

Šakpe II would try to get the baby to eat. He would smack his lips, and say, 'chahâpi' (sugar), but "the baby's throat was too badly swollen. Mother fixed some soft food for him. They seemed very grateful, and many a mess of fish and venison were brought to us in return."

"When they had been there a short time, in Minnesota, Baxter and Mary grew very enthusiastic about teaching an Indian to speak English. He would say over after them in English after telling them in Sioux (Dakota). He had played with them for an hour or longer when they ran and put their arms on Old Sorrel and said, 'Horse.'"

"He said in perfect English, 'It isn't a horse at all; it's a mare.' And then he laughed at them. They never gave any more lessons. The Indians would not speak English unless compelled to."

In the spring, Florence helped her mother shear sheep, wash the raw wool, and prepare for spinning, "Then Mother's work began in earnest. She had it all to spin and cooker (dye) to send to the weaver." Florence's family owned sheep and made warm clothing out of sheep's wool.

"The severe winters proved too much for Father's health....To illustrate what the winters were like, the thermometer froze up the six winters we lived there, with the exception of one."

"The family became more dissatisfied with the cold and snow. They had an opportunity to sell the farm, and September 1860 saw us bound for Iowa," said Florence Courtney Melton.

Once they moved to Iowa, many of the male family members were enlisted to fight in the American Civil War. By May 1, 1868 they started their journey west again, first Oregon, and then to Washington, where they settled on Pahaha Flats near Pomeroy, Washington.

Florence Courtney Melton died on January 3, 1926, and was buried at Pomeroy City Cemetery, Garfield County, Washington.



## SHAKOPEE HERITAGE SOCIETY



**Florence  
Courtney Melton  
1857-1926**



Florence's parents, Levis Courtney and Mary Anne Ashbaugh Courtney and their six children left Ohio and travelled to Shakapee City, Minnesota Territory, where they lived for six years, starting in 1854.

Florence Courtney Melton told the story of her trip from the Ohio to Washington on February 24, 1929. The book was called ***History of a Pioneer Family***. It was later donated to the Garfield County, Washington Historical Museum in Romeroy, Washington.

The family took land nine miles from Shakapee City. "It was dense timber. Indians were as numerous as the squirrels. There was a lake about a mile from our claim."

"It was September when they got started to work on their houses. They camped on the ground and the nights were quite cool. A neighbor who lived almost a quarter of a mile away had his cabin built. He offered to let the little girls sleep in his house. Mother used to take one boy with her and the girls. After they were tucked in bed, she would go back to the wagon where the other brother was watching Father. She did this for three weeks. She gave directions about the cabin."



Florence Emily Courtney Melton and her husband James Moran Melton (1849-1895) ended up having three children: Ralph B. Melton (1878-1949) Caroline Elizabeth (1880-1966) Gertrude Lucile Melton (1884-1971). From *History of a Pioneer Family*.

On right is a person using an adz. It was used to smooth the floor.



"The roof was covered with clapboards with logs to weight them down. There was a big fireplace at one end of the room; a small window by the door. The floor was made of small ash trees hewn on both sides and laid side by side; it was called a puncheon floor. Father took the adz and smoothed it; then went over it with a plane until it was almost as planed boards. Mother always said it was the whitest floor she ever owned!"

"That first winter was very long and lonesome. My father soon found he could not stand the cold weather. He and his brother Jake froze their feet every time they tried to work, but Baxter and Mary played out of doors with 'Old Sorrel' and a jumper sleigh. The runners made shafts and cross pieces held it together. A seat was fastened on. They played for hours, many a day, with the thermometer 20° below zero.

The Indians taught the boys how to fish by cutting a hole in the ice and gigging fish.



"They could get necessary supplies at Shakopee, as it was a trading post established by the fur company.... There was a company of soldiers who came up on the boat our folks came on; they were stationed at Fort Snelling as protection to the settlers."

"The long winter came to an end. All was bustle and stir, clearing land, getting ready to plant a garden. Mother worked with the boys. Either that spring or the next, Baxter thought he could cut down trees equal to any man. He cut off one toe of one foot, and soon after cut three toes from the other foot. One toe hung by a thread of skin, the others were clear gone. Mother raised the scissors to clip it off, but he began to beg for it and cried."

"He said, 'Don't take them all away.' She said, 'All right, I'll see if I can mend it.' She fixed some splints and set it; it grew together as good as ever-never a thought of a doctor."

Šakpe II, his wife and a 2-year-old boy came to see Mary Anne. "He was very sick. She knew at a glance he had the mumps so she helped them care for him. They spread their blankets in a corner by the fireplace."