

## **Bassett, History of Buffalo County**

### SPECIAL ELECTION, JANUARY 20, 1870

The special election for the reorganization of the County of Buffalo was held at the schoolhouse in Precinct No. 1, on Thursday, January 20, 1870.

Clerks of Election--C. S. Johnson, William Nutter.

### FIRST REGULAR ELECTION

The first regular election in the county was held October 11, 1870.

### A PIONEER FAMILY, A HISTORICAL SKETCH OF ONE OF THE FIRST FAMILIES TO MAKE SETTLEMENT IN BUFFALO COUNTY

William Nutter, aged twenty-five years, and Dinah Hingham, aged eighteen years, were married in Lancastershire, England, in 1853. In the family of William Nutter there were nineteen children, all from the same parents, and Mr. Nutter recalls seeing fifteen of these children seated together at his father's table. In Mrs. Nutter's family there were seven children. Mr. Nutter from his earliest youth was taught the spinner's trade and worked at his trade until he rose to the position of foreman of the card room before leaving England. Mrs. Nutter, as a small child, wound bobbins for weavers and when older worked in cotton and woolen mills. About this date there were many Mormon elders in both England and Wales and large numbers of the people in these parts of England were converted to the Mormon faith and emigrated to Utah. At first polygamy was not preached as a part of the Mormon faith or practice, but about this date (1852-54) its preachers becoming more bold, announced that Mormons of deep piety and who gave liberally to the church were permitted more than one wife. Mr. Nutter was converted to the Mormon faith and earnestly advocated its cause, though it seems that he gave little thought to its polygamous feature as it did not appeal to his nature or mode of life. Mr. Nutter was so imbued with the truth of the Mormon faith that he attempted to convert his mother, who had already borne nineteen children, from her own faith to that of the Mormons, but without success.

Two children, the eldest a daughter named Olive, and the second a son named Moroni, after one of the most prominent characters in the Mormon Bible, had been born to Mr. and Mrs. Nutter when in the spring of 1855, in company with 700 other Mormon emigrants, they took passage on a sailing vessel named the Juventa, their destination, Salt Lake City, Utah. This vessel, the Juventa, had been condemned as unseaworthy by the British government, but the condemnation seems not to have prevented the use of the vessel to transport Mormon emigrants. The passage cost about thirty dollars for each person and included board. Five weeks were required for the trip and they landed at Philadelphia, Pa. Mr. and Mrs. Nutter were without means when they landed, but had been led to believe that plenty of work at good wages could be had on arrival and that they could earn enough to enable them to pursue their journey to Utah. As both had worked all their lives in cotton and woolen factories, they fully expected to find like employment on arrival, but were disappointed. Mr. Nutter finally secured work in a truck garden at \$3 a week, working from daylight till dark. Work was so scarce at the time that many worked for their board and it is related that an aged man, toothless, who worked for his board, was found fault with because he took so much time at his meals. About this time the eldest child, Olive, died of summer complaint and was buried in Philadelphia. After a few weeks Mr. Nutter found employment in a cotton factory but was taken sick and being without any means, was compelled to ask for and received a ticket of admission to an almshouse, but could not get admission for his wife and child. The family went together to the almshouse, arriving in the evening. The superintendent, on coming to the door, demanded

in a loud, coarse voice, "What in h-l did you come at this time of night for?" This brutal reception so angered Mr. Nutter that he left the building, and passing down the street, it being a warm evening and the people sitting on their porches, inquired where he might find lodging until he was able to find work. He was taken to a building called "House of Industry," established by the Quakers for those out of work and without means, where the family were provided with clean beds and good food until employment could be found. When able to seek work Mr. Nutter found a man who promised work on a railroad in the State of Delaware and who furnished transportation on a sailing vessel but furnished nothing to eat and the family became very hungry when a negro cook took pity and gave them a meal. Here Mr. Nutter worked two weeks and then found work for himself and wife with a farmer but neglected to fix a price and when they came to leave had little coming--just enough to pay their passage back to Philadelphia. They started on Saturday and at midnight the vessel cast anchor until Monday morning and the family became very hungry. On arriving at Philadelphia, an Englishman, whom they met, gave them some money and referred them to a friend in Gloster, N. J. where they found employment in print works, and where they remained for two years. At this place the second child, Moroni, died and was buried in Gloster, also John N., the second son was born in 1855. In the fall of 1857 the family returned to Philadelphia and Mr. Nutter found work at his trade at \$1 a day wages, but soon came the panic of 1857; and all manufacturing ceased. In the spring of 1858 Mr. Nutter found employment at his trade, as foreman of the card room at \$40 a month wages. In the year 1857, twin boys were born, William H. and W. Hingham. The one named W. Hingham died in early infancy and was buried beside his sister Olive in Philadelphia.

