Alexander William Doniphan, the Forgotten Man from Missouri

Gregory P. Maynard
Brigham Young University - Provo

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd

Part of the History Commons, and the Mormon Studies Commons

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation
https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd/4918

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.
ALEXANDER WILLIAM DONIPHAN, THE FORGOTTEN
MAN FROM MISSOURI

A Thesis
Presented to the
Department of History
Brigham Young University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Gregory P. Maynard
August 1973
This thesis, by Gregory P. Maynard, is accepted in its present form by the Department of History of Brigham Young University as satisfying the thesis requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Thomas G. Alexander, Committee Chairman

Eugene E. Campbell, Committee Member

Alma P. Burton, Committee Member

Date: July 31, 1973

Ted J. Warner, Department Chairman
TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS ........................................... v

PREFACE ................................................................. vi

Chapter
   I. ANCESTRY AND EDUCATION ................................. 1
      Progenitors .................................................. 1
      Childhood and Education ................................. 2
      The First Years ............................................ 4
      Conclusion .................................................. 8

   II. THE DAWN OF SUCCESS ...................................... 9
      Liberty ....................................................... 9
      Atchison .................................................... 10
      The Mormons ............................................... 11
      Legislator .................................................. 21
      Courtship and Marriage .................................. 22
      Conclusion ................................................ 23

   III. REFINER'S FIRE ............................................. 27
      The Mormon War ............................................ 27
      Defense of Smith and Rockwell ......................... 36
      Doniphan's Relationship with the Mormons ............ 41
      Conclusions ............................................... 44

   IV. THE CONQUEROR .............................................. 46
      Call to Arms ............................................... 46
      The March West ........................................... 49
      Arrival at Santa Fe ....................................... 53
      Indian Treaty ............................................. 56
      On to Brazito ............................................. 59
      March to Chihuahua ....................................... 63
      Ordered Home .............................................. 67
      Significance ............................................... 71
      Conclusion ................................................ 73

   V. LIFE IN LIBERTY ............................................. 75
      Legal Successes ........................................... 75
      Business .................................................... 78
      Education .................................................. 79

iii
## Chapter

| Family Tragedy | 82 |
| Conclusion     | 84 |

### VI. POLITICKING AND CIVIL WAR

| Offices Declined | 86 |
| Senatorial Candidate | 89 |
| Kansas | 91 |
| Peace Convention | 94 |
| State Convention | 98 |
| Civil War | 100 |
| Move to St. Louis | 102 |
| Conclusion | 104 |

### VII. THE LAST YEARS

| Return to Western Missouri | 107 |
| Poor Health | 110 |
| His Rhetoric | 111 |
| Death | 114 |
| Conclusion | 115 |

### VIII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

| 118 |

### APPENDIX A

| 121 |

### APPENDIX B

| 122 |

### APPENDIX C

| 123 |

### WORKS CITED

| 125 |
# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>A. W. Doniphan</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Alexander William Doniphan and Elizabeth Jane Thornton</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>John Thornton Doniphan and Alexander William Doniphan Jr.</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Liberty, Missouri about 1850 and Savings Bank in Richmond, Missouri-Doniphan's Law Office Upstairs</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Doniphan Monument and Doniphan Statue</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PREFACE

Few men on the Missouri frontier in the nineteenth century exemplified the quality of character, integrity, as well as did Alexander William Doniphan. Whether in his capacity as a lawyer, soldier, legislator or friend, he remained steadfast to his beliefs and principles, though often in the minority.

Several books have been written about Doniphan's military experiences during the Mexican War. But surprisingly this is the only part of his life which so far has been reported in great detail. The other aspects of his career have been treated only in a sketchy manner. It is therefore the purpose of this paper to present in greater detail those segments of Doniphan's career which have been neglected for the most part. While the author realizes his limited ability at the present time to do complete justice to the history of Alexander W. Doniphan, this paper will bring together and integrate for the first time the commonly known and the little known facts about his life. Personal letters, newspapers, journals, public documents and public addresses have been searched carefully in an effort to extract the facts and character traits which best portrayed the man.

Although the major contribution of this paper will be the synthesis of the life and career of Doniphan, two aspects of his life will be presented in much greater detail than heretofore reported. These areas will deal with Doniphan's relationship with the Latter-day Saints or Mormons in the late 1830's and his activities during the Civil
War. His biographers to date have totally neglected these two areas which play such a vital role in the unveiling of the character of this man.

Although this biographer may be sympathetic with his subject, every effort has been made to present a balanced interpretation of the facts as they are known.

Deep appreciation is extended to Dr. Thomas G. Alexander, Dr. Eugene E. Campbell, and Dr. Alma P. Burton for their helpful instruction in the preparation of this thesis; to Mr. William E. Eldridge, Judge R. Kenneth Elliott, Dr. Robert J. Mathews, and Dr. Martin Mayes for unselfishly sharing their own research to make this thesis possible; to Mr. and Mrs. John Dittmore who graciously provided me with room and board during my three weeks in Missouri; to Mr. Russell Dye, Mrs. Clara Chensault, Miss Louise Darneal, Mrs. Charles C. Calvert and Mrs. Charles P. Hough for contributing to my research; to Mr. and Mrs. C. Don Bishop, Mr. Parley R. Neiley, Mr. Larry C. Porter, and Mr. Don Howard for aiding in the research; to Deborah Maynard, my wife and typist for suffering through this tedious project.

Appreciation is also expressed to the following who contributed in locating information: Historical Department of the L.D.S. Church, Salt Lake City, the Brigham Young University Library, the William Jewell College Library, the Kansas City Library, the Department of History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the State Historical Society of Missouri, the Missouri Historical Society, the Utah State Historical Society, the Western Historical Manuscript Collection State Historical Society Manuscripts, and the Office of Secretary of State, Missouri.
CHAPTER I

ANCESTRY AND EARLY YEARS

Progenitors

By family tradition, the name of Doniphan is a corruption of the Spanish name Don Alfonso Iphan. A young cavalier by that name served under Ferdinand and Isabella at the Battle of Grenada in January, 1492. For his gallantry on the field in defeating the Moors, he was knighted. However, when he joined the Protestant movement, he was forced to leave Spain because of the Inquisition. Traveling by way of Holland and England, he settled in Scotland. About 1674, Sir Alexander Doniphan, a descendant of Don Alfonso Iphan, emigrated to Virginia. He married Margaret Mott, a Scottish heiress, and they settled in Richmond County, Virginia. Two of their six children were direct progenitors of Alexander William Doniphan, the subject of this study: His great-grandfather on his father's side being Mott Doniphan, who married Anne Anderson. Their son, Alexander, married and had a son named Joseph. Joseph married Anne F. Smith whose father was William Smith. In 1773, William had married Elizabeth Doniphan, the daughter of Alexander Doniphan and Mary Waugh. Alexander was Mott Doniphan's brother.¹

While the early family history is very sketchy, some facts are known about the life of Alexander William Doniphan's father, Joseph.

¹Montgomery Smith Price, The Sydney-Smith and Clagett-Price Genealogy (Strasburg: Shenandoah Publishing House, 1927), pp. 47-100. (See Appendix A)
Born about 1764, Joseph was a native of what is now King George County, Virginia. Preferring adventure in the western wilderness to the genteel life in Virginia, he accompanied Daniel Boone into Kentucky about 1779. There in Boonsborough, at the request of the settlers, he taught perhaps the first organized school in Kentucky. In early 1781, he returned to Virginia. His return was possibly precipitated by a patriotic urge, for he joined the Continental Army just prior to the siege of Yorktown in October of that year. Shortly after the war's end, Joseph was attracted to Anne F. Smith, a sprightly and intellectual second cousin. They were married about 1785. After five years in Virginia, the attraction of the rich soil further west precipitated the removal of the family to Mason County, Kentucky. Hard work and sacrifice were rewarded by prosperity.

Childhood and Education

There in Kentucky on July 9, 1808, the last of seven children was born to Joseph and Anne. They named him after his two grandfathers, Alexander and William. While little is known about his early childhood, some details have been recorded. He was only four years old when his father died on March 12, 1813. His father in his will bequeathed his young son, William, a Negro boy named Steven and half the land of

---

2 Sketch of Life of A. W. Doniphan, 187, Missouri Historical Society, Doniphan Papers, p. 2. (Hereafter cited as Sketch)

3 Doniphan to Cousin Emma, Richmond, 1875. State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia.
the farm. The education of young Alexander rested with his mother until he was eight years old. At that time, he was sent to live with an older brother George because the opportunity to attend school was rare in Mason County.

While living with his brother in Augusta, about fifteen miles away from his home, Alexander was placed under the instruction of Richard Keene, "... a learned but eccentric Irishman." It was Keene who helped young Doniphan overcome his clumsiness of expression by exposing him to the works of the great poets. Keene believed that, "Through knowledge of the poets could alone come the precise meaning of words, the perfect pronunciation of them, the melody of speech, and the majestic declamation of the orator." The youthful Doniphan took his advice and carefully studied their works. The results will be mentioned later, but Doniphan never ceased to express his gratitude to Mr. Keene.

Entering Augusta College at fourteen, Alexander came under the influence of two men who were also to have considerable impact upon his education: Dr. John Price Durbin, a suave and refined man, and Dr. Henry Bidleman Bascom, a fiery Methodist preacher. In the former, Alexander admired the man and loved the friend, while in the latter, he

4G. Glen Clift, History of Maysville and Mason County (2 vols.; Lexington: Transylvania Printing Co., 1936), I; 411. His father was sheriff of Mason County at the time of his death (Sketch, p. 2).

5Sketch, p. 2.

saw the orator and felt the impact of his sermons upon his soul.  

After four years of study in the classics, Alexander graduated with distinction at the early age of eighteen. Being early inclined to study law and encouraged by his mother, Alexander spent eight months of methodic and diligent study in ancient and modern literature before entering the law office of Martin P. Marshall of Augusta, the brother of the famous Supreme Court justice, John Marshall. In the opinion of Doniphan, "His legal preceptor was one of the most learned and able of all the members of the famous Marshall family."  

Marshall's program of study was rigorous and required two years for Doniphan to complete:

First of all he required his pupil to read and carefully study portions of the classical authors of the English language. . . . It was, as Mr. Marshall phrased it, to fructify and chasten the pupil's imagination and give him wings for more arduous flights. Secondly, he required him to read the histories of England and America and cognate works, so that he might see, historically, the evolution of our system of law. And, thirdly, he required of him a most careful study of those text-books of the law which were then considered necessary in order to admission to practice.

Doniphan's keen mind grasped each concept and in 1829 he passed his bar examinations and was licensed to practice law in Ohio and Kentucky.

The First Years

Searching for a place to locate his new practice, Alexander toured the southwestern states for several months before deciding upon western Missouri. Arriving in St. Louis in March, 1830, he was examined by the Supreme Court at Fayette and admitted to the Missouri Bar in April. On the 19th of that month, he settled in Lexington.

7 Ibid, p. 21 8 Ibid 9 Ibid 10 Sketch, p. 3.
In 1830, Lexington was one of the more populous cities in Missouri, boasting a population of nearly two thousand. It was also an important trade center, being one of the towns from which merchants heading for Santa Fe and New Mexico outfitted themselves with merchandise, mules, oxen and wagon. Also, in 1831, Lafayette County became the center of the new fifth judicial district.

Doniphan's decision to establish his practice on the Missouri frontier was probably motivated by the fact that his home community was already well supplied with established lawyers. The frontier offered him a chance to rise to prominence quickly. However, for every opportunity there was a hazard. Many young hopeful lawyers never became active practitioners. Some were poorly prepared to meet the rigors of the western circuit life and others failed because of a lack of motivation. However, such was not the case with Doniphan. He was better educated and versed in his profession than most young hopefuls. In addition, he had developed character traits during his schooling which ably prepared him for the rigors of frontier law. The orations of Dr. Bascom had impressed upon him the need for moral integrity, while years of study established within him a habit for industry. Besides these traits, he possessed an absorbing love for literature and knowledge in general. All these qualities and many more developed over the years helped Alexander become successful.

---


13Doniphan to Emma, Richmond, 1875.
Doniphan dates his career as beginning from "the second day" after his location in Lexington. Undoubtedly, his practice extended beyond the community, for in those days lawyers followed the judge around the circuit. In this case, it extended from Calloway and Cole Counties "on both sides of the river to the western boundary," an area in excess of 2,500 square miles.

In riding the circuit, Doniphan experienced the physical discomforts of western travel. Journeying on horseback around the circuit two or three times a year, he probably carried his law books, papers and clothing in saddle bags and slept in crowded beds with fellow lawyers or strangers. Dust, snow, rain, mud and swollen streams were obstacles which had to be overcome. Despite the many discomforts, there were moments of pleasure. For instance, in an 1872 address to the people of Clay County, Doniphan reflected upon one of these moments and described a typical end to a day's journey.

Many charming pictures float through my grateful memory of nights enjoyed in the humble homes of the early frontiersmen. Nearing the close of a weary day's travel on horseback, nothing was more cheering than the sight of the curling smoke of a cabin, with no fear of refusal—even to a stranger. Alighting, most probably the sturdy host was preparing his gun, ramrod and ammunition for the morrow's hunt. The bright, cheery housewife, in homespun dress, often of the inevitable Tennessee stripe, would be busily engaged in preparing the evening meal for the returned hunter. Often have I met with the accident of a dinner as the juicy venison ribs were roasting before a bright, wood fire in the ample fire place. . . . If the host was from Tennessee—as was often the case—he would easily glide into a social chat by asking about General Jackson, [then President] . . . We were not then a nation of readers; few journals reached the country;—hence the inquiries. It would have been unkind not to have gratified their patriotic anxiety, and I never failed to do so, either from my own limited store of reliable information, or more frequently, from the ample stores of youthful imagination. The rule was: horse well cared for, comfortable

---

14 Sketch, p. 3. 15 Ibid.
night, smoking breakfast, and nothing ever to pay. Indeed, the most delicate diplomacy was required in making the offer so as to avoid giving offense to your generous entertainer. For twenty years after my arrival, I do not remember paying a bill at a farm house.  

Renewing his travels, Doniphan would journey to the next court which might be held in someone's home, a tavern or in a small log courthouse. The first order of business would be the appointment of a clerk, if the county were new, and then the admission of any new lawyers. As in the case of the August term 1830, when on the motion of William T. Wood, David R. Atchison, Thomas J. Givens, Alexander W. Doniphan and John Wilson were admitted to practice as attorneys and counsellors at law in Clay County.

Doniphan, like any western lawyer, had to be able to handle any kind of case be it criminal, probate, commercial or real estate law. During the forty-six years that Doniphan was to practice law, he would handle almost every kind of case conceivable: From delayed shipments of hogs to claims of promissory notes, from claims to land titles to legal rights to slaves, and from common theft to murder.

During Doniphan's first year of practice, he was called on to assist Abiel Leonard in the defense of a criminal case. As Alexander had never even witnessed a trial for murder, he modestly tried to

---


18 Record Book 2, Clay County, Missouri Circuit Court, Liberty, p. 213.

19 Missouri, Missouri Reports, Reports of Cases Argued and Delivered in the Supreme Court of Missouri, Vols., VII-LXII, 1933-1876.
decline. However, under the encouragement and insistence of Leonard, he agreed to serve. Those who witnessed the case stated that "His conduct in this trial was modest, and gave evidence of the dawning of the reputation as a criminal lawyer which he afterward attained."  

Conclusion

Because the early years of development and training are so significant in the shaping of the character of a child, Doniphan was fortunate to have had such able parents and instructors. Their actions and teachings established a model by which he could judge his actions and thus be able to meet the physical and moral challenges he faced during his adult life.

20 Sketch, p. 4.

21 The History of Clinton County Missouri (St. Joseph: National Historical Co., 1881), p. 450. (Doniphan wrote the chapter on the Bench and Bar, #26).
CHAPTER II

THE DAWN OF SUCCESS

Liberty

In May of 1833, Doniphan moved to Liberty, Clay County, Missouri. He stated his reasons for moving as "the prospect of the early annexation of the Platte County to the State and growth of Jackson County . . ."¹ Although Liberty's population numbered less than a thousand, the social atmosphere was perhaps also more inviting to the young, ambitious and well educated Doniphan. Highlighting the social atmosphere were the officers, their wives, and daughters of the nearby Fort Leavenworth. They often came to Liberty to shop or attend the public amusements, balls and parties. Their brilliance combined with the local intellect, which was above the norm on the frontier, made Liberty an exceptionally charming place.² However, even in such an elegant society, Doniphan was imposing and magnificent in appearance: He stood six feet, four inches in height. His frame, while full, was not obese. His complexion was fair and delicate. Sandy hair outlined his face which many felt approached the Grecian ideal except for an aquiline nose. His eyes were a bright hazel. Such a physical appearance was likely to stand out in any society.³

Atchison

In establishing his practice in Liberty, Doniphan joined David Rice Atchison, Amos Reese and other prominent jurists. While Doniphan and Atchison kept an office together, they never actually became partners. However, they were very warm personal friends although of opposite political views. Of that difference, Doniphan stated, "He was a strong States' Rights Democrat, while I was a Whig of the most orthodox school." Despite political differences, Alexander also stated that he "deemed him [Atchison] one of the best lawyers, and consulted with him more frequently than I did anyone else." After Atchison was made a judge, Doniphan "practiced before him in all the courts during the whole time that he was judge." During one of their travels together around the circuit in October 1843, news reached Atchison that Governor Thomas C. Reynolds had appointed him to fill the vacant seat created by the death of Senator Lewis F. Linn. Atchison was hesitant, but Doniphan offered him this advise:

Judge, fortune does not shower her favors on us very often, and a man should not turn his plate bottom upwards when it does happen, but should turn the right side up and catch all he can. Your refusal will mortify Governor Reynolds, as you have some political ambition, you ought to accept. It is your duty to do it. We have never had any senator from the western half of the state.7

Atchison took Doniphan's advice and went on to become a successful politician.

4History of Clinton County, p. 441.
One note of humor in association with the Doniphan-Atchison relationship occurred on February 1, 1834. During a game of cards called "Bragg", the sheriff came in and caught them in the act of betting "a large sum of money," twenty-five cents. As gambling was illegal, they were brought to trial and fined $5.25 each by Amos Reese.\(^8\)

The location of the office which Doniphan and Atchison shared is not known but it is certain that they had at their disposal the work of Blackstone, Kent, Chitty and other available reports on British and American law. It is also probable that they took care of their own correspondence and legal papers, unless they had students studying under their direction.\(^9\) Such a description is a far cry from today's law offices which are crowded with law books and secretaries.

The Mormons

Not long after his move to Liberty, Doniphan, for a second time came into contact with members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or Mormons. His first acquaintance with them had occurred in 1831. On that occasion, he had traveled to Independence in order to have a suit made in the latest eastern style at the hands of a Mormon missionary named Peter Whitmer.\(^10\) Now, in 1833, the Mormons were coming to him. Actually, they approached Doniphan and three other prominent Clay County lawyers, as they attended court in Independence.\(^11\) Recent

---

\(^8\) Record Book 2, Circuit Court, Liberty, p. 126.

\(^9\) English, "Pioneer Lawyer", p. 100.


\(^11\) Amos Reese, William T. Wood and David Rice Atchison were the other lawyers.
trouble between the citizens of Jackson County and the Mormons had precipitated this action.

The events which led to these difficulties began with the arrival in Missouri of five Mormon missionaries sent in late 1830 to preach to the Indians and to locate a place for members of their rapidly growing church to settle. While the physical features and agricultural potential of Jackson County appealed to them, the inhabitants did not. On May 7, 1831, Oliver Cowdry, one of the missionaries, wrote Joseph Smith, their church leader, and informed him of their labors and findings. 12 In mid-July, Joseph Smith and several other Latter-day Saints arrived in Independence. They concurred with Oliver's opinion of the populace:

But our reflections were many, coming as we had from a highly cultivated state of society in the east, and standing now upon the confines or western limits of the United States, and, looking into the vast wilderness of those that sat in darkness; how natural it was to observe the degradation, leanness of intellect, ferocity, and jealousy of a people that were nearly a century behind the times, and to feel for those who roamed about without benefit of civilization, refinement, or religion. . . . 13

Such an attitude among the Mormons coupled with their belief that western Missouri was their land of promise, 14 was destined to arouse the fears and prejudices of the local inhabitants.

Commenting on the trouble which arose between the Latter-day Saints and the people of Jackson County, Doniphan remarked in 1881:


13 DHC, I, 189. 14 Ibid.
. . . the real objections to the Mormons were their denunciation
of slavery, and the objections slave holders had to having so
large a settlement of anti-slavery people in their midst, and
also to their acquiring such a large amount of land, which then
belonged to the government, and subject to pre-emption. From
these and other causes a very bitter feeling was engendered
between the Mormons and citizens, which culminated in the month
of July, 1833, when a public meeting was held at the court house
in Independence, at which it was resolved to tear down the Mormon
printing establishment, [Evening and Morning Star] which resolve
was immediately carried out. The mob also committed numerous
other outrages, the most brutal of which was the tarring and
feathering of Bishop Partridge. . . . The Mormons made but little
if any resistance, but submitted to the inevitable, and agreed
not to establish another paper, and there was an apparent tran-
quility existing until about the first of the following
November . . . 15

It was during this period of tranquility, that the Mormons had
contacted the four lawyers in response to Governor Daniel Dunklin's
suggestion that they seek redress in the courts. Responding to the
Mormon's appeal by letter on October 30, 1833, the lawyers agreed to
file the suits if the Latter-day Saints would agree to pay them each
two-hundred and fifty dollars. The fee was high because as the letter
stated:

We have been doing a practice here among these people, to a
considerable extent, and by this engagement we expect to lose
the greatest part of it . . .

