

Phelps Helps



Volume 20, Issue 1

Spring 2012

**Meetings held at the
Nebraska Prairie
Museum
on the first Monday
of the month at
2:00 PM.**

**The public is
welcome!**

Visit us on the Web!
Phelps Helps Web Page via
[http://users.atcjet.net/p/
psdesigns](http://users.atcjet.net/p/psdesigns)



**New 2012 Holdrege Area
Genealogy Club
Officers:**

President:
Carol Davis

Vice President:
Sandra Slater

Secretary:
Margaret Stutheit

Treasurer:
Ada Hinson

Phelps Helps Editor:
Patti Simpson

Narrow Escape

From J. F. Miller, who used to be a drayman here but is now farming two miles east of Atlanta, we learn of the narrow escape he and his family had during the storm Saturday. The house where they live consists of a frame building 14x20 and a sod attachment. A little after seven o'clock the frame building was struck by lightning and so completely demolished it that there is not one stick of timber that can be used again.

The family was in the sod part of the house when the bolt struck and the bolt entered the sod room where they were and killed their dog, which was only a few feet from their three-year-boy Lloyd. Lloyd had been playing with the dog a little before this but had stopped and straightened up, which probably saved his life. Mr. and Mrs. Miller felt the effect of the shock and the baby was unconscious for some time, but the little boy did not seem to be affected. Mr. Miller had been in the part of the house that was destroyed only a few minutes before the bolt

came. It seems almost a miracle that none were injured.

Mr. Miller says their pictures and some of the lighter things were destroyed but the chairs and heavy articles of furniture escaped. Mr. Miller says he was aware of the light going out and a running light dancing about the room and then was a smell of sulfur, so about the first thing he did was to open the door and let in fresh air. He has no desire to go through his experience again. He was in Holdrege, Monday, to get a place for his wife and family to stay until he could get his crops in and a house could be erected.

DUES NOTICE

**If you have not yet paid your
2012 Dues, this will be the last
Phelps Helps issue you will
receive.**

**Please send your \$10 check
payable to Holdrege Area
Genealogy Club, Box, 164,
Holdrege, NE 68949**

Homecoming Addition

Holdrege Progress Newspaper ~ Dec. 28, 1916

In accordance with its annual custom, the Progress has asked a number of its readers, living in distant cities and towns, to send letters for the Home Coming Edition, which is presented by the publishers this week. The response has been very generous and all the letters are unusually interesting. The publishers desire to thank each contributor for his help in this undertaking. These bright, newsy letters, reflecting the cordial spirit of the holiday season, should be read by all.

Atlantic, Ia. Dec 15, 1916, To the Holdrege Progress: In compliance with your request for a few lines on the early settlement of Phelps of Phelps county, will say that George W. Price, Father Magill, his sons, Wesley Frank and Samuel Loring Phelps, Mrs. Hyatt, Mother of Mac Hyatt. W. Hammond, Silas Emil and Henry Emil and myself took homesteads in Anderson Township in the fall of '879. And we erected the proverbial sod houses, in which some of us lived for fifteen years or more. At that time there was not railroad in the county, hence Kearney was our trading point and post office for several years. Phelps County at that time was simply a large unbroken prairie country, hence nearly all roads ran diagonally from one place to another. It was here and at that time when we homesteaded, endured and experienced genuine pioneer life.

Yet no one complained, for the fact everyone was calculating and expecting more or less hardships. But none could tell or anticipate just when or how these hardships would fall upon us. But I want to say right here, when they did come, they were met and bravely borne without a whim-

per. The first hardship that fell upon us was a prairie fire in December of 1879, which came from the west and reached from Platte to the Republican rivers, and practically burned everything from it that was not protected by fire guards. Another hardship, was our fuel question, as we, or the most of us, were all too poor to buy coal, hence we depended first on willow saplings, cut and hauled from the Platte river, second, prairie hay, corn stocks and buffalo chips. These hallow saplings made very poor fuel, and all times were difficult to get on account of deep snow on islands where they grew.

