

David Shelton

Pioneer of 1847

compiled by Frank Kistner
contributed to oregonpioneers.com

David Shelton

b. 15 Sep 1812 Shelton Laurel, Buncombe Co, NC

d. 15 Feb 1897 Shelton, Mason Co, WA

s/o Lewis Shelton (15 Sep 1785 Henry Co, VA -28 Jan 1847 MO and Nancy Gladden (14 Sep 1776 Green Co, TN-16 Jun 1866 Dallas, Polk Co, OR; buried Dallas Cemetery, Dallas, Polk Co, OR)

m. 30 May 1837 Clinton, Clinton Co, MO

Frances Wilson

b. 16 May 1817 Whitley Co, KY

d. 15 Apr 1887 Olympia, Thurston Co, WA

d/o David Wilson

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DAVID SHELTON DEAD.

**A Pioneer in This Country Passes to
His Final Rest.**

David Shelton died at 3 o'clock this morning at his home in Shelton, aged 84 years and 5 months.

The friends of the family are respectfully invited to be present at the funeral, which takes place Wednesday afternoon at Olympia after the arrival of the Shelton boat, at 10 p. m.

Short services will be held either at the residence or the Masonic hall, Shelton, before the departure from Shelton.

[Morning Olympian, Olympia WA, Monday, February 14, 1897 p.3]

DAVID SHELTON DEAD.

One of the Best Known of the Pioneers
Passes Away.

Shelton, Feb. 16.—David Shelton, one of the earliest pioneers of Washington territory, died at his home here at 3 o'clock yesterday morning. He was 84 years and five months old. He was born in Buncombe county, N. C., September 15, 1812.

In 1849 David Shelton was one of a party which went to the American river gold fields in California, and returned with a bag of dust.

In the latter part of 1851 he disposed of his place and in company with H. F. Pettygrove, L. Hastings, Thomas Fallentire and others they bought the small 75-ton schooner, Mary Taylor, and came around to Puget Sound.

The two former unloaded their families and goods at Port Townsend, and became the founders of that city; Fallentire got off at Steilacoom and the others continued to Olympia, which was reached February 20, 1852.

There he remained about a year, running a hotel, when the family moved down Big Skookum bay, reaching the final resting place on April 15, just 84 years to a day before the death of Mrs. Frances Shelton. He filed on 640 acres of donation for himself and wife, going to the land office then located at Oregon City. In 1852 the Sound district was cut off from Lewis county, and Thurston county was organized. David Shelton being one of the first board of county commissioners, with A. Denny and E. S. Ford.

David Shelton was a member of the first territorial legislature, and one of his first acts was the severing of Sawamish county from Thurston, and this was afterwards changed to Mason county in honor of the first territorial secretary.

The remains will be buried beside his wife at Olympia, Wednesday, February 17, by the Masonic fraternity, of which he was an old member.

[Tacoma Daily News, Tacoma, WA, Tuesday, February 16, 1897 p.4]

Children of David Shelton and Frances Wilson:

1. Lewis David Wilson Shelton
- b. 18 Oct 1841 Andrew Co, MO
- d. 17 Nov 1919 Baker City, Baker Co, OR

m. 1887 Snohomish Co, WA

Lydia Morris

b.

d.

1850: Portland, Washington Co, OR, December 7, 1850; David Shelton, 38, no occ, NC; Frances, 33, KY; Louis D., 9, MO; John L.S.W., 6, MO; Levi, 2, OT; Caroline, 2/12, OT; Murray Sheldon, 27, no occ, OH; T.C. Holdgate, 23, no occ, OH; Elizabeth Rhodes, 18, IN

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John Miller Murphy
Writes History of
Lewis D. W. Shelton

Lewis D. W. Shelton, an Oregon pioneer of 1847 and a resident of Olymupia in 1853, was born in Andrew county, Missouri, October 18, 1841. His father, David Shelton, was a native of North Carolina, but removed to Missouri, with his parents, in 1819, and both he and his family were reared amid the hardships of frontier life. Mr. Shelton, pere, improved a farm, which he worked till 1847. when with an ox team and in a "prairie schooner" he removed his family to the Northwest territory, then known as Orègon. The journey was fraught with the usual experience of fighting indians, the loss of cattle, and other impediments to the early pioneers. The train consisted of nine wagons.

