



Eastern Nebraska Genealogical Society Newsletter

P O BOX 541
Fremont NE 68026-0541



Dec 2017 – Jan 2018

Happy Holidays!

MEETING: Dec 11, 2017 - 7 P.M.

Mares Meeting room: 1722 e 19th street

**Come and share a story about an ancestor who served in any US war – a continuation from November
--NO BROWSE NITE IN DECEMBER--**

2018 Jan 8: Meeting and Jan 22: Browse Nite

We had a small gathering of members in November who came to share stories of ancestors who served in a US war. We heard details about service in an unidentified war in 1831, the Civil War, the Spanish American War, and WW II. We decided that we would all like to share stories of an additional ancestor at the December meeting. Hopefully more members will be able to join us and add new stories on Dec 11.

Note: Please come to the Nov 27th Browse Nite and help us select interesting topics for future Roots and Leaves Quarterlies. You are also welcome to send ideas to reneeabunck@gmail.com

Here are some highlights of early settlement in Washington County as presented by the 1921 publication, ***History of Dodge and Washington Counties, Nebraska***

Historic Items of Washington County

Mrs. May Allen Lazure, well-known to the people of Washington County, a few years since made this historic record of some interesting items on the early day history of the county, and from such writings we are permitted to quote freely:

"Alfred D. Jones, the first postmaster of Omaha, tells in the Pioneer Record of the first Fourth of July celebration in Omaha and Nebraska, as well. "On July 4th, 1854, I was employed in the work of surveying the townsite of Omaha. At this time there were only two cabins on the townsite, my post office building and the company claim house. The latter was used as our boarding house. Inasmuch as the Fourth would be a holiday, I concluded it would be a novelty to hold a celebration on Nebraska soil. I therefore announced that we would hold a celebration and invited the people of Council Bluffs, by inserting a notice in the paper, and requested that those who would participate should prepare a lunch for the occasion. "We got forked stakes and poles along the river, borrowed bolts of sheeting from the store of James A. Jackson, and thus equipped, we erected an awning to shelter from the sun those who attended. Anvils were procured, powder purchased and placed in charge of cautious gunners, to make a noise for the crowd. The celebration was held on the present high school grounds. "The picnickers came with their baskets, and the gunner discharged his duty nobly. A stranger in our midst was introduced as Mr. Sawyer, an ex-congressman from Ohio." I had a life-long acquaintance with one of those early picnickers, Mrs. Rhoda Craig, a daughter of

Thomas Allen, who built the first house in Omaha. She often told the story of the first Fourth of July celebration there. Their fear of the Indians was so great that as soon as dinner was over, they hurried to their boats and rowed across to Council Bluffs for safety.

Another pioneer woman was Aimee Taggart Kenny, who came to Fontanelle with her parents when a small child. Her father was a Baptist missionary in Nebraska, and his earliest work was with the Quincy Colony. I have heard her tell the following experience "On several occasions we were warned that the Indians were about to attack us. In great fear we gathered in the schoolhouse and watched all night, the men all well armed. But we were never molested. Another time, mother was alone with us children. Seeing the Indians approaching we locked the doors, went into the attic by means of an outside ladder and looked out through the cracks. We saw the red men try the door, peep in at the window, and then busy themselves chewing up mother's home-made hop yeast, which had been spread out to dry. They made it into balls and tossed it all away."

John T. Bell of Newberg, Oregon, contributed the following: "I have a pleasant recollection of your grandfather Allen. My father's and mother's people were all Southerners and there was a kindness about Mr. and Mrs. Allen that reminded me of my own folks back in Illinois. I often stopped to see them when going to and from Calhoun mill. "I was also well acquainted with Mrs. E. H. Clark, and Rev. Mr. Taggart and his family were among the most highly esteemed residents of our little settlement of Fontanelle. Mr. Taggart was a man of fine humor. It was the custom in those early days for the entire community to get together on New Year's Day and have a dinner at the 'College.' There would be speech-making, and I remember that on one occasion Mr. Taggart said that no doubt the time would come when we would all know each other's real names and why we left the States.

The experiences of the Bell family with the early Nebraska days were ones of privation. We came to Nebraska in 1856, quite well equipped with stock—four good horses and four young cows which we had driven behind the wagon from Western Illinois. The previous winter had been very mild and none of the settlers were prepared for the dreadful snow storm which came on the last day of November and continued for three days and nights. Our horses and cows were in the stable made by squaring up the head of a small gulch and covering the structure with slough grass. At the end of the storm when father could get out to look after the stock there was no sign of the stable. The low ground it occupied was leveled off by many feet of snow. He finally located the roof and found the stock alive and that was about all. The animals suffered greatly that winter and when spring came we had left only one horse and no cows. That lone horse was picking the early grass when he was bitten in the nose by a rattle snake and died from the effects. One of those horses 'Old Fox' was a noble character. We had owned him as long as I could remember and when he died we children all cried. I have since owned a good many horses but not one equalled Old Fox in the qualities that go to make up a perfect creature.

After the Civil war my brother Will and I were the only members of our family left in Nebraska. We served with Grant and Sherman and then went back to Fontanelle, soon afterward beginning the improvement of our farm on Bell Creek in the western part of the county. By that time conditions had so improved in Nebraska that hardships were not so common. I was interested in tree planting even as a boy and one of the distinct recollections of our first summer in Nebraska was getting so severely poisoned in the woods on the Elkhorn, when digging up young sprouts, that I was entirely blind. A colored man living in Fontanelle told father that white paint would cure me and so I was painted wherever there was a breaking out with satisfactory results. Later the planting of cottonwood, box elder, maple and other trees became a general industry in Nebraska."