The family remained in Philadelphia until enough had been earned to enable them to reach Utah. They left Philadelphia in the spring of 1859 and going to some point on the Ohio River traveled down that stream and up the Mississippi and Missouri rivers to Florence, near Omaha, which was an outfitting and starting point for Mormon emigrants. Mrs. Nutter recalls that they were three days making the distance from St. Joseph to Florence occasioned by their boat repeatedly getting aground on sand bars. On this trip the family were accompanied by Samuel Stamworth, wife and child, Mrs. Stamworth being a sister of Mr. Nutter. At Florence Mr. Nutter purchased a yoke of oxen, a new wagon, a cow and food sufficient for the entire journey. Another family furnished a yoke of oxen and shared the wagon with Mr. Nutter's family during the journey. The train consisted of seventy-five wagons, mostly drawn by two yoke of oxen. A daughter of Hiram Smith, later president of the Mormon Church, and her husband and children accompanied the train, the captain of the train being John F. Smith, a son of Hiram Smith. All emigrants were supposed to carry sufficient provisions to last the entire journey but many were wasteful and were entirely out before the end of the journey. Mrs. Nutter says she feared more than wild Indians these half famished emigrants when they came demanding food.

A few days before the Smith train left Florence, a hand cart train (that is a party carrying all their belongings in hand carts which they pushed or pulled) darted out ahead of the Smith train and reached Salt Lake City some two weeks in advance of the Smith train. Owing to the crowded condition of their wagon, Mrs. Nutter walked the entire distance, riding less than twenty-five miles. Rice was the principal food of the family, this with milk from their cow furnishing a most satisfactory meal. The captain of the train, John Smith, had frequently traveled the trail. He was a very profane man and a drunkard. When drunk he would not allow the train to break camp, and they were much delayed on this account. On one occasion he did not break camp until after noon and then announced that they would travel in the night to make up lost time. For fear that William H., the baby, might fall out the wagon in the dark and be injured, Mrs. Nutter tied him with a rope to the wagon bows. While driving in the night, on this occasion, a teamster in lighting his pipe, frightened his oxen and this in turn caused a stampede of other ox teams and loose stock, cows and other cattle. Mrs. Nutter had milked their cow previous to starting and was carrying the milk in a pail in order to have it for their supper when they camped. In the stampede she was knocked down and the milk spilled but she was not injured. One child was seriously injured and wagons broken so that it was necessary to make camp in order to make repairs. Late in the night the captain of the train came back cursing and swearing because they had not continued the day's drive until the camp was reached.

Mrs. Nutter relates that on the ship Juventa, at Florence and on the trail occasional religious

services were held and related an incident connected with one of such services held on the trail by the captain of their train who was also an ordained elder or preacher. Captain Smith had issued an order for religious services to be held at camp headquarters in the evening and commanding every one to be present. This service Captain Smith conducted in person during which he stated that in being ordained an elder he was also given the power to pronounce curse on anyone, and the party so cursed could not remove same. He then said he had lost a valuable knife costing \$5, and he knew someone with the train had it, that if the knife was not returned he would pronounce a curse on the one having it. At this point a Welshman jumped up and said he had the knife.

During this journey twelve children died of whooping cough, one of the number, the daughter of Mr. Nutter's sister, Mrs. Stamworth. John N. Nutter recalls being awakened before daylight to take a last look at his little cousin, who lay dead in a cracker box, much too short for a comfortable bed, and who was buried in a grave beside the trail early in the day so as to not delay the journey of the train. Accompanying this train was a family, husband, wife and three children; they were possessed of considerable means, had three good horse teams, a good wagon, and abundant outfit for the journey. The three children sickened and died and were buried beside the trail. The drunken captain of the train neglected to caution the emigrants not to allow their animals to drink of the alkali water and as a result this family lost some of their most valuable horses and finally the husband of the family buried his wife beside the trail, without a coffin, on the high divide, where it is reported that the waters from one spring flow one part towards the distant Pacific and the other part towards the distant Atlantic.

The greatest suffering on the part of the emigrants on this journey was for want of water while crossing the alkali plains and in the mountains; much of this suffering would have been avoided but for the drunken captain who sometimes failed to advise where water could have been found and thus save long drive between camps; also had the emigrants known the distance to the next water camp they might have carried water at times to help relieve the great thirst often endured. This journey, begun in early summer, was completed after the harvest of small grain in the settlement in Utah, but in time to find work in the harvest of potatoes and other vegetables. There was no welcome on the part of the Mormon Church or those in authority, to these emigrant members of the Mormon Church, who, leaving kindred and friends, the land of their birth, the homes of their ancestors for many generations, and who had, amid poverty, toil and undreamed of privations, at last reached the so-called "promised land," the dwelling place of the "Latter Day Saints of God."

There was no preparation in advance for their coming; no provision for their comfort or necessities. Did one complain to an elder of the church that he had only a dry crust to eat and no means to buy more, he was told to soak his bread in water, and if he lacked for vegetables was informed that potato tops were said to be better than nothing. Ox teams and good new wagons were valuable property in Utah, and, at much less than their real value, Mr. Nutter traded his oxen and wagon for ten acres of sandy land some miles from the City of Salt Lake, and also included in the trade was a lot and a house built of "dobe" or sun-dried brick. Timber for fuel could be had in the mountains some five miles or more distant. Work could be had but the pay consisted of produce, not cash. Everything not raised in Utah commanded extravagant prices. The English are great lovers of tea. To purchase one pound of tea it is related one Englishman drove to the mountains, cut and hauled a load of wood to the city, a trip, coming and going, of thirty miles. Mr. and Mrs. Nutter soon learned that polygamy, as preached in England and practiced in Utah, were quite different propositions. In Utah, any man could have all the so-called wives he could manage to get possession of and incoming trains were watched for, and young women made plural wives of, in many cases over the objections and protests of their parents. Girls only thirteen or fourteen years of age thus became mothers of children by becoming plural wives of Mormon officials as well as of men who held no official connection with the Mormon Church, simply were members of the church. The Nutter family soon became greatly dissatisfied with the so-called Mormon religion and Mr. Nutter, from a firm believer in the Mormon religion, came to be a non-believer in any form of religious belief, and so continued to the end of his life.

