



GLEANNINGS

FROM THE HEART OF THE CORNBELT

The McLean County Genealogical Society
Bloomington, Illinois

MCLEAN COUNTY WILLS, ESTATES, AND GUARDIAN CASES

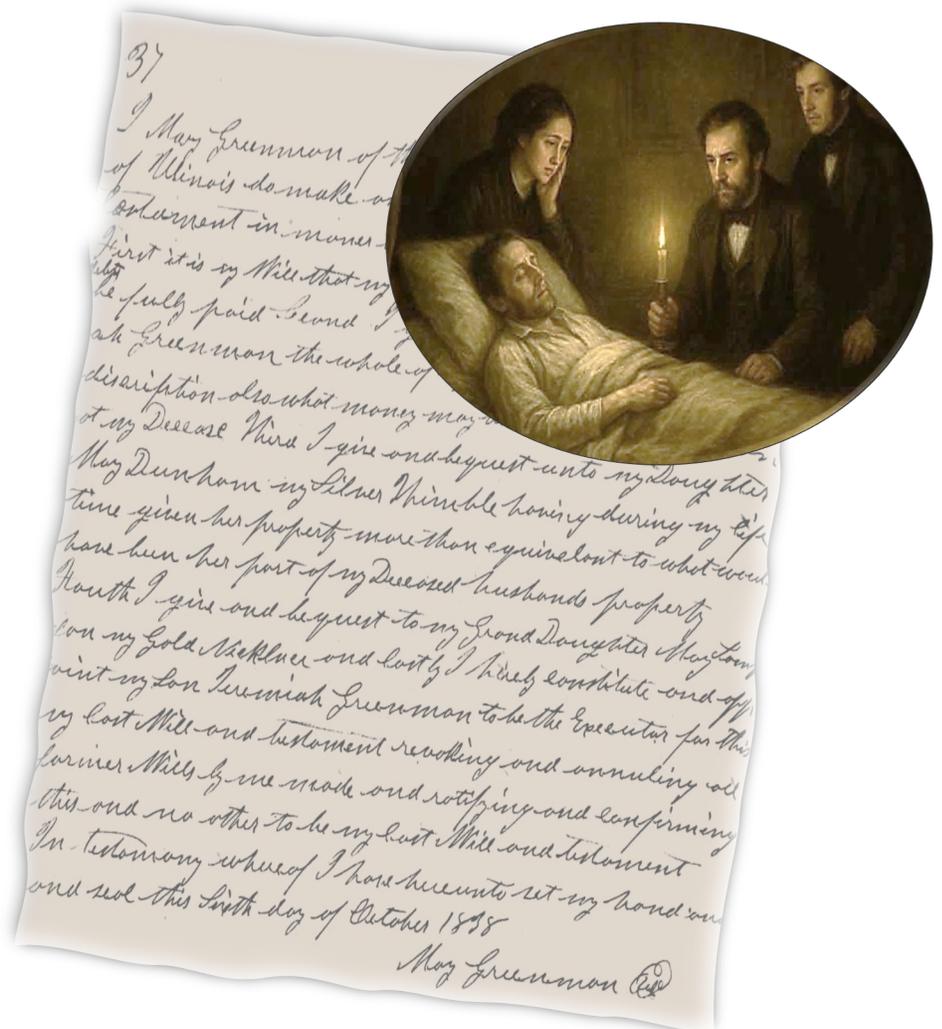
NUNCUPATIVE WILLS IN ILLINOIS



HOWARD CEMETERY

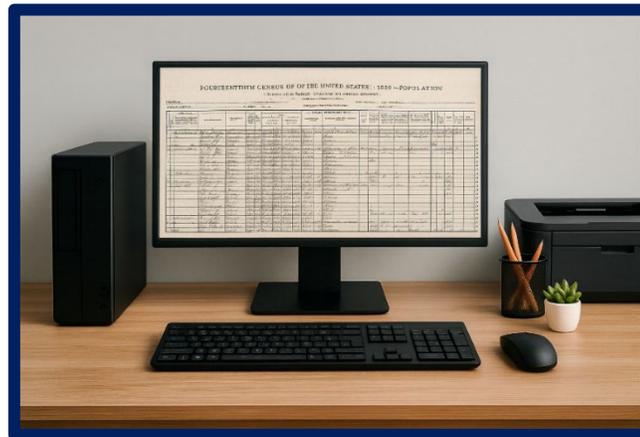


EVERGREEN CEMETERY
LAWDALE



The McLean County Genealogical Society

HAVE A COMPUTER? USE OUR WEBSITE! — tmcgs.org



McLean County Info for All

Our website provides guidance to beginners and experienced researchers. We are digitizing our microfilm so you can enjoy working at home.

Our Digital Publication Store has low-cost items!

- DD 214 and military records Civil War to 1953
- Grantor / Grantee Deed Indexes 1838—1970
- Select Central Illinois 1800s Newspapers

Digitized Books not found elsewhere including:

- *A Place We Called Home*—ISSCS Normal orphanage
- *Listing of Artificial Limbs Furnished to Civil War Veterans*
- *Civil War Diary of James W. Jesse*
- *Grand Lodge of Oddfellows*
- *Early Baptist Church records*
- *2nd Pres – First 100 Years*
- *History of Evangelical Church*
- *Illinois Corn Growers – 1910*
- *Farm Bureau Membership – 1950*
- *Cemetery Locations*

Monetary donations towards our expensive digitization projects are appreciated!

Guidance for Everyone

- Video search tips
- Links to under-used resources
- Genealogy Methods—Beginner to Pro
- Sensational Deaths
- WikiTree Explained
- The McLean Civil War Regiment
- Why Oh Why Do Your Y-DNA
- Immigration and Naturalization
- Links to many little used sources
- Free ancestral charts and family diagrams
- Union Civil War Pension Files

Members Can Access More!

- Copies of McLean County Court Records: Births, Deaths, Marriage licenses.
- Every TMC GS Publication
- Cemetery stone readings for all cemeteries
- 200 issues of *Gleanings from the Heart of the Cornbelt*
- Select programs on DNA and Illinois digital resources

