

# Shelton Township

## Atlas 2009 and 1917

### Location

Last township on the east in the bottom row – Only Platte Township in the river is south of it. Only has three sections in the bottom row – all of sec 31 on west, southeast corner of sec 32 missing, about a third of sec 33. Rest are lost in the river. In the second row from the bottom the curve of the river takes the southeast corner of sec 27 and about half of sections 26 and 25.

### Transportation routes

#### Roads –

Highway 30

I-80

Shelton Road - Road runs on section line a mile west of county line (all the way north to Highway 2 at St. Michael and south along west edge of Shelton to the interchange and across the Shelton bridge over the Platte. Then the name changes to Denman.

Wiseman Road is the county line on the east

Pawnee is the road between Gibbon and Shelton Townships on the west.

#### Railroads –

Union Pacific

Gibbon Cutoff – leaves the main UP track about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile east of Gibbon, which puts it in Shelton Township. Angles south east to go under the Interstate just east of the interchange.

### Towns – Shelton

Located in Sec. 1, northeast corner of the township.

**Cemeteries** - Shelton Cemetery is across the county line in Hall county

First burials (in days when this was Wood River Center) were apparently south of town – where the high school is now located. Constitution and by-laws for the present cemetery were drawn up in 1883, People buried in the old cemetery were moved to the new one. In 1899 two men, R. Fieldgrove & JW Weaver took wagons up into Merrick County and brought back two wagon loads of cedar trees.

Cemetery has 544 lots which are divided into 7,000 plots.

## Shelton Township

### Bassett – History of Buffalo County

SHELTON TOWNSHIP--TOWN NO. 9, RANGE NO. 13

#### 1870—2

O. E. Thompson,  
Andrew Buest.

#### 1871—34 (includes Soldiers Free Homestead settlers)

August Meyer,  
L. Worthington,  
B. C. Bassett,  
Henry Fairchild,  
Robert Waters,  
S. C. Bassett,  
A. S. Craig,  
J. H. Darby,  
Ed Lovall,  
W. H. Sprague,  
James Oliver,  
H. C. Green,  
M. Stearley,  
H. Goss,  
B. F. Sammons,  
Ira L. Bunker,  
L. N. West,  
F. F. Blanchard,  
C. Putnam,  
Dr. I. P. George,  
W. H. Kelly,  
Theron D. Yost,  
J. N. Allen,  
B. Austin,  
J. M. Bayley,  
C. O. Childs,  
Kingman Fisher,  
J. M. Erwin,  
J. F. McKinley,  
Isaac Starbuck,  
James Wilkie,  
F. B. Reider,  
Paul Litterman,  
W. H. Gray.

**1872—18**

Edward Oliver,  
Ephriam Oliver,  
Henry Dugdale,  
E. M. Fargo,  
John Gagin,  
H. Stockwell,  
Orin Pratt,  
S. B. Lowell,  
A. D. George,  
Rodney George,  
George W. Brown,  
James Wilson,  
John Haug,  
Fred Haug,  
George Stearley,  
Joseph Buck, Sr.,  
A. W. Zimmerman,  
J. R. George.

**1873—3**

Joseph Owen,  
Elizabeth Hurley,  
Mrs. Mary Day.

**1874—7**

Patrick Walsh,  
J. A. Brown,  
M. Breed,  
H. Thompson,  
F. J. Jenns,  
L. M. Sanford,  
B. Ashton.

**1875—2**

Wm. Nutter,  
Montrose Fisher.

**1876—2**

L. D. Craven,  
Mrs. E. Pember.

**1877—1**

M. G. Lee.

**1878—22**

D. S. Meals,  
D. M. Swayze,  
W. G. Devall,  
Mary M. Kirkpatrick,  
Eli Meals,  
B. P. Thompson,  
W. H. Curtis,  
J. O. Vanwey,  
George Trace, Jr.,  
L. Vohland,  
W. H. Bell,  
N. Meals,  
M. W. Winchester,  
W. H. Mauer,  
J. Bishop,  
W. H. Ashton,  
J. P. Bastian,  
S. L. Boyer,  
J. B. Loury,  
J. J. Brown,  
James Wilson,  
H. H. Winchester.

**1879—3**

George Mortimer,  
J. H. Leisey,  
J. Miller.

CHAPTER XXVII

FIRST FOURTH OF JULY PICNIC, 1872 -- HELD IN DUGDALE GROVE --  
SUNDAY SCHOOLS FROM BUFFALO AND HALL COUNTIES PARTICIPATE --  
500 CHILDREN IN ATTENDANCE -- SAMUEL B. LOWELL, PRESIDENT -- COL.  
H. D. NILES DELIVERS THE ORATION -- PROF. D. B. WORLEY IN CHARGE OF  
MUSIC. .... [120](#)

CHAPTER XXXIII

SHELTON--KNOWN AS WOOD RIVER CENTER FROM 1860 TO ABOUT 1873--  
COUNTY SEAT OF BUFFALO COUNTY--FIRST RELIGIOUS SERVICES HELD IN  
1870--AN OFFICIAL DOCUMENT IN THE HANDWRITING OF PATRICK WALSH-  
OLIVER BROTHERS ESTABLISH A STORE IN 1871--AN OFFICIAL NOTICE TO  
THE POSTMASTER GENERAL NOTIFYING HIM OF CHANGE IN THE NAME OF  
THE POSTOFFICE--LIST OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS-- .....145 - 149

## SHELTON

At the locality where now (1915) is the thriving and prosperous Village of Shelton, at as early a date as 1860, on maps and publications of that date appeared the name Wood River Center, and there is good reason for believing that an even earlier date there was here a hamlet, a way station, as it were, for travelers over the Overland Trail, doubtless dating from the establishment of Fort Kearney in 1848.

The trails up the Platte Valley, on the north side, extended from the Platte to the bluffs until in the vicinity of Wood River Center, when all trails north of Wood River (those which had followed Prairie Creek) crossed to the south of Wood River at or near this point, proceeding westward on the south side.