If the fee was not agreeable, they asked to be notified by letter
immediately,

. . . for we can be engaged on the opposite side in all proba-
bility. We prefer to bring your suits, as we have been
threatened by the mob, we wish to show them we disregard their
empty bravadoes.16

The Mormons accepted the offer, hopeful that it might be a means in

15Saint's Herald, XXVIII, 230. Apparently the Mormons also
agreed to leave Jackson County by 1 April 1834.

16DHC, I, 425.
bringing about the desired results of redress and restitution. William W. Phelps and Bishop William Partridge gave notes which were endorsed by Gilbert, Whitney and Co., to secure the services of the lawyers.

Following their lawyer's advice that they protect themselves, the Latter-day Saints began to arm. Upon learning that the Mormons were intending to file suit in the courts and that they were petitioning the Governor for aid, the Jackson Countians reacted violently. One of the local citizens reported the events as follows:

It was found not only that the Mormons did not intend to move according to agreement, but that they were arming themselves, and threatened to kill if they should be molested. This provoked some of the more wild and ungodly among us to improper acts of violence, such as breaking in upon Mormon houses, tearing off coverings, & c. On this the Mormons began to muster, and exhibit military preparations.

In the rapid course of events which followed, the Mormon settlement of Whitmer on the Big Blue was attacked. The Mormons retaliated and several people were killed on both sides. Finally, by November, the Militia was called out under the direction of Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Pitcher. Seeing that they were greatly outnumbered, the Mormons surrendered and gave up their arms as ordered. Unarmed, they became victims of a systematic plan of harassment which eventually forced their removal from Jackson County in late November. Crossing the Missouri River, most of the exiles fled to Clay County, where they were well received.


Learning of the Mormon's expulsion from Jackson County, the Governor had the Attorney-General, Robert W. Wells, send a message to the Saints through their lawyers, Doniphan and Atchison. The letter stated that if the Mormons wished to be re-possessed of their property, an adequate force would be sent if they officially requested it. In the meantime they should organize themselves into a "regular company of militia." A few days later, Doniphan learned in a conversation with the Attorney-General that the Governor had the intention of ordering a court of inquiry. Feeling that an immediate court of inquiry would not be to their advantage because of the scattered state of their witnesses, the Mormons asked the Governor for a delay. The end of February was agreed to as the date for the court to convene.

On February 23rd, the Mormons who had been subpoenaed in behalf of the State, left Liberty under the protection of the "Liberty Blues," commanded by Captain David R. Atchison. Doniphan may have accompanied them but no record is known that he did. In any event, after their arrival in Independence, the Mormons were informed by District Attorney Reese and Attorney-General Wells, "that all hope of criminal prosecutions were at an end." Mobs were gathering and threatening violence if any inquiry were held. Outnumbered, Atchison and the Mormons returned to Clay County.

Frustrated in their attempts at legal redress locally, the Saints appealed to the President of the United States. However, he declined taking any action until requested to do so by Governor Dunklin, which

---

the latter did not deem necessary. In addition to the letter to the President, the Saints informed the Governor on April 24th that they were now ready to follow his suggestion and "organize according to law." They requested that he issue an order for the return of their arms taken in November by Lieutenant Colonel Pitcher. If these arms were not returned, the Saints would apply for public arms. However, because this latter action might cause much commotion among the inhabitants, they preferred to regain their own arms. They also informed the Governor that they had several hundred friends coming to Missouri sometime that summer. Governor Dunklin issued the request order but the Saints never got their arms back, as the local authorities were sympathetic with their fellow Missourians.

Further efforts to get the Governor to take some positive action occurred in June when Doniphan and Atchison requested Colonel John Thornton, a prominent citizen of Liberty, to write the Governor and suggest that he support a compromise whereby the Mormons and the Missourians would be assigned separate territories and confine their members within its limits except for the use of public roads. The Governor responded on June 6th and agreed that such a proposal might serve as one solution to the problem. He in turn suggested several others, one being that the Mormons sell out. In general, he remained vague and elusive in committing himself to supporting any action, fearing to "embarrass" his neutral position. Instead, he appointed Thornton to act as aid to the Commander-in-Chief in the hope that he, without committing himself or the Governor, could arrive at a peaceable

---

compromise.\textsuperscript{26}

In the meantime, Judge John F. Ryland called a meeting for the 16th of June between the Mormons and Jackson citizens in order to air their differences and hopefully arrive at a solution. The Mormons agreed to attend but informed Doniphan and Atchison to make it known to the Judge that they would not consider selling their land. About eight hundred to a thousand people assembled at the courthouse to witness the meeting. A delegation from Independence presented a proposition either to buy all the Mormon property or to sell out to the Mormons within thirty days. A debate followed. Joseph Thorp, a citizen of Clay, reported the event as follows:

They wrangled and jawed till Colonel Doniphan, who had been a listener and thought their proposition rather too stringent, arose and began to shove up his sleeves (his manner when a little warmed up), and commenced his remarks in a rather excited tone, when the chairman or someone called him to order, saying he was giving too strong vent to his feelings; that it was calculated to raise an excitement in the crowd, whose feelings were then almost ready to boil over. The Colonel pulled his sleeve up a little higher and told them 'that was what he got up for—to give vent to his feelings.'

I wish I could give his speech, but if I recollect, he advocated the right of citizen and individual liberty, with individual responsibility, and was opposed to 'Judge Lynch' and mob violence; was in favor of law and order; the law was made for the punishment of evil doers and to protect the law abiding and should be strictly enforced.\textsuperscript{27}

After Doniphan had concluded his remarks, someone arose and declared that "The Mormons have lived long enough in Clay County; and they must either clear out, or be cleared out."\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{26}\textit{Ibid}, p. 87.

\textsuperscript{27}Joseph Thorp, \textit{Early Days in the West} (Liberty: Irving Gilmer, Pub., 1924), p. 80.

\textsuperscript{28}DHC, II, 97.
Joel Turnham, the moderator, responded by saying: "Let us be republicans; let us honor our country, and not disgrace it like Jackson County. For God's sake don't disfranchise or drive away the Mormons. They are better citizens than many of the old inhabitants." Doniphan then exclaimed:

That's a fact, and as the Mormons have armed themselves, if they don't fight they are cowards. I love to hear that they have brethren coming to their assistance. Greater love can no man show, than he who lays down his life for his brethren.

About this point, pistols were cocked and knives unsheathed. But before physical violence errupted, someone cried from the door, "a man stabbed." The meeting instantly came to an end as all rushed outside to see if it had been a Mormon. To the disappointment of many, it had involved only two Missourians.

A week after the above meeting broke up, Joseph Smith and about two hundred armed Saints from Ohio camped between the Little and Big Fishing Rivers. Their presence in Missouri had been known for several days and a force of Missourians was gathering to attack them if they tried to enter Liberty. On the night of 19 June, as the mob approached the Mormon camp, a violent storm developed and prevented the two forces from making contact.

---

29Ibid, pp. 97-98.

30Ibid, pp. 98. On 24 February 1834, Joseph Smith reported receiving a revelation from God explaining the cause of the Mormon persecutions in Missouri and calling upon the members in Ohio and elsewhere to organize into companies and march to the relief of their brethren in Missouri. These companies were called Zion's Camp. (See Doctrine and Covenants, Section 103) (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1963), pp. 180-82.

31Ibid.
On June 23rd, David Atchison and several other gentlemen from Clay County rode out to meet the approaching Mormons. About six miles from town, they encountered Joseph Smith and his party. Informed that the feeling of the people was against their entry, Joseph turned his force to the left and camped near Rush Creek. The next day cholera broke out among the Mormons. With most of his force sick and desiring to quiet the fears and prejudices of the Clay citizens, Joseph sent a letter to Thornton, Doniphan, and Atchison, informing them he had disbanded his force.  

On the departure of the Mormon force, the difficulties between the Mormons and the Missourians subsided for about two years. However, by June of 1836, difficulties had again risen to a point where action was required. On June 19th, a public meeting was held during which Doniphan, Atchison, Thornton and seven other men were appointed to draft a resolution asking the Mormons to leave the county before violence erupted. The report of the committee cited five causes for the proposed removal: 1) The rapid increase in Mormon immigration, 2) Their large purchases of land, 3) Their imprudent remarks about their divine right to the land, 4) Their association with the Indians, and 5) Their eastern attitudes, especially toward slavery.

Several days later, the Mormons responded by denying the charges but they agreed to move at the first opportunity. Offering to help the Mormons locate a new place for settlement, the citizens of Clay County recommended that the Saints look into the possibility of locating in the sparsely settled northern part of Ray County. This the Mormons did, and in November they petitioned the State Legislature to create a new

---

county. Their petition was presented on November 29th by Doniphan who had put aside his legal practice to run for the State Legislature and had been elected to the House that fall. He and representatives Head of Randolph County and Noland of Jackson County were appointed to study the matter. In a letter dated January 8, 1837, Jefferson City, Doniphan wrote William W. Phelps explaining the difficulties he had encountered in gaining passage of the Mormon petition:

The petition of the people of North Grand River, the statements of the citizens of Ray, the influence of her members, and the prejudices of Noland, Boggs, Jeffery, McLelland, etc., were to be combated. I did not succeed as you wished or as you might have expected, in fixing the boundaries of your county. In the first place, I was forced to report a bill making two counties north of Ray, instead of one.

The bill organizing the Counties of Caldwell and Daviess was presented on December 19, 1836. Passing both the House and the Senate with minor changes, it was signed into law by Governor Lilburn W. Boggs ten days later. Caldwell County was to be the settling place for the Mormons.

---


35 Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, January 8, 1837, Historical Department of the LDS Church, Salt Lake City, Utah. (Hereafter cited as J. H.)

36 Doniphan named the counties after two personal friends of his father: Captain Matthew Caldwell, an Indian fighter from Kentucky, and Colonel Joseph H. Daviess who was killed in the Battle of Tippecanoe, 1811.
Legislator

Doniphan's activities in the State Legislature not only involved him in the creation of Caldwell and Daviess Counties but also involved him in the annexation of the Platte Territory to Missouri. On Monday, December 20, 1834, he presented "a bill to annex the country lying North of the Missouri river, and West of the present boundary of the State, to the counties of Clay and Clinton, for civil and military purposes prospectively." The bill passed successfully, thus concluding over one and one half years of personal effort.

Doniphan's first term as a legislator also involved him personally in questions concerning the constitutionality of the state laws for the establishing of roads and highways, the ratio of bank notes to the amount of gold and silver in a bank's reserve, and the establishment of an additional superintendency of Indian affairs near the western frontier of Missouri.

A man firm in his beliefs, Doniphan often voted in the minority on issues. One case while illustrating his political loyalties also has a spark of humor. Doniphan voted "nay" to a resolution to tender to President Andrew Jackson, a Democrat, the Missouri legislature's "respect, esteem and best wishes for his future happiness at his retirement." The vote was 51 in favor and 12 against.

40Ibid, p. 373.
Courtship and Marriage

Doniphan did not spend all his time reviewing bills of defending clients. He was also active in courting the charming young ladies of the county. Years later in recalling his early associations with the young women of the frontier he noted that in Missouri he discovered the reality of the poet's remarks that, "Women when unadorned were most adorned." Describing them as being typical of the "true Di Vernon type of glowing womanhood," Doniphan further commented that,

There were then two distinct sexes. The short haired, hen-crowing hybrid had not been hatched. Affinities and counterparts—the adjuncts of free-love and woman's rights to run mad—did not disturb the peaceful dreams of the ladies in those days. They only asked to be women—not spears of men.

One such charming young lady to catch Doniphan's eye was Elizabeth Jane Thornton. She was the daughter of his friend Colonel John Thornton. It was probably during his early association with the Thorntons that Alexander became acquainted with the Colonel's oldest daughter. According to Doniphan, she was beautiful, well mannered and intelligent. Her young and gentle ways won his heart and consequently they were married December 21, 1837, in a double wedding with Jane's sister Caroline and Oliver P. Moss. Doniphan loved his wife dearly and was by her side constantly except when public duty or business demanded otherwise. As one biographer said, "He knew and loved

41 Doniphan to People of Clay County, Liberty, 5 June 1872, p. 6.
43 Doniphan to Cousin, Richmond, 6 May, 1878, William H. Richardson's Journal of Doniphan's Expedition 1846-1847.
no place like home, and neither the mystery of lodges nor the joviality of clubs had any power to draw him thence.\textsuperscript{45} In describing his wife to a cousin Emma years later, Doniphan wrote:

My wife was a lovely woman: I married her the day she was seventeen; I was glad she had no more education than the Common Schools of this frontier then afforded; I desired to educate her myself—to form her mind and tastes—I was young, liberally educated, and energetic. I never read a book to myself (other than a law work) during the more than thirty years of married life; I read them all to her and with her, she often relieving me.\textsuperscript{46}

Two boys were born to the Doniphans: John Thornton on 18 September 1838 and Alexander W. Junior on 10 September 1840. Doniphan was very attached to his boys and much concerned for their education. Of them he wrote:

I may say without vanity that they were the most highly educated, the most finished educations, of any boys of that age in the state; besides the ordinary classical and scientific collegiate training, each could speak and write French, Spanish, German and Italian . . . I had provided them with private teachers from childhood and never tasked them heavily, and required them to plough and to hoe when I feared study was enervating them.\textsuperscript{47}

Conclusions

The early years of Doniphan's residence in Liberty brought him into contact with a social atmosphere which stimulated his intellect and satisfied his social needs. Lasting friendships were made with men of great ability and moral integrity such as David Rice Atchison. He also met and married his true love who would influence and support him

\textsuperscript{45}Allen, "Doniphan", p. 29.

\textsuperscript{46}Doniphan to Cousin, Richmond 1875. Richardson's Journal.

\textsuperscript{47}Ibid.
for the next thirty-six years. Also during those first years in Liberty, Doniphan established his reputation as a just and able lawyer and politician. Perhaps more important for his immediate future, Alexander became associated with the Mormons. For the next several years that association would test his reputation and show the strength of his moral integrity.
PLATE II

Alexander William Doniphan

Elizabeth Jane Thornton
John Thornton Doniphan

Alexander William Doniphan Jr.
CHAPTER III

REFINERS FIRE

The Mormon War

Shortly after the birth of John Thornton in 1838 and his return from the State Legislature, Alexander was ordered to serve in the State Militia in his capacity as Brigadier-General of the Western Division. The continued growth and increasing prosperity of the Mormons in Caldwell County and their over-flow into surrounding counties had aroused the jealousy and fears of the local Missourians. Open hostilities began on election day at Gallatin in Daviess County, August 6th, 1838, when the Mormons tried to vote and were prevented from doing so by some of the local Missourians.\(^1\) A fight broke out in which no one was seriously hurt, but rumors reached Far West that several Mormons had been killed and that their bodies would not be allowed to be removed. Joseph Smith led an armed group north to rectify events but it was soon learned that the rumors had been false. On their return, the Mormon force visited Justice Adam Black, who gave them a letter assuring them of his neutrality. However, several days later, William E. Peniston appeared before Judge Austin A. King and swore that the Mormons were armed and collecting to do violence in Daviess County. He also

saw that the Mormons had forced Adam Black to sign the above mentioned letter under the threat of violence. Black signed a similar affidavit eighteen days later. Charges were preferred against Joseph Smith and Lyman Wight, but both refused to be tried for what they considered false claims. The refusal of Smith and Wight to stand trial and the forwarding of Black's affidavit to the Governor resulted in the ordering out of the State Militia. The Governor's order cited possible Indian disturbances and the recent civil disturbances as the reason for such precautionary measures. 2

On Tuesday, September 4th, General Atchison arrived at Far West to confer with Joseph Smith. Both he and Doniphan were employed as counsel for Smith and Wight. Joseph Smith was advised to submit to trial before Judge King. That same day Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon began the study of law under the instruction of Atchison and Doniphan. 3 The trial took place on Friday the 7th. No evidence was produced against the two Mormons but Judge King bound them over for trial on a five hundred dollar bond hoping such action might appease the agitated Missourians.

Events took a turn for the worse when the Mormons seized a shipment of arms enroute to the mobs of Missourians roving the countryside.

2 Correspondence, Orders, etc., in Relation to the Recent Disturbances with the Mormons ( Jefferson City: Published by Order of the Missouri State Legislature, 1839) pp. 20-21. (Hereafter cited as Correspondence.) Cited in Leland H. Gentry, "A History of the Latter-day Saints in Northern Missouri From 1836-1839" (unpublished dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1965), p. 270.

3 DHC, III, 69. How long Smith and Rigdon studied law under Doniphan and Atchison is not known but apparently the events surrounding the Mormon's expulsion from Missouri brought an end to those studies.
Fearing this might ignite a civil war, Major-General Atchison ordered Doniphan to take a regiment of the Clay County Militia and prevent a collision between the two opposing forces. On September 12, Doniphan left his troops on the Crooked River and then went with his aid to Far West where he asked for the release of the wagon of arms and the prisoners the Mormons were keeping. The Mormons complied. On the 14th Doniphan marched his troops north into Daviess County. Near Millport he encountered a citizen force under the direction of Dr. Austin of Carroll County. They were read the order to disperse but they refused. Doniphan then proceeded to Adam-ondi-Ahman where he found a Mormon force gathered. The Mormons agreed to disperse if the Missourians would. This not being likely, Doniphan encamped between the two forces. The groups were finally dispersed after the arrival of General Atchison with additional forces. However, trouble soon broke out in Carroll County. The Mormon settlement of DeWitt was surrounded and the inhabitants forced to leave. The ousting of the Mormons from Carroll County probably encouraged the lawless citizens in Daviess County who gathered together again this time determined to drive the Mormons out. In early October Doniphan informed Joseph Smith "that a company of mobbers, eight hundred strong were marching toward Adam-ondi-Ahman." He ordered Lieutenant Colonel George M. Hinkle, a Mormon, to raise a force at Far West and march to the aid of his fellow Mormons, until he (Doniphan) could raise a reliable company from Clay County. This action was taken

4Correspondence, pp. 24-25. (Gentry,"History", p. 281)
5DHC, III, 161.
because Doniphan had found it necessary to dismiss some of his men because of their sympathies with the lawless crowd.\textsuperscript{6}

Shortly after this action by Doniphan, General Henry G. Parks returned to Daviess County. Upon receiving word of mob depredations in the Millport and Gallatin area, he ordered Colonel Lyman Wight to raise a force and put down the lawless. This they did but their success worked to their disadvantage. By seizing Gallatin and Millport, the Mormons caused rumors to spread among the Missourians that they intended to lay waste the entire northern part of the state. The Mormons on their part were sure that mob forces were planning an attack on Far West. Rumors, charges and counter charges were so numerous that it became difficult for anyone to know just what was happening.

The final spark that ignited the fire of passion which drove the Mormons from the state occurred on October 25, 1838. The Mormon Militia under Captain David W. Patten engaged a detachment of unauthorized State Militia under Captain Samuel Bogart, at Crooked River. The Mormons were responding to an attack on a Mormon settlement by Bogart on the 24th. Patten and two of his men were killed while Bogart's forces lost only one man.\textsuperscript{7}

However, rumors of a Mormon massacre and a probable march on Richmond spread swiftly. Without questioning the validity of the reports, Governor Boggs issued an "Extermination Order" on the 27th. In the meantime Generals Atchison, Doniphan and Lucas were marching north to restore order. Atchison and Doniphan had requested by letter

\textsuperscript{6}\textit{Times and Seasons} (Nauvoo, Illinois), May, 1840 Vol. I, 98.

\textsuperscript{7}\textit{Ibid}, pp. 170-71.
additional arms from Fort Leavenworth to help put down what they thought was a Mormon uprising. But the officer in charge of the U.S. Dragoons responded that he could not justify giving arms to one party to be used against the other, he was there to protect both from Indians, not to interfere in internal politics.\(^8\) It was on the 28th that news of Governor Bogg's order reached the generals. The order gave General John B. Clark overall command. No mention was made directing Lucas or Atchison to command troops; consequently, Atchison left the field and returned home.\(^9\) Doniphan continued as ordered but paid no attention to the part of the order that stated: "The Mormons must be treated as enemies, and must be exterminated or driven from the State if necessary."\(^10\) For as Doniphan stated in his report to the Governor, it was entirely illegal.\(^11\)

Proceeding toward Far West, Doniphan made camp on Shoal Creek on the 29th of October 1838. The next day he was joined by General Lucas, who was encamped on Goose Creek, one mile south of Far West. Shortly after this, Doniphan discovered an advance Mormon outpost party returning from the east. Pursuing them at full speed, he was unable to cut them off before they reached the Mormon lines. Doniphan continued

\(^8\)J. H., October 1838, p. 2.

