

MUNICIPAL REFERENCE LIBRARY

300 CITY HALL

CITY OFFICIALS

Shafer, Austin C

NAME Shafer, Austin C.

PUBLIC OFFICES HELD

(DATE)

CITY:

City Council	1889-1890
Board of Education	1891-1892
President of School Board	1891-1892

COUNTY:

STATE

FEDERAL:

CIVIC ACTIVITIES:

Current civic and welfare activities
One of the largest developers of home sites in
local history of real estate

BUSINESS OR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Rural, district and city schoolteacher
Real estate investor and subdivider
City official

PORTRAIT:

ATTACHED OR ENCLOSED IN ENVELOPE:

PORTRAITS APPEARING ELSEWHERE (DATES)

Hunt's, California and the Californians,
vol 1V, p 281

ANECDOTES AND PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS:

A farmer's child was expected to earn his keep in the days when Austin Shafer was a boy. When scarcely out of his babyhood he hauled wood, fed the live stock, and helped on the farm from daylight to dusk.

The straggling education he acquired during the few winter months when he was allowed to attend the log cabin school a mile from his home proved inadequate to young Shafer's spiritual needs.

After he returned from the Civil War, a veteran of Sherman's March to the Sea, the battle of Chickamauga, and others, he very courageously went back to the country school for more learning. Taking his place on the benches with ten-year-olds, he studied and later taught school, earning funds with which to spend four years in college.

Mr. Shafer taught in the pioneer schools of northern California and Los Angeles, which was an adobe village of 8,000 persons at the time of his arrival.

During 1882-1884 he was the sole teacher in Cahuenga School, the district of which included much of the present Hollywood, and all of what is now known as the Wilshire district. Mayor Sebastian was one of his pupils as a boy; Mr. Shafer reports him as being the usual average school boy.

His Civil War experiences remain vivid in Mr. Shafer's memory. He clearly recalls the suffering of the soldiers during the latter part of the conflict as contrasted with the comfort and plenty enjoyed by the men on their March to the Sea with General Sherman.

The young lady Mr. Shafer married was born at his father's old Oak Ranch in the San Joaquin Valley, a famous station in the stagecoach days. As a child she played with gold nuggets for toys, which were given to her by the forty-miners.

Since the death of his wife in 1935, after almost sixty years of marriage, Mr. Shafer lives a very retired life, except for occasional G.A.R. meetings.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

BOOKS:

Hunt's, California and the Californians, vol 1V
p 281

NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS:

PERSONAL INTERVIEW:

INTERVIEWED BY: Luella Sawyer

DATE OF INTERVIEW July, 1935
Rewritten by: Clare Wallace
December 10, 1936

The Los Angeles Public Library
Local History Collection
Biography

NAME Shafer, Austin C.

Occupation Schoolteacher and Realtor

Address 1801 S. Kingsley Drive, Los Angeles

Birth (Date and Place) May 19, 1844, Mt. Ephraim, Ohio

FATHER William Shafer

Birth (Date and Place) 1811, Virginia

If Deceased, When 1909

MOTHER Isabel Voorhies

Birth (Date and Place) 1814, New York

If Deceased, When 1892

IF MARRIED, TO WHOM Lary Harriot Harrold

Birth of Same (Date and Place) October 7, 1851, Oak Ranch
San Joaquin Valley, Calif.

If Deceased, When May 14, 1935, Los Angeles, Calif.

When Married November 2, 1879

CHILDREN (Married Names of Daughters)

Mrs. Effie Milgus

Roy V.

Callie (d. 1896, aged 3 years)

ANCESTORS OF DISTINCTION OR LOCAL INTEREST

(Please include names of local interest as "forty-niners," or any one connected with the affairs or development of the state or city, as officials, professional men, merchants, etc.)

Subject was a decendent of American Colonial stock.

His wife's parents were forty-niners.

EDUCATION (Schools, Colleges, Degrees, Etc.)

Rural schools, Ohio; Iowa State College, Iowa City (four years)

CLUBS, LEARNED SOCIETIES, ETC.

Mason; Commander of the Southern California Veterans Association of Civil War Veterans
Member of the G.A.R.

RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION Methodist

POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS Republican

RESIDENCE IN CALIFORNIA SINCE 1872

SKETCH

(Please make this as full as possible, giving business affiliations, positions of honor or trust with dates if possible.)

Austin Conrad Shafer, Civil War veteran, was born May 19, 1844, near Mount Ephraim, Ohio, and spent his youth on the farm where he was born.

His education, until eighteen years when he volunteered in the Civil War, consisted of two months during the winter in the rural schools.

After discharge from the army in 1865 Mr. Shafer returned to his studies and shortly afterward went to Iowa City where he spent four years in the Iowa State University.

Coming to San Joaquin Valley, California, in 1872 he taught public school for four years, then removed to Los Angeles, where he taught the first public school in Santa Monica.

During the boom of 1886 Mr. Shafer, after having spent ten years as the head of various city schools, gave up the profession of teaching and became a realtor. He built up a large real estate business, especially as a subdivider of estates into home sites, and remained in real estate enterprises until 1922, when he retired.

Elected to the City Council from the 5th ward Mr. Shafer served during 1889-1890, on the following committees: Sewers, Zanjas, Building, Health, Lands, Supplies, and the Special Committee on Charter Amendment. He also was a member of the Public Works Committee the affairs of which were administered by Councilmen in those days.

As a Councilman representing the city's religious element, he caused to be enacted the Sunday closing law for saloons. He was the only member reelected to the Council after the Charter of 1889 went into effect.

In 1891-1892 Mr. Shafer was elected to the Board of Education, and served during this time as president of the School Board. As a school trustee he instituted the custom of flying our flag over schoolhouses.

Mr. Shafer is retired, and lives at his home in Los Angeles.