To this point in the year 1839 came Joseph E. Johnson, a Mormon, a man of considerable means and of more than average ability. Here he established a store, a blacksmith and wagon repair shop, a tintype gallery, a bakery and place where meals might be had and in April, 1860, a newspaper (The Huntsman's Echo) published, as announced in its columns, at Wood River Center, Nebraska Territory, so that from April, 1860, until February 3, 1873, the name of the place was officially and otherwise known as Wood River Center.

Mr. Johnson fenced with poles cut from Wood River an enclosure, where he engaged in gardening, raising of flowers and planted small fruits and also cherry and apple trees. From copies of the Huntsman's Echo, in the library of State Historical Society, we learn that near this point was a portable sawmill in operation; that corn and spring wheat were grown; that Mr. Johnson had a portable mill in which he ground both corn and wheat for customers.

From the Huntsman's Echo, published in 1860-61, it appears that in the year 1860 J. Sterling Morton and other candidates for congressional and territorial office came to Wood River Center and made political addresses on the streets of the village. We learn that in the fall of 1860 an election for county officers was held at this point, forty-two votes being cast, resulting in the election of Henry Peck, probate judge; J. H. Wagner, Joseph Huff and Thomas Page, county commissioners; P. H. Gunn, sheriff; L. VanAlstine, coroner; James E. Boyd and J. H. Wagner, justices of the peace; James E. Boyd, treasurer and register of voters; Edward Huff, county clerk; P. H. Gunn and John Evans, constables, and Joseph E. Johnson, county superintendent. It was at this point August 20, 1860, that the first postoffice in the county was established, Joseph E. Johnson, postmaster. It was in this immediate vicinity in the early '60s that the families of Mrs. Sarah Oliver, James Oliver, Owen, Dugdale, Meyer, Nutter, Walsh, Thompson, Slattery and Stearley made settlement on lands, becoming permanent residents of the county, honored citizens of the commonwealth. It was at this point in 1860 that the Great Western Stage Company, extending as far west as Fort Kearney, established a stage station, with August Meyer in charge.

When in August, 1864, occurred the stampede, memorable in the history of the territory, occasioned by a raid of Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians, in which terrible atrocities were committed in Central Nebraska Territory and many lives of white settlers lost, and all inhabitants west of the Missouri River terrorized, it was at Wood River Center that settlers north of the Platte gathered, placed themselves under command of August Meyer, who had served in the United States regular army, barricaded themselves

in an unfinished log building, and later all journeyed to Omaha and Iowa points until fear of the raid was over -- except August Meyer and "Ted" Oliver, who remained to care for the stage company horses. Here the first school district was organized, the first schoolhouse provided, the first terms of school held.

It was citizens of Wood River Center, Patrick Walsh, Martin Slattery and others, who joined in a petition to Governor David Butler to reorganize Buffalo County in 1869, and it was in the schoolhouse at this place that the special election reorganizing the county, January 20, 1870, was held, Wood River Centre being the county seat.

In this schoolhouse, in the winter of 1870-71, was held the first public religious services in the county, conducted by Rev. David Marquett, a Methodist missionary.

#### AN OFFICIAL DOCUMENT--1871

The following is a copy of an official certificate of appointment to office, issued by the county clerk of Buffalo County under date of February 24, 1871. This document is in the handwriting of Patrick Walsh and bears the seal of Buffalo County, Nebraska:

"State of Nebraska  
"County of Buffalo ss

"I Patrick Walsh Deputy clerk of said county do hereby certify that at a meeting of the county commissioners of said county on the 18th day of this month the said commissioners have duly appointed Oliver Thompson for the office of county Sheriff of Buffalo Co. and that he has been duly qualified by taking the oath of office and giving bond as the law requires.

"Given under my hand at Wood River Center this 24th day of February A. D., 1871.

(Signed) "MICHAEL COADY, Co. Clerk.

(Signed) "By PATRICK WALSH, Deputy."

"Seal of  
Buffalo County."

(Note-The original of this document is in possession of Shelton Township Library.)

In the year 1873 Edward Oliver and brother established a store at Wood River Center, first in a building 12 by 16 feet in size, later, occupying a much larger building south of the track and carrying a line of dry goods and groceries. An advertisement of E. Oliver and Brother, dry goods, groceries and provisions, Wood River Center, appeared in a copy of the Buffalo County Beacon, published at Gibbon, in 1873. A postoffice at Wood River Center was established October 11, 1872, with Patrick Walsh as postmaster, the postoffice being kept in Mr. Walsh's dwelling, a log house, and later in the Oliver store, with E. Oliver as deputy postmaster. There is a tradition that when the postoffice inspector visited the office and found no stamps on sale the deputy informed him that he did not have to keep stamps for sale without a profit and the inspector threatened to close the office, the salary of the postoffice being some twelve dollars a year.

The name of the postoffice was changed from Wood River Center to Shelton on February 3, 1873, Mr. Walsh continuing to serve as postmaster until March 31, 1879, when Mark G. Lee was appointed.

The postmasters in their order have been Patrick Walsh, Mark G. Lee, John Conroy, J. M. Harman, S. F. Henninger, Frank D. Reed (three terms), I. T. Peterson and John Conroy, dating from August 1914. The revenue of the office in 1914 was \$1,500.

It is related that the village was named in honor of N. Shelton, an auditor in the land department of the Union Pacific Railroad Company.

There is a tradition that Postmaster Walsh, desiring the name of the postoffice changed, notified the postmaster general in substance as follows:

Mr. Postmaster General,

"Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

You are hereby notified that the name of this postoffice has been changed from Wood River Center to Shelton and you will govern yourself accordingly."

In the year 1879 Patrick Walsh had a townsite surveyed on his homestead farm and additions were soon after surveyed by the Union Pacific Railway Company and by Michael Coady, who had a claim on an adjoining section.

In the year 1876 the Union Pacific established a station and installed George Mortimer as agent.

## PHYSICIANS

As recalled, the pioneer physician was Doctor Childs, who erected a two-story frame building south of Wood River bridge on the west side, the lower rooms occupied by More & Nethercut, dry goods and groceries.

