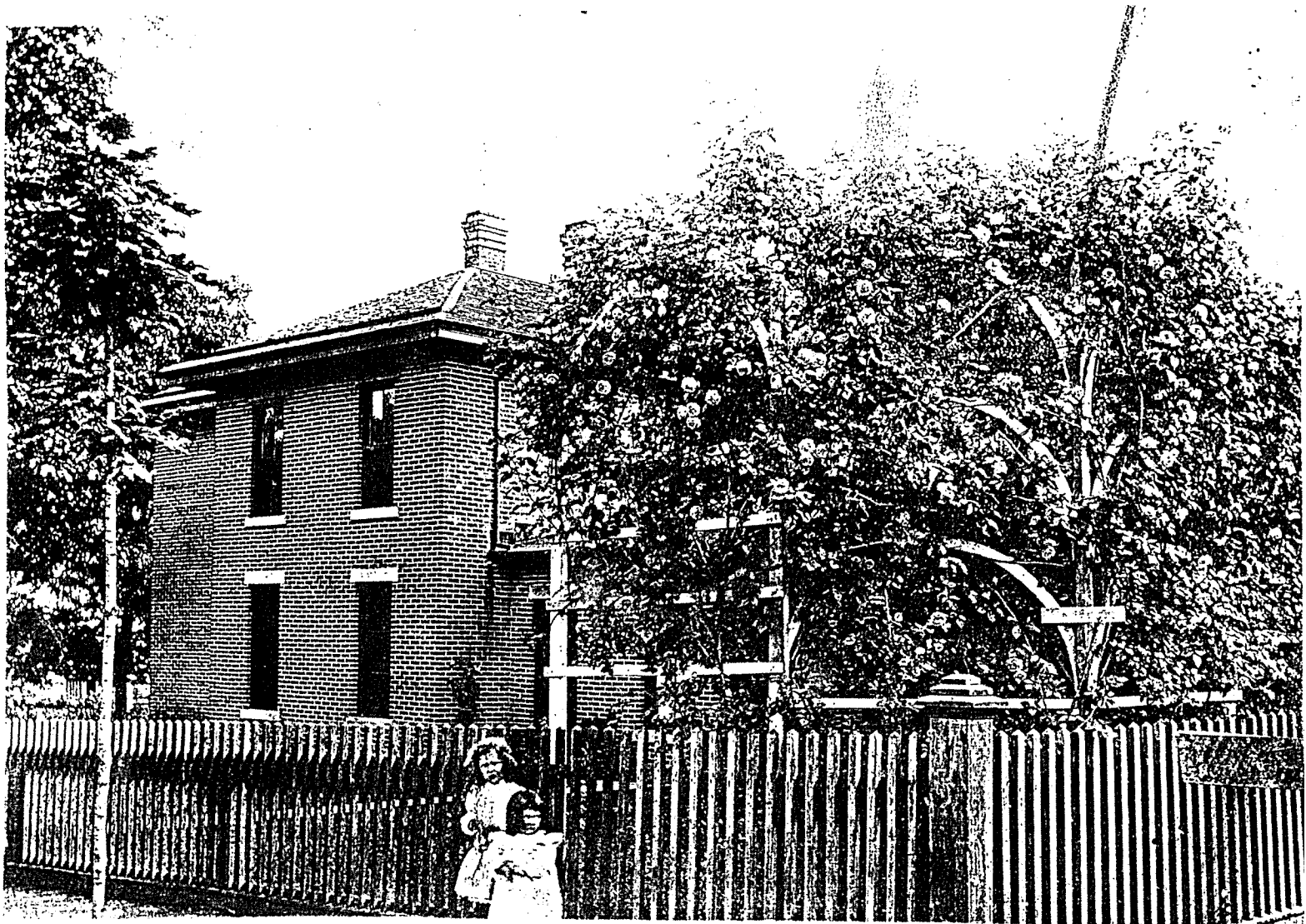


# The Shantz House

by: Chris Stoner

October 2003



For my Mount Vernon History Project, I chose the brick house at 303 A Ave. South. This house was built by my great-great-great grandfather Martin Luther Shantz, a blacksmith in Mount Vernon.

When you study the history of a house, you also need to study the people who lived in the house. Martin Luther Shantz was born on May 16, 1844 in Montgomery county, Pennsylvania. His parents were Alice Rambo and John F. Shantz. Martin was the youngest of nine children. He came with his family to Iowa in an ox cart when he was ten, settling on a farm south of Lisbon. His father eventually grew homesick and moved back to Pennsylvania, but Martin stayed behind, for he loved Iowa and a young woman named Mary Jane Yount.

Martin came to Mount Vernon as an apprentice to a blacksmith in 1865. He made horseshoes, wagon wheels, and other iron tools by heating them in a forge kept hot by a bellows. He then hammered the item on an anvil to shape it. Martin also shod horses, sharpened plows, and made and repaired wagons. He was well respected in the community. A quote from his daughters story quotes citizens saying things such as "No one but Mart shall sharpen my plow or shoe my horses." His daughter's story is included later in this report.

Mary Jane Yount was born in Hendricks County, Indiana on February 18, 1845. Her parents were Mr. and Mrs. Braxton Yount, and she had three other siblings. Mary and her family moved to Iowa in 1850, traveling in a covered wagon. They settled near Martelle, and later moved to Mount Vernon.