Beginning in 2026—16 webinars from Thomas MacEntee on genealogical topics with a new one added each quarter!

GLEANINGS FROM THE HEART OF THE CORNBELT

A Publication of The McLean County Genealogical Society

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The Society’s Library Location: The McLean County Museum of History
Courthouse Square, 202-210 North Main Street
Bloomington, IL 61701

Email: mcs.directors@gmail.com Website: <https://www.tmcgs.org>

Hours: 9 AM to 5 PM Monday and Wednesday through Saturday; 9 AM to 8 PM
Tuesday (Free entry day); 10 AM to 2 PM Sunday (May-September)

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We invite suggestions and submissions relevant to McLean County, Illinois history and genealogy. Submitted materials may be in the form of articles, transcriptions, photographs, queries, etc. For questions, or submissions, please email Rand Veerman, Editor: <mailto:mcs.journal@gmail.com>

COVER: Front: Deathbed scene, ChatGPT; Mary Greenman Will; Br. James Nelson, Howard Cemetery; Evergreen Cemetery, Lawndale, Colfax, IL Photos Cheryl Budde

**Back: McLean County Museum of History. William P. LaBounty photo
Bloomington street scene in 1849. Art generated by Gemini 3 December 5, 2025.**

Welcome to the Stevenson-Ives Library & Archives Located on the Second Floor of the



What's in the Library?

Internet-based Databases (Free access)

- Ancestry.com
- FamilySearch.org
Family Search affiliate !!
- Illinois State Archives databases
- Pantagraph negative photo collection
- Library book catalog

Books (16,000+)

- McLean County history and genealogy
- genealogical publications (around U.S.)
- family histories & ethnic groups
- local authors
- Illinois history
- Midwestern social life/culture
- agriculture and agribusiness
- education and teacher training
- transportation
- Illinois and McLean County politics
- city directories & school yearbooks
- and much more

Often a genealogy volunteer is in the library to assist you!