Of resident physicians in the life of the village the following are recalled: Henry W. Brickett, Ames, Theron E. Webb, R. M. Beecher, Geo. C. Paxton, E. L. Smith, Charles Lucas, W. W. Hull, R. Kanzler, J. Soper. Of the physicians named doubtless Dr. E. L. Smith was most widely known, had the most extensive practice. His devotion to his chosen profession, his ready response to the calls of suffering humanity doubtless had much to do with his death in the prime of life.

The pioneer dentist was Alex Thomas, who had a pair of rough, home-made forceps, about the size of horse forceps. He had an improvised chair in which to perform his dental operations, his office being in the pioneer hardware store of Eb Marsh, and later John Heatherington.

## INCORPORATION OF THE VILLAGE

The Village of Shelton was incorporated January 6, 1882, the county board naming as trustees H. S. Colby, Edward Oliver, George Mortimer, Mark G. Lee and E. O. Hostetler. The oath of office was administered by B. F. Sammons, justice of the peace. H. S. Colby was chosen chairman and F. D. More clerk. The first meeting was held in Oliver Hall, south of the track.

## THE HORSE INDUSTRY

Much attention is given to the breeding of horses and some of the finest draft stallions in the state are owned by Shelton parties and kept for breeding purposes. Colt shows are held and the animals exhibited are among the finest specimens of their class. In the year 1905 mention was made in the public press of the weights of some of the colts of draft breeding shown. In the two-year-old class, Jacob Johnson's weighed 1,390 pounds, H. H. Stedman's 1,320, Albert Allen's 1,200, Chauncey Cook's 1,150, Silas Coon's 1,170, C. J. Soderstrom's 1,130. In the yearling class I. K. Henninger's weighed 1,010, H. J. Dugdale's 950, John Hosier's 810, Lew Anderson's 830.

Shelton has a driving park association, a fine half mile track, and speed events are held each year at which liberal purses are offered and which attract large numbers of speed horses from this and other states.

The Shelton Flouring Mill was erected in the year 1874 by Jason I. and Dr. I. P. George, brothers.

Wood River, which furnishes the water power to operate this mill, is a stream exceedingly difficult and expensive on which to maintain a dam, and the owners of the Shelton Mill in the earlier days were put to great expense on this account.

In the year 1901 the mill was owned and operated by the Shelton Milling Co., composed of S. A. D. Henninger, F. T. Turney and S. G. Carlson.

In the early spring of 1912 the old dam was completely washed out by an immense flood and the new permanent dam was immediately built of reinforced concrete.

In 1893 the mill was changed from the old stone system to the modern roller process and has been constantly kept up to date with new machinery.

A fine grade of flour is made by this mill which is not only sold largely in Shelton and surrounding towns, but considerable shipments are made abroad. In the year 1915 the mill was still owned and operated by the Shelton Milling Co., which is composed of S. A. D. Henninger only, who in turn is the acting president and manager.

The milling capacity is 100 barrels per day and the grain storage capacity is 12,000 bushels.

From the earliest history of the county Shelton has been prominent as a grain shipping point, one of the first to engage in the business being "Jake" Rice about the year 1878. At that date there were no elevators for storing grain and when cars could not be secured in which to load the grain for shipment, it was piled on the ground and at times several thousand bushels of wheat were thus in piles on the open prairie awaiting cars for shipment, and as Mr. Rice could not pay for the wheat until loaded in a car, when he drew on the bill of lading, the wheat was in these piles at the risk of the farmers.

Fortunately, in those years, there was little rainfall in the fall of the year and the loss on the wheat thus exposed was not large.

At first the storage elevators were "shovel elevators," that is, grain was shoveled into the storage bins from the farm wagons and then shoveled into cars. When the first elevators were built the loaded wagons were drawn up an incline plane to the top of the elevator and then dumped. In 1915 Shelton has four grain elevators, with a total capacity of 130,000 bushels.

Alfalfa is extensively grown in this locality and in the year 1911, at an expense of \$15,000, E. C. Warren erected an alfalfa meal mill with a capacity of thirty tons per day.

PATRICH WALSH.

On the 17th of November, 1902, the news spread through Shelton and Buffalo county that Patrick Walsh had passed away. He was one of the county's best known pioneer settlers and had been closely associated with the work of early development, improvement and progress, taking an active part in planting the seeds of civilization which in later years have borne ripe fruit. His death therefore was the occasion of deep and widespread regret and his history cannot fail

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to prove of interest to many of our readers. He was born in County Sligo, Ireland, and when about twenty-one years of age came to the United States, settling in Mississippi near Kosciusko. There he was married on the 26th of January, 1856, to Miss Agnes Welch, who was also a native of County Sligo and was brought to the United States by her parents when about eight years of age.

Mr. Walsh afterward joined the army and in 1864 came to Buffalo county as a member of Company D, Fifth United States Volunteer Infantry, which was stationed at Fort Kearney, where he remained until 1865, when he was mustered out. The following year he was joined by his family, who made their way by passenger train as far as Grand Island, at which point their few household effects were loaded on a flat car and thus traveled to Buda, which at that time was the terminus of the Union Pacific Railroad. They slept the first night under the shelter of a load of hay. The following day they forded the Platte river with an ox team and the family lived at the fort until the following March, when Sergeant Cody prevailed upon them to remove to his squatter's claim at Wood River Center, now Shelton. Thereon they made their temporary home until Mr. Walsh, located his homestead in 1860 on the present site of Shelton covering the northwest quarter of section 1, Shelton township.

After being discharged from the army Mr. Walsh took sub-contracts under James E. Boyd, afterward governor of Nebraska, on the grading of the Union Pacific as far west as Rawlins, Wyoming. While he had had but limited educational privileges, he always made excellent use of his opportunities and by reading and observation added continually to his fund of knowledge. He became quite a well educated man, was a fine penman, used excellent diction, and also became a master in spelling. His worth was recognized throughout the community in which he made his home. He was closely identified with every movement of a public nature that was of interest and benefit to the town of Shelton. When he first located upon his claim Buffalo county was unorganized, although the district was known by that name. In 1870 he and several of his neighbors who arrived about the same time that he did, petitioned for the organization of Buffalo county and Governor Butler issued his proclamation establishing the county and fixing the temporary county seat at Shelton, which was then known as Wood River Center. Mr. Walsh was appointed probate judge of the new county with authority to appoint county

commissioners., He served in that capacity until the first regular election, when he was elected to the same position.

