from 300 to 2,400 gallons capacity. There are twenty-four varieties of grapes grown, but those yielding the best and getting the most attention are the Concord, Virginia Seedling, Elvira, Martha, Delaware, Catawba, and Goethe. The Elvira, a white variety, has been unusually successful making the finest of fine qualities. Mr. Brenner makes a specialty of the Goethe and Virginia Seedling wines. The Doniphan wine trade extends into Kansas, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, Colorado, Texas, Michigan, and Montana, having large and regular customers in each state.
From

History of Kansas
by
A. T. Andreas
1883

JACOB BRENNER, proprietor Central Vineyards, came to Kansas June 7, 1860, and located in Doniphan, where he has since resided. He was born in Deidesheim, Rheinpfalz, Bavaria, Germany, January 12, 1816, and lived in his native place until he came to Kansas. He was married in Deidesheim, Bavaria, July 6, 1841, to Miss Barbara Raufer, a native of Forst, Rheinpfalz, Bavaria. They have five children, viz. George, Adam, Margaret, Mary and Nicholas. Mr. Brenner started the Central Vineyards in 1864, with only 200 vines, as a matter of experiment. His vineyards, which are called the Central because they lie between the vineyards of his brother Adam and his son George, now contain over fifteen acres, and the annual production of wine is about 7,000 gallons. Mr. Brenner attends personally to his vineyards, selling his productions as fast as he can get them ready for market. He has one variety of wine, the Taylor Bullitt, which is not manufactured at either of the other vineyards, and of which he has the monopoly of sale. It is much superior in quality, in the opinion of competent judges and connoisseurs, to any wine produced in Doniphan. The dimensions of Mr. Brenner's wine cellar are 22 x 38 feet, and 16 feet high. Its storage capacity is about 10,000 gallons. The other varieties of wines produced by him are the Virginia Seedling, Dry Catawba, White and Red Concord. From twenty to twenty-five hands are employed by him during the busy season. He does not care much as to the quantity of wine he produces in a season, but he is very careful as to its quality. Mr. Brenner makes a specialty of wines for sacramental purposes, for which he is receiving large orders daily.
DONIPHAN VINEYARDS WAREHOUSE - DONIPHAN, KANSAS

1867 - 1889

has totally disappeared
WINE CELLAR IN DONIPHAN VINEYARDS WAREHOUSE

DONIPHAN, KANSAS    1867 - 1889
Central Vineyards, Doniphan, Kans.
Strictly Pure Wines for Sacramental Purposes a Specialty.

**PRICE LIST**

### RED WINES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PER GALLON</th>
<th>PER CASE 1 DOZ. QTS.</th>
<th>PER CASE 2 DOZ. PTS.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concord</td>
<td>$0.50</td>
<td>$3.00</td>
<td>$4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claret</td>
<td>$0.50</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claret, Extra</td>
<td>$0.75</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Seedling</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### WHITE WINES

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catawba</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>$4.00</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Concord</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elvira</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martha</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>5.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor Bullitt</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>5.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### SWEET WINES

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Catawba</td>
<td>$1.25</td>
<td>$4.50</td>
<td>$5.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angelica</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>5.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherry, Domestic</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherry, Imported</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port, XX</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>5.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port, XXX</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port, Imported</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Special Prices on Large Quantities.

**THE JACOB BRENNER WINE CO.,**

**DONIPHAN, KANSAS.**