On reaching the vicinity of Walla Walla the venturers met Rev. Marcus Whitman about six weeks prior to his massacre. The party continued down the river to The Dalles and went into camp. Here they whip-sawed timber with which they built a raft, on which they loaded their wagons, effects and families, and drifted down the river, while the stock was driven across the mountains. At the falls the people walked around the portage while the boat was allowed to "shoot the rapids" and was picked up below without damage. Here Mr. Shelton was met by an Indian canoe, sent to his aid by an old friend and earlier pioneer, Mr. Caples, and in that canoe himself and family were taken to Vancouver, while the other members of the party followed in the flat boat. They then proceeded to Sauvoles Island, where they passed their first winter in Oregon, living on wild duck and other game secured by the rifle.

In the spring of 1848 Mr. Shelton put in a crop, and while awaiting for returns lived on split peas, purchased from the Hudson Bay company, and a large sturgeon which they purchased from the Indians and salted down. The next year, 1849, he removed his family to Yamhill, while he went to California, attracted by the craze for gold. He found considerable of the precious metal, but owing to continuous illness, was unable to save much of his find.

Mr. Shelton then located 320 acres in what is now East Portland, where he remained till January, 1852, when reports from Puget Sound reached his ears that drew him hitherward. In company with several friends he purchased a small schooner and came around to the Sound on her, arriving in February, and while some stopped at Port Townsend, Mr. Shelton continued his way to Olympia, where he took up a section of land in Mason county which he subsequently increased by purchase to 1,200 acres, 320 being open prairie.

In 1854 Mr. Shelton was a member of the territorial legislature, and introduced the bill to organize Sawamish county, but while its representative at a later session, he by legislative act changed the name to Mason county, in honor of Charles H. Mason, the first territorial secretary under Governor Stevens. The owner began improving his property and ultimately cleared eighty acres which became the townsite of Shelton, which he founded about 1885.

Mr. Shelton has been an official of Mason county almost continuously since the date of organization, filling almost every important office. Later he became mayor of the city. His wife, his companion during all these vicissitudes, died in 1887, aged 71 years.

Lewis D. passed through all the pioneer experiences of his father. His education had been chiefly by home instruction. At the age of 14 he began work with surveying parties and thus gained his first knowledge of the profession which he continued to study from such books as he could obtain at that time.

He was an active participant in the Indian wars of 1855-6, and was a member of Captain Swindal's company of scouts, and took part in many battles between Snoqualmie Falls and the Cowlitz river. After peace came he followed for a time such employments as he could find, but in 1875, he took up surveying as a regular business, opening an office in Olympia.

Commissioned as United States deputy surveyor in 1879, during a decade he had charge of all the Port Blakeley lands, and for six years superintended all their logging interests between Portland and British Columbia. Since 1888 his office has been in Seattle, and his vocation extended to realty speculations, but in 1891 he resumed government work.

In politics Mr. Shelton has always

been a democrat. He was married in Snohomish, in 1887, to Miss Lydia Morris, a native of Wisconsin.

EARLY OLYMPIA

PIONEER IS DEAD

Lewis D. W. Shelton, who ranked with the earliest of pioneers, passed away at his home in Baker City, Oregon, Thursday. The remains were brought to this city this afternoon by the son of the deceased and funeral services will be held from the Jesse T. Mills chapel Sunday afternoon at 1:30 under Masonic auspices. Interment will be in the family plot in Masonic cemetery.

Mr. Shelton was born in the state of Missouri, October 18, 1841, and came to Olympia at the age of 11, or 67 years ago. Remaining here for a year, the family removed to what is now the site of the city of Shelton, where the boy grew to manhood and remained for a number of years. Of later years Mr. Shelton was connected with eastern timber interests, and had made his home in Baker, Oregon. He had been a member of the Masonic fraternity for 57 years. Deceased is survived by one son, a resident of California.

[Olympia Daily Recorder, Saturday, November 22, 1919 p.1]

2. John L. Speed W. Shelton
- b. c1844 Gentry Co, MO
- d. Apr 1906 WA

1850: Portland, Washington Co, OR, December 7, 1850; David Shelton, 38, no occ, NC; Frances, 33, KY; Louis D., 9, MO; John L.S.W., 6, MO; Levi, 2, OT; Caroline, 2/12, OT; Murray Sheldon, 27, no occ, OH; T.C. Holdgate, 23, no occ, OH; Elizabeth Rhodes, 18, IN

1860: Snohomish Co, WA, July 27, 1860; David Shelton, 47, farmer, \$3000 \$1000, NC; Frances, 43, KY; Lewis D.W., 19, MO; John L.S. W., 15, MO; Levy F., 12, OR; Mary E., 9, OR; Franklin P., 7, WT; James B., 5, WT; Joicy A., 2, WT

1880: Whidbey Island and Camain Island, WT; John S.W. Shelton, 36, school teacher, MO NC KY

3. Unnamed Baby Girl

b. 1847 MO

d. 1847 MO

“David and Frances Wilson Shelton did have a daughter that was born in 1847 in Missouri and died there before they emigrated. In David Shelton's original handwritten account of his life, he simply states they had an `unnamed girl born in Missouri in 1847.’