The summer of 1880 was exceedingly dry, hence little grain of any kind was grown, and this dry summer was followed by notorious blizzard in 1880-1881. These blizzards commenced about Christmas and for ten straight weeks we had a blizzard every week lasting from two to three and a half days, and they "were full grown and vigorous too." The snow got so deep it was impossible to get anywhere and when our flour and meal gave out, we had to resort to whole wheat and corn hominy for our food, and to our hay stacks for our fuel, and even this hay was to wet the latter part of the winter from the snow blowing into it, we could hardly burn it. The writer well remembers calling on George Price about the first of March and finding him sitting by the cook stove where he was placing hay over the oven to dry and when fit to burn, feed it to the stove through the end door, while Mrs. Price was cook-

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ing a meal on top of the stove, and I heard no complaint either; only Mrs. Price said ---George, "By

Zounds, this has been a winter for our whiskers, hasn't it.: We all agreed with him, for it had been.

George A. Arnold

—END

Harlan County Newspapers On Microfilm

Harlan County Journal

0005713 Reel 14 05-18-1944 thru
12-11-1947

0005714 Reel 15 12-18-1947 thru
10-05-1950

#0005715 Reel 16 10-12-1950 thru
04-30-1953

Alma Weekly Record

#0006244 Reel 1 10-25-1895 thru
08-28-1903

#0006245 Reel 2 09-04-1903 thru
06-07-1907

Alma Shaffers Alma Record

#0006246 Reel 3 05-28-1909 thru
12-02-1910

#0006247 Reel 4 12-09-1910 thru
01-17-1913

#0006248 Reel 5 01-24-1913 thru
04-07-1916

Alma Record

#0006249 Reel 6 04-14-1916 thru
05-09-1919

#0006250 Reel 7 05-16-1919 thru
03-31-1922

#0006251 Reel 8 04-07-1922 thru
06-26-1925

Orleans Progress

#18,782 Reel 1 10-25-1895 thru
07-30-1897

Oxford Standard

11,189 Reel 9 01-26-1950 thru
01-08-1953

LANCASTER COUNTY, NEBRASKA BOOKS

100 Years of Remembrance Sprague 1888-1988
Nebraska

Sprague Community Church 100 Years of History
July 23, 1893 to July 23, 1993

Lincoln, Nebraska 1867-1923

Souvenir of Lincoln, Nebraska (contains old pictures
of buildings in Lincoln).

Lincoln-Lancaster County Genealogical Society
Newsletters.

Wyuka Cemetery in City of Lincoln-Parts 1 & 2
Calvary, College View & Mt. Carmel Cemeteries
in City of Lincoln

Marriage Record Index Vol 1: Sept. 1866-Oct
1893

Marriage Record Index Vol 2: July 1893-Nov
1906

1903 Plat Book of Lancaster County Index
A Biographical & Genealogical History of South-
eastern Nebraska Index

Intention to Naturalize: 1867-1944 - Lancaster
Co. District Court Index

Alba Brown Mortuary Records Index: 1921-1965
Pioneer Families of Lancaster County Index

From an Early History of Phelps County Written in 1940 by J.C. Mitchell

Two of the most memorable events of the period between 1883 and 1890 are the storms of 1886 and 1888. As with every other event of the more or less distant past, a great many incorrect statements concerning these two storms are current among the "old timers". At least, the various descriptions do not agree. The following is a brief account of the two storms have been given by an old settler who lived in the vicinity of Funk.

