

# Bryant Township

Bryant township occupies the southwest corner of Fillmore County (T5, R4W). It was presumably named for Edward Bryant, who homesteaded the N 1/2 of the SE 1/4 of Sec. 14 in 1872. It is bounded on the north by Momence and on the east by Hamilton townships, on the south by Thayer County, and on the west by Clay County. Nebraska Highway 74 follows its northernmost section line from east to west, passing 1/4 mile N of Shickley. The Beatrice-Hildreth line of the Burlington runs WSW out of Shickley, and the Fremont-Superior line of the Northwestern runs SSW from Shickley to where the Thayer County line meets Secs. 33 and 34.

The land is generally level except where Little Sandy Creek flows mostly southeastward through four sections (19, 20, 29, and 32) in the southwestern quarter of the township. Here there are more trees and the land is quite rolling, affording good pasture. A smaller stream, Dry Sandy Creek, rises in

Sec. 3, turns south into Sec. 10, and then flows eastward past Shickley. The soil is a rich, loamy loess which is very productive when enough moisture is available either from rainfall or from deep-well irrigation. In 1966, a total of 101 irrigation wells were registered in Bryant precinct.

The Burlington Railroad's main line through the northern end of the county, when it was finished in 1871, brought a great influx of settlers. During the 1870's, many settlers, Swedish immigrants predominating, came to Bryant township. Drouth and grasshoppers halted settlement for a time in the early part of the decade and caused some who had already staked claims to relinquish them and return to the East.

Among the names of early settlers, we find those of William Kline, Robert Campbell, the Lambert family, Peter Nelson, Jacob Pearson, E. S. Rothrock, A. M. Horner, J. L.

**Bryant Township Homestead Map**

State of Nebraska	Gertie Anderson		L. D. Phillips	Andrew J. Williams		Daniel H. May	Cheney A. Shepard	
	Nels Anderson	5			3			
Swan Nelson	N. W. Swanson (1873)		Albert Hines	Cheney Shepherd		Wm. M. Van Buren	Peter M. Van Housen	
Olof Erickson			Thomas Fivecoat			Thomas D. Van Buren		
	Olof Bergquist	Wm. E. Warthen			William McDeth	Alfred A. Beach (early 70's)		Jacob A. Schmitz
7			9				11	David May
	John J. Harnett	John Danielson	James Watmore		Wm. B. Stout	Wm. H. Davis (1876)		Wm. Kline
								Wm. Smithson
Olof P. Aderson	Olof Olson	Samuel Bjork		State of Nebraska		Louisa H. Roe	Wm. C. Milroy	
Frank F. Reed			17	16	15			13
August Augquist	John A. Johnson	Carl Sandburg				Morris Manson	Peter Manson	John E. Bryant
								Wm. Miller
19	Robert Astel	Wm. C. Young			Nels Anderson (1872)	James C. Fuster		Reeves Miles
			21				23	Elisha White (1871)
	Edwin E. Howe	David Thompson			John C. Hunter	Thomas Smith		Wesley Teter
						Nathaniel T. Smith (1873)		
Nils Nilson	Edgar A. Howe	Gardner G. Pratt		Eddy Randall	Isajah Lambert		Wm. Keefer	Samuel Teter (1871)
			29					
Agnes McAleese	Geo. D. Burdick			Wm. H. Spears	Wm. Reiver		Joseph W. Ireland	
								25
							Elijah Shepherd	Joseph H. Springer
	John T. Hardinger	Samuel Hardinger	Almon Livings		Lewellen R. Hoag (1872)	Geo. M. Hoag	Joseph L. Langstorf	
31			G. Nelson Hoag					School Land
				33				35
	James W. Hardinger	John T. Hardinger	Chas. H. Bernanderfer					
					Eli S. Rockrock (1878)	Wm. A. Williamson	Abraham Horner	36

Langsdorf, L. R. Hoag, the Davis family, Elisha White, and N. T. Smith. Some took homesteads, while others bought relinquishments, and some took tree claims. The Grange was an important organization during the settling of this part of Fillmore County.

Bryant township received its share of worthy Scandinavian immigrants. These accounts of Nels Anderson and Swan Johnson are apparently from contemporary newspaper articles (dates not available):

"In Bryant township in the midst of a large and prosperous Scandinavian colony, where the proverbial thrift and enterprise of this race is well displayed in highly cultivated farms, fine homes, groves, orchards, hedgerows, gardens and bountiful grain fields is the 152-acre estate of Nels Anderson, Esq., a native of Sweden, who came here from Illinois in 1873 with an ox team and \$10. He now has an estate worth \$25,000.

"He has now 900 acres under plow, grows 8,000 to 10,000 bu. of corn, 2,000 bu. of wheat, 2,500 bu. of oats, 800 to 1,200 bu. of barley, 120 tons of hay and millet, and large and profitable crops of broom corn. Keeps 70 head of cattle, milks 15 cows, has a few purebred shorthorns, and feeds a carload of steers and 100 pigs. He has \$2,000 worth of buildings, extensive groves, and other permanent improvements.

"Mr. Anderson is an intelligent, sagacious man of the world. He is an influential man of broad views and great public spirit and has a host of friends."

"Swan A. Johnson was born in Sweden December 10, 1863. In 1883, with the hope of bettering his financial condition, he came to America, accompanied by his sister, now Mrs. O. W. Peterson of Bryant township. Coming immediately to Fillmore County, he purchased 80 acres of wild land for \$720, or \$9 per acre. This he subsequently sold for a good price and bought a much better 80, 2½ miles from Shickley. At the age of 25, he was married to Mary Larson, also a native of Sweden, and a daughter of Lars and Margareta Johnson."

Olof Swenson was born in 1853 in Sweden, and came to Galesburg, Illinois, at the age of 16 years. My mother, Jennie Freeburg, was born in Sweden in 1856 and came to Galesburg when she was 19 years old. They were married February 6, 1879, and came to Fillmore County on February 1, 1884.



Photo from Harry Swenson

The O. T. Swenson farm in 1890. Mr. and Mrs. O. T. Swenson in center, Arthur Swenson on horse, Seth Liliedoll in spring wagon, Teckla in rocker, Bert in wagon with dog.

The Olof Swenson farm is the NW ¼ of Sec. 35. Originally railroad land, it was first sold in 1874, and a second time in 1879. Then, in the fall of 1883, it was bought by Olof Swenson for \$2,900.

Three of their four children were born in the same room of the farm home: Bert (of Stockton, California), Teckla (of Oelwein, Iowa), and Harry (myself), who still lives on the home place. Arthur, the oldest child, was born in Iowa. My parents lived on the farm for 32 years and in 1916 built a new home and moved to Shickley. They made arrangements to give the land to the children. I got the home place.

I also had three children [by my first wife, Clara Bjork], who were born in the same room in which I was born: Willard (of Carleton), Lester (of Lincoln), and Lavette, who passed away two weeks after her mother. In October, 1924, I married Beulah [Hayes], who had a daughter, Thelma, who lives in Texas. So I still have two sons and one daughter.

I have now lived on this place 51 years after my parents moved to town. So the Swensons, father and son, have lived on this farm 84 years. I quit farming in 1946 and I rent the ground out. In 1955, I put down an irrigation well.

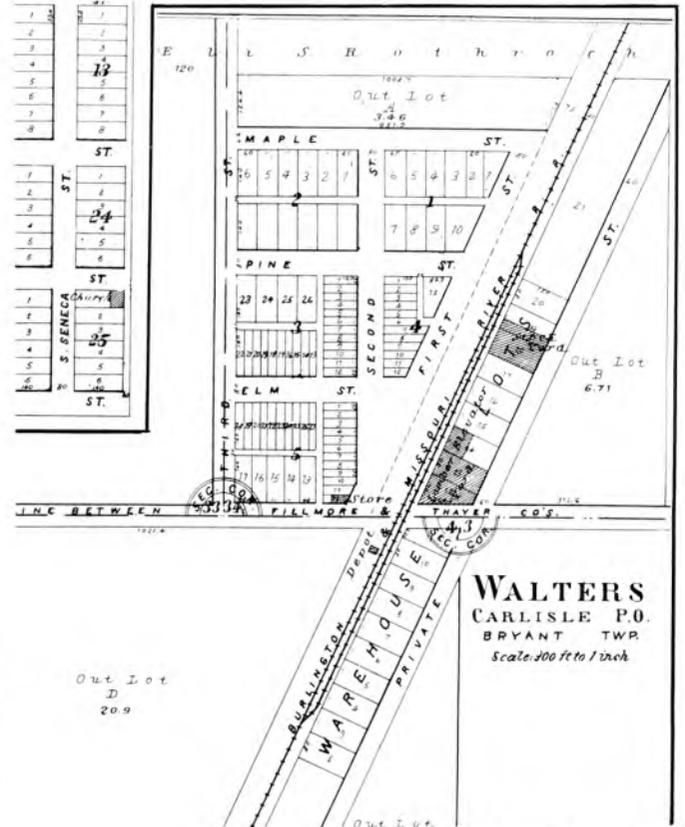
—Harry Swenson

In 1885, the Burlington surveyed for a branch line to run from Beatrice west to Holdrege. It seemed for a time that there would be a trade center established near the

Stockholm Church, which was the Swedish community center. However, because of the generous offers of William Kline and Robert Campbell, who owned farms in Sec. 12, 2½ miles E of Stockholm, a village site was laid out on their land. The town was named (according to *Nebraska Place-Names*) for Fillmore Shickley, an attorney for the Burlington Railroad when the line came through, who also owned land in the vicinity and was instrumental in getting the town located there.

### Carlisle

Mr. and Mrs. George M. Hoag, with their son L. R. Hoag, came from Muscatine, Iowa, by covered wagon and mule team, in 1872, and homesteaded the NW ¼ of Sec. 34.<sup>1</sup>



Standard Atlas of Fillmore County (1905)  
Map of Carlisle/Walters in 1905.

In the summer of 1888, when the Northwestern R.R. extended its line from Geneva to Superior, it came across the east 80 of this quarter. A town site was laid out on the line between Thayer and Fillmore counties at the corner of Secs. 33 and 34. The railroad built a loading platform and a depot just across the line in Thayer County and called the station Walters. A little community sprang up, with a store combined with living quarters, stock-buying and grain-handling facilities, a blacksmith shop, and a post office.



Photo from Mrs. Charles Pritts  
The J. N. Lambert Store in Carlisle.

<sup>1</sup> This account was contributed by Mrs. M. M. Hoak (died 1962) and Mrs. A. F. Wagers, daughters of L. R. Hoag.

When mail service became necessary, the Post Office Department declined the request for a post office because another town had too similar a name; and so the name was changed to Carlisle, in honor of John G. Carlisle, President Cleveland's Secretary of the Treasury. The railroad company continued to use the name Walters, but for all other purposes it was known as Carlisle. Two more residences were built, and it was a thriving little place for about 30 years. At first, church services were held in the depot waiting room, served by neighboring ministers or lay leaders from the Methodist Church at Davenport. When the District 87 schoolhouse was built, 1½ miles N of the village, a Union Sunday School was held there, and a church organization served by the ministers of the Christ Lutheran Church of Davenport. This lasted until about 1910.

As late as 1910, the village had a population of 30; but later everything was sold and moved away, and the land reverted to farmer owners.



Photo from Mrs. Charles Pritts  
Carlisle Elevator and Lumber Yard.



Photo from Galen Lambert  
Carlisle Basketball team about 1910: 1 Floyd Swanson; 2 Jay Nedrow; 3 Harry Swenson; 4 Raymond Lambert; 5 Frank Maust; 6 Charley Anderson; 7 Galen W. Lambert.

## CHURCHES

### Stockholm Lutheran Church

One of the first objectives of the pioneers was to establish places of worship. It was quite natural that they should consider the necessity of a church and the spiritual welfare of themselves and their children, since they brought a strong religious heritage from their homelands. Early religious services were held in schoolhouses and homes.