Mary and Martin were married on June 27, 1867. They had 5 children. Adelbert, their first son, lived only a year and three months. He was born in December 1868, and he died in March 15, in the year 1870. Their second child, Geneva, was born on February 7, 1871. Their second daughter was born on May 30, 1875. She died as an infant. Helen, their third daughter, was born on November 1876. Their last child, Harry, was born in 1880.

Martin's obituary said that they only had four children, but Mary's said they had five. So we went to Mount Vernon Cemetery

to find out. We found three tombstones for the children who had lived to adulthood, and one tombstone with Adelbert's and their infant child's birth and death information on it.

Martin and Mary first lived in a little white frame house. We believe this was located just south of the brick house because they also owned this land, and Geneva's story about the house refers to Mary being able to hear Mart working in his nearby shop. His shop we believe was just a little south of the current garage. Their children were born here and two died here in the little house. It's here that they began planning their dream house. They wanted a parlor with a bay window, and a dining room. Also, they wanted large rooms, and for their house to be made of red brick. It took Martin several hard years to construct the house. When it was finished, the family moved in.

It is difficult to tell exactly when the house was built. According to the story written by Geneva Shantz Hoelscher, the children were born in the old house, and two had died there. If all the children were born there, the new house wouldn't have been built until after 1880. We have a picture of the house with Helen's daughters, Alta and Dorothy, standing by the fence. Judging by the ages of the girls in the picture, it was taken about 1903. Geneva's story talks about the house being built while the kids were in public school. Harry the youngest would have been in school by 1885. We feel the house was built sometime between 1885 and 1890. The brick used in the house is also consistent with that time.

The Shantz' were hardworking, practical people. According to Amy Haney, the current resident of the house, the rooms are large but very simply built. There is no ornate woodwork or other fancy architectural features. There is a large parlor with a bay window, a large dining room, the summer kitchen, and another room off the dining room which is the current kitchen. Originally there were three large bedrooms upstairs, but now there is also a bathroom.

Geneva, Helen and Harry grew up in this house. After they married they moved out to live their own lives. Geneva moved to

Colorado, and Harry to Davenport, Iowa. Helen (Nellie) stayed in Mt. Vernon to help her husband, C.W. Neff, operate the Neff funeral home. Martin continued to work as a blacksmith from his shop behind the house. According to family stories, in the 1880's he built the wrought iron railing that is at the top of King Memorial Chapel. The chapel was completed in 1882 by contractor William Bracket who was my great-great-great-great grandfather. He was the grandfather of C.W. Neff, who married Helen Shantz.

Both Martin and Mary's parents were early pioneers of Iowa. Martin and Mary were good citizens and highly respected in Mount Vernon. Mary died in 1917 from a long illness, but Martin continued to live in the house he had constructed for himself. He worked as a blacksmith for 53 years, until he retired in 1928 at age 82. He then died in 1929.

According to an article in the Cedar Rapids Gazette from the early 1960's, some of Martin's blacksmith tools were donated to Jesse Hoover's blacksmith shop at the Hoover Historical Site. Jesse Hoover and Martin L. Shantz were both blacksmiths in the 1870's. My mother and aunt tried to find these tools, but there were unsuccessful due to the sheer amount of tools in the shop. The historical person there is trying to locate them for us.

After Martin's death, the house was given to his youngest daughter Helen (Nell) Neff. Helen and her husband already had a home in Mount Vernon, so they rented out the brick house for a few years, and then sold it sometime in the 1930's. Marion Scott, a high school friend of my grandmother, Jean Stoner, lived in the the house in the 1930's. Her father was a shoe repairman whose shop was in the basement of Bauman's store. The Edwards family bought the house in the 1940's. The Haney's believe there was another couple that lived in the house before the Collins. We know the house was bought by Robert Collins in 1962. They sold it to the current owners, Patrick and Amy Haney, in 1993.

As you can see from the pictures, the porch was not original to the house. Sometime while Martin lived there, he added the porch with white pillars. The pillars were removed and replaced by wrought iron, probably sometime in the 1950's, when wrought

iron was very popular.

Included in this report is a story by Geneva Shantz Hoelscher, as well as pictures and newspaper clippings about the Shantz and Yount families.

# "THE STORY THE HOUSE TOLD"

THE FOLLOWING IS A STORY  
WRITTEN BY  
GENEVA SHANTZ HOELSCHER,  
SISTER OF NELL SHANTZ NEFF.  
IT IS WRITTEN FROM THE  
VIEWPOINT OF THE HOUSE SHE  
GREW UP IN, AND GIVES A  
BIOGRAPHY OF THE SHANTZ  
FAMILY.

PICTURES OF THE SHANTZ  
FAMILY AND THE HOUSE  
FOLLOW.

If I am ever to write my autobiography, I must do it now before I am too old. Sometime I shall disappear from this corner where I have stood these many years. How I loved it! If my walls could sing its' praises and shout all I have seen, heard, and felt.

At one time I was just a dream house. I was to be strongly built, warm, comfortable, beautifully located in a thriving village in Iowa. Flowers were to bloom in abundance about me, my lawn was to be in perfect condition, and if I do say it myself...as I shouldn't...I was to be the envy of many a man - the pride and joy of my owner and his wife.

My owner often had a vision of me in his mind. He knew I was to be of red brick - a large house, one to attract attention. For he was a proud man!

