

# NUGGETS of HISTORY

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## UNIDENTIFIED PHOTOGRAPHS

Do you recognize any homes pictured on this page? Often our photographer loses an address between the time he takes a picture and when the film has finally been developed. Pictures here are some homes photographed during the last several years for which the addresses have been lost. If you know the address of any of them, please call 968-6700.



SEWARD TOWNSHIP  
By Miss Juniata Scott  
and  
Mr. Clair Scott

Note: On the Rockford Historical Society Tour, Sunday, June 4, 1972, the group stopped at the Scott home in Seward. Here we saw some interesting artifacts and souvenirs of early days. There was a woven coverlet dated 1841, some mounted buffalo horns, an Indian axe found on the Seward school grounds, a tax receipt for the sum of twenty-eight cents and other papers of historic interest. The following are Miss Scott's notes. Since there was an air of informality, this has been preserved in the retelling. Clair Scott tells his stories with a warmth that delights the listener.

--Hazel M. Hyde

What is so rare as a day in June?

My father, Clair Scott, was born in Seward Township 91½ years ago -- and I have been asked to tell you something about early days in the township. This will concern families whose farms have belonged to them more than 100 years-- as well as present-day Seward.

During the Rockford Historical Society's tour, August of 1970, you visited Vanceboro where the first settlers came to Seward Township in 1836 and also the Twelve Mile Grove Area.

By 1844, fifteen families were living in the Grove, but John Vance's cabin on the hillside to the East, known as "The Light House of the Prairie" did not cast its light to the south --east-- or west part of the township. Only wild creatures inhabited the woodland, the prairie and the sloughs.

But two years later, 1846, a courageous gentleman from England, Alfred Bridgeland, settled on a claim in the south-east part of the township, owning three hundred acres. He had been a gardener for royalty. A picture of the home he eventually built was included in the 1870 Atlas of Winnebago County, and looks quite the same now. His grandson, William B. and wife, live there today.

Continuing west on Montague Road, dipping down into the valley of Bebb Creek -- if you had gone up the tree-lined drive to the William McDonald home, you might have seen a faint outline in the ground where part of the seventeen-room Victorian mansion once stood. Part of the house was built in 1852, and it was destroyed by fire in 1909.

It was the Illinois home of former Governor William Bebb of Ohio. The family named it Fountain Dale. The Bebbs came from the East in 1850. The children helped drive a herd of thoroughbred Durham cattle, the first breed of shorthorns.

They bought 5,000 acres of land in Winnebago and Ogle Counties. Through its peaceful valley pastures ran a meandering stream, where their son Michael, world-famous botanist, planted many of his willows. At one time he planted 1,000 cuttings of 175 species sent from Kew gardens. Many

of his willows were native but others were sent from all over the world. The plow was Michael Bebb's greatest enemy. He wrote, "How beautiful the rolling prairies were before man's coming."

Some of his specimen and notes on plants of Winnebago County are preserved in Rockford College, Evelyn Fernald Herbarium, and others in Chicago Natural History Museum.

Clair Scott told a story at this point. Michael was seen looking at something in the grass. People supposed he had lost something, but someone said, "Shucks! He was just looking at a bug."

And Juniata took up her story again, as follows:

Back of the old Bebb home, down a slope to the spring, limestone steps lead up to a grassy knoll where there are cellar holes. According to tradition it is the site of the first Fountaindale post office. At that spot a lilac bush blooms each spring.

The Ex-governor, lawyer, and landowner, entered much into public life. He helped colonize America with Welsh people. However, from the time Michael brought his bride from the east in 1857, William's life was haunted by great tragedy for he accidentally shot a young man at the charivari for the young married couple. He was tried for manslaughter at the court house in Rockford. The trial had to be moved to Metropolitan Hall to secure more room. A noted lawyer came from Ohio and was assisted by three other competent men. Three Pecatonica men served on the jury which freed him.

On the south side of Montague Road there is a tree-shaded drive leading to a lively old home. It is one of the Bebb homes in Ogle County where Edward Bebb, a civil engineer, lived. In the yard there remain some of the huge old hemlock trees.

Milton Mahlburn, director of the Museum of Natural History in Rockford, had no doubt that some of the trees on the former Bebb estates, like the tall, old larches and the equally tall white poplars may well have been planted by the botanist Bebb, or spread from trees he planted.

William Bebb died in 1873.

The area adjoining the Bebb estate was settled by the Irish, and among the number we find McDonald, Ryan, Markham, Wuinlan, and Fitzgerald.

Daniel Ryan came in the eighteen forties and about six years after his arrival took a claim in the southwest part of the township. His grandson, Fred Ryan, owns the property today.

