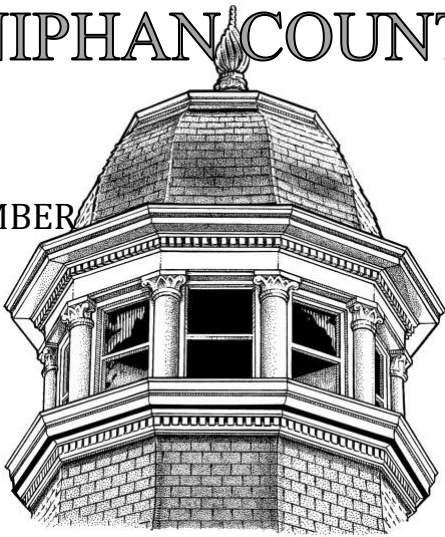


# DONIPHAN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SEPTEMBER  
2023

Vol. 29  
No. 9



## News Notes

### 2023 OFFICERS

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September 28, 2023 6:00 pm

### Origins of Doniphan County Roadways

by Todd Miller

Sparks State Bank, Sparks

Have you ever wondered where covered wagons passed through Doniphan County in traveling westward? Are there ruts or swales left along heavily traveled stage routes? When did the county begin paving the main roads?

I'll do my very best to answer your questions in my upcoming presentation

*"Origins of Doniphan County Roadways."*

I've enjoyed researching the topic, and look forward to sharing my findings with you.

Meet me at 6 on Main Street in Sparks. Bring a chair and insect repellent. If weather becomes a problem, let's meet at the Museum in Troy. See you then.



### 2023 BOARD MEMBERS

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August 31, 2023

MEETING MINUTES

President Todd Miller welcomed everyone. While the weather had caused a couple of rescheduling dates, approximately 40 members and guests were able to gather to learn more about the historic Gilmore Kent Limestone farmhouse on a beautiful evening.

A prayer and moment of silence was offered for David Guy. Members were asked to keep Pete Duncan and Cindy Hoverson in their thoughts and prayers due to health issues. A thank you was extended to Corky and Carol Smith for the treats. The upcoming meetings for the remainder of the year were reviewed. No business meeting was held.

Julie Dorrell told of her journey in purchasing, remodeling, restoring and renovating the Gilmore Kent farmhouse. She purchased the house from the Harold Rush family in May of 1993, moving in December 1994. The home was vacant from 1988 to 1993. The group learned of the various grants, processes and criteria she has completed and received to this point. Notebooks of pictures, articles, and grant information were available for review. The group toured the house and the stone cellar. Julie and family and friends have done much of the work themselves; truly a labor of love. The tour was greatly enjoyed by all. Thank you to Julie for sharing her home.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

AUGUST 14, 2023

AUG 14 BALANCE	\$38,023.24
INCOME:	
August interest	6.30
Dues	20.00
Income total:	\$26.30

EXPENDITURES:	
American Legion use of building	50.00
Stamps	66.00
Expenditures total:	\$111.16

SEPT 14 BALANCE	\$38,108.10
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CD #7175	\$6,896.29
CD #6519 (for Save Our Liberty Project)	\$7,702.22

The first railroad in Kansas (or west of the Missouri River for that matter) got its start in 1856 when the St. Joseph & Denver City Railroad began construction in Elwood. Sixteen years and several name and destination changes later, the line would be completed as the St Joseph & Grand Island, running between its namesake cities. The St. J & GI (or "Grand Island") would remain a fixture in Doniphan County for over a century before most of its track in the county would be removed in the early years of the 21st Century. By the 1920's, the Grand Island had fully become a part of the Union Pacific system, though the St. J & GI name would continue to be used into the early 1950's before fading away. Though deemed redundant by the Union Pacific by the end of the 20th Century, the Grand Island line through Doniphan County was once an important link in the Union Pacific System and some recently unearthed (or de-buildinged to be more precise) papers provide some insight into the traffic that traversed the St. J & GI's rails a century ago.

When the St Joseph Stock Exchange building was torn down a few months ago, many documents from the St. Joseph Stock Yards Company which were stored in the building came to light as their home was reduced to rubble. For better or worse, some of those involved in the demolition saved some of the papers that they found (I only say worse because I now have a dining room table stacked with interesting but disintegrating century old records from a defunct enterprise). Among the papers saved was the binder containing the Stock Yards Company's accounts payable records for the month of October 1925. These records provide a glimpse into the Stock Yards Company's business by showing what the company was paying for, including bills paid to the St. J & GI for shipping livestock.