The Swedish settlement in Bryant township was the first to organize a congregation, which became known as the Stockholm Lutheran Church. On December 28, 1875, a meeting was held at the home of O. G. Bergquist on Sec. 8 for the purpose of organizing a congregation. The first officers were William Miller, chairman, and Nils Anderson, secretary. Deacons elected were Nils Johnson, Morris Manson, and William Miller. O. G. Bergquist, O. P. Akerson, and O. Erickson were elected trustees. Others present at this meeting were Peter Manson, N. Nilson, N. W. Swanson, John Harnett, Herman Olson, John A. Johnson, and Olaf Olson, who presumably became charter members.



Photo from Mrs. Hulda Carlson  
Stockholm Lutheran Church and Cemetery.

A five-acre tract was purchased from Herman Olson on Sec. 9 for a church and a cemetery, and in the summer of 1881 the first Stockholm Church was built. Some time later it was decided to retain only a part of that land for the church and to deed the other part to what became known as the Swedish Cemetery Association. An adjoining two-acre tract was purchased as the site for a parsonage, which was built in 1883. The first resident pastor was the Rev. H. R. Miller; the church had previously shared pastors with Saronville.

There was a considerable increase in membership in 1898 and 1899 and the following years. The old church became too small, and in 1900 it was razed and a new church was built on the same spot. It is a 36' x 60' building with a steeple 70 feet high. There is a social room addition at the rear. In 1909, a new parsonage, with 12 rooms, not including the basement, replaced the old one. About this time the church reached its all-time high point in membership. The total membership in 1911 was 367, of whom 239 were communicant members.

The Stockholm church had its last resident pastor in 1932-1936. As the parsonage was no longer needed, it was sold and dismantled. During these later years Stockholm has shared a pastor's service with the Gethsemane Church at Ong. The following are the pastors who have served the church since its organization (1875-1967); confirmands number nearly 400.

J. Torell .....	1875-1870	C. O. Isakson .....	1919-1923
C. J. E. Haterius.....	1870-1883	J. A. Christenson .....	1923-1931
H. R. Miller .....	1883-1886	Glen A. Stenholm .....	1932-1936
J. E. Swanbom .....	1887-1892	A. Walfred Anderson .....	1937-1941
C. A. Bergendoff .....	1893-1898	J. H. Larson .....	1941-1943
C. A. Randolph .....	1898-1903	Hilmer N. G. Larson .....	1943-1956
C. O. Gulleen .....	1903-1904	Wendell Berggren .....	1956-1960
Carl A. Sward .....	1905-1913	Various supply pastors.	1960-1967
C. T. Carlson .....	1913-1918	Woodrow Wilson.....	May 1967 —

### Shickley Methodist Church

As in many churches, Sunday School preceded the church in the Methodist group of worshippers. Sunday School was held in a schoolhouse on the northwest corner of Sec. 12 before the village of Shickley was organized. As settlers increased in numbers, and with the coming of the new town, the Methodist Church had its beginning in the summer of 1886. The first preacher was the Rev. David Fetz, the Carleton pastor (1884-1886), and Shickley church became part of a three-point circuit, the third point being Summit, a rural church midway between Shickley and Carleton.

Bob Campbell, who owned the NW ¼ of Sec 12, donated a lot (Lot 1, Block 2) in the new village for a church site. The building committee consisted of Elisha White, Bob Campbell, and Ed Wendell. Sanford Huston and Elisha White circulated the subscription list for the building fund. The edifice, which became the main part of the present structure, was built in 1886 and dedicated on September 4 in the same year. Names mentioned in the conference minutes of 1887 as contributors to missions are Sam Logsdon, John Burgess, Ida Knee Garver, Mrs. R. B. Schelp, J. Arganbright, Jennie Hedden, and Mollie Schelp. An 1887 Sunday School record book contains the names of R. B. Schelp, superintendent; Ed Stevens, assistant superintendent; Sanford Huston, Mollie Schelp, Mrs. Schelp, Mrs. W. E. Woodruff, and Mrs. Philby, teachers. The minutes of January 9, 1887, report: "Number present, 25. Penny collection, 37 cents."

In 1910, the church was remodeled by raising the building and adding an annex on the north, making a basement, and installing a furnace, giving the exterior its present appearance. In 1955, the interior was extensively renovated. Various houses in town were used as parsonages until 1922, when the Bergquist property adjoining the church was purchased for the pastor's residence.



Photo from Nancy Wilkins  
Shickley Methodist Church in 1963.

The Shickley church was part of the previously mentioned three-point circuit until 1903, and at different times since it has been on a charge with Strang, Ohiowa, Ong, and Bruning. From its inception until the present time (1967) the church has been served by 30 pastors.

David Fetz .....	1884-1886	E. H. Tipton .....	1917
H. A. Ewell .....	1887-1888	E. L. Jeamy .....	1918-1919
E. J. Bird .....	1889-1890	B. F. Kuhler .....	1920-1922
Francis Deal .....	1891-1892	C. H. Lind .....	1923-1927
E. F. S. Darby .....	1893-1894	E. A. Gaither .....	1928-1932
Finley Smith .....	1895	Richard Gibb .....	1933-1935
E. L. Wolff .....	1896	Arthur Bates .....	1936-1941
C. P. Metcalf .....	1897-1900	George S. Goodwin .....	1942-1946
E. D. Gideon .....	1901-1902	Harold B. Lansing .....	1947-1950
Lawrence Yost .....	1903-1904	Grier Hunt .....	1951-1952
B. N. Kunkel .....	1905-1907	E. W. Price .....	1953-1954
K. P. Kilbourn .....	1908	Charles Flickinger .....	1954-1963
E. S. Burr .....	1909	Milton O'Connor .....	Summer, 1963
R. F. Farley .....	1910-1911	Waldo Greer .....	1963-1966
E. B. Maxcy .....	1912-1916	Hugh Houchin .....	1966

### Shickley Congregational Church

This writer has been unable to locate any record of the organization of the Congregational Church in Shickley, but there is a treasurer's book which records subscriptions beginning with August 1, 1887, and also various purchases of building materials and payments for labor, beginning with August 4, 1887, and continuing until September, 1888. The sums recorded, both receipts and expenditures, total close to \$1,000.

The one-room structure was erected at the south end of Main Street, about two blocks south of the Northwestern Railroad, which came through during the summer of 1888. Among the early contributors are the names of such pioneers as William Kline, W. H. Davis, E. Beitler, J. C. Robertson, Isaiah Lambert, Sarah Davis, Mrs. W. C. Milroy, William Lambert, A. A. Beach, J. W. Price, C. W. Beeson, Winter Price, C. W. Shickley, the Ladies' Society, and banker Harry Pattee. No list of the charter members has survived.

In the early 1900's, the congregation bought two lots (Block 10, Lots 5 and 6) a block north of the Northwestern tracks and one block east of Main Street; the church was then moved to this location, and a short time later a parsonage was built on the vacant lot.



Photo from Mrs. John Pearson  
Congregational Church and Parsonage.

No list of ministers is available. For a short time, Shickley was on a circuit with Grafton, where the pastor lived, and a part of the time with Strang, when the pastors divided their residences be-

tween the two places. Some of the ministers who occupied the Shickley parsonage were Dr. and Mrs. Reeves, the Rev. and Mrs. C. W. Preston, the Rev. and Mrs. Abraham Payne and family, and the Rev. and Mrs. Elijah White.

Services were held continuously until 1923. For short periods there was no minister, but the church school carried on, and for many years a union Christian Endeavor Society was strong, alternating their meetings between the Methodist and Congregational churches. When the Methodists organized the Epworth League, about 1908, the Christian Endeavor Society still carried on until thinning ranks made its continuance inadvisable.

Because of diminishing membership, the congregation decided in 1923 to disband. The property was sold and the proceeds were turned in to the state's Congregational headquarters. The church building was razed and the salvage made into a bungalow in the country. A house was moved onto the church lot, and that and the parsonage have been used as residences since that time. Most of the remaining membership united with the Methodist Church.

—Lorena Hoag Wagers

### English Lutheran Church

About 1889 or 1890 a Union Sunday School, held in the schoolhouse of District 87, was organized. Weather and traveling conditions were never so bad that W. C. (Grandpa) Robb didn't walk more than a mile to open the door for Sunday School. He was superintendent for many years. Early in the 1890's, the minister of the English Lutheran Church of Davenport organized a church group at the schoolhouse, with services on Sunday afternoons every two weeks. On the alternate Sundays, Sunday School would meet in the forenoon. The Rev. Baker was the organizer of the church congregation. Other ministers were Rev. Groh, Rev. Edwin Bollman, Rev. Matthis, and Rev. Poot. This church was discontinued about 1904.

### Swedish Methodist Church

In 1887, before Shickley was founded, the Swedish pioneers in this area were visited by their first Swedish Methodist minister, the Rev. O. J. Swan. At that time, Rev. Swan was also serving a pastorate at Saronville. Religious services were held in a schoolhouse on the NW corner of Sec. 12, or in homes, rotating services with another group to the west, where Ong is now located. When a regular pastor was not available, Charles Wennersten, John Gustus, Swan Ekwall, F. F. Rudd, and other laymen took turns preaching.

Rev. Swan served this group for two years. Others who served the church after him were: V. F. Levin, John Jacobson, N. Peterson, John Lundeen, A. G. Engstrom, A. F. Vinell, O. W. Ostrom, and F. F. Rudd. In 1889, while A. G. Engstrom was pastor, a church building was erected in the new town of Shickley, on Lot 1, Block 15, at a cost of \$1,500. The building committee were Peter Hillgren, John Gustus, and Swan Ekwall. The Rev. H. W. Eklund of Worcester, Massachusetts, gave the dedication sermon. The remaining debt on the church was taken care of at this service through contributions by members and friends of the church.

Esther Lundgren recalled, in a letter written to John Johnson: "I taught a Sunday School class of young girls, including your sister Anna, Rena Gustus, my sister Jennie, Carlson's daughter, and the younger Zetterman girls. They were a sweet and lovable group, anxious to do things, so I organized them into a group and we called it the 'Busy Bee Circle.' We met on Saturday afternoons and made articles which were auctioned in the church with church members attending. My uncle John was the auctioneer and we netted \$25. With this we had a well dug for the parsonage. You remember the type where a bucket was dropped down and brought up by turning a crank. Were the girls thrilled over that well!"

"Rev. Engstrom's family had stayed in Kansas and they were not in the best financial circumstances. In the blizzardous Nebraska winters, Rev. Engstrom wore a hat. At Christmas the young folks chipped in and gave him \$5 for a fur cap. This money he sent to his family, telling me they needed it more than he needed a fur cap."

John W. Ekwall provided a list of persons received into the church between 1889 and 1895:

(1889) Lillie and Josephine Gustus, Seath Lillidahl, Frederick Ekwall; (1890) Louis Peterson, Frank and Mary Danielson; (1892) Athos and Victor Wennersten, Theo and Leonard Ekwall, Rena Gustus, Mary Peterson; (1893) Lizzie Wennersten, Jennie and May Ekwall, Anna Johnson, Almada Swanson, Minnie Zetterman; (1895) John Johnson.

John Ekwall's parents were the first couple married in the church, on December 23, 1887.

The Rev. A. G. Engstrom was followed by A. G. Milton, who remained for three stormy years, during which his passion for "second blessing" and his strict enforcement of discipline caused about 50% of the members to be brought before a church tribunal and to be stricken from the church rolls. The church never overcame this handicap, since the wholesale unjust expulsion of so many caused nearly the whole congregation to cease attending. Some members joined the English-speaking Methodist Church, others the Stockholm Lutheran Church, and still others never re-affiliated with any church.

In 1921, when the membership of the Swedish Methodist Church had dropped to 12, the English-speaking church was served by a

former member of the Western Swedish Conference, the Rev. G. Lind, who also spoke Swedish. It was decided to cease holding separate services, and the remaining members were transferred into that church in 1925. As most of their children were already members there, the families were reunited to worship in the same church.

The church building, put up for sale, was bought by the local Ku Klux Klan; the proceeds of the sale were used to aid in the building of a parsonage in Wayne, Kansas, where the English-speaking church had merged with the Swedish church and had turned their property over to the Western Swedish Conference.



Photo from Kenneth Koch  
Zion Evangelical Lutheran  
Church, built in 1918. This  
brick church stands in Shick-  
ley, but its story is told in  
*Momence Township*.