November 16th, 1886, was a mild day and rain began to fall towards evening, which turned to snow before night. The wind came up and blew a furious gale. The snow increased until it was naught else but a blinding sheet. This continued all night and all the next day and night and some say that it kept through the 18th. Of this I am not sure recollection of the seventeenth. It was about impossible to get anywhere as the air was full of snow driven by high wind that one became bewildered and lost for a few minutes. Many of the business men in the town spent the night in their places of business not daring to attempt the trip home....The weather in the 1886 storm was not cold, being about the freezing point. There was no suffering or deaths, which there would have been if the weather was colder. There was an unverified rumor that a family in a covered wagon down by Holdrege had perished. This was the storm that caused the searching party headed by Mr. Barr and not the storm of 1888. Since 1886, we have had many snow storms but nothing to compare to this storm in thickness of snow and velocity of the wind.

The twelfth of January, 1888, was a mild day. I was loading a car in the elevator with the

blind horse on the horsepower. While eating dinner about 1:00 o'clock, the storm struck. It came with a great roaring, a high wind and quite a flurry of snow, which did not last very long. I hurried over and did my work and by this time the mercury was falling at a rapid rate. It continued to fall throughout the night and into the morning, it was 30 below zero. There was very little snow, and I always say it was the coldest weather I ever experienced without snow on the ground. The day following the storm was clear and bright. One of the neighbor boys went to Holdrege and brought me a load of coal. Charley Peterson, now a resident of Funk, lived in Kearney County, several miles southeast of Minden. He relates how the cows drifted with the wind nearly three miles south and how he drove them against the wind, being out in



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the storm all afternoon. This confirms my recollection of there being no snow of consequence.....for weeks after the storms, we read the suffering, especially of the school teachers and scholars who were caught in the schoolhouses, but there was none of this as far west as Kearney or Phelps Counties. It is an error to say that Miss Royce and her scholars were found in a haystack in the east edge of Phelps County. Nothing of this kind happened in this part of the county. The storm was only remarkable in this part of the county for the fact the mercury dropped from fifty to thirty below zero, a drop of eighty degrees in a little over twelve hours, and if it had not been for a blizzard farther east, with the consequent stories of suffering and death. It would hardly have been remembered at all.

HARD TIMES CAME IN THE 1890s

The period between 1890 and 1900 was a period of "hard times", especially the first part of the decade. In 1893 there was a short crop in Phelps County and in 1894, a total failure. In 1893 there occurred a national panic which added to the stress of the times. It is said that valuable farm horses were shot for lack of feed, and the woman in the country gathered bleached bones which they found lying on the prairie and ground them up to use for making soap. During these years many people left Phelps County, never to return. In fact, it was often said that the only ones who remained were those who did not have the means to enable them to get away. However, this is an overstatement of the case. There were many who kept their faith in the eventual prosperity of the county, even in the midst of the reverses of this period. In 1895 winter wheat began to be sown

very generally, and from this time our prosperity began to return to the county, but of course it took several years to recover from the "hard Times" period.

As a result all conditions during this decade, we find that Holdrege gained only about a hundred in population and very little building was done. The only public or business buildings erected during that period were East Ward School, built in 1890, at a cost of \$15,000; The Erickson building; the Mid-West Hospital; the George Jackson building; the Hyatt building and the Swedish Methodist Church dedicated in 1899.

A plan for establishing a public library was originated by the Drummond Club, organized in 1890 (now known as Priscilla). This club gave an art exhibit for the purpose of raising money for a nucleus for the library fund. Membership cards were issued costing one dollar a year. The first library contained one hundred and seventy-three books donated by the Y.M.C.A. library, sixty-five books donated by the public, and one hundred and ninety-two books purchased by the library board. Mr. H. E. bush offered one room in his real estate and central telephone office building for the library free of charge, and Mrs. Bush acted as librarian without compensation until the library could be established upon a self supporting basis. For nearly six years the library remained in Mr. Bush's office, when a larger room being required, L. J. Titus offered the use of a room over the First National Bank. The City Council, in the autumn of 1903, levied a tax for the maintenance of the city library, whereupon the Association turned the books over to the new Board appointed by the Council, and in February, 1904, the free circulating library was open to the public in 1917.

Mitchell Hardware—Orleans, Nebraska

Following information taken from 1872-1972 Orleans Centennial Book.