Now Mart, as he was always called, came to Iowa in an ox cart, but was too young to remember only what he had been told. His father settled on a farm, but later was homesick for his old Pennsylvania boyhood home. He would not remain in Iowa. But what was to become of Mart - who by that time not only loved Iowa, but loved a pretty maid by the name of Mary?

Mart was not then twenty-one, and those were the days of apprentices. Mart was apprenticed to a blacksmith in the village, and it was in that village that he spent his life, and built me - the brick house - but not until many years later. I was not the first home of Mart and Mary, oh no! They began house-keeping in a little white frame house not much larger than my parlor. In the dream house was to be a dining room, too - said Martin, that no one would have to get away from the table when he wanted to open a door or window.

The music from Marts' anvil was almost continuous, and when it ceased, Mary wondered what had happened in the nearby shop. There was horse shoeing to be done, and that was dangerous work.

Seldom did Mart have a holiday. About once a year, he went fishing, or took the train to Cedar Rapids to buy supplies. He thought many times of going to Pennsylvania to visit his parents, but that time never came. Children came instead - so he remained at home sharpening plows, setting tires, shoeing horses, and pounding on his anvil until the sparks flew.

On Sunday, he and Mary went to church. Mart acted as usher, scrubbing himself on Saturday night in the big wash tub in the kitchen until there was no sign of the grime of the week.

The three children were sent to Sunday School. Today his grandsons and son-in-law repeat the same blessing he asked before every meal: "Bless this food to its' intended use, and us to thy service." For a long time the eldest daughter puzzled over that: "Bless this food it its' intended JUICE", or so she thought her father said!

Mart was a good citizen of the town, but he enjoyed a good argument, and might have been called an againer - so decided he was in his opinions. He was not especially public spirited, but like all good Republicans of that day; carried a torch, marched in the parade, and voted a straight ticket.

He was gruff, often rude, and so independent his wife often wondered how he ever had any work to do. The farmers returned, however, and again and again the remark was often made: "No one but Mart shall sharpen my plow or shoe my horses."

At one time he became prosperous enough to hire a wagon maker, but he felt so responsible for every job that left his shop - every nail that was driven, every wheel that turned (or didn't turn!) that no wonder the wagon maker left! Who could please a blacksmith as particular as that old blacksmith, anyhow?? A profit of five dollars a day made him happy - almost a braggart.

Marts' vision of the new house grew and grew, but what of Mary? Did she have a vision too? Far too many! She had lived at one time in the family of a college president. There she saw and picked up the niceties of home life - cooking and serving of food, making of beds, orderliness, and cleanliness. She washed, ironed, baked, sewed, and kept boarders for a time. She had her dreams too, and how fortunate that one can dream at the same time one is working! Otherwise, Mary would have had no dreams. Her children must amount to something. In this dream, she and Mart were one. Since they had little education, a college diploma loomed great in their eyes.

But their dreams of me, the new house, did not fade. It must be built while the children were in public school.

Scarlet fever, chicken pox, and measles all brought doctor bills. Shoes to be replaced, new coats bought, new hats, and furniture occasionally. Bills of all kinds came and were paid. "Nothing new unless there is money to pay for it," was the motto.



There was the garden - no one had a better one! New peas that were always gathered early in the morning, new potatoes must be ready for July 4th - corn - beans - cabbage - beets - onions - lettuce - all in abundance! No knowledge of vitamins in those days, but the family lived on them without knowing it, and were healthy.

It took many years of hard pounding to build a house such as was dreamed of, but at last I was completed and the family moved in! The children were happy, and Martin had accomplished something - gratification.

Where was Mary? The older daughter went in search of her and found her in the little frame shack, weeping. Here her children had been born, two had passed away - the little house was still home. Would the new one with its big rooms looking so strange and cheerless ever be home?

Night after night they made their plans, drew their own. One wanted the parlor here, the other there. They laughed together, they quarreled too, then they went to bed to be ready for the next evenings planning. Mary was tired from all the planning and preparations - for she had sewed rags for rag carpets until every room had a new floor covering. She made curtains for every window, and there were many of them - all shown and sparkled in the sunlight. The bay window in the parlor was filled with plants and flowers.

Mart's dream was now a reality, and he was proud. Yes, he bragged that he had the best house in town, best built, best located.

Anticipation better than realization? Not with him! He laughed when he often said, "I want a gold watch, a thousand dollars, and a brick house." Before he died, he had all three.

I think Mary was never so proud as Mart. She put a soul into me, or something - I don't know what to call it but a soul - anyway, I was always glad she lived there too.

The years passed, the children were educated, and it was a proud day when the older daughter received her college diploma. Her father often said, "If I had the education you have...", but he never seemed to know just what he would have done - but he sometimes added, "I would not have been a blacksmith."

The children one by one got married and left me, and I missed them. All their gaiety, their parties, their quarreling, and their companionship. I missed the family gatherings, the popping corn, cracking of hickory nuts, the pound cake Mary baked, the neighbors calls. Their parents missed them too, and often times were lonely. But grandchildren came, and again their was gaiety - especially at the holiday seasons.

Mary worked hard, and loved it too. Service to others all her life. Sickness or trouble in the neighborhood, and it was Mary who was called. After a years illness, worry and disease which took her strength - Mary died. A devoted sister helped care for her. One of her sons-in-laws said, "She was always a lady, a faithful wife, a devoted, unselfish mother, and a wonderful mother-in-law. " The other son-in-law said, "She was the best woman I ever knew."