"A month before she started [the Oregon Trail journey] she had layed away a baby girl ..." This quote refers to Frances Wilson Shelton quoted by Joycie Shelton Monson in a written sketch of David Shelton's life. [per correspondence with Julia Lucas May 2013]

4. Levi Tillman Shelton

b. 18 Jul 1848 Portland, Washington Co, OR

d. 19 Aug 1919 Olympia, Thurston Co, WA

m.

Elizabeth M. Murray

b. 1861 KS

d.

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1870: Oakland, Mason Co, WT, July 15, 1870; David Shelton, 65, farmer, \$3000 \$1000, MO; Susan, 60, keeping house, MO; Tillman, 22, MO; Mary, 20, MO; Joice, 17, MO; Frank, 15, WT; James, 13, WT

1880: Mason Co, WA, June 17 & 18, 1880; Levi T. Shelton, 31, lumberman, OR NC KY; Elizabeth M., 19, wife, KS unk KY; Roy G., 6/12 (Nov), WT OR KS; Frank Murray, 14, brother in law, WT OR KS; + 11 employees enumerated in household

5. Mary Eliza Caroline Shelton

b. 06 Oct 1850 Portland, Multnomah Co, OR

d. 25 Nov 1930 Shelton, Mason Co, WA

buried Shelton Memorial Park, Shelton, Mason Co, OR

m. 1887 WY

William Howard Cyphert

b. 08 May 1849 Kingsville, Clarion Co, PA

d. 10 Oct 1925 Shelton, Mason Co, WA

buried Shelton Memorial Park, Shelton, Mason Co, OR

[Note by Stephenie Flora, oregonpioneers.com: Caroline was listed, at one point, as a separate individual but the 1850 Oregon census shows her as born in October 1850 with no mention of Mary Eliza, whose birthday was also October 1850. Due to the penchant in the family for multiple names it is easy to assume these are one and the same individuals]

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Mrs. Mary Shelton Cyphert.

Mrs. Mary Shelton Cyphert, who died November 27, was born in Portland October 6, 1850. Her parents, David and Frances Shelton, came to Portland in 1845 and remained until 1852, when they removed to Puget sound and took up a donation claim in what is Mason county, Washington. The city of Shelton, county seat of that county, and occupies the larger part of that donation claim. She acquired the rudiments of an education in a log cabin schoolhouse and later at Olympia. After that she was associated with her brother, J. B. Shelton, in a book and music store in Olympia. In 1887 she went to Wyoming, where she was married to W. H. Cyphert, an oil operator. In the early 90s she returned to Shelton, and that was her home up to the date of her husband's death in 1925. She is survived by a daughter, Mrs. Hypathia Houpt; a brother, James B. Shelton, both of Shelton, and a sister, Mrs. Joycie Monson of San Francisco.

[Oregonian, Portland, OR, Sunday, December 7, 1930 p. 21]

6. Franklin Pierce Shelton

b. 12 Dec 1852 Olympia, Thurston Co, WA

d. 24 Nov 1875 Olympia, Thurston Co, WA

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Several sales of farming lands and farms in the vicinity of Walla Walla have been made recently. Mr. Frank Shelton has sold his splendid farm, some three miles from town, to a gentleman just out from Tennessee; for \$7,500. Mr. O. P. Lacy has also just sold the old Courtney farm, on Garrison Creek, four miles from town, for \$3,500.

[Oregonian, July 28, 1875 p.1]

7. James Buchanan Shelton

b. 07 Jun 1855 Shelton, Mason Co, WA

d. 28 Nov 1937 Shelton, Mason Co, WA

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James Shelton, City Founder's Son, Dies at 82

SHELTON, Tuesday, Nov. 30.—(UP)—Funeral services for James Buchanan Shelton, 82-year-old son of the founder of Shelton, who died Sunday after an illness of several years, will be held tomorrow.

Shelton was born here June 7, 1855. He left town only for very brief trips, except when he operated a music store in Olympia with his sister in the '80's. He was popularly known as "Buck."

Shelton's father, Davis, who crossed the plains by ox team in 1847, settled on the donation claim which now includes the City of Shelton, in 1853. As a boy "Buck" Shelton carried the weekly mail from Olympia to Shelton, then known as Oakland, by rowboat and on to Union City by foot or horseback.

Shelton was county commissioner in 1910 and 1911 and county assessor in 1918 and 1919. He retired from politics and private business in later years and looked after his property. He retained a clear memory of the early history and families of Mason County until he died.

