

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We want to thank all of the individuals of Livingston and surrounding areas for the help they accorded in supplying pictures, stories and other memorabilia on everything and everybody from the Village of Livingston. One hundred years is a long time and a lot of water has “passed under the bridge and over the falls” so to speak. Some of the information was given to us second-hand and even third-hand, but even that way it enabled us to start searching through files and records and discovering things that we had not even heard before that time.

When a committee starts to put together a history book covering 100 years, they get a lot of scraps and bits of information. It is a large task to put all of these things together in some order. We hope that we have not neglected to have every bit of information recorded in our book. We apologize if we have done so. I can assure you that it was unintentional. It would be impossible to name everyone who has helped in some way, so we are giving you all a big “THANK YOU!”

We want to thank the newspapers in the area: the *Staunton Star Times*, the *Edwardsville Intelligencer*, the *Highland News Leader*, the *Madison County Chronicle*, the *Kwik Konnection*, and the *Alton Telegraph*. and any other newspaper that may have helped us in our quest for articles and other types of information about our town. We also want to thank the following libraries: Staunton Public Library, Edwardsville Public Library, Bethalto Public Library, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville Library and the Macoupin County Genealogical Society for letting our researcher use their film machines. We especially want to thank the Regional Superintendent of Schools Office for allowing us to look through their records for teachers and other offices of the township.

We want to thank the Madison County Historical Society of Edwardsville for allowing us to do research and study in their library. We thank them for their help in supplying us with pictures of the different schools.

We also want to thank the members of the committee for their hard work in getting all the material together. It’s not an easy task to sort out everything. We want to thank Harold Ernst and Diane Donahue for coming to our meeting and giving us advice on how to get our book together and to the printer.

We want to apologize to anyone who gave us information and/or pictures that were not used. Some pictures could not be reproduced to our satisfaction and the same is true of newspaper clippings. We are very sorry that we could not use all of them.

Although this committee decided that single names would not be mentioned, we would be remiss in neglecting to mention Maridel (Nixon) and Arvel Fowler they spent countless hours of research at all of the venues listed above. Without their hard work and diligence this document would not have been possible.

## ***All Aboard!***

***Come take a trip through the past of your ancestors.  
See what they saw. Hear what they did. Find how  
they built a life and community here in Livingston,  
Illinois.***



# Where We Are . . .

*Everyone wants to know where they come from. This book serves to help those who came or will come from Livingston, Illinois. Below are the geographic and demographic information of their roots. The remainder of the book contains historical information as well as memories of life in this small town.*

*The following information gleaned from the United States Census of 2000.*

Livingston is a village located in Madison County, Illinois. As of the 2000 census, the village had a total population of 825.

## **Geography**

Livingston is located at 38°58'2" North, 89°45'45" West (38.967301, -89.762450).

According to the United States Census Bureau, the village has a total area of 2.8 km (1.1 mi). 2.7 km (1.1 mi) of it is land and 0.93% is water.

## **Demographics**

As of the census of 2000, there are 825 people, 367 households, and 237 families residing in the village. The population density is 300.5/km (777.5/mi). There are 396 housing units at an average density of 144.2/km (373.2/mi). The racial makeup of the village is 98.91% White, 0.00% African American, 0.00% Native American, 0.24% Asian, 0.00% Pacific Islander, 0.00% from other races, and 0.85% from two or more races. 0.24% of the population are Hispanic or Latino of any race.

There are 367 households out of which 27.2% have children under the age of 18 living with them, 49.9% are married couples living together, 9.3% have a female householder with no husband present, and 35.4% are non-families. 31.9% of all households are made up of individuals and 15.8% have someone living alone who is 65 years of age or older. The average household size is 2.25 and the average family size is 2.81.

In the village the population is spread out with 23.3% under the age of 18, 7.0% from 18 to 24, 30.5% from 25 to 44, 19.6% from 45 to 64, and 19.5% who are 65 years of age or older. The median age is 38 years. For every 100 females there are 101.7 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there are 96.0 males.

The median income for a household in the village is \$37,083, and the median income for a family is \$41,563. Males have a median income of \$34,444 versus \$19,271 for females. The per capita income for the village is \$16,291. 9.1% of the population and 7.8% of families are below the poverty line. Out of the total people living in poverty, 7.6% are under the age of 18 and 6.8% are 65 or older.