Bring your laptop - free WIFI !!

Microfilm

- 1862-63 Illinois Civil War military census
- pre-1900 McLean County birth & death records
- pre-1900 Illinois marriage index (incomplete)
- granter/grantee index to McLean County deeds 1831-1967
- McLean County Circuit Clerk records 1831-1907
- Archival Land Records Illinois Township Plats
- papers of Jesse Fell
- misc. Central Illinois newspapers
- Letitia Green Stevenson Chapter NSDAR scrapbook

**Please sign the guest register. Large bags or purses must remain in the reading room.
Please use a pencil for notetaking. Please call ahead with questions**

What's New On Our Website tmcgs.org

GENEALOGY MEET-UP

- Beginning in 2025, The McLean County Genealogical Society teamed up with The Normal Public Library by encouraging all our members to attend the Genealogy Meetup. This is an in-person (Zoom is optional) meeting at the Normal Public Library the first Tuesday of every month at 2:00 pm. Check the NPL calendar to confirm, but we are having great meetings – solving problems and discussing brick walls. Come join us.

MILITARY RECORDS

- DD214's and other military records (some dating back to the Civil War) that were recorded in McLean County are now available to everyone as a service to the community. If you need an official one, you will still have to inquire thru the Recorder's Office, but for genealogy use, these records are photographs of the originals.

McLEAN COUNTY GRANTOR/GRANTEE DEED INDICES

- Tracing your family tree using land records? Now you can easily tract them through history using the Deed indexes – both grantor and grantee. Photographs of the actual indexes. These are available to everyone.
- Many thanks to the McLean County Recorder's Office for sharing these with us so we can make them available to you. Each photo was enhanced for readability.

LOW-COST GENEALOGY

- We have added pages devoted to low-cost genealogy. How to get started without spending a lot and not miss anything in your searches.

RESEARCHING McLEAN COUNTY

- For those researching McLean County, this page offers directions to find records for land, military, birth, death, marriage, and interment. If it is not on our site, we tell you where to look.

TMCGS WELCOMES YOUR QUERIES!

We are happy to help you search for your McLean County ancestors. Email your request to mcs.research@gmail.com or send via USPS to: MCGS, Attn: Corresponding Secretary, P.O. Box 488, Normal, IL 61761-0488. Please include as much information as you have, including the area in McLean County where your ancestor lived. Family group sheets and/or a link to your ancestry.com tree may help avoid research duplication and provide guidance, especially where the surname is common in this county.

HOWARD CEMETERY

Empire Township, Illinois

By Cheryl Budde, MCGS Corresponding Secretary

This Indenture made the 4th day of March A.D. 1865 between Eleazer Howard and Matilda Howard of the County of McLean and the State of Illinois of the one part and Dan O. Howard, William E. Scott, Newton C. Coffman, Charles Cope and Simpson Thompson of the County of McLean and the State of Illinois of the other part as Trustees for the People of town of Empire and vicinity and their successors of the other part Witnesseth that the said Eleazer Howard and Matilda Howard for and in consideration of the respect and regard that we have for the people of the town of Empire and vicinity have this day given aliened released and confirmed and by these present do release and confirm unto the said Dan O. Howard, William E. Scott, Newton B. Coffman, Charles Cope and Simpson Thompson and their successors, Trustees as aforesaid the following described piece or parcel of land lying and being in the town of Empire in the county of McLean and State of Illinois for and in consideration that the same is to be used for a Cemetery or Burial Ground for the people of the Town of Empire and vicinity viz:

Beginning at the S.W. corner of the land owned by Thomas M. Whitaker known as Lot #1 of the N.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 27—Township 22-N— Range 4 E. and running thence South 15 rods, thence East 25 rods, thence North 15 rods, thence West 25 rods to the place of beginning containing 2 acres and 55 rods be the same more or less.

