

Sartoria Township

Sartoria, up in the northwest corner of the county, near the Sherman County line, is another town that did not develop because the railroad never got there. The tracks had been laid as far as Pleasanton from Ravenna and the roadbed was graded from Pleasanton to Sartoria, but the tracks were never laid. The town had a post office, school, several professional offices and retail businesses including a general store. There was even a newspaper. While the village continued to exist and serve the community until the 1920's, it did not grow and with the coming of the automobile, it just faded away.

Location: Sartoria is the 2nd township west of the Dawson/Buffalo county line, in the top tier of townships. The only "town" in the township is Sartoria, located on the north side of the Loup River in Section 25. To reach it, go from Riverdale toward Amherst. A couple of miles east of Amherst the Sartoria Road goes north. Go about 1 1/2 miles north to reach Sartoria. This is about a mile into the township so it is not on the Sherman county line.

See Buffalo Tales, June 1981, Sartoria, a Lovely Ghost Town

See also Bassett's History of Buffalo County, Vol. I:

The first settlers in Sartoria Township appear to have been B. Lee, Nels Lee and Mattie Stockdale in 1878, and P. Pierce, C. Cook, Wm. Cook, W. J. Grant and George Pfeiffer in 1879.

Township No. 12, Range No. 17, was originally named Taylor Township. There is a tradition that the name "Taylor" did not appeal to John Swenson for some reason and Mr. Swenson induced the county board to change the name to Sartoria, explaining that Sartoria was a French word having a like meaning as Taylor.

Quote from John Swenson in Bassett's:

My reasons for becoming a dweller in the region afterwards named Sartoria was that I wished to get into a territory which afforded opportunities for raising livestock. The country was then regarded as useless for any other purpose; with this end in view I went from my homestead (in Divide Township) up along the South Loup River to look for a suitable location. At the foot of a high hill, now called Black Hill Creek, I saw a cabin. Here dwelled Jephtha Hooley, a professional hunter. Making known the object of my visit, Hooley pointed east: "See that bluff yonder? There you will find a log house and a good well; occupy this and you will have plenty of hay and lots of range." I took Hooley's advice and am still (1916) on that ground to which he pointed me....

The first settlers in the region afterwards named Sartoria, came in the fall of 1877. They were Norwegians named Lee. They consisted of the parents, four stalwart sons and two grown up daughters. They took three homesteads at first and more afterwards. They had but one team. Began breaking prairie early in April and ended in June.

With that only team, they went to Kearney, once a week (twenty-eight miles) to get their two plows sharpened. They raised eighteen bushels of sod corn to the acre, that year. The Lees, though prosperous were impressed by a spirit of expansion to seek better opportunities, sold out their holdings to a colony which came from Iowa. They were Richard Hughes, Owen Jones, and W. R. Jones, of these only the latter is now left. He is quite prosperous, has raised a colony of daughters who have the peculiar distinction of having acquired education and are not above

work. There came also with those mentioned a family named Royale. They were and are so numerous that I have to limit my narrative to the mentioning of, only one, George. George Royale came to Sartoria with five motherless children, and was apparently the poorest of the poor. What has he now? He owns all the homesteads which his fellow colonists bought and has a landscape west of numberless acres and all his places stocked to their full capacity. The other settlers who came by companies, were the Browns, McCurries, the Chipps and others from Missouri.

A COW, A LAMB AND A PIG

In my sheep keeping we sometimes had orphan lambs. These we had to feed with a bottle. This was tiresome and so with one lamb I tried to teach it to nurse a small cow. This went well after the first trial. When the little cow was lying down, the lamb hunted out the teat and then nursed the cow. The cow let down her milk so that it ran on the ground. A pig took care of what seemed to be wasting. He followed the stream from the ground to the teat, and in this way learned to nurse the cow also. These two followed the cow until satisfied, after which they would lie down. When again the cow wanted to be relieved she lowed, the lamb came running and bleating at every jump and the pig came following as fast as he could and squealing at every jump. The cow stood the same as for her own calf. These two grafters grew to big proportions.

