

## Four Esthers

When the fourth daughter of Charles and Bessie Livingston was born in 1906, she was given the name of Esther, honoring her grandmother, Esther Quillin Livingston. This grandmother was named for *her* grandmother, Esther McKinley Quillin, who had been named for *her* great-grandmother, Esther McKinley. No second name was given to the fourth Esther as Bessie always told her daughters that when they married they could take “Livingston” as their middle name - and they all chose to do so.



If only the first **Esther (1705 – 1789)** could share the adversities she valiantly faced, what stories she would tell! She was born and raised in County Antrim, a coastal county in northeastern Ireland; her husband, David “the Weaver” McKinley, was also a native of County Antrim, where his parents had settled after emigrating from Scotland. Married in 1728 in the small village of Dervock, most of their five children were born in the same vicinity.

One can imagine the trials of David, Esther, and their family, when in 1740 the people of Ireland suffered a severe famine. The country was gripped by a mini-Ice Age; the weather turned extremely cold and windy for an extended period of time and then was followed by incessant rains. No crops of any kind could be grown, in particular potatoes or grains, the major sources of nourishment. Suffering continued into the next year throughout Ireland as well as in other European countries. Mortality rates were extremely great and decimated over one-third of the population. This prompted a tremendous exodus of Irish families with endless numbers of them immigrating to colonial America. The McKinleys did not dilly-dally in deciding to accompany those others who were leaving Ireland.

Sometime between 1740 and 1743, David and Esther left their ancestral homeland, boarded a tightly packed sailing vessel in Belfast, and watched as their beloved country receded in the distance, disappearing beyond the ocean waves. After suffering the rigors of an ocean voyage, they ended their journey in the colonies, most likely in New Castle, Delaware, with little more than dreams. A William Penn land grant for fifty acres determined the location of their home in York County, Pennsylvania. At that time Chanceford Township, located in the southeast part of the county, was sparsely settled, but the valleys, reminiscent of home, were eyed with eagerness by many of the Scotch-Irish migrants. David and Esther chose a location near a large spring where David built a half-stone and half-log home.

Land holdings were expanded until the homestead totaled 316 acres; it was on an elevation from which the Blue Ridge Mountains could be seen to the north. Esther could also view the Susquehanna River in the distance, but would have had no time to ponder on the magnificent beauty around her for household duties were many. As the spouse of a husband who was a weaver, it was her responsibility to see that the looms had a ready supply of yarn. She and her daughters, wearing long, homespun dresses of their own making, must have spent many hours at their spinning wheels, keeping the shuttles well-filled. After the day's work was done, the fireplace provided light for knitting as countless stockings, worn as an extension of knee breeches, were needed for the male members of the family. In addition to those duties and the care of the home and five children, it may have fallen to Esther to help supervise her three sons as they cared for the sheep and other livestock. David was not only kept busy with his business, but was involved in many public activities, particularly the development of roads to replace the meandering trails and narrow bridle paths. David died a few years after turning fifty, while Esther lived well into her eighties, witnessing the colonies' fight for freedom and the founding of the nation. Both Esther and David are buried among the rolling hills of Old Guinston Presbyterian Church Cemetery.

John McKinley, the oldest son of Esther and David, was an owner of a hotel, or inn, while at the same time keeping his looms busy. The businesses of blacksmithing and distilling were added to his other enterprises. Known as "the Wagon master," he also built sturdy, high-wheeled Conestoga wagons, using them to haul goods to markets in the cities and ports. John was, without a doubt, among the residents of Lancaster who sold wagons to Benjamin Franklin for General Braddock during the French and Indian War. He was energetic, thrifty, and shrewd in the York County public enterprises as well as in his private affairs. Even though he made wagons for the Continental Army, he was a forceful man and freely expressed his opinions of the rebellion against England. Like many of his family, he was a Presbyterian. John married Margaret Morton, daughter of Robert and Susannah Morrison Morton, in about 1754. They became the parents of eight children.

David, the oldest of the eight children of John and Margaret, was born in Chanceford Township on May 16, 1755, and was given the same name as his grandfather, David "the Weaver." After joining the Pennsylvania militia as a private, fighting with George Washington in the Revolution, and participating in many skirmishes, he became known as "David the Patriot." When the Revolutionary War ended, he married Sarah Gray, daughter of John and Hannah Stevenson Gray;

they became the parents of ten children: William, James<sup>1</sup>, Martha, John, Sarah, Stephen, Rachel, **Esther (1797 – 1841)**, Mary, and Elizabeth.

The soil in the barrens of Chanceford County was at one time clear and productive, though thin; with no replacement of nutrients, the tillable soil deteriorated more every year as it was cropped and re-cropped. When David found the rocky ridges unable to produce enough to support his large and expanding family, he elected to pull up stakes and move on to Mercer County along with a number of his friends and relatives.

Veterans who had seen service in the Revolution were paid with continental currency that depreciated until it was almost worthless, but the commonwealth of Pennsylvania government determined those who had fought for liberty should be given land from the public domain. Part of this was located in what would become Wolf Creek Township in Mercer County and became known as “donation,” land. Many of the former soldiers, not wanting to move to the raw, undeveloped frontier lands, disposed of their titles by selling to others who were eager to have the chance to own property. There is no specific record of David receiving land as payment for his services in the Revolution, but land was cheap. In 1792 to encourage settlement of the uninhabited frontier beyond the Allegheny River, land was offered to purchasers for six cents per acre if the buyer settled and improved the land. The threat of hostilities from Indians had ceased when the Miami tribes were defeated by Mad Anthony Wayne in 1794 at the Battle of Fallen Timbers. This prompted an influx of settlers in the years from 1796 through 1800, most of them Scottish Presbyterians from the eastern counties. The availability of inexpensive land, the increased safety from Indian attacks, and the willingness to struggle to clear the unbroken land may all have played a part in the McKinley family’s relocation to the remote, western boundary of Pennsylvania.

A county history lists Samuel Waldron as the first settler in Wolf Creek Township, coming in 1796, “packing his provisions on horseback and conveying his heavier utensils in an ox-cart.” David, Sarah, and their family migrated around this same time, for daughter **Esther** was born in 1797 after her parents had settled in Wolf Creek Township. In 1798 Ephraim and Jacob Rose rode into Mercer County on horseback, as Waldron had, bringing scant provisions, an ax, grubbing hoe, and rifle. Before long they had planted a field of turnips, their first crop. By this time, the neighboring McKinleys had made a good start in conquering the wilderness, clearing land of huge trees and building their home.

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<sup>1</sup> The grandson of James, William McKinley, became the twenty-fifth president of the United States. The lineage of William McKinley has been well-researched and documented. The lineage and detailed information on the McKinley family can be found by reading numerous accounts, including the following:

Prowell, George Reeser, *History of York County, Pennsylvania*, New York: 1907, p. 948-51.

Collier P. F. and Son, *The Life of William McKinley*, New York: 1901, p. 2-5.

Claypool, Edward, *Scotch Ancestors of President McKinley*

With the increase of new settlers, the residents of the township recognized the need for religious services. The Centre Presbyterian Church, organized in 1801, was built of pine logs chinked with mud. It had a dirt floor and a thatched roof, through which the open skies could be seen. The first members, seated on split logs, included David McKinley and his son James McKinley, along with their families. Other early members were from the Rose family, whose children had intermarried with the children of David: James McKinley married Mary "Polly" Rose, while Martha McKinley married James Rose. The McKinley family continued to follow the same Presbyterian faith of their ancestors.

When Sarah McKinley died in 1814, David and his younger children moved to nearby Columbiana County, Ohio, in the Western Reserve where several of his older children had established homes. Son James had gravitated to the foundry business and found work around New Lisbon as an operator of iron furnaces. David augmented his income by teaching school; one of his students was the Rev. James Vallandigham, who would later become a noted Presbyterian minister. Even though having been wounded in the war, David did not apply for a pension until 1832. Upon David's death son James was left fifty-six acres in Crawford County, Ohio, and son John received seventy-five acres in Mercer County, Pennsylvania.

The second **Esther McKinley**, granddaughter of the immigrant Esther, spent her growing-up years in her birthplace of Wolf Creek Township, Mercer County. By 1810 she was thirteen years old and was living at home with five of her siblings, while her brother James and his family dwelt on adjoining property. Close neighbors in the same vicinity were Ambrose Quillin and his family of two sons and three daughters. Ambrose and Sydney Evans had solemnized their marriage in 1780 in the Centre Presbyterian Church of Cumberland County and had come to Wolf Creek Township around 1800. It is likely their son, Alexander John Quillin and the teen-aged Esther had eyed each other during church services, perhaps even dreaming of marriage when Esther became older.

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A second war with Great Britain had become necessary due to its encroachments on United States possessions; the British were threatening the lake shore by Erie, Pennsylvania, where Commodore Perry had begun building his fleet. During the resulting War of 1812, Alexander Quillin answered the call to arms along with the state militia and other volunteers. Because of the close proximity to the Great Lakes, residents of Mercer County responded quickly to sudden alarms. When swift runners would bring information that a vessel of the enemy had been sighted, privates would quickly mold their bullets, clean the old flintlocks or rifles, and gather together their tomahawks, knives, knapsacks and woolen blankets. Within a very short period of time the defenders would be ready to march northward in defense of Erie. After the decisive



battle in 1813 when six British vessels of the Royal Navy were defeated and captured, there was no longer a necessity for the presence of the soldiers, and the militia was discharged.

By 1816, when Alexander was twenty-six, he had accumulated enough stock and equipment to be self-sufficient, and on October 11, Esther celebrated her nineteenth birthday. The couple were married in Columbiana County, Ohio, on November 5 by Clement Vallandigham, beloved pastor of the Presbyterian Church of New Lisbon. They returned to Mercer County, Pennsylvania, to establish their home. They became parents of a son, also named Alexander John Quillin. The marriage was short lived for within eighteen months the father, Alexander, died, leaving Esther a widow. The nature of the misfortune that befell Alexander— accident or illness – has been lost in the dim recesses of time.

Since Alexander left no will, Stephen McKinley, brother-in-law, and John Quillin, brother, were appointed administrators of his estate. All property was put up for sale. The inventory taken in June 1818 listed several heifers and steers, three horses, one old sow with nine shoats, several sheep, and numerous bee gums. There were tools, equipment, a fiddle, and a few household items. Also up for auction were the crops growing in a large field including several small plots of rye and wheat that would soon be ready to harvest. Esther purchased a few items: three chairs for \$1.00, one auger and a “tom ox”<sup>2</sup> 15¢, one bridle 25¢, one cow \$15.00, one sorrel mare \$40.00, and one ewe \$1.00. The total results from the sale of property was \$319.59. There is no record of distribution of the proceeds or of the finalizing of the estate.

Esther does not appear to have received any benefits from the estate. Perhaps Alexander left debts that had to be paid. In the early part of the nineteenth century, women had few legal rights. They were under the domination of their father until marriage, at which time they became dependent upon their husbands. During the colonial period, English inheritance laws of primogeniture were adopted but were gradually being abandoned as the country expanded. If, however, in settling an estate, there were creditors pressing for payment, the wife could keep the bare necessities of two dresses, cooking utensils, and a bed.

Esther did not remain in Wolf Creek Township; she and her little son returned to Lisbon, Columbiana County, Ohio, where she would have the support of her family. The First Presbyterian Church Roll lists Esther Quillin as becoming a member of the church on November 25, 1819, and recorded the baptism of her son, Alexander John Quillin on January 9, 1820.

When left a widow at an early age, women would often remarry quickly, and that is just what Esther did. She married Joseph Fulks sometime before June 1820; they remained in Columbiana County, living in Elk Run Township, just east of Lisbon Township. Esther was kept busy, caring

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<sup>2</sup> May be “tom-ax,” a corruption of *tomahawk*.



for her household and, in the next twenty years, bearing nine more children. She and Joseph lived a few years in Wayne County before moving on to Homer in Medina County. Esther died on April 15, 1841, and was buried near Crawford's Corner, Wayne County, Ohio.

The summer before she died, she was able to see her two oldest sons married. Alexander John Quillin exchanged vows with Elizabeth Oberlin on June 22, 1840, at Homer in Medina County. He was "above twenty-one years of age," and she was "above eighteen." This was a double wedding, for on the same day A.J.'s half-brother Charles Fulks married Rebecca Laughman.

Alexander and Elizabeth lived in various places, though generally all in the same locality, never moving any real distance away. The oldest child of A. J. and Elizabeth, George Oberlin, was born in Wayne County. Two years later when their next child, **Esther (1842-1902)**, arrived on August 24, they were living in Lorain County, Ohio, which was bounded by Lake Erie on the north and Medina County on the south. Two other children, Mary Jane and John, were also born in Ohio.

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The country was expanding rapidly in 1847 under the administration of President James K. Polk; Oregon Territory became part of the United States when the region was divided between the U.S. and Great Britain. During that same time the Mexican-American War was being fought over the rights to Texas. The year 1848 saw the end of the war, and the frontier was pushed back even further. The United States paid Mexico \$15 million for land that would become California, Texas, Arizona, Nevada, and Utah, while in the same year Wisconsin became the thirtieth state of the Union. Railroads had not yet reached the Mississippi River, and it would be several years before the transcontinental system would be built. Gold in California was waiting to be discovered. Newspapers from the east took nine days to reach Wisconsin, and communication by telegraph was limited. Advances were in the wind, and people were becoming restless.

As had their ancestors, pioneers felt the enticement of the trackless forests, the lofty mountains, or the wide-spread prairie lands. Whenever friends and relatives gathered together, they would discuss the news of the country's growth along with their desire for a better, more prosperous life. The Quillin and Fulks families felt the pull of the great opportunities that existed in the beckoning west.

In 1847 the three families - and likely other friends and neighbors - loaded up their belongings, left Ohio, and headed toward the Territory of Wisconsin. The year of 1847 was not a good time to move to Wisconsin as records show there was frost in every month of the year, during harm to all growing crops and vegetables. The journey was slow going with unmarked roads or trails, dangerous river crossings, unpredictable events, and weather extremes. This, a trip of many miles, was a challenging venture and would not have been easy in any case, but was especially difficult for large families accompanied by small children. Alexander John and Elizabeth Quillin had their four children: George, the oldest (6), Esther (5), Mary Jane (3), and John (1). Elizabeth, pregnant with a fifth child, endured the adversities of rough travel while still caring for the needs of her family. Charles and Rebecca Fulks had one small child and were expecting another. The third family was widower Joseph Fulks and his two teen-aged children, whose mother had been Esther McKinley Quillin, plus two younger children of his deceased second wife. Supporting and encouraging each other, the families arrived safely in Grant County, Wisconsin. Before long, smoke could be seen curling from the chimneys of their new homes.

While living in Annaton, Grant County, six more children were born to A. J. and Elizabeth: Daniel Aaron, Rebecca, William, Joseph S., David M., Alexander V., and Charles Lemon. On June 1, 1858, A. J. became a land owner of eighty acres. While A. J. was a farmer, it has been recorded that he also built the first grist mill in Annaton, Wisconsin. This mill, only one of three in the county, continued in operation for many years, providing a much needed service for the local residents.

Growing to adulthood in Grant County, Esther Quillin fell in love with a young man from the neighborhood, Robert Livingston, who spoke with an Irish brogue. While Esther Quillin's ancestors had originated in County Antrim in northern Ireland, the Livingstons came from County Wicklow on the eastern coast in close proximity to the Irish Sea. Robert had been born, as was his eleven siblings, at the Meeting of the Waters in the Vale of Avoca, County Wicklow, Ireland. He had been baptized and confirmed in the Church of England, Castle Macadam Parish.

In 1855 Robert left Ireland and came to Wisconsin with his parents, Robert and Mary Watson Livingston, and numerous other relations in the final migration of two large Livingston families. Other family members who had preceded them across the sea had been drawn by the work



available in the coal mines of southern Wisconsin, the men having been experienced workers in the copper mines of Ballymurstra, Ireland.