Mitchell Hardware IS OLDEST BUSINESS IN COUNTY

NOTE: The Phelps Helps Newsletter highlights Harlan County in this section. With many of our subscribers interested in and from Harlan County, and since Harlan County is a connecting county to Phelps County, the Phelps Helps will publish history information on Harlan County.

Probably the oldest business establishment in Harlan County, with a history of continuous uninterrupted service to the public is the Mitchell Hardware Company in Orleans.

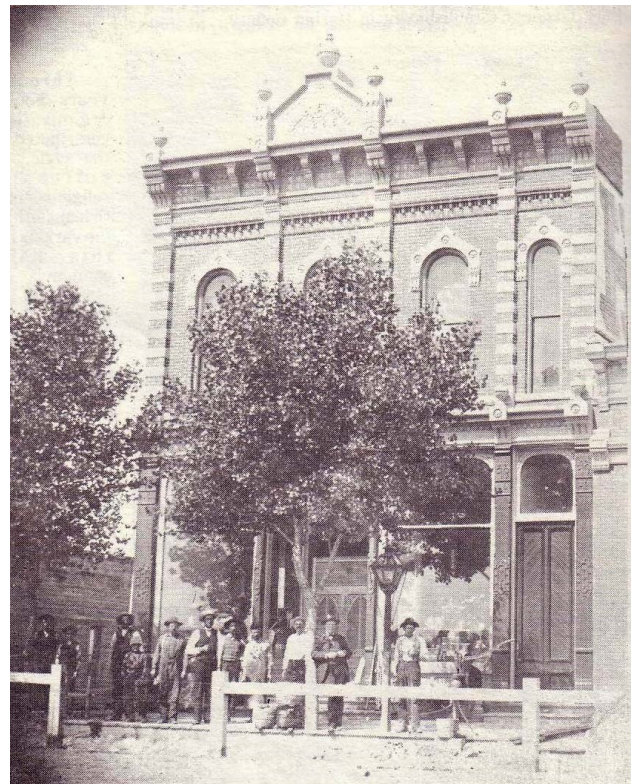
Orleans was founded by D. N. Smith of Lincoln, Nebraska in the spring of 1873. That same year, George Downing started a hardware store in the new town. Then in the spring of 1874 Downing sold his stock of merchandise to T. H. Manning who was moving his hardware business from Melrose to Orleans.

In 1876, T. H. Manning formed a partnership with James Mac Preston, who had taken a homestead near Orleans in 1872. A lumber yard and implements were added to the hardware stock. In 1885 an impressive two story brick store building was erected. About the year 1893, the lumber business was sold to H. B. Holland. A few years later T. H. Manning bought out Mr. Preston's interest. He continued in business until 1920 at which time he sold out to Mitchell brothers (Harry and Robert Mitchell). In 1940, Robert sold his interest to Harry. The firm was renamed the Mitchell Hardware Company. It is now owned and operated by James Mitchell, Harry's son.

Thus it would seem that the Mitchell Hardware Company can claim to be the oldest business establishment in Harlan County.

Through the years no business organization has contributed more to the civic, business, cultural and religious activities of Orleans than have the various owners of this hard-

ware company. T. H. Manning established his hardware business in Melrose before 1874, so probably had the first such store in Harlan County. Until 1920, as a business man here in the city, he was active in all facets of community life. When the new Presbyterian Church was to be built, Mr. Manning made a very substantial contribution to the building fund. The beautiful rose Window in the front



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of the church is a memorial to Mr. and Mrs. T. H. Manning.

In 1917, Mr. James Mac Preston returned to Orleans after his wife's death in California to built and give to Orleans Township the magnificent Cordelia B. Preston Memorial Library, which has become the cultural center of the community.