Photo from Langdren family

District No. 52 in 1912. *Back row, left to right:* Carl Rosenquist, Elmer Swanson, Emil Harnett, Adolph Nelson, George Harnett, Teacher Albert Peterson, Clara Bjork, Della Rosenquist, Nannie Harnett, Pearl Matteson, Edith Bjork, Mabel Johnson. *Front row:* Hosmer Brust, Edwin Gustafson, Stanley Landgren, Otto Nelson, Earl Swanson, Edward Rosenquist, Florence Swanson, Florence Gustafson, Marion Swanson, Eva Swanson, Ruth Rosenquist.

## SCHOOLS

District No. 51, the first set up in Bryant township, was organized on September 13, 1872, although officers were not elected until March 1, 1873. School was held in sod houses before the building of frame schoolhouses. The first teacher was Simon Holsinger, who taught a term of 3 months and 25 days. The schoolhouse, located on the east side of Sec. 27, was not built until 1874. The carpenters were L. R. Hoag and his father, George M. Hoag. Another early teacher in District 51 was Belle Hoag.



Photo from Mrs. David Lichty  
District No. 51 (Sunny Side School) Picnic—about 1910.

District No. 52, in the northwest corner of the township (September 13, 1872), and District No. 53, (September 21, 1872), in the southwest corner, were organized about the same time. The first teacher in District 52 was Alice L. Howe; the first in District 53 was Belle Hoag.

District No. 54 was organized September 28, 1875, comprising Secs. 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 14, and 15, set aside in 1872 by County Superintendent J. A. Dempster for a school district. The first schoolhouse for District 54 was built on the northwest corner of Sec. 12. The first teacher was Anna Davis. On January 15, 1880, more land was added, and more still in 1883. There were deductions and additions until now District 54 includes Districts 49, 50, 51, 52, 55, 58, 59, 69, 77, 79, 86, 87, 92, and 93. The old schoolhouse was sold to R. B. Campbell for \$78 and a four-room frame school was erected in 1888 on the site of the present Shickley school. (For more on District 54, see *Shickley*.)



Photo from Leonard Carlson

District No. 53 about 1912. *Front row, left to right:* Amy Fisher, Viola Rousch, Kate Fisher, Howard Axtell. *Back row:* Leonard Carlson, May Fisher, Miss Schneider (teacher), Alma Rousch, Anna Anderson, Hulda Anderson.



Photo from Lawrence Lichty  
Shickley School District #54. Football field built in 1962.

At first, there were only these four districts in the township, with nine sections to a district. By 1887, the growing population made more schools necessary. A new division was made in September, 1887; land was taken from Districts 52 and 54, and District No. 86 was organized (August 11, 1887). Belle Hoag held a meeting at the Peter Nelson home on December 17, 1889, for the purpose of organizing District No. 87, comprising lands taken from Districts 51 and 53.



Photo from John Carl

District No. 86 about 1909-10. *Front row, left to right:* Vivian Bergquist Miller, Harold Nelson, Johnny Hanson, Paul Hanson, Emil Hendrickson, Victor Hendrickson. *Back row:* Miss Daisy Sissel (teacher), Harry Pearson, Clarence Hanson, Clara Nelson Lentfer, Harry Hendrickson, Selma Hendrickson Harnett, John Pearson, Rebecca Hanson Cline, Victor Nelson, Effie Peterson Johnson, Oscar Johnson, Lillian Hanson Carlson, Florence Nelson, Harry Carlson.



Photo from Galen W. Lambert

District No. 87 (North Carlisle school) in 1900—Teacher Edna Rice at left, with bell.

It was decided to move the old District 51 building from the east side of Sec. 27 to the west side, which was the center of the new district. A sleet storm had left a heavy coating of ice on the ground, and by placing skids under the building, it was easily moved across. This was done in the latter part of February, 1888, and three days of the current school term were finished after the move.

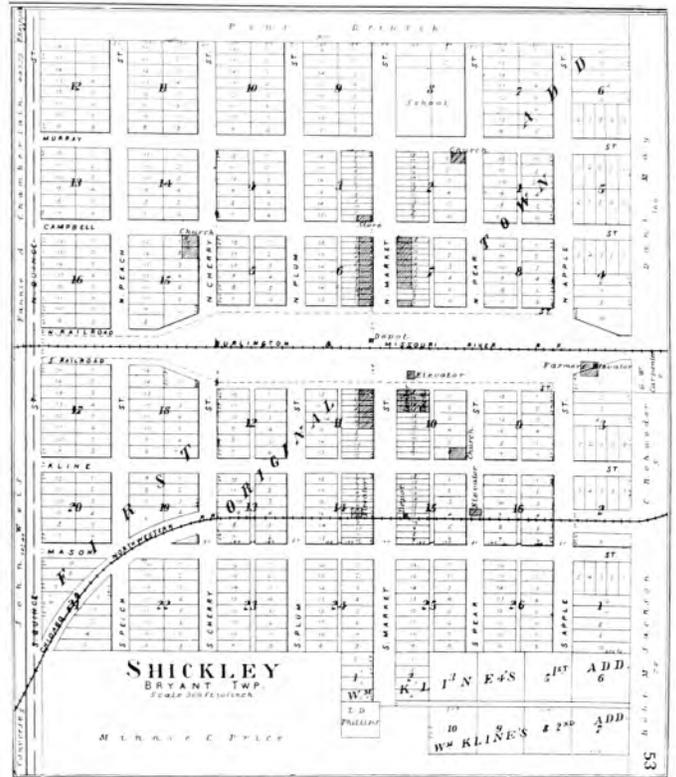
District 51 built a new schoolhouse on the east side of Sec. 26, one mile east of the original location. District 53 moved their building farther west to Sec. 30. The District 52 building was located on Sec. 8.

Among early school board members were Samuel Teter, Elijah Shephard, E. S. Rothrock, Mrs. Joe Ireland, L. D. Phillips, F. F. Rudd, A. N. Anderson, Eddie Randall, G. N. Hoag, J. W. Cassel, and Peter Nelson.

A school year in the early days was from April to April. The length of the school term was three months. Teachers' salaries ranged from \$20 to \$30 per month. Other teachers who taught in Bryant township in the first few years, besides those already named, included Levi Beanblossom, Jennie Williams, Blanche Warner, C. Beminderfer, B. L. Burr, C. E. Jones, Mary Hughes, J. G. Davis, Nettie Howe, J. E. Bryant, Phoebe Davis, Sarah Davis, Clara Strang, Alfred Bates, Clara Stickel, and C. W. Pinkerton.

Schoolhouses served as community centers. They were used for literary and debating societies, for grange meetings, and as polling places. Before the building of churches, they also served for Sunday Schools and church services, thus contributing greatly toward binding the settlers into a community.

No rural schools now operate in Bryant township. District 54 has absorbed 14 other districts, and five buses are required to transport the students from the surrounding areas to and from school. In 1952, a meeting was held at Eddie Randall's, and Districts 52 and 53 were attached to Ong in Clay County.



Standard Atlas of Fillmore County (1905)  
Map of Shickley in 1905.

## Shickley

A great deal of the history of Shickley is included in the following essay, "Shickley: Community Co-operation in Economic Decline," written in 1941 for a sociology assignment at the University of Nebraska by a Shickley native, Miss Marjorie Johnston (later Dean of Women there, and as of 1967 College Counselor for the University Extension Division). As it is seldom that any Nebraska community has been the subject of any such detailed study, we include it entire. Although the period of "decline" may be over (as we hope it is, and as the census figures for 1950 and 1960 may indicate), this account no doubt reflects the history of many another Nebraska town in which pioneer co-operation still survives.

### Introduction

Many villages located in the farm areas have shown a decrease in population and an economic decline in recent years. At one time these villages were the important trade centers for the surrounding farms, but with coming of improved roads and faster means of transportation many people now go to larger communities to do their trading. The recent years of drouth and low prices for farm products have caused a still greater decline. Such has been the fate of Shickley, but in spite of the economic decline and the decrease in population there is a stronger community spirit and a greater tendency toward co-operation. People who have lived in Shickley many years or perhaps all their lives seem determined to keep this community a desirable place in which to live. ("Community" refers to the incorporated area and is here used interchangeably with "village.")

### Geographical Setting

Shickley is located in the south-central part of Nebraska in Fillmore County. When the first settlers came to this part of the state all they saw was a vast expanse of level prairie country. There were no large streams and thus few trees. It was 20 miles to the North Blue River and the same distance to the South Blue. The site of the village comprises an area of 160 acres of level land with a gentle slope to the south and is bordered on the north and east by a small meandering stream which is usually dry. If one gets above the buildings of the village he is able to see for several miles in all directions. A good supply of water is found far below the surface of the ground which makes it necessary to drill deeply for wells.

The soil of the surrounding farm area is very fertile but has a gumbo content which bakes hard in time of insufficient rainfall. The levelness of the land and the absence of many trees makes it possible for the hot winds to sweep across the fields and within a few days do much damage to the corn crop. Rainfall is very uncertain and this area often receives little rain from the last of June until the middle

of August. During years of sufficient rainfall, the yield per acre for corn and wheat is high. These uncertain conditions, which have been characteristic of the history of this community, have made economic incomes unstable.

#### Historical Background

The last of the sixties saw a few pioneers coming to south-central Nebraska. They came from Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Illinois in covered wagons filled with the necessities with which to start a new home. In 1870, there were many settlers coming to this part of Nebraska. Many of them stopped in the northeastern part of the county where the main line of the Burlington was to cross the county. Here the first village of the county was founded, which was called Fairmont and which was to be the main trade center for several years. The next year the settlers decided to choose a spot near the center of the county for the county seat, which was called Geneva. In 1873, the county was divided into townships.

During this time a group of Swedish people had taken homesteads in the southwestern part of the county known as Bryant township. There were many newcomers until 1873, when the grasshoppers destroyed crops and gardens. There was much suffering that winter and the county tried to vote bonds for relief but they failed to pass. It was then that Bryant township decided to vote bonds which were found to be too small to give the necessary relief but gave evidence of united action on the part of these early settlers. For the next few years there were few newcomers to this part of the country because of these conditions.

Most of the homes of these early settlers in Bryant were dugouts or sod houses, since there were few trees and it was 14 to 30 miles to the trading centers. Few trips were made to these places and then one or two men would go for several families in the neighborhood. There were plenty of wild game and the gardens and crops supplied many of the needs. The families helped each other in many ways and there existed a fine spirit of co-operation and friendliness. A church was built in 1888 and the place was called Stockholm. Here would have been the logical site for the trade center and these Swedish people wanted it here.

In 1885, the Burlington surveyed for a branch line to run from Beatrice to Holdrege. This line was to go within a few hundred feet of the Swedish church and these settlers began to plan for the site of the village. Three miles east of the church were the farms of William Kline and Robert Campbell, who wanted the village to be located on their land. For this reason they offered to give many lots to the railroad if it crossed their farms and to sell land cheaply to the newcomers. Thus the site of the village was determined and immediately a store and blacksmith shop were started. The village was named Shickley in honor of the attorney for the Burlington who was also a land-owner in this area. He later started the first bank in the village.

The village was laid out with the tracks dividing the community into two parts. Mr. Kline owned the land south of the tracks and Mr. Campbell owned land north of the tracks. Each man tried to interest the newcomers to choose his land, and for several years this competition existed. The village was incorporated March 20, 1888, with a population of 200. In the same year, the Northwestern R.R. surveyed for a branch line to run from Superior to Fremont, crossing the four south blocks of the original town. At first, most of the business places were located facing Market Street in the two blocks between the Burlington and Northwestern tracks; but there was a gradual trend toward the blocks of Market Street north of the Burlington. By 1910, most of the business houses were located in this area, leaving many empty buildings on the south side, which were finally rebuilt into homes.



Photo from "Shickley—Then and Now"

One of the first Northwestern trains into Shickley.

#### Growth and Decline

With the coming of the two railroads and the reports of good crops the farm lands were quickly taken up. Each year saw several more business places added to the village, which made it a better trade center. Although the Swedish people were disappointed that the trade center was not located at Stockholm, they were glad to have one so close and became loyal supporters of the community.