On December 24, 1863, Robert Livingston of the little village of Mifflin and Esther Quillin of Ellenboro went to Platteville, Wisconsin, and quickly located the one-story brick Methodist church with its tall steeple. They were married in the parsonage with two of Robert's cousins, Abner Woodward and Robert Woodward, serving as witnesses.

The 1863 marriage license showed Robert's occupation to be a miner, but by the time the 1870 census of Grant County, Wisconsin, was taken, Robert had become a prosperous farmer with \$2,500 worth of real estate and \$600 worth of personal property. This was a good sum for that particular era. By then, the family of Robert and Esther had increased; the census taker recorded three children: William (Willie) age 6, George Green age 4, and Susan age 2.

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With the shelling of Ft. Sumter in April 1861, the nation was thrown into a civil war. President Lincoln issued a call for 75,000 men, and Wisconsin responded. Union sympathizers felt this would be a short-lived war, but found it did not end with just a few battles. As the Civil War dragged on, in 1864 forty-four year old Alexander John Quillin enlisted for a term of one year in the 43rd Infantry Regiment of Wisconsin Volunteers. Records show he had gray eyes, black hair, and was five feet, ten inches tall. Elizabeth, like other wives when their husbands marched off to war, was left alone to care for their growing family. A. J. moved southward to the theater of war. He spent a couple of months in the Post Hospital in Clarksville, Tennessee, then in the spring he served at Blockhouse #1 of the Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad; at the conclusion of the war in 1865, he was in Nashville, Tennessee, guarding the railroads and dispersing guerrillas. He was discharged there and, with his regiment, returned to Milwaukee, from which he eagerly made his way back home to Grant County.

While A. J. fought in the 43<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin Infantry, his son, George Oberlin Quillin, served with the 35th Infantry; George was in Brownsville, Texas, when he was mustered out in 1866. Now with battles behind them, the veteran soldiers from Wisconsin traveled countless miles as they returned home, going through territory never before seen. Specific locales, notably southwest Missouri, made an indelible impression upon those passing through.

Southwest Missouri held promising prospects for farming. Compared to northern regions, its mild climate was well suited for both agriculture and stock raising. Prairie grasses grew tall, thick, and abundant, while sparse timber was found along the bottom lands of the small creeks. . The booming sounds of prairie chickens echoed in the clear air as males tried to attract a mate; thousands of these birds hid their nests in the dense, tall-grass prairies, whirling into the air in

thick, dark clouds when disturbed. White tailed deer and wild turkeys could be found in great numbers. The unexcelled opportunities of climate and natural resources were recognized by pioneering families who were searching for fertile soil in which to plant their crops and for grasslands to fatten their cattle; they looked no further and began to purchase land and build their homes.

According to family legend, George was particularly impressed with the "lush grass" of the prairies of southern Missouri. Upon his return to Wisconsin, he shared his experiences and observations with his father, his sister Esther and her husband, and the Fulks relatives. After hearing his glowing report of prospects in Missouri, the family began plans to relocate. A. J. decided to sell his Grant County property that had been valued at \$200 in 1860 and to continue with plans to move southward. The short summers and long, wintry weather of Wisconsin with its forty inches of snow each year may have played a part in deciding to leave the northern state. The proposed five-hundred-mile journey was carefully planned and soon became a reality.

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A.J. Quillin would have drawn on his previous experiences of migration, choosing only the most essential farm tools and equipment. Household items would have been added only as space permitted, filling every nook and cranny of the wagons; most heavy furniture was left behind. When all was packed and ready to go, a final, sad goodbye was said to friends and family; the Quillins embarked on a journey full of unknown perils. The Quillins headed for Barton County, Missouri.

Most of the pioneers depended upon word of mouth to maneuver through unknown areas, augmented only by rough, hand-drawn maps that used streams and rivers as points of reference. Most routes for the use of vehicles (wagons, carts, or a rare buggy) were unnamed and primitive, often rutted by heavy iron-clad wagon wheels and interspersed with muddy potholes. The charred remains of numerous bridges which had been destroyed by the warring factors of the recent rebellion now required rebuilding. Ferries, however, were available for crossing the larger rivers, but the majority of smaller creeks had to be forded. Whether traveling by foot, riding horseback, or using various conveyances, individuals would have to follow rough roads and brushy trails that angled and twisted in all directions over unbroken stretches of prairie. As new lands were being surveyed, some fences and the resulting roads began to delineate the sections of land and to replace the ancient traces. With careful calculating and good information, the travelers could sporadically locate stretches of cleared trails.

One major pathway was the remnant of the Butterfield Mail Route; this corridor operated from 1857 to 1861 and came through parts of Missouri. Then there was a beaten path left in 1861

when Claiborne F. Jackson, governor of Missouri, and 300 Confederate supporters hastily came from Jefferson City, passing through Barton County on their way south. Some towns or settlements were linked together by military routes that had been established for the needed movement of the soldiers and the transfer of equipment, food, and other supplies. The eastern terminus of the Ft. Scott Military Road was in Barton County, but one branch, "the Militare," extended further; it passed through the county, and continued southward to Neosho and points beyond. In some areas, however, travelers had to just find their own way. This tedious trip would take two months or more to reach Southwest Missouri, the predetermined destination for the Quillins.

Travel by rail was not an option to consider. Though a network of railroads had been completed to the east as far as neighboring Illinois prior to 1861, Wisconsin had only a few short railroad lines. Missouri had limited railroads that extended westward through the state; during the war, a considerable number of these had been destroyed by the opposing armies and were slow in being repaired. The nearest railhead for counties of southwestern Missouri was in Sedalia from which point migrants going in a southerly direction must then travel overland by other means. It was not until 1871 that trains came to Jasper County, the adjoining county to the south of Barton County.

The migrating Quillins most likely made the journey from Wisconsin around 1868 using heavy canvas-covered wagons pulled by mules or horses. Their immediate family numbered nine: father, mother, and seven sons. The boys would have been old enough to be depended upon to help with the driving of the loaded wagons and to care for the horses and any other stock. It is presumed that daughter Rebecca and her husband, Newel Wood, made the move along with her parents as their arrival in Missouri was at approximately the same time. Other travelers may have gone all or part of the way with them, creating a rather long train. This would have been a good thing, for lawlessness existed and as a rule, men went about armed; bitter feelings still existed, and some people continued "fighting" the past war.

As the sun traveled on its downward path, if there was no welcoming homestead available for shelter, a good campsite must be selected. Oftentimes a wooded area would be found close to a little stream; sometimes the chosen location might be near a lone chimney where a home had once stood. An open camp fire would be built by the travelers, and Elizabeth, wearing her serviceable long dress, would begin the Herculean task of preparing a nourishing meal for her large, hungry family. From the wagon would come the smoke-stained coffeepot, a frying pan, and a big, black, iron kettle. At night, quilts and bedding – perhaps even a treasured feather bed – would be brought out for the use of each person, some finding a place close to the fire and others taking shelter under the wagons. The tired travelers, glad for rest, disregarded their hard beds and were soon lulled to sleep by the droning sound of nighttime creatures.

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The War Between the States had not been kind to those trying to eke out a living in Barton County, Missouri. Both the Confederate and Union armies had traipsed through, oftentimes engaging in skirmishes. Besides the frequent military operations, residents had also faced guerrilla warfare, border wars with Kansas Jayhawkers, and depredation by renegade Indians. Barton County was visited twice by Quantrill and his Raiders, infamous for the destruction of Lawrence, Kansas. Because marauders frequently looted and/or burnt homes, the occupants had left for other parts of the country in search of safety. By 1865 only two families remained in Barton County.

With the cessation of conflict, the past residents then felt secure to come back to reclaim their former properties, though typically toting firearms, for loyalties were still strongly divided. The new arrivals were heartedly welcomed into the growing communities, and white canvas-covered wagons began coming in droves. Mail, keeping travelers in communication with old home folks, was carried from Neosho to Nevada in a four-horse stagecoach with tired horses changed at Dublin. Slowly reviving, by the end of 1866, Barton County's population had increased enough to establish seven schools. Those local school buildings served double duty for both education and church services until 1870 when the first church building was erected. The year 1868 saw the construction of a frame courthouse on the west side of the square in Lamar, replacing the one burnt during the war. The county was now up and running, growing by leaps and bounds.

When did the Quillin family make the move to Southwest Missouri? It was before August of 1868, possibly in the preceding year before winter had set in. Alexander John may have taken his time in choosing the best location for a new homestead. Virgin sod, good grasslands, and nearby water were all factors to be considered. Blue stem grass grew to be over six feet tall on the prairies. An added plus in determining the ultimate choice was the close proximity of coal banks, or veins of coal. In Barton County, these were not very thick, but were close to the surface. The coal could easily be had for the taking and provided fuel for cooking and heating. The final decision made, property in North Fork Township in Barton County was purchased by Alexander John Quillin on August 26, 1868.

While still in Wisconsin, one daughter of the large Quillin family, Mary Jane, had married Newel P. Wood. Within six months of their 1861 marriage, she had died from complications of smallpox. Five years later Newel had married Mary Jane's sister, Rebecca. They, along with the younger sons of A. J. and Elizabeth, came to Missouri either with her parents or shortly before. Frank Wood, son of Newel and Rebecca Quillin Wood, stated he was born February 3, 1868, near Carthage and moved at one year of age to Barton County.



The two oldest children, George Quillin and **Esther Quillin Livingston**, along with their spouses, were not quite ready to pull up stakes and resettle. They remained in Grant County, Wisconsin, when their parents and siblings migrated south.

In January 1871 while still in, Wisconsin, George Quillin, brother of Esther, married Jane (Jennie) Andrews. A tale handed down through the family divulged that one of the Andrews' daughters found herself in the family way. The father called in a preacher, lined up all the girls with their beaus, and ordered all to recite their marriage vows. The marriage of George and Jennie lasted sixty-three years, with Jennie ruling the roost.

As letters came from Missouri reporting that A. J. and Elizabeth were settled and prospering, the Robert Livingston and George Quillin families felt the time was right to join their parents. Selling his property, Robert invested his money in a large herd of cattle and the two families began their journey. According to family lore, along the way they met a Texas cattleman who was driving his cattle north to market after fattening them up on the free range grasses. The Wisconsin cattle intermingled with the Texas herd. The longhorns, were diseased and the Livingston and Quillin cattle caught the ailment and died. Oral history related the Texas cattle were infected with hoof-and-mouth disease which is extremely contagious; it hurts too much to eat, and the animals just stand and waste away. However, the culprit could instead have been tick fever, another highly destructive malady that was also spread by herds from the south. This was known as Spanish, or Texas, fever and was carried by young ticks, often wiping out whole herds. To prevent the spread of this disease, Texas longhorns were later banned from crossing the border into Missouri. The financial setback caused by loss of the cattle necessitated a completely new start from which the Livingstons never fully recovered.

Arriving at Lamar in the autumn of 1872, Robert and Esther Livingston found that the county seat of Barton County had rebounded from the destruction caused by the war and was now a thriving metropolis. An 1872 newspaper of Lamar, *The South-west Missourian*, carried ads for attorneys, doctors, a livery stable, billiard saloon, a boot manufacturer, and a lumber yard, as well as mercantile and grocery stores. Notices were posted of meetings of the Masonic and Odd Fellows lodges. A hardware store offered many desired items including oil lamps, chimney globes, patent medicines, and cigars. There was even a nursery selling assorted varieties of fruit trees and berry bushes. Perhaps the weary travelers stopped long enough to replenish a few badly needed provisions before proceeding on to North Fork Township, most likely following the route of the old stagecoach line that passed through the little village of Esrom.

In the 1850's the government had given land grants to the railroads to encourage the growth of transportation in unsettled areas. This land was then sold to finance the construction of more railroads. From such a land grant in Barton County, Missouri, A. J. and Elizabeth Quillin



purchased additional property in section 9 in April 1872, buying it from the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad. This land, containing 197 and 67/100 acres, was acquired for \$790.48. Plum trees were planted outside Elizabeth's kitchen door.

A month prior to this, eighty acres of his land had been sold to G. H. Waters for \$1380, turning a nice profit on the original investment. Upon the arrival of the families of Robert Livingston and George Quillin, A. J. sold each family a portion of this acreage, possibly following through on plans made in advance. Along with two other children, Rebecca (Wood) and Daniel, this made four of A. J. and Elizabeth's children to own farms in Northfork Township.

Both Robert Livingston and George Quillin finalized the purchase of their properties on December 16, 1872. Robert's ten acres cost him \$280. Robert and Esther Quillin Livingston now had a home with acreage, albeit small, to support and shelter a growing family of their three children. Another son, Charles Leon, was born on February 10, 1874, in this small home. The Northfork Township home where he was born, would become the birthplace of several of his children a quarter of a century later. In 1906 the same home would also be the birthplace of Charles' daughter **Esther Livingston Scott**, the "fourth Esther."

The year 1874 was significant in other ways. After being in Barton County for a year and a half, Robert and Esther Livingston finally could see the light at the end of the tunnel. With the assistance of family and neighbors, progress had been started toward recouping their losses. However, the unreliable weather played havoc. An extended period of severe drought in 1874 resulted in poor crops.

This scarcity of rain preceded a devastating invasion of hungry grasshoppers. All growing vegetables and whole fields of crops were destroyed by the voracious insects. Anything green was doomed and little could be salvaged. The graphic diary of a pioneer lady, Dolly Roberds, contains a description of this unfortunate time: "1874 became the accursed year of the grasshopper, coming down in clouds, the locusts ate everything in sight. Some pioneers who survived said that the creatures ate everything but the fence posts, [with] which they used to pick their teeth." The plague of grasshoppers covered a wide swath through several states, and brought hardship to all inhabitants of Barton County, leaving many destitute.

## Building a Community ~ Northfork Township

The Livingston and Quillin families enjoyed good times with their neighbors even though periodically the community suffered hard times and frequent sorrows. They banded together offering both sympathy and assistance whenever needed. Accidents, diseases, and various maladies often resulted in the loss of life. Infant mortality was high in pioneer settlements, and Barton County was no exception. After the loss of several infants in Northfork Township, it became evident that the community was in need of a burial ground.



In 1871 W. H. Waters first laid out the neighborhood cemetery, which later became known as Waters Cemetery. A site was selected on a high rise of ground in the middle of the prairie grassland with Mr. and Mrs. George Quillin and Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Budd each giving a part of the land. At first the small mound was barren of any trees, but gradually many cedar trees were planted.

These easily-grown trees marked the location of new graves, for many mourners were financially unable to purchase tombstones for their loved ones. Whenever a death occurred, the women headed for their kitchens to prepare food, while the men of the community would take their shovels and meet at the cemetery to dig the grave. Upon establishment, the cemetery was continuously cared for by George and Jennie Quillin, who lost four of their eight sons in infancy.

Alexander, the son of A. J. and Elizabeth who had been born in 1869, died in 1883 at the age of 24 years with typhoid fever and was buried in Waters Cemetery. The mother and grandmother, Elizabeth Oberlin Quillin, died in 1891 at the age of seventy-one and was buried in in the same hilltop cemetery. A. J. Quillin, however, was an exception. Left a widower and getting along in years, he entered the Old Soldiers' Home at Leavenworth, Kansas. He stayed about three years before returning to Barton County to stay with his daughter, Esther Livingston. Enduring poor eyesight, he re-entered the facility in 1902, remaining there the rest of his life. Upon his death in 1904, he was buried in the Military Cemetery in Grave No. 2440. Through the years, Waters Cemetery became the final resting place for countless descendants of the Livingston and Quillin families, and continues on until this day.