\(^9\)Atchison's biographer explains his actions thus: "... Atchison's sense of justice as well as his close associations with the Mormons... prevented his becoming a part of such a program." (Parrish, Atchison, pp. 25-26.) Doniphan felt that the Governor had excluded Atchison because of his pro-Mormon attitude.

\(^10\)Correspondence, p. 61. (Gentry, "History", p. 420.)

his approach to within a few hundred yards of the city, where he was met by Charles C. Rich carrying a white flag. The Mormon leaders had sent Rich out in an effort to gain an interview with General Doniphan, in hopes that he could help avoid their being massacred. Doniphan calmed their fears of immediate doom and withdrew his force. About sunset, Reed Peck and John Corrill returned to Far West after a futile search for Doniphan at his camp. Alighting from his horse, Peck approached Joseph Smith and volunteered to take any message to the General. Smith asked Peck to carry to General Doniphan a message relative to establishment of a compromise. Peck immediately road off toward Doniphan's camp. As he approached, a guard informed him that the General was not receiving any communications tonight. Peck in his diary reported the events as follows:

I observed to the person addressing me that I particularly wished to see Gen'l Doniphan, and if he would take my name in, he would confer a special favor; which he reluctantly did but soon returned and conducted me to the Gen'l's tent.

After delivering Joseph's message, Peck informed the General,

That there were many individuals among the Mormons who were warmly opposed to the wicked transactions in Daviess County and the oppressive influence by which the Church is led. . . . Peck reported that Gen'l Doniphan was appraised of this fact and . . . that he was determined to have a complete reorganization of society in the county before he returned and by the suffrage of the people it should be determined whether Caldwell would still be governed by priest craft. . . . On leaving, Gen'l Doniphan directed that some of the principle men of Far West should meet him the next morning at a certain point between the army and the Mormons to see what could be done. . . . John Corrill, W. W. Phelps, John Clemenson and myself were named by Gen'l Doniphan and Seymour Brunson and George H. Hinkel [sic] were added to the number by Joseph Smith.12

12 Reed Peck, Diary, Special Collections B.Y.U. Library, pp. 103-109.
The next day, Peck, Hinkle, Corrill, Phelps and Morrison met with Doniphan as arranged. However, General Lucas, superior to Doniphan in rank, took charge. He informed the peace committee that he was not prepared to negotiate until he received an official copy of the Governor's order. Both groups returned to their respective camps. Later in the morning, Hinkle sent word to Lucas asking for an interview. At two in the afternoon, Lucas, his staff and Brigadier-Generals Wilson, Doniphan, and Graham met with Hinkle. Lucas presented Hinkle with a copy of the Governor's orders and issued the following terms for ending the war. They were as follows:

1. To give up their leaders to be tried and punished.
2. To make an appropriation of their property, all who had taken up arms, to the payment of their debts, and indemnity for the damage done by them.
3. That the balance should leave the state, and be protected out by the militia, but to be permitted to remain under protection until further orders were received from the Commander-in-Chief.
4. To give up their arms of every description to be received for.

Lucas emphasized that if these terms were not agreed to within one hour, Far West would be attacked. Hinkle requested a delay until morning which was granted provided Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Lyman Wight, Parley P. Pratt and George Robinson were delivered as "hostages" in one hour. Hinkle agreed and both sides returned to their camps.

Hinkle apparently informed Joseph Smith only in part as to what was intended by the negotiations. Smith was led to believe that Lucas wished to speak with him and the others. Meanwhile, Lucas was busy preparing his troops to march on Far West. Doniphan and his men were

---

to form their line on the south side of Far West. They were "to parade
on foot and to form on the left of General Parks." The report of a
cannon was to be their signal to advance.

As the appointed time approached, Lucas marched his force num-
bering about eighteen hundred toward Far West. Enroute, they met
Hinkle and the prospective hostages who were surrounded and taken into
custody amid whooping and yelling. Smith and his associates were
greatly surprised at this turn of events. He wrote:

But judge of my surprise, when, instead of being treated
with that respect which is due from one citizen to another,
we were taken as prisoners of war, and treated with the
utmost contempt. The officers would not converse with us,
and the soldiers, almost to a man, insulted us as much as
they felt disposed, breathing out threats against me and
my companions.16

The next day, November 1, 1838, the Mormons in Far West were
forced to surrender. Hinkle marched the Mormon's Caldwell Militia out
and formed a hollow square into which they placed their weapons.
Hinkle then approached Doniphan and surrendered to the General his
sword and pistols.17 Lucas then gave orders to search for any
unaccounted for weapons. Far West was then ransacked and the inhabit-
ants threatened or beaten.18 Satisfied that all weapons had been
surrendered or confiscated, the militia was ordered back to camp. That
night Lucas convened a court-martial and the five prisoners were found
guilty of treason in spite of the objections of Doniphan, the only
lawyer present. He declared the proceedings as "illegal as hell"


17History of Clay and Platte Counties Missouri (St. Louis:

because civilians were not subject to military law unless martial law was in force, which in this case it was not. In addition he challenged the make-up of the court as there was a mixture of military and civilian personnel. Despite his objections, Doniphan received the following order from Lucas early the next morning.

Sir: you will take Joseph Smith and the other prisoners into the public square of Far West, and shoot them at 9 o'clock to-morrow morning.

Upon receipt of this order, General Doniphan deliberated and then replied:

It is cold-blooded murder. I will not obey your order. My brigade shall march for Liberty tomorrow morning, at 8 o'clock; and if you execute these men, I will hold you responsible before an earthly tribunal, so help me God.\(^{19}\)

Shortly after he had responded to General Lucas's order, Doniphan visited the prisoners to inform them of the preceding events. Speaking with Lyman Wight he said, "Colonel the decision is a hard one, and I have washed my hands against such cool and deliberate murder."\(^ {20}\) He wished the prisoners well and returned to his tent. At dawn, he marched his men toward Clay County as he had promised. His departure threw the whole camp into confusion and consternation. Lucas, knowing Doniphan to be a man of his word and probably fearing the consequences of his unauthorized action, ordered the prisoners taken to Jackson County, where they were to be held until a civil trial took place.\(^ {21}\)

\(^ {19}\)\(\text{DHC, III, 190.}\) \(^ {20}\)\(\text{DHC, III, 446.}\)

\(^ {21}\)Doniphan's bold stand against a superior officer can be explained by two facts: 1) Doniphan's own personal integrity would not allow him to take part in such a "cold blooded murder", and 2) Lucas was acting without proper authority. He was not ordered to command troops in the Governor's original order. In addition, he was not
Defense of Smith and Rockwell

Joseph Smith and his companions were first taken to Independence and then to Richmond, where Doniphan was employed to defend them during their trial which began on the 12th of November 1838. However, it dragged on for several weeks. Doniphan became very frustrated with the proceedings for either defense witnesses were put in jail or were not allowed to testify. After several attempts to bring witnesses before the bar, Judge King asked if the Mormons were not going to introduce some witnesses. Again they produced a witness but the State's attorney objected to his being sworn because this was only a preliminary hearing. Doniphan arose and said:

He would be ______ if the witness should not be sworn, and that it was a damned shame that these defendants should be treated in this manner, -- that they could not be permitted to get one witness before the court, whilst all their witnesses, even forty at a time, have been taken by force of arms and thrust into the damned 'bull pen' in order to prevent them from giving their testimony.23

Alexander then sat down and the Judge allowed the witness to be sworn and enter his testimony. But before he could finish, he was removed by force. Doniphan thereupon advised his defendants not to bring any more witnesses in or there would not be anyone left for the final trial.

22Joseph was apparently dissatisfied with his lawyers for in a letter to his wife Emma dated Richmond, 12 November 1838, Joseph states: "The trial will begin today for some of us. Lawyer Reese, and we expect Doniphan, will plead our cause. We could get no others in time for the trial. They are able men and will do well no doubt." Perhaps Joseph was referring to getting additional lawyers when he mentioned others, instead of expressing dissatisfaction. (Rollin J. Britton, "Early Days on the Grand River and the Mormon War", Missouri Historical Review Vol. XIV (Columbia: Missouri Historical Society, 1920), p. 95.) Joseph's remarks also reflect the abuse to which he and the other had been subjected.

23DHC, III, 419.
As the hearing continued, several excommunicated members of the Mormon church were interviewed. Their testimony presented the church as a temporal organization whose goal was to subdue the nations of the earth. After their testimony, Judge King asked one of the prisoners if the Mormons believed in Daniel's prophecy about God setting up a kingdom which would break in pieces all other kingdoms and stand forever. When the answer was in the affirmative, King turned to the clerk and told him to record that as it made a good point for treason. Thereupon Doniphan remarked, "Judge, you better make the Bible treason." King made no reply but continued the hearing. Alexander then noted to his clients that a cohort of angels could come down and declare them innocent and it would make no difference to Judge King for he was determined to put them in jail. King did just that. He found Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, Lyman Wight, Alexander McRea, Caleb Baldwin, and Sidney Rigdon guilty of high treason against the State. There being no jail in Caldwell or Daviess Counties, the prisoners were ordered to be held in jail at Liberty, Clay County.

On 28 November, Edward Partridge and his wife Lydia executed a deed for 1,008.58 acres of Jackson County land to Doniphan and Amos Reese in payment for legal services to the Mormons amounting to nearly five thousand dollars. While it was a common practice to accept land


26DHC, III, 213. King's antagonism toward the Mormons was possibly a result of the death of his brother-in-law, Hugh Brazaele during the Jackson County War.

as payment for debt, it would have been interesting to have been able to have witnessed Doniphan's reaction to the statement made by Joseph Smith sometime during the five months that the latter was in the Liberty Jail. On that occasion, Doniphan had the sheriff bring Smith to his office for consultation about his defense. While there Smith overheard a conversation between Doniphan and a Jackson County client. The man offered Alexander land in payment for the fee which was due. Doniphan told the man he would have to consult his absent partner James Baldwin before deciding. After the man's retirement, Joseph Smith offered this advice:

Doniphan, I advise you not to take that Jackson County land in payment of the debt. God's wrath hangs over Jackson County. God's people have been ruthlessly driven from it, and you will live to see the day when it will be visited by fire and sword. The Lord of Hosts will sweep it with the besom of destruction. The fields and farms and houses will be destroyed, and only the chimneys will be left to mark the desolation. \[28\]

Doniphan's reaction is not known.

Weeks turned into months and by March 1839, the Mormons were still in Liberty jail. An attempt by Smith and Doniphan to secure a change of venue had failed because Doniphan had given Heber C. Kimball and Theodore Turley the wrong documents to take to the Governor. \[29\]

Finally, on April 6th, Judge King ordered the prisoners taken to Daviess County for another hearing, again no valid evidence was produced.

\[28\] Junius F. Wells, "A Prophecy and Its Fulfillment", Improvement Era Vol. VI, November 1902, p. 8. This event was reported by Leonidas M. Lawson a brother-in-law to Doniphan. In 1863 Lawson visited Doniphan at his home in Liberty. While they were riding over the devastated Jackson County (the results of General Order #11, Aug. 25, 1863), Doniphan related this incident and how the devastation "forcibly reminded him of this remarkable prediction of the Mormon prophet."

\[29\] DHC, III, 288-89.
against the Mormons but they were kept in close security until a change of venue was procured. Enroute to Boone County of 15 April 1839, Smith and his fellow prisoners were allowed to escape.\(^\text{30}\)

Although the Mormons had left the state by April of 1839, Doniphan was not yet finished in his defense of their members. On May 6, 1842, someone tried to kill ex-governor Boggs at his home. Accusations were made that the would-be assassin was Orrin Porter Rockwell, a Mormon. A warrant was issued for his arrest but nearly a year passed before he was recognized during a stop over in St. Louis while enroute to Nauvoo, Illinois. He was arrested and taken to Independence where he was imprisoned in chains despite his protest that he was not even in that part of Missouri on 6 May 1842. After several months of confinement without a trial, he tried to escape but was caught and returned to jail. Again sometime passed before he was finally brought to court. It was then he learned that the grand jury had failed to find a bill against him for shooting Boggs; instead he was charged with breaking jail. Because Rockwell did not have a legal counselor, the judge recommended that he pick from among those present. Recognizing Alexander Doniphan, Porter indicated to the judge that Doniphan was his choice. Alexander addressed the court and asked the judge to overrule the choice as he was overly loaded with business and there were plenty of young lawyers who could plead the case just as well. When Doniphan had finished, the judge looked at Rockwell and indicated that he considered the excuses insufficient; Doniphan would be his counsel.\(^\text{31}\)

\(^{30}\text{Ibid, p. 321.}\)

thereupon approached his client and said that he would do his best. Several days later Doniphan was able to get a change of venue to Clay County where he hoped to find a more impartial jury. However, Rockwell was returned to Independence. Apparently the papers were improperly prepared because it took nearly two months for Alexander to make out new papers. Upon Rockwell's second removal to Liberty he was visited by his mother who brought with her one hundred dollars with which to pay her son's attorney fees. She also approached Doniphan and prevailed upon him to visit her son and explain the delays in setting a trial date. As Alexander was talking to Rockwell about the special court to be called in two weeks a small boy came to the bars carrying some chips and fire for the prisoner. Upon seeing the boy Doniphan said "You little devil you, what are you doing here with this fire?" The boy replied, "I am goin' to give it to Mr. Rockwell . . ." Doniphan thereupon told the lad to leave, but the boy looked at the tall lawyer and said, "Mr. Doniphan, you go to hell . . ." Pushing the chips through the bars, the boy left, only to return each day to resupply Porter's needs. Alexander had met his match.32

In two weeks, the trial was held as scheduled. Doniphan pleaded that his client was not guilty on the grounds that he had not broken jail as defined by the laws of Missouri, which stated that a person had to break a lock, a door or a wall in order to break jail. By this ruling the jury found Rockwell guilty and sentenced him to five minutes imprisonment in the county jail.33 However, it was five hours later

32DHC, VI, 140-41.

33Missouri, Circuit Court Records Jackson County, August Term Book E, 1843, 00. 196-98. (cited in Schindler, Rockwell, p. 103.)
before Doniphan came to gain the release of his client from jail. Alexander advised Rockwell to be careful not to travel on the roads unless at night for his enemies would be after him. Finally, about 8 P.M., Doniphan bid Porter farewell. On foot, Rockwell reached Nauvoo on Christmas night. He was barely recognizable after his ten month ordeal.

Doniphan's Relationship with the Mormons

Doniphan's association with the Mormons did not end with the termination of his services as their lawyer, for he was associated with them in 1846 and again in 1874. While his connection with the Mormon Battalion in 1846 will be covered in the chapter dealing with the Mexican War, his visit to Utah in 1874 will be presented here because of its relevance in determining his relationship with the Latter-day Saints.

On Friday, May 22, 1874, Doniphan arrived in Salt Lake City for a week's stay. He was boarded at the Townsend House and shown every kindness by the Mormons. That Sunday in the new Tabernacle George A. Smith gave an address which represented the sentiments of many Mormons toward Doniphan:

There are few men whose names have been identified with the history of our Church, with more pleasant feelings to its members, than General Doniphan's. During a long career of persecution, abuse and oppression, characters occasionally present themselves like stars of the first magnitude in defense of right, who are willing, notwithstanding the unpopularity that may attach to it, to standup and protest against mob violence, murder, abuse, or the destruction of property and constitutional rights. . . .

---

34 Deseret Evening News (Salt Lake City), May 22, 1874, p. 3.

35 George A. Smith, Address delivered at Salt Lake City, May 24, 1874, Journal of Discourses, reported David W. Evans, XVII (London,
It is not reported if Doniphan was present to hear these remarks but the next morning at nine o'clock he was the guest of President Brigham Young on a special train to Provo. Accompanied by a large party of ladies and gentlemen, they visited the Provo Woolen Mill and other places of interest. Afterwards, they were provided a sumptuous meal at the home of Mrs. (Lucy?) Kimball.36

Doniphan's treatment in Salt Lake City illustrated the Mormons' attitude toward him; but what was his attitude toward them? In general, Doniphan thought highly of the Mormons. He considered them "peaceable, sober, industrious and law abiding."37 Of the Mormon leaders, he stated:

I have never met a group of men who had native intelligence and understanding and force of character that have ever quite equalled the group of men--leaders gathered about Joseph Smith. . . . 38

Although Doniphan thought highly of the Mormons, he never developed a personal relationship with them as did another patron, Thomas L. Kane.39 While Kane was of great help to the Mormons in settling the

---

36Provo-Tri-Weekly Times (Provo), May 26, 1874, p. 3. The Provo Woolen Mill was the largest such mill west of the Mississippi River. Heber C. Kimball's plural wife Lucy lived in Provo with her family, but the paper does not indicate positively if it was Lucy Kimball or not.

37Saint's Herald, p. 230.

38Alexander W. Doniphan, testimony given to John Morgan, Richmond, 1884, Department of History L.D.S. Church, Salt Lake City, name file.

39Thomas L. Kane first met the Mormons as they were leaving Nauvoo, Illinois. He became very friendly with many of the Church leaders and corresponded with them frequently. In 1857, he pleaded their cause before the President of the United States and even went to Utah where he helped end the Utah War.
Utah War, in 1858, Doniphan offered no help. Also, while Kane corresponded with the Mormons frequently, no correspondence is known to exist between Doniphan and the Mormons other than a few business letters during the Missouri period. In addition to not corresponding with the Mormons, Doniphan did not mention them in his brief autobiography, not even in connection with the Mexican War where he worked with the Mormon Battalion.

Doniphan's actions in 1858 were possibly a result of his pre-occupation with the Kansas-Missouri border difficulties and the death of his sole surviving son. His apparent failure to write or mention the Mormons, however, leads one to conclude that he was motivated by either professional or moral ethics in his association with them.

Further evidence pointing to such a conclusion can be found in his reaction to the visits of Smith's sons years later.

When they called upon Doniphan to express their deep gratitude to him for saving the life of their father, he responded:

---

40 Rumors did circulate for several months that Doniphan was to replace Brigham Young as governor of the Utah Territory. As early as the 13th of February 1852, Jedediah M. Grant wrote to Ezra T. Benson that such talk was circulating in Congress. (J.H. 13 February 1852). And in April, Hosea Stout reported in his journal that the news from the east reported that Doniphan was to be governor. Hosea Stout Journal, ed. by Juanita Brooks, On the Mormon Frontier (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1964), p. 434. Then in May, Brigham Young, in a letter to John M. Bernhisel, expressed his desire to see Doniphan in his place if no Church member were chosen. (J.H., 27 May 1852, p. 4.) All the reports of Doniphan being made Governor proved false.

41 Doniphan was visited by Joseph III and Alexander Smith. This author believes there is a possibility that Alexander Hale Smith was named after Alexander W. Doniphan. See appendix B for the details.
I deserve no thanks for doing my duty. I had a long time to live, and I could not afford to burden my conscience and life with the blood of my fellow men.\textsuperscript{42}

Doniphan's response indicated that he would have done the same for anyone. Dewitt C. Allen, a close personal friend of Doniphan's perhaps described this trait in Doniphan's character best:

Like Cato, Col. Doniphan had this wonderful compassion for the weak, defenseless and miserable, -- only that it was broadened and made more tender, gracious and personal by Christian culture. To compassion, he united, in the highest degree, courtesy and modesty, and therefore he was accessible to all alike, -- the rich, the poor, the high, the low, the statesman and the peasant. . . . the great man was forgotten in the genial friend and faithful counselor.\textsuperscript{43}

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, Doniphan's affiliation with the Mormons has been presented and the conclusion drawn that his professional and moral ethics motivated that association. However, the means by which those ethics were brought into play is also worth examining in order to gain a better understanding of Doniphan's character. By his professional training and education, Alexander was accustomed to applying reason and logic to his decision making. It would then seem probable that he would apply those processes to the important decision he had to make in refusing to shoot the Mormon prisoners. Evidence supporting this probability is provided by analysing the courses of action open to Doniphan upon his refusal to obey Lucas' order and their consequences.

\textsuperscript{42} *Saint's Herald*, IC, 38.

\textsuperscript{43} Allen, "Doniphan", p. 38.
If Alexander had stayed, he might have been forced to defend the prisoners rather than allow them to be shot. This might have resulted in the shedding of the blood of his fellow Missourians as well as have been an act of mutiny. Neither of these possibilities were acceptable to Doniphan because they could have meant an end to his career in Missouri and brought hardship upon his family. Another possibility open to Doniphan was to take the prisoners with him if he left. However, this would have been committing an unauthorized act which was more likely to result in court-martial than his defiance of Lucas' illegal order. The final alternative for Doniphan was to leave the prisoners in the camp. While they might have been shot, his departure could create enough of a stir to pressure Lucas into retracting his order. Doniphan's ultimate decision to leave without the prisoners proved desirable for both the Mormons and himself. For besides preserving the lives of the prisoners, Alexander also maintained the respect and confidence of his fellow Missourians.
CHAPTER IV

THE CONQUEROR

Call to Arms

Apparently, Doniphan's popularity with his fellow citizens was not affected by his association with the disliked Mormons; for in 1840, he was overwhelmingly elected to his second term in the state legislature. In addition, his legal practice continued to flourish during the 1840's. However, in May of 1846, Alexander was called upon by Governor John C. Edwards to assist in raising several companies of volunteers from the western counties to fight in the recently declared war with Mexico.