He was also appointed deputy county clerk under Martin Slattery and after the election the county treasurer failed to qualify and the county commissioners appointed Mr. Walsh to that position. He then resigned the office of deputy clerk but continued to act as judge and treasurer. He also filled the position of superintendent of public instruction and he was afterward elected to the office of county commissioner, in which capacity he displayed the same faithfulness to duty that had marked his course in the other offices.

Mr. Walsh was largely instrumental in securing the establishment of the postoffice at Shelton and continued to act as postmaster until 1879, within which period, through his influence, the name of the town and postoffice was changed to Shelton. It was Mr. Walsh who had the town of Shelton platted and it was he who was at the head of every movement for the advancement of the interests of the town. There was no project for the benefit and upbuilding of the com-

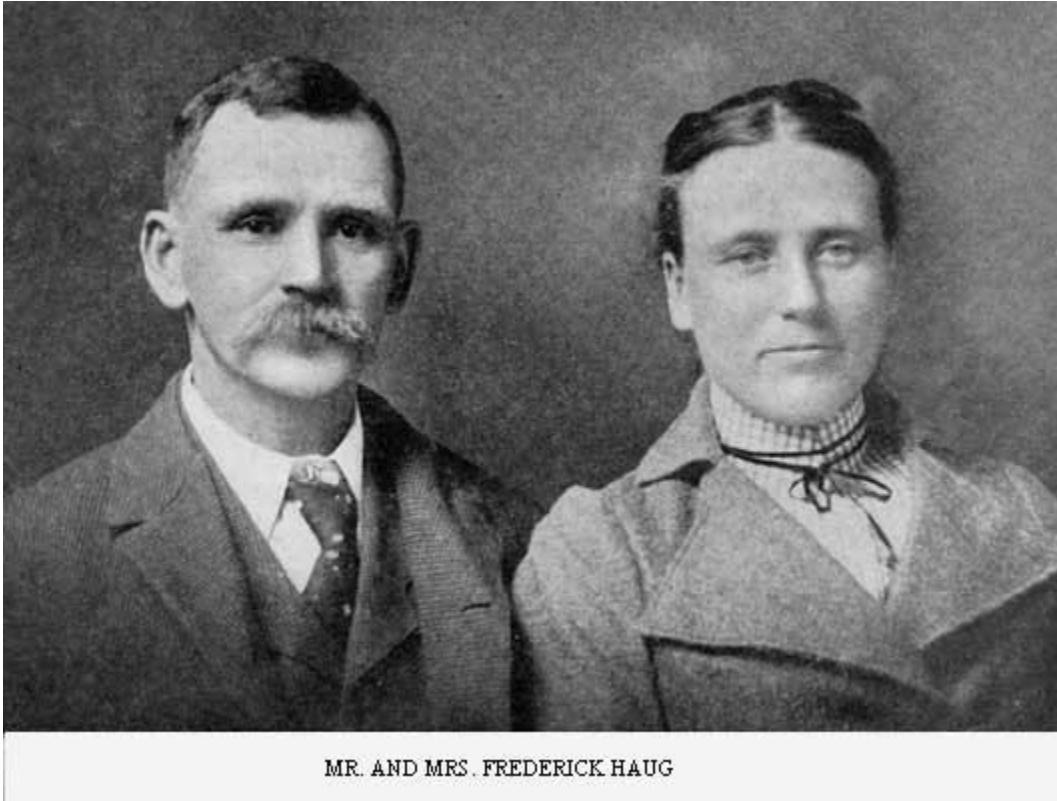
munity with which he was not associated and his aid and influence were at all times given for public benefit and progress.

To Mr. and Mrs. Walsh were born nine children: J. P., who is deceased; J. T. and W. E., both of whom are residents of Omaha; Mrs. Mary Bills, who lives in Fortuna, California; Mrs. Anna Michael, deceased; Rose, the wife of Charles Frietenbach; P. J., deceased, who resided in Laramie, Wyoming; Mrs. Maggie Barney, of Oakland, California; and Ella, the deceased wife of Fred Simpson, of Omaha.

The religious faith of Mr. Walsh was that of the Catholic church, in which he was reared and to which he always loyally adhered. His political belief was that of the democratic party and his allegiance thereto never faltered. He never had occasion to regret his determination to come to the new world, for in this country he found the opportunities which he sought and which are always open to ambitious, energetic young men. Gradually he worked his way upward, winning not only material success but also the high regard and goodwill of all with whom he came in contact, and his worth to the community in which he lived is acknowledged by all who knew him.



FREDERICK HAUG.



Frederick Haug, a well-to-do retired farmer living in Shelton township, was born in Pennsylvania on the 4th of November, 1851. He is one of a family of nine children, of whom eight are living, and is a son of John and Mary (Bender) Haug, natives of Germany, who in 1848 came to America and settled in Pennsylvania. There their marriage occurred and there they resided until 1871, in which year they came to Buffalo county, Nebraska, where both passed away.

Frederick Haug was about twenty years of age at the time of the removal of the family to this county and continued to reside at home until he was twenty-seven years old, when he began operating a homestead which he had entered in 1872. For ten years he farmed that place, after which he purchased his present farm on section 9, Shelton township. He owns three-hundred and fifty-six acres of as good land as there is in the county and he has not only conserved its fertility but has also added to its value by making many improvements. He has erected fine buildings and planted an orchard of seven acres, which supplies the family with an abundance of all kinds of fruit. He is now living retired, his well directed activity in former years having made him a man of independent means. He carried on general farming and found both grain raising and stock raising profitable.

In 1880 Mr. Haug was married to Miss Sarah A. Oliver, who was the second white girl born in Buffalo county. Her natal year was 1860 and she was a daughter of James and Ellen Oliver, both of whom were born in England. In 1860 they came to America and settled in Buffalo county, Nebraska, where the father died. The mother, however, is still living. Mrs. Haug passed away in August, 1900, and was laid to rest in Shelton cemetery.

She left two children, namely: Bertha A, the wife of O. O. Hayman; and James H., who is operating the home farm.