A basic look at the Stock Yards Company's business model will help to understand why the Stock Yards Company was paying the St. J & GI for shipping livestock. Essentially, the Stock Yards Company served as a clearing house for livestock for the meat packing companies in St. Joseph. The Stock Yards had agents travelling throughout the western United States looking to buy livestock, which would then be shipped (by rail into the 1960's) to St. Joseph. Once in St. Joseph, the animals would be housed in the Stock Yards Company's massive stock yards until they were sold to one of the packing companies. (To give an idea of the size of the operation, in the 1920's the Stock Yards Company dealt with millions of head of cattle, hogs and sheep, had over 25 miles of railroad track on its property to access all of the various stock pens and was paying out nearly \$20,000

## THE ST. JOSEPH & GRAND ISLAND AND THE ST. JOSEPH STOCK YARDS COMPANY HISTORICAL TRIVIA FROM OCTOBER 1925

By Jason Midyette

(\$600,000 in 2023) a day in freight bills to the railroads, just for incoming livestock shipments).

The records pertaining to the St. J & GI consist of a daily sheet from the Western Weighing & Inspection Bureau showing the car number, weight and freight bill of each railcar load of livestock delivered to the Stock Yards by the St J&GI, as well as a check to the railroad for each day's freight bill. Sadly, the surviving documents do not tell us what type of livestock was being shipped, nor where it was coming from, but there are many interesting tidbits that can be discerned from what is left.

A century ago, railroad freight rates were based upon the weight of the shipment; each railroad would set a rate or tariff per hundredweight of a specific commodity (that is to say it would cost you a set amount for each 100 pounds of your shipment, with weights being rounded to the nearest 100 pounds). The Tariff rates were set between each station on the railroad, thus a shipment from St. Joseph to Troy may have cost 12 cents per hundredweight while the rate for the same commodity being shipped from St. Joseph to Grand Island could have been 40 cents per hundredweight.

Thus, weight and the ability to get an accurate weight of the cargo in each railcar was very important. To accomplish this, each and every railroad freight car was occasionally weighed while empty, and the empty weight was stenciled on the side of the car so that everyone using the car from then on would know what the car weighed when empty. (The stencil was painted on the side of the car in a specific format that recorded the weight of the car, the date it was weighed and the location that it was weighed). Once loaded, the car was weighed again and the empty weight recorded on the side of the car was subtracted from the loaded weight to determine the weight of the cargo and thus the freight charge.

While most railroads maintained their own scales, the weighing of loaded cars was often done by the Western Weighing and Inspection Bureau, an independent third party. Additionally, cars were usually weighed twice during their trip - once just after loading and once again after arrival at their destination. This re-weighing made it possible to determine if any of the shipment had been lost during the trip (such as grain leaking from a hole in a boxcar or livestock losing weight during shipment). If there was difference in the weights, the freight bill was generally paid based on the lower of the two weights.

In the case of the St. Joseph Stock Yards Company, the Western Weighing and Inspection Bureau weighed all of the incoming livestock shipments for the company and provided a sheet of cars weighed each day for each railroad that had cars incoming to the stock yards. It is from these sheets that we have some idea of how many railcars loads of livestock were coming into the St. Joseph Stock Yards on a daily basis.

Form 13 3M 7-25.

**Western Weighing and Inspection Bureau**

OCT 8 - 1925      Weights Furnished      R. R.

PRO. NO.	CAR NO.	Car Initial	GROSS	SHRINK	NET	CONTENTS	CHARGES
	36971	W.P.	213	—	—		175.50
	44208	W.P.	212	—	—		140.65
	46455	W.P.	160	550	155		28.90
	46615	W.P.	181	300	178		37.38
	35693	W.P.	189	300	186		54.84
	36829	W.P.	186	550	191		38.01
	46518	W.P.	228	800	220		46.10
	35401	W.P.	224	—	—		204.55
	4211	W.P.	232	500	227		31.78
	40014	W.P.	212	800	204		30.80
	37748	W.P.	257	800	249		36.11
	35807	W.P.	W	Y	C.		
	45760	W.P.	222	—	—		300.45
	36842	W.P.	W	Y	C.		
	45150	W.P.	222	—	—		376.85
	37804	W.P.	W	Y	C.		
	40468	W.P.	222	—	—		300.45
	37810	W.P.	221	—	—		300.45
	45616	W.P.	W	Y	C.		
	45438	W.P.	221	—	—		366.45
	36515	W.P.	W	Y	C.		
							2169.30