A typhoid epidemic struck again in Barton County in 1886 with more deaths reported. Robert and Esther Livingston sadly lost their teen-aged daughter, Susan, and buried her in the Livingston plot in Waters Cemetery.<sup>3</sup> This was before the discovery of antibiotics, the only cure for the deadly disease. However, one son, John W. Livingston, also became ill, but survived. When only fifteen years old, he returned to Wisconsin but suffered for years as the result of having had typhoid fever in Missouri.

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Northfork Township became a cohesive neighborhood as neighbors worked together in building their schools and churches. The faith of the early settlers never wavered and was maintained by holding meetings in various homes. After the one-room Blue school was constructed, Sunday School classes were held in it. The congregation used the river east of Blue for the baptism of new church members. Periodic church services were provided by an occasional circuit preacher. As time went on, these dedicated itinerant ministers served a number of small congregations, often visiting several in one day, preaching in the morning, afternoon, and/or evening. Oftentimes, after first consulting the schedule of the assigned circuit preacher, Northfork families would hitch up their horses to buggies or farm wagons and set off for one of the other neighboring schoolhouses - Diamond, Lynnland, or Nashville - to visit Sunday School or church. A good turnout would be guaranteed if services were followed by basket dinners.

Still, the people desired a permanent place of worship. In 1877 a camp meeting was conducted in a temporary clearing along the west bank of the North Fork of Spring River, a short distance from the trading post at Esrom. A traveling Methodist preacher arrived on horseback and delivered the customary lengthy and vociferous sermon. As a result, a good number of those in attendance were baptized in the river and became the newly formed congregation of a Methodist Episcopal church.

A two-acre site was chosen and obtained on May 28, 1880. Contributions enabled construction to begin in the spring with most of the lumber being hauled by team and wagons from Nevada, forty miles away. Sandstone rocks for the foundation were dug from nearby farms. One man donated fifty dollars for the privilege of naming the church; he chose the name Bethel, meaning "house of God." When the church was completed, a potbellied stove was installed that gave forth heat on cold days. Coal oil, or kerosene, lamps were placed in hangers at the side of the windows for lighting on cloudy, gray days or for the occasional night services. Many willing

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<sup>3</sup> Susan's grave was originally unmarked. After Bessie Livingston died, the original tombstone of C. L. Livingston was replaced with a double headstone. The base of the first stone, inscribed "Livingston," was kept. After consulting cemetery records, Effie Livingston McNew and Ruth Sneed placed it on Susan's unmarked grave.

hands donated time and labor in making the building of the Bethel church possible. This became the church home of the Quillins and Livingstons.



*Bethel ME Church, Barton Co., MO*

A parsonage was built to the west of the church, and a couple of rows of maple trees were planted between the two buildings. These trees were the delight of many a young person as they provided an ideal, cool place for imaginative play before and after church. After a few years, the parsonage was moved elsewhere where before long, it was destroyed by fire. Taking advantage of the vacant spot where the parsonage had been, the old Rocky Mound school was moved from its location south of Esrom in 1898. This facility sufficed as a structure in which to educate the children of the community for a couple of decades until a new building was constructed and dedicated in 1920.

As schools became established, they became community centers for social affairs as well as church services. Throughout the year, the schools had spell downs and spelling bees. Literary societies and singing schools were organized in which both adults and children participated. Pie suppers were held as fund raisers, drawing local crowds as well as reciprocal visits from surrounding districts. At these entertaining events friends and neighbors all participated in competitive bidding for pies. Beautifully decorated boxes of food, prepared by the young belles of the area, were eagerly bid upon. The highest bidder would get to eat with the charming owner who had filled it with a tasty supper. The prettiest girl contest was a highlight as a particular young swain continually raised his bids, battling so-called friends who gleefully ran the bidding up against the want-to-be suitor. The audience participated in hilarious contests in which they chose the man with the biggest feet, the most hen-pecked husband, or the most lovesick couple. The evening would be deemed a success if a profit of eight to ten dollars was made, for that sum would be enough to purchase a number of needed items for the school or church. In 1901 a box supper at Bethel netted \$27.75 due to the spirited competition for the prettiest girl. Those funds were to be used to purchase a stove and lamps for the church.

Since there were few places of public entertainment, resourceful people in the rural areas created their own amusements. Young boys and men enjoyed countless contests of skill. Whenever a few would congregate, their marksmanship would be tested as they vied at shooting matches. Bouts of boxing or wrestling exhibited agility and strength of the participants. Games of horse shoe pitching were often set up quickly as every barn had old horse shoes hanging on rusty nails. Many an impromptu horse race was held. As years went on a racing track was built at Lamar and became quite popular, particularly during the annual county fairs. Hot summer days would find many young boys splashing at the ole' swimming hole in the nearest creek. All forms of fellowship and entertainment were a welcome respite after the daily hard work of making a living.



From pre-Civil War days and extending well past the turn of the century, wolf hunts provided exciting diversions as well as a means of controlling the pesky varmints that continually created problems for the farmers. During such a hunt the creatures, thicker than rabbits, were hunted down and driven toward a center, then surrounded by the hunters, who shot them. When the first settlers came they had been plagued by wolves which howled by the hundreds, loudly and incessantly. During the Civil War the wolves had lost their fear of man and would come close to the settlements, carrying off sheep, chickens, or pigs. The predators would skulk around in nearby thickets. At nighttime, guarding dogs expressed their bravado by barking and growling but soon were chased back to the shelter of the cabins. Men would not venture out after dark unless carrying some means of protection. In an attempt to alleviate this perplexing grievance, the state legislature made wolf and coyote scalps legal tender for paying taxes. This bounty served a double purpose, not only ridding the country of the destructive predators, but also helping the settlers pay their debts. Missouri tax obligations of the farmers were paid in this manner for a good many years.

Ladies, all considered to be sewing pros, would meet for quilting bees, sharing neighborhood news, family stories, quilt patterns, and sage advice as their needles flew as fast as their tongues. When stitching a quilt for a new bride, those who failed to make tiny stitches were chided with the prediction that the groom-to-be would catch his big toe in such large stitches. Patterns varied from the complicated "Wedding Ring," "Irish Chain," or "Log Cabin," to just the common patchwork design. The beautiful works of art, made from tiny scraps of throw-away material, brightened many a bleak home.

In close knit communities like those in North Fork Township, friendships were formed that lasted a lifetime.

## Return to Wisconsin

### Robert and Esther Quillin Livingston

Through the years, close family ties were maintained between the relatives in Wisconsin and those who had migrated to Missouri. After nineteen years of living in Barton County, Robert yearned to see his two sons, brothers, sisters, and other relatives who were living in Grant County, Wisconsin. In March of 1891 he hitched up his team of horses to the wagon, told his wife and children goodbye, and left for the long trip. Completing the journey without incident, a joyful week was spent renewing friendships. While visiting at the home of a brother, Charles Livingston, Robert stepped to the wood pile to cut a few bits of wood as a pastime. He had been using the ax but a very short time when he fell to the ground and his life was gone, due to apoplexy, now commonly known as a stroke. Left to mourn him were his wife and five living children: William Martin and John Wesley of Livingston, Wisconsin; George Green, Charles Leon, and Mary Elizabeth [May] of Jasper, Missouri. The funeral services, centering on the verse, Job 14:14, were conducted in the Methodist church in Livingston, Wisconsin. Interment was in the Rock Church Cemetery.

What a shock this must have been for Esther Quillin Livingston when she received the news that her husband would not be returning to Missouri. May, their youngest child was only nine years old, but Green, her twenty-five year old son, still lived at home. With his assistance, Esther was able to continue to make a living on her Barton County farm. Later in the same year, she lost her mother, Elizabeth. With A. J., her father, now a widower, and beginning to have trouble with his vision, he soon became part of Esther's household.

Like Robert, Esther longed to see her other two sons, their families, and many relatives who were living in Wisconsin. The Blue items in the *Jasper News* reported on September 12, 1901: that May and Arthur Woolery were "in the neighborhood last week." This was likely a visit for May to tell her mother good-by. That entry was followed by: "Mrs. Livingstone started to Wisconsin to spend the winter with her two sons. Bessie and Charley Livingstone of Jasper have moved on the place vacated by their mother." Other family members may have made the trip

with Esther, as Bert and Len Quillin recalled making a trip to Wisconsin “in a wagon pulled by mules” when they were ten or twelve years old.

Spending the winter with her sons, by spring Esther’s physical difficulties had worsened. C.L. was sent for and arrived in Wisconsin the day before her death. *The Jasper News* reprinted her obituary as it had been written in the *Montford (Wis.) Mail*:

*Mrs. Robert Livingston, nee Esther Quillin, died at the home of her son, William Martin Livingston, in the village of Livingston, Wisconsin, Monday morning, May 5, 1902, of heart failure due to rheumatism, at the age of 60 years. Deceased was born near Oberlin, Ohio, August 24, 1863, [August 28, 1842] and came to Grant Count, Wisconsin, with her parents when she was five years old.*

*On December 24, 1863, she was united in marriage to Robert Livingston and they made their home in the vicinity of what is now Livingston. In 1872 they moved to Barton County, Missouri, where she resided until a few months ago, when she came north to visit her sons and renew her early friendships.*

*She had been suffering from rheumatism and dropsy during the greater part of the winter and, although her relatives and friends did all within their power to alleviate her sufferings, her constitution was not strong enough to endure the Wisconsin climate. It is a peculiar coincidence that her husband came on a similar visit about ten years ago and, after being here five days, died of apoplexy. She was a faithful member of the Methodist Church. Her disposition*



*was amiable, but while slow to think ill of anyone, she was intolerant of wrong or deception in any form. Although she showed kindness and unfailing good nature to all with whom she came in contact, yet the children came in for the larger share, and her grown-up nephews and*

*nieces look back with pleasure to the time when a visit to Aunt Esther’s home was a joyous event in their lives.*

Methodist Church, Livingston, WI 1902

*Uncomplaining and patient in her own sufferings, her sympathetic nature and good sense made her a most skillful nurse.*

*She leave five children to mourn her departure: a daughter, Mrs. Woolery of Walnut, Kansas; two sons, George Green and Charles Leon, in Missouri, and two [sons] William Martin and John Wesley, in Wisconsin; her aged father and a sister, Mrs. Wood, live in Missouri, and her four brothers live in various parts of the United States. Funeral services were held on Wednesday, May 7, 1902, from the Livingston M. E. Church, Rev. Bell officiating. Interment was made in Rock Church cemetery by the side of her husband.*

### Charles Leon Livingston

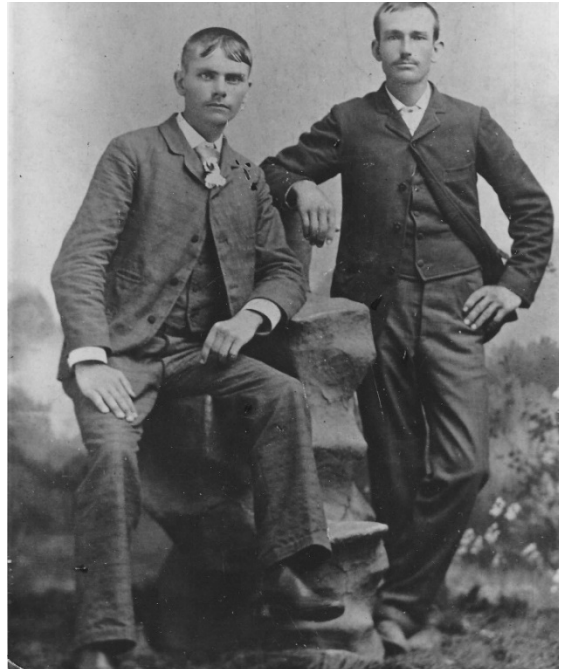
On February 20, 1874, Charles Leon Livingston was born to Robert and Esther Livingston. Charles, always known as "C. L." or "Charley," had the Irish blue eyes of the Livingstons, not the gray eyes of his grandfather Quillin. When Charley was growing up he never lacked for companionship as he had older brothers and a sister. When he was four, a little brother John Wesley was born and a few years later a little sister, Mary Elizabeth, better known as May, arrived. Since the Livingston home was only a half-mile to the west of George and Jennie Quillin, close bonds were formed between the Livingston and Quillin cousins. Frank Wood and "Rune" Wood, first cousins of about the same age as Charley, were frequent companions. A couple of times when Charley and one of his cousins were dashing young blades, they donned their best suits and bowler hats, hitched up the buggy, traveled to Lamar, and had photos made. Besides the visit to a photographer, hard telling what other adventures were in the works!

All the cousins were fond of music and, as young adults, formed a string quartet. Ed played a classical guitar, Charley a cello, and Mark a mandolin. Tom Easley, a young man who boarded with the Quillins, added his violin-playing skills to the group. They undoubtedly provided





*C. L. Livingston and Frank Wood*



entertainment at Bethel church events, revival meetings, or any social functions held at rural schools in the community. Before the turn of the century, the Onstott store at Esrom drew quite a crowd every week because of the enthusiastic musicians who would congregate there. This would have been close enough for the musical group of Charley and his cousins to have attended on a regular basis. A newspaper item in 1901 tells of an infair dinner celebrating the marriage of Lou Nett and Ed Quillin; music was provided by Prof. Thomas Easley, Rufus Ryan, Ed Quillin, and Chas. Livingston. If the group had a name, it has not survived, but it could possibly have been the same "Bethel Orchestra" that was listed on the program of the Rocky Mound Literary Society in 1908.



*Ed Quillin Charley Livingston Mark Quillin Tom Easley*

Charley often worked for neighboring farmers with the planting or harvesting of their crops. One summer while part of the hay crew, the hired girl working for the farmer's wife caught his eye. Making her acquaintance, it wasn't long before Bessie Dolores Hanes and Charles Leon Livingston made a special trip to Carthage, Missouri, on July 23, 1898. After tying their horse firmly to a hitching post, they stepped carefully across the streetcar tracks that circled around the square, entered the gray marble courthouse, and applied for their marriage license. The probate judge then performed their marriage ceremony.

The heritage of Bessie Hanes Livingston goes back many generations from England, Germany, and Ireland. The Hanes were of German ancestry who settled in Pennsylvania around the time of William Penn. In the mid-nineteenth century, the marriage of Elias Hanes to Mary Hillary, born in County Down, Ireland, introduced Irish blood. English ancestry was added by the Cobb family who had migrated to Virginia in the early 1600's. Thus, three nationalities came together, making up the personality of Bessie, mother of Esther Livingston Scott.

#### The Hanes Family

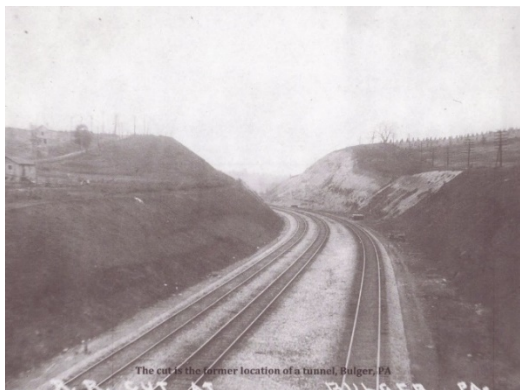
William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania, openly solicited German settlers to colonize his land. Many came, and through the eighteenth century, the German population of Pennsylvania continued to swell, at one point eventually making up a third of the population. The majority,

such as the large Hahn family, settled in the eastern part of the state, predominantly in Northampton County. As the wilderness became tamed in the mid-nineteenth century, many young men eager for adventure, drawn by promises just over the horizon, packed up their most necessary possessions and moved westward.

Some, like Elias Hahn who migrated to the backwoods county of Jefferson, Pennsylvania, found areas to their liking and came to a halt. Steep and rugged hills lined the streams which flowed through the narrow valleys; the undisturbed forests were populated by abundant wildlife - wolves, black bears, panthers, deer, turkeys, and other fowl. Fine soil encouraged farming, especially the production of small grains; many varieties of fruit trees spread their roots deeply. Beds of coal were found throughout Ringgold Township and, though only three to four feet deep, provided a ready fuel source for the settlers. There was no need to go further.

