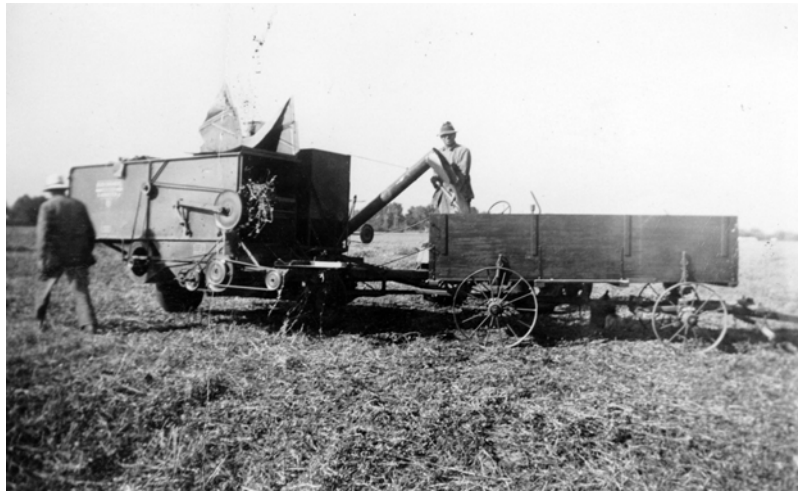


Memories of Farming

By Bill Sievers

Over the years, farming has become very different. Getting the ground ready for planting previously took a lot of time and energy, even if it was a few acres. Farming went from horses and a walking plow to huge tractors, chisel plows, and planters, even no-till planter. What was previously done in days – 10 to 20 acres – can now be done in several hours. Much farm work was done by helping each other. Take threshing wheat for example. First the farmer would cut and bundle the wheat putting it into shocks. Then at threshing time, a crew of farmers would come together to thresh the grain. The bundles would be loaded on a flatbed wagon and hauled to the threshing machine where someone would operate the machine, another would feed the bundles into the machine at just the right speed, and the grains of wheat would go into bags. The bundles were then hauled into a granary to be used for animal feed and some for seed to plant the next year. Some was taken to the mill to be ground into flour or food. The best thing about threshing was the meals the women cooked. They put food on a long table often outside under a shade tree while using tree twigs to ‘shoo’ flies away. Oh! Those home made pies.

Another example of working together was butchering time. This, of course was done during wintertime. Everyone butchered so a crew would get together to plan which place and day. One farmer would butcher and then the crew would decide who would be next and what day they would go to that place. It was ‘early rise’ for the crew to get a fire under the kettle plus other preparations. After the meat was cooled the whole family got involved. Women helped with cleaning casings, making sausage, and cooking the meal for the butchering crew. The next day might be used for rendering lard and cutting up meat. In early years much of the meat was cooked down, rendered lard poured over it, and sealed in jars as a way to preserve. The big advantage to this was the quick way to ‘heat and serve’ when company came. Some years later, while the cutting up process was still the same, meat was put in the town locker or the farmer’s freezer.



Combining beans and loading on a wagon. Wheat was done the same way. 1932

Still another ‘work together’ project was when a neighbor or farmer friend needed some building to be done. A number of men would gather and ‘look out!’ boards, hammers and nails were on the move. Again, the ladies would host the meals for them.



Cutting wheat with a binder. William O. Sievers on tractor. 1944.

In all of the projects, the neat part was the sense of working together, to get the job done, and the social aspect. They knew they could depend on each other, being ready for long hours and hard labor. Children learned at an early age that work on the farm was a job for each member of the family. Not only was it a learning experience, children were also expected to take responsibility. They had constructive things to do to keep them busy, making

them proud of what they could learn by ‘hands-on’ experience. Families also had time together for visiting and playtime. Farming consisted of long days and hard work, but also family get-togethers for adults to relax and share. Children often made items to play with and made up their own games.

Today farmers still work hard but many have more acreage to farm and have bigger, more modern machinery. More crops can be harvested from fewer acres because of the spray chemicals and fertilizers made to produce larger yields. Much planning and labor goes into farming, but the satisfaction is in knowing that it helps to put groceries on the shelf and provides food all over the world.

Farming is a necessity, not a luxury. A need for which to give thanks.