A portion of the October 8, 1925 weight sheet furnished by the Western Weighing and Inspection Bureau. Note the lone St. Joseph & Grand Island car on the sheet (midway down, Car No. 4211). The "Gross" column lists the weight of the livestock shipped in the car (the car's loaded weight minus its empty weight), "Shrink" is the difference between the weight of the shipment at its origin and at its destination and indicates weight lost by the livestock during shipment while "Net" indicates the weight of the shipment received. (The "Gross" and "Net" columns are listed in Hundredweights, while the "Shrink" column is listed in actual pounds, thus the Gross Weight for car No. 4211 is 23,200 pounds, the Shrink is 500 pounds and the Net is 22,700 pounds). Also note the difference in freight charges. As an example, cars 46518 and 37310 each carried about the same weight (22,000 pounds and 22,100 pounds respectively) while the freight charges were wildly different (\$46.10 and \$200.45 respectively). This indicates that the livestock shipped in car No. 37310 came from significantly further away than that shipped in car No. 46518.

For this article, we are focusing on two days' worth of inbound cars from the St. Joseph & Grand Island Railroad in October 1925. On October 7, 1925, the St. J & GI delivered 27 stock cars to the stockyards, each car carrying an average load of around 22,000 pounds (11 tons) for a total freight bill of \$2,032.77 (around \$60,000 in 2023). On October 8, 16 cars were delivered, 11 less than the day before, but the freight bill for the day grew to \$2,169.30. Given that the average weight of the shipments in each car stayed about the same, it can be inferred that the livestock that arrived on October 8 came from further away than the loads from the day before.

The St. J & GI was one of the smaller railroads delivering cars to the Stock Yards. On the other end of the spectrum was the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe which delivered over 100 cars a day and to whom the Stock Yards Company was paying around \$10,000 dollars a day in freight bills to. Add in the other railroads from which the Stock Yards received cars of livestock from (Union Pacific, Burlington, Rock Island, Chicago Great Western and Chicago & Northwestern) and you can start to get an idea of how large an enterprise the Stock Yards Company was.

The other thing that the surviving papers provide an insight into is the railroad cars used to transport the livestock. Well into the 1960's, railroads maintained large fleets of cars specifically designed to transport livestock, with even a smaller railroad like the St. J & GI having 100 such cars on the roster in 1925. A big railroad like the Union Pacific had several thousand. The daily sheets show that most of the stock cars coming in on the Grand Island were Union Pacific cars and only a few were St. J & GI cars. This is not surprising as not only were there more Union Pacific stock cars available, but they were newer than the Grand Island's cars. The St. J & GI's stock cars were all wood-framed cars built between 1898 and 1900 that were nearing the end of their lifespan in October 1925 (they started being retired in 1926 and all were gone by 1936) while the Union Pacific cars that show up on the sheets were newer, being built between 1907 and 1910, and had steel underframes. The Union Pacific started retiring the type of stock cars that show up on the sheets in the late 1930's and some lasted into the 1950's.

Form 47 10M 12-24.

**ST. JOSEPH STOCK YARDS CO.**  
SO. ST. JOSEPH, MO.

**Remittance**

No. 33593

Date 10/9/25

To St. J. & G. I. Ry. Co.,  
St. Joseph, Mo.

The enclosed check is in full settlement of items enumerated below. No receipt necessary.

Payment of freight on livestock per bills attached \$2169.30

*St. Joseph Stock Yards Company*  
South St. Joseph, Mo. OCT 9 - 1925 No. 35145

Pay to the order of THE ST. JOSEPH & GRAND ISLAND RAILWAY COMPANY \$2169.30

EXACTLY TWENTY ONE HUNDRED SIXTY NINE DOLLAR THIRTY CENTS

To St. Joseph Stock Yards Bank, South St. Joseph, Mo.

36-6  
22570

St. Joseph Stock Yards Company  
By J. Midyette, TREASURER  
By J. Peuker, Auditor

The check issued by the St Joseph Stock Yards Company to the St Joseph and Grand Island Railway Co. to cover the freight charges for October 8, 1925.

## 2023 MEETINGS

*All meetings at 6:00 unless otherwise noted.*

**Presenters/topics/locations subject to change.**

**October 26** *Local Legends and Monsters* by Michael

Kelley and Lance Foster. Iowa and Sac & Fox Mission at Highland. 1737 Elgin Rd, Highland. Refreshments Sharon and JR Peuker.

**November 23** Program by Jason Midyette.

**December 1** Annual soup dinner at the Tenant Baker House in Troy.

**Christmas party** at Star 36 Diner in Wathena. Date to be decided.

**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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Please send newsletter by email. Email address: \_\_\_\_\_