Population of Washington County

At various periods the population in Washington County has been as follows : In 1855 it had a total population of 207 ;in 1860 it had reached 1,249; in 1870 it was 4,452; in 1880 it was 8,631. The last three United States census returns gave Washington County the subjoined figures, by townships and villages:

	1890	1900	1910
Arlington Township	1,167	1,378	1,380
Blair Township	1,443	1,011	645
Cuming City Township	665	638	613
De Soto Township	277	370	313
Fontanelle Township	803	759	766
Fort Calhoun Township	1,187	1,495	1,447
Grant Township	926	866	775
Herman Township	827	996	978
Lincoln Township	856	850	791
Richland Township	1,000	1,179	1,292
Sheridan Township	649	575	546
Blair City	2,069	2,970	2,584
Arlington Village	412	579	645
Fort Calhoun Village	346	324
Herman Village	319	321	345
Kennard Village	275	319
Totals	11,869	13,086	12,788

Original Village Plats

Since the organization of Washington County the following original village plattings have been executed, a number of which have long since been defunct:

DE SOTO, platted in section 27, township 18, range 12, by an act of the Legislature, March, 1855, having been surveyed out the autumn before by Dr. John Glover, Gen. J. B. Robinson, Potter C. Sullivan, E. P. Stout, William Clancy.

FORT CALHOUN was platted in sections 11 and 12, township 12, range 17.

COFFMAN, platted in section 31, township 17, range 13; it is a siding on the "Omaha " railway line, but not a place of importance.

WASHINGTON, platted in section 32, township 17, range 11, and is now an enterprising town and important station on the Northwestern Railway.

KENNARD, platted in section 5, township 17, range 11, is an excellent town today.

BLAIR, platted in sections 11 and 12, in township 18, range 11. It was platted by the officers of the Northwestern Railway Company (old F. E. & M. V.).

TYSON, platted in section 15, township 19, range 11 ; it is simply a railway siding.

HERMAN, platted in section 30, township 20, range 11, and was the result of the construction of the railway.

DALE, platted in section 26, township 17, range 10. Today there is a siding and a grain elevator at this point.

BOWEN, platted in section 14, in township 17, range 10.

VACOMA was platted in section 7, township 19, range 10. A county store is now located at that point today.

FLETCHER, platted in section 32, township 20, range 10. This also has a general store at this time.

TALBASTA, platted in sections 26 and 27, in township 19, range 9, It is a small hamlet with a store.

FONTANELLE, platted in sections 8, 9 and 17, by the old Quincy Company, is situated in township 18, range 9. It now has a postoffice and store.

ADMAH, platted in section 34, township 20, range 9.

ARLINGTON, platted as Bell Creek, in section 12, township 17, range 9.

ORUM, platted in section 10, township 18, range 10.

CUMING CITY, platted in sections 34 and 35, township 19, range 11. A large part of this village plat has been vacated.

HUDSON was another early platting, in the extreme northeastern part of this county. It was one of the early paper towns and had much pioneer notoriety. It was heavily advertised in the East, and many lots sold at good prices. Even to this day, it is related, there are now and then inquiries from the far East about the town which has long since been in the midst of excellent farms. No trace of a village is to be seen—corn and wheat fields are there to be seen today. The location of this much-talked-of "Town" was in the north half of sections 26 and 27, township 20, range 11, now within Herman Civil Township. It was platted and offered for sale by one William E. Walker, a schemer of the Eastern States.

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**For more information about early Washington County, NE. Please visit the Washington County Nebraska Genealogical Society website - <http://www.newashcogs.org/>**

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The ENGS library contains a number of Washington county reference items. (Note: Items 1 & 5 appear to be missing)

- * 1) Biographies of Nebraska Pioneers by Louis Bayer of John H Albrecht, Carl Bayer, William C Hecker, Charles Cushman
- 2) Blair Cemeteries
- 3) Blair City Directory – 1963
- 4) Blair, Nebraska 1869 - 1969
- * 5) Fontanelle, NE Pioneer History by Verne C Fuhlrodt - 1930
- 6) Fontanelle, NE - Washington County 1980 Church on the Frontier
- 7) Fort Atkinson on the Council Bluffs – 75th Anniversary Sermon
- 8) Kennard, Nebraska History 1891 - 1991
- 9) Master Index to Pioneer Family Sheets- housed at Dana College.
- Details can be researched at the Washington Co Gen Society
- 10) Reckmeyer Funeral Home Records 1887 -1904 Arlington, NE
- 11) Salem's Story (Fontanelle NE) A Sesquicentennial History 1860-1910
- 12) Shipley Cemetery 1861-1981
- 13) Washington County, History 1876 (1985 reprint)
- 14) Washington, NE (Washington County) History 1980
- 15) Washington, NE (Washington Co) 1887-1976
- 16) Washington County Plat maps for 1880,1885,1972-76,79-81,84-85
- 17) Washington Co (NE) Census from Einar VIG Collection
- 1870 & 1880 (appears to be head of household)
- 18) Washington County, Nebraska 1884 Plat Book with Index
- 19) Washington County, NE Marriages Book I, II (1856-1874)
- 20) Washington County, NE Marriages-Index of Parents & Witness
- for Book I & II (In back of Book II)
- 21) Washington County, NE Marriage Indexes books III, IV & V
- 22) History of Washington County, NE - "Portal to the Plains"
- 23) History of Washington County, NE 1887-1976 - "A Struggle For Survival"
- 24) Washington County Census –1885 - book form and 3x5 cards
- 25) Washington County Cemeteries Vol I and II