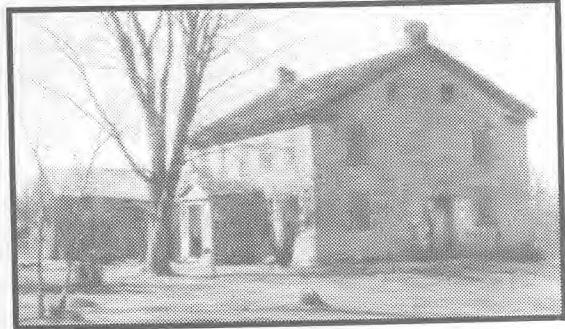
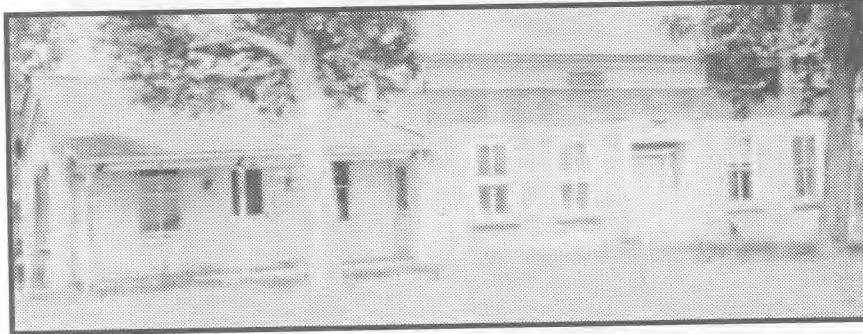

NUGGETS OF HISTORY

VOLUME 36 JULY 1998 NUMBER 2

TWELVE MILE GROVE HISTORICAL PRESENTATIONS, 1835-1998



FIVE HISTORIC STRUCTURES

Upper left, Woodruff/Burch home, Comly Road

Upper right, David Weld home, Comly Road

Center, 12 Mile Grove Church, 1877, Pecatonica Road

Lower left, Whittlessey home, 1854, Comly Road

Old Stone Inn, US 20, circa 1840 - 1915

Photos, courtesy Faye Hilton

FROM AN EDITOR'S DESK

Once upon a time, a small settlement named Vanceboro (Vanceburg) existed near present-day Pecatonica Corners. Named after first settler Joseph Vance, who had arrived in 1836, it also was known as Twelve Mile Grove. Its location twelve miles from the Rock River ford gave it that name. By the 1840s, the area had attracted fifteen families. They supported a blacksmith shop, two stores, and a combined tavern and stagecoach stop. A log cabin, near the present site of Twelve Mile Grove church, served as both school and church.

On Sunday, June 7, 1998, the Seward and Rockford Historical Societies presented an "Historical Day at Twelve Mile Grove, 1835-1998." Costumed interpreters, stationed at grave sites, presented oral histories of early settlers and their descendants. Most presenters traced their roots to the person/persons they portrayed.

Due to text volume and to allow space for photos, this issue was prepared single space, Courier font, 12-point size. Presenters supplied research for our use to edit, to condense, and to select what seemed most appropriate. We did not always include birth and death dates. But that information is available on tombstones in Twelve Mile Cemetery. It's a fascinating place located about one-half mile south of US 20 on Pecatonica Road.

Peggy Jensen

Peggy Jensen, Editor



Costumed presenters pause for a photo.

Back row, left to right: Robert Meyer, Eleanor Sass,
Kathy Connerton, Bobbe Wenger, Scott Whitney, Mike Eickman.
Front row, left to right: Edna Green, Peggy Whitney, Diane Miller,
Allen Marston, Joy Aurand, Eugene Hitchcock
Not present: Nancy Wallace, Dan Hamilton (see pg. 9)

VANCE/WHITTESEY

The Vance family arrived in the area in 1836: father Joseph, mother Margaret and eleven children. Baby Mariah would be born two weeks later. Joseph Vance hired two young Rockford men to build a house for his family--the first in the area. Located on the stagecoach road from Chicago to Galena, it also served as inn and post office. Later, Ephriam Sumner built a stone tavern across the road.

Both young men married Vance daughters. Edmund Whittlesey, originally from Stockbridge, Massachusetts, married Susan, May 7, 1839--the first marriage in Twelve Mile Grove. Andrew Austin married Sarah.