## FROM WHENCE WE CAME . . .

Livingston, Illinois, is located in the northeastern edge of Madison County, just about halfway between Springfield, Illinois and St. Louis, Missouri. You can find it by driving down Interstate 55, taking Exit 37 and turning west, passing up corn and soybean fields along the way in the summer and early autumn months.

A drive into the rural town with a current population sign of 850, presents a picture of what would be considered a bedroom community. The silver water tower near the heart of the village is the town's tallest feature. Many of the older homes have been remodeled, and sit on good-sized lots—space enough for children to play outside in their own yards without having their balls, bats and jump ropes creep into a busy street, as is common in many modern subdivisions in suburbia. The downtown “business district” consists of about an entire block and a half, and a few other businesses dot the frontage road and street coming off the interstate. There are no stop lights, unless the red ones that flash when a train crosses the main street can be considered in this category. The entire length of Livingston is less than 20 blocks long.

But the picture painted of Livingston today is vastly different from what the town looked like in 1905 when it became incorporated. Originally mostly farmland, the village sprang up around the New Staunton Coal Company, which was sunk in 1904. Railroad tracks ran parallel to the mine site, providing an easy means of shipment for the coal after the mule-drawn cars deposited it to the cages.

The mine and its prospect of employment attracted an influx of residents to the community, anxious for steady work. Many of those who came were immigrants who spoke little or no English, but whose native tongues were Lithuanian, Slavik, Russian, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Spanish, French and Turkish, to name a few. The swell of newcomers was so great that some Livingston residents would wait for a train to come into town and flag down those who spoke the same language as they did. Sometimes, the only form of identification these new arrivals would have would be a tag with their names on it pinned to their coats. The Livingston residents would then take the latest arrival home and “foster” him for a while, providing him a warm bed and food until he could get established. It was not uncommon for many families to take in boarders, and some tales recount that the beds would be full around the clock, with a miner working the late shift occupying a mattress during the day while his counterpart working days would bunk there for the night.

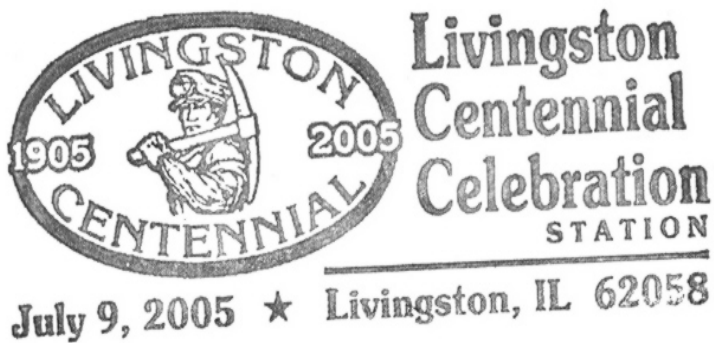
Some of the new arrivals also settled into a part of town known to this day as “The Patch.” This area, located on present Sara Street, was a few hundred feet from the mine across the railroad tracks. Many of the homes were small and cramped, but they provided housing for the “patchwork” of nationalities represented there. Later, when some of the miners accumulated funds, they would move into the “company” houses owned by the mine along current-day South First, South Second and South Third Streets. Many of these homes were built from lumber recycled from the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis.

The prosperity of the mine brought many shirttail businesses to the community, and its population swelled to more than 2,000. The mine had its own company store, in which a tab would be ran and payment deducted from the miner's pay. Neighborhood grocery stores—some more like general stores-- sprung up all over town, sometimes occupying the front part of a person's home with living quarters in the back. Businesses in town included bakeries, butcher shops, drug stores, hotels, shoe stores, furniture and hardware stores, automobile dealerships and gas stations/garages. There was even a dance hall and two theaters in town, and a horse racing track just east of it. But by far the most common business was the tavern. Hard-working miners--more than 700 of them when coal production was at its peak—built up a hearty thirst. Some accounts estimate there were up to 30 taverns operating at the same time in Livingston during this time.