Population steadily increased until 1910 (its peak year) and then began gradually to decrease. All figures after that for 1888 are those of the U.S. Census Bureau:

1888	200	1930	389
1890	307	1940	342
1900	372	1950	316*
1910	429	1960	371*
1920	396		

\* The figures for 1950 and 1960 have been added by the editor, for continuity.

By 1910, there were three general-merchandise stores, a bakery, two drugstores, a post office, two banks, a meat market, a millinery shop, two hardware stores, a furniture store, a saloon, two blacksmith shops, three produce stations, a farm-implement shop, a printing office which published a weekly paper, four elevators, two lumber yards, two doctors, two undertakers, a photographer, one school, and four churches. There were two passenger trains and two freight trains daily on each road. Businesses prospered and crop yields were usually good, with an occasional low return when the rain fall was insufficient. From 1915 to 1922 the village supported a picture show regularly. Since there were more cars in the village and the surrounding farm area, the roads had been improved and people did not now do all their trading in Shickley. Between 1920 and 1930 there were many changes in the business ownership in the village.

Shortly after 1930 the general-merchandise stores gradually became grocery stores with a few items of dry goods. People were beginning to go to larger places to get their clothing where there was a greater selection from which to choose. Today there is only one store that can be called a general store and it carries very little in the way of clothes. The bakery finally closed, for it could not compete with the trucks that brought bread from larger places. In 1930, the Farmers Bank was bought by the State Bank which still serves the village. The printing shop finally discontinued the paper in 1922 and it closed soon after this. Now the news of the community is printed in the county paper. Today there are two churches instead of four and also only two elevators. There is no hotel but there are two cafes. There is only one lumber yard which has done little business the last few years since there have been few new buildings. There has been no doctor since 1936 and no resident dentist since 1934. The Northwestern passenger service was discontinued in 1937 and the Burlington in 1940. Each road has a tri-weekly freight service and has continued to keep an agent at the station. This great decrease in train transportation was felt after the main highway was placed one half mile north of the village. Truck service then took the place of train service. The village now has three garages which seem to do a fair business since nearly everyone in the community owns some kind of a car.



Photo from "Shickley—Then and Now"  
Burlington Depot, Shickley.

Property has greatly decreased in value the last ten years. People have not had sufficient incomes to make the necessary repairs during this time. In 1930 the property was assessed at \$215,499 and in 1940 the assessed valuation was \$194,144. Property brings a very low price at present so there is little sold. Rents are lower than in 1930. At present there are about eight houses that are vacant.

#### Public Life

The first 30 years in the history of Shickley might be called a period of individualistic growth dominated by economic interest. People were getting started in business and were anxious to succeed so that they gave little attention to village improvement. Only with decreasing population and declining business did the people in the village become more community-minded and think of civic improvement and ways to counteract the attraction of larger trade centers. The members of the village board in the early days seemed little interested in improving the community. Not until 1923 when the board was composed of more progressive men did the village take much action to make Shickley a modern community.



Photo from Mrs. John Carl  
V. P. Nelson in his shoe shop in the 1920's.



Photo from "Shickley—Then and Now"  
The Livery Barn (foreground) which later became the Community Building.

Until 1923 the village had no general system of electric lights. In 1914, a merchant moved to Shickley to go into business and, having been accustomed to lights, decided to install a small plant in his store to supply the necessary electricity. In a few months he was furnishing power to all business places and the church. Not until 1923 did the village vote bonds to connect with the Blue Valley Power Company and wire the entire village for lights.

About the same time five of the men in the village, realizing the need for a community building which could be used for a school gymnasium and for other social gatherings, bought an old livery stable to rebuild. The Woman's Club was much interested in the project and helped by taking one-third of the building, which they made into a library, dining room, and kitchen. The remainder of the building was made into a large gymnasium with a fine hardwood floor which can be used for roller skating. The building is used by all organizations in the village and the surrounding rural areas.

In 1927, the business men in Shickley organized a commercial club for promoting plans to make Shickley a better trade center. One of the first things the club did was to gravel Main Street and several of the side streets. In 1930 the men worked hard to get the main highway [Nebraska 74] to go one mile north of the village. Their efforts were successful, but they soon realized that this highway was to cause a greater decline in business. Now Shickley was on a well-improved highway to Hastings, a distance of 50 miles, York 40 miles, Beatrice 50 miles, and Lincoln 80 miles.

In 1934, the village board took action to lay out an electrically lighted kitten ball diamond. Once a week, on the nights the stores were open, the neighborhood teams competed and at the end of the season had a tournament. These means served to attract people to the village for two summers but were replaced the next summer by a free moving-picture show which is still found to be effective. During the winter the merchants sponsor a drawing for a free basket of groceries each Saturday afternoon. For the past several years the businessmen have had a community Christmas tree and a Santa Claus on Saturday to distribute treats to the children. Whether the money expended for these means to attract people to trade in Shickley brings back greater returns in business is doubtful, but at least it shows that the men are alert and doing everything possible to keep the community from further decline.

Business was the poorest from 1935 to 1940, but in spite of these economic conditions the village installed a fine water system in 1940. The cost of the system was \$32,000, but half of the cost was supplied by help from the Works Progress Administration.

### Religious Influences

Religion has played a great part in the growth and development of Shickley. Nearly everyone in the community is affiliated with one of the churches and the result has been to develop citizens with good morals and high ideals. Most children are brought up in the Sunday School and become members of the church at an early age. The youth, as a whole, have been outstanding for good moral conduct and there has been little evidence of delinquency.

Religion has perhaps influenced the community in another way. The many churches in such a small area have tended to separate the village into groups rather than unite it. There has been little evidence of conflict among the churches, but also little unity and co-operation until recent years.

The Swedish church had been built before the beginning of the village and because of a common language and tradition these people remained apart from the life of the community. Since a number of families in the village were members of this church it affected the early life and unity of the community. In 1922, there was a split in the membership and a number of the people joined the Methodist Church. At present this church has no resident minister and as a result its unifying influence has been lost.

In 1879, a settlement of German people, five miles north of Shickley, built a Catholic church. Although this church has largely a rural congregation, several families in the village are members of this church.

A year after the incorporation of the village the Methodist church was built. The first building was small and with the growing population it was replaced by a larger building in 1910. About 50% of the membership is rural. In 1930, there were 195 members and in 1940 there were 138. In the same period the minister's salary declined from \$1,200 to \$900 with the result that this year the church must share the services of the minister with a neighboring village. The members are determined another year to raise the salary so that they can have a full-time minister, for they fear the church will decline and they realize the good influence of a strong church in the community.

The Congregational church was organized in the same year as the Methodist church. The membership of this church was never very large, with the result that it disbanded in 1922 and many of the people joined the Methodist church. A group of Swedish people in the village built a Swedish Methodist church in 1888 but the services in this church were discontinued after 1905. These people, too, joined the Methodist church.

The other church that is active today in the village is the German Lutheran church. The membership is about 80% rural people with a total membership of 134. Until recently the church, as a whole, remained apart from the activities of the village.

Several families in the village are members of the Mennonite church 3 miles E. of Shickley. This church had its beginning in 1895 when a few families of this faith came from Indiana and in a few years built a church which today has a membership of nearly 300. Although these people, by religion and by tradition, tend to be "church-centered" and so somewhat withdrawn from "community" interests of more secular sorts, they are earnest, honest people, and very religious, so that their influence in the community has been distinctly good.

All the churches in and near the village have influenced the growth and development of the community. They have done much to instill high ideals and Christian standards of living. In the past few years there has been more co-operation among the churches, which has resulted in greater interest in the public life of the community.

### Education

When Shickley was incorporated there was a district school just outside the limits of the village. Here the children in this part of the township had attended school for several years. The same year that the village was incorporated, a four-room schoolhouse was built. This school included just the eight grades, but the following year two grades of high school were added and in 1891 the first class was graduated. A brick building was erected in 1908; the eleventh grade was added in 1910 and the twelfth in 1916.

The school has kept pace with the changing curriculum and offers manual training, typing, music, and, at one time, offered home economics. For several years it had a fine band and many students who were taking private lessons on instruments. The school makes good use of the public library and the library board co-operates with the school in trying to secure books that are needed in school.

The school has been affected by the economic decline. Salaries dropped considerably from 1930 to 1940. The average salary in the grades in 1930 was \$765 and in 1940 \$652. During the same period the amount received from taxation and tuition was \$10,000 in 1930 and \$9,000 in 1940. The enrollment has decreased from 100 to 98 in the same period and thus a smaller number of teachers were needed as grades were combined. For the past few years the school board has been very conservative and perhaps they have reduced salaries and other expenditures more than necessary.

The school has always felt the effects of the large settlement of the Mennonites who do not believe in higher education and rarely send their children to high school and thus reduce the amount of tuition which would normally come from this large farm area. The past few years there has been a slight increase in the number of young people from these homes that are coming in to high school.

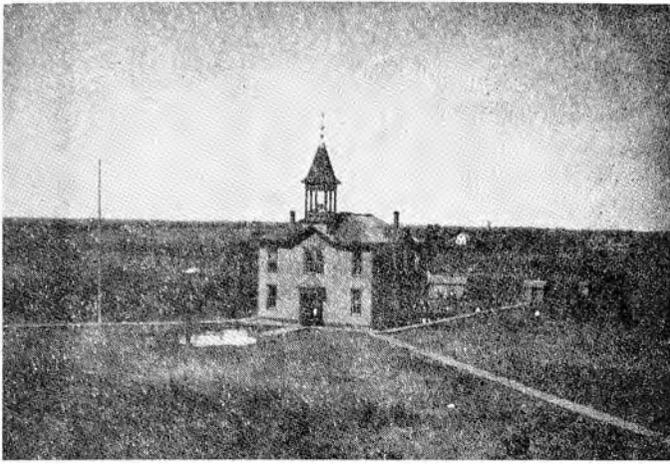


Photo from "Shickley—Then and Now"  
Original school building of District 54, Shickley.

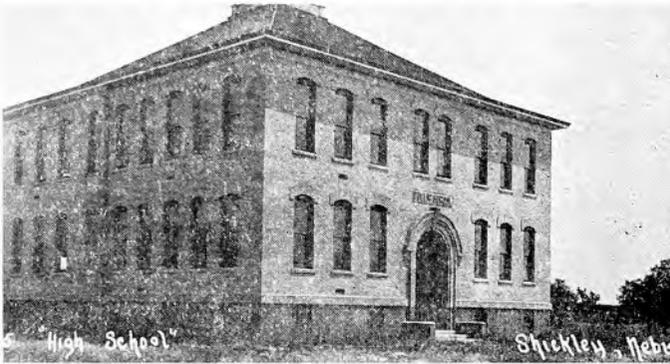


Photo from "Shickley—Then and Now"  
Shickley High School, built in 1908.



Photo from "Shickley—Then and Now"  
Shickley's modern school, built in 1954 at a cost of \$218,000. In 1953 a new district, No. 54R, was formed consisting of 15 reorganized districts and parts of two others. This plant provides modern classrooms, a gym, a large stage, a kitchen and lunchroom, a shop, and offices.

About 25% of the graduates attend college or business school for a year or two. Most of the young people who do go away for a college education do not return to the community to live. Many of them become teachers, nurses, engineers, businessmen, and stenographers.

The village has been fortunate in securing good teachers in spite of the low wages. Shickley looks to the teacher for leadership in the church and public affairs, and much of a teacher's success depends upon her participation in community life. Teachers, as a whole, like to live in Shickley and usually stay there for several years although they do not feel they are paid well. They like the friendly and hospitable spirit of the people living in the village.

#### Population and Family Life

The early settlers in this village and the surrounding farm area were Germans, Swedes, a few French, and Pennsylvania Dutch. There were many families who came from the eastern states whose ancestors had lived in this country for one or more generations. The predominant influence of the population has no doubt been Swedish. Many customs of these people still prevail in the community. The "afternoon coffees" with Swedish rolls and cookies are still common in the homes and are enjoyed even by people who have not been reared in Swedish homes. Of late years these people mingle freely in the

community and are much interested in its activities. Their interest in music has been a great asset in the musical training in the community.