Susan and Edmund had three children: Mary Olive, Joseph Henry and Edmund Vance. Edmund was elected Seward Township Justice of the Peace, 1849, a position he held for 38 years. He also served as a township supervisor, 21 years; and treasurer of Burch School District, 33 years.

Andrew and Sarah had two children. Sarah J. married A.N. Bates; Mary E. died at age five.

Edmund's brother, Eliphilet, arrived in 1837. He married Catherine Shimmin who died in 1842. She's buried with the Shimmin family. In 1846 Eliphilet married Lydia Amelia Hitchcock. They moved to Calhoun County, Iowa, in 1868. One daughter, Mary Ellen remained in the area. (See Burch.)

Edmund, Eliphilet and Austin were charter members of the Congregational Church at Twelve Mile Grove

Source: Edna Green

HITCHCOCK

Parents Ebenezer and Abi Button Hitchcock, sons Horace and Norman and Norman's wife Edie--arrived in Winnebago County circa 1845. Edie died in 1846.

Russell Hitchcock had preceded the others to Illinois, purchasing government land in 1843. He married Claressa Warner. Brother William followed in 1855 with his wife Martha Hudson and their four children.

Horace purchased his first land here in 1849 and lived with the Elijah Guilford family from 1850 - 1854. After his marriage on Christmas Day 1854 to Henrietta Adah (daughter of Reuben and Jane Roberts Wells), he continued to add land to his holdings, including some in Iowa, valued at \$14,000. He worked diligently as a farmer, breaking new land and hauling wheat to Galena and Chicago.

Henrietta and Horace had three daughters--Edie, Laura, and Abie-- and one son John. But after eight years of marriage Horace would die. Family tradition recalls that he "made sure he was square with the Lord before he died." The minister from the nearby church came to Horace's deathbed and confirmed him as a member.

Edie and her husband William DeLaMater had one daughter Mabel. Laura married Moses Mitchell and moved to Windom, Minnesota. Abie married Charles Stockburger and died two years later during childbirth. John married Jennie Stockburger. They had two children, Homer and Edna. Homer and his wife Nellie Horn had a daughter Marian and a son Maurice.

Today, the only male Hitchcocks in Winnebago County are Eugene

and Harold Hitchcock descended from Horace's line.

Source: Eugene Hitchcock

BURCH

Chauncey Burch, born in Erie County, Pennsylvania, worked on his father's farm until he was 21. Then he headed west and arrived in Pecatonica, November 1859. He worked as a woodcutter for Elisha Woodruff and as a farm hand for Marcus Lowry until he enlisted in the Union Army, May 1861. He served under Captain E. F. Ellis in Company C, 15th Illinois Infantry. He participated in battles at Fort Donelson, Fort Henry, and Pittsburgh Landing. Although wounded at the latter, he was able to rejoin his regiment at Corinth, Memphis and for discharge on July 28, 1863 at Lagrange, Tennessee.

Upon his return to Pecatonica he purchased a 160-acre farm in Seward Township from Deacon Woodruff. On Christmas Eve, 1863, he married Mary Ellen Whittlesey, daughter of Eliphilet and Lydia Hitchcock Whittlesey. They had two sons, Charles W. and Eliphilet C.

Mary Ellen died June 3, 1878, age 30. During her funeral service in the stone church, a loud noise startled the mourners. During the night the building collapsed.

Two years later, Chauncey married Mary Short, a native of Essex County, New York. Parents of three children, they lost two three-year-old daughters to scarlet fever.

Chauncey's community commitments included trustee, assessor and road commissioner in Seward

Township. He belonged to the Congregational Church and was a charter member of the 12 Mile Grove Cemetery Association. For more than 50 years, he served as commander of Ellis Post GAR, Pecatonica.

Source: Adah Mamby

HAMILTON

William Hamilton Jr., born near Glasgow, Scotland, emigrated to the USA with his parents in 1795. In 1844, William and his wife Nancy, with their nine children, moved to Winnebago County. They purchased 80 acres of land for \$1.25 per acre. Their legacy to the community included land donation and money to construct both a school--to be known as Hamilton School--and a church. When William died in 1874, record numbers of people attended his funeral in Pecatonica.

Son Jacob remained in the area to farm. In 1858, Jacob and his wife Sarah Derwent, with their first son Charles, traveled to Freeport by horse and buggy to attend the Lincoln-Douglas debate. Eventually, ten more children would join the family.