Sartoria Township book of Minutes (notes about proceedings): [book in possession of Jeff Bauer, 388-2400, 16150 340rd, Amherst]

Members of the township board got \$2 for attending each meeting of the board. They seemed to meet about 3 times a year including the annual meeting in April. John Swenson was on the board in the 1880's, usually as clerk.

1884

First meeting was held Apr. 1, 1884

Richard Hughes, Chair (for the meeting, a chair was chosen for the annual meeting each year)

William Jones, Sec.

John Stockdale, Treas.

John Swenson, Supervisor

Richard Hughes, Clerk

S. H. Brown, Road supervisor

Samuel Hinote, constable

During that first year they met in homes of members. There were some membership changes.

1885

Annual meeting Apr. 7, 1885

Held at Dist. 73 schoolhouse. This became the township meeting place for several years.

Voted to accept Richard Hughes offer to build a bridge over Deer Creek.

1886

Jan 5, 1886 – Deer Creek bridge 16 ft. wide, 12 ft. long, cost \$71.28

Annual meeting Apr. 6, 1886
Levy: 2 mills – roads & bridges
 1 mill – poor fund
 1 mill – town purposes (general fund)
Voted to put banisters on Deer Creek bridge

Met as Board of Equalization June 7, 1886
Started at 9:30 a.m. Six items of business to pay bills.
Adjourned at 4 p.m. “there being no grievances brought”

1887

Jan. 4, 1887
Bill for \$18.20 for some surveying near Swenson’s bridge, rejected due to an overcharge.

Mar. 29, 1887
Bill presented again and approved after reduction of 75¢

Annual meeting Apr. 5, 1887
Two road districts (36 & 37)
Voted to buy iron road scraper for each district
Levy: 5 mills for roads & bridges
 1 mill for township
 [none for poor fund]

June 6, 1887 as Board of Equalization
One complaint by resident assessed tax on 96 head of fat cattle which he said he did not own.
 Denied
Road supervisor given \$36 to buy 4 road scrapers

Aug. 27, 1887
Joint meeting of Sartoria and Scott townships.
Part of Sartoria township was cut off and included in newly formed Scott township
Township property had to be divided.
Scott township got 1/3 of property
 \$16.50 of road fund to Sartoria & \$8.25 to Scott and one road scraper

1888

Jan. 3, 1888

Bills for goods sold to a pauper “Mrs. Dorthy Gouse”, for 2 months boarding, & for “doctoring” her. Approved
Bills for board member visiting her two days and another for visiting 1 day. Approved

Annual Meeting April 3, 1888 at Dist 73 schoolhouse
Road supervisor was to remove a bridge and use as a culvert where ever he saw fit
Levy: 1 for general fund

2 for roads & bridges
3 for poor fund
John Swensen was the clerk

May 29, 1888

Claim of a board member for visiting -?- an application as a pauper was approved.

June 4, 1888

Bill for keeping pauper, Dorathe Gauze 3 months. Approved

Contract with resident [a man] of the township to keep her 6 months to Dec 4 for \$6 per month

Sept. 17, 1888

Bill from a woman for keeping pauper, Dorathia Gauze 1 month, \$5 reduced to \$3 and approved.

Bill from another woman for \$9 for transporting and keeping her. Approved

Bill from another man for \$6 for looking after her.

Also bills for medicine and cloth for bandages

1889

Jan. 2, 1889

Doctor's bill for attending Dorathia Goze on Sept. 25 was allowed.

April 2, 1889 – Annual meeting

Levy – for all purposes – 1 mill

Roads & bridges – 4 mills

June 3, 1889

Met in township office in Sartoria

Minutes record who attended but there was no business.

1890

Jan 7, 1890

Met at township clerk's office

Pauper, Dorathia Gauze, was still being cared for

Adjourned to Jan 8 when the only business recorded was paying some bills.

Annual Meeting April 1, 1890 at schoolhouse

Levy - 2 for roads

2 for bridges

1 for general purpose

June 2, 1890

Met as Board of Equalization

Ruled that since George ---- was a resident of Kansas for 1890 taxes, his assessment for Sartoria township was cancelled

Bill for using Mr. Kaiser's hall as a polling place in fall of 1889 was allowed

Oct 11, 1890 Special meeting

Petition signed by 14 residents protesting against the purchase of an Austin Road Machine.