Mr. Haug is a republican in politics but, although he is interested in public affairs, he has never sought office. He is affiliated with Shelton Lodge, No. 141, I. O. O. F., at Shelton, in which he has held all the chairs, and he is also a member of the United Brethren church, to which his wife also belonged. He is a

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man of many admirable qualities and during the many years of his residence in this county has gained the sincere friendship of those who have been closely associated with him.

### EPHRAIM OLIVER.

#### Portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Oliver    Four Generation Picture

Ephraim Oliver, who owns five hundred and eighty acres of good land in Shelton township, is one of the leading stock raisers of the county. He was born in Manchester, England, on the 14th of January, 1852, of the marriage of Edward and Sarah Oliver, both natives of that country. The year 1860 witnessed their emigration to America and they first settled in Buffalo county, Nebraska, but two years later the father removed to Salt Lake City, where his demise occurred. The mother passed away in this county.

Ephraim Oliver is one of a family of eleven children, of whom five are still living. His education was mainly acquired in the public schools of Buffalo county, Nebraska, as he was but eight years of age when the family settled here. He remained at home until he attained his majority and then purchased the old homestead on section 2, Shelton township, which he still owns. He has bought additional land and now holds title to five hundred and eighty acres, all of which is well improved. He raises some grain but devotes the greater part of his attention to stock raising and feeding and in 1915 fed one hundred head of steers and seven hundred head of sheep. He understands every phase of stock raising and also pays great attention to the marketing of his stock and the success which he has gained is well deserved.

On the 6th of April, 1875, Mr. Oliver was united in marriage to Miss Dorothy Fieldgrove, a daughter of William Henry and Margaret Fieldgrove, further mention of whom occurs elsewhere in this work. Mr. and Mrs. Oliver have eleven children: William E.; Walter E.; Edward H.; Cora, the wife of William J. Pierce; John E.; Chester Arthur and Charles A., twins; Howard L.; George H.; Vernon J.; and Dewey S.

Mr. Oliver indorses the policies of the republican party and loyally supports its candidates at the polls. For many years he has served as a member of the

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school board and during that time has done much to promote educational advancement in his district; The greater part of his life has been passed in the middle west and he possesses in a marked degree the qualities characteristic of this section, namely, self-reliance, enterprise and the determination that overcomes obstacles, and he merits the title of a self-made man, for he began his career without capital or the aid of influential friends.

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#### HENRY JAMES DUGDALE.

Among the successful and energetic farmers of Shelton township is numbered Henry James Dugdale, who was born in Shelton, Nebraska, then known as Wood River Center, on the 10th of July, 1860. His father, Henry Dugdale, a machinist by trade, was born in England, as was his mother, Sarah Jane Dugdale.

Our subject was reared in this county and is indebted for his education to the district schools. Early in life he became familiar with farming and on beginning his independent career determined to follow the occupation to which he had been reared. He has never had occasion to regret his choice of a life work, for he has not only gained a gratifying measure of prosperity but has also found agricultural pursuits congenial. He gives careful attention to his work, follows up-to-date methods and uses improved machinery and his well directed energy has resulted in the attainment of success.

Mr. Dugdale was married on the 13th of March, 1888, at Imperial, this state, to Miss Lillie May Allsop, a daughter of William and Helen Allsop. To this union have been born the following children: Lulu Estelle, the wife of Walter

W. Rice, of Kearney; Ralph Earl, who married Ethel V. Roberts, of Toledo, Ohio; Delia Irene; Lee Allsop; and Thelma Helen.

Mr. Dugdale has never been remiss in any of the duties of a good citizen but has not taken an active part in politics, preferring to devote his time to his agricultural interests. He was one of the charter members of Lodge No. 141, I. O. O. F., of Shelton township, organized in 1883, and is still identified with that organization. His entire life has been passed in this county and his genuine worth is indicated by the fact that those who have known him intimately since childhood hold him in the highest esteem and warmest regard.

### **Biographical Souvenir**

**HOMER J. ALLEN.** One of the prominent and influential citizens of Kearney, Nebr., as well as one of the oldest settlers in this section of the state, is Homer J. Allen. Born in Erie county, Pa., in 1848, he came to this state while the major part of our beautiful and now well-settled territory was literally a howling wilderness. His father, Josiah N. Allen,

was a Congregational preacher, born in Otsego county, N. Y., but while yet an infant moving with his parents to Erie county, Pa., where the earlier years of our subject were passed. It was in 1872 that Josiah N. Allen emigrated with a colony of neighbors and friends to this county, locating near the present village of Shelton. His entire life has been given to the Master's service, his labors having begun as early as 1858. He is still alive and resides near Shelton, where he first located. He can tell many an interesting and thrilling tale of pioneer experience, but for these there is scarcely room in a brief sketch like this. Suffice it to say that he preached the first sermon in what is now Buffalo county, and also married the first couple. His faithful wife, Polly Miller, a native of Erie county, Pa., was born on the third of August, 1837, and still lives to share the comforts and trials of his declining years. The Allens trace their lineage back to Samuel P., the great-grandfather of Homer J., who was of English descent. His son, Clother B., was born in New York State, but passed the greater part of his later life in Erie county, Pa., whither his son, as above stated, had emigrated about 1827. He died there at the age of seventy-seven years.

The subject of this sketch is the eldest of six children, of whom five are still living. Emogene, wife of a Mr. George, is a resident of Custer county, this state; Ernestine, now Mrs. S. J. Hedges, lives near Sidney, Nebr.; Milly, wife of Stephen Stonebarger, lives at Shelton; Mertie B. lives with her parents at Shelton; Hadley Dean is dead.

Our subject was reared up a farm boy in Erie county, Pa., and during his boyhood years attended the common schools of that state; but at the age of twenty-one, desiring to still further increase his fund of knowledge, he entered the excellent normal school located at Edinboro, Pa. It was his intention to take the entire course at this school, but his labors were broken in upon by an accident which he met with at the end of his second term, and which precluded his further attendance until other interests seemed to make it impossible for him to carry out his original intention. The remaining time that he lived in Pennsylvania was devoted to farming, and when, in 1872, having accumulated a little property, he came to Nebraska and bought eighty acres of land located about two miles southwest of Shelton.