Of them, Myron served as Pecatonica mayor, 1927-33. He and his wife Fannie Hobson reared five boys on a farm north of Pecatonica. Son Homer lived on that farm until 1994. His son Curtis resides there now.

Another son, Harold and his wife Dorothy Johnson, farmed in the Durand area. Their children: Barbara, David and Roger.

Source: Daniel Hamilton, David's son

WHITNEY

Laura Bixby Whitney, wife of Darwin, was born in 1827 in Royalton, New York. When Laura was 17, her family traveled from New York via the Erie Canal and by steamboat through the Great Lakes to Racine, Wisconsin. A covered wagon brought them to Middlecreek, Ogle County.

Erasmus Darwin Whitney married Laura in 1847 at Byron, Illinois. Soon thereafter Darwin moved a house from Elida to a farmstead on the corner of Kendal and Edwardsville roads, Winnebago County. As a farmer, Darwin would haul harvested wheat to Chicago, a two-week round trip.

The couple reared seven children. Five grew to adulthood, married, and had children. Sons Everson and Newton who remained in Winnebago County still have descendants living here. Other children migrated to New Mexico. After Darwin died in 1898, Laura moved to New Mexico where she died in 1920 a victim of influenza.

Source: Peggy Whitney

WELLS

The Wells connection with Seward Township began with the arrival of brothers Chester and Reuben, married to sisters Eliza and Jane, and the women's father Abram Roberts. They traveled from New York state in 1841.

They settled on the north side of the Pecatonica River, northeast of Pecatonica. Flooding during two consecutive years forced them to relocate. They chose the highest spot in Section 3, Seward Township. Having purchased a claim from

John Vance, they received title to it in 1847 by government patent signed by President James Polk. The Wells retained title to the Pecatonica property to use as a wood lot. They'd cut firewood in the fall, load it on a sled, and then haul it across the frozen river and up (what is now Lundgren Road) to the farm.

Reuben and Jane had 11 children. Eight accompanied them to Illinois. Some stayed in the Seward/Pecatonica area. Although John Roberts Wells spent time in California and Iowa, he eventually returned to Seward Township. He and his wife Adell Clark then lived in section one, on the eastern edge of the township. Henrietta Wells and husband Horace Hitchcock lived on State Road, east of Conger. Hitchcock family members still own this farm.

Alvin Wells, the 11th child of Reuben and Jane born in 1844, served in Company C, 146th Volunteer during the Civil War. He was with General Grant at Vicksburg. His first wife, Alice Holcomb died in 1870 after two years of marriage; then he married Sarah Ellen Brannan, who lived until 1925.

Eventually, John and Lucinda Cole (sister of Reuben) purchased the 40 acres north of state road (US 20). Next, several others owned it prior to purchase by the widow of Alvin Wells. Today that land and the property south of the highway remain in the family.

Chester and Eliza had 12 children. It is not known if any relocated to Illinois.

Source: Robert Meyer.

CLIKEMAN

Diane Clikeman-Miller, a current resident and shopkeeper in Pecatonica, traces her ancestry through great-grandfather Miner Clikeman, grandson of Frederick and Maria Quandt. Frederick, a Revolutionary War soldier served in 1780-81 in the Captain Dubois Company as a scout and a messenger for Colonel Willet. His son Peter and wife Jane Helligus Clikeman farmed in Schoharie County New York. When their ninth child, Peter Helligus, was only one year old, Jane died.

In 1848, eldest child Mary Ann married Cherick Schoonmaker, a rural New York cobbler. Eight years later, the couple joined another family and traveled to Winnebago County by ox team. It took two trips to bring their belongings. Meanwhile, they had assumed care of Mary Ann's nephew left motherless two days after his birth. His grief-stricken father John, brother of Mary Ann, asked the childless couple to rear his son Miles.

In Illinois, they settled on a plot of land large enough to raise vegetables and to keep a cow and some pigs. Cherick continued to practice his cobbler trade.

Mary Ann and Cherick encouraged her brothers to join them in Illinois. By mid-1857, Miner arrived. His weekly wages at a reaper factory in Milford, six miles south of Rockford, earned him \$26. After five weeks he returned to New York for his wife Ann and the children. Another brother, Allen Jacob also stayed with Mary Ann and Cherick briefly until joining brother John in Michigan.

