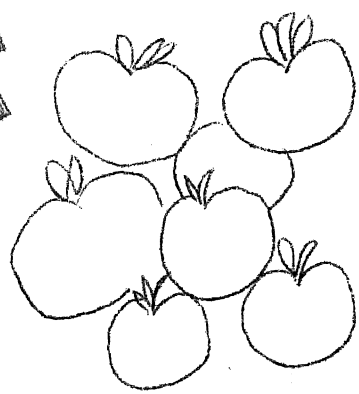


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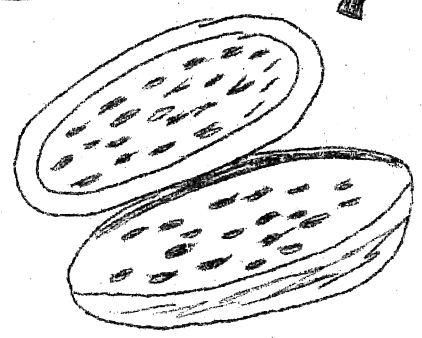
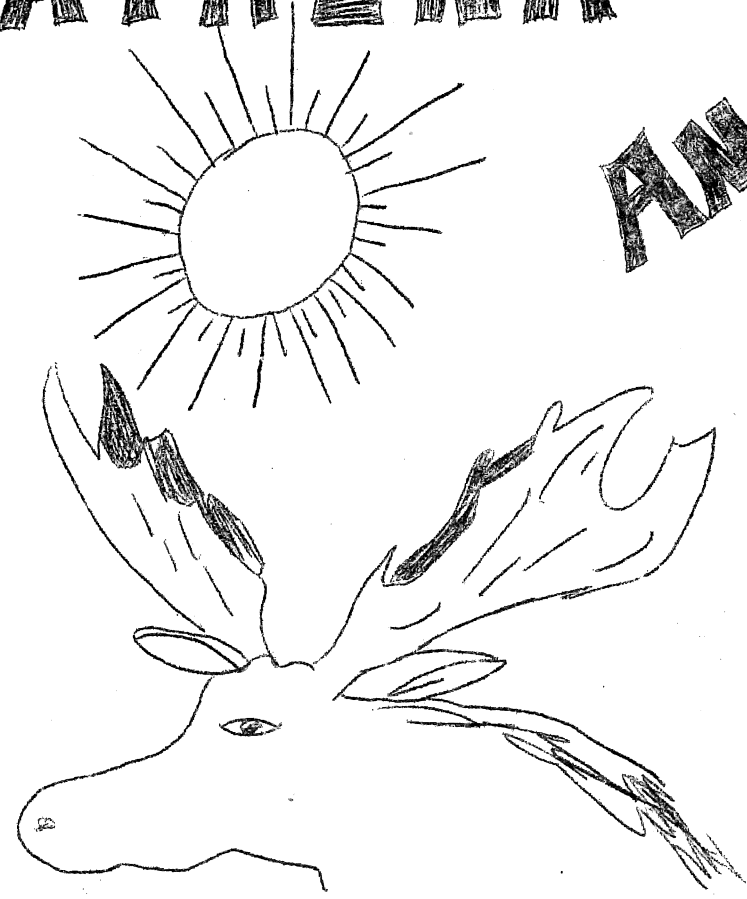
WATHENA



AND

Library District #1
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DONIPHAN County



THE HISTORY OF WATHENA
AND DONIPHAN COUNTY

By Dean Butrick

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
Washinton Township	2
Doniphan County.	4
Early Explorers.	8
Education.	8
Railroads.	10
Highways	11
Industry	12
Churches in Wathena.	13
Central Protective Association	15

THE HISTORY OF WATHENA
AND DONIPHAN COUNTY

Wathena is located near the fertile valley of Peter's Creek and is only a short distance from St. Joseph, Missouri. St. Joseph, of course, started the Pony Express on its westward march to California.

