

DONIPHAN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JULY
2025

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No. 7



News Notes

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JULY MEETING



Nothing Fancy Vehicle Show

July 26

American Legion and Main Street, White Cloud

Let's make this a blow-out evening! We will meet on **SATURDAY, July 26**. Vehicles can start showing up at 4:30. Ready for viewing at 5:00. Food served at 5:30. MEMBERS are asked to bring potato salad, pasta salad or cookies/brownies. Society will provide pulled pork, buns, baked beans, tea, water and table ware. We always appreciate using the American Legion's nice facilities. Use the included flyer to invite friends. We hope to see a wide variety of things on wheels. Jason Midyette is bringing at least three vehicles (depending on their willingness to cooperate) to get the ball rolling.

We hope this will be a time to reminisce about vehicles, tell stories and meet new people. Food will be served inside in the air conditioning.

2025 BOARD MEMBERS

PETE DUNCAN
HONORARY BOARD MEMBER

JOAN OYERLY
510 Fremont St, Wathena, KS 66090
816-261-0676

MARVIN SMITH
785-850-0063
1288 Peck Rd Troy KS 66087

LARRY FAULKNER
816-591-8898
6108 Kentucky Ave, Raytown, MO



NOTHING FANCY VEHICLE SHOW

Not like other car shows! We hope to see cars, pick-ups, grain trucks, tractors, and more that tell stories about Doniphan County. Maybe it's the truck you hauled hay with when you were a teen. Maybe it's Grandpa's tractor that you hope to restore someday. Or maybe it's the antique hay rake that's a marvel of moving parts.

It doesn't have to be fancy or perfect -
just fun to look at!

**PULLED PORK DINNER
FREE WILL DONATION**

🕒 4:30 set up vehicles,
5:00 ready to show,
5:30 meal

📅 No registration fee,
no competition, no prizes

presented by
Doniphan County Historical Society

785-988-0796 📞

JULY 26

**Main Street
White Cloud, KS**

TREASURER'S REPORT

July 8, 2025

MAY 14 BALANCE \$35,087.27

INCOME:

Dues 65.00
May and June interest 11.51
Income total: \$76.51

EXPENDITURES:

Cricket Wireless May, June, July 165.00
Postage 219.00
Slide scanning 66.18
Expenditures total: \$450.18

JULY 8 BALANCE \$34,713.60

CD #7175 \$7,196.97
CD #6519 (for Save Our Liberty Project) \$7,871.86

MEETING MINUTES

June 26, 2025

The June meeting was canceled due to weather.

WOLF RIVER TOWNSHIP HISTORY

Wolf River, one of the five original townships, was organized in 1855. It is one of most resourceful of the townships, containing an overshare of the excellent lands of the foremost county in the state. Along the line of the Rock Island railroad, between Troy and Purcell, lies 30,000 acres of land as fair and fine and rich as any that the sun, in his daily journey around the world, finds to shed its glory on. The township is, in fact, one large and beautiful farm, lavishly soiled and plentifully watered by copious springs and clear-running streams. There are scores of farms in the township, whose owner hold them above \$100 an acre, a pretty fair, price for ground twenty-five miles from a city! The first settlements were made on Wolf river in 1854-5. Some of the earliest settlers are here named: Parker Hooper, John Cummings, A. Q. Rice, J. C. Clark, Geo. Dittmore, Nathan Springer, John Prawl, Hugh Robertson, Grandison Wilson and John Wood.

The township has six towns - Leona, Severance, Moray, Bendena, Denton and Purcell. Three railroads - the Grand Island, the Rock Island and the B. & M. pass through the township.

FRAGMENTS.

John Cummings and Caroline Hooper, both of the Hooper's ford country, Were the first to be joined in wedlock in Wolf River township. The cremony was performed by Squire A. Q. Rice, one of the very first justices, in the spring of 1855.

The credit for having been the first white child born within the boundaries of this township is given to Perry Dittmore, a son of one of the very first pioneers, George Dittmore. The birth occurred in the Wolf river country in 1855.

The first death to occur was that of J. Waggoner, or Wagner, in 1855, mentioned elsewhere.

According to Bird's History, the first election in the township was held at the house of Milton Utt, at what was known as the Sac village, on the first Monday in October, 1855. Another account, more descriptive, yet lacking in date, is as follows: "The first election in Wolf River township was held in a blacksmith shop Dear Hooper's ford. Everything was quite primitive. The voters handed their tickets to one of the judges who deposited them in an iron kettle upon which he sat." This, if the account be true, was, indeed, an original election.

