

# Doniphan Station: Former thriving settlement now barely a memory

by ROY REID  
Special to the Globe

I had never heard of Doniphan Station until a few years ago. I didn't even know where it was located.

I found that Doniphan Station, the railroad and the town of Doniphan, were all tied so closely together, that if I were to tell of one, I would have to tell of all.

As the railroad was in operation from Atchison to Rulo, Neb., 10 to 12 years before Doniphan Station ever existed, I will tell of the history of the railroad first.

On May 5, 1867, a charter was filed for the Atchison-Nebraska Railroad Co. A group of men, all from Atchison, subscribed bonds and capital stock in the amount of \$150,000, along with individual subscriptions in the county for \$80,000. The stockholders of Atchison graded the road bed to the state line, constructed bridges and furnished the ties.

The railroad was then consolidated with the Atchison, Nebraska Lincoln and Columbus Railroad Company of Nebraska, and the road was completed to Lincoln in the fall of 1872. This consolidated road was purchased by the Burlington Missouri River Railroad Co. in 1880. I was surprised how early the Atchison-Nebraska railroad was built. It began operation in 1872, right along with Atchison's five other railroads, three years before the Atchison railroad bridge was built.

Upon leaving Atchison, the railroad went north along the river bluff, where the river road is now. I am told that mudslides caused a lot of trouble along the bluff. At the time there were very few trees on the Kansas side to hold the soil.

The railroad continued along the bluff, crossing Independence Creek, not far from where it emptied into the big curve of the river. The big curve was formed by the river channel flowing past Doniphan, curving south toward Independence Creek, then back almost to the starting point before heading toward Rushville.

The railroad followed around the big curve of the river past the west edge of Doniphan to a point just north

of Doniphan, then turning straight west toward Rock Creek three miles away. The railroad entered Rock Creek Valley just above where Doniphan Station was established 11 years later.

It continued up the valley past Brenner, which was established in 1872 by the railroad, then on to Troy. The railroad did not cross the Wood property until 1882. In 1872 the railroad signed a 16-year lease to quarry rock on that farm. From there it pretty much followed U.S. 36, until it again followed along the river, past White Cloud and on to Rulo, Neb., a distance of 45 miles.

The channel of the Missouri River flowed past Doniphan in a giant loop, then back out, probably for centuries. History shows that as far back as 1675, the Doniphan townsite was occupied by a larger tribe of the Kansas Indians. It wasn't until 1775 that the site began to be occupied by whites.

In 1854, the Doniphan Town Company was organized in St. Joseph, and the land was surveyed and laid out in lots. It became an excellent steamboat landing and consequently in 1855, one lot was sold for as much as \$2,000. Because of a sand bar one mile above the town and extending almost completely across the river, it made Doniphan the head of navigation for heavy-draught steamers.

Doniphan became one of the largest towns on the upper Missouri River in the 1850s, having a population of 2,000 at one time.

Along the wharf two warehouses were erected that could hold cargo from at least 15 steamboats at one time. It was said that as many as 20 boats came up the river in one day, and that three or four boats would be seen unloading at one time. It was an important shipping point for grain, having the first grain elevator built in Kansas by Adam Brenner.

The Doniphan House Hotel was built in 1855. In 1857, the St. Charles Hotel was built. It had 40 rooms — a large lobby, spacious dining room and a large barroom. Seven newspapers were founded between 1855 and 1881. Most of them didn't last long.

One thing that did last was St. John's Catholic Church. Built in

1867, it had been in continuous use until July of this year — a total of 123 years.

Because of the "Panic" in 1857 and the resultant depression, Doniphan began going downhill. With the railroad between Atchison and St. Joseph in 1860, and Atchison getting most of the immigrant trade, Doniphan continued to decline through the 1860s.

In 1859 the surrounding towns around Doniphan began to get more railroad connections, while Doniphan did not get a railroad until 1872, some 13 years later. This caused more decline in both business and population.