The Pennsylvania Dutch and Germans who belong to the Mennonite church have been little interested in the affairs of the village. They are somewhat clannish and do not favor higher education for their young people. They believe that the way to keep their young people from becoming sinful is not to allow them to associate with other young people and become worldly-wise. Only in recent years has the hold of the church weakened and the young people have begun to break away from the church and marry those of other faiths. Often these young people join another church and have associations with other groups. The Germans who belong to the German Lutheran church have been more interested in the public life of the community but have never taken as active a part as the Swedish people.

Despite the variations among these groups making up the population of the village, there has been little evidence of conflict. In recent years there has been a tendency for these groups to act as parts of the community and not so much as separate units.

The people living in Shickley are noted for the friendly and welcoming spirit which is extended to all newcomers. Every possible effort is put forth by the people of the village to make these strangers like their new home and feel a part of it. There is a genuine spirit of good will existing throughout the community and there is seldom any evidence of conflict in religious or political life.

Family life is still important in this community. There were no divorces in 1930 and only one in 1940. There were four marriages in 1930 and five in 1940. It is still a common practice for the entire family to go to Sunday School and church. This is especially true in the Mennonite families. Dinners between families are still exchanged and many social affairs include the entire family.



Photo from Deb Witt  
Harold Barney, early telephone technician, in 1910.

The following statistics give some idea of family life in the community [1967 figures have been added for comparison]:

	1940	1967
No. of families .....	109	139
No. of home-owning families.....	76	118
No. of renters .....	33	21
No. of families with telephones.....	42	127
No. of families moving in.....	13	No data
No. of families moving out.....	5	No data

Of the families in town, 28% consisted of 1 person; 30% of 2, 33% of from 3 to 5, and 9% of from 6 to 9 persons. The average-sized family consisted of 3 persons.

These statistics show that the population of the village is quite stable, since so many families own their homes. They also show that a large percentage of the population is composed of older people,

since there are so many families with one or two persons. This fact was further verified when 125 people voted in the last election—37% of the total population. There were four deaths in the village in 1940. In 1930, there were six births; in 1940, there were only two recorded. Since there is no doctor, many of the children are born at the hospital in Geneva and their birth is recorded as from there.

The typical home in Shickley is a 1½ story frame building. A very small percentage of the homes are modern due to the lack of a water system. A large percentage of the homes connected with the water system when it was put in and plan to install sinks and bathroom equipment when incomes are higher. Many homes have had a windmill to furnish water. A number have been put up in the last few years so that people could water their lawns and gardens during the drouth. It was found to be much cheaper than electric power, since there is seldom a day in the summer that the wind does not blow. There have been no new homes built in Shickley during the last 10 years. Homes and yards are well taken care of, although at present there are places in need of paint and repairs.

#### Social Organization

Much of the social life of the community centers around the several churches. Each church has its own organization of the women of the church which is known as the "Aid Society." These groups sponsor food sales, bazaars, dinners, and other money-making affairs during the year. Each group meets twice during the month in the afternoon for a social time and a pay lunch. In recent years these lunches have been well attended by members of other groups. It has become a custom to invite each group once during the year to a special meeting. These recent practices are evidences of greater cooperation among the churches. Once a year the Catholic church has an all-day picnic with a dinner, bazaar, and dance. This is well attended by the people in the village even though it is held on the church grounds, five miles from Shickley. The businessmen make an effort to attend, as much of the trade comes from these people.

The Woman's Club is very active in the community. It has a membership of 38 ladies from all the churches and from the rural districts. Its outstanding achievement was the establishment and sponsorship of the village library. This was begun in 1924 with 200 volumes and at present has 2,000 volumes. For a number of years the club paid the librarian and bought all the new books, but at present the village appropriates \$200 each year for books and the librarian is paid by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The library board is composed of members from the club and they still select the books. In 1927, the club sponsored a historical pageant which included many people in the community and rural area. It was given in a pasture on the edge of the village in a spot that formed a natural amphitheater. People came from many miles to see it.

The men's Commercial Club is for both social and business purposes. It has a membership of 24 men and has done much to establish good feeling among the businessmen and to promote the interests of the village. The men organized a Volunteer Fire Department in 1933 after the business section was in danger of being destroyed. This organization has its social meetings, too.

There are a few social clubs and many family get-togethers. People in Shickley enjoy themselves in many ways. Occasionally they go to a larger place to see a show but in recent years most of their recreation had to be found at home. All activities of the school such as plays, basketball games, and carnivals are well attended by the people of the community.

The young people enjoy the roller-skating rink in the community building. It is operated by one of the businessmen and is open every Thursday evening. It is well patronized by the young people of the surrounding villages and affords clean and wholesome amusement. At present there is no Boy Scout or Camp Fire group. At one time both organizations were active in the community, but when incomes were reduced by the drouth and depression these groups gradually ceased to function. Each church has some organized activity for its young people.

#### Relief

Since Shickley is chiefly a trade center for an agricultural area, business is dependent upon farm crops. Since 1934 this community has suffered from the effects of the drouth and the pests which accompany a dry period. During this time there have been four years of almost complete crop failure. During this time there was the depression when business in general was very poor. As a result of these conditions the farmers' incomes have been greatly reduced, which in turn has made business poor in Shickley. Many people who were still paying for their farms were not able to keep up their payments and consequently lost them. A number of these farmers were older people who had planned to retire in a few years and live off the incomes from these farms. Several of these people are now receiving "Old Age" assistance.

The farm relief program has been of great benefit to these farmers. Many of them could not have continued on their farms without this assistance when their crops failed. With this program they have managed to keep going and to earn a living and thus keep off of relief. This aid has also made it possible for business in the village to keep growing, since the farmers have purchasing power. The Agricultural Conservation Office reports that approximately 98% of the farmers in the Shickley trade area belong to this farm program. The average farm would receive about \$250 from this office.

As a whole, the people in Shickley have been glad of the assistance that has been offered by the government. At first many were hesitant about asking for Old Age assistance but finally came to it. When crops are good again and business conditions have become normal the people will be glad to get along without this assistance. There will no doubt continue to be quite a few Old Age grants because of the number of old people in the village. At present the County Assistance Office reports the following grants of assistance given in Shickley:

Old Age assistance .....	18
Aid to dependent children .....	6
Aid to crippled children .....	1
WPA .....	7
CCC .....	4
NYA .....	5
No. using the stamp plan.....	23
County relief .....	5

The Assistance Director for this area reports that the trends for assistance at this time are toward an increase in Old Age assistance grants and a definite decrease in WPA, CCC, and NYA. He states that among the youth and physically fit, many are moving to urban districts, mainly in California.

During this period of drouth and depression many of the people in Shickley were forced to give up luxuries of many kinds. Cars have become old, some houses need paint and repair, lawns need reseeding, and trees need to be replaced. Property has not suffered as much neglect as in some other communities near by. Many farmers have left and gone to other areas to farm or to work for someone. There have been few changes in business ownership during this time.



Photo from Frank Williams

Threshing—about 1900. 1. Frank K. Williams; 2. Loyd Davis; 3. L. F. Fisher; 4. A. W. Isberg; 5. Oscar Isberg; 6. Charles Isberg.

#### Conclusions

The economic future of this community depends a great deal on the forces of nature that produce crops. If the yields from farm products are good, business will be better and schools and churches will again have funds to improve. Houses and buildings in general can be painted and repaired, trees replanted and lawns reseeded.

The economic decline has not been accompanied by a decline in the spirits of the people. They have been quite hopeful and optimistic and have done what they could to make the community a better place in which to live. The greatest evidence of this spirit has been the installation of the water system. Now people hope to have modern homes as soon as they can afford it. Last Arbor Day a row of trees was planted on each side of Main Street to replace the ones that died during the drouth. The land north of the railroad tracks had been planted with trees several years ago but most of these had died so these, too, were replaced. The trees in the cemetery are being replaced and plans to reseed the lawn are being made. These plans show that the people are hopeful for the future of the community.

Some of the farmers have done some research concerning the future of the crop outlook. They are inclined to believe that there will perhaps never be a crop certainty because of the type of soil and general lack of rainfall in this area. Since there is a large supply of water underneath the ground, many farmers are having eight-inch wells drilled on their farms and these are pumped by tractors to irrigate the fields in times of insufficient rainfall. The first well was tried out in 1938 and proved to be so successful that seven more have been drilled and other farmers plan to in the near future. The total cost of the well is about \$1,800 and it has been found to be rather inexpensive to operate. It is felt that a well will more than pay for itself in two seasons. The owner of a garage has rigged up an outfit for digging such wells and employs a crew of several men. These wells may mean a bright future for the community.

At present people in Shickley are very hopeful. The harvests this summer and fall were the best in several years. Merchants report an increase in sales. Winter wheat looks better than it has for some time. The people have hopes that incomes will soon be large enough to support a doctor.

Although Shickley can never hope to become much larger, it will probably never get much smaller. Some families have sought homes elsewhere, but the people who have business and home interests in the village are determined to keep this community abreast of the changing times. There is not much future for young people unless they wish to farm. Few business places can afford to keep a clerk and there is no opportunity for those who wish a professional career. Thus Shickley can never hope to keep many young people in the community. It will no doubt continue to be a home for retired farmers and older people because they like to live in Shickley.

Most of the following account of Shickley is drawn from the booklet *Shickley: Then and Now (Diamond Jubilee History, 1888-1963)*, compiled by Laura Pearl Koch, Lorena Wagers, Margaret Vough, and Carl Wennersten:

These are some of the business firms and professional people in the early days of Shickley. The inserted dates indicate when each person or firm came to the town. This list is incomplete because of lack of information.

**General Merchandise:** August Schneider; T. J. Winters; C. W. Beeson; Wilson Bros.; James Bodkin (1886); J. W. Hanson; John Ekwall (1887); Peter Bergquist; Van Timmerman; Thoma & Arends; Limback & Beach; Oscar Johnson & Son; Alfred Rosenquist (1903); **Farmers' Store**—Carl Sanburg, proprietor; J. L. Doud; Jake Dorbin; Ed Snodgrass (1925); J. A. Fisher (1915).

**Flour and Feed:** Henry Schott; D. W. Carlson; John E. Brown. **Restaurants:** Charles J. Phillips (1891); Jim and Sam Garrison; J. C. Boe (1901-1942); Camp & Richie.

**Livery Barn:** Charles Kreger (1887); J. B. Morris; Mike Fitzpatrick; Claus Frantz; Ike Beller; Charles Gehrke.

**Creamery:** Bush Bros.

**Bakery:** Harry Aydelott; Chris Hansen; Harold Bergquist.

**Jewelers:** Charles Bergquist; V. A. Beresford.

**Photographers:** W. S. Reed; M. M. Hoak (1906).

**Barbers:** Charles Buehrer; Frank Axelson; Cal Brown; Nick Marson; Ed Franzen (1903-1918); Harry H. Johnson.

**Blacksmiths:** Frank Johnson; Dan North; George Beeson; Chris Zehr; Ben Alf.

**Grain Elevator Men:** William Gehrke; George Powell; William Van Buren; Joe Laur; Clint Smith; Frank Anderson; Charles Witt.

**Shoe Repair:** William T. Craig.

**Physicians:** T. C. Canine; Royal Woods; A. J. Chamberlain; George A. Harris; E. A. Wilson; C. G. Delfs; C. W. Wiggins.

**Tailor Shop:** Captain Joe Thomas.

**Dentists:** H. G. Patterson; John Arthur DeMamphrey; J. Q. Adams; Guy Van Slyke; Dr. Jaecke.

**Painter and Wallpaper Hanger:** Seymour Thomas.

**Wells and Windmills:** Nels Rosenquist; Ed Stevens.

**Auctioneers:** L. R. Hoag; Loren Teter.

**Carpenters:** Jacky Wallace; John Carlson; A. A. Vough (and wheelwright); Sylvanus Lamb; Samuel C. May.

**Harness Shop:** Joe Ertel; Ray Merryman.

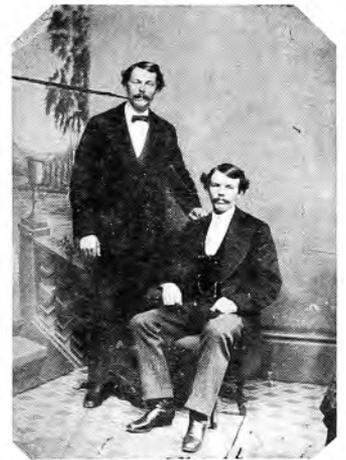
**Burlington Section Foreman:** Robert M. Jackson (1887).

