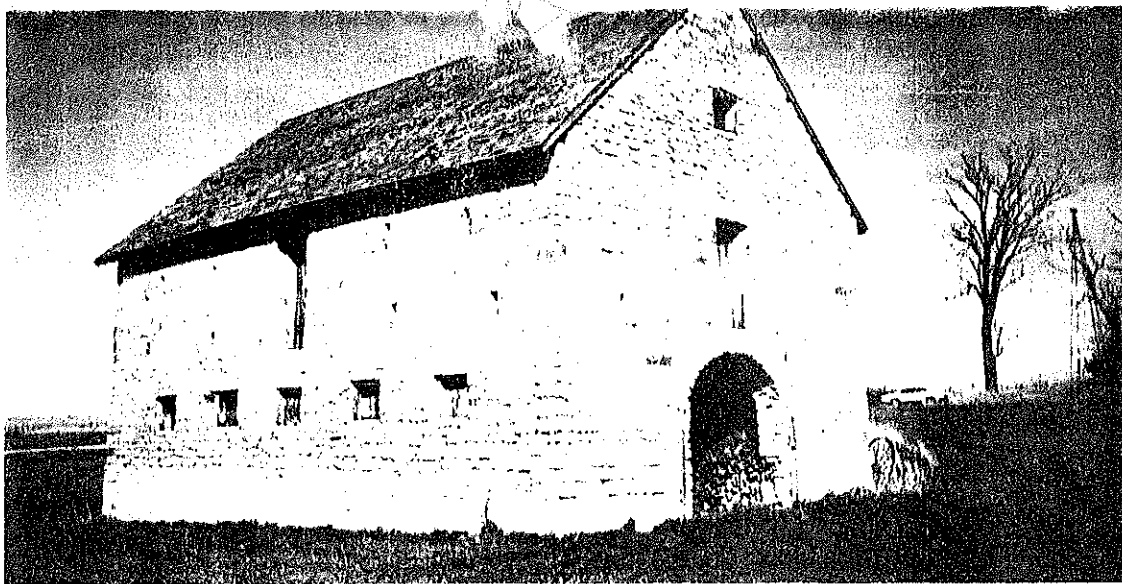


S. Man  
Andersen  
Tressie  
Potter



get  
water  
away from  
wall -  
take dirt  
away  
call  
E.D. Kenney

The Dickinson Barn, built circa 1865, is a superb example of a three-tier, byre barn. The structure, built of a limestone rubble construction, stands three stories tall. The first story would have been used as a livestock area, with the second and third stories of a typical structural example being used as storage for hay. A quick glance inside the second floor will indicate that at some time improvements were made to enable it to store grain. It is not clear if that was the original intent or a later alteration. The "roman" arches on the ground level of both sides of the barn exhibit superior craftsmanship.

Worthy of attention are the series of rectangular slits evident on the outside walls of the second story. Legend holds that the barn was built during the tumultuous time of the "Indian troubles", and these slits were built into the barn's design for defense. The story purports that these holes were convenient spots to poke a rifle through to fire at any marauders, all the while safe from any returning volleys.