In 1881, double tragedy struck the town of Doniphan, with what must have been the worst flood in history. My father told of how it was from bluff to bluff. The flood caused the river channel to change, flowing straight across the loop, leaving Doniphan high and dry, with nothing left but a large lake. At the same time the railroad tracks were washed out. As they were never reconstructed, Doniphan was not only without a river but also without a railroad.

It wasn't until some time in 1882 that the tracks were rebuilt. This time they bypassed Doniphan, turning northwest upon reaching Independence Creek, crossing Deer Creek, then on northeast about three miles, crossing Independence Creek just past the mouth of Rock Creek. From there the railroad went due north on the west side of Rock Creek, across the valley, straight up Rock Creek Valley, crossing Dorothy Wood's farm, then on a short distance to where it joined the original tracks. It was on the Wood's farm that the settlement of Doniphan Station was established.

Because Doniphan Station never had its own Post Office, I could find almost no information about it — neither in the libraries nor court-houses. It was not even listed on the maps. I had to depend almost entirely for my information from a few old timers, and they got most of their information from their parents.

Dorothy Wood helped me the most by kindly letting me look at the

abstract for the farm where the settlement was located.

Watson Wyncoop was a very big help to me. He lives on a farm just north of Doniphan Station, where his parents lived before him. Also, John Wood gave me a lot of information. His farm is the next farm north, and also where his folks lived before him. The tracks formerly ran through the center of both farms.

Doniphan Station was located three miles due west of the town of Doniphan. The reason it was called that was because that's just what it was — Doniphan's Railroad Station.

When the tracks left Doniphan all the railroad buildings were left useless. I believe the railroad established Doniphan Station, like it did Brenner 10 years earlier, because all the buildings were located along both sides of the tracks, on railroad property.

Doniphan Station came to life in 1882. It was very necessary and a very busy place as it had to replace all the rail connections that Doniphan lost. It continued to be a busy place until the automobiles and trucks changed the way of living.

Even then, I believe most places continued in use until the trains stopped running around 1935.

Doniphan Station was built on both sides of a single track that ran north to south. A side track branched off several hundred feet north, running parallel about 100 feet from the main line, for about ¼ mile, then back to the main line.

From the north, on the west side of the main line, was the Station Shop and foreman's home. Just across the track was a small building that housed a handcar.

The county road from the east turned south along the main line, then west across both tracks to the bluff, then south.

A concrete grain elevator was built between the two tracks. Just across the main line and road was a grocery and dry goods store. Ice was kept for customers behind the store.

The depot was located a short distance south, with a large freight house adjoining. A wooden platform in front of the depot, sloped to a raised platform in front of the freight house. The depot agent lived above the depot. He sold tickets, ran the telegraph, handled the freight and took care of the incoming and outgoing mail sack. In the early, busy days, it must have taken a lot more help.

Farther south was a well and water tower where the train engines took on water. Several small homes were situated back from the track a short distance. One was a large home belonging to the storekeeper. In later years it burned down. A coal yard was between the tracks, south of the elevator. A stockyard was located west of



The grocery store and elevator shown in the above photo were built at Doniphan Station about 1882. Now all this is left of the settlement are parts of the concrete foundation of the elevator, hidden among the weeds.

the busy 1800s.

I am told that back in the busy days before automobiles and with Doniphan three miles from the depot, freight house and mail sack, it was necessary to have some sort of freight wagon and passenger vehicle to make at least one trip back and forth daily.

Also someone had to meet the train and get the mail daily, even up to the time the train was discontinued.

Francis Hyde told me that after about 1924, a motor coach nicknamed "Kiddie Car" also made daily trips to Rulo and back. It probably carried passengers and the mail.

Roy Loader, who rode the steam train once, said it was sometimes called "The Galloping Goose." An old house and rock barn, that I believe played an important part in the life of Doniphan Station, lies some 200 feet east of where the elevator once stood. I believe they were built in the 1850s. They are on the same farm as Doniphan Station, and the farm was bought 40 years ago by Dorothy Wood and her late husband, Woodrow Wood.