He is one of the many men who have demonstrated beyond a doubt that good business habits, coupled with industry, will make a success of farming in Nebraska. Beginning with but eighty acres, he gradually added to his landed possessions till at the present time he owns four hundred and twenty acres. Mr. Allen continued the business of farming up to the year 1883, when his fellow-citizens, deeming his services would be of value to them, elected him to the office of county treasurer, and, for the better discharge of

his duty, he in that year removed to Kearney, the county seat. At the end of his first term he was re-elected, holding the office continuously from his first election in the fall of 1883 until 1888. His services in this capacity were entirely satisfactory to his constituents. It has, since 1888, been engaged in the abstract and real estate business,

which he still follows. He is, however, interested in various other commercial enterprises, having been active in organizing the Kearney National Bank, one of the strongest banking concerns in the city of Kearney, of which he has been a stockholder from its incipiency, and during a large portion of that time one of the directors. He is also treasurer of the Kearney Land and Investment Company, which company he also assisted in organizing.

Mr. Allen was married in 1875, March 18, to Phoebe S. Hotchkiss, of Erie county, Pa. Three children have come to bless this union--Elmer W., Edna M. and Leon. Mr. Allen and his wife are both members of the Congregational church of this place.

In the midst of his arduous and successful business enterprises, Mr. Allen has found time to develop the social side of his nature as well. He is a Knight Templar, member of Mount Hebron Commandery No. 12, and is also a member of the shrine located at Omaha. He is also connected with the A. O. U. W. of this place. Mr. Allen is a staunch republican in politics, but, as will be seen from the foregoing sketch, has preferred the more congenial walks of a business life to the turmoil and intrigue of a political career. He is a man of fine and commanding presence, and, best of all, has the respect and confidence of his fellow-citizens. In a city which can, perhaps, boast a larger number of enterprising and able men than the average city of its size, Homer J. Allen occupies an honorable place.

**BENJAMIN ASHTON**, of Platte township, Buffalo county, is a comparatively old settler of his locality, a successful farmer and an old soldier of honorable distinction. He is a native of Bucks county, Pa., born in 1843, and comes of old Pennsylvania stock. His father, Samuel Ashton, lived most of his life in the Keystone State, being a farmer and leading the active, industrious and useful life common to his calling up to his death, which occurred in the fall of 1862, when he had attained the sixty-sixth year of his age. Mr. Ashton's mother bore the maiden name of Matilda Bryan. Ten children were born to these, only three of whom are now living - John, residing in St. Louis; Benjamin, our subject, and William H., in Lycoming county, Pa. Benjamin Ashton grew up on his father's farm and received the training common to his years and calling. He entered the Union army in May, 1862, enlisting in Company E, Fourteenth United States infantry, his regiment being assigned to the Fifth corps, Army of the Potomac. He was in the campaigns and engagements participated in by that army from the second Bull Run to Gettysburg, at which latter place he was disabled by a gun-shot wound in the left shoulder and compelled to retire from active field service. He continued on duty, however, being placed in the recruiting service and serving out his term of enlistment, being mustered out May 8, 1865. Settling down in Lycoming county after the close of the war he married and devoted himself to agricultural pursuits till 1878, when, seeing a family growing up around him and being desirous of getting into a new country where the opportunities were better for giving them a start in the world, he decided to move West, and accordingly, in October of that year, he came to Nebraska and settled on Elm Island in Platte township, Buffalo county, where he now

lives, taking a soldier's homestead of one hundred and fifty four acres. He has been steadily engaged in farming and stock-raising since that time, and, having added other land by purchase, he now owns two hundred and thirty-four acres well stocked and well improved.

Mr. Ashton married, May 18, 1867, Miss Susan Siglin, a daughter of Frederick and Susan Siglin, natives of Monroe county, Pa., where also Mr. Ashton was born and reared. Her father died there, but her mother continues to reside there. Mr. and Mrs. Ashton have had born to them a family of eleven children, only four of whom, however, are now living, the full list being Walter, Matilda (deceased), Mabel (deceased), William (deceased), twins who died young, Samuel, Edgar P. and Flossie.

Mr. Ashton has filled the usual number of local offices, having been treasurer of his school district, justice of the peace of his township, township clerk, and moderator of his school board. Mr. Ashton is a pleasant gentleman, kind and accommodating, and to his home and family devotedly attached.

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**H. H. WINCHESTER.** An old and honored citizen of Buffalo county and one of the first settlers of the locality where he lives is H. H. Winchester, of Platte township. Mr. Winchester moved into the county in May, 1879. He took a homestead shortly afterwards on the old Fort Kearney military reservation, which had been thrown open to settlement a short time previously, filing on lots in sections 5 and 32, his claim lying on Clark's island, in the Platte river. There he located and has since resided. He has a small, well-improved farm, desirably located and one that yields well. He has been actively and exclusively engaged in farming since settling in the county. Mr. Winchester had his first experience, however, at farming on his present place. Before moving West, he was for many years a manufacturer of carriages in Coleraine, Mass. Misfortune overtook him, as it has done thousands of others, and he came West to regain what

he could. Measured by his means and opportunities, he has succeeded reasonably well. It is no mean tribute to his pluck and energy that he has done as well as he has. He was considerably past middle life when the business which he had been engaged in for twenty-one years went to pieces. It would unquestionably, under the circumstances, take a strong resolution to make a man pull up, go to a new country and set out afresh in a business concerning which he knew nothing practically. The natural impulse of most men would be to remain among the friends and associates of their earlier years. But Mr. Winchester's pride and sense of duty to those dependent on him forbade him doing this. He came West, where, if he could not materially repair his own fortunes, he might at least

put his children in a better way to make theirs than they could hope to do in the East.