The first occupant of the land on which the town site is now located, was Peter Cadue, with his Kickapoo wife, who came at an early date, an interpreter for the Kickapoo tribe. He remained there until 1847, when he moved to Cadue Reserve and later to Petersburg. Peter's nickname was "Squaw Pete." He usually had a wife in every tribe that he traded with.

No major group of people appeared in Wathena until 1852, when Wah-the-nah, chief of a small band of Kickapoos built a wigwam by Peter's Creek. "Wathena's" wigwam was located where the Snively and Hedges Mill was later located.

R. Whitehead. He settled near Bellemont in January, 1852. In April of the same year Benjamin Harding settled near what is now Wathena and established a trading post. He also built a cabin, broke twenty acres of ground and planted corn.

In 1853 Henry Thompson built a house on the west side of the Missouri. He operated a ferry at St. Joseph, Missouri. In January, 1854 Daniel Vanderslice, an agent of the Kickapoos, allowed Ebenezer Blackiston and H. Smallwood to cut the timber for a road from Wathena to the ferry. In the spring of 1854 many people came from Missouri and made claims by laying four poles in the form of a square and inscribing their names.

The first marriage in the township was that of Miss Hazelwood to Samuel Piles in the spring of 1856. The ceremony was performed at Bellemont by J. T. Braidy. The first white child born in Washington township was a daughter to Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Whitehead in the fall of 1854. This child was also the first death, which occurred a few months later. The next birth was that of Charles E. Harding, born July 4, 1853.

on one of the branches of the Wolf River. The "Mission" as the settlement came to be called was established by the Presbyterian Church and Rev. S. M. Irvin.

The first trading post in Doniphan County was established near the mission under government supervision. This was the only settlement in the county until 1852, when the trading post at Whitehead was established. Whitehead was later called Bellemont. In April a trading post was established at Roseport, now the town of Elwood. The next settlement in the county was at the present site of Doniphan, settled in 1854. The early towns who became rivals for trade and commerce were Iowa Point, Charlestown, Whitehead (Bellemont), Wathena, Elwood, and Doniphan.

Doniphan is one of the original counties organized by the first territorial legislature in 1855 and named in honor of Alexander W. Doniphan of Missouri. Doniphan conducted an expedition from the state of Missouri to northern Mexico during the Mexican War. Walter Montgomery made the following statement about

The first county seat was located at Whitehead (Bellemont). The selection was only temporary. Troy was later selected as the county seat after the county government was organized. In 1867 the courthouse at Troy burned. The people of Wathena made an attempt to move the county seat to Wathena. When a county election was held, the voters decided to move the county seat to Wathena, but the election was contested (more votes than citizens in the county) and taken before the supreme court. The supreme court decided in favor of Troy, even though residents of Wathena had built a foundation for the courthouse. Today J. K. Rice's home is built on this spot.

The early settlers of Doniphan County came from all parts of the East and South, but a majority came from the state of Missouri. The Missourians generally selected claims along the streams where there was an abundance of timber, which offered shelter and fuel. August Miller who came to America in 1852 and became a druggist was born in Bavaria.

that year an \$8,000 school building was erected by James F. Forman.

J. A. Sea was the first principal.

In 1856 "the classical academy" was opened by Father Irvin, thus forming the nucleus of Highland University. In 1858 a charter was granted by the territorial legislature creating Highland University.

The first school building erected in Wathena was in 1857. In 1867 a better wooden-framed building was erected. In 1870 a brick structure was erected by A. Larzelere, the contractor. It was used exclusively for white children and the old school turned over for use by the colored people. In 1879 \$15,000 of bonds were approved by the people to provide educational facilities for their children. The high school was first organized in 1897. Later in 1909 John H. Wagenknecht built a better school building to replace the old one. Then in 1930 the high school moved to a new location, where it is today. In 1966 the Wathena schools were unified into U. S. D. # 406 with all grades being in the same

of St. Joseph & Denver City stock, provided they would have the track completed from Wathena to Doniphan inside one year. The road was operated for only two years, the stock sold and the tracks removed in 1878. The railroad in early Doniphan County history was very important to the grain, apple and fruit, and livestock industries.