One of the most remarkable men in the Irish Settlement was Lawrence McDonald, known to the people as the "Squire". He came from Ireland in 1855 and worked on the Bebb estate before he became the owner of 800 acres of land.

Clair Scott was given the microphone at this point to amplify the information on Squire McDonald. Squire McDonald furnished the ground for St. Thomas church and cemetery. He served on the Winnebago County Agricultural Society for forty years. Also he was a member of the legislature.

Juniata Scott continued. Squire McDonald married Mary

Williams, the daughter of David and Elizabeth Williams from South Wales, who came to Winnebago County in 1840.

The Williams home was located in a wooded area on the south side of Murphy Road. When I was young, tumbled ruins of the old foundation of their home remained. Their grandson, the Squire's son, said the family could be traced back to the little kingdoms of Wales and Ireland, to the year 964 A.D.

Charles Darwin was a friend of the Williams families, and rare plants were sent to them from all over the world. The road was fringed with larch trees brought from Europe, and some of them remain.

The microphone was passed to Clair Scott, who recalled that the Irish picnics were happy affairs and were held in Williams' or McDonald's Grove. He quoted a poem by James Whitcomb Riley:

"Oh, where in all of Ireland  
Where twice te week begory  
They're playin' jigs on the band  
And jumpin' there in sacks  
And a racin' with wheel barrys"

Juniata continued: Today the Dolans and Murphys own land which was part of the Squire's estate for they are his descendants.

Continuing north on the Pecatonica-Seward Road to the Edwardsville Intersection and east to the first little stream bed, you come to the "Upper Bebbs Creek". The Cleveland Brothers came from New York State to this area in 1854.

Clair Scott mentioned the remnants of Indians. In some fields people plowed up Indian arrow heads in fairly recent years.

East on Edwardsville Road is the Scott Farm now owned by Clifford Whitney. William Scott was the grandfather of Clair, now in his nineties, so much history has been lived on that farm, which was in the family from 1848 until about two and a half years ago. At this point several items were displayed: a commission for the War of 1812, a two-dollar bill, some items from Hall and Sellars, Philadelphia 1775.

Proceeding down Edwardsville Road, you will find a sign "Clark Farm Since 1849". The owner is Harlow Clark, the grandson of Jonathan Clark. The obituary of Jonathan Clark read, "A warm heart beneath a somewhat bluff exterior".

At Hoisington Corners is the site of the Methodist Church that moved to Seward in 1901. It is now transformed into six modern apartments by the ingenuity of Dr. Falconer and the architect Lynn Boeke.

Continuing east on Edwardsville Road, there is the farm originally owned by Darwin Whitney, who came from Ogle County to Seward Township in 1849. The story is that they moved an old house from Westfield Corners by oxen. They got mired in a slough on the way and the house slid out of place, so it has always been out of line. The grandson, Ralph Whitney, lives on the property today but the old house is gone.

Mark Smith came from England and sailed for fifty-two days before reaching this country. He arrived in Rockford in 1857 but settled in Seward.

Clair Scott recalled that Smith arrived with a five-franc piece which was worth about 93 cents. His first good fortune came when fishing with nets. Somehow, and honestly, too, he amassed a fortune of more than \$50,0000.

(To be concluded in next issue)

FREDERICK HOLLINGSWORTH  
By Harry Hollingsworth  
(Concluded from last issue)

Why Would Frederick Hollingsworth leave a successful and affluent family like this to emigrate to America on his own? Did he quarrel with his brother John? Or did he listen to the song of land free from "ground rent", which the newspapers frequently sang? Perhaps.

There are tales of the Great Irish Rebellion of 1798 told by Frederick's descendants. Some say his father was killed there. That is clearly impossible, since Frederick was born four years afterward. Another story claims that his father lost his leg in the Rebellion. The facts known are these: Ballycanew village was captured by the rebels and all of the farms of Protestants in the parish were burned and looted. The lists of Compensation Claims prove that all the Hollingsworths suffered losses and put in claims for aid from the Government. Samuel's elder brother William was particularly hard hit. His wife was Elizabeth Jones. Her two brothers, John and Samuel Jones, were shot dead, and her brother-in-law, John Dalton, was roasted alive in Sculabogue Barn, on June 5th, 1798 (Musgrave's MEMOIRS OF THE DIFFERENT REBELLIONS IN IRELAND). Now, Samuel Jones was the grandfather of Eliza Hollingsworth (Jones) Varney, a Quaker of Prince Edward County, Canada. She is credited with doing the most to bring the Russian sect called Dukhobors -- 7,500 of them -- to Canada in 1899. Samuel Jones' other child, Eliza, married our Frederick's brother, William. John Dalton was the father of Edward, who married Frederick's sister Susan. No wonder that one of the tales we hear is that "all of Frederick's relatives were murdered by the Irish in 1798!"

