

# Benton County

## Genealogical Society

### NEWSLETTER

Located in Philomath, Oregon  
Founded in 1971 in Corvallis, Oregon

Volume 42 No.8: April 2023

<https://www.bcgs-oregon.org>

From President George

Hello fellow BCGS members. May this find you well as we start our Spring. The calendar says spring but Mother Nature is delaying things a bit except for the beautiful flowers that are showing.

I hope to see you at our next General Meeting and enjoy our musical guest.

### FREE Program



The Benton County Genealogical Society will welcome Brent Bunker during its monthly meeting, who will give a presentation called **“Musical Genealogy: Entertainment by Rare Vintage Instruments.”**



Come hear the sounds, stories and histories of Brent Bunker’s extensive collection of old and unusual musical instruments.

Saturday, April 8<sup>th</sup> 11AM-12:30PM

♪ Benton County Historical Museum ♪

1101 Main St., Philomath, OR  
Moreland Gallery, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

## Reuben Shipley – A Good Man



This historical marker was placed in Philomath's Newton Creek Park in 2022.

Recently, King's Glory Productions worked with Philomath's former mayor, Eric Niemann and Tyler McHuron-Guss, a 2020 Philomath graduate, to put together Shipley's story. The story is made into a 14 minute story entitled "The Journey." It's a beautiful story with narration, sound and nature.

See it at:

<https://vimeo.com/79640007>

**Reuben Shipley** was brought to Oregon from Missouri as a slave of Robert Shipley. Robert had given Reuben the choice of going with him to Oregon or be sold for \$1,000.00. In 1853 the slave owner promised that he would give Reuben his freedom if he would move with him to Oregon and help build him a house. Reuben's family were slaves on a different plantation. Shipley agreed to go, thinking that he could work in Oregon and be able to buy his family back.

After Reuben finished the house of his enslaver, he was given his freedom in 1853. It's not clear what he had to do to be free. Did he have to pay for his freedom or was he given a paper of freedom to carry? After being freed, he worked for Eldridge Hartless who was a well-to-do cattle rancher south of Philomath. When Reuben finally had the money to buy his family, he was told that his wife had died in Missouri. The other slave owner wouldn't let Reuben's children go, and in the turmoil and hardships of the Civil War and afterwards, they were never heard from again.

In 1844, Mary Jane Holmes, another enslaved person, came to Philomath with her parents, Robin and Polly, as slaves of Nathaniel Ford. Ford gave freedom to Robin and Polly in 1850 but not Mary Jane. Her father took Ford to court, and in 1853, Mary Jane was freed. However, she stayed with the Ford family until 1857 when Reuben and Mary Jane married. Shipley gave Ford money for permission to marry Mary Jane because Ford said he wouldn't allow her to leave without payment. People tried to tell him not to give Ford money, but, obviously, Reuben didn't want to take a chance.

Reuben and Mary Jane saved enough money within a few years and bought a farm of 80 acres (others say 101 acres from Charles Bales' Donation Land Claim) four miles west of Corvallis. In 1861, he deeded two acres of his land to become Mount Union Cemetery with the condition that Blacks would be allowed to be buried there as well as Whites.



Both Reuben and Mary Jane were well-liked by their neighbors, their children went to school like all children, the family went to church and they lived a good life. Reuben died in 1873 at the age of 73. Mary Jane lived into the 20<sup>th</sup> century and remarried. Unfortunately no photo of Reuben has ever been found. Reuben, Mary Jane, their children and Mary Jane's husband, Alfred Drake, are all buried in Mount Union Cemetery.



Bronze plaque at Reuben Shipley's grave site



Mount Union Cemetery marker



Mary Jane Holmes Shipley



Shipley Family Headstone

Reuben's son Edward had his father's name printed "R. E. Ficklin" on his stone. It's believed that he did so because Ficklin was Reuben's first enslaver's last name as was usual at the time. Edward took the same last name also while the other children didn't.

## WHAT IS A FAMILY HISTORY?

### **A family history is anything you want it to be!**

It doesn't have to be a heavy book of everything you have found about every ancestor. The people you love and those who love you want to know what your life is/was like. They want to know about the ancestors you knew or ancestors that your mothers/fathers/ grandparents, etc. told you about.

If you're wanting to write about those who came before you, start with people you knew. You probably have material, photos, etc. that were given to you or know someone who might have something interesting.

When you think of something you remember about a family or person, write a quick note so you can still have the idea when you get to your computer. Once you have a number of memories you've written about, you can put them in the organization you think appropriate.

BELOW ARE SOME GOOD IDEAS TO GIVE A TRY.

History around types of work ancestors did; was there the same type of work in several generations?

Heritage albums: More than a scrapbook/ a heritage album is a record of the life of a family and includes photographs, documents, newspapers, heirlooms, so on.

Family recipe collections, whose recipes were they?

A genetic family history, which identifies specific physical traits (eye color, height, weight, complexion and so on), causes of death, family illnesses.

A record of your family with you as a child, containing recollections of your parents and other living ancestors.

A collection of family traditions and their origins.