The following names are those of farmers from that era: Albrecht, Schuette, Sievers, Kroeger, Hering, Genczo, Rausch, Voyles, Engelke, Best, Golob, Sveglich, Britt, Quade, Repovsch, Kerin, Slifka, Hertel, Anschutz, Henke, Schaeffer, Bentrup, LaBanschnig, Olive, Philippe, Marasti, Spudick, Bononi, Karger, Pieper, LaHommendu, Ruehrup, Wolf and Pintar.

More scenes of area farming . . .

Cutting wheat with binder, 1944.

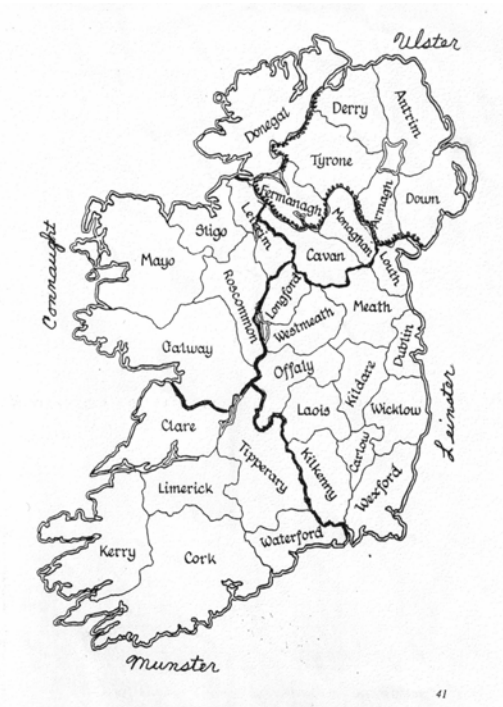


Charles Kroeger Family Farm.

Livingston Family Saga

How many of us have wondered about our backgrounds? This is the history of how this little village was established and came to be named after John Livingston.

John Livingston was born in Monaghan County, Ireland, (see map below) on December 25, 1830 to James and Sarah (Bethel) Livingston. After, James Livingston died in his homeland, Sarah and her son John moved to America. John was the youngest of six children and was about sixteen years of age when he came to Madison County. There is no record indicating why the Livingstons chose Madison County to set down roots. John received his schooling while still in Ireland. When the family moved to Illinois he worked on local farms for fifty cents a day. During the winter he split logs that local farmers used for fences. John's mother Sarah died at age seventy-four in Madison County, Illinois.



John married Mary A. Jane Brown, also from County Monaghan, Ireland, in November, 1857, and settled in Madison County near Venice, Illinois.

John and Mary were the parents of eleven children: Sarah Jane, Martha White (Mattie), Robert Wilson, Rebecca Elizabeth (Becky), Mary Ellen (Nellie), Margaret Ann (Maggie), William John, Jessie Alice, David George, Luella Mae and Cora Belle.

In 1861, John and Mary Livingston purchased a farm in Section 15 and 16 in Madison County, Illinois, that was unimproved at the time. John Livingston became an agricultural giant in the area and eventually the Livingston Farm encompassed 297 acres. John was also involved in local politics and was a member of the Republican Party. He served as school director and was highway commissioner for fifteen years.

Mary Livingston died in 1897 and John died the following year. Their bodies are buried in Spangle Cemetery.

It was after the deaths of John and Mary Livingston that the farm was found to be rich in veins of coal. After his parents' deaths, David (D.G.) Livingston managed the family farm and his other business interests. David served as the first village president and postmaster having begun his term on December 23, 1904. He also held the jobs of Olive Township collector, supervisor, deputy sheriff, deputy coroner and school treasurer. His older sister Jessie assisted D.G. in the post office and lumber office. She helped him in the lumber office until she was appointed postmaster in 1924. She served twelve years as postmaster.



Seated from left: Martha, Mrs. Mary A. Livingston, Mr. John L. Livingston, Sarah, Margaret. Second row: David G., Louella May, Cora, Jessie. Back row: Rebecca, Robert, Mary Ellen, John.

Four of the Livingston sisters became schoolteachers. Martha (Mattie) was a teacher in Madison County. Rebecca (Becky), who taught for forty-five years, also served as principal of a Granite City School.



From left: Margaret, Sarah, Robert and Rebecca. The above is a copy of a tin-type photograph.

She was also assistant principal of the Livingston Grade School and was school treasurer from 1930 to 1932. Mary Ellen, known as Nellie, was a schoolteacher prior to her marriage. Margaret (Maggie) served 42 years as an educator. She was the first principal of the Roxana schools and was principal of the Williamson School. She had a record of never having been absent from her schoolwork due to illness.