The breaking out of the Civil war greatly pleased the Mormon leaders who claimed the war had been prophesied by Brigham Young as punishment for the persecution of Mormons by Gentiles, and that the Gentiles in the eastern states would destroy each other and that the Indian tribes in the West would

assist in the destruction. All this was believed by the Mormon people and discouraged any who thought of leaving. Helen, the second daughter, was born in Utah in 1860; in 1862 the family arranged to leave Utah. They traded their real estate property for two yoke of oxen and a wagon, and provided food for the journey but had no cow. Mrs. Nutter had taken with her to Utah a loom, thinking she might get work at her trade. This loom she traded for a gold watch. They left Utah in the month of June, accompanied by two other families, one by the name of Morgan. On the first day's journey, when some ten miles east of Salt Lake City, they were overtaken by Mrs. Allen, with whom they were acquainted. She was barefoot, and had nothing except the clothing she wore. She begged to be allowed to accompany them on their journey. Mr. and Mrs. Allen were quite well educated people and had arrived in Utah with considerable property. Since their arrival Mr. Allen had taken younger wives and practically deserted his first wife, leaving her destitute. When he saw that his wife was determined to leave Mr. Allen had agreed that Mrs. Allen might have a yoke of steers with which to make the journey, but neither Mr. Nutter nor Mrs. Allen dared to return for the steers for fear they might not be permitted to again continue their journey. The Allens had in store some flour at a Mormon station east of Salt Lake City and of this flour Mrs. Allen secured two sacks which were added to the food supply of the party. A few miles west of Fort Laramie the Nutter family met a westbound immigrant train engaged in burying three of their number who had been killed by Indians. These three persons--two men and one woman--driving a good team of horses and a fine saddle horse hitched to the wagon, had tarried at a trading post near the fort in order to make a few purchases. Some Indians were at the trading post and tried to trade for the saddle horse but without success. It is supposed the Indians followed the party and attacked and killed them. The members of the train with which the three persons were traveling, becoming uneasy that they did not rejoin the train, halted and sent back a party which had just found them dead and their horses gone. At Fort Laramie Mrs. Allen traded a ring which she wore for a pair of coarse shoes, she having come barefoot thus far on the journey. The Nutter family had planned to cross the River at Julesburg, coming down on the north side of that river. At this point they met some Indians who threatened to kill them if they crossed the river, so they followed the trail on the south side until they reached Fort Kearney, crossing the Platte at that point. When Mrs. Nutter was asked if they had any trouble in crossing the Platte she answered "Not at all." When asked to describe just how they crossed, she said: "Mr. Nutter walked on the near side, driving the oxen; Mrs. Allen and myself waded in the river on the off side and with whips kept the oxen from turning back. The water was not deep except in the main channel where it came nearly up to the wagon box."

The Platte River at this crossing is 1½ miles from the north to the south bank; there are numerous small islands or toe-heads as they are called locally, so that the total width of all the channels is about four thousand feet. The crossing was about three miles in length, extending from a point half a mile west of the fort on the south side to a point some two miles west of the fort on the north bank. The Platte was a treacherous stream to cross, having numerous quicksand holes and a fall of about eight feet to the mile. In time of high water in the main channel the water often came up to the wagon box and with the tremendous fall ran at a furious rate. With a strong wind, in time of high water, the waters were forced into one channel, washing out holes ten or more feet in depth. The writer forded the Platte at this crossing in 1871 and saw a dozen or more large, strong army wagons, sunken in quicksand holes and abandoned in mid-stream, when doubtless attached to each one of these wagons were four or more pair of strong, government mules driven by experienced drivers, while the brave, sturdy pioneers, men and women, who by toil and privation demonstrated for the benefit of future generations, the possibilities of the then Nebraska Territory as a place for comfortable homes and happy families, thought it "no trouble at all" to wade waist deep in the swift running waters of this broad and treacherous stream and by means of whips and shouting encouraged their half frightened oxen to drag across its sandy bottom a heavily loaded wagon containing the small children of their families and all their earthly belongings. The objective point of the Nutter family on leaving Utah, had been the Wood River Valley, near what is now the Village of Shelton in Buffalo County, some fifteen miles east of Fort Kearney, as they had been most favorably impressed with this locality on their overland journey to Utah. When they were near this point they overtook a freighting outfit en route to the Missouri River. Mrs. Allen was extremely anxious to continue her journey eastward and so Mr. Nutter arranged with the freight "boss" to convey Mrs. Allen

to Omaha. There were no women with the freighting outfit but the "boss" agreed to protect Mrs. Allen during the journey. The Nutter family never again heard in any manner from Mrs. Allen--one among many thousands of other victims, deceived, wronged, outraged, robbed, many murdered, by that foul blot on civilization, and more so on the American nation, the Mormon Church.