Mr. Winchester is a native of Marlboro, Vt., and was born in 1824. He was reared there till he reached maturity and went thence to Massachusetts, where he resided, mainly at Coleraine, till coming to Nebraska. He comes of old New England stock, his father, Martin Winchester, being a native of Marlboro, Vt., and his mother, who bore the maiden name of Clarissa Hillyard, a native of Stonington, Conn. These were reared in their native places, married in the latter state, and settled in Marlboro, where they subsequently lived and died. The father died in 1844, at the age of sixty-one; the mother in 1862, in her sixtieth year. They were plain, well-to-do people, spent their lives on the farm and were characterized for their industry and the economical management of their domestic affairs. They left a family of six children, only three of whom are now living. The full list is as follows -- Betsie, Cyrus, Horace H., Eliza, George and Hiram. The last three sons are the ones now living.

Horace H., the subject of this sketch, and Mary Ann Felker were married in June, 1849, Mrs. Winchester being a native of New Durham, N. H. She is the eldest child of William and Susan (Holmes) Felker, her parents both being natives also of New Hampshire. Her father was born March 18, 1799, and died December 2, 1832. Her mother was born January 19, 1799, and died at the age of forty-two years. Their children were Mary Ann (Mrs. Winchester), who was born October 9, 1827; Hannah Abigail, who was born October 19, 1829; William, who was born January 19, 1832, and who died one day after; Deborah J., who was born December 23, 1832, and died May 17, 1839, making Mrs. Winchester and her sister, Hannah Abigail, the only survivors.

Mr. and Mrs. Winchester are the parents of five children, all of whom are now living. These are--William, John, Clara, Ella and Charles. To these Mr. Winchester has given good educational training and they are all making their own way in the world in a creditable manner. Only two of them now remain at home, these being the two younger.

Coming of New England stock Mr. Winchester retains many of the qualities of his people. His persevering industry, strong self-reliance, as well as his thrifty, economical habits, he owes to this source. Mellowed by age and softened by his experience with the world, his character has lost that metallic nature (if indeed he ever had it), which the New England character is popularly supposed to have and he presents the appearance of a man who has lived to a reasonably good age, soothed and sustained by a consciousness of having discharged his whole duty to those dependent upon him and to his fellowmen. He has never aspired to any public life, being content to follow the even tenor of his way as an humble citizen. He has not failed, however, to bear his full share of the burden of public and neighborhood duties of that unremunerative kind which fall to the lot of all.

**JACOB MILLER** is a representative farmer of Platte township, Buffalo county. He settled on his present homestead in March, 1878, his claim being part of the Fort Kearney military reservation, which was thrown open to settlement about that date. Mr. Miller

came to Nebraska from Preston county, W. Va., but is a native of New York City. He is of French extraction, his parents both being natives of the town of Strausburg. His father, George Miller, came to America after his marriage and settled first in New York City and afterwards in Preston county, W. Va. He died in the latter place in 1852 in his fortieth year. He was an engineer, an industrious, hard working man, of studious habits and very strong domestic tastes. Mr. Miller's mother, whose maiden name was Margaret Long, survived her husband many years, dying also in Preston county, W. Va, in August, 1872, aged seventy-two. These

were the parents of three children, all of whom reached maturity and are now living. The eldest of these, Margaret, now wife of John Nine, and the youngest, George, both live in Preston county, W. Va. The second is the subject of this sketch, who was born in New York, March 9, 1839, and was quite a lad when his parents moved to West Virginia. He was apprenticed to the shoemaker's trade, learned it, and followed it till the war came on. He enlisted in the Union army in May, 1861, entering Company D, Sixth West Virginia cavalry, which regiment first formed the Third West Virginia infantry and was afterwards mounted. His company was commanded by Capt. A. J. Squires and was mustered into service at Newburg, Va., June 28, 1861. His regiment served with the Army of the Potomac and took part in the following engagements: Shaw's ridge, battle of McDowell, Franklin, Cross Keys, Cedar mountain, Rappahannock station, Waterloo Bridge, Sulphur Springs, second Bull Run, Warm Springs, Rocky gap, Mill Point, Droop mountains and other smaller ones. He was captured near New Creek, W. Va, in September, 1863, and was released on parole in February, 1864. During part of this time he was held at "Libby." When the war was over he continued in the regular service for more than a year, being on the frontier in the Indian service, ranging the plains and Rocky mountains, mostly along the stage lines. He was mustered out May 22, 1866, at Ft. Leavenworth, and returned to his old home in West Virginia, where he lived till coming to Nebraska in 1878.

Mr. Miller has been twice married. He married first in December, 1868, his wife being Miss Mary Shaw, a daughter of Thomas A. Shaw, of Preston county, W. Va. To this union were born three children - William W., Marshall McCurdy and Thomas Clark, the last now deceased. Mr. Miller married the second time December 24, 1876 - the lady on whom his choice fell being Miss Helen Louisa Parsons, a daughter of James William and Catherine Parsons of Tucker county, W. Va. Mrs. Miller is a native of Tucker county, as were also her parents. Her father is still living there; her mother died in 1856, aged forty eight. Mrs. Miller is one of a family of eight children who reached maturity, namely - Jane Rebecca, Samson Ellion, Hannah, Agnes, Ann Melissa, Helen Louisa (Mrs. Miller), Diana Elizabeth and Solomon John.

Being a public spirited citizen as well as a man of good business qualifications, Mr. Miller has naturally been called upon to fill some offices in connection with the

administration of the public affairs of his township. He has been moderator of his school district, road supervisor, and is now serving as township supervisor. In politics he is a republican. He cast his first presidential vote for the Bell-Everett ticket, but soon afterwards, affiliating with the republican party, he has voted that ticket since. Mr. Miller is an intelligent, liberal-minded, progressive citizen, and well esteemed by his neighbors.

### Andreas' History of the State of Nebraska

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# BUFFALO COUNTY

*Produced by [LeRoy Eaton](#).*

## Part 9

THELON F. ALLEN, farmer, located on northwest quarter of Section 11, Township 9, Range 13, Shelton Township, in November, 1878. He also owns forty acres on Section 10 and eighty acres on Section 13. He engages largely in farming and raises some stock. He was born in Erie County, Penn., February 23, 1844; was raised on a farm. He went to Illinois and worked at farming in Boone and Ogle Counties four years; returned to Pennsylvania and farmed about eight years; then came to Nebraska. He was married, in Boone County, Ill., November 17, 1870, to Miss Ellen M. Stall, who was born in Norway March 15, 1848. Her parents came to America when she was six years of age, and settled in Illinois. They have three children--Albert, Frank and Edgar. He is a member of the School Board of his district and a member of the Buffalo County Agricultural Society.