My clue to Frederick's identity is his signature appearing upon the post-nuptial settlement of his brother John, executed in 1823. Frederick's two autograph signatures, as chief memorial witness, match his signatures made years later in America, in his family record, and in his land Pre-emption papers in Cherry Valley.

Perhaps he stopped in Dublin a few years, perhaps for only a last goodbye to brother Edward, before sailing away forever. The ship was the Brigantine "William", built, owned and mastered by the Keatings of Thomaston, Maine, a family with generations of seafaring men on its pedigree. Richard Keating was Master, his brother William, the mate,

when on 29 May, 1829, the small ship departed the shallow harbor of Dublin for America. The 169-ton vessel carried 62 passengers and a crew of seven. Cargo included 20 hogs-heads of salt and 150 boxes of raisins.

The "William" docked at New York on July 16, 1829 (National Archives Passenger Lists, M-237, roll 13, list 163 1829). Frederick did not delay on the coast. He probably traveled with his Irish friends, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Kidd, who had arrived on the "Ann Maria" on June 30th, directly to Cincinnati, making use of the canals and the Ohio River, a difficult but much-used migration trail in those days. Kidd settled in eastern Clermont County, Ohio. Frederick stopped for a couple of years to live with his relative, one Thomas Hollingsworth, in the Second ward of the bustling river city of Cincinnati. The latter had established himself there in 1819 as an Irish soap boiler and candle maker. He and his wife Lucy and son William Henry were staunch members of the Wesleyan Church.

Interestingly, while Frederick Hollingsworth was sojourning there, he met James Gamble, born in County Fermanagh, Ireland, the son of a gentleman nurseryman named George Gamble. The financial failures which followed the Napoleonic period had forced him to leave Ireland. Young James Gamble was now apprentice to Tom Hollingsworth. Of course, you must have guessed that he was one of the founders, with William Procter in 1837, of the most successful soap company in History, P. & G., who originated the "soap opera" on radio and TV. Gamble acted as trustee of the widow, and guardian for the son after Tom Hollingsworth died in 1842. Just what relationship he bore to Frederick is now known.

The meagre public documents attesting to the above account are deeds which Frederick signed in Clermont and Hamilton Counties. He bought a farm next to Thomas Kidd, and sold it a year later to Kidd's brother-in-law, Matthias Edwards, another Wexford man. Incidentally, Thomas Kidd's sister was married to Richard Smith, whose son of the same name later became a world-renowned Cincinnati journalist. Frederick bought a farm from Thomas Hollingsworth in Sycamore Township, north of the city. This too he sold only a year later at the price he paid for it. From 1833 to 1836 nothing is known of his whereabouts. In the latter year he came to Laporte County, Indiana. There, he met his bride, a child of fifteen, Elizabeth Brown. She was the oldest child of Jacob Brown. Hollingsworth was now 34 years old. Miss Brown's mother had died when she was born, in Ohio. Now Jacob was married to Mary Ann Keith, half his age, and only nine years older than Elizabeth. Eventually Mary bore him fourteen more children. Maybe friction developed between the girl and her stepmother, and Jacob found it necessary to marry off his daughter to somebody in order to get peace at home again. Along came Frederick Hollingsworth, an eligible Irish bachelor with a bag of gold in his sachel! They married in LaPorte County on April 17, 1836. Curiously, they had no children of record until Edward was born in June of 1838, when Elizabeth reached the age of eighteen! Had Hollingsworth made agreements with his fa-

ther-in-law? Peter and Maria (Head) Keith, Brown's in-laws, also were along. And in that year and the next, all moved to Winnebago County! About ten of Mary Keith's brothers and sisters also eventually settled there. They had come from Morgan County, Ohio, via Damascus, on the Maumee River, now in Henry County, Ohio.