The Nutter family purchased a "squatter's right" to a claim on Wood River about two miles east of the present Village of Shelton, trading therefore one of the two yoke of oxen. Mrs. Nutter traded her gold watch for a cow and here began anew the struggle for a living and a home. During the fall Mr. Nutter found work putting up hay for use at Fort Kearney and in the winter in cutting and hauling wood to the fort. Mr. Nutter had never worked at farming, except while in Utah, and had never raised any corn. In the spring of 1863, they planted a small acreage of potatoes and other vegetables and managed to break and plant eighteen acres of corn. In planting this corn a hole was cut in the sod with an ax and the kernels of corn dropped in the hole. No weeds grew, in those days, on newly broken sod and this corn was not cultivated in any manner. Mrs. Nutter assisted in the out-door work. From these eighteen acres they harvested and sold 600 bushels of corn selling at \$1 per bushel--\$600 in all. This corn was purchased by the Holiday stage line operating on the south side of the river.

This was more money than the Nutter family had ever had at one time before and Mrs. Nutter relates that the first article that she ordered when they received the money for this corn was a pair of men's boots, No. 5, for which they paid \$5. There being no store nearer than Omaha an order was made for the things needed and sent by a freighting outfit which in time delivered the goods. In the spring of 1864 the family planted a considerable acreage of corn and vegetables, planting their corn quite early and thereby secured the promise of a bountiful crop, while those of their neighbors who planted late had their crop destroyed by grasshoppers which appeared in considerable numbers destroying the unripened corn.

In August, 1864, occurred the "stampede," memorable in the history of Nebraska Territory for the horrible atrocities committed by the cruel Cheyenne Indians. Space does not permit only a mere mention of the stampede; suffice to say practically all settlers in the Territory of Nebraska, except in the near vicinity of the Missouri River, deserted their homes and traveled with all possible speed towards the eastern border of the territory. Awakened in the dead of night and notified that the dreaded Indians were on the war path, the Nutter family hastily placed their household elects and children in their wagon, hitching thereto their two ox teams and took the trail for the Missouri River, every moment in dread of attack by the savage Indians. Is it any wonder that in the hurry incident to this sudden leaving of their home that baby Helen should have been overlooked and been left asleep in a dry goods box used as a cradle? Some considerable distance had been thus traveled before Helen was missed and the team halted while the anxious father returned for her. During the time the family had been living on the Wood River claim, two daughters, Onie and Leonie, had been born, so that the mother's arms were full even without the baby daughter Helen. The great fright which Mr. Nutter received on this occasion seems not to have left him until he reached England. He had heard of the horrors of the Civil war then raging in "the states," of the massacre of settlers by Indians in Minnesota, knew of the degradation and misery of Mormondom from which he had lately escaped and his one desire seems to have been to once again reach "Old England." At Omaha the family disposed of all of their belongings, at what then seemed fairly good prices. Their first objective point was Quebec, Canada, as Mr. Nutter greatly feared that he might be compelled to take part in the Civil war. Of the journey from Omaha to Quebec, Mrs. Nutter can recall nothing as to route or mode of travel. One thing she recalls with much vividness; it is the great astonishment she felt when crossing "the states," probably Iowa, Illinois and Michigan, that the people on the farm were busily at work in the fields or in building houses or barns, and in the cities larger buildings were being erected, while she had thought that in "the states" everybody was fighting and being killed.

At Quebec they engaged passage on a vessel for Liverpool, England. The passage was paid in English money, or at the rate of \$3 of United States money for \$1 of English money. The passage took two weeks and when the family reached Liverpool they had not a cent to pay fare to their former home. Mr. Nutter pawned his watch for that purpose. Here the baby Helen was again forgotten, she being asleep in the station with the rest of the family on the train ready to start. Mr. Nutter at once secured

work at his trade of spinner, but in less than two weeks was longing to be again on his claim in Nebraska Territory. He wrote to his former employer in Philadelphia for work and back came a letter with passage money, and Mr. Nutter leaving his family in England returned to Philadelphia and began work in the factory as foreman of the card room. On this trip Mr. Nutter was a passenger on the City of Boston, a magnificent steamship, which on its return voyage disappeared and was never heard from. Mrs. Nutter remained in England six months before joining Mr. Nutter in Philadelphia. While in England the twin daughter, Leonie, died and was buried in England, and a daughter, named Elizabeth, was born. Mr. Nutter remained in Philadelphia until the spring of 1869, when he came to Nebraska and purchased a "squatters right" to the southeast quarter of section 8, town 9, range 13 west, in Buffalo County, paying therefore, with the improvements--a log house, log barn and corral--about three hundred dollars.