**Hotels:** Midland—Jerry Coffey, proprietor; Columbia—A. M. Baldwin.



Photo from John Carl Peter Bergquist General Store (later the J. A. Fisher Store).

Photo from "Shickley—Then and Now" Frank Johnson (standing), early Shickley blacksmith, and his cousin, Mr. Lindgren. This picture was taken in Moline, Illinois, where Mr. Johnson learned the blacksmith trade, in 1874.



Courtesy of Nebraska Signal W. S. Hughes Drug Store in 1891.

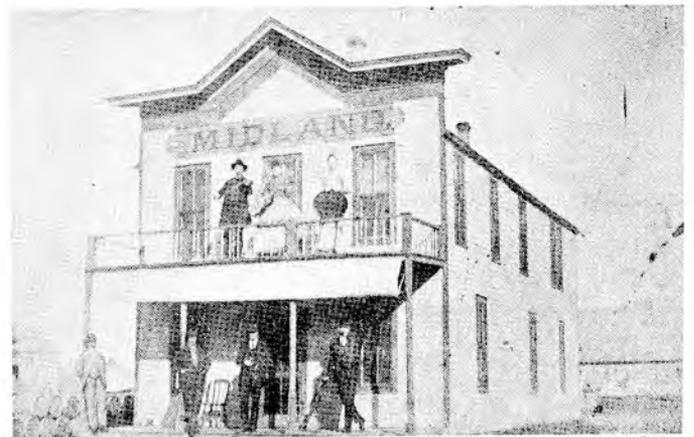


Photo from "Shickley—Then and Now" One of Shickley's two early hotels—The Midland.

**Groceries:** V. D. Johnston (1914); Glen Pumphrey (1931). **Millinery:** Mrs. W. E. Woodruff; Mrs. C. W. Beeson; Gustus & Peterson; Rose Brittenham.

**Drugs:** Hardinger & Ireland; W. S. Hughes (1891); Charles Colson; Elmer Hanson; Glen Hoag.

**Lumber and Coal:** Bolton Bros.; H. I. Converse (1892); Wake & Thornton; Nye-Schneider-Fowler Co.

**Hardware:** W. C. Milroy; McPherran Bros. (1901); Rowlison & Long; Long & Wennersten.

**Meat Markets and Butchers:** Joe Davis (1887); Edward Blott; John Hiermier; J. R. Phelps; William Heiser; Charles Shaw; Schafer & Walters.

**Implements:** Pius Reinsch; Huston Bros.; Clint Smith.

**Furniture and Undertaking:** H. A. Miller & Son; Long & Wennersten.

With the advent of automobiles, garages and gas stations were established. The first garages were those of McElroy & Russell, and Charles Bergquist, who later sold to Fred Geise. Chris Gratopp, W. C. Milroy, and Emil Krause were owners of early cars.

In 1910, Shickley had four elevators, District 54 school, and four churches. Each railroad ran two passenger, mail, and express trains and two freight trains daily. From 1915 to 1922, the community supported a picture show regularly. With the coming of automobiles and better highways, Shickley was no longer the only trade center for the community and there were many changes in business ownership between 1920 and 1930. The general-merchandise stores became

groceries, the bakery gave way to trucked-in bread, and there were no hotels but two cafes instead. The weekly newspaper, the Shickley Herald, was discontinued in 1922; after that, the county paper published in Geneva disseminated the news. The Congregational and the Swedish Methodist churches discontinued regular worship services in the 1920's because of small memberships and their church properties were sold and eventually removed. That left two churches within the village, the Methodist and Zion Lutheran, and several rural churches, to serve the community. The rural churches are the Stockholm Lutheran, 2½ miles W of town, St. Mary's Catholic, 4 miles N; Salem Mennonite, 4 miles SE, and Bethel Brethren, 4½ miles S on the county line in Thayer County. The Northwestern R.R. discontinued passenger service in 1937 and the Burlington in 1940. Each road continues its freight service, but the Northwestern station was torn down in 1967. There has been no resident doctor since 1936.

As of 1967, business enterprises were the Alfs Grain & Fertilizer Co.; Alfs Implement & Well Drilling Co.; Biegert Bros. Fertilizer Co.; Busse's Circle Foods; Busse's Repair Shop; Dick's Shoe Shop; Erb's Plumbing Shop; Gay's Skelly Service; Hatcliff Barber Shop; Janet Jean's Beauty Salon; Johnson Feed Mill, Inc.; Lauber Electric; Lichti Bros. Oil Co.; Lohmeier Repair; Merryman Repair & Mobil Service; Neuhaus IGA Store; Nickel Hardware & TV; Rosie's Place; Schafer Plumbing; Shickley Feed & Produce; Shickley Grain Co.; Shickley Lumber Co.; Shickley State Bank; and Jim Weinrich, barber.

Another business was one in which Dave Steider pioneered about 1940, the addition of frozen food lockers to his already established produce business. The frozen food lockers added much to housewives' convenience before home freezers became so numerous. The lockers continued until 1960 when Lichti Bros. bought the site and erected their new building.

In 1923, the town voted bonds to wire the village for electricity and contracted with the Blue Valley Power Company for current. In 1940, a \$32,000 water system was installed, half of the cost borne by the Works Progress Administration. A sewer system and disposal plant for the town were installed in 1954 at a cost of \$83,000. Thanks to these conveniences, nearly all homes are modern.

A building long important in Shickley's social and recreational life is the community building on North Railroad Street, facing the park. Originally a livery stable, in the twenties it was converted into a community hall. The west third of this building houses the public library and the club room and kitchen of the Federated Woman's Club. The library was founded by the Woman's Club in 1923, but is now supported by village tax levy. There are over 4,000 volumes in the library and nearly 20 magazines are received regularly. The rest of this building was floored with maple and was used as a skating rink for many years. Later the floor was tiled and used for basketball before the new school gymnasium was built. Other activities for which this space was used were banquet hall, dance floor, Red Cross Bloodmobile, irrigation meetings, and Farm Bureau and Soil Conservation programs.



Photo from "Shickley—Then and Now"  
Shickley Community building, formerly a livery stable.

The businessmen have been more or less consistent in keeping alive a Commercial Club, always interested in community betterment. Some of its concerns have been better lighting and improved streets. The village board has been in full accord with these improvements. In the early days, Fourth of July celebrations and Chautauquas were events of interest.

The people of Shickley have always been sports-minded and have backed many cup-winning teams in basketball, baseball, and softball. During the drouth and depression years of the thirties, kitten ball was played on a lighted field by both sexes and there was keen competition from neigh-



Photo from "Shickley—Then and Now"  
Shickley Girls' Basketball Team.

Stella White                      Nora Wennersten  
   Pearl Koch  
Clara Gratopp                      Gertrude Powell

Top Row, Left to Right: Charles Ruth, (?) Meyers, Arthur Vough, John Koch, Glen Hoag, Ralph Johnson, Varr  
Bottom, Lower Row: Roy Wennersten, Clay Thomas, Paul Newman



Shickley Baseball Club, 1913.

boring teams. This was a real morale-lifter for everyone in those depressing years.

Shickley has had two major fires which destroyed business places on Market Street. In 1920, the Farmers Union Store, the drugstore, and the hotel were burned, with a loss estimated at \$20,000 to \$30,000. The V. D. Johnston Meat Market and Grocery were destroyed in 1932. Volunteer fire departments came from Ong, Carleton, Davenport, and Geneva and kept the fire from spreading to adjoining buildings. Another disastrous fire occurred on the night of May 21, 1918, when the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church was struck by lightning and was a total loss. The congregation replaced it with the present brick building on the same site on West Murray Street.



Photo from John Carl  
Shickley's Main Street in 1912 (looking north). Notice Fire Department on the west side, just beyond the drugstore.

Early fire-fighting equipment was a hose cart and bucket brigade, with the water supply coming from town pumps powered by windmills. One was on the corner of Market and North Railroad Streets and the other on the corner of Market and Campbell. At one time Shickley was known as "Little Holland" because of its many windmills. After the Johnston fire the need of better fire-fighting equipment was emphasized, and in May, 1932, a Volunteer Fire Department was organized. There were 25 original members. The first truck was bought in the summer of 1932, a Chevrolet equipped with a chemical tank, hose, and buckets. Gradually, additional and more up-to-date equipment has been added, including a fully equipped rescue unit in 1961. In 1950, a new all-steel fire house was built to house the fire-fighting equipment, financed 50-50 by the village and the rural fire district.

In the early days of Shickley many Civil War veterans were residents and there was a strong Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) organization. An old photograph of G.A.R. members pictures Isaac Beeson, Joseph Thomas, Sam Strayer, Samuel Teter, L. D. Phillips, John Hiermier, Mike Fitzpatrick, Cheney Shepard, Albert Herrick, A. A. Beach, William Shuster, Sylvanus Lamb, John Foster Pinkerton, and W. C. Milroy. A later organization of veterans is American Legion Post 164, which was organized in 1919 with 28 charter members. The American Legion promotes Americanism and patriotism in the community. In 1963, the Legion sponsored a flag-selling campaign to promote the flying of the flag. Market Street was testimony to the success of the campaign on Flag Day, June 14, and on July 4, when "Old Glory" was flying from a staff in front of nearly every business place. The Legion sponsors high-school students' participation in County Government Day, held in Geneva each year. Memorial Day services, honoring fallen comrades, are held annually at the Shickley Cemetery and the Stockholm Cemetery. Every year the American Legion sponsors the sale of poppies, the proceeds of which go to handicapped veterans. The Legion stands ready to give community service and cooperates in worthy projects. The present membership is 25, with the following officers (1967): Gordon Johnson, commander; Kenneth Hofferber, adjutant; Don Barney, service officer; Reiny Ackerman, finance officer; and the Rev. Hugh Houchin, post chaplain.

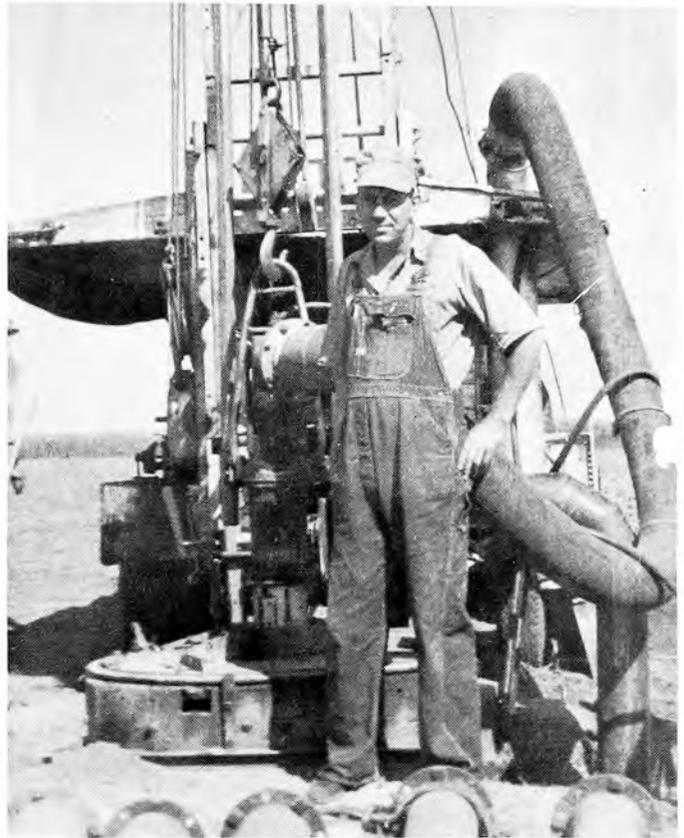


Photo from "Shickley—Then and Now"  
John B. Alfs—first Fillmore County citizen to get into the irrigation-well business, and his original drilling rig.



Photo from "Shickley—Then and Now"  
Big corn crop of 1896, with some 70-bushel yields.