Doniphan was attending the Ray County Circuit Court when he received the Governor's letter. Responding immediately, Alexander sent notices to Lafayette, Clay, and Jackson Counties where he made speeches calling for volunteers. ¹ Although each man had to supply his own horse, saddle and clothing, volunteers were numerous. ² Alexander's task was not difficult because as he stated, "Patriotism was at fever heat."³ Assembling at Fort Leavenworth, the recruits were organized into eight companies of the First Regiment of the Missouri Mounted Volunteers. On

¹Sketch, p. 6.


³Sketch, p. 6.
June 18th, elections were held to determine the officers of the regiment. This election was important because the man elected Colonel would be second in command to Colonel Stephen Watts Kearny.\textsuperscript{4} Although Alexander had been a brigadier-general in the State Militia, he volunteered as a private in company "C" from Liberty. However, he was almost unanimously elected Colonel. Doniphan's election was probably based more upon his ability to lead men and popularity than upon his military experience, for he had never led troops into battle. Neither the Hetherly War of 1836 nor the Mormon War of 1838, in which he had participated, had required any fighting.\textsuperscript{5} Perhaps for this reason and his lack of regular army training, it is reported that Colonel Stephen W. Kearny loaned Doniphan a book of French Dragoon Tactics.\textsuperscript{6}

For several weeks prior to their departure, the volunteers were kept busy drilling and preparing their equipment. Teaching the fundamentals of cavalry tactics and marching to the young and spirited farm boys proved quite an undertaking, for Doniphan and the other officers. For the regular army officers, one of the more frustrating points of


\textsuperscript{5}History of Clay and Platte, p. 129. Doniphan was among the two companies raised from Clay County in June 1836 to put down a supposed Indian uprising. However, it was discovered that the real cause of the problem was a family named Hetherly. The Militia was disbanded without any fighting on their part.

\textsuperscript{6}Seymour V. Connor & Odie B. Faulk, North America Divided (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 62. In Alexander's brief autobiographical sketch he expresses his feelings about General Kearny, "... a more gallant and accomplished officer never drew a sword. ... He was and still is Doniphan's beau ideal of a military commander." p. 7.
the whole ordeal was the casual way in which the volunteers obeyed orders. Despite the fact that the volunteers had been informed they were to wear certain clothing for uniformity of appearance, they wore just about what they pleased. When an officer would reprimand one of them for not wearing the required clothing, the volunteers usually responded by stating that they had joined to fight, not dress pretty.7 Doniphan himself rarely wore any military dress. He preferred plain clothing similar to the fatigues worn by his men. However, he did wear a distinctive broad rimmed white hat.8

Among the other personal affairs which Doniphan undoubtedly took care of prior to his departure was the filling out of the necessary legal papers to turn his power of attorney over to his father-in-law, John Thornton, in event that he (Alexander) did not return from the war.9

With his personal affairs set in order, Doniphan continued to prepare his men for their expedition into Mexico. As the date of their departure approached, the excitement mounted. Citizen groups and relatives gathered to see their boys off. During one such farewell gathering, arranged for the volunteers from Clay County, Mrs. Oliver Cunningham gave to Captain Oliver P. Moss a flag on behalf of the ladies of Liberty. In presenting the flag, Mrs. Cunningham said, "... We trust then that your conduct, in all circumstances, will be worthy of


8Rollin J. Britton, "General Alexander W. Doniphan", address given 20 February 1914. Historical Department of the L.D.S. Church, Salt Lake City, Utah.

9Document, 20 June 1946, Department of History L.D.S. Church, Salt Lake City, Utah. Name file.
the noble, . . ." Pointing to the inscription on the flag, she continued, "... let your motto be 'Death before Dishonor.'"10

The March West

Farewells concluded, the march of the Army of the West to Santa Fe began on June 22, 1846, with the departure of two advance companies.11 The first contingent of volunteers left Fort Leavenworth four days later. Doniphan followed them on the 29th with the remainder of the volunteers and his staff. Colonel Kearny departed on the 30th with his dragoons; the artillery and the engineers. The staggered departures were a result of the limited availability of forage and water along the route. In all, the Army of the West included almost seventeen hundred men and their mounts, sixteen cannons, one hundred wagons and eight hundred head of cattle.12

Heading west through Indian territory, the Army's route took them across the Kansas River, around the sand hills, up the Arkansas River to Bent's Fort and then south through Baton Pass to Santa Fe. The journey was physically demanding on both men and animals as they experienced torrential rains, choking dust, withering heat, half rations and increasing sickness along their march. By the time the Army reached Bent's Fort, on 22 July, over one hundred men were on the sick rolls.

10Liberty Tribune, 27 June 1846.

11Jacob S. Robinson, A Journal of the Santa Fe Expedition Under Col. Doniphan (Portsmouth: N.H., 1848), pp. 1-2. The two companies which left in advance of the main body were ordered to intercept a mule train believed to be carrying contraband to Santa Fe. They were unable to catch the trail, but did capture two spies.

12Numbering 856 men, Doniphan's volunteers made up half of Kearny's total force.
and many others were on foot, their mounts having died. Doniphan himself would have been on foot had he not brought along another mount because his old horse Bucephalus died about a week out from Fort Leavenworth.13

While his men relaxed and recuperated at Bent's Fort, Kearny and his officers sought ways to reduce the Mexicans' resistance to the U.S. occupation of New Mexico. Kearny's first move was to release three captured Mexican spies after showing them his forces and assuring them that the army would protect anyone who did not resist the occupation.14 His next move was the result of the arrival of James Wiley Magoffin, a wealthy merchant from Independence, Missouri. In a discussion with the merchant, Kearny learned that Magoffin had been sent by President James K. Polk to negotiate, if possible, with the New Mexican Governor, Manuel Armijo, the peaceful take over of Santa Fe. Magoffin's mission suited Kearny's plans perfectly, especially since Magoffin "knew every man in New Mexico and his character".15 Assigning Captain Phillip St. George Cooke to accompany Magoffin, Kearny next issued a proclamation promising civil and religious freedom to all who laid down their arms.16 Kearny gave Cooke and Magoffin a copy of the proclamation and sent them on their way.

13Hughes, Expedition, p. 39. It was reported that Doniphan wept at the loss of his faithful mount.

14Doniphan to Dr. William A. Morton, Santa Fe, 4 September 1846. Printed in the Liberty Tribune 10 October 1846.

15March, Missouri, I, 775-76.

The day after Cooke and Magoffin departed, August 1, Kearny marched south. The climb toward Baton Pass was very difficult. The wagons and equipment often had to be pulled by rope up rocky slopes and then eased down steep inclines. Finally, after several days of great toil, the army reached the south side of the pass. There they rested in a cool green valley, and during the rest, Kearny decided to drill the troops. He approached Doniphan and asked if the Colonel wanted him present or not while the volunteers were drilled. Doniphan replied, "I do not suppose you can learn anything new. But I may learn much from your kindly criticism." After a light drill which pleased Kearny, the volunteers ate their dinner of flour stirred in water and fried with tiny bits of salt pork.

Increasing the speed of their march, the army averaged twenty-five miles a day. The rapid marching, however, soon had the volunteers cursing their officers. Such complaining and the indiscriminate shooting at game caused Doniphan to assemble his men of 12 August and reprove them for their indiscretion in wasting ammunition on game. He admonished them to observe discipline and obedience for safety as they were in enemy territory and could be attacked at any moment. He also reminded them that their own honor and the reputation of their state

---

17 Connor, America Divided, p. 65. "Any private man in the camp might approach him with the greatest freedom, and converse on whatever topic it pleased him, for he [Doniphan] was always rejoiced to gain information from anyone, though a common soldier." (Hughes, Expedition, p. 15.)

demanded that they perform their duties cheerfully. He finished by stating that they could and would not retreat or surrender. 19

Continuing south, the army arrived at Las Vegas, New Mexico early on the morning of 15 August. Here a currier brought to Kearny news of his promotion to brigadier general. While there, General Kearny addressed the citizens. Doniphan described the incident as follows: "... The Genl had the Mexican element assembled, men, women, children and donkeys. At his request I had written the substance of the oath proper to be administered and without his request of my own notion the points of a brief address touching their change of allegiance and c." 20 The General assured the people of the peaceful intentions of the Americans and promised them that he would protect them from raiding Indians. After his remarks, the citizens were required to take the oath of allegiance. This business concluded, the army marched on.

While Kearny was administering the oath to the villagers enroute to Santa Fe, Cooke and Magoffin had arrived in Santa Fe. They were cordially greeted by Governor Armijo despite his apprehensions at the approach of the American Army. Fortunately for the negotiations, Armijo's spies had greatly over exaggerated the American's numbers. This false report and Magoffin's promise of the possibility for personal enrichment appealed to the grasping governor. Early on the morning of the 13th of August, Cooke was dispatched with the results of the negotiations in a sealed packet for Kearny. 21 Of his impression of the

19 Hughes, Expedition, pp. 69-70.
20 Doniphan Papers, September 19, 1883, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.
New Mexico Governor, Cooke wrote in his diary, "... he is unequal to the trying circumstances of his present situation." Cooke's observation was well made for Armijo had no taste for fighting and was distrusted by his people who he had allegedly been fleecing for years.

Despite his assurances to Magoffin, Armijo yielded to the pressure to uphold local honor. He hastily assembled a rabble army of nearly three thousand and marched to Apache Canyon on 16 August. There they set up breastworks and emplaced six cannons. Though their position was strong the militia was not eager to fight and their leaders soon began to quarrel with the commander of the three hundred regulars. Confusion reigned and finally Armijo disbanded his army and fled. The Americans approached the canyon prepared to do battle; however, they found the breastworks abandoned. As the Americans marched through the canyon they were relieved at their good fortune for as Doniphan stated, "500 good men could have kept us there until Christmas."

**Arrival at Santa Fe**

Taking full advantage of the situation, Kearny hurried his force on to Santa Fe. Arriving on 18 August, Kearny had the people assembled and conveyed to them the peaceful intentions of the army. He also declared the area a U.S. possession and informed the Mexicans that they were now Americans and would be expected to take an oath of allegiance. As soon as things appeared under control, Kearny took a large part of the army and marched south down the Rio Grande to visit

---

22 Cooke, *Conquest*, p. 17.

23 Doniphan to Dr. Morton, 4 Sept. 1846, in *Liberty Tribune*. 
San Domingo and Albuquerque and other outlying towns in order to inform them of the U.S. occupation and bring them under the oath. While Kearny was gone, Doniphan was left in charge as acting governor of Santa Fe. Among his duties, Alexander superintended the construction of Fort Macy on a nearby hill overlooking the city and worked with Willard P. Hall in drafting the new code of organic laws for the new American possession. Writing from the governor's house where he lived while working on the code, Doniphan commented on the problems they encountered:

> It is a very arduous matter—the laws are all in Spanish and every thing (sic) is done through an interpreter, and there is so much in our laws conflicting with our constitution to be altered. 25

After a month of hard work the code was finished. Named the Kearny Code, it consisted of 115 double columned pages, written in English and Spanish. In reflecting back upon the code years later, Doniphan remarked,

> It is astonishing, considering the short time we had been there and our limited means of information, that we should have written a code that Congress after the annexation of the territory, re-enacted and which, after thirty-five years I found still in vogue in 1881. 26

Shortly after Kearny's return from his reconnaissance of the area, it was decided that Doniphan would go south and assist General John E. Wool in the capture of Chihuahua. Kearny would continue on to California with his dragoons and the Mormon Battalion if they arrived in time. Colonel Doniphan would be acting military governor until his

24Edwards, Campaign, p. 60.

25Doniphan to Dr. Morton, 4 Sept. 1846, in Liberty Tribune.

26History of Clinton, p. 444.
departure south, at which time he would turn over that position to Colonel Sterling W. Price who was enroute to Santa Fe with the Second Regiment of Missouri Volunteers. On September 20, 1846, an express arrived from Colonel Price with news that Willard Hall had been elected to Congress. Doniphan conveyed the news to Hall who decided not to return immediately but instead to accompany General Kearny to California on the 25th of September.

Two weeks after the departure of Kearny, the Mormon Battalion entered Santa Fe. Short on food and water, most of them were either footsore or sick. The healthier had arrived on the 9th of October just under the deadline set by Kearny if they were to accompany him to California. Doniphan was "pleased to find a number of old acquaintances and friends among the soldiers, . . ."27 Perhaps to cheer them up from the hardship of their journey or to salute them for their loyalty in spite of the wrongs they had suffered, Doniphan ordered a one hundred man salute fired.28 The next day he called several of the Mormon leaders to his headquarters and informed them that Captain, now Colonel, Cooke would replace Lieutenant A. J. Smith as their commanding officer.29 The Mormons were disappointed by the news because they had hoped that one of their officers would be appointed.30 Whatever fears they may

27Daniel Tyler, A Concise History of the Mormon Battalion in the Mexican War (Salt Lake City: by the Author, 1881), p. 165.
28J.H., 9 October 1846, p. 2.
29J.H., 10 October 1846, p. 2.
30Apparently Colonel James Allen, their original commander before his death, had promised them that a Mormon officer would replace him. However, upon his untimely death at Ft. Leavenworth, Lieutenant A. J. Smith took command and now the Mormons were again being denied a leader of their own choice.
have had about their treatment under Cooke were short-lived for their new Colonel proved to be a just and capable commander.

Because of the rigors of the journey and the Battalion's assignment to build a wagon route to California, Doniphan and Cooke decided to send the incapacitated Mormon soldiers to Pueblo for the winter where an earlier sick detachment plus women and children had established themselves. From there in the spring, they could join their fellow Mormons who were headed for the Rocky Mountains. On the 16th of October, Doniphan learned that Dr. George B. Sanderson had discharged thirty Mormons, "... without pay or means to procure conveyance to the states."31 The doctor had found them not healthy enough to go to California. Colonel Doniphan countermanded the order and authorized them to join the group going to Pueblo. In addition, they were allowed to draw pay for the full time they had been enrolled in the service.

**Indian Treaty**

Two days prior to the departure of the Mormon Battalion, on the 29th, Colonel Price arrived in Santa Fe. With his arrival, Doniphan was able to devote his time to preparing his men, as best he could, for a campaign north against the Indians. On the eleventh of October he had received orders to go into the Navajo country and chastise them for their raids into New Mexico. He was further ordered to see that all prisoners and stolen property were returned and to make a peace treaty with the Indians. As cash was in very short supply, Doniphan wrote the Secretary of War on 20 October to inform him of the urgent need for cash.

31 J.H., 16 October 1846, p. 2.
It seems the merchants would not cash government checks without charging ten to twenty-five percent for the exchange.\(^{32}\)

Despite the fact that he could not get the needed supplies, Doniphan was eager to complete his mission to the Navajos before the winter snows fell. Dividing his force into three columns, they were to sweep the area and round up all the Navajo Chiefs and escort them to Ojo del Oso or Bear Springs; where they were to rendezvous with Doniphan on the 20th of November for the formal treaty negotiations. Major William Gilpin took one column up the Chama River to its source, then turning east he followed the San Juan River for a ways before turning south toward Bear Springs. Lieutenant Colonel Cosgreve Jackson led another column eastward into the Puerco Valley. Doniphan headed south toward Albuquerque with three hundred men. Here he received word from a merchant train that they feared an attack, and requested protection. Therefore, Doniphan sent his three companies to Valverde to protect the merchants and prevent them from going further south.\(^{33}\) Unable to continue his drive to round up the Navajos, Doniphan proceeded eastward and joined Jackson at Cebolleta on the 5th of November. From there they toiled through waist deep snow over the mountains and across a barren and rocky valley to Bear Springs. Arriving on the 20th they met Major Gilpin and several Navajo chiefs. The next day negotiations began. Doniphan, using an interpreter, explained the purpose of his visit and the intentions of his government. The Indians in turn expressed their admiration for the Americans' show of enterprise and their detestation of

\(^{32}\)Gibson, *Journal*, p. 250.

\(^{33}\)Hughes, *Expedition*, p. 149.
the Mexicans. On the 22nd, Doniphan boldly declared to the fourteen Navajo chiefs that the United States had taken possession of New Mexico and that they would protect the Mexicans from attack. He also told them that the U.S. was "... also anxious to enter into a treaty of peace and lasting friendship with her red children, the Navajos." He likewise offered them protection but warned them that, "if they refused to treat on terms honorable to both parties, he was instructed to prosecute a war against them". He further admonished them,

... to enter into no treaty stipulations unless they meant to observe them strictly, and in good faith; that the United States made no second treaty with the same people; that she first offered the olive branch and if that were rejected, then powder, bullet, and the steel.  

Doniphan's bold stand impressed the Indians. They agreed to a treaty based upon peace, mutual trade, and the return of all prisoners and property taken since 18 August. Alexander then presented the Indians with gifts as a testimony of his good will and friendship. The Indians in turn gave him some Navajo blankets.

After the signing of the treaty, Doniphan sent most of his force to Valverde while he, a small detachment of volunteers and three Navajo chiefs went to Zuni—about sixty miles to the southeast of Bear Springs. Arriving on the 25th of November, the volunteers made camp outside of town while Doniphan took the three Navajo chiefs and his staff into the city where they lodged in an adobe building. A dispute soon arose between the Navajos and the Zunis over who was at fault for the war going on between them. Doniphan, however, interrupted the dispute and suggested they all meet tomorrow to endeavor to negotiate a treaty.  

---

The next day a meeting was held at the American camp outside of town. There, after much discussion, a treaty was finally agreed to by both tribes. This treaty concluded, Doniphan continued eastward to join the remainder of his command.

Doniphan was fascinated by the Zuni city. Later, in a letter to T. B. Thorphe, he described what he saw,

It [the city] is divided into four solid squares, having but two streets, crossing its center at right angles. All the buildings are two stories high, composed of sun-dried brick. . . . The inhabitants of Zuni enter the second story of their buildings by ladders, which they draw up at night, as a defense against any enemy that might be prowling about. . . . It is a remarkable fact, that the Zunians have, since the Spaniard left the country, refused to have any intercourse with the modern Mexicans, looking upon them as an inferior people. . . . their great chief, or governor, being the civil and religious head. The country around the city of Zuni is cultivated with a great deal of care, and affords food, not only for the inhabitants, but for large flocks of cattle and sheep. 36

On to Brazito

Doniphan did not return to Santa Fe after completing his mission to the Indians. Instead, he went to Socorro. From there, he sent a message to Colonel Price asking him to forward ten cannons, 125 artillerymen and other needed supplies to Valverde. There Doniphan would reorganize his regiment prior to marching south. Upon receiving the message, Price organized a special unit called the Chihuahua Rangers, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel David D. Mitchell. 37 Price and his men had been greatly disappointed to learn that they had been


37It is reported that Mitchell, in order to secure the needed cash to fund the expedition south, flattered the notorious gambling house queen Senora Tules into loaning him the money on condition that he escort her to the Governor's ball. (Latham, "Doniphan", p. 76.)
assigned garrison duty at Santa Fe. Perhaps hoping to reflect some glory upon his unit, Price sent the rangers to join Doniphan. The artillery was delayed because of a revolt inspired by a few Mexican nobles who resented American rule. 38

With his force reorganized and rested, Doniphan prepared to move south in groups across the Jornada del Muerto, a desert almost ninety miles long. On 14 December, Major Gilpin lead the first group into the desert. Lieutenant Jackson's group followed several days later. Finally, Doniphan led the last group on to the seven thousand foot high desert plain on the 17th. Crossing the desert took five days during which the men were without hot food and fire, there being no wood. By December 25th the regiment reached a level plain called El Brazito, about thirty miles north of El Paso. There they made camp. While the men scattered in search of wood and water, Doniphan and several officers sat down to a game of cards called three-trick-loo. Suddenly a cloud of dust appeared on the horizon, then the plumes and banners of a Mexican Army. Doniphan sprang to his feet, threw down his cards, grasped his sabre and said, "Boys, I held an invincible hand, but I'll be d__n__d if I don't have to play it out in steel now." 39

At the sounding of the alarm, the men dropped whatever they had in their hands and ran back to camp. However, only about five hundred were close enough to be in formation when the Mexicans sent a messenger

38Joining with local Indians, the Mexican nobles attacked an American party near Taos. They killed Governor Charles Bent, the sheriff, the circuit attorney and an army officer. Upon learning of the attack, Colonel Price marched north. After a month of bitter fighting, he crushed the rebellion.