My favorite: "TIMELINES" see page 5

## Using Timelines

I like to make a timeline for all the main ancestors to help me get started writing a story about each one. Each event gives you a place to start making your ancestor a real person. For example, see June 12, 1880 Census below. Use a map to see where Crooked Creek is; who lived nearby; are the neighbors other Winkler families; how much land did they have; did they own it; how many livestock did they have; how did baby Harlan's mother keep him healthy in the first six months of life, what dangers were there for a baby? You now have a way to make several paragraphs! If you have any other ways to find information to write about, let me know so we can help each other! **Thanks, Sue Van Laere**

Harlan Winkler Timeline		
Date	Life event	Source
13 Nov 1879	Born in Estill County, Kentucky, Obit says 1880, Death certificate says 1878, Family says 1879	Family history, WW 1 draft Registration card
12 Jun 1880	Living on Crooked Creek near Irvine, Kentucky	1880 Census
1892	Family came to Hamilton County, Nebraska	Deeds to Albert Walton (April), and John T. Adams (June) in Irvine, Kentucky
4 Jun 1900	Working as a servant to (Stephen) B. Cole and family in Harrison & Robb Precincts, Gosper County	1900 Census
9 Jun 1900	Baptism at Methodist Episcopal Church, Lexington, Dawson Nebraska. The Rittgarns are listed on the same page of the Census	Nebraska State Genealogical Society Journal: Nebraska Ancestry, Vol. 2, No. 2, Fall 1979. Source: Rootsweb
28 Aug 1900	Marriage to Caroline Christiane Albertine (Lena) Rittgarn in Minden, Kearney, Nebraska. Witnesses were Milton Connor and Laura Newell	Marriage Record and License, Kearney County Courthouse, Minden, Nebraska
1900 ca.	Member of Lexington Hook & Ladder Company 1. Lexington, Ward 3, Dawson, Nebraska	Family photo of firefighters in uniform, no date
18 Apr 1910	General Laborer. This may have been when he helped lay the street bricks (some of the bricked streets still exist) Lexington, Ward 3, Dawson, Nebraska	1910 Census
18 Feb 1911	Work on the streets with team (horses?) Paid \$50.00	Dawson County Pioneer, Page 3
24 Nov 1911	Family resided on the Ralph Roberts' farm when their house went up in flames. They lost all of their belongings.	The Overton Herald, Page 8
26 Jun 1914	A support broke when workers were raising the roof on the alfalfa mill and Harlan was knocked off the scaffold and fell about 20 feet. He was ok but another worker, Frank Gessner, had a badly sprained back.	Dawson County Pioneer, Page 5
	And so on .....	



## Sources

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reuben\\_Shipley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reuben_Shipley)

<https://aaregistry.org/story/reuben-shipley-oregon-farmer-born/>

<https://pnwafroamerihistory.weebly.com/bibliographies-and-lifestyles.html>

<https://philomathnews.com/video-brings-new-perspective-on-reuben-shipleys-life/>

Benton County Genealogical Society

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**Secretary:** Linda Olsen

**Treasurer:** Lois Courtney

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Appointed Positions

Membership: OPEN

Librarian: Liza Wilson

Programs: OPEN

Historian: OPEN

Photographer: OPEN

Audit: Connie Patterson

Refreshments: Pegge Gee

Host: Kathryn Moss

Research: Lois Courtney

Book Sales: OPEN

Website: George Davidson

Facebook: OPEN

Publicity OPEN

### Calling all BCGS members!

Please come over to the Annex when our meeting is finished.

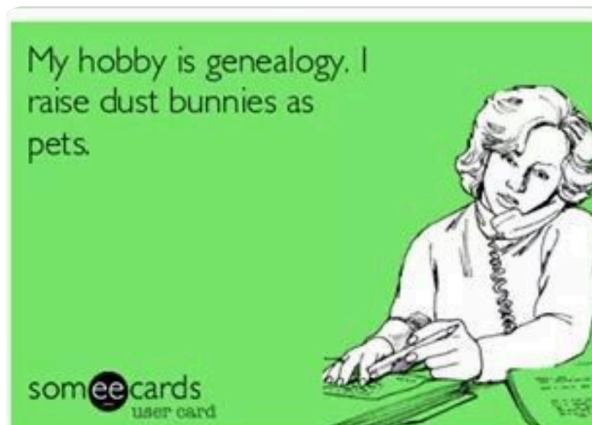
There will be more books from Danell Aukerman's collection for sale at great prices! Liza and volunteers have spent a lot of time working to decide which materials should be in our collection.

Stay for refreshments and time to get to know each other and talk about what we always like to talk about: GENEALOGY!!

SEE YOU FIRST STARTING AT 10:30 FOR THE MEETING AND THEN MUSIC AND VINTAGE INSTRUMENTS. IT SOUNDS FUN!

THIS IS FOR THOSE OF US WHO WISH THEY COULD  
HAVE A TIDY HOUSE BUT USUALLY NEVER DO!

"A Home with everything in its place, and a place for everything, means you're not well suited for Genealogy!"



[pinterest.com/pin/not-a-hobbyit-is-a-passion--12947917656429086/](https://pinterest.com/pin/not-a-hobbyit-is-a-passion--12947917656429086/)