Brothers Miner and Seneca eventually settled here, too. Miner, a carpenter and farmer, built many homes and barns throughout the county. The home he built in 1867 for his wife Ann and their seven children in Owen Township, on what is now Clikeman Road, is still occupied by Clikeman family members.

Seneca, his wife Diana Mosher, and her parents first settled on the State Road on a farm known as Well's Fish Farm. Two years later they settled on a Comly Road farm with their three children. No descendants survive today.

Then Peter, the youngest, settled on the first farm south of Comly on Hoisington Road with his wife Francis Alice Preston. Carpenter brothers, Seneca and Miner, helped build a substantial house and barns. Five children completed that family.

Mary Ann's brother Peter farmed on Hoisington Road and later in Iowa. His first wife Frances died in 1908; Charlene Posen, his second wife survived him after he died from a sudden heart attack. Today, descendants Martin Lyle Allen, Nancy Collatti and Eva Lemanski and their children live in the Pecatonica area.

Eventually Father Peter Clikeman joined his children in Illinois. He died September 10, 1875.

Miles eloped to Rockford in a snowstorm to marry the house maid he'd courted at Uncle Peter's home. Laura Brooks and Miles boarded a train for Grundy Center, Iowa, after their night-time wedding performed by a Rockford Methodist minister.

Source: Diane Clikeman Miller.

NEELY

Neely history begins in Virginia, moves to Indiana, then to Illinois and Iowa. John Neely, born in Virginia, April 22, 1817, moved as a child with his parents to Washington County, Indiana. Next, in Jackson County, Indiana, he married Adaline Peck, Seven years later she died, leaving a four-year-old daughter.

Next, John married Phebe Stillwell, also in Indiana. When they moved to Stephenson County in 1865, seven children accompanied them. Another son would be born after their arrival. Phebe died in 1867. A year later John returned to Indiana to marry Rachel Stillwell. She accompanied him to Illinois where they lived until 1886 when they moved to Iowa near three of John's sons from his second marriage. Rachel died in 1886 and John in 1902.

Meanwhile John's oldest son William stayed in the Seward area and married Harriet Short, a school teacher. They farmed near Seward. William held offices such as Township Supervisor, Justice of the Peace and served on the Board of Review. Harriet endeared herself to the community as a reporter of Seward news for the *Pecatonica Newspaper*. Family and friends alike called her "Grandma Neely." She lived to be 98 years old; William, 86.

Four of five children survived to adulthood. Each married and owned farms near their parents. Three Neely farms are owned today by descendants.

Source: Nancy Wallace

STOCKBURGER

Christian Stockburger, born in Wurtenberg, Germany, in 1827 emigrated to the United States and settled in New York. He married Fanny Gates in 1852. They journeyed to the Seward area. Of their eight children, George has a local history. In the early 1900s, he was a blacksmith here. About 1912, he moved to Montana. Fanny, Christian, George, his wife Helen and their daughter Lois are buried in 12 Mile Grove Cemetery.

Frederick Stockburger, born in Germany, emigrated here at age 18. He married Helen Kidder in Pecatonica. Several of their five children married Hitchcocks. Jennie May married John; Edie married Norman; Charles married Abi.

Source: Bobbe Wenger

ANDREWS/RUGG

Mary and her father David Weld (mother Nancy had died earlier) arrived at Twelve Mile Grove in 1844. David was the first Seward Township Supervisor following organization in 1849. He also served as Justice of the Peace and as a deacon in the Congregational church.

Following her marriage to widower Austin Andrews (see *Vance family section*), the couple had two children, David and Abijah. After Austin's death in 1857, Mary married widower Amos Rugg, 1865. The Rugg family--father David, mother Eunice, and eleven children--had arrived at 12 Mile Grove in 1857. Amos and his first wife, Eunice Purrington, had three children: Ada, George and Edith. George served as Seward's first

postmaster.

Amos' sister Lestina married George Flagg who had come from Heath, Massachusetts in 1859. Seward Forest Preserve is situated on former Flagg farm land. Lillian, another sister, married Willis Stone. She contributed Seward items to the *Pecatonica News*.

Following Amos' death in 1895, Mary went to live with Abijah in Mattawan, Michigan. She died in 1906.

Source: Joy Aurand

EICKMAN

Cemetery presenter Michael "Mike" Eickman traces his Seward ancestry beyond the 1807 birth of his great-great-grandfather Ludwig Eykerman in Swalenberg, Germany, to Ludwig's parents Anton Christian and Sophia Eykerman.