A. Q. Rice and S. D. Gilmore were the first justices of the peace, appointed in September, 1855. William Lewis, the first constable, was appointed at the same time.

The very first settlements were made in the township by John Prawl, Nathan Springer, Parker A. Hooper and John Cummings in 1854. In 1855, G. R. Wilson, C. C. Clonch, George Dittmore, S. D. Gilmore and W. T. Rittenour, took up claims along the river. In the same year, W. Wood and Hugh Robertson staked their claims in the northeastern sections, while the Gronniger family came to the Independence country. In 1856, John Wood, George Bromley, Laban Jackson, Osul Nelson and George Malon took up claims in the northeast, while Charles Phillips, Thomas Lyons, Abram Bennett and Pat. Kirwan located in the eastern parts. Silas Loyd, David Hoppins and John Starr made their dugouts in the southern sections in 1856 or 1857.

More than three-fourths of the early settlers of eastern Wolf River township came from Ohio, and each brought with him and retained his politics and religion.

A store of provisions was kept by Abram Bennett, on his farm near Prairie Grove, during the years 1856-7-8. He supplied the travelers who passed through on the old Pottawatomie trail. Perhaps this was the first store opened in the township. It stood on what is now the Wynkoop farm half a mile west of Bendena.

During the early days, 1856 to 1858, there hung in the postoffice at Doniphan a list of the names of fourteen residents of the Syracuse neighborhood. Anyone of the fourteen calling at the postoffice brought the mail for all and left it at Syracuse for free delivery. A little later they had a postoffice of their own.

One of the early blacksmith shops in the eastern part of the township was owned by Grandfather Osul Nelson and Samuel Hardy, first opened in 1857, on the Nelson farm just west of where Moray now stands. The blacksmiths needing coal went prospecting and discovered a mine in the Syracuse neighborhood which furnished them a supply. It was not the best coal in all the world, but it was the cheapest to be found. The shop did good business sharpening breaking plow shares, welding log chains, clevises, wagon tires, etc., and had the patronage of the travelers on the early trails, going out from St. Joseph.

Another early shop, owned by Jacob Bursk, was located on the old Pottawatomie trail about three-fourths of a mile east of Syracuse. The site of this shop is still marked by a clump of trees, and scraps of iron used in the old place may still be found there. Bursk did much work for the emigrants and freighters. It is said that they kept him on the jump from morning till night as long as he remained. During the summer the lightning had been unusually severe, two men having been killed within a half mile of Bursk's shop, and Bursk decided to return to Ohio, where the lightning was not so freakish.

In 1860, G. M. Clem, a Virginian, settled on the upper Independence and opened a shop in which he did work for neighbors in both Doniphan and Atchison counties. The shop was situated on the northeast corner of the place, just one-half mile east of where the Mt. Vernon

school house now stands. For many years it was a land mark. Every neighbor's house was referred to as being situated so many miles in this or that direction from "Clem's blacksmith shop".

Later, along in the middle '60s, Francis Fry opened a shop which was continued for many years. At first it was located on the Pottawatomie trail, a little less than a mile east of the old site of the Bursk shop. Within a few years he removed the shop to his house, where he did work for the neighbors until late in the '70s. It was in this shop that the first glass ball trap ever used in the county was made. Fry was also a gunsmith.

Gray's Doniphan County history: A record of the happenings of half a hundred years. By P. L. (Patrick Leopoldo) Gray. Bendena, Kan.: The Roycroft Press, 1905.

2025 MEETINGS

*All meetings at 6:00 unless otherwise noted. **Presenters/topics/locations subject to change.***

August 28 – Trains, Trucks and Vintage Farm Equipment by Jason Midyette at his home 544 Hwy 7, Bendena. Refreshments by Anna Midyette.

September 25 – *Denton Cemetery* with Paul Roberts. Refreshments by Sharon Peuker.

October 23– Geologic History of Northeast Kansas by Betty Gleason. Jones Family Barn, 548 Hwy 7, Bendena. Refreshments by Nancy Fuhrman.

November 20 – *Abraham Lincoln* by Larry Faulkner. Jones Family Barn, 548 Hwy 7, Bendena. *Refreshment volunteer needed.*

December 1 – Soup Supper.

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
OR email your name, address and email to annam2807@gmail.com and pay by Venmo
[@doniphancountyhistory](https://www.venmo.com/doniphancountyhistory)

All Memberships are \$15.00. This is a: ☐ Renewal Membership ☐ New Membership

Name _____

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☐ Please send newsletter by email. Email address: _____s

Doniphan County Historical Society
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