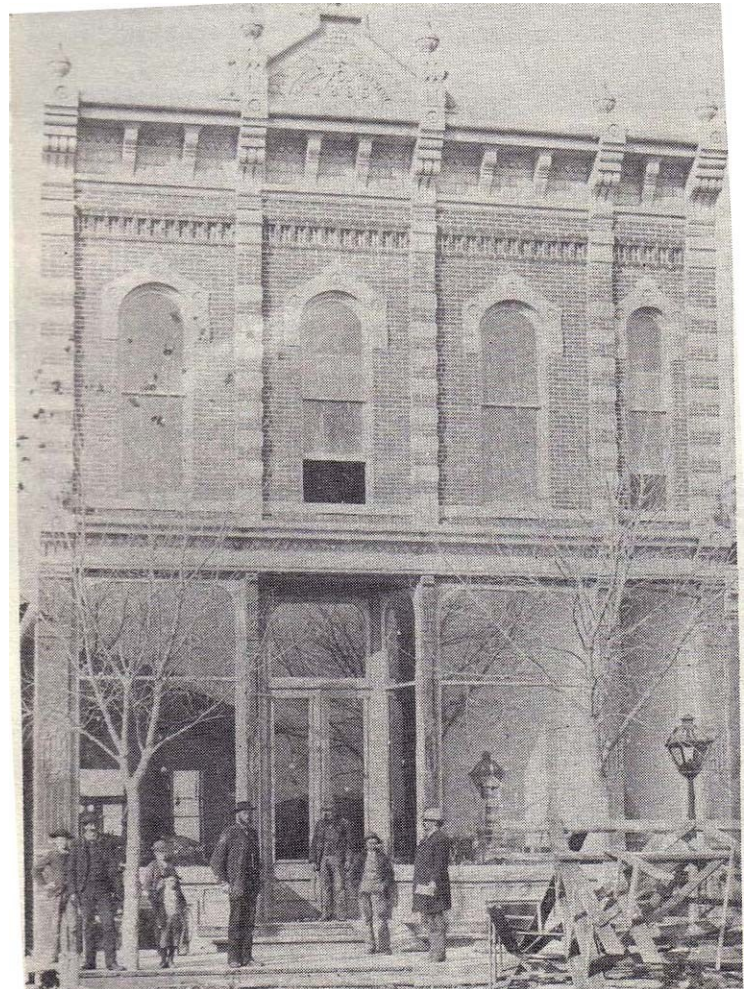
In 1885, when only eight years old, Harry Mitchell started to work for Manning and Preston as a delivery boy. He hauled merchandise in his little wagon to Orleans customers for five cents a trip. He saved all his nickels until he had enough to buy his mother a small cook stove. Harry was to continue to be a part of this store until his death in

1963 □□ a period of 78 years. He always gave of himself, his time and his talents to the service of Orleans.

Always the Mitchell families have been willing to help in any project promoted for the good of the community. Especially in the field of music they have been out-standing leaders, giving unstintingly of their time and superior talents. Wherever there is music in Orleans, there is also sure to be some of the Mitchells.

Orleans should be truly thankful to have had this most successful business in the city for all of its 100 years. So much has been given to the community by all those who have been associated with the company. Orleans must not forget to be grateful. —END

Building photos are of the old Manning/Preston building, later known as the Mitchell Hardware Store in Orleans, Nebraska. This building burned down in 2010.



Holdrege First Methodist Church ~ Holdrege Progress, December 11, 1924

Last Sunday the attendance at all services at the Methodist church took the first tumble of the new conference year. It was the first Sunday in several for the attendance of the School to drop below 300 mark. The people will soon get accustomed to this kind of weather, and the roads will get good and the attendance will soon return to normal.

Dr. Sunbury, Magill and Long gave very instructional and interesting talks last Sunday morning on the general topic of Tuberculosis. Those absent missed a very fine treat.

Dr. Howe, the new District Superintendent, was detained in Holdrege last Sunday, because of the roads, and delivered a very fine and helpful message at the Methodist church at the evening service.