Photo from Frank K. Williams  
Deering cornpicker about 1921—Frank Williams on picker.



Photo from Mrs. C. W. Flory  
First irrigation well in Fillmore County, drilled in 1936 (Charles W. Flory by well).

The development of Shickley, like that of any other Nebraska community, has been varied; for the village had its "ups and downs," brought about largely by the fluctuating rainfall. This area is purely agricultural and drouth immediately affects the economy. In 1896, there was a bumper corn crop which resulted in long cribs for storage being built on the railroad rights-of-way. Corn was sold for 13 cents a bushel. The drouth of the 1930's, aggravated by national depression, found Shickley at low ebb. In 1930, the assessed valuation of the town was \$215,499; by 1940, it was down to \$194,144. A recovery from this condition came with the use of deep wells for irrigation. Geologists have long told us of the lake of water underlying this area, and in 1936 the first well was drilled on the Charles Flory farm, tapping this wonderful supply for irrigation. The growing season of 1937 showed its worth in insuring plenty of moisture for crops. From this beginning, all of Shickley's trade territory is now dotted with deep wells. Much credit goes to John B. Alfs, who self-constructed and assembled deep-well drilling equipment and was the first in Fillmore County to get into the business of drilling irrigation wells. Fertilizing became a necessity, and this gave rise to fertilizer-distribution businesses. Yields zoomed and the huge storages maintained by the two grain companies are mute testimony to the value of deep-well irrigation. Drouth-resistant sorghum grains have also made their contribution to the changing economy. All this has been reflected in the business of the town and in the increase in property values. Shickley is truly a "big little town."

### Lodges

Through the years, Shickley has had several fraternal orders. The earliest was the Shickley Masonic Lodge No. 178, chartered on June 20, 1889. The first Master was William M. Van Buren. This lodge became extinct on September 2, 1905, and its remaining membership transferred to Geneva.

Shickley Lodge No. 194, I.O.O.F., was instituted on June 2, 1892. The 16 charter members were R. B. Campbell, W. S. Hughes, J. A. Smith, S. W. Light, W. H. Cooksey, Peter Bergquist, T. C. Canine, Alfred S. Strayer, D. E. Rusmisells, John McHale, Joel P. Morris, David Butler, Michael Fitzpatrick, Nels Swenson, Cheney A. Shepard, and Albert J. Murphy. This lodge is still active and meets every Monday evening. The 1967 membership is 22.

—Data supplied by John E. Pearson

The Leona Rebekah Lodge, No. 241, was instituted February 10, 1908, with 13 sisters and 20 brothers as charter members, namely:

Gertrude M. Powell	Gusta Frantz	S. F. Wagers
W. Meyers	Naomi Hagenlocker	H. L. Long
M. Lorena Hoag	William Meyers	W. S. Hughes
Emilie Meyers	John Boe	William Mansfield
Lena Boe	P. M. Hagenlocker	Will Vough
Mary M. Smith	Dick Ferguson	E. S. Thomas
Emma Frenzen	George Davis	H. B. Thomas
Lena Sanburg	Emil Krause	B. N. Kunkel
Mary Sherbondy	Walter Dodge	Ed Frenzen
Inez Dodge	N. T. Smith	Harry Schuster
Katie Schott	J. L. Doud	Claus Frantz

The Leona Rebekah Lodge has met on the first and third Tuesdays of each month and has continued to be an active lodge for the past 59 years. The 1967 membership is 25.

—Data supplied by Mrs. John E. Pearson

A charter for the local organization of the **Royal Highlanders** was granted in September, 1907, but the organization was discontinued in August, 1919. There were also short-lived chapters of the Ancient Order of United Workmen and the Modern Woodmen of America.

### Pioneer History

The following first-hand account of Shickley's early days, written by Mrs. Harriet Anderson, is presented in her own words:

You ask me to give you a "History of Shickley." I will try but there will be many items of interest that I have forgotten. To those who have been so far from a town it caused a great excitement to think of having a town within a few miles. Of course, we women did not go very often. Sometimes once or twice a year and we did not think so much about the "fashions" as we do now.

Our first trading place was Fairmont and then Grafton, Sutton, Carleton, and Edgar. We traded also at Davenport. At first there was only one store, kept by a Mr. Stump. They lived in the rooms at the back of the store. That was the only house in Davenport at that time.

In 1884, they began to talk of a railroad being built from Beatrice through this part of the county. Everybody was thankful to hear about it. But in 1885 there was more than talk. A road was surveyed and



Photo from Rev. John W. Ekwall  
Modern Woodmen Drill Team in 1890.

every day we were glad to hear that it had been surveyed through such and such a man's farm. Now Mr. Kline was glad to see them survey where they did but a Mr. Schmutz did not want to be so near a town. He traded his homestead of 160 acres to R. B. Campbell for his farm of 240 acres near the Catholic Church and Mr. Campbell moved to Mr. Schmutz's farm, known now as where A. E. Miller lives.

In the spring of 1886, the "town" was surveyed and Mr. Kline and Mr. Campbell were very generous with the lots, giving so many to the railroad and they would give to anyone who started up a business a lot for \$1.00. There were three stores started at once, Mr. Winters on the south side and Oscar Johnson and Mr. Houchin & Cavanaugh on the north side.

A Mr. Wilson built a furniture store where the Opera House now stands and a Mr. Mercer kept the first lumber yard where Mr. Thornton's lumber yard is.

A contractor by the name of Lather built, with Mr. James Flory's help, many of the buildings, and everyone was busy and trying to do their part in making a town. They succeeded in getting quite a number of good businessmen located here. It seemed no time until there was a man ready to start some line of business. Soon Mr. Coffey had a hotel up and Mr. Ross put up a drugstore and a Mr. McDougal a restaurant, then a blacksmith shop. Mr. Campbell was real-estate man and postmaster. His mother, Mrs. Woodruff, was dressmaker and milliner. It seemed to us something grand to have our letters and papers come to Shickley after so many years of getting mail from Carleton. We all rejoiced over it and thought of those long cold rides and often disappointments over the mail.

I remember my first trip to Shickley as plainly as if it occurred last month. I did not go to town much on account of not being very strong and could not stand the rides very well, usually being sick afterwards, so when Mr. Anderson asked me if I did not want to see the new town, of course I said I did. But it seemed to me we were there so quick. We all went to Mr. Winters' store first and there I made Mrs. Winters' acquaintance. She invited me into their rooms at the back of the store where they lived. A firm friendship lasting as long as she lived here was made. Afterwards we went to visit the other stores, buying something at each place, as I told them I would treat them all alike. I enjoyed my visit to Shickley, coming home much pleased with the new town, and I always had a warm friendship for the people in Shickley.

After the town was surveyed, Mrs. Clara Ekwall bought two lots where Mrs. N. T. Smith's house now stands (R. T. Johnson home). She built the first dwelling house. She had come here to live, bringing her four children, Fred, Theodore, Leonard, and Jennie. She bought lots in March and soon commenced to build. That house is part of Amos Frieden's home and it was moved to its present location by Harvey Johnson, he having bought it later.

In the meantime, Mr. Winters and Oscar Johnson had built their stores and Mr. Milroy had also built a hardware store on the south side.

A bank was built and opened by a Mr. William Shickley of Geneva. Then it was decided to name the town after Judge Shickley, who lived at Geneva. He was much respected all over the county.

On the 19th day of August, 1886, at 10 o'clock A.M., the first train came into Shickley. Of course it was a construction train, and it did not get to Ong until the 29th of August.

At this time Mr. Houchin & Cavanaugh had their store built, so Mr. Cavanaugh built a dwelling house. That house is now owned by Mr. Mansfield. Soon after, they began to build the Congregational Church, where Mrs. Augusta Swenson now lives. Then in 1887 they built the Methodist Church. Many other buildings were put up and there began a feeling of rivalry between the North and South Shickley which was not pleasant, and some made statements that they would not trade with one another. There were three elevators built. Of course, that was a great benefit to the farming community.

Our first doctor was a Dr. Fish. He built an office south of where the Opera House now stands. They lived upstairs, but he did not stay long, not being very successful.

We sometimes went to other towns but did most of our trading at Shickley.

In the fall of 1886, I went to Illinois for my first visit to my old home. My father being here, he persuaded me to go back with him. I had always had a longing for my old home but my mother was not there to greet me so I felt so lonesome that I lost all care to live there.

I returned satisfied to stay in the "Wild and Windy West" and Shickley looked good to me. One thing, people from the East thought it was uncivilized and that Nebraska people were like Indians, but we got over caring for what they thought.

In a few years the Northwestern was surveyed and they thought they should have bonds voted to help them and threatened to miss Shickley unless the bonds carried. The day of the election was one of the worst days seen in Shickley and if there had not been good men on guard there would have been crime committed. But the bonds carried. There was hard feelings for many years over it. When I see the quiet elections since women have the right to vote I rejoice and am glad the saloon is of the past. I hope we will so vote that it will never come back again.

We have always had good doctors here. Dr. Canine succeeding Dr. Fish. Then Dr. Woods, who was our friend and doctor for many years. He moved to Geneva but he sold out to Dr. Harris. Shickley was too slow for him, so he sold out to Dr. Wilson, who built up a good practice. But Dr. Wilson liked farming better. Then good-natured Dr. Delfs came along and after he left, Dr. Wiggins moved here.

When the school districts were located, there was a schoolhouse built west of Shickley. There were quite a number of schools in Bryant township and they were all used to have Sunday School and church in.

I remember one teacher, a Miss Dyson, that had homesteaded where T. E. Johnson now lives north of town. Her sister and she lived together and both taught school, going or riding on their ponies night and morning, and they were liked.

Shickley Schoolhouse was built in 1887 and Mr. Neal was principal in 1888 and 1889. If there were any other teachers, I do not remember them, but I think that there has been a great interest in the Shickley school, and all unite in wishing that all may co-operate to make it one of the best in the county or state.

I think that some day we may be proud of some of our young people. There may be someone who may be President of this great country. One wish I give you all, that you may all live such a good life and do so much good that we will rejoice that you went to school at Shickley.

I have given you a slight sketch of the early history of Shickley but I think that it is very imperfect. I hope you will all help to make Shickley so grand that a better historian than I will be found to give you a good history of the Little Town we all love.



Photo from Leonard Carlson

Farm home of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Hanson, built in 1883. Left to right: Mrs. Arthur Vennell, Mrs. Victor Pearson, Mrs. Hjalmar Olsen, Mr. and Mrs. Louis Hanson, Anna Hanson, Mr. and Mrs. Nels Johnson.



Photo from "Shickley—Then and Now"

West side of Market Street (about 1920). Bank is the third building from the left.

## Banks

When a bank was needed in the community, articles of incorporation for the Shickley State Bank were issued September 19, 1887, signed by T. H. Beekman, C. F. McGrew, Harry Patee, G. Schneider, John Donovan, Jr., George E. Black, and G. W. Clawson. A meeting of the stockholders on January 1, 1888, elected F. H. Beekman, president; C. F. McGrew, vice-president; Harry Patee, cashier; board of directors, F. H. Beekman, John Donovan, Jr., C. F. McGrew, George E. Black, and Harry Patee.

In 1909, William Matzke and W. A. Snare organized the Farmers and Merchants Bank. On March 29, 1930, the Farmers and Merchants Bank was bought by the State Bank, which still serves the area.

## Our Trip Out West and Early Days

by Mrs. Harriet Anderson

In the year of 1872 my husband [Nels] came to Fillmore County, Nebraska, to Wm. Miller's and while there he chose 160 acres of land. As he was a soldier he went to the land office at Beatrice to homestead it. But he found that it was already homesteaded so he chose another 160 acres that was not taken on Sec. 22. It is still owned by the family today.

We intended to move in the fall of 1872 but sickness prevented us. In the spring of 1873, April 21st, my husband, myself, and our two little girls, Nellie age 2 years and Adelia 6 months and my two brothers, Nathaniel and Thomas Smith left our loving parents in Rock Island County, Illinois, to come to the broad and fertile prairies of Nebraska. To me it was a sad day and I can hear my mother's words as she kissed my good-bye: "I will never see you again in this world." Oh, how true it was!

