

# Garfield Township

**Location:** Fourth in the top tier of townships, going from west to east.

Bounded on the north by Sherman County, on the south by Schneider, on the west by Loup, and on the east by Cherry.

**Formation:** After 1880 [census includes settlers in Schneider Township]

Before 1885 [on 1885 atlas of Nebr. Map]

Apparently Schneider was formed first and Garfield separated from it.

## Rivers & Streams:

South Loup River enters the township about a mile north of the southwest corner of the township and winds northeast, finally turning east to exit into Cherry Creek Township a mile south of the Sherman County line.

Beaver Creek (Muddy) enters the township about 2 miles from the north boundry and winds basically east to empty into the South Loup about at south side of present day Ravenna.

## Towns:

Nantasket – two miles east of Ravenna

Ravenna – two miles into the township, a mile from the Sherman County line.

## Transportation Routes

Highways – Highway 2 crosses east/west

Coming from Sweetwater goes on south side of Ravenna

Drops a mile south as it continues east.

Only east/west road going completely through township

- Highway 68 comes out of Sherman County into Ravenna.

Continues south as Ravenna Road

Only north/south road going completely through township

Railroads – Burlington Northern –

G I through Ravenna

formerly Chicago, Burlington & Quincy

formerly Burlington & Missouri River

- Union Pacific – Gone now

Howard County & Boleus through Nantasket to Poole & Pleasanton

## Railroads – race

Winner's town would grow.

Freighting in Buffalo County ended with construction of Burlington.

Equipment & supplies shipped to Kearney, taken north by freight wagons

Jan 7 – 2 train loads of tents & camping equipment arrived in Kearney

End of Feb – hauling goods daily  
Mid-March - Freighting all those supplies was not easy and working with the mules must have been a strain on the temper at times. In May it was reported that "One of the railroad teamsters, hauling iron pipe from Kearney to the B. & M. railroad, north, was arrested on Saturday for unmercifully beating one of his mules."

Early Visitors:

Indians

Pawnee, maybe a village and burial ground in Ravenna area

Ft. Kearny

Trees to build fort came from Islands in the Loup

Ft. Banishment

Est. on South Loup in 1866 to protect UPRR construction

Post South Loup Fort, aka Ft. Desolation

[last October radio]

Cut wood for ties

Gibbon Homestead Colony

Looked around when exploring for claims

Early settlers – logs for house beams & firewood

**Early homesteaders** – 18 before 1880.

Stark, Fritz – 1878

New York – June 16, 1864

Davenport, Iowa, 3 years, Miller

Omaha, NE, Feb-May 1867

Grand Island – 3 years

Fremont – Oct. 1870

Council Bluffs – Elevator hand

Grand Island – Apr. 1871 – Started a saw mill on Oak Creek

Gibbon 1873 – milling business

Garfield Township homestead – 1876, filed on it in 1878

Loup valley at Nantasket

Married in 1877 in Grand Island – Wilhelmina Gaden, a native of Germany

Two children – William & Anna

Smith, Erastus – first in 1874

First to homestead in Garfield Township

Born in Indiana in 1830, in his 40's when he came here

Father from Vermont, mother from Maine

English – came here before the Revolutionary War

Educated as a civil engineer

Des Moines, Iowa – 1854 – 400 acre farm, sold it

Omaha, NE – 1856 – Real Estate

1858 – Commercial Traveler (traveling salesman?)

Burning Springs, West Va – 1861 – oil wells but business ended with war  
Polk County, Iowa – taught school & farmed  
Garfield Township, Buffalo County – 1874  
Household goods, 6 horses & feed, family provisions for 1 year  
Family in Kearney, floor collapsed, John McGee at Sweetwater  
Household goods, stove, 3 horses lost in Beaver near claim  
Homesteaded 1/4  
Lost 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> year crops to grasshoppers  
Timber claim & bought 540 acres R R land  
Farming & cattle raising  
Appointed first postmaster of Beaver Creek Post office – Dec. 11, 1878  
  
Jan. 1, 1886 – Burlington & Missouri River RR started building  
Sold 2/3 interest in a section of land to Lincoln Land Company  
Platted a town, Smith kept every third lot.  
Retired to town, looked after his property & buildings  
  
Began recording weather in 1878 till death in 1909.  
3 temp readings, 7 a.m., 2 p.m. & 9 p.m.

**Buffalo Tales, July-August 1991, “Post South Loup Fort”**  
**Buffalo Tales, April, 1985, “Freighting in Buffalo County, Part III”**

**Bassett**, p 114 – Homesteaders before 1880

GARFIELD TOWNSHIP--TOWN NO. 12, RANGE NO. 14

1874--Erastus Smith, H. J. Alward, Wm. Eastridge, D. Miller, W. Freel.  
1876--E. Veith.  
1877--J. T. Lewis.  
1878--F. Stark, A. A. Hixon.  
1879--J. C. Stark, P. Gehrt, J. W. Mommesson, J. M. Smith, C. Uri, W. Brough, B. F. Peck, P. N. Round, C. Landers.

**BIOGRAPHICAL SOUVENIR OF BUFFALO COUNTY, 1890, p. 100-101**

**F**RITZ STARK, miller of Garfield township, Buffalo county, Nebr., was born in Holstein, Germany, November 28, 1834. His father, Friedrich Wilhelm Stark was superintendent of a large farm in the old country; he married Lucy Schall, and by her became the father of five children, of whom Fritz is the youngest. Fritz Stark came to America alone, landing in New York, June 16, 1864; from that city he went to Davenport, Iowa, and for three years followed his trade as miller; from Davenport he came to Nebraska in February, 1867, and until the first day of May of the same year resided at

Omaha; thence he went to Grand Island, where he remained until October, 1870; then he moved to Fremont and to Council Bluffs, being employed as an elevator hand at the latter place; he next returned to Grand Island, in April, 1871, and later started a saw-mill on Oak Creek, but the mill was not profitable, and he passed two more years at Grand Island; he then passed two and a half years in the milling business at Gibbon, and in 1876 located on his present homestead, it being one-half of section 2, Garfield township. One quarter section is a homestead and the other quarter is a timber claim. He has sixty acres under cultivation in mixed crops, has good buildings and most of his farm fenced in. His residence and barns are large frame structures, surrounded by fine orchards and groves. The farm shows thrift and good management, and is situated opposite the town of Nantusket in the valley of Loup river, with water convenient for his stock. Mr. Stark was married at Grand Island, in 1877, to Miss Wilhelmina Gaden, a native of Germany, and two children bless this union -- William and Anna. Mr. Stark has two brothers in this country -- John C., a plasterer and mason, living at Grand Island; and Carl, a farmer living near Litchfield, Sherman county. Mr. Stark is in politics independent and unfavorable to prohibition. He takes great interest in the development of his country, and is a true American citizen.

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