He secured work as a section hand on the Union Pacific Railroad and in July Mrs. Nutter and the children arrived. In the spring of 1870, not being able to purchase a team, they hired some land plowed, and this they planted in potatoes and other vegetables and corn, from which he raised good crops. His corn he sold for 50 cents per bushel and the potatoes were placed in a cave until spring and sold for excellent prices to members of the Soldiers' Free Homestead colony, some seventy-five families, which made settlement near that point in April, 1871. The crop of 1870 enabled the family to purchase a yoke of oxen and a cow and through the kindness of Sergt. Michael Coady of Fort Kearney he secured an old Government wagon. At the time of the stampede, before referred to, he had nearly ready for the harvest a considerable crop of both corn and vegetables; and which crop was harvested and sold by returning settlers after the stampede scare was over. Returning settlers state that this crop sold for about one thousand dollars, but it is more than probable that this amount is greatly in excess of the amount actually received. For the crop raised in 1864 Mr. Nutter received from one of the settlers who returned after the stampede one cow.

With the coming of the colony referred to schools were at once established and the children of the family were prompt to take advantage of this opportunity to acquire an education. Also the older children were of an age where they were helpful in opening up the new farm and tilling the same. The home of this family soon became one of the best improved farms in the county. In the '80s there was on this farm a bearing orchard of 2,000 trees. When this orchard came into bearing there was great loss by reason of wormy apples. Mr. Nutter finding little of value in recognized authorities in regard to this pest of his orchard, set apart a room in his house and made a scientific study of the pest, pursuing his investigations with all the zeal and close attention to details that would be expected from a graduate of a scientific department of the State University with the initials of a degree attached to his name. The results of Mr. Nutter's study and investigations in this connection were deemed so important that the professor of horticulture of the State University visited Mr. Nutter and secured the results of his investigations and embodied them in a bulletin issued by the station and from these and like investigations came the present method of spraying fruit trees for the destruction of many kinds of fruit pests. In 1886 Mr. Nutter erected, at that date, one of the finest farm houses in the country. The house is octagon in form, 16 feet on a side and 18 feet in height. It has what are termed modern conveniences, such as hot and cold water, toilet and bath room, furnace, etc. The rooms are spacious and well furnished. It has abundant porch room and a well kept lawn with ornamental trees and shrubs. He also erected at the same date a convenient barn. After the return of the family to Nebraska in 1870 there were born the following children: Hingham, Alice, Jane, Frank, Louisa and Mirabeau D., in all fifteen children, ten of whom are living and of legal age. All these children were given the benefit of a common school education and some of them have been for years teachers in the public schools.

Mr. Nutter took but little interest in state and national affairs. He was for many years a subscriber to such magazines as Popular Science Monthly and North American Review, and in his library was a quite complete set of Spencer's works, also the published works of Darwin, Tito Vignoli, Stallo and others. He was a strong believer in free trade from an English standpoint. He was at all times industrious and performed an incredible amount of labor and yet he was, by many, regarded as a "dreamer" because, while his hands were employed about the labors of the farm, his thoughts were almost wholly given to the contemplation of some profound subject.

All the property accumulated by Mr. and Mrs. Nutter has been by industry and economy, as Mr.

Nutter never speculated, nor, so far as known, had any source of income other than his farm. Mr. Nutter was born in 1828 and died at his home on May 13, 1908. He was buried in Riverside Cemetery, near Gibbon. No historical account of this family is at all complete that does not include some further mention of the mother of this family; she enjoyed little in the way of educational advantages and at the age when she should have been playing with her dolls was helping to earn the family living by winding bobbins for the weaver's shuttle. She it was who loyally, patiently, uncomplainingly followed the varying fortunes of the family, seemingly never discouraged, always hopeful, doing her full share of work most laborious, enduring her full share of all privations bearing fifteen children, two pair twins, five of the children dying in early youth or infancy and being buried in widely separated graves, one in England, one in New Jersey, two in Pennsylvania and one in Nebraska. As the years came and went she came to be the financier of the family. She it was who saw that the children had food in plenty and of good quality, that they were comfortably clothed, and while to her the profound theories of Huxley and Darwin and Spencer and the fine spun theories of free trade and protection were as mysterious as the letters of the Greek alphabet, yet she it was who saw that the children were regular in attendance at school and attended to the cares and duties assigned them. In furnishing, from memory only, on request, something of the history of her family, its travels, its privations, its toils and struggles at times for the barest necessities of life, its times of great peril and sore affliction, she was much more likely to recall some humorous feature or incident than one of peril or great privation and seemed not to realize that people who thus meet and overcome such almost insurmountable obstacles, and at last secure by industry, economy and integrity a comfortable home for themselves and their immediate family are true heroes and heroines of real life. Notwithstanding all the toils and privations incident to her life and travels, Mrs. Nutter in the seventy-third year of her age pursues her daily task with a vigor of step and a sprightliness of movement to be envied by many a person still on the sunny side of life.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL SOUVENIR OF BUFFALO COUNTY**