HIGHWAYS

In addition to having railroads Doniphan County also took the lead in building a highway. On June 4, 1866 a Macadamized road was built linking Elwood to Wathena. A toll of twenty-five cents was charged on every vehicle that used the road. The road was a good investment for the stockholders until two miles of it slid into the Missouri River. An inspection of the old roadbed shows that a good part of the original base of stone remains in good condition.

apple industry, a motel, tavern and dance hall was constructed in the shape of an apple. The name of the establishment was the Big Red Apple. It was located west of Wathena, the past location of Fleek's Fruit Market.

CHURCHES IN WATHENA

Much emphasis was also placed on religion and the establishment of churches in Doniphan County in the mid and late 1800's. The First Baptist Church of Wathena was established on June 13, 1858. Rev. E. Allward was the first pastor. The services were held in the school until the church building was constructed in 1873 for \$5,000.

The Methodist Church was also established in Wathena. It was organized June 12, 1858. The Rev. T. Mck. Munhall was the organizer of the church. The first pastor was Rev. D. H. May. The construction of the brick building structure began September 8, 1866 by Alfred Larzelere. It was dedicated February 18, 1867. Andy Morris made the bricks in his kiln nearby and the wood was native

Ward on May 13, 1913. The building was completed and the first mass held by Rev. Joseph Eiker February 22, 1914. The cost of the new structure was \$35,000.

CENTRAL PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION

Due to better railroads and roads criminal activities increased in Doniphan County. To combat such activities the Central Protective Association was formed. Sometimes it was referred to as the "Anti Horse Thief Association." The CPA was an organization of peaceful, law-abiding citizens working hand in hand with the law enforcement officials to enforce the law and to protect people from acts of violence and to protect their property from theft. The Wathena association had a standing reward for housebreaking at \$50 and horse-stealing at \$100 for the capture of each offender.

The CPA began in Clay County, Missouri in 1863 when the James boys were robbing in the area. One day about twenty-five farmers got together resolved to do something about their protection. Every horse thief caught was hung to the nearest tree. They, at

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT TOWNS IN DONIPHAN COUNTY

DONIPHAN

The town and county of Doniphan were named for Alexander W. Doniphan, a colonel in the Mexican War. The town of Doniphan was an outgrowth of a trading post established by Joseph Utt in 1852.

TROY

Troy was named by J. R. Whitehead after the ancient city of Troy. The name had to be approved by the county commissioners. The county commissioners promised Mrs. Hammer that they would name it Saltillo. The commissioners later said that Saltillo contained too many letters. The post office was first established in 1856 with A. Head as Postmaster. Troy, the county seat, first used the Higby House as the courthouse. In 1859 a brick structure was erected as the courthouse. Prisoners, however, were taken to Atchison for safekeeping. In 1867 the building was destroyed by fire. In 1868 another structure was built with an addition in 1880.

WHITE CLOUD

White Cloud was named in honor of Ma-Hush-Kah, or White Cloud, a chief of the Iowa Indians. In 1856 men by the name of Utt and Spaulding laid out a portion of the town on the west bank of the Missouri. It is best remembered for its steam ferry owned and operated by John Lynds. The first building was a frame house built by Bird.

IOWA POINT

Iowa Point and Iowa Township were named after the Iowa Indians. Iowa Point was laid off as a town in the spring of 1855 by H. W. Forman, J. N. Forman, and John S. Pemberton. The first building was a house built by John Pemberton. In 1857 a Negro slave was sold at a private sale, the first and only case occurring in the state. In 1862 a devastating fire destroyed all the buildings on the east side of commercial street and were never rebuilt. This occurred during the "Great Rebellion."

EAST NORWAY

East Norway was settled principally by Norwegians. When the town was moved its name was Moray after the Grand Island official. Although the town was laid out in 1869, no buildings were erected until two years later. The Post Office was established in about the year 1873. The original town site of 18 acres was purchased by John Hoverson for \$360.