Met in front of G S Kaiser's hall in Sartoria and went to the schoolhouse.

Motion to reject the machine since it was illegally purchased and worthless and not meeting the requirements of the board. Carried

1891

Jan 6, 1891

Paid bills including one "for doing blacksmith work on a very useful and efficient Road Machine belonging to the Township" and one to G. A. Kaiser for the use of his hall as a polling place in

Nov. 1890

Annual meeting April 7, 1891 at Dist. 73 schoolhouse

Selected moderator [as usual]

"It not being suitable place to hold meeting on account of school there was a motion carried to adjourn to the Kaiser's Hall or any other suitable place." They went to Kaiser's hall.

Motion carried to accept the Austin Road Machine as township property.

Motion carried to expunge the action of the Oct. 11th meeting,

Motion to purchase suitable road plows.

Levy – 2 for roads

2 for bridges

2 for general purpose

Anyone wishing to use road scraper to be charged 10¢/mile, road machine \$3/day + pay the township for any breakage.

Motion to accept the minutes of the Oct. 11 meeting lost.

Motion to accept the minutes of the Jan 6 meeting "excepting that position relating to the payment for repairs on one Austin Road Machine amounting to \$6.00 Also that portion of the records which advertises the efficiency of said Road Machine Motion lost."

"Moved and second that any town Board who shall purchase any Machine or aught else except by the express consent of the Elector at their annual or special Meeting or strictly with the meaning of the law Will do so at their Peril. Motion lost"

June 1, 1891

Met as board of equalization. Filled positions of treasurer and justice of the peace since those holding those offices had moved away.

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1892

Annual meeting April 5, 1892 at Kaiser's Hall

Not enough attending in morning, adjourned to afternoon.

Raised taxes – levy:

2 mills for roads

2 mills for bridges

3 mills for general fund

Second note on Austin Road Machine to be paid as money became available

1893

Annual meeting April 4, 1893

Minutes of last annual meeting read and adopted except for clause relating to the Austin Road machine

Levy – 2 for roads

2 for bridges

3 for general fund

and this levy to be used for no other purpose

Motion that Austin Road Machine be paid for only out of the fund provided for that purpose.

Carried

Motion to buy 4 medium sized wheel scrapers. Carried

Resolved that Austin Road Machine be sold or traded for wheel scrapers and buy more to make a total of 4.

Resolved that the overseer of Highways Dist. No. 36 be ordered to remove the obstruction in the highway between sec 23 and 24 known as Swensens cattle shoot according to law and if the matter be taken to the county Board that the Township Supervisor of Sartoria T. P. Buffalo County defend the interest of the Township in the matter.

1894

March 27, 1894

Met about purchase of the four wheel scrapers. Could get #1 scrapers for \$80 or #2 scrapers for \$100 and the Auston Road Machine. Make decision at annual meeting.

April 3, 1894 – Annual Meeting

They decided on the #1 wheel scrapers.

Levy – 1 for roads

1 for bridges

3 for general purposes.

1895

Feb 23, 1895

“Board met to audit and allow bill of G(?) M Morey for the amount of \$23. Said order was for the burial expense of W. S. Spooner”

[from Pleasant Valley Cemetery burial records:

Spooner, Isabelle, "Wife of W. S. Spooner", Born Jun 12, 1825 - _____

Spooner, William S., Born Jun 2, 1825 - Died Feb 12, 1895

April 25, 1895 – Annual Meeting

Levy – 3 for general

2 for roads

2 for bridges

June 3, 1895

“At a meeting of the board of supervisors of Buffalo Co it was moved and second that the County pay \$15 of the burial expense of W. S. Spooner.

1896

Levy – 2 for general fund
 2 for roads
 2 for bridges
 1 for poor fund

Moved that the town clerk get Some Suitable Brand and Brand Said tools. Carried

Moved that the Board be instructed not buy anything in the way of tools. Carried

Board was also looking at tiling as possibly being less expensive than lumber for construction of culverts.