Railroads were expanding rapidly across Pennsylvania. The first trains traveled about ten miles an hour and experienced difficulty conquering the steep hills; consequently horses were hitched to the trains to help them up the precipitous slopes. Analyzing the situation, it was believed that construction of tunnels through the hills would alleviate this problem. To accomplish this, many workers were needed.

Elias Hahn had been born in Pennsylvania around 1825-26, and by 1846, he had married an Irish lass, Mary Hillary, who had migrated to America from County Down, Ireland. Elias, a trencher,



worked as a miner excavating rock and soil surfaces for construction. In Jefferson County he found employment in building the Bulger Tunnel for the Pan Handle Railroad. At some point prior to 1860, while blasting on the tunnel between Pittsburgh Pennsylvania and Parkersburg, Virginia, (now in West Virginia) Elias had the misfortune to lose his eyesight by a premature explosion.

Elias, according to information handed down in the family, received a settlement with which he purchased land. The 1860 census confirms this, listing his real estate of \$1,000 (about eighty acres) and his personal estate of \$300, both goodly sums in the mid-nineteenth century. By 1870 the family had emigrated from Pennsylvania to Bates County, Missouri, and the value of his real estate was then recorded as \$8,000.

During the period of transition when Elias and his family moved to Missouri, he anglicized his name: *Hahn* was discarded in favor of *Haynes*. Before long, the “y” was dropped, and the

spelling became *Hanes*. The Hahn name, translated as meaning “rooster,” was commonly found in Germany, and was well-represented in colonial America.

Elias and Mary Hanes had four children – Jane, Sarah, William, and John H. - all born while residing in Pennsylvania. While living in Jefferson County, John Henry, the youngest, was born on February 29 in the leap year of 1856. The children helped Elias, their blind father, make a living by selling books, stationery, and other articles of merchandise. In so doing, John H. traveled through all of the thirty-two states (by 1883). On one selling trip Elias was aided by a young grandson who held the hand of his grandfather; several times Elias felt the boy being pulled away from him. The young child was kidnapped and never heard from again.

The proceeds of his business, along with his initial investment, enabled Elias to purchase several farms in Prairie Township. In 1882, three tracts of this land were sold to his son, John H., for \$300 a year for the rest of Elias’s natural life and could not be sold as long as the father was alive. Two of the tracts were farm land, each containing eighty acres. The third one, comprised of pecan groves, was irregular in shape and was bounded by the Osage River and the Marais des Cygnes River.

The biographical entry of John H. Hanes in the *History of Cass and Bates County*, published in 1883, stated John H. owned 200 acres and supervised 200 acres for his father, who was still continuing to travel. There is no record of the death of Elias which would have occurred shortly after this date; it is possible he died while away from home. As Mary became elderly, she was cared for by her son, William, and later, as her health failed, lived in a lady’s home in Papinsville until her death in 1899.

### The Cobb Family

The farms of the Hanes family in Prairie Township were not too far from those of the R. W. Cobb family. Anna Josephine Cobb was thirteen when she and her family returned to Missouri from Texas, after a sojourn of two years.

The Cobb family originated in England, the name coming from the word Cobbe, or Cobba, which was used to denote a large, impressive man. Migration to the New World began in 1613 when two brothers named Cobb - Ambrose and Joseph - arrived in Yorktown, having been willing to undergo the uncertainties and hardships of an ocean voyage in their search for a better life. Fortune shone on them for in 1618 Virginia introduced the headright system to encourage settlement. Those already residing in the colony were granted two tracts of land, measuring fifty

acres each. Additional headrights could be accumulated by paying for the passage of poorer migrants, who then became indentured servants to pay their debt. In 1639, as a result of these headright laws, Ambrose became the owner of 350 acres on the Appomattox River about fifty miles upriver from Jamestown.

The immigrant Ambrose was born in the small hamlet of Petham, England, and was married to Ann White who was born in Norton Parish, both birthplaces being in the County of Kent. They had a son named Robert who, in turn, had a son named Robert. Both Ambrose and Ann died before 1656, leaving a large number of descendants. The given names, Ambrose and Robert, were used repeatedly in the progeny of each family, making it a challenge for historians to ascertain precise lineage. After migration the Cobb family inhabited York County and Henrico County, Virginia, for many years and were citizens of high standing in both church and state. Several served as vestrymen at the Bruton Parish church, found in the heart of Williamsburg.

Ambrose Cobb<sup>(1)</sup> was born in 1729 in Bruton Parish, York County, Virginia, to Robert and Crosia Frith Cobbs. Sometime around 1748, he married a young girl, Sarah Howell, who had been born in 1734 in Halifax County. Their marriage was fruitful, producing twelve known children, all born in the same county as their mother. Having a large family in a Virginia county that was already well populated, as well as having two married sons desiring to purchase their own land, Ambrose felt the need to move on and so began exploring the attributes of new territory.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, Ambrose and numerous other Cobb families began a gradual migration into the untamed wilderness of western North Carolina. This area, in the rolling terrain of the piedmont area, was inhabited by the red man and uncountable wild animals. It was the ancestral lands of two indigenous tribes of Indians: the Catawba, a powerful people living east of the Catawba River, and the Cherokee who dwelt on the west. In 1749 the first white pioneer, guided by trails made by the wandering herds of deer and buffalo, bravely established a home in the raw, hostile region that became Tryon County before being renamed Lincoln County in 1778. Following in his footsteps came other bold adventurers, who arrived in increasing numbers.

Of vital importance to these new arrivals was the immediate forage provided by the wild pea vines. They grew as tall as a horse's back, flourishing in open clearings surrounded by dense forests of chestnuts and oaks. This boon of nature furnished feed for the livestock of the frontiersman until other provender could be grown. Often found among the pea vines was the abundance of wild strawberries plants, reaching to a person's knees. After the lofty trees were girdled and the fields laboriously cleared, the soil was found to be well-suited for growing flax, buckwheat, and corn.

The fierce Catawba tribes were decimated when the influx of the Europeans brought smallpox. The Cherokee, in contention for territory with the land-hungry white man, were pushed on to the peaks of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Roving bands continually swept down from the ridges, making raids on the homesteads, brandishing tomahawks and carrying quivers full of deadly arrows. The men working in the fields or forests had to constantly be on guard, keeping a sharp lookout for attacks.

In addition to the menacing Indian tribes, wild creatures abounded and created problems; the huge black bears, fierce wild cats, and howling wolves often made off with domestic animals. The predators were so copious the courts paid seven shillings six pence for every wolf or panther pelt, while evidence of killing a smaller wild cat brought a lesser amount. Even as late as 1774, records show the local courts had rewarded individuals for forty-nine “wolf scalp tickets.” The indomitable pioneers faced and overcame the perils found in the early days of Tryon County.

In July 1777 Ambrose Cobb and his wife Sarah sold 200 acres on Buckskin and Ellis Creeks in Halifax County, Virginia, for 150 pounds. In the next month 200 acres in Tryon County, North Carolina, were purchased.

Ambrose and his sons came into the hill country out-fitted in short pantaloons with leather leggings, topped by hunting shirts of dressed deerskin; they carried their long, muzzle-loading flintlocks and accoutrement. To make the move, pack horses were loaded with bags of seeds, tools, household goods, and sundry supplies. Necessary implements would have included a broadax, froe, an auger, a grindstone, and handsaws. Sarah and her daughters undoubtedly donned their mob caps and oversaw the packing of domestic necessities such as a tinderbox, candle molds, cooking pots, iron skillets, a loom, and a cotton wheel. Most of the offspring of Ambrose and Sarah relocated to Tryon (Lincoln) County with their parents.

Ambrose <sup>(1)</sup>, the father, penned his last will and testament on June 21, 1797. Two sons, William and James Cobbs were to be executors of his will. William inherited two hundred acres of land, including the houses and plantation, and also one feather bed and furniture. James Cobbs was given one hundred fifty acres including the improvement where he formerly lived along with one bed and furniture. After the demise of both Ambrose and his wife Sarah, the remainder of the property was to be sold and the money equally divided between all the rest of his living children, save one, Mary Jackson, who was to receive five shillings and no more. Ambrose was deceased by 1799 when Sarah signed a quit claim deed, authorizing William and James to dispose of the estate when and how they thought best, citing her age and infirmities as reasons to not be the administrator. Sarah died sometime before 1805, but the estate was not finalized until 1818.



The marriage bond of William Cobb and his future bride was recorded in the records of Lincoln County on August 7, 1787, with the bondsman being Charles Abernathy. Often times the bondsman is found to be a father or a brother; since the bride's name on this bond is illegible, it has been proposed that her maiden name was Abernathy. Later documents reveal her first name was Mary, or "Polly." By 1810 they had six sons and four daughters - and possibly others who were older but no longer living at home. In the 1820 census, the residence of William and Polly was listed as being "East of the South Fork of the Catawba River."

With the estate of his father finally settled, by 1830 William and his family made a decision to follow the westward flow of migrants into the new state of Missouri. Several years earlier a number of North Carolina families had been recruited to settle near Cape Girardeau on the Mississippi River in what would later to be known as Bollinger County. This may have been the reason the Cobb family chose that particular area as their destination. Sons Walter and Starling relocated along with their parents. The rest of the children of William and Polly – all of whom had been born, raised, and married in Lincoln County - moved at different times to various locations. By 1850 none remained in North Carolina.

Timing was not a good for the newcomers to secure a foothold in southeast Missouri. When moving into a rough, sparsely inhabited country, fields had to be broken and prepared for planting, and rudimentary shelters had to be hurriedly built. In 1830, one adversity followed another. In December after a very mild, warm fall, extremely brutal weather began with a cold rain. Changing to sleet and snow, it was accompanied by fierce gale-like winds that created huge drifts, followed with more rain, and then topped off with bitter sub-zero weather. This onslaught of storms and bitter temperatures continued for several months without abatement. Layers of snow and ice accumulated, reaching four to five feet deep, causing great suffering to the occupants in the roughly made dwellings. The pioneers found it hard to keep body and soul together. Both the stock of the settlers and wild animals of the forest perished from the extreme cold and lack of food. The storms affected a wide band across Illinois and surrounding states as far south as the Ohio River, including the Cape Girardeau region where the Cobb family had taken up residence.

Following the horrific winter, the weather-beaten families looked forward to springtime. However, Mother Nature was not through, for the extremely deep snow began to melt, causing flooding of rivers and nearby farmland – and Cape Girardeau was bounded by the Mississippi River. Along with the unwelcome inundation, the growing season was shortened by an early frost in the spring and again in the fall, defeating any attempt to plant crops. The battle for survival continued.

In the nearby state of Illinois, Indian uprisings kept everyone in turmoil, particularly during 1831 and 1832. Men from Bollinger County joined the Illinois militia to aid in putting down the attacks, fearing the safety of their settlements. To bring the Black Hawk war to a speedy end, the federal government sent almost one-third of its Regular Army soldiers. Tragedy came along with the troops as they carried the dreaded disease, cholera, the same disease which had played havoc with other communities in the east. The malevolent plague, caused when contaminated food or water was swallowed, traveled from town to town, eventually reaching southward to counties bordering the Mississippi River. It struck without prejudice the young and old, the strong and the weak. With no warning, victims quickly became violently ill; they seldom lasted more than twelve hours with most dying within three hours. The unrelenting pestilence found the Cobb family . . .

Dacey Cobb Richards recorded in her Bible that her father William, her sister Jane Hancil, her brother Starling, and Starling's wife Nancy, all died in July 1833 within a seven-day period of time as a result of a cholera epidemic. Starling and Nancy left five orphaned children. Walter and family, who lived close by, escaped the deadly outbreak. Mary "Polly" Cobb also survived. Within a few months of her husband's death, she petitioned the court to appoint an administrator of her husband's rather modest estate on the grounds that she was not able to do so.

One of William and Polly's sons, Ambrose<sup>(2)</sup> (or Ambrosia), was born around 1794 back in Lincoln County. He married Susan M. Underwood, the daughter of Reuben Underwood and Elizabeth Clubb, on March 14, 1824. Ambrose and Susan were as prolific as the other Cobb families, with birth of four children in North Carolina, seven in Tennessee, and the last one in Iowa. Soon after their son Robert Winchester was born on February 2, 1833, they packed up their possessions, extinguished the embers in the fireplace, and made sure the latchstring was out. Leaving Lincoln County, they crossed the mountains and headed toward the west, possibly to join with other family members in Missouri. At some point, they may have received word of the calamity of the cholera epidemic, changed their plans, and stopped in Rutherford County, Tennessee.

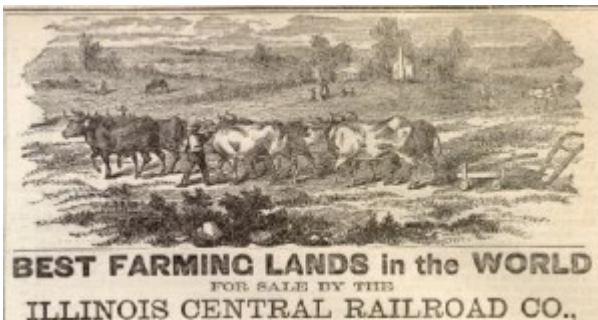
In both 1836 and 1837, Ambrose paid his taxes in District 24 of Rutherford County – 12 ½ cents poll tax and 12 ½ cents state tax, a total of 25 cents. There was no assessment for real estate, indicating he was not a landowner. While the most productive soil was found in the center of Rutherford County, the prospects for farming were far from ideal in District 24, located in the extreme southeast corner. One writer described this section of the county as having many red cedar trees with outcrops of limestone rising above the shallow topsoil. This same writer stated, "A man living back in the cedars has to scratch and sweat mightily if he wants to starve decent." Ambrose, strong and hardworking, eked out enough by farming to support his large and growing family. They remained in Tennessee for twenty years.



At the time the 1850 census was taken, Ambrose, Susan, and their family were living at Big Spring, a community centered on the spring where underground water flowed naturally to the surface. A two-storied inn was built on the corner across from the spring on Cobb Road. As more people began to settle in the area, the inn became a stage depot. Now, instead of having mail arrive periodically by post riders who announced their arrival by blowing a horn, stage coaches dropped off the mail. It had become apparent by 1848 that a post office was needed in Big Spring; once established, it was named Carlocksville. This village is no longer in existence but is marked by a historic plaque located near the springs on Big Spring and Cobb Roads. (Whether or not the name of the road has any connection to Ambrose is unclear.)

**"BIG SPRING SETTLED IN EARLY 1800'S.  
VILLAGE GREW AND PROSPERED AROUND SPRING AND STAGE DEPOT.  
POST OFFICE KNOWN AS CARLOCKSVILLE FROM 1848-1904.  
INDUSTRY AND POPULATION PEAKED IN 1878-  
BUT CHANGED AS ECONOMY CHANGED.  
NOW ONLY THE SPRING REMAINS, A FOCAL POINT OF A BUSY  
COMMUNITY"**

It is evident that Ambrose was having financial difficulties. On December 20, 1851, he gave a Deed and Trust to John W. Yardley. The following property was listed as collateral: “. . . one Sorrel Horse three years old, one Baymare, four years old, one Jennall [may refer to a “jenny,” a female donkey] two years old, Two Car\_\_\_safe, six chairs . . .” Payment of the note was due in December 1852.



The Cobb family, no longer content in Tennessee, began looking for other options – any place would do, but it would really be the fulfillment of a dream if the ploughshares would cut easily through rich soil. As the flat, open prairie land in Iowa became open to settlers, land speculators published guides in which there were “glowing accounts of the beauty, advantages, and fertility of the Iowa country.” Railroad companies, receiving a grant of federal lands to sell enabling them to finance construction of more railways, promised a wealth of opportunity in their brochures and handbills. After debating the pros and cons of moving such a long distance, there seemed to be no better choice.