And Livingston was not without its ties to some great names. The story is still told that during the Prohibition era Al Capone himself would come down near Livingston and hide out when necessary. The area west of town was known as “The Dirty Dozen,” and stories of a distillery on site and an underground tunnel in the area are still circulated. And Charles Lindbergh landed on the Rosenthal Farm between Livingston and New Douglas in 1925 when his plane was experiencing engine trouble. The family put him

up for the night, nourishing him with good, home cooking, before Livingston resident “Bike” Coalson and a couple of others got the plane up and running again. After that, Lindbergh would stop by periodically and visit, always being invited to dinner and offering plane rides to his friends in the area. And for a time Livingston claimed its piece of “The Mother Road” when Route 66 went through the village between the years of 1940-1977.

We, the members of the Livingston Centennial Committee, invite you now to take a trip down memory lane and uncover the interesting history of this little town. We’ll bet you’ll be glad you did.



Coal truck making delivery to then Livingston Bank now post office. Coal chute still exists in the sidewalk in front of building. This truck was the property of Arthur “Bike” Coalson, Sr.



# Olive Township

Olive Township is located in the northern part of Madison County. Its boundaries include Macoupin County on the north, New Douglas on the east, while on the south it touches Alhambra Township, and on the west Omphgent Township.

For three quarters of a century, Olive Township was considered strictly an agricultural community and included the surrounding area farms. Its inhabitants led a simple life, content with raising bountiful crops of staple products such as corn and beans, and also raised animals that benefited the farm. They also seemed to have large families. If you dig deep, you can see that although they had large families, the families lost quite a few of the children to illnesses of one kind or another. These people were warm congenial people and were always willing to help their next-door neighbor. They were totally unmindful that below the surface of their land lay great wealth in the form of vast quantities of coal. This coal proved to be a big asset for the town, as the news of the coal mine brought many to settle down here.

There were quite a few settlers in Olive Township before it was elevated to township status. When the people traveled to this area, they knew nothing about township lines. They just wanted to find some place to settle down, live a quiet existence and raise their families. Some of the first settlers were: Abram Carlock, John Hoxsey and John Herrington, 1817; Samuel Voyles, David Hendershott, James Street, James S. Breath, 1818; James Keown, Thomas Kimmett, Samuel McKittrick, Wiley Smart, 1819; Isham Vincent, 1820; W. H. Keown, 1824; John and Andrew Keown, Thomas Porter Keown, 1825; Tobias Reeves, Joel H. Olive, 1828; Robert Keown, Joel Ricks, 1829; John A. Wall, 1830; Robert Y. Voyles, 1831; Jarrett Cudd, 1832; Abel Olive, 1833; James Olive, John Coleson, 1834; Rev. Peter Long and Elisha Sackett were other early settlers.

Wm. Jones, James Street, and Thomas Ray were pioneer preachers in the township. As the number of settlers increased so did the number of children, there developed a need to have a school for these children. According to the 1882 book of Madison County History, the first school was taught in an abandoned cabin in Section 34 on the west side of Silver Creek. (If you look at a map of the region, this section is located in the southern part of Olive Township.) This school was taught by Matilda Thompson, who is believed to be the first teacher in Madison County, Olive Township. We can find no further record of her.

The first cemetery was located at the Wm. Olive farm in Section 34. Most area residents now know this cemetery as the Olive Cemetery. The first interment was that of George W. Olive, son of Abel Olive.

A Christian church was constructed in Section 34 in 1862. It was located along the present Alhambra – Livingston Road about 2 ½ miles south of Livingston. A Lutheran Church was built in 1870 and located in Section 18, ½ mile west of Route 4 on what is presently DeCamp Road.

Prior to the adoption of township organization in 1876, Olive Township was split in two, the east part being known as Silver Creek Precinct and the west part as Worden. When the township became a congressional township, the township had to have a name. The name OLIVE was chosen in honor of the family who lived for many years in the township.

At one time there were busy railroads traveling through Olive Township. They were the Wabash, and Litchfield and Madison (L&M). Both were located in the northwest corner of the township. The Big Four Cut-Off, and the Chicago and Eastern Illinois railroads used the same tracks and traveled through Livingston.

The first mine sunk in Olive Township was Henry Voge Mine sunk in 1896 and sold to Mt. Olive and Staunton Coal Company in 1898. It was called their #1 mine and was located along the Litchfield and Madison railroad tracks about two miles west of present day Williamson. It was the best producer of coal in Madison County from 1900 through 1903. It was closed in 1923.

The second mine sunk in the township was De Camp Coal Mining Company Mine #1 in 1903. It was located about three miles south of Staunton along the present day Route 4. It was closed in 1914.