A year following Marys' death, during the flu epidemic of 1917, the only son died. It was a quiet, lonely place - but Mart preferred me to any other home, and remained under my roof until his death. During his older daughters' last visit, he said, "Don't weep when you hear I am no more, I have lived long enough."

He passed away in the arms of his younger daughter. Following his death, I passed into the hands of his younger daughter, who already had a home. So, I was rented for a period of years. As dreams must end, time brings material ravages - I was sold.

Years later, the daughters called to see me. I was owned by strangers. They were given a welcome and rejoiced when told I was still loved. I was happy to know I had not been forgotten.

And so ends the chronicle of my life - which ends with the passing of the one who told my story for me.

The End

# Shantz Timeline

- 1844-May 16th-Martin Luther Shantz is born
- 1845-February 18th-Mary Jayne Yount was born
- 1850-Yount family travels by ox cart to Iowa
- 1854-Shantz family travels by ox cart to Iowa
- 1865-Martin Shantz becomes an apprentice to a blacksmith in Mount Vernon
- 1867-June 27th-Martin Shantz marries Mary Yount
- 1868-December-Adelbert is born
- 1870-Adelbert dies
- 1871-Geneva is born
- 1875-May 30th-Infant daughter is born and dies
- 1876-November 18th-Helen Alice is born
- 1880-Harry is born
- 1882-King Memorial Chapel is finished (wrought iron railing was built by Martin Shantz)
- 1885 through 1890- House built sometime during this period
- 1894-December 10th-Geneva marries Dr. Ernest Hoelscher
- 1897-January 17th-Helen marries Charles William Neff
- 1917-March-Mary Yount Shantz dies
- 1918-Harry Shantz dies in flu epidemic
- 1928-Martin Shantz retires from his career as a blacksmith
- 1929-Martin Shantz dies
- 1930's-House is owned by the Scotts'
- 1940's-House is owned by the Edwards'
- 1950's-Porch pillars on house are replaced by wrought iron
- 1953-Geneva Shantz Hoelscher dies
- 1962-House is bought by Robert Collins
- 1965-Helen Shantz Neff dies
- 1993-House is bought by Patrick and Amy Haney

# My Relationship to Martin Shantz

1. Martin Luther Shantz and Mary Jayne
2. Helen Alice Shantz and Charles William Neff
3. Dorothy Anna Neff and Roy V. Johnson
4. Dorothy Ann Johnson and Dewey R.  
Humphries
5. Catherine Anna Humphries and Dan L.  
Stoner
6. Christopher Stoner

## A FAVORITE MEMORY

By Dorothy Neff Johnson

Written to Grandmother and Grandfather

Mary Jane Yount Shantz

and Martin Luther Shantz

Tucked closely in  
my heart I keep  
A group of memories,  
Then depending on my mood,  
I choose the ones I please.  
There's one I do so often choose,  
It's very dear to me,  
My own sweet Grandmama  
Again I clearly see.  
Once more I see her big black eyes,  
They always sparkled so,  
And I can hear her speak to me,  
Her voice so soft and low.  
She seldom ever missed a day,  
To pay to us a call,  
Always looking fresh and sweet,  
Bedecked in bright red shawl.  
Going over to her home  
It truly was a treat,  
I know that I can ne'er forget,  
Good things she fixed to eat.  
A large square dish of meat with rice,  
Or yellow chicken stew,  
Hot sweet rusks, preserves of quince,  
Fresh butter, 'n' honey too.  
When sugar cookies she did bake,  
She let me be her aid,  
I can affirm there never was  
A better cookie made.  
She didn't have the modern things  
Home makers have today,  
She washed, ironed, cooked and cleaned,  
All done the old time way!  
For raising many pretty flowers,  
She still found ample time,  
Clematis, roses, and sweet peas  
And lovely climbing vines.  
She managed time to play with us,  
A game of lawn croquet  
She made a many lovely things  
Of lacy fine crochet.  
Of course in thoughts of Grandmama  
Dear Grandpapa appears,  
The village finest smithy, he,  
For many, many years.  
For young ones liked to watch him,  
On anvil he would pound.  
The sparks would fly, it was a thrill,  
Oh how it did resound.  
It may be true, what some folks say,  
'Bout living in the past,  
To me it's going to a play,  
With loved ones in the cast.