When Ludwig and his second wife Anna Marie Reichmeier left Germany in 1854 they anticipated finding a better life. Facing mandatory seven-year military service plus a severe business depression and crop failures prompted the journey. With their name changed to Eichmann, Ludwig, Anna Marie and six children settled on a Kelly Road farmstead west of Seward. Four more children would be born in Illinois before Anna Marie died in 1864. Next, Ludwig married Mary Neseemeier who gave him another son, Lewis.

Several of Ludwig's children opted to live in the Seward area. Among them, August and Herman. August married Neeke Bonne and they had nine children. Some remained in the Seward vicinity; others

relocated to Freeport, Winnebago, Rockford, and Nebraska.

Among August's descendants currently in the region, Ruth Hodgson Rummel now owns and operates Rummel's Barn--a country cafe, antique and gift shop--with her husband Roy. Marjorie Eickman Johnson lives on Edwardsville Road and her son Gary farms his grandfather Charlie's farm on Kelly Road.

Herman's Seward descendants today include grandson Merlyn who with his son Michael owns and operates Eickman's Processing. Merlyn's father John and Clarence Meyers had started meat processing operations in the 1920s in an old creamery, now part of the current plant.

Source: Michael Eickman

CLEVELAND

George, Eli, William and Hervey Cleveland comprised some early settlers. They traced their ancestry back to Moses Cleveland who had emigrated from England circa 1635. One of Moses' sons, Aaron, was an ancestor of President Grover Cleveland. Another, Josiah, was the great-grandfather of General Moses Cleveland, founder of Cleveland, Ohio. Job William Cleveland, Jr., the father of George, Eli, William and Hervey, was a New York farmer and had served in the War of 1812.

Twenty-five-year-old George traveled from Wethersfield, New York, to establish a farm in the Rockford area, 1843. Eli arrived in Seward in 1849. A farmer and a teacher, he eventually moved to Rockford to become a merchant.

William, his wife Elvira Jane Curtis, and the couple's 16-month-old son journeyed from Buffalo to Detroit by boat during December 1853. Arriving in Pecatonica, they spent their first winter in a shanty constructed in a stone quarry. After purchasing 200 acres to farm, the family moved into Seward. A portion of that land is now included within the town. William and Elvira Jane had seven children, the last one born on their 25th wedding anniversary.

Hervey, born in 1831, worked as a wagon maker in New York, until he left for Illinois in 1853. Once in the Seward area, he invested in 80 acres. A few months later, he joined his brother Albert in wagon manufacturing, Monroe, Wisconsin. Next, he returned to New York to marry Annette Curtis. They returned to Seward to develop his farm and to acquire more land--up to 295 acres. In 1880, he became a director of the Farmers Mutual Fire and Lightning Insurance Company. Of their five children, only Hervey Seymour, Jr. survived beyond infancy.

Source: Eleanor Sass, descendant of Edward, seventh child of Moses Cleveland.

CARSON

Born in St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada in 1841, Albert moved to Seward Township with his mother Mary in 1850. After her marriage to William Jones in 1852, Mary and Albert lived on the Jones farm west of Seward.

Albert enlisted in the First Illinois Cavalry, September 1861, and then transferred to the 15th Illinois Cavalry M. O.,

December 1862. In 1864, he enlisted in the 8th Illinois Cavalry, and fought under General Phil Sheridan, M.O. in the Shenandoah Valley Campaign. He was in Washington, D.C. when Lincoln was shot.

When he returned home, he married Martha Mathewson, 1872. After a few years farming in Nebraska, the couple settled on the Jones farm in Seward. They were the parents of 12 children.

Source: Scott Whitney. His wife Peggy is the great-granddaughter of Albert.

MARSTON

Charles and Meribah Marston, married in 1823 in New York, came with their family to a Hoisington Road farm in 1847. Three sons served in the Civil War including George Washington Marston, born 1835 in Genesse, New York

Enlisting as a Private in the Ellis Rifles, 15th I.V.I., Company C in Freeport, May 24, 1861, George served under Col. Thomas J. Tuner and Lt. Col. Edward F. Ellis. Wounded in the Battle of Shilo, Pittsburg Landing, Hardin, Tennessee, April 6 & 7, 1862, he was discharged as a Private, August 1862 at Chicago, Illinois. He returned home on crutches. He became a member of the G.L. Nevius Post No. 1, GAR, Memorial Hall, Rockford.