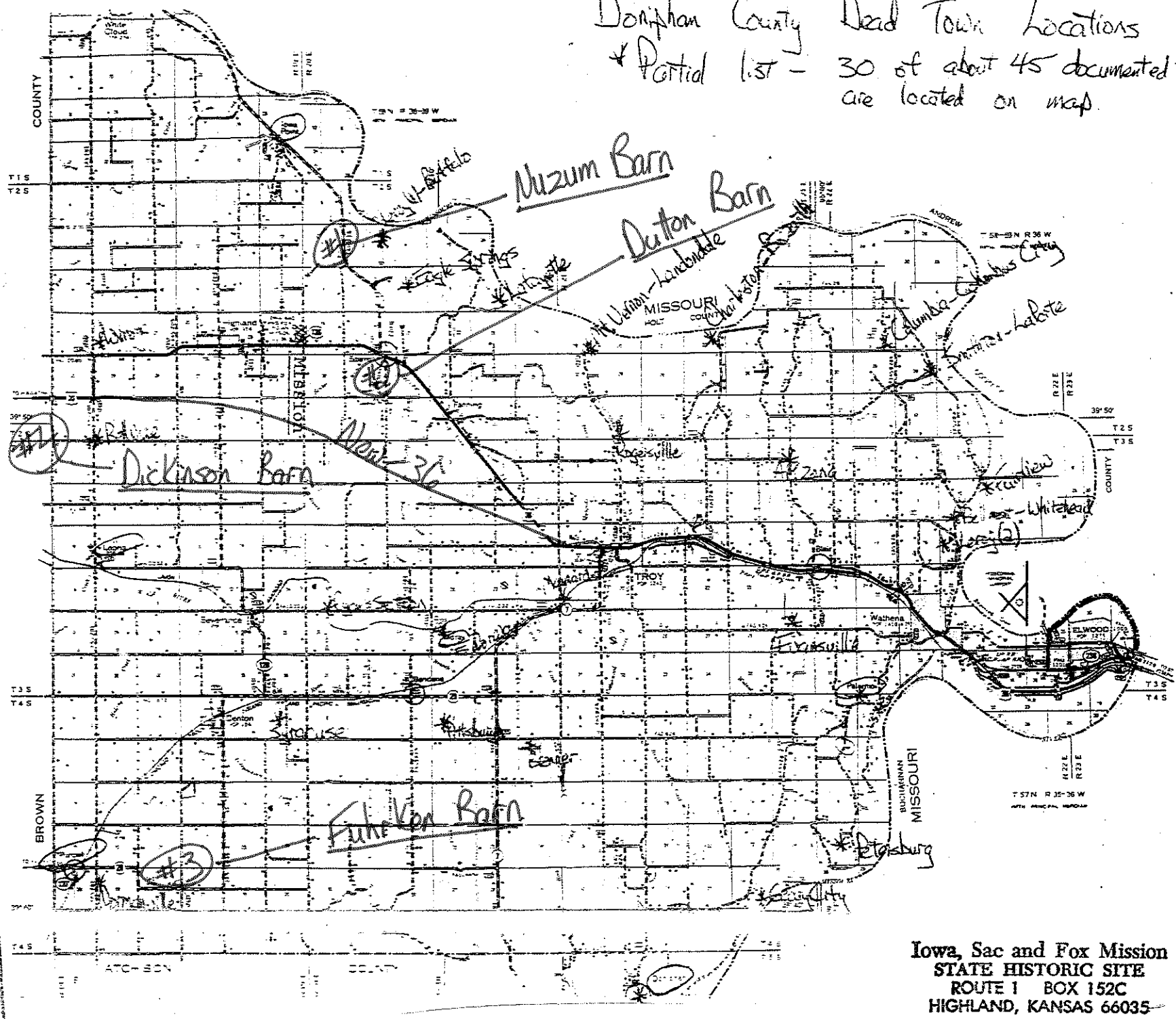
In fact, the holes are actually ventilation holes. The second story of the barn was chiefly designed to carry and house hay cut from the fields. Hay at that time was not bailed, but loose loaded into wagons and then heaped inside a barn. This manner of cutting and storing hay did not encourage uniform drying throughout the harvested hay. If hay had any significant moisture in it, heat would begin to build and fires often started. Farmers used to try to negate the problem by throwing rock salt on freshly cured hay, which would thwart the chemical process produced by wet hay. The most important precaution, however, was providing adequate air flow over and around the hay. As long as air could be encouraged to circulate around the hay, additional drying could take place and hay fires and hay mold could be averted. Although the gun slit story is much more exciting, these vents preserve an important tool in the farmer's arsenal of the period that has largely been forgotten. In this case, the passing of a once common practice from general knowledge has led to the production of a pretty neat story.

Dennis and Stanley Tietjens now own this barn. A recent improvement is the replacement of the wood shingle roof with a new roof of the same material. The decision to keep a wood roof on this barn adds tremendously to its historic feeling. The low mound along one side of the barn was once much higher. It functioned as a ramped entrance to the second floor, but the years have seen it erode away. Because of the scarcity and expense of lumber when this barn was erected, an earthen ramp was probably more cost effective than a wooden one. The Tietgens have done, and continue to do, a praiseworthy job of preserving this unique barn. It is hoped that the barn will be placed on the National Register sometime in the near future.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Compiled by A. Clements, Iowa, Sac & Fox Mission State  
Historic Site, 4/13/93

Doniphan County "Dead" Town Locations  
 \* Partial list - 30 of about 45 documented towns  
 are located on map.



Iowa, Sac and Fox Mission  
 STATE HISTORIC SITE  
 ROUTE 1 BOX 152C  
 HIGHLAND, KANSAS 66035