## Mary Jane Yount Shantz

1845-1917

Married Martin Luther Shantz, June 27, 1867

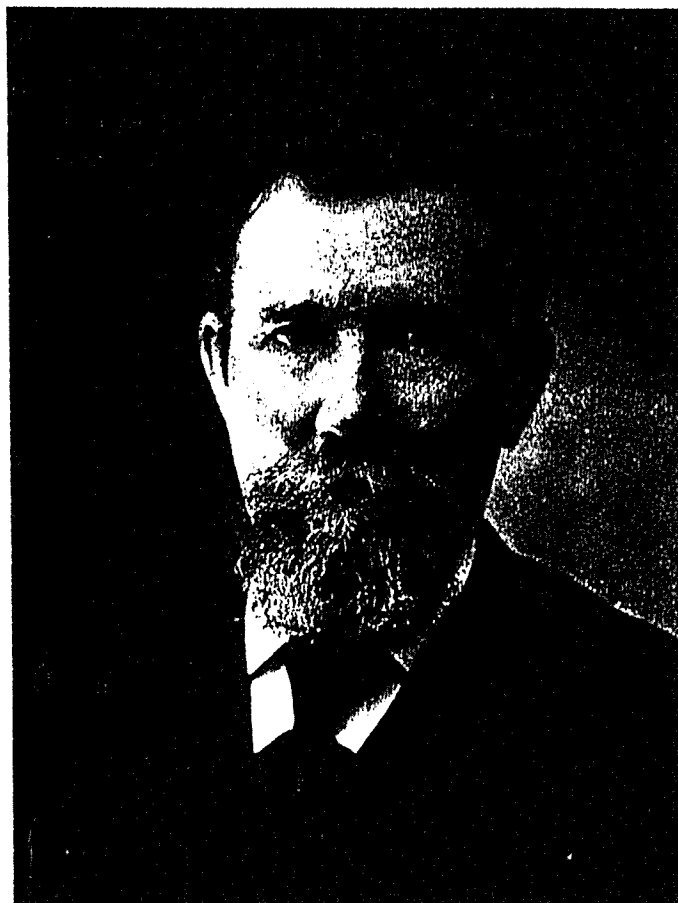
By Dorothy Johnson Humphries

Since my great grandmother died when my mother was only 17, I did not know her. I want to preserve some of the stories of her passed on to me by my mother, Dorothy Neff Johnson. Mother had a deep love and a special relationship with her maternal grandmother.

Whenever she went out in the neighborhood, she wore a red shawl. After supper, she often walked the block or so from her house to her daughters house to help her granddaughter with the dishes!

One Sunday afternoon, she and Grandpa were sitting together. He had seen a mouse and said to her, "There's a mouse! Help me get it!" to which she replied, "Don't bother me, I'm reading!" Sometime later, she grabbed her long dress at the leg and said, "Here's your mouse, Mart." The rascal had run up her leg...but she got him!

While she was in her last illness, she told the lady who was taking care of her, "I believe if I could live until the spring, I could get well." The lady replied, "Well, Mrs. Shantz, it's a long time till spring." I do not know if she lived until spring.



*Died*

**Martin Luther Shantz**

Martin Luther Shantz was born May 16, 1844 in Montgomery county, Pennsylvania, the youngest of a family of nine.

In 1854 he came with his parents, by ox team, to Iowa, locating on a farm south of Lisbon; later coming to Mt. Vernon, where he worked until his last illness, at his trade of blacksmith and wagon maker.

In 1867 he united in marriage with Mary Yount. To this union were born four children, two of whom survive him, Mrs. E. A. Hoelscher of Boulder, Colorado, and Mrs. Chas. W. Neff of Mount Vernon. He is also survived by six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were held on Monday afternoon at the Mount Vernon Methodist church, conducted by Rev. H. C. Culver. Interment was in Mount Vernon cemetery.

**Venerable Smthy**



—Lahman Studio photo; Tru-Art cut  
M. L. SHANTZ.

"Mart" L. Shantz, veteran blacksmith of Mount Vernon, is probably the dean of that upbuilding vocation both in point of years and in point of continued service in Linn county. He came here a young journeyman in March, 1865, and continued at it ever since until within the year, when he had an attack of illness. He is now about town every day and approaching his eighty-third birthday in May.

Mr. Shantz is a native of Pennsylvania, born May 16, 1844, and as early as 12 years of age began to follow in the footsteps of his father as a blacksmith. After the war he came to Iowa and was here married to Mary Jane Yount. He has two daughters, Mrs. Hoelscher of Boulder, Colo., and Mrs. Charles W. Neff of Mount Vernon. In earlier times before buying the shop and home on South Third street which he still possesses, he was employed by such local factory enterprises as that of Dan Camp, Michael Gutzler, Johnson Needles and Fred Hipp.

**THE OBITUARY RECORD.**

*Died March*

**Mrs. M. L. Shantz. 1917**

Mrs. M. L. Shantz, one of Mount Vernon's longest time residents, whose serious illness and evident decline has been a realization of several weeks past, died Monday morning, March 19, at her family home on South A avenue. The funeral services were held Wednesday afternoon, at the home, in charge of Dr. R. D. Parsons, assisted by Dr. Rollo F. Hurlburt, both of the Methodist Episcopal church. Appropriate vocal selections were sung by a trio composed of Mesdames Miles I. Cumming and J. C. Boyd and Miss Jessie Rigby. Interment following was in the Mount Vernon cemetery.

Mary Jane Yount, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Braxton Yount, was born in Hendricks county, Indiana, February 18, 1845. The family moved to Iowa in 1850, settling first in Jones county, near Martelle, and later moving to Mount Vernon. The father died here.

She was married here in Mount Vernon to M. L. Shantz, June 27, 1867. They would have celebrated their golden wedding anniversary this coming June had she been spared. The family home has been here in Mount Vernon through this half a century.

Five children were born, two dying infancy, a boy and a girl. The three who with the husband and father survive, are Mrs. E. A. Hoelscher, of Boulder, Colorado, Mrs. C. W. Neff of Mount Vernon, and Harry L. Shantz of Davenport. Mrs. Shantz is also survived by her sister, Miss S. C. Yount, and her two brothers, John Yount of Ogden, Utah, and Joseph Yount of Anamosa.