In February 1904, coal was found in Olive Township where Williamson is today. This was the second mine for the Mt. Olive and Staunton Coal Company. Called #2 it was the top producer in Madison County

in 1906-1907, 1920-1928, and 1931-1950. It was closed in 1957.

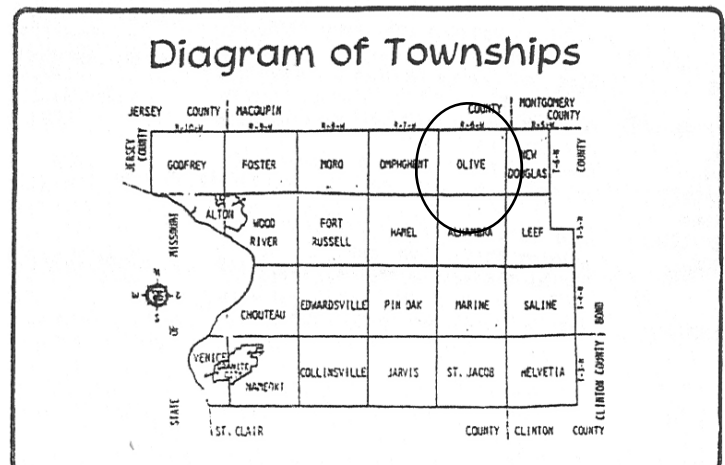
New Staunton Coal Company was sunk in 1904 and produced coal for shipping in 1906. This company led Madison County in production in 1908-1919.

In a fifty year period an Olive Township mine was the leader in Madison County coal production except for the years 1904, 1905, 1929, and 1930.

Many years ago a burg called Bennettville was found near the location of present day Livingston. A cane and grist mill and a blacksmith and woodworking shop was run by William Bennett. When they drilled for coal, people scoffed at a town being built on the prairie.

Olive Township had three villages: De Camp, Williamson and Livingston. De Camp didn't last very long as the mine closed in 1914.

The township at one time had five country schools – Pisgah, Pleasant Hill, Hazel Dell, Spangle and Moultenville – along with the schools in Livingston and Williamson. In the late forties the country schools closed with Pleasant Hill coming to Livingston and Hazel Dell, Spangle and Moultenville going to Staunton. Williamson joined Livingston in the late 1950s.



## James Olive

Squire James Olive, one of the members of the Olive family who donated land for the Olive Cemetery and for whom Olive Township was named, was born June 4, 1817 in Trigg County, Kentucky. He was the youngest of thirteen children born to Abel and Elizabeth Olive. For some years he was a tailor in Edwardsville and Alton. Subsequently he studied medicine and set up his own medical practice in Staunton. His brother John Olive was one of the early settlers, but resided in Olive Township only a short time.

In 1833, James Olive followed his brother John to Alton. As a boy of sixteen years, James arrived in Alton with only good health and a fifty-cent piece. He worked for \$6.00 per month cutting timber for farmers who used the wood for fence posts. The following spring, 1834, he came to Olive Township. After a couple of years, he married Mrs. Linda Tabor who had a forty-acre tract of unimproved land. After his marriage, he began farming on his wife's land in Section 22, where he lived until 1845 or 46. They then sold their home and moved north of Nauvoo, Illinois. They resided there until the Mormon problems at which time they returned to Madison County and bought nephew Jesse Olive's place.

Linda Olive passed away in April 1864. The following November, James married Mrs. Mary Shumate. As a successful farmer, James Olive raised a large family. He was the father of the following children born to his first wife: Mrs. Mary Kienle, Mrs. Martha Kinnikin, Henry, James, Sarah, Margaret, Thomas and another infant. The following children were born to his second wife: Mrs. Lily Olive Livingston, Mrs. Pearl Camp, Mrs. Nora Francey, E.M., John and Jesse Olive. Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Francey lived on the homestead in Olive Township for many years.

James Olive served as Justice of the Peace and Township Supervisor. He also was the township treasurer of the schools from the time the free school system was established continuing for a period of forty-four years. This was the longest service of any man in the township. He retired in 1896.

At one time, James accumulated 1,400 acres of prime land. He gave this land to his children at annual birthday family reunions before his death in 1902. He was buried in Olive Cemetery.