George married 21-year-old Sarah Scott, August 1863, daughter of Harriet McCarty and Amos Scott, M.D. The Scott family had emigrated from Pennsylvania. George and Sarah's seven children were born in Seward Township. They married as follows:

Anson/Mary Alice Day;
Amos/Jessie Eleanor Taylor;
Charles/Harriet Evalyn Scott;
Mary Alice/John Smith and Alonzo
Ellis; George Edward/Sarah
Rachel Scott; Walter/Mabel Eddy;
and Robert/Nellie Allen.

Source: Allen Marston

SCOTT/TRACY/MARTIN

Amos Scott, M.D. his wife Harriet, and their five daughters--Sarah, Rachel, Mary, Clara and Harriet--came to the Seward area after the Civil War. Dr. Scott purchased farm land north of Seward. While in the Union Army, he had served as a surgeon. In Seward he practiced medicine for 40 years.

Mary and her husband George Tracy built a home next to the railroad. Such a location led to running a boarding house for travelers. They paid 80 cents per day for three meals and a bed. Mary not only shared in boarding house profits, but money from the sale of runt pigs was hers as well. When George platted the town map, Mary signed the document too. Their only child, Mabel, was born in 1872.

When Mary's father, Dr. Scott, decided to retire, a request for a new doctor was sent to Rush Medical School, Chicago. Dr. Charles Martin responded. Where did he stay? At the Tracy's boarding house. Love developed between the doctor and Mabel. They married and moved into a spacious home built for them by George. It stands today as "The Doctor's House," owned by the Seward Historical Society.

Besides two natural daughters--Mary Lenore, 1897 and Barbara Kagy, 1903--the Martins assumed

parenting duties for a nephew Don Martin and a motherless toddler adopted in 1921 and named John. Mary graduated from Beloit College with Phi Beta Kappa honors. After teaching school for one years, she married Irvin Kilker and moved to his family's farm south of Seward. She was active in the Seward Congregational Church, Eastern Star and Home Extension. She and Irwin had three children: Charles, Barbara and Marjorie.

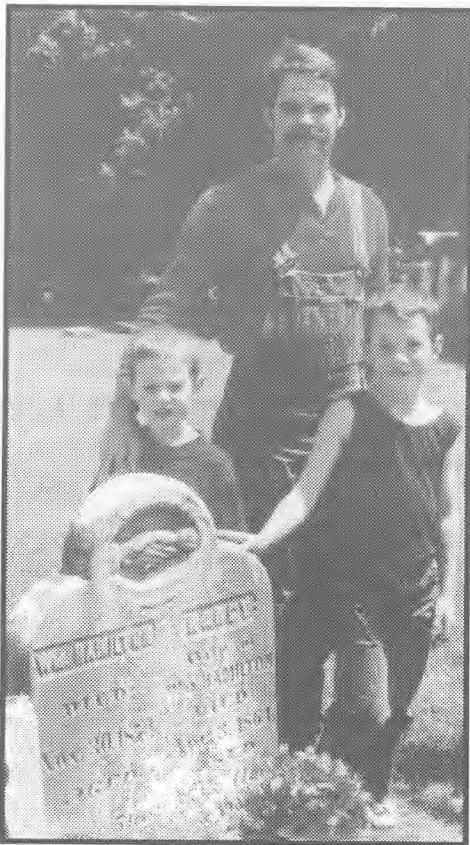
Barbara Kagy attended Wittenberg College in Ohio; married Dr. Marion Martin and lived in Lake Geneva, Ohio. After deaths of three "blue babies," they adopted Judith.

Besides his medical career, Dr. Martin served in the Illinois House of Representatives, 1904-07. He died from pneumonia in 1923 after making house calls during a blizzard. His nephew Don, a medical school graduate, returned to Seward to take over his uncle's practice, the last Dr. Martin in Seward. John attended Beloit College and then began a career in banking.

*Source: Mary Katherine Conerton,
grand-daughter of Mary Lenore.*



The Martin Family, circa 1903.



Daniel Hamilton and his two sons represent 6th and 7th generation Hamiltons in this area.



Nancy Neely Wallace poses at a Neely tombstone.



Robert Meyer stands beside the tombstone of Alvin Wells, 1844-1899.



Diane Clikeman Miller presents her Clikeman heritage.

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