Mrs. Shantz united with the Methodist Episcopal church at Mount Vernon in young womanhood, during the pastorate of Rev. Stevens, and continued to make that denomination her church home and christian inspiration, as in her life she devoted herself in like faith and consistency at the head of one of the real homes and fireplaces of our town. Devoted, pri-

Mrs. Geneva H. Hoelscher — 783 13th Street. A retired Boulder High School teacher and resident of Boulder for 43 years. Services Wednesday afternoon at 2:30 at Allardice-Hibbard Mortuary with Dr. Rufus C. Baker of Fort Collins officiating. The body is to be sent to Mount Vernon, Iowa, for interment.

**Mrs. Geneva Hoelscher, Retired Boulder High School Teacher, Dies**

A retired Boulder teacher, who was a popular member of the high school faculty for many years, died this morning at 12:05 at the Boulder Colorado Sanitarium after a ten days illness. She was the widow of Dr. Ernest Hoelscher, a retired Methodist minister, who died in Boulder, July 20, 1943, the year Mrs. Hoelscher retired from teaching.

Born February 2, 1871 at Mount Vernon, Iowa, to Martin and Mary Jane Shantz, she attended school there and secured a bachelor of arts degree from Cornell College, located in Mt. Vernon. She was married Dec. 10, 1894.

Her husband, a member of the Northwest Iowa Conference of the Methodist church, served pastorates in that state for twelve years before his health broke down and they came to Boulder in 1907. Mrs. Hoelscher, while caring for her husband, did graduate work in the University of Colorado and secured a master's degree in 1910 and soon afterwards joined the high school faculty.

She was a member of the Methodist church and active in its women's organizations. She was also a member of Hypatia Club and of the Boulder chapter of the American Association of University Women.

She is survived by a sister, Mrs. Nell Neff of Mt. Vernon, Iowa; four nieces, including Mrs. P. H. Moen, 855 Lincoln and two nephews. Mrs. Gala Gough of Denver is a cousin.

Funeral services will be Wednesday afternoon at 2:30 at Allardice-Hibbard Mortuary. Dr. Rufus Baker, of the Fort Collins Methodist church, formerly of Boulder, will officiate. The body is to be sent to Mt. Vernon for interment.

*circle, she was also generous and helpful surrounding her children to make the most of their opportunities, she was also generous and helpful with other young people temporarily in her home while attending college. Life long neighbors (missing)*

26  
copies

## C. W. Neff Dies At Mt. Vernon

Special to The Gazette.

MT. VERNON — Services for C. W. Neff, 85, a Mt. Vernon funeral director for more than 50 years, will be Wednesday at 2 p.m. at the Methodist church here.

Mr. Neff retired about 6 years ago. A native of Mt. Vernon, he went into the mortuary business with his father in 1900.

He is survived by his wife, 3 daughters, Mrs. John Neff and Mrs. Roy Johnson, both of Mt. Vernon, and Mrs. James Seeks, of San Jose, Calif.; a son, Myron, of Mt. Vernon, and a sister, Elizabeth Williams of Muskogee, Okla.

His body is at Baxter's mortuary.

### In Memory of

CHARLES WILLIAM NEFF

August 2, 1873 - November 16, 1958

#### Services

Nov. 19, 1958, Wednesday, 2:00 p.m.  
Methodist Church

#### Clergyman

Rev. Rollin G. Oswald

#### Honorary Pallbearers

J. W. Bloom	C. C. Tull
James McCutcheon	R. P. Ink
Fred Young	Harry Siggins
Elmer Miller	Lee Stinger

#### Cremation

Cedar Memorial Crematory

#### Arrangements By

Baxter Mortuary

## Miss Yount, Age 85, Cornell Housekeeper For 40 Years, Dead

Special to The Gazette.

MOUNT VERNON—Sarah Catherine Yount, 85, housekeeper in Cornell college dormitories for nearly forty years, died Wednesday from a heart attack, following six months of failing health. Her life interest centered in her service to Cornell, to which she gave liberally in addition to helping many students individually. Her first work was at "Old Sem," and then at Bowman hall from 1885, when it was built, until she retired in 1918, since which time she had lived with her niece, Mrs. C. W. Neff.

Miss Yount was born in Hendricks county, Ind., Feb. 9, 1847, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Braxton Yount. They came to Iowa in 1850, settling first near Martelle. A brother, Joseph Yount, of Anamosa, survives. The funeral will be held Friday at 3 p.m., conducted by the Rev. E. T. Gough.

## Rites for Mrs. Neff Held on Saturday

Funeral services for Mrs. Charles W. Neff, 88, a life long resident of Mt. Vernon, were conducted at the Methodist church on Saturday, March 13, at 2 p.m. by the pastor, the Rev. Charles Q. Wallace. There was a crematorial committal.

Mrs. Neff died at 12:20 a.m. Thursday, March 11, 1965, at the Mt. Vernon Rest Home where she had lived since July, 1958. She had been confined to her bed since suffering a coronary on Feb. 24.

Dr. Clyde Tull, a former member of the Cornell faculty, paid a tribute to her during the service. Referring to the fact that she and Mr. Neff had provided a home for numerous Cornell students in exchange for their help, he stated, "Mrs. Neff belonged to that group of women who were not 'rooming house operators' but mothers to college boys away from home. . . and had more influence upon the attitudes and behavior of their boys than the college officials. . .