April 23, 1896

Bought a half car load of sewer pipe, 18”, 15” & 12”

1897

April 6, 1897 – Annual Meeting

“Moved that town clerk Hunt up all road tools and Brand them approved”

Moved that the board investigate different sizes of tile and if they thing it’s best buy a car load if some other township will take half. [traincar?]

Levy – 2 for general fund
 2 for roads
 2 for bridges
 1 for poor fund

1898

April 5, 1898 – Annual Meeting

Levy – 2 for general fund
 1 for poor fund

Voted to ask county board to put in a bridge over Swi[e]nson Creek east of Sartoria.

1899

April 4, 1899 – Annual Meeting

Met at Dist. 73 schoolhouse

Levy – 3 for general fund

Sept 12, 1899

Notice to town clerk to call a special meeting for the purpose of answering the questions:

“Shall the Town board build or cause to be build a bridge across Swinson creek just east of Swensons store and if so of what dimentions!”

Oct. 12, 1899

Meeting called to order and adjourned to Swensons hall. A secretary was chosen and John Swenson was elected chair. Since there was not a quorum present the meeting adjourned.

1900

April , 1900 – Annual Meeting

Meeting called to order at Dist. 73 school but since school was being held they adjourned to Swenson's Hall.

Levy – 3 for general fund

1901

April 2, 1901 – Annual Meeting

Levy – 2 for general fund

2 for roads

2 for bridges

1 for poor fund

1902

April 1, 1902 – Annual Meeting

Levy – 2 for general fund

2 for roads

2 for bridges

1 for poor fund

1903

April 7, 1903 – Annual Meeting

Met at Swenson's Hall but since there was no heat they went to the Post Office

Levy – 3 for general fund

2 for roads

2 for bridges

1904

April 5, 1904 – Annual Meeting

Approved minutes, set treasurer's annual salary at \$10, down from the \$15 it had been for many years, voted the board members pay for the day, adjourned to May 31st

May 31, 1904

“On motion the following scale of wages was fixed road work while working out the township apportionment man 12 ½ cents per hour man and team 25 [cents] per hour.”

Levy – 1 for general fund

2 for roads

2 for bridges

1911

Feb. 28, 1911

Inventory of road equipment

4 wheeled scrapers

4 large slips

4 small slips

2 plows

1 10' log chain

1 pinch bar

about 30 spikes

lumber: 33 2x10x 16, 2 2x12x16, 3 2x8x16, 9 2x12x12, 10 6x6x9

March 7, 1911

Voted to sell small scrapers for not less than \$1 each

First telephone bill paid – 20 cents

April 15, 1911 – Annual meeting, adjourned from an earlier date

Motion to not buy a road grader – lost

Motion to buy a road grader – carried

Ballot vote on size of grader – large 4, small 5

Motion to let the board decide on grader appropriate for use in township as long as it is classified as light – carried

August 31, 1911

Met in Cool's grove. Only business was to appoint a new overseer of township highways.

Email question and answer:

5-23-2005 Re: BCHS Archives

Mardi,

We were wondering where LEE VALLEY was. We know it is in Sartoria township, wondering if it was right across from us. We were unable to find out from maps we had. It was listed in the second addition of history of Buffalo county as three miles north of Sartoria?? (not sure if that is what they meant.)

Thanks for your time!

Sharon Bauer

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5-25-2005 Re: Lee Valley

Sharon,

You have raised an interesting question. I took it to the ladies at the Archives but we cannot find any reference to Lee Valley. Maps of the county show townships, roads, land ownership, residences, names of rivers and some creeks, but no valley names. However, in looking at some of those old maps in comparison to more recent ones, I see that two streams once began in sections 3 and 2 of Sartoria Township and flowed south into section 11 where they joined to form Swensons Creek which continued south to empty into the South Loup. This creek probably formed a valley in that section east of your place. It could have been referred to locally as Lee Valley. That would fit with the death notice in that old Sartoria newspaper quoted in the *Buffalo Tales* story about Sartoria which I think you were referring to.

I've read minutes of Sartoria Township board meetings but don't remember any reference to Lee Valley there. But then, most of their business was road and bridge maintenance.

Wish we could have found something more definite.

Mardi