

Shelton – 1894 – The livery stable closed due to dull business.

## **Bassett**

### 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--THE FIRST  
DENTIST--SHELTON FLOURING MILLS--THE FIRST GRAIN ELEVATORS--  
ALFALFA MILL--THE SHELTON CLIPPER--TWENTIETH CENTURY CLUB--  
FIRST TERM OF SCHOOL IN COUNTY BY LICENSED TEACHER--SHELTON  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS--PUBLIC LIBRARY --BANKS--CHURCHES--FRATERNAL  
AND BENEFICIARY LODGES.

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.... 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 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 post office at Wood River Center was established October 11, 1872, with Patrick Walsh as postmaster, the post office 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 post office 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 post office being some twelve dollars a year.

The name of the post office 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

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 post office 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 post office has been changed from Wood River Center to Shelton and you will govern yourself accordingly."

In the year 1879 Patrick Walsh had a town site 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

The Village of Shelton was incorporated January 6, 1882,