"Many others, as well as college boys, have responded to the remarkable personality and character of Mrs. Neff, her intelligence, her intellectual aliveness as revealed in her reading, her calm endurance of pain and handicaps and her interest in others. I have heard people comment on the fact that they have never heard her utter a derogatory word about another person."

Nellie Alice Shantz was born to Martin and Mary Jane Yount Shantz in Mt. Vernon on Nov. 18, 1876. The home of her parents was the brick house at A Avenue and Third Street now owned by Robert Collins.

She was graduated from Mt. Vernon high school in 1893 and attended Cornell college as a member of the class of 1900.

On Jan. 17, 1897, she was married to Charles W. Neff, who predeceased her on Nov. 16, 1958.

The Neffs operated a furniture and undertaking business until 1928 when the furniture store was discontinued. The funeral home was continued until Sept. 1, 1953 when it was sold to Jack Morgan after serving the community for 53 years.

After buying the Dr. George and Kate Mason Hogle residence in 1935 and remodeling it for a funeral home, some 30 Cornell students made their home with the Neffs between 1935 and 1953. Many of them are now prominent alumni of Cornell.

In 1963 Mrs. Neff was made an honorary member of the Cornell Alumni association in recognition of her service and loyalty to the college.

## Services Saturday for Mrs. Charles Neff, 88

MT. VERNON — Nellie Alice Neff, 88, died at a rest home in Mt. Vernon where she had lived since 1958.

A lifelong resident of Mt. Vernon, she was born Nov. 18, 1876, at Mt. Vernon. She was graduated from Mt. Vernon high school and attended Cornell college. She taught school at Hale.

In 1897 she was married to Charles W. Neff. She and her husband operated the Neff funeral home for 54 years before retiring. Mr. Neff died in 1958.

She was a member of the Methodist church, charter member of the New Century club, helped organize and nominated first officers of the Mt. Vernon Woman's club, Past Chiefs club, was president of WSCS, Circle 5 and Pythian Sisters lodge. Last year she was given special citation by Cornell college in recognition of providing a home for many Cornell students while attending college. She was an honorary member of the alumni association.

Survivors are three daughters, Mrs. John Neff, Mr. Roy Johnson of Mt. Vernon and Mrs. Maurice Cheek of Dos Palos, Calif. six grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren.

Services will be held Saturday at 2 at the Methodist church. There will be cremation committal. The casket will not be open after the service. Friends may call at the Baxter chapel in Mt. Vernon.

Mrs. Neff was a life long member of the Mt. Vernon Methodist church. She was a longtime member of the New Century club and helped organize the Woman's club and nominate the first officers. A member of Circle 5 Methodist W.S.C.S., she had served as president of the Ladies Aid for several years, predecessor of the later organization. She was also a member of Pythian Sisters lodge and the Past Chiefs club. Surviving are three daughters, Mrs. John (Alta) Neff, Mrs. Roy (Dorothy) Johnson, Mt. Vernon and Mrs. Maurice (Helen) Cheek of Dos Palos, Calif., six grandchildren.



BRAXTON YOUNT, was born in the state of Kentucky, May 14, 1814 and died in Mount Vernon, Iowa, Sept. 14, 1892, aged 77 years and 8 months, leaving four children, two sons and two daughters. When he was nine years of age his parents removed from Kentucky to Indiana. He made his home in this state until the year 1850, when he came to Jones County, Iowa, where he resided for many years. He came to Mount Vernon about 12 years ago, since this time he has made this place his home, residing with his daughters.

Quite early in life he was converted and became a member of the Baptist Church, in the membership of which he continued until his death. He had been in feeble health for some time, but being a man of great will power and determination of character, he kept up and around for a long time after others, in a like condition of health,

would have given up completely. Mr. Yount belonged to that class of the sturdy pioneer settlers, who came to this state in an early day, and endured many privations and hardships in that Iowa of forty years ago in order that we might enjoy the greater advantages and larger opportunities that belong to us in this Iowa of to day.

In that Iowa of forty years ago there were no rail roads, the commercial and trading centers were few and far between, the farmers were obliged to haul their farm produce for long distances overland, before they could secure a market. They suffered many trials and inconveniences, that we in this day know nothing about. We should ever honor the memories of these grand old pioneers, who suffered and labored that we might enter into their labors.

Mr. Yount was a man who adhered strongly to his principles. He was a man of his word, honest and upright in his dealings with his fellow-men. He was humble and retiring in disposition; so only those who were brought into close contact with him knew of the real worth of his moral character. He was always a great lover of music, and before his voice became weakened by age he loved to sing the old hymns of the church. Some of the dearest memories that his daughters now have of their father are of the time when they were little children, and when he would take them into his arms at night and rock them to sleep, singing to them some of the precious old church hymns.

He was ready and willing to die. Very often during the past few weeks he has dwelt upon that old hymn by Isaac Watts and has repeated the lines: "Jesus can make a dying bed feel soft as downy pillows are." During several days preceding his death he had often been heard talking, as if to himself. And as his daughters have listened they have heard him say: "Lord Jesus, I am tired out and

#### Miss Sarah Yount

Miss Sarah Yount, aunt of Mrs. C. W. Neff, died early Wednesday morning following a week's illness of heart complications. Miss Yount, for thirty-five years, had charge of the kitchen at Bowman hall and was well known by a host of students who had benefitted by her generosity and sound judgment. She had made her home with Mr. and Mrs. Neff for the past fifteen years.