With a final conclusion reached by 1853, Ambrose, Susan, and their minor children, along with several of their married children, said goodbye to neighbors, gathered up their belongings, and started on their long tedious journey. In all likelihood, they headed northward through Illinois

and crossed the Mississippi River on the ferry - perhaps at either Burlington or Keokuk. Stopping as soon as they reached Iowa, a homestead was selected in the extreme southeast part of Lee County in Des Moines Township. Two daughters and their husbands found residences next to their parents: Nathan and Sarah Cobb Beckwith and Charles and Elizabeth Cobb Jones. In March of 1854, Lee County would become the birthplace of Martha "Mattie" Ellen, the last child of Ambrose and Susan.

The year 1854 was a memorable one for Iowa. In that year railroad tracks were laid to the banks of the Mississippi River, encouraging migrants by providing an easier mode of travel – at least to the edge of the frontier. The gateway into Iowa was further opened when the vast prairie lands became available for purchase after the Redemption Act was passed, allowing settlers to purchase land formerly occupied by the Indian tribes. These factors, along with fatal epidemics of cholera and severe droughts in the eastern states, caused many a pioneer to pull up stakes and follow the setting sun, both to and beyond the undeveloped territory. Wagons, wagons, and more wagons . . . One historian noted that the prairies of Illinois were lined with cattle and canvas-covered wagons, for miles and miles, day after day, pressing on into Iowa. At one point in nearby Illinois, seventeen hundred and forty-three wagons had passed during a single month. Ambrose and his family, thankful to be ahead of the multitude of migrants, would have likely witnessed this endless procession of people.

It is debatable whether or not the son of Ambrose and Susan, Robert Winchester Cobb and his wife undertook the journey to Iowa at the same time as the rest of the family. While a son wrote about his parents being from Tennessee "whence they removed in 1853 and made a settlement in Iowa," records of Roane County, Tennessee, show that the marriage of "Reuben" W. Cobb to Sarah G. Arnold was solemnized on September 4, 1854. Upon reaching Iowa, for some reason the young couple opted against staying in Lee County where relatives had settled down and instead started their married life in the newly-formed Benton Township in Lucas County. R. W. and Sarah were residing there on August 29, 1855, when William, their first child, was born.

The vast tallgrass prairie of Lucas County was part of the land vacated by the Sac and Fox Indians just a few short years before being opened to white settlers after the treaties between the Indian tribes and the US government expired. A burgeoning influx of property owners occurred in 1853 after the U. S. Land Office was moved to Chariton, the county seat of Lucas County; those who wanted to purchase public land in southern Iowa had to do so there. Under the direction of Brigham Young, the Mormon Trace passed through the same county. The Mormons, driving their ox-drawn wagons, frequently stopped for rest and recuperation in this area before continuing on their journey. Tired livestock and weary travelers appreciated the good timber along Wolf Creek and the Chariton River where both clear water and firewood could be found.

Following in the wake of the Mormons came the ones being lured by the prospect of riches in California and others hoping to find a bright future on the rich prairies.

Gathered around warm firesides, the merits of new territories were deliberated as friends shared the latest reports. Perhaps R. W., or Winchester as he was called, had heard the promising reviews of Lucas County and traveled on to the center of the state, hoping to find employment. In reality, the only work available in Benton Township of Lucas County, other than farming, was working with a portable sawmill. Logs were cut from around the creek banks and turned into lumber, an important commodity in the development of a community. Listed as a laborer in the 1856 State Census, R. W. may have found work at the saw mill, cutting and sawing wood, or perhaps he may have worked for a farmer breaking up the prairie sod in preparation for cultivation. There is evidence he began to prosper, for by 1860 he is identified as a farmer with a personal estate valued at \$200. By this time Winchester, Sarah, and three children, aged four, three, and one, had moved and were living in Charleston Township in Lee County. However, the family was not yet complete. Anna Josephine Cobb (who would later become the mother of Bessie Hanes Livingston) arrived on June 26, 1861, followed by three more little girls.

\* \* \*

The Civil War caused an upheaval throughout the United States, Iowa being no exception, especially in those areas close to the state of Missouri. In the summer of 1861 there was an attempt of a rebel invasion into Iowa, which was quickly put down after ammunition and 1,000 guns were received by those who favored the Union. Over six hundred men volunteered for a period of three years when troops were raised at Keokuk for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Iowa Cavalry.

Most of the older children of Ambrose and Susan were married and had large families. There is no record of any of the sons becoming soldiers, except one. When Ambrose died on 7 May 1863, he left Susan a widow of fifty-three years with two sons at home, John aged fourteen and Ephraim aged eighteen. The next year a call went out for recruits to replace the six-hundred volunteers whose three years were up. In answer to this plea, Ephraim went to Keokuk and enlisted as a private in Company C of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Iowa Cavalry. He was mustered in on March 16, 1864, and had little training before immediately being sent to the South. On June 11, Ephraim's cavalry unit, cut off from their infantry support, was pinned down by Confederate troops of Nathan Bedford Forest. Taken captive at Ripley, Mississippi, the prisoners were sent to the notorious Andersonville prison, where Ephraim died on September 26, 1864. In 1866 Susan Cobb, living in Des Moines Township of Lee County, applied for a Mother's Army Pension. Her application gives specific dates for her marriage, the date of death for her husband Ambrose, and the capture and death of Ephraim.

Throughout several generations, the various Cobb families periodically moved on to new lands, leaving the settlements behind. Close family ties remained strong and endured throughout these constant migrations. Living for several decades in Virginia, a portion of the Cobb family had removed to Lincoln County, North Carolina. When the tidewater soil became depleted of nutrients, Missouri and Tennessee offered opportunities for a better, productive life, and the clan pushed on. After a few years, Iowa exerted the same pull. Every move to each new region included practically all of the nuclear family – father and mother with their minor children as well as the married children with their families. Leaving Lee County, Iowa, the Cobb family now chose to move southward to Arrow Rock in Saline County, Missouri.

Overlooking the Missouri River is a ninety-foot bluff called Arrow Rock. For centuries the rare outcroppings of flint found on this high limestone bluff were used by various cultures for the making of flint tools and weapons. The Indian tribes found the flint was especially ideal in producing points for the arrows by chipping and flaking the stone. The tall bluff, rising where the prairie plains and the forest met, was a landmark for river travelers and explorers, marking a crossing place on the Missouri River. Many canoes, keelboats, rafts and steamboats would make a stop there; trade resulted and the economy grew along with the population. Nearby plantations grew hemp, and a brisk trade with the Southern states developed as hemp ropes were needed for bundling bales of cotton.

A town called Arrow Rock was founded on the large bluff above the ferry crossing, and as the inhabitants increased in number, a new township was established using the same name. After the Civil War, the bustling town of Arrow Rock had dwindled in population when the railroads bypassed it. Along with the loss of the commercial hemp business of the South, the slackening of the steamboat trade and other river traffic, a devastating fire destroyed the business district. The town never recovered from its economic downfall and continued to decline. At one time, a Thomas Cobb was the proprietor of the Arrow Rock Tavern, but no connection of this Thomas to the Ambrose Cobb family has been found.

In 1868 the widow, Susan Cobb, and her four young adult offspring (Sarah, Sophia, John, and Mollie), moved to Arrow Rock, Saline County, in the central part of Missouri. In 1870, not too far away from the family, was R. W., Sarah (or “Sallie”), and six children, one of whom was nine-year-old Anna. R. W. was listed as a farmer with a personal estate of \$1,000. Finding a home closer to Susan were Charles and Elizabeth Cobb Jones with their seven young children. One wonders about the reason the Cobb family opted to leave Iowa and what influenced them to choose Missouri as their new home. Perhaps availability of cheaper land was an inducement for the move as Charles Jones, also a farmer, owned real estate valued at \$1,000 and personal property of \$1,000. When Susan Cobb died in 1872 at the age of sixty-two, her family was close

and gathered round to support each other. After her death, the family began to disperse to other areas.

R. W., his brother William P., and their families removed to the state of Texas. During his lifetime, Robert Winchester Cobb called five states his home; he was born in North Carolina, but lived in Tennessee, Iowa, Missouri, and Texas. Now, in 1874, after a two-year sojourn in Texas, he returned to Missouri, and purchased a farm in Bates County near Appleton City. This acquisition appears to be the first time R. W. owned property. Here he lived out the rest of his life.



In January of 1875 a new little daughter, Ollie C., was born but only lived nine months. Sarah died on April 12, possibly because of complications following the birth. Both mother and baby are buried in the Snodgrass Cemetery and share the same tombstone. Seven other children survived with the oldest being twenty and the youngest one four years. Upon R. W.'s death on July 13, 1898, he was interred in the same community cemetery located close where Bates and Henry Counties meet.



#### Anna Josephine Cobb and John H. Hanes

Anna Josephine Cobb, fourth child of R.W. and Sarah Cobb, was thirteen when returning to Missouri. Not too far away was the Hanes family in Prairie Township, and soon Annie became acquainted with two brothers, John H. and William Hanes. Annie Josephine reportedly was a beautiful young lady, and both brothers fell in love with her. John won the hand of Annie and they were married on April 28, 1877, when the bride was almost sixteen and the groom twenty-one.

Bessie Dolores was the first child born to Annie Josephine and John Hanes. She arrived on September 29, 1879, in Bates County, Missouri. Because the young mother, Annie, did not know how to sew, a seamstress was hired to teach her. Dainty baby clothes of Irish linen were made for the new little daughter. Annie was attractive and genteel, but reportedly had a hot temper.

Bessie, when an adult, recalled that her mother grew a box of pansies inside the house during the winter, and the children were forbidden to pick them.

Will remained a bachelor the rest of his life, never speaking to John. While Will prospered, John turned to drink and lost his farms. In later years Bessie Livingston was the only one in the family who kept in contact with her Uncle Will, keeping up a regular correspondence. One time the Livingston family received a gift from him, a box of hickory nuts. Will was a well-read man and often debated at the community literary society. Upon Will's death in 1932, he was buried in the Papinsville Cemetery beside his mother. When no will was found, his estate was divided into three parts: one to his brother John H. Hanes, one to a niece and nephew, and one set aside for the unknown heirs of his sister Sarah. Each part was \$5,971.93 after taxes were paid, a substantial amount for the heirs, as the country was going through the severe economic times of the Great Depression.

After losing the Bates County farms, John H. Hanes picked up stakes and left the area, though continuing to drink. His family now included six children, with Bessie the oldest. Webster County, Missouri, tax records for 1891 show J. H. Hanes paid a total of \$143 in taxes on two horses, six neat cattle, six hogs, and forty acres of land east of Marshfield.

When Annie Josephine died in 1891, John was working away from home. Bessie had the distressing task of going to the railroad station to telegraph the bitter news to her father. Bessie, almost twelve, did her best to care for her five siblings: Gordon (8), Ethel (6), Mabel Claire (5), Susie (3), and Ben (1). When her father gave her some money to make dresses for the little girls, she dressed the little ones up in the finished garments. Walking behind them, she discovered the hems were all uneven. This distressed her greatly and she remembered it the rest of her life.

The death of Annie Josephine was a wakeup call for John Henry; he realized what all he had lost and never drank again. He loaded up all the family's possessions in a wagon and moved from Marshfield, Missouri, to Northfork Township in Barton County. Unable to care for his six children, the father "farmed" out his children to different families for a short period of time. Bessie stayed with a Gresham family for a while and also with a Melugin family down by Reeds, both residences in Jasper County.

After her marriage, Bessie continued caring for her siblings as much as she was able. By 1900 eleven-year-old Susan Hanes was living with Charley and Bessie in Preston Township of Jasper County, while the other four children were with their father in Northfork Township of Barton County.

Sometime in the next decade John H. Hanes moved to Rialto, San Bernardino County, California, living with his son Gordon and daughter-in-law Flora on Palm Avenue. Most of his

other children also became residents of sunny California, though Gordon and Flora (“Flowery”) returned to Southwest Missouri. Reportedly a strong man, John worked as a laborer, doing general work and odd jobs in Rialto. He must have lived frugally, investing in real estate, for he eventually became the owner of two houses.

For a short time John worked as a laborer for the County Road in Trona. This town, known for its isolation and desolation, was situated at the edge of a dry lake bed abundant with many chemicals. This must not have suited him for it was not long until he returned to Rialto.

John Henry Hanes died in San Francisco, California, on April 20, 1941.



*John Henry Hanes c. 1935*



## CHARLES LEON AND BESSIE DOLORES LIVINGSTON



After the marriage of Charley and Bessie, they found a place to live in Preston Township of Jasper County, just over the county line from Northfork Township. While living there in 1899, a daughter, Daisy, was born. A year and a half later, another daughter, Mabel, arrived. Then in September 1901, after Esther Quillin Livingston had left for Wisconsin, the family moved from the Beatty place south of town to her vacated home. This was the same house where C. L. had been born in 1874. In 1902 it became the birthplace of a third little daughter, Effie.

After having the three girls, Charley and Bessie were anxious to have a son. “Little Clifford” arrived in June 1904 while the family was briefly living in Livingston, Grant County, Wisconsin. After the baby began having health problems, the decision was made to return to Missouri in hopes the warmer climate would help him gain strength. Charley had had enough of Wisconsin anyway, making the statement that he didn’t want to “leave any more footprints in that d\_\_\_ snow.” The day after arriving back in Barton County on July 2, 1905, one-year-old Clifford Leon died of bronchitis.



Greatly depressed by their loss, Charley and Bessie were quite happy to have a healthy baby on February 8, 1906, when Esther was born. A young doctor who was new to the medical profession, Dr. W. H. Knott, had been summoned from his office in Jasper when birth was imminent. Carrying his little black bag, he drove



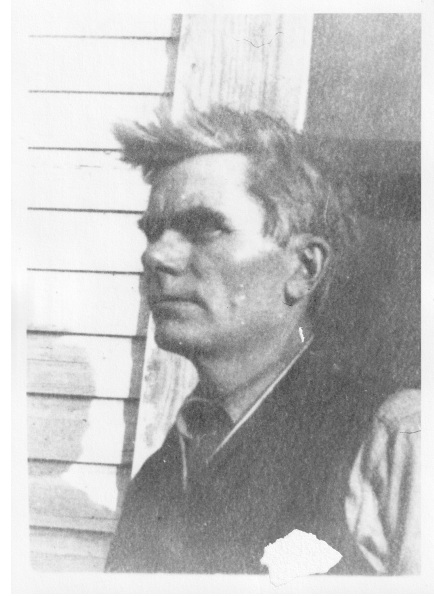
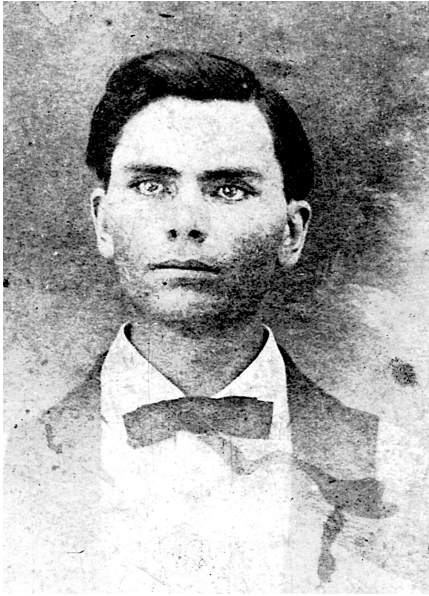
his horse and buggy over the six miles of dirt road to be sure all was well. Dr. Knott would continue to play a part in the life of Esther for many years to follow. Esther with her golden curls received a lot of attention until two years later when the focus of the family was diverted to a long-awaited son who was given the name of Charles Raymond.