The local minister will speak next Sunday morning on the subject, "The Nemesis of the Sinful Career." At the evening hour, there will be a union meeting at the Methodist church, and Dr. Hanson of Colorado will address the meeting on the general subject of welfare work within the country. This should be largely attended.

The church training night program is going fine. Notwithstanding the unsafe condition of the walk, there were half and hundred present. There is a fine and courageous effort on the part of many in the church to allow nothing to interfere with its success.

The Church Sunday School meets at 9:45 a.m. and Epworth League at 6:30 p.m.

From Prospect Hill Holdrege Nugget ~ June 25, 1884

(We would appreciate any new information on the Booth or Arnold family. Below is the article about Prospect Hill.)

Editor Nugget: I do not write in papers much, but I read the Nugget and feel that this end is neglected.

On the 19th, Mr. William Arnold, died very suddenly from inflammation of the bowels. Mr. Arnold came to the neighborhood last fall and made his home with his son. He was 69 years of age. The remains were interred at Cemetery Hill (I believe this now is called Magill Cemetery.) Mr. Booth's farm.

Mr. Booth is the proud father of a daughter

weighing 10 ½ pounds. All doing well.

We have organized a Sabbath School, which is held at the Prospect School house, Henry F. Davis as superintendent. We have preaching every other Sabbath by Rev. E. H. Carmichael, and temperance meetings when we can get speakers.

George Neigh killed a Jack rabbit this morning which he captured under the sod.

If you think any of the above worthy, you can publish them.

Yours,
J.B.K, Prospect Hill
June 21, 1884



Original Harlan County Courthouse—Alma, Nebraska

New Members & Queries

1. Brittaney Borman
151 Borman Rd.
Longview, TX. 75605

QUERY: I am searching for information on Herman (born in 1842 in Germany) and Amelia Brede/Brade/Brady (born in 1853 in Holstein Germany) family that homesteaded in Antelope Township in Harlan County in the 1880s; Also for the Carl and Eliza (Brade) Paul family that also homesteaded in Antelope Township in Harlan County, NE.

2. Viola Thomas
72743 P Rd
Holdrege, Ne. 68949

QUERY:

Carol (Gustafson/Sjgren) Perkins
849 Brochardt Blvd.
Farragut, TN 37934

My offer still stands: whoever can provide proof on how my great grandfather died, I will give to that person \$100 as well as a \$100 donation to the

Holdrege Area Genealogy Club. His name was John Sjögren who resided in Harlan County. It was from his farm property that the Immanuel Lutheran Church was moved from to the grounds of your museum. He died on January 3, 1882 and is buried in the Immanuel Lutheran (Swedish) Cemetery, which is across the road from his farm in Harlan County. He was 46 years old when he died.

Magill Cemetery

Section 30, Anderson Township,
Phelps County, Nebraska

This is a very old cemetery north of Funk, Nebraska. It is on hilly rough land. The Phelps County History book 1973-1981 states that available records show the earliest burial to be Sarah Amy Booth who died in 1881. She was buried on her husband's land on the highest spot. The 1880 Mortality Schedule states her death as the 1 June 1880, however her grave stone states she was born about 6 Dec 1856 and she died the 13 Jan 1880. She was 23 years old when she died of a nervous condition that caused fits.

Some research in the 1880 Federal Census and the Phelps County marriage records state that John S. Booth married a Mrs. E.M.I. Nay on the 25 June 1882. Eva had previously been married to Henry Nay and she, her husband Henry and

their children Tilda, George and Jennie were residing in Kearney, Nebraska.

Sometime after 1890, Eva and her husband John Booth moved to Monmouth County, New Jersey and John built houses there.

A news article written in June of 1884 tells of the death of William Arnold and that he was buried on the Booth land. Perhaps at one time this area was called Prospect Hill as the article is entitled such. There is a W. G. Arnold is buried at Magill Cemetery. The Arnold family lived next door to John Booth in 1880 census. There is a W G. Arnold burial listed in our cemetery book with no dates with may be the William Arnold who is mentioned in the news article below.