The story is that these two buildings are all that is left of someone's dream or plan to have a large water-powered grist mill on Rock Creek. The beams in the basement and underpart of the old house are put together with wooden pins, and it is believed to have been built as a warehouse.

It is one of the best examples of a

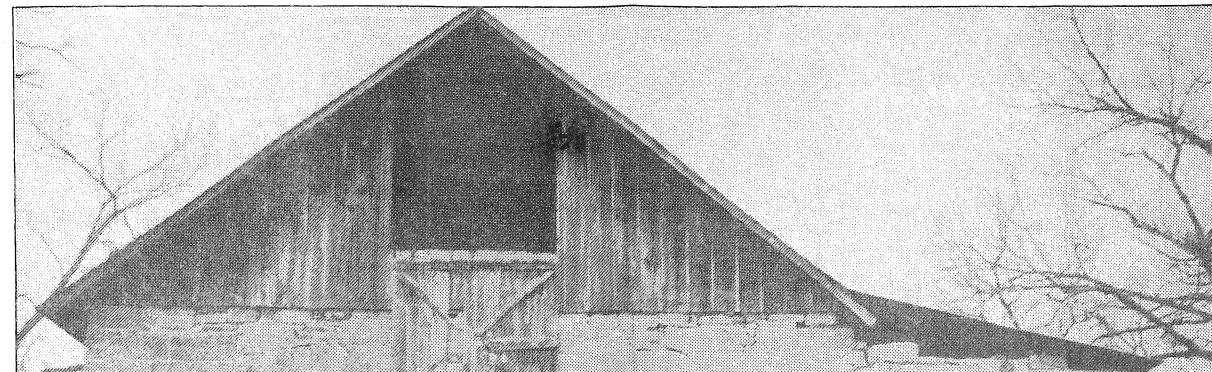
corner was built right along with the other walls. The barn is made of very large, beautifully shaped doors, two on the south and one on the north about 8 or 9 feet wide and 14 feet high.

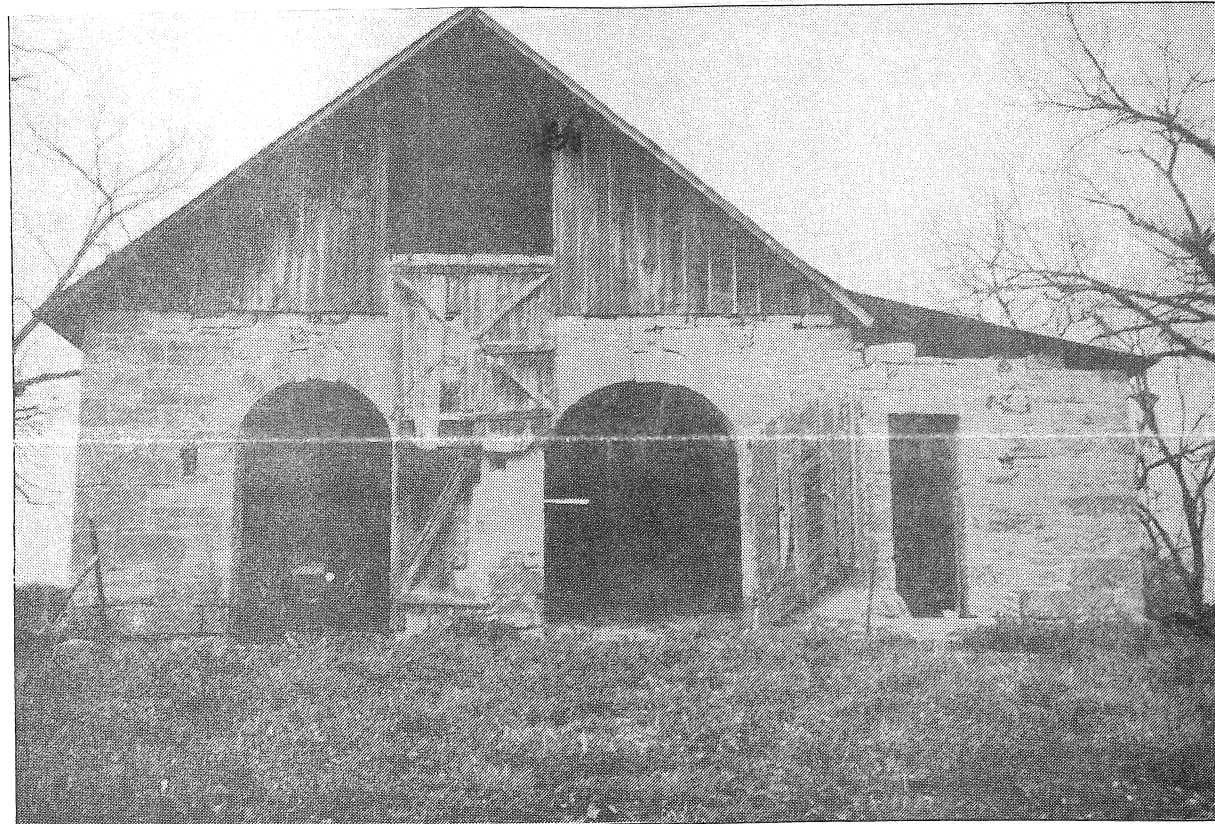
Two large abutments, one on each side of the creek, made of huge stone blocks, were made to hold a water wheel. The project was never finished, as it is believed the man died.