HARRISON A. LEE, farmer, came to Buffalo County, Neb., in April, 1873 and located on Section 15, Township 9, Range 13, Union Pacific Railway land, all of which he now owns and has well improved. He believes in raising a variety of crops, but makes corn the principal one, having in the present season about two hundred and twenty-five acres; has also a large herd of fine stock, in which he is quite a dealer. Section 15 is finely located in the Platte Valley, between the Platte and Wood Rivers, and is two and a half miles from Shelton Station, Union Pacific Railway. Mr. Lee was born in Farmington, Trumbull Co., Ohio, October 4, 1837; was raised and lived on a farm until December 7, 1861, on which day he enlisted in Company D, Sixth Regiment Ohio Cavalry, as Bugler. He served about a year. During that time, he was under Gen. Fremont, in Western Virginia; participated in the second battle of Bull Run and the battle at Centerville, Va. He re-enlisted, in 1864, in the One Hundred and Seventy-first Ohio Infantry and was commissioned First Lieutenant in Company H of that regiment. He participated in the battle of Keller's bridge, near Cynthiana, Ky., where he was taken prisoner, with his regiment, on the 11th day of June, 1864, by the rebel Gen. Morgan. Fortunately, Gen. Burbridge was close at hand, and compelled the rebel General to disgorge his prisoners, and they reached the Union lines at Augusta, on the Ohio River. He was married, in North Bloomfield, Trumbull Co., Ohio, December 19, 1865, to Miss Mary C. Snyder, who was born in Brookfield, Trumbull Co., Ohio, October 3, 1838. They have one daughter--Louisa, born January 2, 1872. He is a member of the Robert Morris Lodge of Masons at Kearney. He served three years as County Commissioner of Buffalo County. He is at present, and has been since its

organization, President of the Buffalo County Agricultural Society. He was one of the committee that came out with Mr. John Thorp to select a location for the Soldiers' Homestead Colony from West Farmington, Ohio. They arrived at Gibbon February 27, 1871, and being favorably impressed with its location, as well as the appearance of the surrounding country, it was decided to come to Gibbon.

GEORGE MISNER, farmer, located on Section 24, Township 10, Range 13, in Shelton Precinct, Buffalo County, on a homestead of eighty acres, April 1, 1871, and began breaking the prairie and farming, turning over eighty acres of sod the first year, and the year following he broke up 240 acres, and has now 1,500 acres under cultivation, and employs four men. With the latter's help, and his assistance, they produced 8,000 bushels of wheat and 16,000 bushels of corn in 1875. He has not missed a crop since he has been in the State, and now owns 3,000 acres of fine land. He is now making stock-raising a specialty, and owns at present 500 head of cattle of all kinds, and will turn off 120 head of beeves in the spring of 1882. He was born in Germany March 19, 1843; came to America with his parents in 1847, and settled in Troy, N. Y.; moved to Tama County, Iowa, in 1855. He has always followed farming. He was married in Shelton, Neb., in October, 1877, to Miss Rachel Fieldgrove, of Pennsylvania. They have two daughters--Eldora and Elnora.

GEORGE SMITH, farmer, located in Shelton Precinct in the fall of 1871. Moved his family in July, 1872, and located on Section 27, Union Pacific Railroad land. He now owns 480 acres, 210 of which is improved. He has twenty acres of fine growing cultivated timber. He is engaged quite largely in stock-raising. He was born in Lawrence County, Penn., April 4, 1833, was raised on a farm and followed farming until he came to Nebraska. He spent three or four years in California in mining, etc. He was married in Lawrence County, Penn., in 1859, to Miss Nancy Fisher, who was born in Lawrence County, Penn., October 25, 1835. They have five children--William J. (now married and farming in Buffalo County), Melvina (now married to Mr. George Barrett and farming in the latter county), Andrew E., Joseph and Ida Jane at home.

## **From the Archives**

### **Assessor's Book -- Shelton Precinct, 1879**

Familiar names of some land owners:

Coady

P Walsh

Ed Oliver - 600 used in merchandising - no livestock

Joseph Owens - 6-10-0-12-0

Ephram Oliver - 2-5-0-4-1

George Meisner - 7-42-0-130-3

Casper Meisner

Henry Fieldgrove – 5-6-0-14-1  
27,600 acres

Personal property – horses – cattle – sheep- swine- vehicles  
Henry Dugdale – 7-20-0-6-3  
Fred Haug – 2-2-0-3-1  
George Stearley – 3-19-0-6-1 aka Stierley  
Alba Robinson 2000 used in merchandising – 0-1-0-5-1

### **The Golden Record, Vol. I**

Sarah Oliver – died in 1871 – Came from England in 1860. Buried on her homestead near Shelton

Rodney George – 1807-6/27/1880 - Shelton Township in 1872. 4 sons, 4 dau.

Henry J, Dugdale – first white boy born in the county in 7-10-1860  
(James Boyd's daughter was born before him)

Lawrence Vohland – 1848-1928 - moved to Gibbon in 1878 and settled on farm where he spent the rest of his life. Married to Mary Stearley, 15 children, 3 died before him

Mary Stierley Vohland - born 1854 in PA, moved to Indiana. Married Lawrence in 1874, moved to Buffalo Co. In 1878 homesteaded southeast of Gibbon, sod house until 1884.

Martin Slatterly p52 – 1831 Ireland – 1896  
Married Mrs. Margaret Carmichel in 1866. Emigrated that same year west to Shelton. 7 children. Railroad section foreman. Section house built at [what later became] Kearney, first residents. Moved to Shelton in 1867.

Margaret Slatterly – born PA 1842 - 1928. Married young and had 2 children, widowed, met & married Martin in Aug. 1866.

George Stearley p59- born in Bavaria, Germany in Apr. 1826, died 8-28-1897  
Came to America in 1854 to PA. Came to Wood River in 1868. 1871 moved southwest of Shelton. "...a man of many eccentricities..." Ill 3 years. Had written exactly what he wanted done at his funeral and about burial.