**WILLIAM NUTTER**, one of a family of nineteen children born to John and Elizabeth (Knowles) Nutter, is a native of England and was born January 3, 1829. He comes of English ancestry and is the only representative of his family in this state. He was reared in his native country and in his earlier years was apprenticed to the trade of cotton carder and spinner, which trade he mastered and followed for some time in some of the chief cotton factories in England. He married in April, 1853, taking for his wife a neighbor girl of his native place, Miss Dinah Hingam, a daughter of William and Olive (Hayworth) Hingam. In the latter part of March, 1855, with his wife and two children, Mr. Nutter set sail for the New World, on the ship Juventa. After a voyage of six weeks, he landed in Philadelphia, May 5, 1855, looked around the factories for work, but could not get the kind of work that he had been raised to and so went to Gloucester, N. J., and engaged in the print works, in the meantime keeping his eyes open for a chance in the cotton factories. He was there two years, and in the spring of 1857 engaged with Guy Taylor & Co., in Philadelphia, to superintend their carding and spinning departments. He held that position for a period of three years and then, in the spring of 1860, with his family, he started west to seek a home in the trackless prairies beyond the Mississippi. Making his way by rail and boat he reached the Missouri river about the middle of that year and joined the great caravan of overland immigrants then making their way to Utah. Locating in Session settlement, Utah Territory, he remained there for twenty months engaged in farming and laying the foundation for what he hoped would be a peaceful and happy home. But with the rapidly passing events of those times he soon found that he had mistaken his company, and breaking friendship with his former associates, he turned his back upon the treacherous Mormons and retraced his steps towards the East. He settled in Hall county, Nebr., in the spring of 1862, taking a homestead on the banks of Wood river near the western line of the county. That was an early date for central Nebraska--some years before the advent of the railroad with its civilizing influences. "Life on the plains!" What memories are awakened in the breast of many a resident of Nebraska at the sight and sound of these words: When the golden spike was driven which bound together the iron links in the great national highway, the knell in that Wild period in the history of the West was struck. The

whistle of the first locomotive in its fierce rush across the hitherto trackless expanse ended forever that scene in the drama of progress, which was alike comedy and tragedy. "I crossed the plains," are words which, spoken by the bronzed and hardy pioneer, signify more than the men of a later generation can conceive of. The toiling caravan of immigrants to the El Dorado of the Pacific slope; the venturesome cavalcade of daring huntsmen; the solitary group of mountaineers have passed beyond the view, and all that now remains of them are scattered traces of forgotten graves, a few survivors of those scenes (sic), busied with other tasks, and vague traditions of the times, which horrify or charm, as deeds of murder, robbery or love perchance give coloring to the tale. Among the very early trials were the dangers incident to crossing a country inhabited by fierce Indians. If the truth could be known, probably every mile from the Missouri to the Pacific would demand at least one headstone to mark a victim's grave. The stages of life, from birth to the closing of the drama, were here exemplified. Many a poor mother hushed her new-born babe amid the rough scenes of a camp while she herself was suffering from lack of those comforts so essential to maternity. Along the trackless plains many a maiden awoke to the revelation of love and many a troth was plighted. Even the marriage rite was sometimes celebrated; and death, in every form, paid frequent court to the lone wanderer and the straggling settler. Through these scenes and the many changes since, the subject of this sketch has passed and from them he has gained a world of observation and experience not met with in the lives of many men. When he settled on his present homestead there were but few settlers along the Platte river in central Nebraska; all the central and western part of the state was one unbroken prairie, threaded by a few streams and dominated by the aboriginal red man and roaming herds of buffalo; the county of Buffalo had not then been marked on the map. When Mr. Nutter settled on Wood river there was a stage station where the village of Shelton now stands, and a family or two settled along the river in that vicinity. To the west, north, south, and one might almost say to the east, the country was simply part of the unknown world so far as the abodes of white men were concerned. The Union Pacific railroad had not then been projected, this part of the great public domain had not then been surveyed, and the country at large was considered worthless, except as a hunting-ground for the Indians. These were present in great numbers, and included some of the most powerful and warlike tribes on the continent. The Cheyennes, Sioux and Pawnees roamed over this part of the country then, and they not unfrequently left the evidences of their savagery in murdered men and women and in desolated homes. To people of a later generation, not one in ten of whom ever saw a "painted red devil," it is hard to convey an adequate idea of the terror which these prowling bands of savages spread through the country, and the constant strain which the settlers labored under. The air was often full of rumors, and occasional outrages were committed in the settlement, but no organized forays were made against the whites as far east as Buffalo county, after Mr. Nutter settled there. Indian scares occurred frequently, and even if they were not prompted by any real danger, the danger, nevertheless, seemed imminent to the settlers, and they were for the time being exceedingly serious affairs. The greatest of these scares, which occurred after Mr. Nutter settled, was in August, 1864, during the Indian outbreak, which culminated in the Plum Creek massacre. That scare depopulated the country, and Mr. Nutter, abandoning for the time all hope of making for himself and family his long-wished-for home in the West, returned to his native country, England, leaving behind him to the ravages of the Indian and the freebooters of the plains his several years' earnings. Remaining in England only a short time, however, he came again to the United States in April, 1865, and was again, for a period of three years, engaged with the firm of Guy, Taylor & Co., of Philadelphia. Returning then to Nebraska in 1868, he settled again on Wood River, Buffalo county, buying a place where he has since resided.