To have and to hold the above granted premises unto the said Dan O. Howard, Wm. E. Scott, Newton B. Coffman, Charles Cope and Simpson Thompson Trustees aforesaid and their successors forever for the used and purposes therein before set forth. The said Eleazer Howard and Matilda Howard reserve to themselves and family two lots as places of interment for themselves and family about the middle of the West end of the above described lots of land of the following dimensions, viz: Two lots nine feet long by 15 feet wide.

Witness our hands and seals this ___ day of March A.D. 1865.
Eleazer Howard (Seal)

Matilda Howard (Seal)

It is requested of the Trustees within named by the said Eleazer Howard that the said trustees (sic) give this burial ground the name of Home burying ground.

Filed Apr. 25 1865 Recorded May 1 1865”

(Ed. Note: 1 rod = 16.5 feet)

On Apr. 24, 1914, *The Weekly Pantagraph*, noted that a decision was made “to see that the three old cemeteries in the township are properly cared for, the sum of \$400 being them with which to do the work: \$50 on Howard Cemetery and \$175 each on the Gilmore and the old part of Oak Grove. These cemeteries have never been self-supporting, and this work is badly needed.”

In the *Heritage of the Prairie History of Empire and West Townships of McLean County, Illinois*, by the LeRoy Bicentennial Committee it is noted that there are three cemeteries near Rt. 150 at

LeRoy. Oak Grove, Old Oak Grove and Howard which is east of Old Oak Grove, across a strip of land and across the creek on a small bluff overlook. Howard Virgin Timber borders the cemetery on the south and a quarter mile footpath through a timber is the only access to it now. Hester Murphy Mortimer was the last burial there in October of 1915. According to *Heritage of the Prairie*, there are more than 20 Indians buried at Howard as well as 100 early McLean County Settlers buried side by side at this cemetery. In 1915, Illinois Governor Dunne signed a bill, sponsored by the Women's Relief Corps of Illinois, which mandated every soldier and sailor's grave be designated. Bouquets of fresh flowers were placed on each soldier's grave by the Women's Relief Corps and by school children under the supervision of the Legionnaires with transportation for all who wish to attend. When the graves are decorated at Oak Grove and Old Oak Grove, someone always walks across the creek to decorate the one soldier's grave (unidentified at Howard).

Stone markers are broken, on their sides, leaning against small trees, with the graves of native Americans unmarked for decades as the rock piles, deer horns marking grave locations are long gone. Grazing animals were probably the most frequent visitors for decades.

Edith Squier's description of getting to the "old Howard cemetery" was fascinating – and accurate! Mrs. Squier wrote a column in the LeRoy Journal and had articles published in several other venues including *Woman's Day* and *Reader's Digest*, as well as *The Pantagraph*. An excerpt from her "Much Ado About Nothing" column in the *LeRoy Journal*, May, 1952:

"Now I know where it is - the 'old Howard cemetery.' I still think it would have been nearer and easier to park in Mrs. John LaMonte's barnyard and follow the east side of the creek to the cemetery. But I was sure I could find it the other way. We drove in from the east past the Rees place through a field as far as the saw mill (sic). We left the car and climbed a fence into the most beautiful timber I've seen in a long time. We followed a fence line west for at least a quarter of a mile over a carpet of lush, green grass, sweet Williams, blue and yellow violets, buttercups, trillium, jack-in-the-pulpit and may apple plants which are now in bloom. We could see the spring beauties and Dutchmen's breeches had flowered in profusion, but they are faded and dried now.

I wish that whoever owns this timberland east of the creek and south of the old cemetery would see to it that it is kept that way forever as Simeon West saw to it that the trees in West park would stand for posterity. This particular wood is unspoiled by livestock...The pipe-line has cut an ugly swathe through all this beauty but that will heal in time.

We came within sight of the creek. No cemetery. And then we saw it on top of the hill across the fence to the north. We climbed down a ravine and up a stock path and through the barbed wire fence which encloses it.