We went about 25 miles the first day stopping to visit a sister of Mr. Anderson over the Sabbath Day. My father would not let us start on Friday as he thought it unlucky so we started on Saturday to please him.

It commenced to rain Sunday night. It was a dismal morning to start out on such a long journey in wagons. A friend of my brothers and myself had come to see us and he brought us a bucket of honey which was quite a treat to us and which we enjoyed. Our parents and friends had seen that we were well equipped with things to eat but my appetite failed and the first week was very hard on me and I was sick. I realized that every step was taking me farther from my mother. My husband tried to persuade me to leave them after the first week of our trip and go by train to Fairmont and wait for them there. But to that I would not consent as he had promised to buy me a cow with the money I saved by coming with them in the wagon.

My brother Nathaniel drove the wagon that the babies and I were in as my husband's wagon was heavily loaded with our household goods and here we had more room and it was more comfortably fixed so that no rain could trouble us.

I got better the next week and I began to take more notice of our trip. Our oldest girl began to get so well and strong. She had been so weakly and everyone thought we would lose her on that long trip but it sure agreed with her and her father saw that she had all the milk she could drink and good food to eat.

I remember one farm we stopped at. It looked like rain and the man told us to drive inside his barnyard and to shelter under his shed. When he heard one of the children cry he came and asked me and the children to come into the house. I thanked him but said I would rather stay in the wagon. The next morning when we were ready to start my husband went to him as he was milking and asked if he would sell 1/2 gallon of milk. He said, "I will give you a gallon of the best milk you ever had." I thought so too when we stopped early for dinner. There was such a lot of butter in the jug.

I never had any liking for the roads in Iowa. We sure found them bad but the people were kind and there were many things that were



Photo from "Shickley—Then and Now"

East side of Market Street (about 1920). Old Midland Hotel is the second building from the right.



Photo from Everett Landgren

This barn burned in the summer of 1899. It was insured in the old Fillmore County Mutual Insurance Co. and caused considerable concern among the stockholders because of the sizeable assessment to cover the loss. Pictured at right are Nels Anderson and his niece Gertie Landgren. The other persons are not known.

interesting and amusing. Some were so ready to let you know they had a gun and were afraid of something being stolen from them. I remember two men that passed us. They had a light spring wagon and a good team and were going at a good speed. They stopped and asked where we were going. The boys said to Nebraska. They said, "We are also." They said, "We are going near Fairmont." We told them that was our intention also. They wished we could travel together, but our wagons were too heavily loaded. They said they had passed the same wagon we had and they had showed their guns and let them know they did not want company. But with wishes to meet these people again they went on. The next day in the afternoon we passed them. One of their horses was sick so they were resting. They asked how far we would go before we camped. We told them about 10 miles. They said they would try and make it and camp with us. Well, we had our supper and they came and a very pleasant time the men had. We left them the next morning and went on. Late that afternoon they passed us again. We were going to have our dinner (we always just took a lunch at noon). One of the men called out, "Why don't you milk one of those cows around you?" My brother said, "These boys are afraid to hold the cow while I milk." So he left his team, came and caught the cow and Tom milked. He got a quart of milk. They had a good laugh and went on. The men met many times in Fairmont but they moved away again.

I did not know the state of Iowa was so hilly. After the first week I got used to having such a small space to move around in, but I was glad when we reached Plattsmouth, Nebraska. There we crossed the river in a ferry boat. We found the roads different. We met many covered wagons leaving Nebraska. They were discouraged over the Great Easter Blizzard on the 14th day of April. They would not live in a place where they had such storms. Now what they said made me feel bad, for I had a fear of living on a prairie and they said the wind blew so hard that houses and wagons had to be chained or they would blow away. My husband told them we were going on and try it anyway.

We stopped in Lincoln one night. I thought it was not much of a place as it had only been the capital 3 years. We went to Wyuka Cemetery to see the grave of Mr. Anderson's sister who had died the fall before. Her husband, Charley Foster, was in Lincoln. He came on out with us to see his land. He had homesteaded the spring before in Fillmore County, when Wm. Miller did. (He was Nels Miller's father.) We were all acquainted with Mr. Miller in Illinois.

After leaving Lincoln we camped near the Insane Asylum on Salt Creek and I assure you that salt water doesn't make good coffee. I threw that coffee out and insisted that we have some well water which my husband got as he liked his coffee as well as I did.

We reached Fairmont Saturday noon making us just three weeks on the trip. When we drove through Geneva, my husband said to me, "This is the county seat." I said, "Where is the courthouse?" He said, "That will be here soon." We did not see many houses after leaving Geneva. I remember a James Merryman place. It began to look very stormy and not much of a road so I thought it much farther than it was.

We arrived at Mr. Miller's just as the storm came and I was glad to be in shelter. There we heard that our land had been pre-empted or jumped and that was sure discouraging after such a long trip. My husband was persuaded to go to Beatrice to the Land Office where he found that the land had never been canceled. He was told to move onto it.

We lived on one side of the 160 acres and our opponent on the other side. He used to come and order us off but it did him no good.

There were a number of soldiers that had taken claims. They came to us and said they would go and put this man's goods on his wagon and send him off. He was a bachelor and no one liked him. My husband had started a law-suit for the land which he won. We had a sod house built that fall. We were neighbors and friends with this man for a number of years.

The next year was a hard one as our money was used for the law-suit. We had a very hard time as the grasshoppers or locusts as some called them came, and I must say they could eat. I had a very nice garden which I took great pleasure in and in one hour's time there was nothing left. All I could find of my onions were the holes where the onions had been. Our potato vines were ate to the ground. Our 25 acres of sod corn was gathered that fall in a water pail. Just a few kernels of corn on a small cob. We had a few acres of spring wheat which had been cut before the grasshoppers came. We talked over what we should do but decided we would stay on the land. We did but it was not fun! We killed our cow so we could have meat and that was a hard thing on me. I thought that I could not get over that but we had no money and if we left the land we would lose it. So we tried to keep up our courage.

I remember one Sunday afternoon that Mr. Miller came and brought me a small bucket of sweet milk. I made coffee for him. (Mr. Anderson being away.) We had bread and coffee without sugar or butter. As we sat at the table he said to me, "Hattie, have you ever told your parents how hard you are having it?"

I said, "No, I will never tell my mother. She would worry about me."

He said, "I feel sorry for you, as you had such a good home, to have it like this."

When he started to go he said, "You tell Nels to come tomorrow and get a cow I have." I told him we could not pay him but he said, "You can some time."

The next morning Mr. Anderson went and got the cow. Oh, how glad I was! Our son Frank was born the 21st of February. I had made a pound of butter. I thought it was so nice to have butter on my bread. Mr. Anderson wrote to my parents that we had a son and my father sent me \$10. When the girls came in with 5 cents of sugar and 24 cents of dried fruit, I think it was apples, I thought I was rich.

Mrs. Bergquist who took care of me and did the work charged us \$3 for 10 days as nurse and doctor. Our nearest doctor being at Sutton. There was no one but Mrs. Bergquist and she was so pleased to get that money.

The first summer we had to go to Fairmont for our groceries. Then in the fall Carleton had a store and a blacksmith shop so we felt as if things were improving.

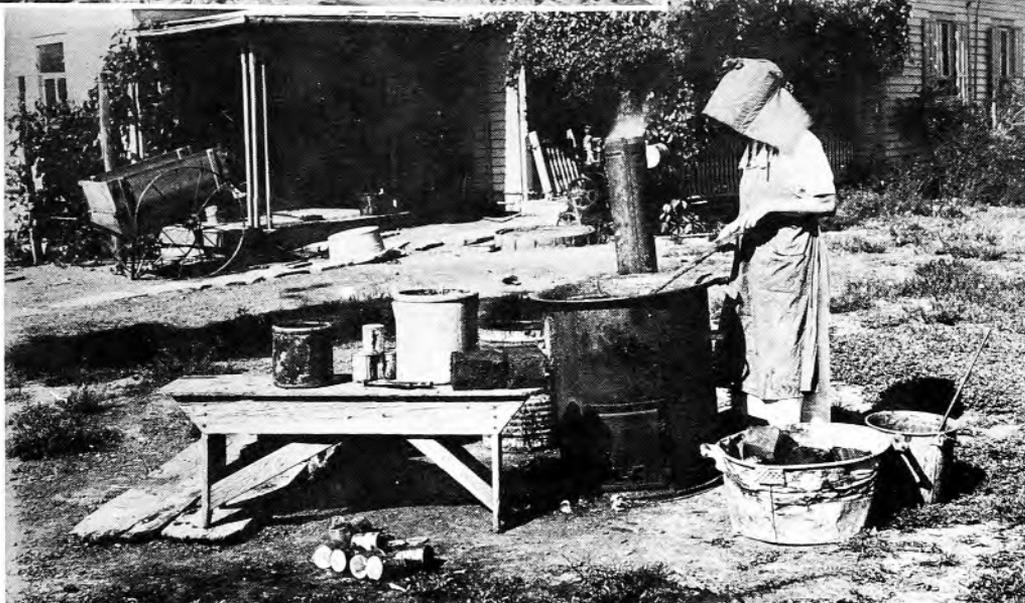
In the spring of 1875 the ground was covered with small grasshoppers. They ate the wheat and oats and garden as fast as it came up. In May a cold rain and snow came and they disappeared and again we had hopes.

We were needing a well as we had been hauling water in barrels all this time and how many times I had longed for a cool drink of water and to have all I needed when I washed. That summer we had a well dug and that was a great deal.

I also had such a longing for pie plant pie. So one day I picked sheep sorrel which grew in abundance on the breaking. I made a crust using cream and sweetened the sheep sorrel with molasses. We liked



Making Sorghum—Fillmore County (about 1916).



Making Soap — Fillmore County (about 1916).

it and when anyone came I made a pie.

One of the things I remember was the wild geese. They sure were a hard thing on our wheat for many years and nearly destroyed it. But with all our losses we managed to live and always had good friends no matter what church they belonged to. As neighbors and friends the early settlers to one another were very dear and early trials drawing us together.

In 1884 or 1885 they began to talk of the B. & M. Railroad being built. There was quite a talk of where a town should be located and at last the location was chosen and named "Shickley." We thought it a great improvement as we had traded at Fairmont, Sutton, Grafton, Edgar, Carleton and Davenport. Now to have a town so near to us we were well pleased.

Now don't think we did not have any amusements. We had dances and mush-and-milk parties. Then we were not so particular about our dress and no one ever criticized the other and many happy days and evenings we had.

I think now my happiest days were spent in a sod house. We felt that everyone was a friend and neighbor. We were so glad to have people move here. Some were good and some were bad but we tried to be neighborly to all.

I often think when hearing people talk of hard times what would they have called it to never have any money coming in or to go and get trust or to have to be afraid we would have to leave our land.

I can not tell you how we lived. I asked one lady if she could. "No," she said. "I only know that I often wondered where our next meal was to come from."

There were many things sent to the grasshopper sufferers that were never given to them, and for all the aid that they got it would never have kept them alive very long. But I think that I would rather buy a piece of land than homestead but when you homesteaded in early days everybody was poor and there wasn't much money.

### Blizzard of 1888

F. O. Nelson of San Jose, California, sent this letter about the great blizzard:

Well do I remember early that January morning as a 12-year-old trudging across fields to the Beach schoolhouse 2 miles W of Shickley, with the wind blowing lightly from the southeast, temperature about 15 above and the snow 18 inches deep. It was the softest, fluffiest, and biggest-flaked snow I have ever seen. It continued to fall intermittently until nearly noon. Just after the noon hour, about 1:30, the wind turned to the northwest and the 50-mile gale that followed picked it up and it all seemed to take to the air at once.

Our teacher would not let any of us leave for home unescorted. My father came for me afoot because he could not force his horses to face it. As we made our way home we could at times see the clear sky above but never at any time more than 10 feet ahead. We finally made the mile and a quarter by following a fence, a railroad, and the last part of the distance between two hedge rows.

The teacher and some of the pupils whose parents could not make it remained at the schoolhouse all night. Fortunately, that time the coal bin was full.



The approach of modern comforts — wash day lightened by a gas engine (about 1916).