Mr. Nutter has raised up around him a large and interesting family of children, some of whom are married, settled off in life, and are themselves heads of families. The christian names of his children in the order of their ages are as follows--Olive (deceased), Maroni (deceased), John, William, Hingam (deceased), Ellen, Iona, Liona, Elizabeth, Jennie, Frank, Mirabeau, Louise, Alice and Thomas (deceased).

## **Buffalo Tales**

### **Historical Vignette: The Tea Pot**

*Told to Leroy A. Walker by John Nutter in the 1920's*

This story has to do with the Nutter family of Gibbon and it happened before the Colony arrived - in fact, before the railroad was built in 1866.

The Nutter family lived in a log house, just north of where the eight-sided Nutter house now stands. The Nutters came from England and like all good Englishmen, liked their tea. In fact, they had two tea pots - identical tea pots, sitting on the shelf. But through habit and convenience, only one of the tea pots was used daily. The other one just sat there waiting its turn.

Came the day when the supply of tea ran out. There was no store to buy more closer than Grand island - a day's journey away by ox team. These two-day shopping trips were not taken without real necessity. Day after day without tea soon became the real necessity. So, Mr. Nutter left for Grand Island. On the afternoon of the second day, one of the children was sent to the top of the log house so he could more easily spot the returning father - with the tea. As soon as he was sighted as a speck on the horizon a child was sent to get the tea and hurry back with it. A child could run faster than an ox team could plod, and the tea could be made and ready for drinking the very minute Mr. Nutter came to the cabin. This was done. Never had tea tasted better. So refreshing. It was only when the tea pot was being washed that it was discovered that in the haste to make the tea, that the second tea pot had been used - the tea pot in which the rattle snake rattles had been stored.

## **Bassett, Vol.II**

### **JOHN N. NUTTER.**

John N. Nutter, a well-to-do retired farmer living on section 16, Shelton township, has resided upon his present farm for thirty-two years. He was born in Gloucester, New Jersey, on the 6th of March, 1856, of the marriage of William and Dinah (Ingham) Nutter, both of whom were natives of Lancashire, England, where they grew to manhood and womanhood. They were married there and continued to live there for several years, but in the early '50s came to the United States with their two children and after remaining for a short time in Gloucester, New Jersey, located in Philadelphia. The father, who was a cotton mill operative, worked in the mills in Philadelphia for several years and made his way upward to the position of superintendent of the mills. He was a member of the Mormon church and in 1860 went to Salt Lake City with a Mormon colony, but he only remained there for a short time, as he became dissatisfied with the way in which affairs were managed and consequently severed his connection with the colony. He came eastward as far as Nebraska and located in Hall county near Shelton. During the Civil war the Indians were so hostile that he was forced to leave his farm and return to England, but after six or eight months he again came to the United States and accepted the position of superintendent of cotton mills in Gloucester, New Jersey. In 1869 he returned to Nebraska and preempted the northeast quarter of section 8, Shelton township, Buffalo county. He resided upon that place until his demise, which occurred in 1908. His wife is still living and makes her home with her son M. D., who is operating the homestead.

John N. Nutter remained at home during the period of his minority and received his education in the public schools. When twenty-one years of age he began farming on his own account and in 1878 he leased a tract of school land, which he subsequently purchased and on which he now resides. In the same year he took up a homestead in Platte township, on which he lived for five years, but in 1883, having proved up on his claim, he removed to the first mentioned farm, on which he has now lived continuously

for thirty-two years. He owns seven hundred and twenty acres of excellent land and his enterprise and efficiency have enabled him to gain financial independence. In 1915 he retired from the active work of the farm, although he is still residing in Shelton township. He is a stockholder in the Farmers Elevator at Gibbon.

In 1881 Mr. Nutter was united in marriage to Miss Anna Carlson, who was then a resident of Kearney, but whose birth occurred in Sweden. They have become the parents of five children, namely: Olive, the wife of Charles Holmes, of South Denver, Colorado; Effie, who married John Graham, of Hall county, Nebraska; Herbert, who is traveling auditor for the Wells Fargo Express Company; Elsie, the wife of John Evans, of Salem, Oregon; and Beatrice, who married John Hogg, of Vancouver, Washington. For his second wife Mr. Nutter married Miss Jennie Ringholdson, a native of Sweden, who came to this country in 1893 and located in Kearney, Nebraska, where they were married while Mr. Nutter was serving as sheriff. There are six children by this Union: Ina, now Mrs. Everett Reynolds, of Red Elm, South Dakota; Hilda, who is teaching school in Lincoln county; and Marjorie, Harold, Daniel and Jean, all of whom are at home.

Mr. Nutter is a liberal democrat and is well informed on the political issues of the day. For two terms he held the office of sheriff of Buffalo county, serving in that capacity from 1892 to 1896, and his record is highly creditable to his ability and public spirit. He is prominent in local fraternal circles, belonging to Gibbon Lodge, No. 37, I. O. O. F.; Granite Lodge, No. 189, A. F. & A. M.; Kearney Chapter, R. A. M.; Excalibur Lodge, No. 138, K. P.; and to the local organization of the Ancient Order of United Workmen and the Knights of the Maccabees. He is interested in everything that pertains to the public welfare and is recognized as one of the valued citizens of his township.