39Hughes, Expedition, p. 260.
forward carrying a black flag. He was met by Lieutenant Mitchell and an interpreter. The messenger informed them that the Mexican's commander, Ponce de Leon, demanded their surrender. If the Americans refused the Mexicans would charge and give no quarter. Mitchell told the messenger "to go to hell and bring on his forces." While the Mexican returned to his lines, Doniphan told his troops to stay low and not fire until the Mexicans were well within range. As the Mexican Army approached, resplendent in their green and scarlet uniforms, Doniphan rode among his men shouting encouragement and reminding them of the Battle of Okeechobee and that today was the day to erase that disgrace from Missouri history. Waiting patiently while enemy bullets whistled past them, the volunteers finally opened fire on the charging enemy at about one hundred yards. Their deadly volleys broke the enemy's charge and threw them into confusion. The Mexican lancers wheeled left and charged the supply wagons. They were stopped by a volley from the traders. A second volley by the Missourians sent the now not so splendid Mexican Army into head long retreat. The entire battle had taken only thirty minutes. Not a single American was killed and only seven had received wounds. The Mexicans were not as fortunate; forty-five of their soldiers had been slain and about one hundred and fifty wounded. That night the Missourians wined and dined on the supplies that the Mexicans had left behind in their flight.


41 During the Battle of Okeechobee, December 25, 1837, the Missouri soldiers had fled in disgrace. (Seminole Indian Wars)

While enroute to El Paso the next day, Doniphan's forces were met by several Mexicans who officially surrendered the city to Doniphan. After sealing the surrender over a bottle of wine, Doniphan marched his regiment to within one mile of El Paso. Here camp was set up at a large corral. On the 27th of December, Doniphan entered El Paso and searched the city. He released American prisoners and in forcing a lock found a large quantity of ammunition and two cannons. The next day he had the citizens assembled and informed them that:

He did not come to plunder and ravage, but to offer them liberty; that the lives and property of such as remained peaceable and neutral, during the existence of the war, would be fully and amply protected; but such as neglected their industrial pursuits, and instigated other peaceable citizens to take up arms against the Americans, would be punished as they deserved.

Doniphan then issued orders to his men prohibiting them from taking anything for which they did not pay a fair and just price. Upon hearing the order, one volunteer approached Doniphan and observed, "Colonel! You don't care if we take mice (maize) do you?" The Colonel not suspecting his motives replied no--The volunteer left and then returned with a large quantity of corn for his horse and those of his companions; the Mexicans call corn mice or maize. The Colonel enjoyed the joke.

On 1 January 1847, the alarm was raised that a Mexican army was approaching. A cloud of dust sent soldiers hurrying to take up their positions. Doniphan came running from his headquarters in town with his


44Ibid, p. 49.

"holster-pistols swung across his left arm, having his drawn sword in his right hand."\textsuperscript{47} A patrol was sent to investigate the report. They returned and reported that it was only a mule train. Despite the fact that such alarms were not infrequent, the Missourians settled down to a month of amusing themselves at gambling, drinking and attending cockfights, fiestas and fandangoes. However, gambling in the streets caused such an obstruction to traffic that Doniphan finally ordered it stopped.\textsuperscript{48} Another problem developed during the delay in El Paso while Doniphan waited to hear from General Wool. Troop discipline became lax. One night two guards were found sleeping at their post. They were brought before Doniphan who gave them a strong lecture on jeopardizing the lives of all the men and then released them with, "go and hereafter be good soldiers and faithful sentinels; I will excuse you for the present."\textsuperscript{49} The merciful treatment these men received was part of Doniphan's manner in handling the discipline of his men: firm but lenient at first, then if need be exact, as in a case in Chihuahua where a soldier was court-martialed for his disorderly conduct and drummed out of the regiment.\textsuperscript{50}

**March to Chihuahua**

After spending nearly three weeks in El Paso, Doniphan learned that General Wool was not marching on Chihuahua. Instead he had joined General Zachary Taylor at Buena Vista. Alexander now had to decide to proceed south or return north. Not one to retreat, Doniphan decided to

\textsuperscript{47}Ibid, p. 275.  \textsuperscript{48}Gibson, *Journal*, p. 316.

\textsuperscript{49}Hughes, *Expedition*, p. 279.  \textsuperscript{50}Richardson, *Journal*, p. 53.
march on to Chihuahua. Securing loans from certain merchants with U.S. Treasury drafts, he was able to resupply his commissary and quartermaster supplies.\textsuperscript{51} Then on February 1, 1847, Major Meriwether Lewis Clark finally arrived with Captain Weightman's company of light artillery. With his force augmented to nearly a thousand, Doniphan conducted regimental and company drills in cavalry charges and sword exercises in order to perfect his organization and discipline.\textsuperscript{52} Finally on 8 February, he marched south. For security reasons, he took Padre Ramond Ortiz along as a prisoner. Ortiz was head of the Mexican resistance and as such Doniphan suspected that he had been constantly communicating to Chihuahua information on Doniphan's strength and movements.\textsuperscript{53} Padre Ortiz was also taken prisoner probably to minimize the chances of enemy resistance in the rear of Doniphan's regiment.

With the trail behind him hopefully more secure, Doniphan ordered the one hundred fifty teamsters to organize into two companies to maximize his fighting potential. Samuel C. Owens was elected as battalion major in charge of the teamsters.\textsuperscript{54} Despite Doniphan's efforts to strengthen his force, two merchants lacked faith in the American's ability to win a victory at Chihuahua, and tried to return to El Paso. Needing every man, Doniphan sent a detachment to stop them and force them to rejoin the group. This accomplished, the march continued.

After two weeks of hot marching, the regiment camped at Ojo Caliente or Warm Spring. Here they enjoyed a refreshing bath before

\textsuperscript{51}\textcite{Hughes, Expedition, p. 276.} \textsuperscript{52}\textcite{Ibid, p. 281.}

\textsuperscript{53}\textcite{Gibson, Journal, p. 324.}

\textsuperscript{54}\textcite{Hughes, Expedition, p. 289.}
marching on.\textsuperscript{55} Several nights later a fire broke out in Major Gilpin's camp. Fanned by high winds, the fire threatened to engulf the whole regiment. Attempts to wet the grass by riding horses in and out of Encenillas Lake failed to stop the fire's advance. Finally, a counter fire was started which checked the advance of the original blaze. That night the horizon was red as the fire burned uncontrolled away from the Americans.\textsuperscript{56}

On 27 February, Doniphan's scouts reported that the enemy was strongly entrenched about fifteen miles from Chihuahua on the Sacramento River. The next morning Doniphan employed a tactic used in Indian Country.\textsuperscript{57} He ordered the wagons into four parallel columns; then he placed his troops between them. This shortened his lines and provided the troops with a buffer. While his columns moved slowly toward Sacramento, Doniphan and his staff carefully reconnoitered the enemy's positions and decided it was too strong to attack straight on. Therefore, about one mile from the enemy lines, Doniphan suddenly swung his columns to the right up on to an elevated plain. This maneuver partially flanked the Mexicans' left. The next move was made by the Mexicans whose cavalry charged the Americans who were moving into position. This charge was stopped by Major Clark's artillery. The next fifty minutes

\textsuperscript{55}Ibid, p. 296. It is quite probable that the dull routine of marching was broken by an occasional song:

\begin{quote}
With Doniphan we still march west  
An' still pledge him our level best  
Don't give a damn what come along  
" " " " " " " " 
We've settled things at Santa Fe  
An' told the Injuns where to stay 
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Our fleeing foes no more dispute  
The fact that we know how to shoot  
An' soon will plant another blow  
Across the rump of Mexico  
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{56}Ibid, pp. 197-99.  \textsuperscript{57}Ibid, p. 302.
were occupied by an artillery duel. The Mexicans suffered heavily because of their close quarters while the Missourians dodged the bouncing cannon balls fired with inferior Mexican powder. "Throughout the duel, Doniphan sat calmly on his horse and whittled. Now and then he would look up and remark, 'Well, they're giving us hell now boys.'"58 When the Mexicans fell back to regroup Doniphan ordered his men forward with: "Let her rip!"59 The advance of the Missourians was so fast and fierce on the right flank that the Mexicans broke and ran. Soon, their whole army of four thousand was in retreat. The battle lasted three and a half hours and was viewed by the local citizens. In all, the Mexican forces suffered three hundred four killed and many hundreds more wounded.60 After the battle, Doniphan returned to his prisoner Ortiz, who had boasted that the Americans would be slaughtered, and remarked, "Well, Ortiz, what think you now about the Mexicans 'whipping' my boys?" Ortiz replied, "Oh! Sir, they would have defeated you, if you had fought like men, but you fought like devils."61 In his official report of the battle, Doniphan gave credit to several advisors and officers for rendering essential service to him.62

Doniphan's march into Chihuahua was uncontested as the army and many of the citizens had fled. On March 1st Doniphan's regiment marched

---

58Connor, America Divided, p. 78.
59Liberty Tribune, 17 July 1847.
60Hughes, Expedition, p. 313. 61Ibid, p. 314.
62Davis, History, p. 320. A Lt. Wooster in a letter to a Mr. Jones dated 7 March 1847, claimed credit for much of the success at Sacramento: "In fact, I may say, without assuming too much to myself, that the movement generally during the engagement were made at my suggestion." (Gibson, Journal, p. 346.) While true that Doniphan lacked an extensive knowledge of military tactics, no credit can be taken from him for knowing when to accept good advice.
into Chihuahua to the tunes of "Yankee Doodle" and "Hail Columbia." Issuing a proclamation to the local citizens, Doniphan invited them to return to their homes and go about their normal business and remain neutral. Many citizens did return, but Governor Angel Trias Alvarez refused to do so. Instead, he sent three delegates to negotiate a treaty with the Americans. Protracted negotiations failed to produce a treaty agreeable to both sides as the Mexicans hesitated to guarantee the safety of American merchants and the neutrality of the state during the remainder of the war.

Ordered Home

On 9 March, news from the east indicated that the American Army had been victorious over General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna's forces at Buena Vista. A twenty-eight gun salute was fired in honor of the victory. Anxious to know what to do now that he had captured Chihuahua, Alexander sent a detachment to find General Wool and receive his orders. In his report to General Wool on the 20th, Doniphan explained his position as "exceedingly embarrassing" because of the hardships his men had endured. He also stated while willing to protect the American merchants that had accompanied him, he protested against remaining there as "a mere wagonguard, to garrison a city with troops wholly unfitted for it, . . ." Doniphan also expressed a desire to join Wool before the term of enlistment expired. Three weeks later, the detachment returned with orders from General Taylor for the regiment

---

63Hughes, Expedition, p. 316. 64Ibid, p. 325.
67Liberty Tribune, 29 May 1847.
to report to Saltillo and then return to the U.S. via Matamoros and the
gulf.\textsuperscript{68} Within two weeks Doniphan was ready to march. The main group
left on 25 April. Alexander remained behind to settle affairs and
officially return the city to the Mexicans. He rejoined the main body
of the regiment on 1 May. After two more weeks of marching, they
arrived at Parras. Here Doniphan received orders from General Wool
authorizing him to purchase any needed provisions on U.S. credit and to
rest his men. Rested, the regiment resumed its march to Army Head-
quarters at Buena Vista; where they arrived 22 May. While his men were
feasting on full rations for the first time since they left Fort
Leavenworth, Doniphan reported to his superior officers. After the
interview, General Wool asked to review the regiment. At the sounding
of the call every volunteer hurriedly stuffed his pockets full of the
remaining rations and fell into line. General Wool addressed the men
and praised them for their performance and then he passed in review.
He must have been intrigued by these bearded warriors in buckskin,
whose lines were far from perfect in alignment due to the "various pro-
tuberances fore and aft."\textsuperscript{69} The volunteers were equally intrigued by
the novel appearance of General Wool in his formal dress uniform:
"They craned their necks and followed his progress down the line."\textsuperscript{70}
General Wool also viewed the cannons and banners the volunteers had
captured. He informed them that they could keep their war trophies.\textsuperscript{71}

\textsuperscript{68}\textit{Adolphus Wislizenus, Memoir of a Tour to North Mexico}
\textsuperscript{69}Robinson, Journal, p. x. \textsuperscript{70}\textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{71}Doniphan turned all the war trophies over to the State of
Missouri upon his return. The banners were probably destroyed in the
fire which demolished the capitol building on 5 February 1911. Of the
cannons, several were recast and for years stood at the southeast and
On 27 May, Doniphan was ordered to Brazos Island where his command was to leave for New Orleans. There they were to report to the Commanding General and the Inspector General for pay and discharge.\textsuperscript{72} When the regiment reached the Rio Grande River, Doniphan ordered all the worn out equipment burned or left behind in order to make more room for the volunteers on board ship. Only clothing, blankets and arms were to be taken home. The horses were sent home via Texas. Volunteers were paid ten dollars a head to accompany the horses. Taking the sick down river to Matamoras, Doniphan arranged passage for them and the rest of the regiment. Finally on June 15, 1847, Doniphan set sail for New Orleans on board the Republic.\textsuperscript{73} The regiment was treated like a thousand returning Robinson Crusoes upon their arrival in New Orleans; and well they looked the part in their worn out clothing and long beards. However, arrangements were soon made with two local merchants to supply the clothing needs of the Missourians. As the volunteers

southwest corners of the capitol building before the fire. Another was stolen during the Kansas border war in the 1850's. Named "Old Kickapoo" it was last reported in the Kansas State Museum of History. The last and perhaps the most famous was "Old Sacramento". This cannon was given to Lafayette County. It was made of amalgam brass, copper, and silver. It lay in Lexington for a long time, being used only on Fourth of July occasions for firing the National salutes: "The boys of the city used to ram it half full of powder and brick bats and then it made a thundering noise, to the delight of all celebrators of Independence Day." Originally a nine pounder, it was bored out to make it a twelve pounder. While imperfectly bored at the breech, it was pressed into service for the Southern cause. It saw service at Wilson's Creek, Elkhorn and Pea Ridge. Finally condemned at Memphis, it was placed in the Confederate navy yard at Mobile where it was reportedly melted down and recast into cannons. (Young, \textit{Lafayette County}, I, 80.)


\textsuperscript{73}Hughes, \textit{Expedition}, p. 376.
had not been paid yet, the merchants accepted the word of Doniphan that his men were reliable. In all, more than sixty thousand dollars worth of clothing was purchased and paid for by the volunteers. The regiment was officially mustered out of service 22-28 June. On June 30th Doniphan left for St. Louis aboard the steamboat Old Hickory.

By July 2nd most of Doniphan's men had arrived at St. Louis. There the citizens staged a gala celebration in their honor. A reception preceded the grand parade in which the veterans, local officials and militia and bands all marched to Camp Lucas. Here, Senator Thomas H. Benton delivered the principal welcoming address. Following Benton's glowing praises, Doniphan arose and responded by thanking the people for their warm reception and praising his men for their gallant service.

Upon returning to their home counties, the volunteers were treated to numerous public dinners and festive celebrations. The one in Liberty on July 15th attracted more than eight thousand people and lasted all day. Doniphan was called upon to respond for the volunteers. Two weeks later at a public dinner held in Independence, Doniphan received a special honor. Mrs. Buchanan, in presenting the honor remarked,

Colonel Doniphan--In the name of the ladies who surround me, I bestow on you this laurel wreath--in every age and every clime, the gift of beauty to valor. In placing it on the brow of him who now kneels to receive it, I place it on the brows of all who followed where; so brave, so dauntless a commander.

---

74 Alexander W. Doniphan, Address to the People of Clay, 5 June 1872.


76 Liberty Tribune, 17 July 1847.
I feel assured that it was never placed on a brow more worthy to receive it than his on which it now rests--the hero of Sacramento.77

Significance

Upon receiving word of Doniphan's capture of Chihuahua, President James K. Polk wrote in his diary: "The battle of Sacramento I consider to be one of the most decisive and brilliant achievements of the war."78 Why was this so; and what was the significance of Doniphan's whole expedition? The answers to these questions fall into three categories: military, political and personal.

From a military point of view, Doniphan's presence in Central Mexico kept several thousand Mexican troops from joining Santa Anna at the Battle of Buena Vista.79 This battle was closely contested and had Santa Anna had a few thousand more troops the results might well have been different. Doniphan's victories at Bracito and Sacramento also neutralized Central Mexico during the remainder of the war. Also the fact that Doniphan's men, volunteers, had soundly defeated two Mexican armies composed mostly of regulars, helped make Mexico and Europe aware of the military strength of the U.S.80


79 The Battle of Buena Vista began February 27, 1847, the day before Doniphan engaged the Mexicans at Sacramento.

80 Prior to the Mexican War, Mexico was considered to have a very fine army. Many Europeans considered it superior to the American army because the latter was composed mostly of volunteers during the war. (Connor, America Divided, p. 28. and Liberty Tribune 17 July 1847.)
Politically, Doniphan's expedition shed light upon the condition and geographical features of Central Mexico. This area was known only to the few merchants who attempted to trade with its people. Now the conversations of Americans were full of the names and places of Central Mexico. Also important was the reopening of the trade routes to American merchants. Since the trouble over Texas the Chihuahua markets had been closed to U.S. traders. Doniphan's expedition also gave the U.S. claim by conquest to all of Central Mexico. This factor was undoubtedly significant in the peace negotiations. And, while most of the land was retained by Mexico, the northern portion became U.S. property governed by laws which Doniphan had helped to draft.

Personally, the expedition marked the zenith of Doniphan's fame nationally. His march of 3,500 miles by land and his return by water of 2,500 miles was and perhaps still is one of the longest ever recorded in history. People compared him to the ancient Greek general and historian, Xenophon, who had accomplished a similar feat. He was invited to speak about his expedition where ever he went. More important than all the honors, the expedition illustrates to the reader that Doniphan was a leader of men in the true sense of the word. Mindful of his fearful responsibility for the lives of his men, and knowing the limitations of his own military experience, Doniphan unhesitatingly called upon officers of inferior rank for such information as he needed. Doniphan also exemplified several desirable traits of leadership:

Bearing, courage, decisiveness, endurance, enthusiasm, initiative,

---

judgment, justice, knowledge, loyalty, tact and unselfishness. An example of each of these traits comes to mind when one reviews the history of the expedition. But instead of citing them over again the remarks of William H. Richardson, who served under Doniphan, will serve to illustrate these points:

The man who can familiarize himself with the poorest private, by some kind word, or ride among the troops, and make us forget that we were hungry or thirsty, by some pleasant converse, in our long and toilsome march; --the man who can forget his own personal safety in the hour of danger, and rise superior to every embarrassment--who can be prepared for every emergency by superior skill in the tactics of war--as well as refined sense of honor, and an open suavity of manner not only leading captive the hearts of his entire command, but those of the hostile foe--such a man is a treasure to society, and how to his country--and such a man is the brave Doniphan.82

Conclusion

Doniphan's involvement in the Mexican War illustrated his strong nationalistic feeling. Whether or not he believed in America's Manifest Destiny one cannot determine from the facts at hand; however, he was a patriot. In his remarks at the banquet given July 17, 1847, in honor of the regiment's return, he could not help but express his disappointment with the lack of unified support from the American congressmen:

... I wish that Mexico could have seen the same unanimity in our people, in the prosecution of this war, that they have seen in our forces, in the field. I recollect well the impression made on my mind, on one occasion, when an express sent by me to General Wool, brought me such stray papers as had found their way to the General's camp... The first thing I cast my eye upon was a speech of Mr. Corwin, Senator from Ohio, denouncing the war, and those engaged in it, as little better than a band of robbers. Gentlemen, a winter shower--bath would have been pleasant compared with my sensations on reading it! Freezing--

82 Richardson, Journal, pp. 86-87.
Chilling! Such speeches might have been deemed patriotic in the U. States; but, place yourselves where we have been, and endure what we have undergone, and then imagine our sensations. We were in a city numbering in population at least twenty times our force, and surrounded by enemies on all sides. We had crossed the Sierra Madre, and found, when we had arrived at Chihuahua, that we were looked upon as little better than a band of robbers! Fellow-citizens, the speeches which are made in opposition to this war, are said to emanate from the Peace Party; but I say that they are made by those who are postponing the peace eternally.\(^83\)

Such a strong patriotic expression marked Doniphan as a man firm in his belief in himself and in his country. Years later when the issue of slavery was tearing the nation apart, Doniphan would again demonstrate his patriotism by championing the cause of national unity. However, in the period prior to the tragic years of the 1860's, Doniphan would enjoy success in the resumption of his legal profession and his community activity.

\(^83\)Liberty Tribune, 17 July 1847.
CHAPTER V

LIFE IN LIBERTY

Legal Successes

Before Doniphan was able to resume his normal life and activity in Liberty, he was busy for several weeks attending the various festive county celebrations which accompanied the return of the volunteers to western Missouri. Gradually, however, the excitement subsided and Alexander was able to devote more and more time to his law practice. While the details regarding his first cases and activities are lacking, he was involved in the famous Harper murder trial which took place at Platte City in November, 1847. The background of the case had begun several years earlier when John H. Harper, a young lawyer at Independence married Fanny Owens despite the wishes of her parents, Colonel and Mrs. Samuel S. Owens. The parents tried to have the marriage annulled, however their efforts proved fruitless. Instead the young couple moved in with them.