Youngest daughter Luella Mae was a homemaker. The Livingston home was the scene of many social gatherings for state, county and township officials as well as family members. On May 18, 1883, a terrific cyclone hit the Livingston Family Farm and the family home was demolished. Luella Mae was the only family member home at the time and survived.

Robert Livingston married Lily B. Olive and they moved to Staunton where Robert had his own business. He was later appointed postmaster in New Douglas and he and his family moved to a farm southwest of New Douglas. This farm was known as Clover Leaf Farm and was located in the area known as Silver Creek Road. Robert served as school trustee for Pisgah School of New Douglas Township from 1916 – 1918. When

Robert and Lily retired from active farm life, they moved into New Douglas.

All of the Livingston children were actively involved with politics. The sisters were active participants in the war effort and were deeply involved with the Red Cross. They were also members of the Eastern Star Lodge.

Brief History of the Livingston Family Lineage

John Livingston – born December 24, 1830 in Monaghan County, Ireland to James and Sarah (Bethel) Livingston. John died March 11, 1898 at age 67 and is buried in the family plot in Spangle Cemetery.

Mary A. Jane Brown Livingston – born July 11, 1836 in Monaghan County, Ireland. Mary died March 23, 1897 at age 60 and is buried in the family plot in Spangle Cemetery.

John and Mary were married November, 1857 in St. Louis, Missouri.

Children of John and Mary Livingston:

Sarah Jane Livingston – born September 9, 1858 in Madison County near Venice, Illinois. Sarah died February 2, 1897, at age 38 and is buried in the family plot in Spangle Cemetery.

Martha (Mattie) White Livingston – born November 11, 1860 in Madison County near Venice, Illinois. Mattie married James R. J. Hoxsey on October 11, 1883 in Olive Township, Madison County, Illinois. They were the parents of four daughters and one son. Mattie died May 8, 1942 at age 81 and is buried in Memorial Park Cemetery in Staunton, Illinois.

Robert Wilson Livingston – born March 23, 1862 in Macoupin County, Illinois near Mt. Olive, Illinois. Robert married Lily B. Olive on December 15, 1886 in Olive Township, Madison County, Illinois. Robert and Lily had three daughters and one son. Robert died December 23, 1917 at age 55 and is buried in New Douglas Cemetery.

Rebecca (Becky) Elizabeth Livingston – born September 19, 1863 in Macoupin County, Illinois near Mt. Olive. Becky died January 17, 1949 at age 85 and is buried in the family plot in Spangle Cemetery.

Mary Ellen (Nellie) Livingston – born July 23, 1865 in Madison County, Illinois near Staunton. Nellie married Charles S. Frame on September 25, 1889 in Olive Township, Madison County, Illinois. They were the parents of six sons and one daughter. Three sons served in WWI, two in the navy and one in the army. Nellie died July 19, 1957 at age 91.

Margaret (Maggie) Ann Livingston – born April 28, 1867 in Madison County, Illinois near Staunton. Maggie died August 19, 1952 at age 85 and is buried in the family plot in Spangle Cemetery.

William John Livingston – born April 15, 1869 in Madison County, Illinois near Staunton. William died October 19, 1893 at age 24 and is buried in the family plot in Spangle Cemetery.

Jessie Alice Livingston – born March 10, 1871 in Madison County, Illinois near Staunton. Jessie died November 8, 1950 at age 79 and is buried in the family plot in Spangle Cemetery.

David George (D.G.) Livingston – born January 29, 1873 in Madison County, Illinois near Staunton. D.G. died April 25, 1927 at age 54 and is buried in the family plot in Spangle Cemetery.

Luella Mae Livingston – born August 23, 1875 in Madison County, Illinois near Staunton. Luella died October 5, 1949 at age 74 and is buried in the family plot in Spangle Cemetery.

Cora Belle Livingston – born April 22, 1877 in Madison County, Illinois near Staunton. Cora Belle died November 3, 1896 at the age of 19 and is buried in the family plot in Spangle Cemetery.



The Livingston Sisters

From left: Miss Luella Mae, Miss Jessie, Miss Margaret, Mrs. Martha Hoxsey, Miss Rebecca, Mrs. Mary Ellen Frame