## Nutter Family

1828, Jan – William Nutter born in England                      1835, June - Dinah born in England - neighbors

1853 - William (25) married Dinah Hingham (18) in Lancastershire, England.

About this date there were many Mormon elders in both England and Wales and large numbers of the people in these parts of England were converted to the Mormon faith and emigrated to Utah.

1855 - with 700 other Mormon emigrants took passage *Juventa*, condemned as unseaworthy Five weeks were required for the trip and they landed at Philadelphia, Pa.

No money when they landed, had been led to believe that plenty of work at good wages. [But they had some very hard times before William could earn enough to continue on west.]

1859 - spring – left Philadelphia, traveled down Ohio River and up the Mississippi and Missouri rivers to Florence...purchased outfit - a yoke of oxen, a new wagon, a cow and food sufficient for the entire journey.... the captain of the train was John F. Smith, a son of Hiram Smith.

A hand cart train left Florence a few days before the Smith train - darted out ahead of the Smith train and reached Salt Lake City some two weeks in advance of the Smith train...

No preparation in advance for their coming; no provision for their comfort or necessities.... [More hard times] ....

The Nutter family soon became greatly dissatisfied with the Mormon religion....Mr. Nutter, once a firm believer in the Mormon religion, came to be a non-believer in any form of religious belief

1862 - the family left Utah.

Purchased a "squatter's right" to a claim on Wood River about two miles east of Shelton in Hall Co. . .  
Small acreage of potatoes and other vegetables, eighteen acres of corn.  
[1863, Good Crop]    More money than the Nutter family had ever had at one time before

1864 - spring - planted a considerable acreage of corn and vegetables - early – escaped

August, 1864 - Awakened in the dead of night - notified Indians war path

Hastily placed their household goods and children in their wagon, hitching their two ox teams –  
Headed east - Baby Helen had been left asleep in a dry goods box used as a cradle.  
Considerable distance traveled before Helen was missed and father returned for her.

Omaha - family disposed of all of their belongings....[Went north to] Quebec, Canada, ...

Mr. Nutter feared that he might be compelled to take part in the Civil war.

Quebec - passage on a vessel for Liverpool, England...

Here the baby Helen was again forgotten,

asleep in the station, rest of the family on the train ready to start

Less than two weeks – Nutter was longing to be again on his claim in Nebraska Territory.

1865 - Nutter left his family in England, returned to Philadelphia to old job  
Mrs. Nutter remained in England 6 months, went to Philadelphia

1869 - spring - Nutter returned to Nebraska,  
purchased a "squatters right" with a log house, log barn and corral--\$300 – 2 mi. east of Gibbon  
July - Mrs. Nutter and the children arrived...

1870 -[good crop- sold for excellent prices to members of the Soldiers' Free Homestead colony,...  
The home soon became one of the best improved farms in the county.

1880 - erected, house, octagon, 16 feet on a side and 18 feet in height, modern conveniences, such as hot  
and cold water, toilet and bath room, furnace, etc

May 13, 1908 - William Nutter died at his home - buried in Riverside Cemetery  
Jan 3, 1919 – Dinah Nutter died & is also buried in Riverside Cemetery

**Tea Story** - before the railroad was built in 1866.

Living in log house  
Liked their tea. - Had two tea pots - identical tea pots, sitting on the shelf.  
Habit and convenience, only one of the tea pots was used daily.  
The other one just sat there waiting its turn.

Supply of tea ran out. - No store closer than Grand island - a day's journey away by ox team.  
These two-day shopping trips were not taken without real necessity.

Day after day without tea soon became the real necessity.

Mr. Nutter left for Grand Island.

Afternoon of 2<sup>nd</sup> day - child sent to top of house to spot returning father - with the tea.

Sighted - a speck on the horizon - child sent to get tea - hild could run faster than an ox team could plod

Tea could be made and ready for drinking the very minute Mr. Nutter came to the cabin.

Never had tea tasted better. So refreshing.

When the tea pot was being washed –

Discovered in the haste to make the tea, that the second tea pot had been used –

The tea pot in which the rattle snake rattles had been stored.

**Children: (15)**

Olive – (girl) b. ca.1853, England – d. 1855, Philadelphia

Maroni – (boy) b. ca. 1854, England – d. ca. 1856, Gloucester, NJ

John. N. – b. March 6, 1856, Gloucester, NJ – lived out his life in Buffalo Co. d. 1935

William H. – twin – b. 1857, Philadelphia –

W. Hingham – twin - b. 1857, Philadelphia – d. ca. 1858, Philadelphia

Helen (Ellen) – b. 1862, Utah

Iona – twin - b. 1863, Nebraska

Leonie – twin - b. 1863, Nebraska, d. 1865, England

Elizabeth - b. 1865, England – d. 1923

Alice – b. 1868, Pennsylvania

Emma (Thomas?)– b. May 1870, Nebraska - d

Jane (Jennie) – b. Mar. 27, 1871, Buffalo Co – d. Oct 30, 1970.

Frank – b. Apr. 1871, Buffalo Co (Hingham - b. after 1870, Buffalo Co.)

Louisa (Mabel) – b. 1876, Buffalo Co

Mirabeau D. - b. Dec. 1878, Buffalo Co – “Not named” in 1880 census