First, Jacob Brown landed in what is now Cherry Valley, in August, 1836. There he met the acknowledged first settler, Joseph P. Griggs. Griggs and Brown acted as Frederick Hollingsworth's witnesses when he applied for Pre-emption on his farm in 1839. Hollingsworth arrived on the 28th of May, 1837 (statement in his land application. For short sketch of Browns, see the histories of the county). He immediately took up a quarter section of land, the South East Quarter, to be exact, in Section 10, Township 43 North, Range 2 East of the Third Principal Meridian, a mile or two southwest of the village of Cherry Valley, which then was made up of the Griggs cabin and a few others. He paid the Government price of \$1.25 for the 160-acre farm, a total of two hundred dollars. He sold it in 1856 to David S. Penfield, the land broker, for four thousand! The improvements were considerable, 72 acres improved, 2 horses, 4 milk cows, 6 other cattle, 50 sheep, 9 swine. In 1850 he produced 300 bushels of wheat, 100 of Indian corn, and 150 of oats (Census of Agriculture, 1850, Schedule 3, Town of Butler, page 755, line 31, State Archives, Springfield). Penfield advertised the farm for sale in the Rockford papers not long afterward. It is now owned by Mr. Oscar Hartwig, who told me in his 1962 letter that the barn on the farm is constructed of hand-hewn logs, but is of undetermined age. Fred and his sons were good carpenters, and it is assumed they did most of the work themselves. However, Frederick retained the old English custom of the Gentleman farmer. He probably left much of the work to his sons.

Frederick then purchased a much-improved farm on the Kishwaukee in New Milford Township. It had 180 acres of the total of 193 improved, and besides livestock, produced 400 bushels of wheat, 600 of corn and 300 of oats in 1860 alone (Ibid., 1860 Census, p. 57, line 22). This farm was sold by Frederick's wife to John H. Edwards, in 1861. At the same time, she purchased a similar one in Independence Township, Jasper County, Iowa.

Why did Frederick put everything into his wife's name? Perhaps he was ill and created an estate for her and his sons against his death. His estate after his death appears very meagre: Farm implements including reaper, plows and harrows, team and wagon, and 10 acres of timber land bought in 1868. Total value, \$378. In 1872 Elizabeth sold all of this good farm to Sarah Mendenhall, and removed to the village of Kellogg. She died there on October 15, 1892, aged 72, and was buried in Our Silent City, the town cemetery, with son Wallace and a granddaughter. But where is Frederick buried? Fourteen years of research by me and many others has turned up exactly nothing about this subject.

Here is a brief account of his sons: Edward Earl Hollingsworth (1838-1902) was my great-grandfather. He was a

contractor and builder. He came to Los Angeles in 1887. His wife was Rachel McFadden. Their nine children are all deceased but several grandchildren are here. Jacob (1842-1917) settled in Newton, Iowa. His first wife was Ann E. Castner, and the second, Georgia Titmus. His eldest son, Jacob, lived to be 94 at Ottawa, Kansas. He has grandchildren there and in Alabama. Samuel (1845-1917) the last survivor, married Fidelia A. Vandyke and removed to Green Bay, Wisconsin. He adopted his dead brother's name, and practiced as a pioneer veterinary surgeon under the name of "Dr. John S. Hollingsworth". His seven children died in youth unmarried. His is a tragic story. John died the year the family moved to New Milford. His marble headstone stands its lonely vigil for the family in New Milford Cemetery. ("John, son of F. & E. Hollingsworth, died August 28, 1856, aged 5 years, 11 months.") William Wallace Hollingsworth (1858-1912) married Lizzie Stolte. He was a musician, singer, and owned piano stores in Kellogg and Newton, Iowa. Ill health forced him to retire to San Diego, California, where he died. One child, Gladys, is living at Lansing, Michigan. She played the Spreckels Organ in Balboa Park, San Diego, several seasons.

The picture of Frederick reproduced here is the only one we have. It was taken in the mid-1860s, and is a tintype. (Picture appeared in last issue.)

My grandfather, Fred's oldest grandchild, said he had a "Scots burr" in his speech. Of course, it was the Wexford burr! Jack told of the day his grandad put on his British Army uniform, blue, with a blue cloak lined in red, brandished his shining sword, mounted his horse, and paraded down the farm avenue to entertain little Jack Hollingsworth. I found no proof of his service. The uniform describes accurately that of the Irish Yeomanry Corps, established 1796, disestablished 1843. Members of the family, and their relatives, the Earls, Godkins, Tackaberrys and Warrens, most of whom later went to Leeds County, Canada, served in the Yeomanry. The uniform may therefore have belonged to his father, Samuel, for we have a story that Fred's father was a "mounted officer" in the Irish Rebellion. It must have been as a non-commissioned officer, because the commissions are all in print, and no Hollingsworth is listed.

Great-great-grandfather Hollingsworth gave a violin to each of his sons. His own, a Zanoli, made in 1765 in Verona (or a counterfeit), is said to have belonged to his father and grandfather. Sam was born that year.

I hope someday we'll find where Frederick Hollingsworth sleeps!

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