Sometime the following spring a young man named Meredith came from Baltimore to join Colonel Owens on a trip across the plains. As the grass of the plains was not mature enough to support the teams until June, Meredith became well acquainted with the Owen household. Apparently during his stay a flirtation arose between Fanny and himself. Harper became extremely jealous and made plans to kill Meredith. His plan was to lure Meredith up to his second floor office and there shoot
him, making it look like self-defense. However, witnesses heard a shot just after Meredith entered the office and Harper's story about an argument was not believed because of the short time involved. He was arrested and charged with murder. Sometime later, with the aid of his wife, he escaped from jail and fled to New Mexico. It was several years later before he was captured and returned to Missouri. In the meantime, his father-in-law, Colonel Owens, was killed in the Battle of Sacramento.

It was probably because of his association with Colonel Owens that Doniphan became involved in the case. Joining John Wilson and Silas H. Woodson, he secured a change of venue to Platte County. The three lawyers ruled out the possibility of pleading self-defense and instead decided that Harper's best chance lay in showing criminal intimacy between Meredith and Mrs. Harper. But the judge made a surprise ruling and declared that only the prosecution could establish criminal intimacy. It appeared to Doniphan at this point that his client might hang. Undiscouraged, the three lawyers proceeded with a modified plan. Their new plan required that they get the prosecution to ask the key question which they could not do. Their first move was to ask for an adjournment until the next day although they only had one witness left. Successful in that, it was decided that Wilson would stay with the prosecuting attorney over night and engage him in a discussion of the case. The next day, Woodson examined their final witness and led the line of questioning toward the establishment of criminal intimacy; but before the conclusive question was asked, he turned the questioning over to the prosecution. The sleepy attorney inadvertently asked the desired question which would establish the
desired fact. However, realizing his error, the prosecutor told the witness not to answer the question. Immediately the defense protested, demanding the right to hear the answer. The jury was dismissed while the two sides argued their points. The judge finally ruled in favor of the defense and the question was answered. With criminal intimacy established, Doniphan gave a moving and passionate closing remark. Despite the fact that he was suffering from an attack of jaundice, Doniphan so moved the jury and the immense crowd in attendance that they gave way incontrollable cheers when he concluded. Harper was acquitted and Doniphan was carried out on the shoulders of the crowd.\(^1\) While most cases were not as dramatic as this one, Doniphan during his long career as a defense lawyer defended one hundred eighty-eight men, most of whom received a lesser punishment than that with which they had been originally charged.\(^2\) Reflecting upon this fact in later years, Doniphan said that, "He regretted having been the cause of so many scoundrels going unhung."\(^3\)

Much of Doniphan's success before the bar can be attributed to his ability as an orator. Because of his eloquence with words, he was often employed to make the last and decisive argument for the defense before the case went to the jury. It was said, that "a silent Doniphan in a cause would have meant defeat anticipated."\(^4\) Unfortunately, none of Doniphan's speeches before the bar have been preserved. Only opinion and conjecture can be applied in recreating the power and splendor of

\(^{1}\)Allen, "Doniphan", pp. 26-29.

\(^{2}\)Settle, "Colonel Doniphan", p. 7.

\(^{3}\)Ibid, p. 7. \(^{4}\)Allen, "Doniphan", p. 25.
his remarks. However, the results testify of his effectiveness. A case in point was that of Thomas Turnham. In November, 1844, Thomas Turnham was indicted for murder in the Clay Circuit Court. A clear case of murder, Doniphan agreed to be retained only because of his friendship with the boy's father, Joel Turnham. Doniphan was incessantly apprehensive that his client would disappear despite what seemed then an exceptionally high bail of eight thousand dollars. Fortunately, Thomas remained and Alexander was able to plead the case. After Doniphan's closing remarks, the boy's father was asked what he thought of his son's lawyer. Turnham replied, "Sir Alex Doniphan spoke only forty minutes, but he said everything." Apparently he did for the jury returned a verdict of manslaughter in the fourth degree and a fine of one hundred dollars.

Business

Despite his reputation as the best defense lawyer in the state, Doniphan did not become as wealthy as he was by means of his practice alone. Lawyer fees in his day were usually moderate, and there was always the problem of trying to collect them. In 1857 alone, Alexander had to take at least six clients to court in an effort to collect his fees which varied in these cases from $172.50 to $632.35. Because of the uncertainty in collecting his fees, Doniphan, like many lawyers, sought to invest in more profitable ventures. In 1853, Doniphan became

7Clay Circuit Court Records, Ledger #22, 31 March 1857, #s 71-76.
a stockholder and president of the Liberty Insurance Company. A total of thirty-one stockholders invested fifty thousand dollars to get the company started. In addition to insurance, Doniphan was interested in banking. In 1856, he wrote a letter to his nephew, John Doniphan in Platte County, and suggested they organize a bank:

... Why are you not making some effort for a bank—but confidentially, cannot you and me do better by getting the fungus Legislature of Kansas to make a fog-bank for us at Leavenworth. A bushel could be made at it if a Liberal charter can be had. It is worth our going to Lecompton to look after. ... But still, two strings to a bow is best and as the state and his [Tom Johnson] banking institutions have a good credit, we ought to make a grand name for a bank at Weston. But if one cannot be had there, impress it upon Perry & Meckson not to make damned fools of themselves by making war on St. Joseph, for if we cannot get a bank in Platte, go for St. Joseph and Donnell. ...  

It is not known what became of this business venture but the letter does illustrate that Doniphan had a keen eye for business and a quick dollar.

In the late 1860's Alexander did take up banking when he helped organize the Ray County Savings Bank in Richmond.

**Education**

Besides his involvement in business, Doniphan was also interested in community betterment, for he took an active part in the educational development of Clay County. When in 1849, the State Legislature granted a charter to the Baptist Church to build a college in order that they might educate their ministers beyond the academy level, Doniphan put aside his law practice to go personally from town to town throughout the county to gather pledges for the financing of the new college.

---

9 *Liberty Tribune*, 3 June 1853.

10 Doniphan to John Doniphan, Liberty, 15 December 1856, State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia.
Everywhere he went, crowds formed to greet him. His persuasive speeches so excited the people that all "social, political and religious distinctions were submerged in the wave of the rising enthusiasm"\textsuperscript{11} for the new college. Through his efforts, Clay County pledged seven thousand dollars, the largest amount in the state. On 21 August 1849 Doniphan represented Clay County at the organizational meeting in Boonville to help determine a location for the new college. At the opening of nominations no one apparently wanted to be first. Finally, Alexander broke the silence and nominated Liberty. Doctor William Jewell, who had been the largest single donor, nominated his home county, Boone. In the maneuvering which followed, Doniphan was able to get the majority of the delegates to back his proposal and Liberty was chosen to be the location.\textsuperscript{12} The following day Doniphan proposed that the new college be named after Dr. William Jewell. The proposal was accepted and Dr. Jewell was delighted by the honor.\textsuperscript{13} The final business was the selection of a board of trustees. Alexander was chosen as a member and served in the position for many years.

Doniphan also served on the Board of Visitors for the Clay Seminary\textsuperscript{14} and the United States Military Academy at West Point. In June of 1848 he addressed the cadets of the graduating class after visiting their classes and witnessing their final examinations:

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{12}\textit{Ibid}, pp. 216-17.
\textsuperscript{13}Settle, "Colonel Doniphan", p. 1.
\textsuperscript{14}\textit{Liberty Tribune}, 23 June 1856.
\end{quote}
... You have now completed your collegiate course, and are now ready to enter upon the active duties of a profession, that if honorably and zealously pursued, rarely fails to lead to honorable distinction... It is true you have laid the deep foundation of scientific and military learning, and upon such a basis you can erect the most noble superstructure... In addition to this ample store of useful knowledge--international law, diplomacy, political economy and the sciences--the useful officer should be endued with every Christian virtue. Patient in suffering, whether from hunger, thirst, fatigue, scorching suns, piercing colds, drenching rains, or pestilential disease; all must be borne, and not only borne without a murmur, but with such cheerfulness as to dispel all gloom from his companions and followers. He should be generous to the weak and humble, magnanimous to the fallen, obedient to superiors, forebearing to inferiors; exacting proper discipline without tyranny or oppression--alive to the best interests of his country, ever making his own interest only secondary, and endued with a philanthropy that neither the carnage of the battle-field, nor the savage warfare of enemies, shall steal to the cries of suffering humanity. Women and children, helpless infancy and more helpless age, can never appeal to an American officer in vain. Remember your country wars with nations, not with individuals--she never revenges national wrongs on private citizens.

Do not deem it arrogant in me to tender some advice, rather personal than professional. In addition to all your attainments, do not neglect to adorn your minds with elegant accomplishments of polite literature. Nothing has a more chastening influence than classic learning, ancient and modern. These sublime productions of genius liberalize the mind, elevate the feelings, and give a proper direction to the ambition. ...

After this advice, Doniphan went on to review the accomplishments of the age and to comment upon the successes and failures in military leadership.

In addition to being a member of several boards of visitors, Doniphan was appointed the first Commissioner of Common Schools for Clay County in 1853. His appointment was a result of the passage by the

---

15 Doniphan to Cadets at West Point, 16 June 1848, State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia.

16 March, Missouri, 1, 773.
State Legislature of the Public School Bill earlier that same year. While holding the position, he helped organize and served on the Board of Managers for the Liberty Teacher's Institute. This was perhaps the first institute of its kind in western Missouri.

Doniphan's interest in community betterment was not limited to education. He was also involved in the Clay County Agriculture and Mechanical Association, serving as its president in 1856. He also participated in the local temperance movement which was sponsored by the Methodist Church. On several occasions, he spoke on the subject at their request. Unfortunately, the extent of Doniphan's involvement in the temperance movement is not known; however, he must have taken a great interest in it for he helped organize a Division of the Sons of Temperance in 1849.

Family Tragedy

Despite all his interest and activity in community affairs, Doniphan was still able to devote time to his family and insure the proper training and instruction of his own boys. However, his hopes for the promising futures of his boys ended with the tragic death of both while still in their teens. John Thornton, the oldest son, died on Monday, May 9, 1853, at the home of his uncle, James Baldwin. Apparently, during the night, he got up in search of some epsom salts

---

17 History of Clay and Platte, p. 182.
18 Liberty Tribune, 23 May 1856.
19 Ibid, 16 November 1848 & 2 May 1851.
20 Ibid, 16 November, 1848.
21 Hughes, Doniphan's Expedition, p. 16.
in the hope that it would give him relief from his tooth ache. But instead, he got hold of a bottle of corrosive sublimate (mercury chloride) which had been placed there accidentally. He lingered for nearly a week and at one time hopes were raised that he might recover, however, they were in vain. About the same time as the death of John Thornton, Doniphan's wife suffered a stroke which left her a semi-invalid for the rest of her life. Whether or not Elizabeth's stroke was the result of the tragic death of her son is not known.

Alexander Junior died almost five years to the day after his brother. His death occurred while attending Bethany College in Virginia. He had been sent there because it was sponsored by the Christian Church to which his mother belonged. A roommate, James R. Rogers, in a letter to William Connelley described what happened on 11 May 1858:

In the spring of that year, with some others, we were foolish enough to brave the swollen waters of a stream nearby, for a bath, a perfect mill-race. I entered the stream first and with great difficulty landed upon the opposite bank some hundred yards below. Doniphan, on the eve of leaping into the stream used the familiar quotation, 'Darest thou, Cassius, leap with me into this raging flood and swim to yonder point?' In the full current of the stream, a distance away, an exclamation of some words escaped him, which I failed to catch, but the turning-point of the quotation was applied by his friends who never entered the stream--'Help me Cassius, or I sink.' His remains were recovered a month later in the Ohio, nineteen miles away. When recovered, one foot was gone, and only by means of the other could I alone identify the body. It was distinctly a model foot, and was the only feature of the body unchanged. . . .

Doniphan received word of his son's death by telegram. After the body

---

22 *Liberty Tribune*, 13 May 1853.


was found it was returned to Liberty and buried in the family plot in the Fairview Cemetery.

Conclusion

The ten years preceding the Civil War were filled with seen and unseen trials for Doniphan. Although his civic activities and his successes before the bar presumably afforded him some feeling of accomplishment, they were probably overshadowed by the tragic events surrounding his family life and by the disconcerting, inner struggle between his loyalty to the Union and his friendship for persons who advocated secession. While the resolution of this struggle and Doniphan's involvement in the political events which preceded the war between the states will be covered in the following chapter, the possibility that he experienced such an unseen trial of his conscience is mentioned here because of the role it played in bringing about a change in his life.

Until 1860, Alexander had been a non-professing Christian. Then at age fifty-two he joined the Christian Church. Why the change? Unfortunately, Doniphan never recorded his reasons. However, several possibilities for the change could include his advanced age, or his fear of the consequences of the approaching Civil War or the tragic altering of his family life. But a still stronger reason for the change

---

25T, M. Allen to John A. Gano, 27 December 1860, Western Manuscripts Collection, University of Missouri, Columbia. "... I also immersed Col. A. W. Doniphan—one of the distinguished and truly gifted, talented, and able men of Missouri and the nation. It was said by those who witnessed it, that his immersion was one of the most solemn and interesting they ever saw. Gentlemen and ladies, some of whom were hardened sinners, wept when he went into the water."
can be found in the teachings of the Christian Church which emphasized that obedience to civil government was divinely decreed and that peace was the law of Christ as God will punish the wrong doer.26

Whether it was through his discussion with his wife who was actively engaged in the work of the Christian Church27 or through his association with Alexander Campbell, whom he entertained in his home on several occasions,28 Doniphan probably found in the teachings of the Christian Church a religious justification for his beliefs in justice and obedience to law. These beliefs now strengthened by his new religious conviction would serve to guide his conduct and action during the troubled years of the Civil War.

26 Doniphan & Allen, Address to the Christian Church, 3 February 1865. Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

27 Christian Church, Records, Kansas City, Missouri.

28 Ibid.
CHAPTER VI

POLITICKING AND CIVIL WAR

Offices Declined

Upon Doniphan's return from the Mexican War, he not only resumed his legal profession and his involvement in civic affairs, but he also resumed his activity in politics. However, when he returned, instead of finding the nation united in victory, he found it divided and entangled in the political tumult over the expansion of slavery. The acquisition of the vast Mexican territory had brought his question again to the forefront of American politics. In the presidential election of 1848 neither Southerners nor Northerners were willing or ready to push the extremist view. Instead, two non-committal candidates were nominated: Lewis Cass, the Democratic choice and General Zachary Taylor, the Whig choice. The Whigs hoped that Taylor's popular appeal as a military hero would win the national election. In Missouri, the Whig Party hoped to strengthen the national ticket by running Doniphan for governor. But he refused because of the ailing health of his wife. She had suffered much during his absence in Mexico, and now that the Harper case...

1 John Wilson to Gen. George Smith, 16 July 1847, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Smith papers.

2 Doniphan to Editor Liberty Tribune, Western History Manuscripts Collection, University of Missouri, Columbia.
was over, they were leaving on a trip to the East in an effort to restore her health. He was not sure when they would return.  

When Alexander and his wife returned early in August 1848 he learned that their still existed some uncertainty in the district as to whether or not he would be a candidate for the legislature. In a public letter printed in the Liberty Tribune, Alexander gave his reasons for not running which included his belief that the Whig Candidate already running was a good man. While he would not run himself, he would campaign on behalf of Taylor. During his canvassing of the State, he spoke to many enthusiastic crowds. On one occasion in St. Louis in early August he spoke for two hours to a rain-soaked crowd of several thousand. As a preface to his remarks on the issues which divided the opposing parties, Doniphan explained that the reason for his political association with the Whigs was based upon their conservative principles and as long as they continued to espouse those principles he would remain a Whig. After these remarks, he contrasted Whig policies with those of Locofocoism (the radical element of the Democratic party). Then he expounded upon the life and character of General Taylor. Apparently his remarks were so interesting and eloquent that the crowd cried "go on, go on" when he "intimated that bodily exhaustion would compel him to come to a close." By the time Doniphan returned home to Liberty, he was hoarse and tired, yet he addressed the citizens of Liberty. They were eager to hear his remarks on the election, and his

---

3Ibid.
4Ibid.
5Liberty Tribune, 11 August 1848.
6Ibid.
7Ibid.
influence was apparently great for Taylor won in Clay County despite losing in most of the state. When the national election results were known, a state celebration banquet was planned and Doniphan was one of the main speakers.  

Being the prominent man that he was, Doniphan was often asked to run for office, but he almost always declined. Two years after the Whig successes of 1848 he was approached about running for Congress. He declined in a public letter dated February 1850:

My health is an insuperable objection if I had no other—just recovering from a painful and protracted attack of bronchittis [sic] the excitement incident to an active and extended canvass at this time would insure a speedy and perhaps fatal return of the disease.  

While his health may have forced him to sit out the 1850 campaign, Alexander probably still followed the local and national issues closely, especially the debates in Congress surrounding the entrance of California into the Union and the expansion of slavery. His keen interest in these issues was based upon his concern that slavery should not divide the country. When the compromise sponsored by his political idol, Henry Clay, was finally adopted, Alexander was probably pleased.  

Although the Compromise of 1850 seemed to settle regional differences for several years, the fires of passion continued to burn.

---

8Liberty Tribune, 9 December 1848.

9Liberty Tribune, 22 February 1850.

10Settle, "Colonel Doniphan", p. 4. By the terms of the Compromise of 1850, California would enter the Union a free state, Texas would receive ten million dollars to settle her boundary claims, New Mexico and Utah Territories would be organized and allowed to enter as a slave or as a free state by their own choice, and a new fugitive slave law would be passed.
The more radical elements on both sides of the issues continued to push their cause. Books such as Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* added fuel to the fire which was burning at the foundation of the union between the North and the South. Moderate voices gave way to radical and every issue which involved expansion became a battle ground between free soil and pro-slavery adherents. In 1854 the debates surrounded the establishment of a transcontinental railroad. Northern men such as Stephen A. Douglas wanted the route to run from Chicago to the Pacific. Southerners objected for they wanted it to run West from New Orleans. The greatest objection to the northern route however, came from the Missourians, who resented the Missouri Compromise understanding that the Kansas-Nebraska territory would be made into free states. Missourians feared the close proximity of freedom might induce their slaves to run away. Finally, after much debate, Douglas was able to override the objections of the free-soilers and gain the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act which favored the doctrine of popular sovereignty and declared that the Missouri Compromise had been superceded by the provisions of the Compromise of 1850. On 22 May 1854 the act became law.

**Senatorial Candidate**

The excitement caused by the doctrine of popular sovereignty as well as restored health resulted in Doniphan re-entering politics. He was elected to represent Clay County for a third term in the State Legislature. On 25 December 1854 he presented his credentials at the House roll call and was appointed to serve on several committees.11

11House Journal, 18th General Assembly, 1855.
Several days later, the two houses met in joint session to elect a United States Senator. The Democrats split into two factions and presented the names of Thomas H. Benton and David R. Atchison. The Whigs, hoping to take advantage of the split, resolved their differences and supported Alexander W. Doniphan. After the first ballot was taken, Doniphan led Atchison by one vote, but he did not have a majority so the balloting continued. Sixteen days and forty-one ballots later the voting was stopped and postponed until the following November. Doniphan had led in all the balloting except for the last one in which Atchison had held the lead by two votes. Doniphan, during the voting, had continued to vote for John Wilson who he considered to be the best candidate. By the time the Legislature reconvened in November the Whig party in Missouri no longer existed. Inner party differences over the issues of slavery had caused a disintegration of the Whig Party on the national and state levels. As a result, many Whigs joined the new Republican Party. However, Doniphan never did. He remained a Whig at heart and over the next several years he became associated with several different conservative movements. In 1856, he campaigned in behalf of the nominee of the American Party. While in 1860, he


13 House Journal, 1855, p. 175.

14 Ibid. This was Wilson's only vote.


16 Liberty Tribune, 16 May 1856.
campaigned for the Conservative Union Party.\textsuperscript{17} By 1864 he was associated with the Democratic Party.