I do not know just what the buildings were used for the next decade. I am told that during the time of the railroad, Rick Carrigan and a housekeeper ran a boarding house. The barn was used as a livery stable, where train passengers could leave their horses for a while. There was also a sunken ice house near the barn.

Fifty-four of the 60 years the railroad operated, Francis Hyde's father, Robert Hyde, was the engineer. Also Watson Wyncoop informed me that his grandfather, D.E. Watson, was a one time section foreman, and George Everett and Hank Wood worked as section hands. George also worked at the elevator. Alfred Elias remembers as a child, he would ride in a buggy, with Chris Boos, whose job it was to take the outgoing mail sack from Doniphan Post Office to Doniphan Station and bring the incoming mail back.

After almost a year of research, I believe these are the true facts about Doniphan Station.





Special to the Globe / Roy Reid

This old barn was used as a livery stable during most of the life of Doniphan Station. When Woodrow and Dorothy Wood bought the farm in 1950, it was still equipped with stalls for horses.

## Contaminated eye drops cause two to lose eyes

PITTSBURGH (AP) — For years pharmacist Edward Kilkeary used arthritis medication, saline solution and sterilizing equipment to whip up hundreds of tiny bottles of specially prescribed eye drops for cataract patients.

But sometime this year something went wrong.

Two women last month each lost an eye to a virulent bacteria. At least 10 people were hospitalized with infections, and countless others sought help for swelling and burning caused by a toxin that was eating away their eyes.

The bacteria, pseudomonas, contaminated an unknown number of bottles that were sold under the name Indocin to patients who had recently undergone cataract surgery. The infection puzzled doctors who treated the patients, and the drops were traced to Hieber's Drug Store, where Kilkeary manufactured them.

"A pharmacy is a place where people put their trust, like their docs, like their priests," said Dr. Robert Lewen of Allegheny General Hospital, where eight people were treated. "When that trust is violated, I think people seem to be somewhat resentful. This was not supposed to be the way things work."

State and federal agencies are investigating, but answers have been hampered by poor records, the sale of the drug to other pharmacies and doctors, and conflicting information from

**FREE Hearing Tests**

**of Manhattan** Pat. Pend.  
**the Circuit** *Automatic Signal Processor*

From Argosy® Electronics

This micro-miniature circuit **Automatically** reduces the problems caused by background noise.

