

Down Memory Lane
Mary Etta Broadwell

Jeremiah Shank

As long as there is a desire in the human breast for a home, there will exist a need for the services of a builder. As this longing is an essential characteristic of man, it is not likely he will soon lose it. Back of the stability of the government is this prime necessity for some spot one can call his own.

Until a man has a home he has no solid interest in any community. It is because of this cogent reason that a carpenter is so important a factor in a new district. It is when people build their homes, when they put down roots, that the town's future foundation is laid.

One of San Gabriel valley pioneers who achieved an enviable record in this line was the late Jeremiah Shank. During the 29 years he was a resident of this community, his worth was measured in the thoroughness with which he did his work and the example he set as a deeply religious and upright character.

One of a family of 11 children, Jeremiah Shank was born in Pennsylvania in 1848. Fifty-three years ago, he and Mrs. Shank, the former Anna Miller of Wayne County, Ohio, and their four children moved to Covina from Carthage, Missouri. "Jerry" as he was known to all his friends, built a large home for his family on West College Street near the original home of the E.P. Warners. This house is now known to Covinans as the "Haviland house."

Assisted by her children, Mrs. Shank conducted a boarding house in her home. Frank Kendall, who at that time was one of the town's butchers, says she was the only woman he ever knew who could make a piece of neck taste like top sirloin. Her table was well-known all over the valley. Drummers often came from Azusa by hired rig for one of her hearty noon dinners.

While Mrs. Shank was busy with household duties, her husband plied his trade as carpenter. Many of Covina's early homes were built by him, including the C.W. Tucker house on Second street, the home of Ida Zug on Cottage Drive, as well as the one next door.

It is generally supposed that he also built the Old Pollard house on Badillo street, now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. W.P. Boes, and the Overholtzer

house. Other carpenters of that period who worked with Mr. Shanks were Clarence Allison, Joe Moxley and Mr. Armel.

In 1901, he worked on construction of the present Brethern Church, the original building having been totally destroyed by fire. A deeply religious man he was a devout member of the Brethren parish and served as deacon for many years.

The four children of Mr. and Mrs. Shank grew up in Covina and attended local schools. Rollie married John Zug and her children are Charles Zug of Azusa Avenue and Mrs. Cecil Jackson. Ethel became the bride of Fred Huff. Years after his death she was married to Frank Kendall, an old friend of the family. They make their home on West College Street. Frank Shank was united in marriage to Miss Amanda Murdock.

Harry, who lives with his family on West Center Street, followed his father's trade as carpenter and had built many of the town's finest homes. His wife is the former Cathrine Rae Steele of El Monte. It was while teaching at the Charter Oak school that she met Mr. Shank. She is the daughter of Christopher Columbus Steele, well-known rancher and stock breeder. A crony of "Lucky" Baldmin, Mr. Steele owned several race-horses.

Their children are Dorothy, now Mrs. Harold Emmons, and young Jerry.

Although he passed away almost 25 years ago, Jeremiah Shank's trenchant personality, tenacity and thoroughness of purpose has made a contribution which underlies all pioneer advancement in a new community.