Death came at the home of his daughter, Mrs. L. E. Callanan. Shelton will be buried beside his wife, Sarah Moffett Shelton, to whom he was married in 1895. She died in August, 1936. He was a member of the Knights of Pythias fifty years. Besides his daughter, a sister, Mrs. Joyce Monson of San Francisco, survives.

8. Joycie Adeline Shelton

b. 1857 Mason Co, Washington Territory

d. 10 Apr 1939 probably San Francisco, CA

m. Frederick H. Monson

b.

d.

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HON. DAVID SHELTON,
SHELTON, W.T.

[History of the Pacific Northwest Vol 1 p.420a]

“HON. DAVID SHELTON - Mr. Shelton, one of the very earliest of the pioneers of Washington Territory, who with Mr. L.B. Hastings and F.W. Pettigrove became a founder of Port Townsend, was born in Buncombe county, North Carolina, September 15, 1812. His father, Lewis Shelton, emigrated to the territory of Missouri in the year 1819, and settled in Saline county but kept on the advance wave of settlement, ever moving westward as the state settled up, and died in Andrew county in 1847. In this frontier life young David came to maturity, and on May 30, 1837, was married to Miss Frances Wilson. This was a young lad whose native place was Whitley county, Kentucky, and the date of her birth March 16, 1817. She had moved from Kentucky after the death of her father, David Wilson, with her mother to Missouri in 1829, and in 1835 had settled in Clinton county.

After marriage this young couple moved into Buchanan county and settled near St. Joseph in 1838. In 1847, feeling their pioneer blood stirred by reports of the great West and of Oregon they gathered together all their household goods and effects, and on the 9th of May crossed the Missouri river about three miles above St. Joseph on their way to Oregon. They found the journey long and tedious, as it was accomplished wholly by ox-teams; and from the time of the crossing of the Missouri the way lay through an Indian country. They found the Pawnee Indians disposed to be saucy; for at the mouth of Plum creek on the Platte river the savages caught a couple of men that were hunting and stole their clothing and guns, and left them to return with only hats and boots to the camp. After this they also tried to stampede the stock; but the immigrants, not suffering any such foolishness, determined to fight them off; and something of a battle followed. On account of their arrows not having the range of the white men's guns, the savages failed to come near enough to do much damage; and the white men could not determine whether their shots took effect. After this the emigrants were quite careful to allow only a small company of two or three Indians to enter the camp at once.

On reaching The Dalles they passed down the shore nine miles, and built a large scow to bring the families and wagons and other goods down the river. The cattle and horses were driven along the shore; and it was found necessary to swim them across the river several times in order to avoid the jutting cliffs. At the Cascades all the goods and things had to be taken out of the scow, and a portage made of about six hundred yards. The scow was then turned loose to drift over the Cascades; and a lot of Indians were ready to catch her and bring her ashore. By this time the measles, which had been following along with the train, reached Mr. Shelton's family; and both of his children were very sick.

Hiring four Indians with a canoe, he left for Fort Vancouver and reached that post on the 29th of November at about eight o'clock P.M. So reduced were his finances that he had but one dollar in his pocket; and the next morning, when the gate opened, he went into the fort and gave half of that dollar for syrup, and the other half for flour. Before night of that day he was gladdened by the appearance of an old acquaintance of his, Mr. Joseph Caples, who at once inquired where he was going. And upon learning that the house of Mr. Alexander McQuinn was his objective point, Caples replied that he was himself on his way thither, and kindly insisted that in his canoe there was room for the family of Mr. Shelton, with their household goods and all. But this friendly

provision Mr. Shelton and his family were accordingly taken up safely to Mr. McQuinn's on Sauvie's Island; and they reached that place of temporary rest, and ended their march of three thousand miles on the 30th of November, 1847.

Since coming to the West, Mr. Shelton has been one of the best citizens of the Pacific coast, ever forward in public matters, and industrious and enterprising in private business. He early became a founder of Port Townsend and of the Lower Sound country, and is now living in hale age at the town which has been named for him." [History of the Pacific Northwest Vol II p. 556-57]

1. Frank Kistner, submitter of biography
2. Julia Lucas, information on unnamed child and notations on location of David Shelton papers [University of Washington Library, Seattle, WA. Title: David Shelton papers, Manuscript Collection No. 4025, *Autobiographical Sketches of the Life and Adventures of David Shelton*. There are also copies of the booklet at the LDS church, Mason County Library, and as mentioned previously, the original 16 hand-written pages by pioneer David Shelton are on microfilm at Washington State Historical Society, Union Station, Rare Material Room.]