GEARY

Geary was named for J. W. Geary, governor of the territory of Kansas. The town was located early in the spring of 1857 by an association organized in Leavenworth, Kansas. C. Lewis in the summer of 1857 laid off some or land and named it Lewis Addition or South Geary. The first actual building was a log cabin built in 1854.

FANNING

Fanning was named by Jesse Reed and James Bradley in honor of Major Fanning, engineer of the A & N Railroad. The founders were Reed and Bradley. The first building erected was a blacksmith shop in 1870. Early in its history it was a neighborhood of Catholics.

ELWOOD

Elwood was originally called Roseport, after a man named Rose, who helped to found the town. The town company was afterward reorganized under the name of Elwood, in honor of John B. Elwood of Rome, New York. Elwood was located in the summer of 1856. James P. Brace was the first postmaster. It was thought that Elwood would become one of the leading cities of the state, but hasn't thus far.

RYAN'S STATION

Ryan's Station was named for Joel Ryan, an uncle of Simon Ryan, who settled on its site in 1854. Ryan's Station in 1869 was a terminal of the St. Joe & Western Railroad. Buildings were erected in 1869, but the business of Severance a few miles away caused it to close. In 1875 the station was closed and used only as a flag station.

BELLEMONT

The first settlement of Bellemont (Whitehead) dates back to the spring of 1852 when a trading post was established by the Whiteheads. It was named after the Bellemont Town Company who founded the town. To attract business and people it purchased a steam ferry. During the Pike Peak's Emigration Bellemont thrived.

LEONA

Leona was named after a lady, Leona Nitzbit. It was organized by a stock company on June 15, 1873. The President of the company was J. W. Stock. It was a shipping point on the St. Joe & Western Railroad. Leona, at one time, had the reputation of shipping more grain than any other station on the road.

AN EXPENSIVE WATERMELON
from Illustrated History of Doniphan County

One evening in August, about twenty years ago the moon was shining, and it was a still, calm evening. I had at that time a large St. Bernard dog which, for some reason was howling, now and then. My wife was asleep, nothing was stirring about, everything was perfectly still. Bang! went a gun, south of where I was, and someone was saying, "You've killed me--you've killed me!" Then I heard someone say, "I told you, if you came, I would shoot you." In a few minutes Mordica Rhue and his hired man came down past my house, calling for me. I went out and told them it was Zeigler shooting watermelon thieves. Rhue went on down, and I could hear him calling to Zeigler, "Don't shoot." After a time, Mordica and his man came back and informed me that Zeigler had shot six boys.

Next morning, before I got up, Zeigler came up and wanted me to go down and see where the boys were when he shot them. He informed me that the boys came through a patch of corn and were so near to where he was sitting that he shot at them when he was sure they would have been killed. Zeigler said to them, "Well, you came down to get it, did you?" At that they turned and ran back through the corn. After they were out of sight he shot. I counted six rows of corn mowed off, and there was a straw hat and blood on the ground, where one of the boys had fallen. I believe the doctor picked fifty-two shots out of his back, and it was several weeks before it was certain he would pull through. Zeigler was not arrested for the shooting, nor were there any more watermelons stolen for years afterward.

written by M. E. Zimmerman

TORNADOES IN DONIPHAN COUNTY
from Illustrated History of Doniphan County

The pioneers had to face many problems, but none was as difficult to face as the unpredictable cyclones and tornadoes. The dwelling house of David Rittenhouse was completely wrecked and the pieces scattered so that few of them were ever found. Ten persons were in the house when the storm struck and five of them were injured. A wagon was standing near the residence and was broken into small pieces, which were strewn over the ground for a mile or more. The houses of James Kennely and John Shirley were torn from their foundations.

Across the river William Fraser lost his house and he was killed in the process. A baby was also severely injured. It died a few days later.

In 1869 or 1870 a tornado occurred east of Troy which demolished the house of John Daums, east of the old Walton place, and instantly killed Mrs. Daums who was in the kitchen cooking.

During the month of July, 1878 a tornado west of Troy blew Clemont Pope's house to pieces in the vicinity of Moray. One of the flying timbers hit Mr. Pope's eldest son and killed him instantly.

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