**SOME HEARING AIDS SEEM TO WORK TOO WELL, THAT IS, THEY CAN AMPLIFY ALL SOUNDS, NOT JUST THE IMPORTANT SPEECH SIGNALS**

**How It Works**

**EDIGER HEARING AID SERVICE**  
Atchison, Kansas

Best Western Motor Inn  
December 6, 1990 — 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.  
Rick Ediger 3641 SW Plass 913-266-2000



## Christmas Contest Winners

### Week #2

**1<sup>st</sup> Place - \$25.00**

Margaret Shrader  
Effingham, Ks.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Place - \$15.00**

Steve Lee

platform in front of the freight house. The depot agent lived above the depot. He sold tickets, ran the telegraph, handled the freight and took care of the incoming and outgoing mail sack. In the early, busy days, it must have taken a lot more help.

Farther south was a well and water tower where the train engines took on water. Several small homes were situated back from the track a short distance. One was a large home belonging to the storekeeper. In later years it burned down. A coal yard was between the tracks, south of the elevator. A stockyard was located west of the side track and the road.

This is a description of what was there in the late 1920s. More than likely, there were more buildings in

I believe they were built in the 1850s. They are on the same farm as Doniphan Station, and the farm was bought 40 years ago by Dorothy Wood and her late husband, Woodrow Wood.

The story is that these two buildings are all that is left of someone's dream or plan to have a large water-powered grist mill on Rock Creek. The beams in the basement and underpart of the old house are put together with wooden pins, and it is believed to have been built as a warehouse.

It is one of the best examples of early Kansas masonry I have seen. It is about 60 feet long by 50 feet wide, with 18-foot walls, and a loft over all. A 20x15-foot room on the southeast

Watson Wyncoop informed me that his grandfather, D.E. Watson, was a one time section foreman, and George Everett and Hank Wood worked as section hands. George also worked at the elevator. Alfred Elias remembers as a child, he would ride in a buggy, with Chris Boos, whose job it was to take the outgoing mail sack from Doniphan Post Office to Doniphan Station and bring the incoming mail back.

After almost a year of research, I believe these are the true facts about Doniphan Station.

Child Health Day, declared by presidential proclamation, is celebrated the first Monday in October.

**KENMORE • GE • AMANA • WHIRLPOOL • TAPPAN • RCA • ZENITH • MAGNAVOX**

**BUY NOW...  
NO PAYMENTS 'TIL MARCH**  
on SearsCharge, Ask for details\*

# SEARS CLIP 'N SAVE SALE

**Get an extra \$10 OFF...\$20 OFF...up to \$30 OFF on home-appliance and electronics items IN-STOCK in our store\***

It's simple! Come into our store, choose from super brand names at great low prices and take \$10 to \$30 off INSTANTLY!  
**HURRY...COUPONS GOOD THRU DECEMBER 22nd ONLY**

- Washers • Dryers • Vacuum Cleaners
- Dishwashers • Refrigerators • Freezers
- Compactors • Microwaves • Ranges
- TV's/Stereos • VCR's/Camcorders

SEARS BRAND CENTER STORE

**CLIP 'N SAVE TODAY!**

## \$10 SAVINGS

Good toward any appliance or electronics purchase of \$150 to \$249

GOOD THRU 12/22/90 ONLY

SEARS BRAND CENTER STORE

**CLIP 'N SAVE TODAY!**

## \$20 SAVINGS

Good toward any appliance or electronics purchase of \$250 to \$349

GOOD THRU 12/22/90 ONLY

SEARS BRAND CENTER STORE

**CLIP 'N SAVE TODAY!**

## \$30 SAVINGS

Good toward any appliance or electronics purchase of \$350 or more

GOOD THRU 12/22/90 ONLY

**DON'T MISS THESE SPECIALS...**

|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| SONY 100 Watt Stereo System w/Remote... 499.99 | SEARS 20" CTV w/Remote ..... 279.89 |
| LXI CAMCORDER w/Case & accessories ... 699.77  | RCA 20" Colortrak ..... 299.99      |