Miss Yount died at the home of Mrs. Lillian Crofutt, where she went in her usual health the Saturday before the Fourth to remain while Mr. and Mrs. Neff camped at the Palisades.

Funeral services will be conducted by the Rev. E. T. Gough from the Methodist church on Friday afternoon at 3:00 o'clock, and burial will follow in the Mount Vernon cemetery.

#### Sarah Catherine Yount

Funeral services were conducted for Miss Sarah Yount from the First Methodist Episcopal church on Friday afternoon, July 15, at 3:00 o'clock. The Rev. E. T. Gough was in charge of the service and interment was in the Mount Vernon cemetery.

Sarah Catherine Yount was born in Hendricks County, Indiana, on February 9, 1847. She was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Braxton

Yount, and one of four children, of whom one brother, Joseph Yount of Anamosa, survives her.

The family came to Iowa in a covered wagon in 1850, settling first on a farm near Martelle, later moving to Mount Vernon. She has been a member of the Methodist church since early womanhood, an active member of the W. C. T. U., and Missionary societies.

She was indentified with Cornell College as housekeeper in Old Sem and later at Bowman Hall, for 33 years. Since 1918 she has

*I want to go home and rest. I am only waiting for thee, Lord Jesus, to come and take me home. That prayer has at least been answered. His eager and willing spirit has left the worn-out tenement of clay and has entered upon ..... (missing).*

Mary Yount Shantz and her brothers and sister



Joseph Yount, Mary Yount Shantz, Sarah Yount, John Yount



Yount cedar chest brought to Iowa by covered wagon







Helen Alice Shantz, Harry Shantz, Geneva Shantz



Martin Luther Shantz, Mary Jayne Yount Shantz



Geneva Shantz



Helen "Nellie" Alice Shantz



Harry Shantz





Shantz house in the 1920's ?



Harry Shantz at his blacksmith shop





Shantz house 2003





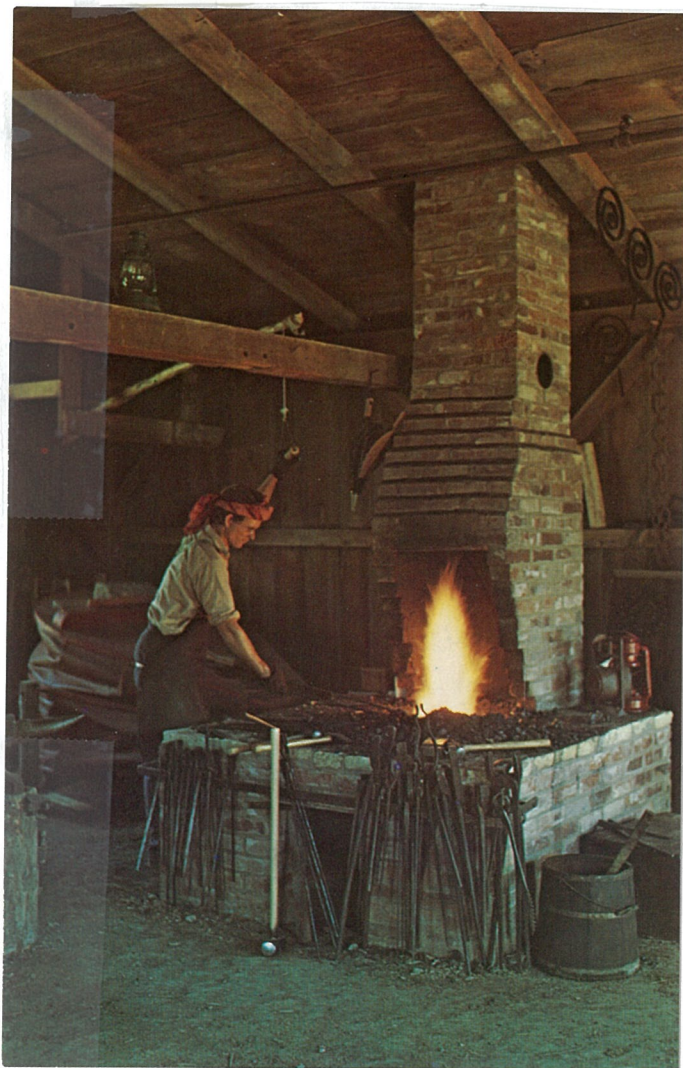


King Memorial Chapel: built in 1874-1882, railing built by Martin Luther Shantz





Replica of Jesse Hoover's blacksmith shop, which would be similar to Martin Shantz' shop



**SEVERAL OLD** blacksmith tools interested Admiral Strauss, Allan Hoover and Governor Loveless when they visited West Branch Thursday, as one of The Gazette's pictures showed. But what we didn't know at the time was this: The tools were presented to the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Foundation by Ray Ink of near Mt. Vernon. The occasion was dedication of the replica of the blacksmith shop of Jesse Hoover, father of the former President. Mr. Ink believes that the tools—tongs and farrier's hoof-trimmer—were used by a Mt. Vernon blacksmith at about the same time that Jesse Hoover was using similar implements in West Branch. The blacksmith's name, Martin Luther Shantz, is stamped on the tongs.