Because of his conservative position, Doniphan was considered in some parts of the country as a good candidate for the presidency. Even in the deep South there were those who wished to see him run:

He is politically, a new man free from all connections with past political intrigues and corruption--having never sought but often declined office... Of unflinching firmness and decision of character, thoroughly national he is the very man for these troubous times.\textsuperscript{18}

Alexander, however, did not desire the office and consequently put his support behind Millard Fillmore, the American Party nominee, whom he favored because of his past record on slavery and national unity.\textsuperscript{19}

\textbf{Kansas}

With the formal adoption of the doctrine of popular sovereignty, both abolitionist and pro-slavery forces began organizing efforts to aid and promote immigration into the Kansas-Nebraska Territory. The New England Emigrant Aid Society, organized by abolitionists was countered by Missouri organizations such as the "blue lodges."\textsuperscript{20} Friction mounted as the immigration of free-soilers and slaveowners increased. The competition for control of the state reached new highs

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{17} Ibid, 9 November 1860.
\bibitem{18} Ibid, 11 January 1856. Article was quoted from Southern Mercury of Jackson, Mississippi.
\bibitem{19} Ibid, 13 June 1856 and 20 February 1852.
\bibitem{20} William E. Parrish, David Rice Atchison of Missouri-Border Politician, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1961), p. 163. Doniphan and Atchison were invited to address a pro-slavery convention at Lexington on the 12th of June 1855 but they both declined. Atchison, however, became very involved in the pro-slavery cause. He and John H. Stringfellow were the leading men in the Missouri movement. (Parrish, p. 175-76.)
\end{thebibliography}
when both sides drew up constitutions and submitted them to Congress as representing the majority of the population. Heated and sometimes violent debates followed in Congress. On the Missouri-Kansas border violence erupted as pro- and anti-slave bands roamed the countryside. Citizens interested in restoring peace were called upon to aid the responsible authorities in arresting the law breakers, and Doniphan was one of many Missourians offering his aid.21 Although Alexander was President of the Pro-Slavery Aid Association, he was against the violence perpetrated in the raid on Lawrence, Kansas and the retaliation raids of John Brown.22 His exact role in bringing an end to the civil war in Kansas is not known but he did make several speeches in favor of law and order.23

Although slavery was not the only issue dividing northern interests from southern interests, it was the one factor which best characterized the whole political, social, and economic difference between the two. In the years following the civil war in Kansas, the alienation between Northerners and Southerners became more and more apparent in the reactions to such events as the Dred Scott Decision of 1857 and the raids and hanging of John Brown in 1859. Talk of secession increased in the South as Northerners became more intent on stopping the spread of slavery. The election of 1860 became an important battle ground for both sides.

In Missouri, as elsewhere, the approaching elections increased the talk of possible secession if the results were not favorable to

21Paxton, Annals, p. 213. 22Liberty Tribune 13 June 1856. 23Paxton, Annals, p. 213.
the South. Such talk was not proper to the thinking of Doniphan. 

Campaigning on behalf of the newly organized Constitutional Union Party, Alexander toured the state and exhorted the people to remain loyal to the Union and vote for John Bell. By November 5th he was back in Liberty where he addressed a capacity crowd in the courthouse. Because of the importance of the occasion the ladies of Liberty did not attend the meeting in order to allow the male population the opportunity to hear Doniphan's remarks before going to the polls the following day. 

While the exact text of Alexander's speech is not recorded, the Liberty Tribune did report the general trend of his remarks which were:

... replete with sound political wisdom and experience; with essentially conservative and patriotic sentiments; and with perfectly irresistible arguments and appeals in favor of the continued unity, and indivisibility, supremacy of our admirable form of government. ... 

The paper cited Doniphan as stating that he was "apprehensive of Mr. Lincoln's election" because of the "inevitable strife, the sanguinary feuds, and border warfare which must follow in a greater or lesser degree, the inauguration of Black Republicanism, with its sectional hate and oppressive policy." The paper also reported that Doniphan intimated that Missourians would probably suffer "four years of incessant broils, and jealousies and bloody contests" because of Northern fanaticism and the consequent Southern retaliations. However, Alexander was not totally pessimistic about the future for he stated that he believed that the Constitution and the Union would survive the

24 Liberty Tribune 31 August 1860. 
25 Ibid, 9 November 1860. 26 Ibid. 
27 Liberty Tribune, 9 November 1860.
period and enjoy a happier era. Doniphan's three hour address must have influenced many of his listeners for in the elections the next day John Bell won by a two to one margin over Stephen A. Douglas. However, Bell lost to Douglas in the state returns by 419 votes. Abraham Lincoln came in a distant fourth.

Peace Convention

Despite his poor showing in Missouri and other states, Lincoln won the Presidency by a minority of the popular vote. Almost immediately after his election was announced, Southern States began seceding from the Union. Doniphan's fears were coming true; the nation was about to pass through a "fiery ordeal" more severe than that to which the founding fathers had been subjected. However, Alexander was not one to sit by and watch the country be torn apart. In late January 1861 he addressed a crowd of nearly ten thousand in Liberty on the subject of preserving the Union. Shortly after this address, he left for Washington D.C. where he was to represent western Missouri in the Peace Convention called by the Virginia Legislature. Twenty-one states attended the convention which began on 4 February.

28Ibid. 29Ibid.

30Doniphan to John Doniphan 28 January 1861, State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia.

31Sketch, p. 4. Enroute to the Peace Convention, Doniphan stopped in Springfield, Illinois where he became engaged in a conversation with Orville H. Browning, a moderate abolitionist. During their discussion Browning denied the right of secession to a state, Doniphan agreed but added that "there were some grave difficulties to overcome in the settlement of our troubles." Browning disagreed insisting that all the government had to do was to enforce the laws. Doniphan thereupon asked Browning how he proposed to do that in the seceding states? "If you use forces like the army you would be recognizing their right to secede and you'd have to bring them back as territories." Finding no answer to Doniphan's remarks, Browning subsided. (Liberty Tribune 15 February 1861.)
While Doniphan enjoyed being in the presence of many of the nation's most distinguished men, he was quite disappointed about the progress of the convention. In a letter to his nephew, John, dated February 1861, Alexander remarked that little had happened worth writing about since his arrival. The Republicans or "Pubs" as he called them had thirteen states represented to "our" seven and were waiting to "know Lincoln's wishes." He also complained that there were "at least fifty open and avowed office seekers" in attendance who had used the conventions as an excuse for being in Washington, "so as not to seem to be mere cormorants and birds of prey." Doniphan was equally negative in his appraisal of Lincoln:

... It is very humiliating for an American to know that the present and future destiny of his country is wholly in the hands of one man and that such a man as Lincoln, a man of no intelligence, no enlargement of view and ridiculously vain and fantastic as a country boy with his first red morocco hat, easily flattered into the belief that he is being correct and can say to the waves of revolution, 'Thus far shalt thou come and no farther' ... if his future administration should compare in statesmanship, diplomatic skill and military strategy which the speeches that have adorned and embellished his triumphal march to the Capitol, the slave states may well quake in their boots--...

Jesting aside, old Abe is simply an ignorant country buffoon who makes about as good stump speeches as Jim Craig and will not be more fitted intellectually for President but perhaps as disinterested.32

After those pointed remarks, Doniphan noted that while he had heard some excellent speeches, he had heard speeches of equal quality in Western Missouri. Continuing on this note he remarked, "There is not so much difference between great men at last--'tis distance lends enchantment to the view' the magic charm fades as we approach to

---

32 Doniphan to John Doniphan, 22 February 1861, State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia.
familiarity." Alexander then noted that he felt he had done as well as anyone in attendance. Turning to more serious matters, Doniphan wrote that "the border slave states must stand or fall together as a unit and by one act, and form a new government or go with the South, and this last is best. As one respectable republic in numbers and power is better than twenty little rickety concerns."33

Apparently at this point Doniphan had not yet completely resolved his inner conflict between loyalty to the Union and loyalty to state's rights. His seemingly southern orientation might also be explained by his distrust in what he called "Black Republicanism, with its sectional hate and oppressive policy."34 It should also be noted that Alexander was still a slaveowner himself at this time and that his nephew was sympathetic with the southern cause.35

During the several days which followed the writing of Doniphan's letter to his nephew the convention delegates were able to draw up a plan which greatly resembled the Crittenden Compromise. In essence, the plan included the extension of the Missouri Compromise line westward; the protection of slavery south of that line; the acquisition of new territory only upon southern approval; the end to congressional power over slavery; and the compensation of slaveowners for run away slaves.36 This plan was presented to congress on the 7th of February but it received no support. The failure of the convention forecast a dark future for the Union. Yet its failure was foreseeable as thirteen

33 Ibid. 34 Liberty Tribune, 9 November 1860.
35 U.S. Census 1860, Missouri, Clay County, Liberty.
states did not even attend the closed door debates, and those who did for the most part were in no mood for accommodation. The convention was too little, too late.37

Before he returned to Missouri, Doniphan had the opportunity to meet President Lincoln. The President's remarks about Alexander were quite different than those made by Doniphan about the President. Upon being introduced to the Missourian the President remarked, "And this is Colonel Doniphan who made the wild march against the Navajos and Mexicans. You are the only man I ever met who, in appearance, came up to my previous expectation."38

While Doniphan was in Washington, he was elected a delegate to represent his district at a special state convention to be held in Jefferson City.39 Before he had departed for Washington Alexander had written his nephew, John, to inform him that he (Doniphan) had been proposed for the post inspite of his objections. However, Alexander had insisted that others be nominated as well. To insure that Platte County be represented by the right man, Doniphan advised his nephew to get busy and "Let no man be nominated who is in principle radical. . . . We must keep the issue secession or compromise and hence we must have compromise Union men so that no submission issue can be forced upon us. . . ."40


38Allen, "Doniphan", p. 39. Both men were 6 feet 4 inches tall.


40Doniphan to John Doniphan, 28 January 1861.
State Convention

Doniphan was still in Washington when the first meeting of the convention took place in Jefferson City. He joined them on 4 March 1861, in St. Louis where they had gone to avoid the secessionist environment of the capital city, as most of the delegates were pro-Union. Alexander took an active part in the convention’s proceedings despite his belief that the war was inevitable.\(^41\) His concern now was to keep Missouri in the Union. To do this he helped sponsor a resolution proposing that the delegates accept the Crittenden Amendment to the Constitution. Some opposition was encountered as several delegates wanted to amend the proposal to include a clause stating that if the Northern States did not accept the Crittenden Amendment, Missouri would secede from the Union. When the voting began on whether or not to accept this restriction, Doniphan arose to voice his reasons for rejecting it. He believed that such a restriction was equal to giving the North an ultimatum and he was opposed to that. He emphasized that he was a "whole Union man - North, South, East and West."\(^42\) He had no intention of bringing about a calamity which would destroy the Union that had taken the founding fathers fourteen years to establish. He was "... willing to serve as long as Jacob served, before the Union shall be dissolved."\(^43\) Just how long Doniphan served in the convention is not documented, but apparently he was present to vote on two bills in 1863.\(^44\)

---

\(^41\)Sketch, p. 5. \(^42\)Liberty Tribune, 29 March 1861. \(^43\)Ibid. \(^44\)History of Clay & Platte, p. 195. Doniphan voted against the requirement of a test oath and for a bill to emancipate all slaves by July 4, 1870. This latter bill was superseded by the thirteenth amendment passed 18 December 1865.
After the adjournment of this second session of the convention Doniphan returned to Liberty. From there on 10 April, he wrote to his nephew, John, and asked to be informed as to the most appropriate time to address the people of Platte County on the subject of Loyalty to the Union. Doniphan was quite pessimistic in his hope for the future of Missouri, and well might he have been, for within a month Missourians were killing each other. This state of civil war was precipitated by the rash act of General Nathaniel Lyon when he moved upon a force of men gathering at Camp Jackson near St. Louis. His action, while perhaps justified by the seizure of the Liberty Arsenal by pro-southern sympathizers, so enraged the local citizens that they attacked Lyon's force, and twenty-eight citizens were killed. News of the incident raised indignation among many men that had been apparently pro-Union and caused their switch to the Confederate ranks. Sterling Price and David R. Atchison were two among the several who now joined Governor Claiborne F. Jackson in his declaration of Missouri's independence from the Union. Jackson also called out the State Militia and authorized Major-General Price to repel the invasion of General troops and to protect the lives, liberties and property of the citizens of the state. Doniphan was tendered the command of the district militia but after some time in consideration of the matter he declined the post. In his letter to the governor refusing the office, Doniphan cited the poor health of his wife. This was not the only reason however, for in an address to

---

45 Doniphan to John Doniphan, 10 April 1861. State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia.

the citizens of Liberty after the seizure of the Liberty Arsenal by pro-
southern forces from Jackson County, Doniphan indicated that he would
not fight against the flag under which he had served, nor would he
raise arms against his friends of the South. Apparently, Alexander's
inner conflict was over for his Christian duty would neither allow him
to rebell against the Union nor fight against those in rebellion.

Civil War

Immediate civil war in Missouri was averted by the quick action
of Major William S. Harney who invited General Sterling Price to confer
with him in St. Louis. As both men wanted to avert fighting, an agree-
ment was reached without delay. Further efforts to establish a more
sure peace occurred in late June when the convention met to discuss the
withdrawl of U.S. troops and the disbandment of the State Militia.
Efforts by Doniphan and other conservatives to achieve the above
mentioned proposal met with little success. Radicals led by Francis P.
Blair gained control of the convention and declared the executive and
legislative offices of the state vacant and filled them with loyal Union
men. Hamilton R. Gamble was chosen Governor. Civil war was now


48History of Clay & Platte, p. 200. Doniphan also had relatives
fighting for the South: His nephew John served as a Lieutenant Col. in
the 39th and 82nd Missouri enrolled militia. Two other relatives,
Joseph and William A. served as Lieutenant Col. in the 16th Kentucky
Infantry and Major in the 10th Kentucky Cavalry respectively. (Francis B.
Heitman, Historical Register & Dictionary of the U.S. Army, 2 Vol.,

49Doniphan and Allen to members of the Christian Church, 3
February 1865, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

50Webb, Battles, pp. 55-56.

51Liberty Tribune, 21 June 1861.
inevitable. Within a month and a half fighting broke out. The first battle occurred at Wilson's Creek on 10 August 1861. General Price's Missouri Guard defeated Lyon's forces in a bloody engagement which saw losses reach twenty-five percent on both sides.\(^52\) After Wilson's Creek, Price marched his men north toward Lexington where he engaged an unprepared federal force under Colonel James A. Mulligan. After several days of fighting Mulligan surrendered on 20 September 1861. While this victory gave Price control of southern Missouri, it also left him in a vulnerable position to be surrounded. As a result, Price retreated south to Springfield where he established his winter quarters.

About February 1862, Price dispatched Colonel John T. Hughes back north to the Missouri River to recruit soldiers and bring them south.\(^53\) However, Hughes' expedition failed because of the quick intervention of Doniphan who somehow learned of the plan. Riding twenty-five miles to Plattsburg, Doniphan informed Colonel James H. Birch that Hughes planned to cross the Missouri River at Albany, tear up the Hannibal and St. Joseph railroad and then recruit a regiment before returning south. Doniphan had acted because he wished to avoid the problems and trouble which would result from Hughes' action and northern retaliation.\(^54\) Doniphan also insisted that Birch go personally to inform Halleck. The General reacted promptly and ordered federal forces to Albany where they arrived just as Hughes was crossing the river.\(^55\) A few shots were exchanged and Hughes retreated south, where he rejoined Price in time for the battle of Pea Ridge, March 6-8, 1862, which

\(^{52}\text{Randall, Civil War, p. 236.}\)
\(^{53}\text{Webb, Battles, p. 86.}\)
\(^{54}\text{Ibid, p. 110.}\)
\(^{55}\text{Ibid, p. 282.}\)
resulted in a smashing victory for the federal forces and the dissolution of the Missouri Guard. General Price took those who would follow him and headed south to join the ranks of the Confederacy. Although causing the disbandment of the Missouri Guard, the victory was a hollow one for the federal forces as those who did not go south carried on a guerilla warfare at home.

Move to St. Louis

While guerilla fighting raged across the countryside, Doniphan carried on a war of words to keep Missouri in the Union. Apparently his pro-Union stand and his emphasis on obedience to the governing powers as every Christian's duty, alienated him from many of his oldest friends. The mounting passions and social pressure which resulted may have been the reason behind Doniphan's move to St. Louis in late 1863. Still another reason and perhaps the most immediate cause for his move was his appointment by the President to be a Special Claims Agent for Missouri Soldiers in St. Louis. Whatever the cause,

56Ibid. 57Webb, Battles, pp. 117-18.
58Randall, Civil War, p. 235. Doniphan confirms this in a letter to W,H. Jennings 2 September 1864: "The guerrillas generally have the country and the soldiers the towns but every few days we hear of some town being taken by the 'Whackers' . . ." 59Liberty Tribune, 18 April 1862.
60Louise Darneal, private interview Richmond, Missouri, August 1972. Miss Darneal's mother was a third cousin to Doniphan. Alexander acted as her administrator upon the death of her parents.
61Ibid.
62Missouri, Civil War Record, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis. This appointment is further substantiated by the directory of St. Louis which in 1864 contains this advertisement: "Doniphan & Field, attorney and counselors at law. Room 5, Kennett Building, South side Chestnut street, bet, third and fourth, Government Claims Prosecuted, Bought and Sold." (Allen, "Doniphan, p. 34.)
Doniphan never returned to Liberty to live although his desire to do so was strong. 63

While in St. Louis, Alexander formed a law partnership with William S. Field and continued to practice law. 64 Apparently many of his cases involved suits resulting from events related to the war. 65 Little is known of his activity in St. Louis except for the few references to his law practice, an address to the Christian Church, and a letter to W. H. Jennings which indicated that Doniphan was involved in some kind of marketing business: "Business keeps us pretty fair for summer and especially tobacco is still active . . ." 66 In the same letter, Doniphan also mentioned his interest in the Democratic Convention in Chicago (August 29, 1864) and its importance to the future of the country. He also noted that "The nomination of General [George B.] McClellan does not give entire satisfaction to the peace democrates or men of Southern sympathies--but all concur that he was the most judicious choice all things considered." 67 Doniphan's interest in politics had now apparently carried him into the ranks of the Democratic

63 Sketch, p. 7. In his brief sketch written for someone about to write about Doniphan, Alexander emphasized his love for Clay County: "... do not say at any place that I live in Ray or ever did--indicate it is in old Clay, God bless her--there I always lived. This was and is temporary--I am not ashamed of my county and such eternal moving looks fickle."

64 Allen, "Doniphan", p. 34.


66 Doniphan to W. H. Jennings, 2 September 1864, State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia.

67 Ibid.
Party. Alexander stayed in St. Louis until 1868, when he moved to Richmond, Ray County, where he remained until his death in 1887.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has dealt mainly with Doniphan's political career and the related events associated with it. His actions in the Kansas-Missouri border fighting and the Civil War have provided evidence that Doniphan was a man who believed in himself and maintained his principles in spite of popular belief and pressures to the contrary. In his letters to friends he showed himself to be a keen observer and critic of men's actions. Also evident in Doniphan's letters and actions was his position on the question of states' rights. Although he was a conservative Union man from the outset, he recognized that states did have certain rights and that too much centralization of power was dangerous. While this explained in part his strong feeling against Republicanism, his greatest objection to it lay in its association with the abolitionist doctrine. A slave holder himself, Doniphan probably looked upon slavery as a benevolent institution. Although no evidence exists to explain his exact stand on the issue, his participation in the Pro-Slavery Aid Association would indicate that he thought slavery was justifiable.

Associated with his feelings against Republicanism was his apprehensions about Lincoln as President. From his experiences at the

68 According to William L. Webb, the Democrats were thinking of Doniphan as a possible candidate for President if Samuel J. Tilden was not nominated in 1876. In 1877 they wanted him to run for Senator, but he declined. (Webb, * Battles*, p. 278.)

69 Sketch, p. 5.
Peace Convention, Doniphan observed that Lincoln was apparently an easy prey to flattery. Alexander feared that any skilled flatterer might direct the President into committing some rash act which would cause the ruin of all past efforts to preserve the Union. Doniphan apparently never changed his opinion of Lincoln, for although no evidence exists of his later opinion of Lincoln, his support of George B. McClellan in the 1864 presidential elections indicates that Lincoln was too radical for the conservative Doniphan.

Considering Doniphan's dislike for Republicanism and his apprehensions about Lincoln's ability to be President, why did he not join the secessionist movement? A probable answer to that question can be found in an address which Doniphan helped deliver to his fellow members of the Christian Church in 1865. During that lengthy address on the duties of Christians toward government, the point was made that resistance to government was civil war and no misgovernment was equal to the horrors which such a war precipitated. With his own patriotic feelings supported and confirmed by his religious belief, Doniphan preferred obedience and patience to rebellion and its consequences. For this reason, he tried to keep Missouri in the Union and away from the evils of civil war. However, when his efforts met with only partial success he made an unpopular choice. He chose neither to fight nor to abandon the Union, and while such a decision probably alienated him

---


71 Doniphan and Allen to Citizens of Clay County, St. Louis, 3 February 1865, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, p. 10.
from many of his friends, Doniphan felt that he was living the higher law of Christ—the law of Peace.\textsuperscript{72}

\textsuperscript{72}Ibid, p. 12.
CHAPTER VII

THE LAST YEARS

Return to Western Missouri

It was three years after the end of the Civil War before Doniphan returned to western Missouri. However, instead of returning to Liberty, he moved to Richmond in Ray County. Why he did not return to Clay County is not exactly known, but it is possible that the alienation of friends and the memory of frenzied passions which then existed were still too strong to allow his return. In any event, he purchased a modest home at the end of what is now South Camdon Avenue. People who remember the home say that although it was simple on the outside it was furnished with lovely mahogany furniture and other expensive woods on the inside. ¹

Shortly after his arrival in Richmond, Doniphan helped organize the Ray County Savings Bank. As Richmond had only one bank for her nearly one thousand residents, another bank seemed justifiable. After discussing the possibility with friends, a charter was secured in 1869. Doniphan was made president, T. D. Woodson vice-president, and H. C. Garner the cashier.² Alexander spent many hours at the bank during the ten years he served as president. Long hours were hard on him physically, and therefore, it was probable for this reason that he

¹Darneal, interview.
stepped down in 1879. T. C. Woodson was made president and Doniphan took a position on the board of directors.