C. L. and Bessie Livingston

Josephine





Charles Leon Livingston



*Charles, Bessie, C. L., Esther, Effie, Mabel, Daisy*

When the family had returned to Missouri from Wisconsin, friendships were renewed and neighborhood activities were entered into vigorously by the whole family. Charley became the president of the Rocky Mound Literary Society which was formed in 1908; he served in this position for two years. Meetings were held during the winter months after farmers were through with the harvest season. Lanterns illuminated the one-room school as the neighbors congregated each week for welcomed fellowship.

During one of the first meetings, the topic for debate was "There is more pleasure in city life than country life." The negative argument was heavily supported by the audience while Charley and his side lost as they debated for the affirmative. Each meeting focused on similar topics such as whether or not "a dog is more useful to mankind than a gun," or, "a cow is more useful than a horse." Programs usually included numerous recitations by young children, including some by the little Livingston girls. At one December meeting Esther, soon to be four years old, presented a little poem, and the Livingston family sang "Christmas Bells." At times Charley would sing a solo such as "That Silver Quarter" or another one of his favorite hymns. For variety, music was occasionally provided by visiting clog dancers or the Bethel orchestra. After Charley's tenure was over, Bessie stepped up to fulfill the duties of president.

Both Charley and Bessie were active members of the Bethel church. One of Bessie's life-long friends, Nora Cones, recalled their participation. "They were ever found on Sunday morning in Bethel S.S. always ready and willing to lend a hand. Chas. was a helper in the musical part of the program. He was a wonderful singer and so were his girls. Often he would find a song he liked. He'd call his little girls up to help him. He'd call out Daisy, Mabel, Effie, and Esther and each little girl would go up front and blend her little voice with their dad's bass and such beautiful harmony. . . . Bessie was a wonderful S.S. teacher of children's classes." While Charley had always attended Sunday School, it was not until 1907 that he was converted and joined the Bethel church.

Fun times were had with neighbors Mark and Nora Cones. They would get together and make pumpkin butter to use as a delicious spread or to make pumpkin pies. Years later Nora reminisced about Bessie. "She always had so much work to do. She was a wonderful mother, homemaker. She had sewing for four little girls and one boy (then). She always had a pile of sewing waiting for her busy fingers. On a chair she would keep a stock pile of dresses, etc. ready for sewing when she could get at it. Then when school time came she always had her little girls all dressed up in pretty new gingham and calico and each one [had] a pretty new Sunday dress."

Charley added to his income by doing occasional carpentry work, sometimes aided by his brother Green. He was reported as "doing a little building" in the spring of 1911. The Bethel items in the same issue of the *Jasper County News* also noted that he was going to quit the mule-

raising business, because he said that every time a strange hound came across the pasture, they mistook his mules for jack rabbits and would chase them into the barn.

Nora Cones provided more memories of the Livingston family. “Charley was a great hay man. Every year for I don’t know how long, he put up hay. He and Green rented two or three sections of hay land known as the Coleman land. Charles named their hay company the Big Four Hay co., and it [the prairie hay land] is still known as the Big Four<sup>4</sup>. . . I often helped Bessie cook for hay hands. Every p.m. about four o’clock she would fill up a basket of big fat sandwiches, pie, and a big pot of coffee and take it out to the hay hands. How those fellows fell to and enjoyed that basket of refreshments!” Charley placed an ad in the fall of 1912 wanting 200 head of horses and steers to pasture at the “Big 4 Hay Ranch.” The virgin prairie of the Big Four was never touched by a sod plow for decades.

In 1910 and 1911 Charley and Bessie purchased several small farms, totaling about seventy acres. Things seemed to be going along fine, so a decision was made to start a feed store in Carthage with a partner. The family gathered up their belongings and loaded them up in wagons. Carefully packed in among the household furniture were all the canned goods that Bessie had worked so hard to grow and to preserve. For a short time they lived at 420 W. Vine, then they found a nice house to rent at 320 S. Orner Street.

Before the move, the older girls had attended the rural school of Rocky Mound. All eight grades, crowded into this one-room school, were composed of fifty-some boys and girls from the surrounding farm community. Only one teacher, family friend Nora Cones, held down the fort! The new school in Carthage was a sharp contrast: big building, large classes, and several teachers. Benton Elementary was a red brick two-story building on the corner of McGregor and Mound streets in the northern part of town. This spacious school contained six classrooms, each room capable of holding sixty students. The Livingston girls did not have a very long distance, just a few blocks, to walk to Benton school. Esther enrolled in the first grade and was included in the class photo in

December 1912 along with thirty other students, bundled up in their winter coats and hats.



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<sup>4</sup> At present, two hundred sixty acres of this tract make up the Bethel Prairie Conservation Area

*Esther in Row 2, sixth from left*

The business venture was not a success; C. L. lost the feed store in Carthage due to an unfortunate choice for a partner who absconded with the money. One day Bessie discovered the canned goods she had taken with her was almost gone; there had been no garden to plant and the stock of canned fruit and vegetables had not been replaced. There were five growing children to feed. Not only that, she was pregnant with George Gordon who would be born in September 1913. These were precursors of even harder times yet to come.

Charley tried to make a comeback in the hay business. A neighbor, Hazel Berry wrote in her memoirs about cooking for the hay hands during the summer of 1913. After her marriage to Wesley Cline, a little income was earned by picking strawberries in Neosho for a few weeks. Then upon returning back to her in-laws, there was good news.

*“Daddy Cline and a partner named Charley Livingston had a hay baler; they were given the chance to bale one section (640 acres) of hay land. It was twenty miles from Carthage . . . there was a big question as to how they could feed the men that were to work for them. Daddy Cline asked me if I thought I could cook for those men. If Mr. Livingston’s daughter Mabel would help me, I said I would sure try. There were a dozen men working.*

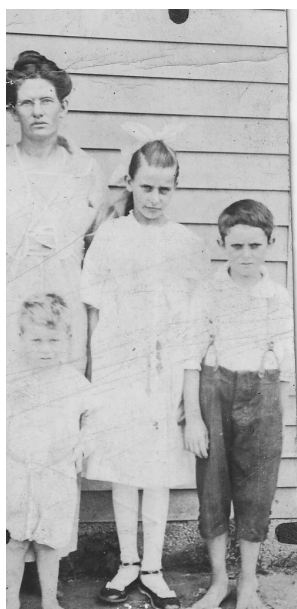
*“Not many people now would believe how we two girls managed under such circumstances. It sure was not easy, and we had none of the handy things women have today to work with. First of all, coal oil lamps and coal oil stoves and all water had to be carried in the house. We had an old vacated house for our place to cook. I think sometimes we even baked bread and cornbread and biscuits in that oil stove oven. We had to have meals that we could eat up, because much of the time we didn’t have ice for freezing. There was a huge tree near the house so Mabel and I had a swing that was put up for us to enjoy the shade. When we had a bit of free time, we would go out and swing while a pot of beans was cooking, or loaves of bread. . . . I believe it took three if not four weeks for them to finish that hay job. We went home on Saturday and attended church Sunday, then back to the hay camp on Sunday evening so we were ready to begin on Monday morning putting up hay. We brought back the needed supplies of things we needed from home.”*

This hay land was most likely the “Big Four.” The power baler used in this undertaking was one of the first to be used in the community. A horse would travel around the baler in a circle, turning the power shaft. Later on the well-used baler was parked in a slough and forgotten about. A number of years later it was remembered and given to Esther’s husband, W.B. Scott. Fred Scott took an ax and fashioned a new power shaft from a pole of ash, extending its usefulness for a few more seasons.

While in a good year Charley would hire all the available workers in the area, things changed when there was three years of dry weather, back to back. This was the final straw that broke the camel’s back. Along the way, the two farms were lost as well as the feed store in Carthage. All that was left was a forty-acre piece of timber ten miles east of Carthage.

Moving to this wooded area, C. L. built a one-room building, not really a house, but it sufficed as shelter for his family. He tried to cut wood to sell in Carthage, as well as large, dressed logs to use in the mines at Picher, Oklahoma. This did not work out because he lacked the wagons and horses needed to get the results of his labor to Reeds where it could be loaded on the freight cars.

The older girls, Daisy and Mabel, caught a street car to go to school in Carthage while the three younger ones – Effie, Esther, and Charles - went to a rural school named Arthur. Three miles southwest of Avilla, it was just a hop, skip and a jump down the hill. Entertainment was left to the imagination. The surrounding groves of trees provided a fanciful playground for the girls.



They would go out into the woods and play “church;” Daisy and Mabel were the “singers.” In later years when Esther and Effie were asked what part *they* played, the reply was “Oh, we were the sinners!”

At times Esther and Effie would walk to some neighbors to carry home a gallon of sorghum. They often would look up at the clouds in the sky and decide which color they would want for a dress, dreaming some day in the future they would get it. Esther made a doll dress and sent it to the fair in Carthage. She got a prize of a doll bed but didn’t have a doll to put in it. One time Charley brought home a large box of soda crackers and a gift for Esther’s birthday – a penny post card with a picture of pretty, large flowers on it. This was a time of hardship and want that no one cared to remember and was seldom discussed over the years. Years later a small pin oak tree from the area was transplanted to Esther’s home in Carthage.

Although Charley felt strongly about working for other people, he finally gave in and began working for a mining company around Oronogo. After living for a year or so on the Reeds

property, the family moved back to Carthage to a house on North Main. In February of 1917, a daughter, Pauline, was born, living only nineteen days. This, another low point in the Livingston family lives, prompted Charley to borrow money from a neighbor and go to Picher, Oklahoma, in search of steady employment.

Few options were open for someone with no education. With a heavy heart, this man, used to working in the fresh air of the outdoors, found work underground in the mines, similar to the occupations followed by his Irish ancestors. Charley was hired by the Blue Mound Mining Company.

The lead and zinc mining areas of Oklahoma were beginning a period of rapid growth and expansion. This was at the start of World War I and there was a high demand for lead, the primary metal used in ammunition. Zinc, also needed for the war effort, was used as a coating on metal objects to prevent rust. The Blue Mound Mining Company had just built a new plant in Kansas just across the state line to the north of Picher, opening in March 1917. It was capable of turning out 300 tons of crude ore per shift. The boom town of Picher, population of 14,000 residents, became the center of the most productive mining field in the Tri-State Lead and Zinc District. During its hey-day, more than fourteen thousand men worked in its mines.

Miners would wear carbide lamps on their hats. These, using calcium carbide mixed with water, illuminated the damp, dark mine shafts. Heat generated by the lamps also provided some degree of warmth, needed when deep underground. In the photo notice Charley's lamp on his hat as well as his wet shoes.





*Blue Mound Mining Company*

*C. L. Livingston on far right*

The check for the first week's work, minus room and board, was promptly sent back to the family, and the kindly neighbor was repaid. After a few weeks most of the family moved close to Picher, except for Daisy, Mabel and Effie who remained in Carthage until their term of school was finished.



*Daisy (after typhoid and loss of hair), Effie, Mabel*





The 1917 annual of Carthage High shows Mabel as a sophomore and Daisy as a senior. Though Daisy had suffered from a bout of typhoid fever, she still graduated with the honored status of salutatorian. Her graduating class of 1917 restored the 125-pound cast iron school bell, made in Sheffield, England. It had previously hung in the first high school known as the Carthage Male and Female Academy and was the only thing rescued from a destructive fire in the first year of the Civil War. In 1917 it is doubtful that Daisy had any money to contribute to the funds her class collected to place the bell on permanent display.

Soon the family was together again, moving into a home owned by the mining company, across the Oklahoma state line in Treese, Kansas. After about a year, they moved a little closer to Picher. Here Charley built a two-story house for his family; when needing boards for small areas, he took advantage of the wood from the dynamite crates that had been discarded by the mines. The house with a gambrel roof had a large, unfinished upstairs room with an outside staircase. It was the duty of Effie and Esther to keep this open room clean and the boarders' beds made. A large lot on one side of the house provided space for Bessie to grow a good-sized garden, feeding her family well, with all excess produce preserved for later use. One other side of the house had room for clothesline posts as well as a bird house where purple martins soared and dipped. On the south



Charley made a rolled and smoothed croquet ground where the family and neighbors participated in many spirited games. The crack of mallets on the wooden balls could be continually heard. Charley was the champion, but Esther gave him - or any other competitor - a run for his money.

A tent house was built a short distance to the east, framed up about four feet and then covered the rest of the way with canvas. About eight cots were put inside and rented out to additional men employed in the mines who had difficulty in finding lodging. Bessie cooked for these hard-working, hungry boarders. The \$8 she received each week bought food for them and the entire family.

The respite from financial worries allowed the family to enjoy life. George, about five years old, tried to catch the hummingbirds as they fed on the sunflowers by the garden. He spent time with a friend playing on the nearby chat piles. There were a few upsets like the time that George had to be punished for throwing the cat into the hen house! Daisy began teaching school while the other girls enrolled in Picher High. Even though Esther was just a freshman, she was captain of

the girls' basketball team. Piano lessons were taken for a short time, until finances became tight. With her friends, especially Gladys Perry, Esther had a good time picking violets on Blue Mound, a high sandstone hill overlooking the town to the southwest. Things were looking up.

Soon this period of prosperity came to a screeching halt; while working at the Blue Diamond mine Charley was injured from exploding mine fragments, breaking his kneecap in five different places. He lay in the St. John's Hospital in Joplin for a long period of time. This was before the time of antibiotics, and there was little that could be done to deal with infection. In time his wound healed over, but then developed into an ulcerous bone four or five inches below the knee. Crutches became necessary. Both the sons, Charles and George, were fascinated with the crutches, so their dad made them some from scrap lumber. The Eagle Picher Mining Company paid a settlement of \$200 in compensation. Part of the money was used for glasses for Bessie; this took care of the headaches from which she had suffered for a number of years. Charley was only able to handle small miscellaneous jobs from then on.



With a family of four practically-grown daughters and two younger sons, Bessie was taken aback when she discovered she was pregnant again. She gathered up enough money to go to California to see her father, brothers, and sisters, thinking she might not have a chance to see them again as her father was getting along in years. Upon her return she spent the next few months convincing the entire family that California was the place to be. World War I was over and the mines were closing down; money was getting scarce. With Charley unable to work full time, Bessie felt that California offered better opportunities for all to help make a living.

After Josephine was born in Picher, Oklahoma, in March of 1921, Charley went out to California and found part time work in the orange groves, gradually sending funds for the rest of his family to move to Rialto. When Josephine was three months old, the remaining family members in Oklahoma joined him, going west on the train.

Of this gradual move, Effie L. McNew wrote:

*“Our dad went out first and was able to get work in the orange groves and Mabel and I [Effie] went as soon as school was out. The rest came along later . . . We all lived together with Grandpa in his little house. It had one large room upstairs, and we made out until he was able to get possession of his bigger house on Riverside Drive, then we moved into it. Daisy, Mabel and I went to work in the orange packing plant which was*

*where everyone worked in Rialto. They would hire school people in the summer, but the work was not steady since all the fruit had been picked and packed as it ripened, and this was the tail end of the season. Daisy got a school for fall, Mabel got a job in the bank, and I was the last to get office work. Finally, in December I went to work at Fontana Farms in Fontana at the fabulous salary of \$85 a month.”*

Charley found work he could handle with the local water company. Both Mabel and Effie had previously had a little business training, which made it easier for them to find work. Chic, barely a teenager, also did his share by working in a newspaper office Friday evening and Saturday and made about \$10 a month delivering milk, enough to buy a new bicycle. Esther enrolled in San Bernardino High School, five miles from Rialto, but also worked part time at a stationery store operated by the publishers of the *Rialto Record*. She became close friends with the owners, Mr. and Mrs. Hoffelt, and continued working for them until her return to Missouri. All of the family were gainfully employed to some extent except for Bessie, George, and baby Josephine.

