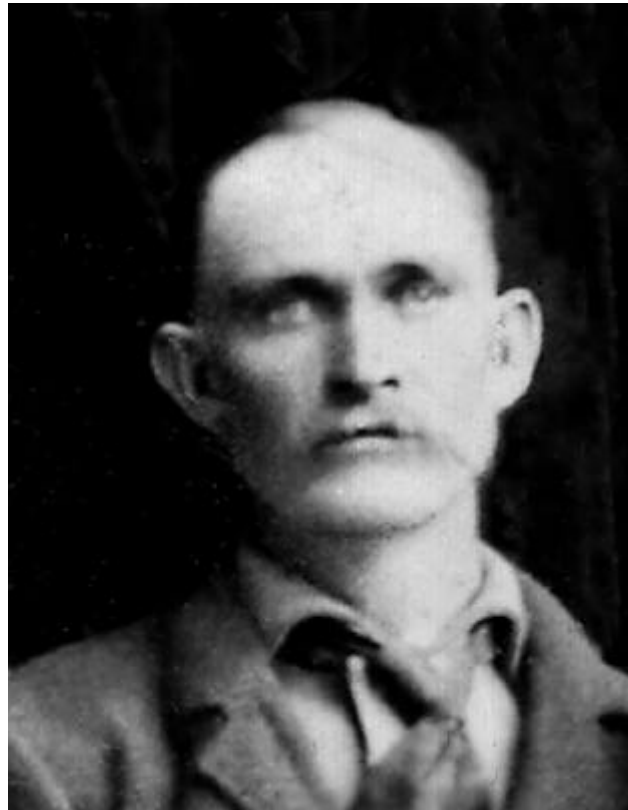


# *MY STORY LEST I FORGET*

*By George Washington Gifford*



In the year of 1888, I left Utah and came to Idaho to look for a home and when I got here a friend of mine, by the name of James Mitchell, lived just north of where Shelley now stands. Shelley was a vacant strip of land at that time. Mr. Mitchell took me around trying to get me to locate near him, but in looking around, it looked like a lot of good land on the west side of the river, so I decided to go over there before I located.

When I reached the west side of the river, I found that four of my friends had just located there, so I decided to locate there also. The names of my friends who had located before me were Bill Mathews, Heber Mathews, William Hammer and George Munsey.

There was a canal coming out of the river just above Eagle Rock. That was the name of Idaho Falls at that time and we expected to get the water for irrigation from that canal. The canal had been built for mining and it didn't pay for that, so they were extending it down the valley for irrigation, but it was a high water canal, so we decided after looking it over, that we just as well build a new one as to buy the old canal and spend a lot of money and time to build it up.

I explained to my friends that I could take a spirit leveler and tell just where the water would go. We then went to the river and followed it upstream, guessing at the fall, and we got to a place that looked most suited to head a canal. I took a spirit leveler and I made an apparatus to work on. Then we surveyed down until we came to the top of the river bank and we came out just right. Mayor Clark's Father was a surveyor at that time, so we asked him to come out and his figures were the same as mine. We thought that was good enough, so we each took a piece of

land along the hill to do and when we got nearly finished, we had the surveyor go over it again in order to be sure we were getting the right grade. That was the only surveying we had done except what I did.

We had to organize a Canal Company, so we called a meeting. We elected a Canal Board. G. W. Gifford was elected President, which position I held for several years. I told them that we just as well name the settlement. I gave a talk and told them I'd prepare a name and the rest could do the same and then we could vote on the names to see which we would use. There was a Grist Mill at Eagle Rock that used wood for fuel and we could take wood there and get flour and a little money for a few groceries. Being able to trade wood for food was a great help while we were improving our land. Nearly all the wood for the whole valley came from here. I thought in order to remember how we made our living when we first came here, I would like it named Woodville. My friends agreed that name was good enough, so that is how Woodville got its name.

There was a man filed on a small piece of land where the townsite now stands. He wanted to sell his place, so we all went together and bought him out. I laid it out in a townsite and we each took a lot and sold the rest to help pay for it. We organized a Town Board and G.W.Gifford was put in chairman. I also served three terms as Justice of the Peace for Woodville Precinct. We were the first settlers on the west side of the Snake River.

In the year 1907, they took out the old river bridge at Idaho Falls and put in a better one. I thought it a good time to get a bridge for Woodville because we had to either go to Idaho

Falls or to Blackfoot to get across the river. I got up a petition and took it around and got the people to sign it. We all donated what we could afford and we got a lot of help to move it down here, so I presented it to the County Commissioners and they granted us the bridge. The same bridge is still in use.

George Washington Gifford  
Born 10th January 1857  
Manti, Sanpete, Utah  
Died 23rd November, 1942  
Idaho Falls, Bonneville, Idaho

Dictated by George Washington Gifford in 1939  
to: LaReah Huntsman, a Granddaughter