Besides his activity in banking, Doniphan formed a law partnership with Christopher T. Garner who was a distant cousin to his wife and a fellow stockholder in the bank. Locating their office on the second floor of the bank building, they practiced law together until 1875 when Garner formed a partnership with his son James. Shortly after this, Doniphan retired from practicing law pending the conclusion of several cases before the Supreme Court's May term in 1876. While he no longer actively practiced law, Doniphan continued to instruct young hopefuls in the profession until at least 1881.

In addition to his banking and legal activities, Alexander continued to be actively engaged in community affairs. Attending church, speaking at political and social gatherings kept Doniphan busy during his free hours. On several occasions he joined with others in rendering community aid to victims of natural disasters or personal slander. In 1878 he served on the committee to receive contributions for those who had been injured and who had lost property during the cyclone which destroyed much of the city. On another occasion Doniphan's co-operation was solicited to help protect a friend's good name. In 1881 a rumor

---

3 Doniphan to Cousin, Richmond, 6 May 1878, Richardson's Journal.
4 History Ray County, Missouri, (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Co., 1918), p. 495.
5 Ibid, p. 524.
7 Ray County, p. 569.
was being spread that David P. Whitmer had denied his testimony of the existence of the gold plates from which Joseph Smith had translated the Book of Mormon. Whitmer approached Doniphan and asked him to sign an affidavit attesting to his character and moral integrity. Alexander consented, for he believed his fellow lawyer and former mayor of Richmond was an honest man.  

Although Doniphan loved his work and his involvement in community service, his true love was his wife. She had always been there to encourage him when times got hard despite her own poor health. Her sudden death in 1873 at the home of her sister Theodosia Lawson in New York greatly saddened Doniphan. In a letter to a cousin years later he wrote that her loss was the misery of his life and that while much of his own suffering was physical, he traced much of it to agony of the heart.

With the death of his wife, Doniphan moved to a boarding house located about one block from the bank. William B. Huggins was the proprietor, and he claimed to have the "best sample rooms on the road for only two dollars per day." While living in a boarding house was

9 Whitmer's testimony and the affidavit bearing twenty-one names appeared in the Richmond Conservator, 19 March 1881, (Ray County, p. 461.)

10 Doniphan to Cousin, Richmond, 6 May 1878, Richardson's Journal.

11 Ibid. In his address to the people of Clay County a year before his wife's death on 19 July 1873, Doniphan may well have been describing his own wife as he commented on western womenhood: "her youthful bloom, love sparkling in her eyes, her rosy cheeks, . . . with form fashioned fresh from Nature's hand,--bright and glad as a wild prairie flower!"

not as nice as having his own home, Alexander preferred it to living with another family.\textsuperscript{13} Besides, his closest relative lived thirty miles away in Liberty, which was too far away from his business.\textsuperscript{14} In addition to his business interests, Doniphan had many friends and admirers in Richmond. It is said that it took him an hour to go the one block to the bank because so many people stopped him to talk or shake his hand.\textsuperscript{15} Apparently the Huggins' took good care of Alexander for he left Mrs. Huggins five hundred dollars upon his death, because of his "... gratitude for her uniform kindship in sickness and in health" over the many years.\textsuperscript{16}

**Poor Health**

In appearance, Alexander did not seem to be suffering from poor health, but actually he was a delicate man physically though few people knew it. One man who did, however, was D. C. Allen. He noted that on many occasions after having delivered a lengthy and emotional argument for the defense or a public address, Doniphan would be taken ill by a dangerous fever. Often he would be bed-ridden for several weeks.\textsuperscript{17} As Allen believed, it was probably his poor health which kept Doniphan from seeking political advancement, for fear that on some important occasion his endurance would give way under the pressure.\textsuperscript{18} It might seem

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13}Doniphan to Emma, Richmond, 1875, *Richardson's Journal*.
\item \textsuperscript{14}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{15}Darneal, interview.
\item \textsuperscript{16}Missouri, *Probate Court Record Ray County*, Book E-6, p. 79, Will of Alexander W. Doniphan.
\item \textsuperscript{17}Allen, "Doniphan, p. 27.
\item \textsuperscript{18}Ibid, pp. 27-28.
\end{itemize}
strange that a man who had endured the tortuous march from Fort Leavenworth to the heart of Mexico and back would suffer from delicate health, but nevertheless, such was the case. Perhaps it was the march which weakened his physical endurance and led to his suffering frequent attacks of bronchitis and congestion as he grew older.¹⁹

Even when Doniphan did feel strong enough to run for minor political offices, he was often absent from sessions of the legislature. In later years, as his age began to add to his health problems, Doniphan often travelled to Colorado where the altitude and the climate helped his bronchitis. ²⁰

**His Rhetoric**

His numerous letters to his niece, Jennie Hockaday Gill, and his sister-in-law, Caroline Moss, from the Alvord House in Denver and the Cliff House in Manitou Springs were filled not only with news of his health but also of his travels. As hard as travelling was on him, Doniphan enjoyed his frequent trips by railroad car. In May of 1874 he travelled to Salt Lake City to spend a week among his Mormon friends. In 1880 he travelled to Colorado by way of Santa Fe where he revisited places he had not seen since 1846. Commenting on his trip, he noted in a letter to his niece that the tracks of the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad traversed the route of his march from the Kansas River at

---

¹⁹ Doniphan to Cousin, Richmond, 6 May 1878, Richardson's Journal, and to Caroline, Denver, 3 August 1878, State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia.

²⁰ House Journal, 18th General Assembly 1855. Doniphan was absent or sick this term about one fourth of the time.

²¹ Clinton County, p. 447.
Lawrence to Santa Fe.\textsuperscript{22} He also wrote that while little had changed in thirty-four years, the recent extension of the railroad to Santa Fe would soon aid in the development of the area.\textsuperscript{23} He was also pleased that everyone made such a fuss over his visit. Even the Governor came to see him.\textsuperscript{24} In another letter, Doniphan recorded seeing a solar eclipse, which increased his admiration for the advance of science.\textsuperscript{25} On that same occasion he took the opportunity to meet many of the astronomers who were there from all over Europe and the United States. Doniphan wrote about many things in his letters which varied from his descriptions on the beautiful scenery in Colorado and New Mexico to his keen observations on human nature. Commenting on the pretentious snobbery of the average tourist, Alexander wrote, "If I was young enough to aspire to or even hope to attain the reputation of Chesterfield or even Beau Brummel, I might have submitted to the inconvenience, rather annoyance, [of the pomp at the elegant Windsor Hotel] for the benefit of the teaching."\textsuperscript{26}

Doniphan, as can be seen, was an able and expressive writer. His descriptions of the people, events and places he saw gave the reader a vivid picture. However, he was also very concise and singularly

\textsuperscript{22}Doniphan to Jennie Hockaday, Manitou Springs, 10 August 1880, Alexander Doniphan Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, Liberty, Missouri.

\textsuperscript{23}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{25}Doniphan to Caroline, Denver, 3 August 1878, State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia.

\textsuperscript{26}Doniphan to Jennie Hockaday, Denver, 3 September 1880, Alexander Doniphan Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, Liberty, Missouri.
pointed at times. The best examples of this can be found in his letters to his nephew, John, on political matters:

As to politics, we and all Mo. are for Greeley [Horace] but there are many old wooden-headed Democrats who think they are as strong as then old Jackson was a candidate. It is annoying to hear such asses. Such words as the time honored usages of the Democratic party, the principles of the old Democracy are a stench in my nostrils. I never wish to hear them again. What are these principles? Or what are their usages except grab and snatch.

Under no circumstances do you aid, assist or countenance Bob Wilson for Govr. He is a low, scurby, mangy pup. You cannot do it without renouncing your manhood and licking the hand that smites you. I would sooner support a decent negro, in truth. 27

While Doniphan's letters were concise and to the point, his public addresses were eloquent and formal. Unfortunately, of his many speeches before the bar and on social and patriotic occasions only two have been recorded and preserved. 28 This is explained in part by the fact that Doniphan spoke extemporaneously on most occasions. Today, only the testimonies of those who knew him or heard him can bear record of his oratorical ability. Fortunately, many people have spoken of his remarkable ability with words. Of the many, D. C. Allen had this to say:

... when before a great audience of his fellow-citizens, assembled to hear him on some momentous occasion, he brought into play the whole range of his stores of thought, -- sentiment, eloquence and wit, -- transported his auditors from grave to gay, from tears to mirth, with a certain divine ease and rapidity, and molded their opinions and hearts to his will with a thoroughness only possible to the greatest orator; ... 29

27Doniphan to John Doniphan, Richmond, 26 May 1872, State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia.

28His address to the people of Clay County, 5 June 1872 and to the Cadets of West Point 19 June 1848 are the only addresses to be preserved in total.

29Allen, "Doniphan", p. 37.
Another testimony is offered by one of his peers, David R. Atchison:

I was familiar with the city of Washington in my early manhood. I knew all the great men of our country in the earlier days — Clay, Webster, Calhoun, John Quincy Adams, Clayto, Crittenden and others. I have presided in the United States Senate when Clay, Webster and Calhoun sat before me. I knew Aleck Doniphan familiarly, intimately, since 1830, and I tell you, sir, when he was in his prime I heard him climb higher than any of them.30

Death

Alexander W. Doniphan died on Monday, August 8, 1887, in Richmond, Missouri. In death, he was as noble as he was in life for he stated in his will that all debts owed to him were to be forgotten in friendship.31 For his burial he requested that only a modest monument be erected to mark his family's burial plot in the new cemetery in Liberty.32 However, his friends felt he deserved more so on August 11th, the day he was buried, a twenty-five foot high granite pillar was erected instead. Many other honors have been bestowed upon him posthumously: A statue, several streets, cities, counties and even a Liberty ship have been named after him.33 If Doniphan were alive today, he probably would be amused by all these honors for it was not in his nature to seek after such fame. His goals in life as expressed in his remarks on his seventy-fifth birthday best illustrates this point:

31See Appendix C.  
32Ibid.  
33The statue is in front of the Richmond Court House, Doniphan is the county seat of Ripley County, Missouri, Doniphan County is in Kansas, Doniphan street is in Liberty, Missouri, and the Liberty ship Doniphan was launched during the Second World War. It is now dismantled. (Maysville Public Ledger, Kentucky, 8 June 1965.)
Looking back at a glance, the time seems short, and when I estimate the few things I have done worth recording or remembering, the time seems shorter. ... I am aware that I have been active and successful, and it would be unpardonable, ... not to agree with them, ... But what of it? ... The episodes of my life were lucky accidents, mainly. My only ambition was to be esteemed the best jury lawyer and advocate in the counties where I practiced. This was too limited ambition. But the book is closed ... Not what I have done, but what I have failed to do causes me regret. It is a grand but fearful thought that although the lamp of life will soon be extinguished, the work that has been done, or failed to be done will continue through eternity. Blessed is the man who, having nothing to say, abstains from giving us wordy evidence of that fact, especially in writing, so farewell.34

Conclusion

Despite his own poor health and the death of his wife, Doniphan continued to be actively engaged in community affairs, business, reading, writing and travelling. His zest for learning never ceased as was illustrated by his keen observations of people and places wherever he went. In his oratory Doniphan drew upon his stores of knowledge and personal observations, and by them was able to speak extemporaneously. Being thus freed from a prepared text, he was able to reach out and envelope his audience in his own emotional sentiments. In this ability, he had few peers.

34Stevens, Centennial History, p. 284.
PLATE IV

Liberty, Missouri about 1850

Savings Bank in Richmond, Missouri
Doniphans Law Office Upstairs
CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Alexander W. Doniphan lived a life dedicated to service and justice. Whether in his capacity as a lawyer, citizen, statesman or soldier, he contributed much to the growth and development of Missouri and the West. His achievements and the example he set in Christian living and patriotism merit a closer examination by Americans today because of the resoluteness with which he approached his activities throughout his life.

Born and educated in Kentucky, Alexander moved to Missouri in 1830. There he established himself as an able and talented defense lawyer, who by his belief in the due process of law, set an example for justice in his enthusiastic and dedicated defenses of his clients. In addition to his contribution to the advancement of law and order in western Missouri, Doniphan also furthered the advancement of education on the Missouri frontier by helping to bring William Jewell College to Liberty. One of the first institutions of higher learning in western Missouri, it still stands as a monument to his contribution.

Politically, Doniphan was an ardent Whig in an area dominated by the Democrats. Yet he enjoyed great popularity and success, being elected to the State Legislature three times and representative for western Missouri in the Peace Convention in Washington D.C. in 1861. While he could have perhaps attained still loftier heights in the
political world, he chose for personal reasons not to pursue such honors and responsibility. However, despite the limited nature of his political career, Alexander's contributions are preserved in the part he played in the creation of Caldwell, Daviess and Platte Counties, Missouri.

In his capacity as a soldier, Doniphan contributed to the growth of the West by helping to conquer the vast portions of northern Mexican territory during the Mexican War. He also aided in establishing a basis for law and order in that area by helping to write the Kearny Code which became a basis for the constitutions of New Mexico and Arizona.

More important than his accomplishments and his physical contributions was the example he set in Christian living and patriotism, which has application to today. For then as now, Americans were faced with the question of loyalty to an administration which many accused of misgovernment. However, instead of preaching rebellion and secession, Doniphan preached loyalty and union. He was confident that the Constitution was broad enough and strong enough to meet every possible need or emergency the nation might face. He also believed that "Misgovernment among a people who understand the nature and act upon the principles of virtuous liberty, is ever of temporary duration."2

To his patriotic loyalty Doniphan added moral integrity. A man of reason and judgment, Doniphan would not allow public pressure or sentiment to sway him from doing what he believed to be right. However,

1Liberty Tribune; 9 November 1869.

2Doniphan and Allen to Members of the Christian Church, 3 February 1865, State Historical Society of Missouri, St. Louis.
being human, he experienced a great inner struggle when his loyalties conflicted such as in the Mormon War and in the Civil War. Yet even under these periods of stress, his moral integrity dictated that he should choose justice over obedience and union over states' rights no matter how unpopular his action might be.

Because of his character traits of integrity, patriotism and resolution, the life of Alexander W. Doniphan has made an interesting study. It is hoped that the reader found the thesis enjoyable and that he gained new appreciation for the "Forgotten Man from Missouri."
Alexander Doniphan
Mott Doniphan

Margaret Mott

Walter Anderson

Anne Anderson

Joseph Doniphan

 Alexander W. Doniphan

Sidney Smith

Joseph Smith

William Smith

Walter Anderson

Kitty Anderson

Anne F. Smith

Mary Waugh

Alexander Doniphan

Margaret Mott

Elizabeth Doniphan

John Waugh

Mary Waugh

?
APPENDIX B

THE BELOVED NAME OF ALEXANDER

Alexander Hale Smith was born June 2, 1838 at Far West, Missouri. While his birth preceded by five months the dramatic events in which Alexander W. Doniphan saved the life of his father, it is quite possible that because of Joseph's prior associations with the dignified Missouri lawyer, that Alexander was named after him. Evidence leading to this conclusion can be found in the Smith Family Bible now in possession of the Department of History, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ in Independence, Missouri. The text of the evidence is here provided, courtesy of Robert J. Matthews of Brigham Young University. On the inside cover of the Smith Bible the following inscription can be found:

To Vida E. Smith from her father and mother--
Alexander and Elizabeth Smith.

The date is believed to be June 2, 1886, the date of Vida's wedding and the anniversary of her father's birthday.]

This book was a gift from my father--Alexander Hale Smith. I am giving it to Isreal Alexander Smith because he bears the beloved name of Alexander with honor, and because of my trust in him, I wish it to pass into his care and personal possession.

signed,

Vida E. Smith Yates

July 9, 1942,

Inez S. Davis, witness
APPENDIX C

WILL OF ALEXANDER WILLIAM DONIPHAN

Probate Court Record of Ray County, Missouri Book E-6 p. 79.

I Alexander W. Doniphan of the State of Missouri aware that I can not live much longer make my last will hereby revoking all others here-tofore made. 1. I appoint my friends Dr. John M. Allen and J. M. Sandusky both residents of Liberty, Clay County, Missouri my Executors and as such direct them to carry out the trusts herein after mentioned. I direct that they shall not be required to give any bond or security. 2nd I direct that I be buried in the new cemetery in Liberty with my deceased wife and children. The lot or small part of a lot where they are now buried being too small and crowded I direct that they purchase an eligible lot the purpose and that they be removed. 3rd It is further directed that a modest monument be erected for the four bearing our names the dates of our respective births and deaths but nothing fulsome this I have to this good taste, one name on each of the four sides. I direct the cost of lot removing reburial together with the monument be about three thousand dollars not restricting my Executors either more or less but trusting to their good judgement. 4th Some twenty years ago my nephew Jon Doniphan executed one or more notes to me and subsequently gave in cumbranleus (sic) an real estate to secure the payment of the same. The debts and all securities are hereby released and as I never intended to collect them, they must not be inventored or mentioned on the inventory. 5th C.T. Garner St. at various times executed his notes to me for borrowed money give them to him and take his receipt and give them to him as he rendered me many kind attentions. Also some notes on James Baldwin & Calhoun Thornton give them up or destroy them. 7th Major Williams & me held some horse stock nominally in partnership. They are all his I have no claim on them. 8th having always intertained an exalted opinion of the intellect culture and pure Christian life and character of my friend and brother Elder Alexander Proctor of Independence, I direct my executors to pay him five hundred dollars not for the material value but as an evidence of my respect. 9th I bequith to my kind friend Mrs. Hudgins wife of William B. Hudgins for her uniform kinship in sickness and in health for these many years. 10th My friend George W. Wymore of Liberty having testified his respect by naming a bright son of his for me, I here by give to said boy five hundred dollars. 11th After the numerous divisions of my estate I direct the remainder to be divided into four equal parts or shares, two my wife's sisters and the remaining two to my two nieces as herein after designated. 12th one forth to Fannie A. Doniphan and one fourth Theo F. Lawson respectively sisters of my wife. 13th one fourth to Mary Ann Shawhan only child of my sister Matilda--she resides in Cynthia...
Kentucky. The remaining fourth to my niece Jennie Hockaday daughter of my Nephew Hinton Hockaday late of Plattsburg. 14th I give to John and Fannie Doniphan my library, silverware canes, and all goods and chairs of like kind.

In testimony where of I heredo write my name & affix my seal this 9th of September AD 1885.

Alexander W. Doniphan

Testified by George A. Stone
Ralph E. Ester
W. M. Allison

Elizabeth Jane Doniphan's will was dated 11 March 1869. Box 3 file D.

In the name of God Amen- Know all men . . . 2nd I hereby desire & bequith to my beloved Husband A. W. Doniphan all my estate, real, personal and mixed of every kind . . .
WORKS CITED

A. PRIMARY SOURCES

1. Official Records, Reports, Journals


Missouri. Circuit Court Records, Jackson County. Independence. Book E

Missouri. Correspondence, Orders, Etc., in Relation to the Recent Disturbances with the Mormons. Jefferson City: Office of the Jeffersonian, 1840.


U.S. Census 1860. Missouri, Clay County, City of Liberty.


2. Manuscripts


Doniphan, Alexander W. Testimony to John Morgan. Historical Department of the L.D.S. Church, Salt Lake City. Name File.


Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1831-1897. Salt Lake City.

Peck, Reed. Diary. Brigham Young University Library. Special Collections.

Smith Family Bible. Department of History, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ. Independence, Missouri.


3. Journals and other Primary Sources


Doctrine and Covenants. Salt Lake City: the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. 1963


Tyler, Daniel. A Concise History of the Mormon Battalion in the Mexican War. Salt Lake City: by the Author, 1881.


4. Newspapers

Deseret Evening News, May 22, 1874

Liberty Tribune, June 27, 1846, October 10, 1846, July 17, 1847, May 28, 1847, June 3, 1853, June 23, 1856, May 13, 1853, November 16, 1848, May 2, 1851, February 19, 1850.
Maysville Public Ledger, June 8, 1865.

National Intelligineer, December 24, 1833.

Provo Tri-Weekly Times, May 26, 1874.

Saint's Herald. XXVIII, 1881.

Times and Seasons, May 1840.

B. SECONDARY SOURCES

1. Articles


Britton, Rollin J. "Early Days on the Grand River and the Mormon War." Missouri Historical Review, XIV (1920), 89-110.


Wells, Junius F. "A Prophecy and Its Fulfillment." Improvement Era, VI (November, 1902), 1-10.

2. Books


History Ray County, Missouri. St. Louis: Missouri Historical Co., 1881.


August 1972, with Miss Louise Darneal of Richmond, Missouri, niece twice removed from Alexander W. Doniphan.