Both Esther and Chic attended San Bernardino High School, five miles from Rialto. One of Esther's classes was Latin; the rest of her life, she used this knowledge to define any unknown word for herself or her daughters. Basic sewing skills were learned in one class; she always said that methods used in construction of dresses in Missouri were a step behind those she had been taught in California.

Chic enrolled in a woodworking class in high school and, as his project, built a cedar chest. Later, after joining the army and having no permanent home, the chest was left in the care of Esther. George, an elementary school student, began taking piano lessons when he was eight years old. Bessie wanted him to learn to play "Love Lifted Me," one of her favorite hymns, and George's big sisters invested in sheet music of many popular songs. He had two years of very fine piano training from a Mrs. Morgan in Rialto. Making good use of this basic instruction, he learned to play any song by ear without having the music and so became a fantastic pianist.

For women in California during the early 1920's, the decision to cut their long hair was a serious business; in some cases even looked upon as being a sin. However, in an effort to be up-to-date, the four Livingston girls cut a few inches off their hair and hid the cuttings in a dresser drawer - but the deed was discovered! This escapade definitely did not please their parents, but after a great deal of persuasion, the girls were finally allowed to follow the new, stylish fashion of short, or bobbed, hair. Women at this time could not go to a beauty salon – for they did not exist!

Haircuts were done at home by a cooperating friend or family member. One quite popular hair style was called Marcelling. This technique required the sculpting of wet hair with either the fingers or by using a Marcel iron to create deep waves all over the head. Esther, always one to seize an opportunity to learn new things, decided she could Marcel hair for others. Buying herself a set of irons, she learned the art, and began curling hair a few hours each day before going to work at the stationery store.



*Esther Livingston*

The styling of hair was not the only change in this period of time following the First World War. Just as hoop skirts, bustles, and corsets had had their day, now gone was the restrictive apparel of tight sleeves and shoe-top hemlines. Ladies' dresses became simplified; no longer were they of long length, complicated designs, or multiple layers. Instead, comfort became of prime concern and as the flapper era emerged, the waists dropped and hemlines crept upward. In Rialto High School, middy blouses were the thing to wear, and Esther followed suit, making a blue ratin-spun (basket weave) skirt with a fringe on the bottom at school. She also happily gave up her high, lace-up shoes in exchange for more graceful patent leather slippers with a buckled strap. These were shown off to an advantage by her new skirt and the shorter dresses.

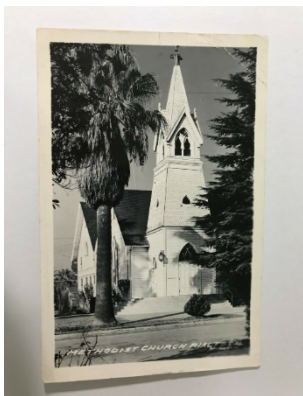
Good times were had by all, and memories of the three years spent in sunny, golden California would later be related with pleasure.

Effie told how she and Esther had fun times together. “While we were living in Grandpa’s bigger house, I can remember him having orange trees in the yard. He would have little irrigation ditches running between the trees. Esther and I used to go out there of a moonlight night (Moonlight nights in California are very beautiful) and scuffle. One was on one side of the ditch, about a foot wide and a few inches deep, and one on the other. We tried to see who could

push the other into the water. We kept this up until she [being stronger] was always winning and then gave it up.”

Occasionally, the family would sit down at the big round kitchen table; Charley would give his sons, Charles R. and George, a dollar. They would literally run down the alley and back, bringing wonderful hot tamales. They were wrapped in real corn shucks and made by a nearby Mexican family. Years later, back in Missouri, Esther selected the soft, inner shucks of freshly picked corn and did her best to replicate the remembered tamales.

The photo albums of Esther give testimony to happy, nostalgic days with friends in Rialto. Many pictures were taken of family and friends posing in front of the clapboard-covered home on Riverside Drive; it had dark paint with white trim. Bessie saw that it was surrounded with rose bushes. The new mode of transportation, the automobile, was coming into its own; everyone was enjoying the mobility to travel to areas previously thought as being too far away. The mountains, part of the San Bernardino National Forest, could be seen on the horizon of the city. Groups of young people - including the Livingston sisters – motored to the foothills, canyons, mountains, lakes, and the desert around Rialto. Picnics, camping, and wiener roasts at a nearby wash were happy occasions with many friends. Excursions were made into the nearby desert where an old man with an old truck loaded with beehives was photographed. Further away was Calaveras, California, with its road passing through an immense tree, a thousand-year-old sequoia. There are other scenic photos taken at locations that were some distance from Rialto: Yosemite to the north and the Redwoods to the north and west. The Petrified Forest was also a number of miles away but must have been visited for one of Esther’s souvenirs taken back to Missouri was a light brown piece of petrified wood, always used as a paper weight.



The services of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Rialto and Sunday School were attended regularly. Esther’s Sunday School class with ten young ladies and their teacher lined up for a photo, and yes, all wore the shorter, below-the-knee dress style showing off their graceful shoes! The girls did not miss the Sunday meetings of the Epworth League (fore-runner of the Methodist Youth Fellowship), for this provided many social activities with their friends. Religious instruction and memory work were an important part of the meetings. Her favorite verses which she called her “farmer verses” are found in Ecclesiastics 3:1-8. “To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die: a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted . . .” This reflected her life-long delight in growing flowers, fruit and vegetables. Several years later when Esther was attending the women’s Sunday School class

of the Jasper Methodist Church, she was the only one who could correctly give the definition of faith - learned while in California. She promptly answered: Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Esther entered a contest for the "Queen of Rialto," coming out as an attendant. This may have brought the four sisters to the attention of a women's group for Bessie was approached by them to give advice on how to raise daughters. She gave a brief, pithy refusal, "No! Let an old maid do it!" Several years later after Esther had married W. B. Scott, Esther wore overalls which was not the approved fashion for young ladies. Bessie, ready with a quick retort, told some of the old biddies that at least Esther was covered up, and she had known many girls who were wearing six petticoats who had had shotgun weddings.



Daisy taught school a year in California, then returned to Missouri where she married Guy Serafini in June of 1922. Before leaving, Bessie insisted on having a photo of the complete family made. All the girls rushed home from work and posed for the picture. (George remembered living on Olive Street about this time.)

When senior graduation photos were taken of Esther in 1924, her father sent one to his brother, "Billy the Barber," in Wisconsin with the following letter:

*Rialto, California*  
*3-27-24*

*Mr. & Mrs. W. M. Livingston*

*Dear Bro & family*

*I am sending you a picture of Esther, my fourth big girl. She will graduate at San Bernardino, Cal. In June. Esther is a smart & a good girl. I have been crippled for six yrs. & haven't been in shape to help Esther much, but she is a girl that is self-supporting & helps herself.*                      *Respectfully, C. L. Livingston*

A letter from cousin Bert Quillin in Missouri contained advice to the Livingstons, "You wrote about coming back here in Aug. You want to bring your living with you as the picking here is short. Seems as though so many are going broke." It included a gift for Esther's graduation; a note written by her on the letter noted that a one dollar bill was enclosed, which paid interest on her cedar chest.

Notations from Esther's year book list her activities:

"Came from Picher High in 1921; Girls League; Volleyball '23-'24; student Club Basketball '24; wills her lithe form to May King." Upon graduation in 1924 she purchased her gold class ring which was later worn by two of her daughters. After graduation she returned to Missouri to spend the summer with her sister Daisy.

One of George's favorite California memories was a two-week camping trip in the San Bernardino Mountains to a place called Strawberry Flats, a little town with a general store and a post office. The part of the family still in California – C. L., Bessie, Mabel, Charles R. (Chic), George, and Josephine – occupied two tents. All the meals were cooked on an open fire of pine knots. Bacon and eggs were fixed for breakfast, accompanied by milk and coffee. Mabel, an aspiring singer, would go out in the woods and let her voice ring. Charles and George crawled and clawed their way up to the top of Strawberry Peak, over 6,000 feet high. At night one could look down at the San Bernardino Valley and see the lights of the big town. Though it was in the dead of summer, three or four blankets were used at night to cover up. "Nice . . . lonely . . . breezes . . . odors from vegetation . . . the pines. Absolutely scrumptious!"

Bessie missed her oldest daughter and became increasingly restless. C. L., who had been missing the seasonal changes of Missouri, was ready to go back to Missouri. With no clear destination in mind, furniture (including the big, heavy piano and Chic's cedar chest) was sent to Picher, Oklahoma. The Livingston family loaded up in an old Model T touring car and headed back to the



Mid-West. The trip took eleven days until they reached Thayer, Kansas, where they stopped for a week's visit with C. L.'s sister, May Woolery. Another stopover was in Pittsburg, Kansas, where they stayed with Ella Riley for several days. Finally, reaching the old neighborhood in Barton County, a home was found to rent.

Family ties were renewed the next summer when W. M. Livingston, better known as "Billy the Barber" in Livingston, Wisconsin, arrived with his son Forrest for an extended visit. Billy was the brother of May Woolery, C. L. Livingston, and of Green Livingston. Charley and Bessie entertained the honored guests and other family members with a dinner, "the menu of the best." Several selections of music was played by Master George Livingston at the piano.

Charley, though still not feeling well, resumed his leadership in the community. In 1927 he spoke to the largest crowd ever assembled at Waters Cemetery for services to pay tribute to the memory of loved ones and to decorate the graves of twenty-one American soldiers. He spoke of W. H. Waters, who first laid out the cemetery, of Mr. and Mrs. George Quillin and Mr. and Mrs. William Budd who each gave a part of the ground, and then of the care of the cemetery in the many years since.

In both 1928 and 1929 (and possibly even in 1927 when he gave the welcome address) Charley was president of the Bethel Reunion. A guest book of attendees in 1926 listed 471 people attending from the neighborhood, surrounding towns, and out of state. Included on the roll were Esther Livingston and Winifred B. Scott (this being prior to their marriage in October).

A record attendance of the Old Settlers Reunion at Bethel in August of 1928 was estimated to be 900 to 1,000. The week before, friends and relatives began arriving from surrounding communities and far-away states eager to renew old acquaintances. The *Jasper County News* describe the setting: "The old church which had stood for many years bore the marks of a beautiful fall mid-summer festival," The welcome address was given by C. L. Livingston, president; Mrs. George Quillin offered the prayer. Among the numerous speakers and musical entertainment of the day were the four Livingston sisters who sang a sacred number. The groaning tables for the noontime feast measured more than a hundred feet and featured the best of the culinary talents for which the ladies were well-known. Platters of crispy fried chicken, home-grown vegetables, all kinds of pies, tall iced cakes, and cold lemonade served in tin cups, tempted the crowd. Stewards Photography was on the grounds to make a photo record as they had the previous year.



Jasper, Mo., July 22, 1929

Meet your old neighbors, friends and  
relatives at the Fifth Annual Meeting of  
the old Settlers at the

**Old Bethel Church August 11, 1929**

Come prepared to spend the day with us

C. L. LIVINGSTON, Pres.

BERT QUILLIN, Sec.

Bethel Reunion 1940's



*Bethel Reunion Avanell, Bessie L., Daisy*



Over the next five years, Charley and Bessie moved five times, tossed about like tumbleweeds. Each time the sons-in-law would be called upon to bring a wagon to move the heavy piano. These were difficult times with little income. Charley found a few carpenter jobs he could do such as repairing a barn for a neighbor. The last job he did was to help Esther and Winifred plaster the old Scott home place. Chic quit high school and headed to Iowa and Nebraska to shuck corn; he sent home a few dollars whenever he could. Mabel, working in a Joplin bank, provided some funds. In March 1929 Esther's record book shows "Groceries for my folks \$2.25." (At this time that amount would pay for a normal week's groceries.) Effie, in Pittsburg provided a home for George who entered Pittsburg High School after he graduated from Rocky Mound rural school in 1927. And then there was Daisy, living on a farm close by, who may have provided eggs and/or milk. Bessie had a "green thumb" and always grew a large garden, making sure it had a dead furrow in the middle for drainage; for every four or five rows of vegetables, there would be one row reserved just for beautiful flowers.

Bessie belonged to the Bethel N. I. C. club attending when she could. Her forty-eighth birthday was celebrated in September 1927 with a picnic dinner. Friends came over from the neighboring Diamond Club quilters club to help her remember the occasion. The club presented her with a gift – a beautiful silver bread tray. After the picnic dinner Mrs. Cones and Mrs. Orahoad took all the children to the river where they took pictures, then all went swimming.

Charley entertained his little daughter, Josephine. To her delight, he took string and twigs using them to make miniature fences and fence posts creating a little farm. He would take out a big two-pound peppermint stick that Mabel had brought from Joplin and whack pieces off with his pocket knife, sharing the little sharp pieces. One time when they were in the garden, a big blue snake came toward Josephine; Charley reached over the potato plants, grabbed the snake by the tail, and snapped its head off. Together they gathered bouquets from the brightly colored flowers in Bessie's garden. Josephine suffered from typhoid while living east of Rocky Mound, but by the time she started first grade, completely bald-headed, they were living in Lamar. The two invalids shared happy times with each other.

*Jasper, Missouri*

*June 1, 1929*

*Dear Effie and Verne This leaves all pretty well except me & I was up and around a walking skeleton. I have been to Bert & Violets for dinner, But they came for me. But I walked to Mrs. Farris's yesterday for a big dinner. You know I eat like a hog. I sure was sick. Navy beans today for dinner. I hope you kids are getting along. I went to decoration services the other day. We had [several?] dishes out of the garden. Effie you must take a good deal of exercise. Mom is ironing. We have 65 little chicks & two incubators running. Mom has a fine garden. We have no crops out yet but will soon. Write soon. Your dad C. L. Livingston*

The last move was east of Waters cemetery. Life went on. An item in the *Jasper County News* in July 1929 related, "A party and Sunday School social was held at the Chas. Livingston home. Lawn games were played in the moonlight and then music on piano and violin were enjoyed while ice cream and cake were served. At a late hour all departed for their homes thanking Mr. and Mrs. Livingston for their music and entertainment."

These were dark days. Eight-year-old Josephine wasn't sure what was happening, but the older sisters were anxiously hovering around, Bessie was sad and less cross, and Charles and George came home. Neighbors, friends, and relatives came by nearly every day. Her parents always had an outside bed that Josephine would lie on to read or play. One day as some friends were leaving after a visit, unaware that she was on the bed, said in passing, "Well, the angel of death has pitched his tent outside Charley's door, and it won't be long now." She never played on the bed again and spent much of her time looking for the angel of death and his tent. In her words, she was "scared spitless."

Charley Livingston had a strong sense of values that he instilled in his children. In California Chic had fallen in with some boys of questionable morals and was severely punished. "They are

not our kind of people!” scolded Bessie. Charley burned the first deck of cards that his boys brought home, as well as the first pair of silk stockings one of the girls had purchased. He believed that liquor was part of the devil’s workshop and the same was true of tobacco. The night Charley died, the old country doctor offered him a drink of whiskey to ease the pain. Charley took the bottle and threw it across the wall, shouting, “I never drank when I was alive and now that I’m dying, I’ll have no part of it!” This teetotaler lay in state in a room that reeked of the smell of whiskey.

### *Obituary of C. L. Livingston*

*Charles Leon Livingston was born six and one-half miles northwest of Jasper in Barton County Feb. 20, 1874. Died Oct. 12, 1929, making his age 55 years 7 months and 22 days. He was the son of Robert and Esther Livingston.*

*He was married to Bessie Haines [Hanes] of Jasper County July 23, 1898, at Carthage, Mo. To this union were born nine children; Mrs. Guy Serafini of Jasper, Mo., Miss Mabel Livingston of Joplin; Mrs. LaVerne McNew of Pittsburg, Kan.; Clifford Leon who died in 1905 age 1 year 14 days; Mrs. W. B. Scott of Jasper; Charles Raymond of Murrey, Nebraska; George and Josephine at home; and an infant daughter [Pauline] who died Feb. 10, 1917, age 3 weeks.*

*While he always attended Sunday school, he was not converted until 1907 when he joined Bethel church. At the time of his death he was a member of Lamar M. E. Church.*

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*The funeral service of Mr. Chas. Livingston were held Monday afternoon at Bethel Church. Mr. Livingston passed away Saturday evening after an illness of many weeks. He has resided virtually all his life in this community and has been a life-long member of Bethel Church. Sorrowing friends filled the church to overflowing. There was a profusion of floral tributes. Rev. Chas. Crockett of Liberal conducted the services as a special friend of the family and hymns were sung by a choir selected from Diamond, Bethel, and Blue Sunday Schools. Interment followed at Waters cemetery.*

*There are surviving his wife and children, five daughters and two sons. Mrs. Guy Serafini and Mrs. Esther Scott of this vicinity, Mrs. LaVerne McNew of Pittsburg, Misses Mabel Livingston of Joplin, and Josephine Livingston at home, Geo. Livingston of Pittsburg, and Chas. Livingston of Nebraska. Also one sister and three grandchildren. [Guy Serafini, Jr., Kathleen Serafini, Catherine Dolores McNew]*

(It took Esther until April 1930 to pay her share of her dad's funeral expenses: \$22.15)

Now a widow at fifty years of age, Bessie had some very tough decisions to make. Uneducated and not having any skills to make a living, what was she to do now? Calling upon all the stamina she could muster, she did the best she could. Frequently work was found as a live-in housekeeper for Aunt Jenny Quillin, or by helping those that were ill (in reality, an early form of home health care). Josephine made her home with friends Nora and Mark Cones a majority of the time, but made extended visits to her older sisters Daisy, Effie, or Esther. Effie and Verne introduced Josephine to the public library and thus, to the Thornton Burgess books. She stayed with them in her teen years and attended Pittsburg High School. Over the next few years Bessie found various employment opportunities in Kansas City; an apartment was located close to the home of Mabel and family. Frequent trips back and forth via the Greyhound bus kept her in contact with her other daughters and their families in Pittsburg and Jasper, as well as old neighborhood friends.

January 9, 1933

(While working for Aunt Jennie and Uncle George Quillin)

*Dear Effie & family Sorry to hear you aren't feeling well. [Effie was expecting Philip in July] I had an attack of the flu . . . I'll try and get out to PB [Pittsburg] in a few weeks. Moved Josephine to Nora's the first of Jan. She is well satisfied and really is as good in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade as any of the other 8 in the class. This is some place to have to stay. No telling when Aunt Jennie will land on one. Len & Uncle George are used to it, not so much me anyway. Suppose I'll stand it 4 or 5 more weeks. Maybe something will come my way. Josephine said to thank you for the bloomers. She would have liked to spend the holidays with you and that she likes the Rocky Mound school fine. Ruby Mitchell is the teacher. Charles came by today. Esther's family, Daisy's family were here New Year's Day afternoon. I wish I could be out there a while. . . I see J. every week and talk to her each day.*

*Well here is news. Uncle Will Hanes was found dead by his east kitchen door Dec. 21 at 2 p.m. . . . They couldn't find any recent address of any of the family, just an old letter of Dad Hanes. So after 24 hours they sent a telegram to him at Rialto. He sent it to Gorden. He went up was at the funeral on Sat. the 24. He stayed until the 29. No will and no mention of the family, so there had to be an administrator appointed. There was \$14,000 of Gov bonds, \$1,500 personal property at the farm & the farm. As Gorden would not try for the job, the county took it over. It will be about \$23,000 all. And Gorden says there will be 3 parts. I don't know where it all comes in. We always thought Dad the only heir, but Gorden says he found out that there had been a boy and a girl of one of the sisters & the boy of the other that had been adopted out. So if Dad gets 1/3 of*



“Decoration Day” May 1936 at Serafini home



Effie in back, John Garrigues, Sr.,

Cousins: Robert, Philip (hidden) Catherine, Ruth, Kathleen, Avanel, Guy, Jr., Jack



Five daughters with their mother, Bessie

Grandchildren Thanksgiving Day 1939 Pittsburg, Kansas

Robert, Ruth, Philip, Avanel, Catherine, Jack, Kathleen, Aunt Josephine, Guy, Jr.



During the 1940's Bessie was concerned about her sons, eagerly looking for their letters and following closely the progress of the Allies in the Western Hemisphere. Chic, after riding the rails during the depression, had joined the army. During the tense days leading up to D-Day, he was in England where his unit prepared for Normandy landings; the mission of the 9<sup>th</sup> Army being the installation and maintenance of communication. Chic fought through France, Belgium, Holland, and Germany. George, after a brief spell riding the rails, followed a different path, serving thirty-five months overseas as a radio operator inside a tank. A member of the 7<sup>th</sup> Army under Patton, he fought across northern Africa, into Sicily, and on into Germany. In 1945 the brothers were able

to meet for a visit when in Erlangen, Germany, before returning home. One Saturday afternoon at the close of World War II, a granddaughter recalls meeting her grandmother who was standing by the town water fountain in Jasper. She was proudly wearing a beautiful gray coat with flecks of lavender woven throughout it. This was a gift, including two matching dresses, from her son George upon his return to the states.

Avanell and Ruth looked forward to the time when Grandma Livingston would arrive at the bus stop in Jasper, hitch a ride with someone going west, and come trudging down the long lane to their home. In one hand would be a huge, metal suitcase in which she always carried most of her possessions. In the other hand would be a small portable typewriter, purchased after her handwriting had deteriorated to be almost unreadable. When wishing to get the attention of Esther, she would say, "Daisy, Mabel, Effie . . ." until finally getting to the right daughter – in



this case, Esther. She, seated in a big rocking chair by the Warm Morning heating stove, would talk by the hour and tell the news and happenings of all the other family members and of old friends along highway 71 - both sides of the highway, from Kansas City to Jasper! As grandson John, Jr. said, “She hit town talking!”

While working in Kansas City, Bessie discovered the streetcars and the interesting places they could take a person. She found great pleasure in expanding her horizon by visiting many different sites. Each Saturday afternoon she would go to a movie matinee where they gave “dishes to the ladies,” one way the numerous theatres competed for business. Loyal movie-goers could accumulate a complete set of dinnerware over time. The set Bessie collected had a cattail design on white background, edged in red; other miscellaneous serving pieces were heavier and had a creamy background.



One year Avaneil and Ruth were invited to be her special weekend guests in Kansas City. Bessie showed her country granddaughters all the sights of the big city. By riding streetcars, the downtown area was explored, then on to see the Union Station and Liberty Memorial. Bessie was a good tour guide, having previously discovered and enjoyed the wonders of the metropolitan area. One evening they attended a basketball game held in a huge auditorium. After exciting days, the nights were spent with the Garrigues family. Sunday morning they attended the Linwood Blvd. Methodist Church where Bessie had transferred her membership. Before long the Greyhound bus was boarded, and they were soon on the way back to the little town of Jasper.

In May of 1945 Josephine was expecting her second child, so Bessie went to Kansas City to be with her and help care for Delores. Unfortunately the baby, a little boy, only lived a day. After staying until Josephine was dismissed from the hospital, she returned home and wrote a letter of consolation to her daughter.

Able to draw Social Security when reaching the age of sixty-five, Bessie could then stop working and find contentment in her life. She rented part of the home of her widowed sister-in-law Flora, wife of Gordon Hanes, whose home was on a hill overlooking the Carthage Marble quarry in Kendricktown, north of Carthage. Bessie only had two rooms with no conveniences, but it was *hers*, and she enjoyed it to the fullest, as the following letter attests.

[Letter Edited]

*Dear Josephine and Delores,*

*I will try and write my letters this morning while the grass is wet. Everything has grown so in the week I was away. I had mowed the lawn on Friday and have it to do again today. Everything looks so nice and all the pretty flowers in bloom makes one think of Paradise, and about 15 kinds of birds singing at dawn. It will take me two days to get all the things done – garden and lawn and my flowers. I thought this morning at 6 what a wonderful world this is and what a pretty spot there was for me to choose to be quiet and prayerful. Big trees, green grass, honeysuckle fragrance, red poppies and so many other blooms. All trellis[es] covered with roses, beautiful golden ones, and then big white ones. I just can't describe the picture to you, but it isn't a picture, it is a reality. And I do enjoy every bit of it and it all helps to keep love in my heart.*

*I had lunch at the bus station in KC, left there about 1:50, got off here at 6:40, 35 min. late, and I was so glad to have a place to call home, and it so grand with teeming life. No wonder the Lord sits on his throne and smiles on his children, even if some rain does fall. We have our trials and crosses to bear, but He said He will carry them all for us if we will let him, and I find it so more every day.*

*Aunt Flora had my laundry all done so I don't have any household things to do, but if it doesn't rain, I will work outside two days, then Wed Morn I will go to Esther's. If she has the strawberries I will send you some. We may go to the cemetery but the services were Sunday. I miss Junior not getting on the bus at Jasper as he has been taking it Sun eve all winter and when I was on it I liked to have him ride with me. I had a letter from George when I got home . . . .*

*You know that the Master and big brother of all of us never lets things come to us without helping us to bear them. I have been just sunk and hurt so that I just couldn't bear it, but in time he has made it all clear and taken the bitterness from me. And now I am sure I have had about all the testing that I need and through it all there is a comfort that passes all understanding. If there is sorrow in my heart He seems to be here with me and in His still small voice is saying be of good cheer I am with you. So I hope He is with you and I know he is. A little ray of joy and a bit of sadness is life in its most expressiveness.*

*I just have so many things to do that I wonder if it is to keep me out of mischief. It will take me about all forenoon to get my letters written and then I will have to go to the store for a few things to eat. Can get milk and eggs here, but no bread on the hill.*

*If there is anything you want me to do just tell me and if I can I will do it. Mabel may be here in June and George thinks he will be in before winter. It looks like rain again and the water was all over the bottoms at Lamar.*

*I am sending the clipping from the paper [loss of the baby] to headquarters at Livingston [Wisconsin] so it can be posted. The Livingston record just gets larger all the time. This will make about 1700 on the list, and it is such an interesting pile of facts and accomplishments, heroism, pioneering, hardships, and sorrow, too. But with a very fine record and a family I for one am glad to be a part of and thanks to Dad, there isn't any unclean thoughts planted in the family. If we have it, it has been acquired, not inherited. Am so glad for a real rock foundation to build on. I just can't be thankful enough for it all and am happy in my small way to the part I have had in the building. Now I want to repeat that I enjoyed the baby [Delores] and hope sometime to see her again but in a different way. Hope you keep well in health and spirit, too. Love, Mother*

Now with a permanent place of her own, Bessie thoroughly enjoyed having her family visit. One Thanksgiving Day she invited only the grandchildren – Philip, Robert, Jack, Avanell, Ruth, and maybe others - for the day. After lunch, they went “over the hill,” down to the quarry, and played on the huge piles of enormous waste rocks. A grand time was had by all, tired out, but happy. During Christmas vacation in 1945, Ruth spent the night with her grandmother; they went into Carthage and checked out the after-Christmas sales at the dime stores, though they didn't buy anything. When it was time to go home, Bessie took out her bushel basket; they walked down the steep hill to Highway 71 where she waved the basket to hail the ever-reliable Greyhound bus, and soon Ruth was back home in Jasper. Jack Garrigues remembers spending overnight with his grandmother and hearing the quarry set off dynamite each afternoon. Another time, all five daughters spent an afternoon visiting their mother at Kendricktown. Whenever getting together the sisters would laugh and talk and talk, just like their mother. The timid never got a word in edgewise!



*Effie, Esther, Daisy, Bessie, Mabel, Josephine in Kendricktown*

In February of 1948, Bessie began having problems; the doctor diagnosed diabetes. While at Esther's she was sitting in the favorite big rocker cutting carpet rags when the scissors fell from her hand. She had just suffered a diabetic stroke. After a hospital stay, a place was found for her at a nursing home in Pittsburg, Kansas. (The daughters were informed if she lived with them, her pension would stop.) In September she was moved to the DuKart's nursing home in Carthage.

#### Long-time Resident Dies

##### Mrs. Bessie Livingston Succumbs After a Stroke

*Mrs. Bessie Dolores Livingston, 68, widow of Charles Livingston and long-time resident of Barton and Jasper counties, died suddenly at 6 o'clock last evening [January 6, 1949] at the DuKart convalescent home on East Chestnut Street. Mrs. Livingston had been ill for some time as a result of paralytic strokes. She was moved last September from McCune-Brooks hospital to the DuKart home. She suffered a stroke Monday but appeared to be improving. Death was due to coronary occlusion . . . [Carthage Press]*

##### Mrs. Livingston

*Mrs. Bessie Dolores Hanes Livingston, widow of Charles Leon Livingston, died at Carthage last Thursday. Funeral services were conducted Sunday afternoon at Bethel church. Mrs. Livingston, 69 years old, had resided in Barton County almost all of her*

*life. She was born September 22, 1879, near Rich Hill, and moved with her family when a child to Barton County.*

*Mr. and Mrs. Livingston were married at Carthage in July 1898. Mr. Livingston died in 1929. Before Mr. Livingston's death they had resided one year in Wisconsin, four years in Oklahoma, and four years in California. The remainder of her life was spent on the home farm in Barton County in the Bethel community. She was a member of the Methodist church.*

*Survivors are five daughters, Mrs. Guy Serafini of Jasper, Mrs. John Garrigues of Kansas City, Mrs. L. C. McNew of Pittsburg, Kansas, Mrs. W. B. Scott of Jasper, and Mrs. L. J. Shiner of Kansas City, and two sons, Charles Livingston of San Bernardino, California, and George G. Livingston of Westfield, N. J.; two sisters, a brother, and 12 grandchildren. Services were conducted at 2 o'clock Sunday afternoon at Bethel church by the Rev. C. O. Crockett of Springfield.*

*Burial was in Waters cemetery under direction of the Sharp and Selvey funeral home. Pall bearers were Guy Serafini, Jr., Philip McNew, John Garrigues, Jr., and Robert Garrigues, all grandsons, and Len Quillin and Bert Quillin. Mrs. Floyd Selvey sang, "In the Garden," "Abide With Me," and "Near the Cross," accompanied by Miss Margaret Sellers.*

[Jasper County News]

On a gray and gloomy Sunday, January 9, all of Bessie's children (except Charles), their families, and many friends and acquaintances, filled the pews of the small Bethel sanctuary to overflowing. The little country church had played a vital role in the lives of the Livingston family through the years. The minister read the obituary and gave a short sermon; the old favorite hymns were sung. Charley had led the singing of these songs multiple times; they were the identical ones that had been sung at Charley's funeral. A few tears were shed by the daughters as memories flowed back. Inside the flower-scented church, it was toasty and warm.

Outside was a different story; the misty rain that had fallen all day became heavier, and the temperature began to slide downward. On leaving the little frame building, great care had to be taken for the big steps at the entrance had become coated with freezing rain. The glazing continued as the procession headed the short distance west and south to Waters cemetery, driving carefully to avoid sliding into the ditch.

The cedar trees, each one planted in lieu of a tombstone by early settlers, were beginning to accumulate the wintry moisture in their branches. The green undertaker's tent, covered by a

solid sheet of ice, crackled in the wind. The family and friends gathered on the hillside under the tent, protected to some degree from the elements. Close by were the graves of Bessie's husband Charley and her infant children, Clifford and Pauline. Lightning flashed across the sky, and thunder rumbled. As the coffin was lowered into the grave, a deafening clap of thunder echoed through the cemetery. One of the mourners exclaimed, "Well, there goes Bessie!"

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Nora Cones Jan. 28, 1969

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C. L. Livingston

Henry Scherr. Nov. 2006

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