I suppose the ground on which the cemetery stands was once a beautiful timberland like that to the south. But now it is a tangle of cut down trees—waiting to be sawed into lumber, I suppose—dense undergrowth and brush. It is the haunt of many head of livestock, too.

We were a little disappointed in the cemetery...Only a few stones are standing and all in one piece. The others are lying about broken and scattered. We tried to read them all including some that have been carried through the fence and thrown down the bluff into the creek.

In one corner are two stones lying together – that of a father who fought in the Civil War – he died in 1869 – and what we made out to be his infant son. On the baby’s stone was this inscription:

*“Sleep on sweet babe
Lie still and rest
God took thee home
He thought it best.”*

The family name of the soldier and the baby was Croombes (note: Edith and her fellow travelers misread this name. It is Grooms).

There couldn’t have been a prettier spot for a picnic than where we ate our sandwiches – just outside the cemetery fence high above the creek and the low valley on the other side. Much further away than you would think through the trees to the west we could glimpse the stones in the Old Oak Grove cemetery.



I hope the owner of the beautiful timberland will read this and be inspired to set aside these few acres for posterity and as a memorial to his family.

I hope that anyone going to explore the old Howard cemetery will take Soldier Croombes a flag –and the baby a flower.”

Edith Squier’s wish for a new stone for this soldier came true some 60 years later:

From Joe Hutchinson: “We did not have a formal ceremony to dedicate the new stone (for Martin V. Grooms) in 2022. Access to the cemetery was not too hard though it was a very hot and buggy August day when we hauled the 300+ pound marble headstone down the path on a home-made cart to the cemetery. I was helped by our Camp graves officer, Wayne Wehrheim and two individuals from his church. Below is text used for our newsletter and attached photos. I was told at the time that the township mows only a couple times during the summer, but it was in good condition when we were there.

"The headstone replacement project was started by Br. James Nelson who discovered a dilapidated and weathered stone while hiking in the Howard Virgin Timber Park outside of LeRoy, Ill. while on a lunch break working for Waste Management Corp. In the rear of the wooded park is a small cemetery of about ¼ acre in size with few stones remaining. After a couple of years of effort, research was completed and contact was made with the township responsible for the cemetery. A new stone was ordered for PVT Martin V. Grooms of Co. I, 39th IL INF. He was born in 1837 in Franklin County, Ohio and died in 1875. The stone was installed in late August with the assistance of Brother Wayne Wehrheim, who is the Camp Monuments Officer, Napoleon Caras and son Benjamin. Pictured is Br. Wayne."



Br. Wayne has stopped a couple of times to visit and place a flag while on his way through Illinois to other places.” Br. Wayne is continuing Mrs. Squier’s wish we remember this soldier and so many more.

Because of Martin V. Groom’s military service, we know a little more about him than his contemporaries at Howard Cemetery. A veteran of the Civil War, the 39th Illinois, he was recruited in Chicago in September 1861 and was known as the “Yates Phalanx.” Company I, was composed of many men from LeRoy and vicinity. He was discharged July 4, 1863, with a disability. His widow remarried in early 1876.

***Pantagraph* Obituaries/notices for a few of those buried at Howard Cemetery:**

William Booth, Sr. 1826-1897. He was born in Guernsey County, Ohio and was married to **Margaret Britton** of Guernsey County, Ohio. He came to Illinois in 1876.

Thomas Edward (Tommy) Land 1916-1962 Note: findagrave.com has the location of his burial at Oak Grove Cemetery with his parents. His obituary reads that his burial will be in Howard Cemetery.

Russell Gilbert, child of Nellie Gilbert, Oct. 1898.

Martin Grooms 1837-1875, who has been living on Keenan’s farm, near this place, for the last five years, died last Sunday morning of lung fever. He was only sick with this dangerous disease some three or four days. (source: *The Pantagraph*, March 11, 1875, pg. 4) From the May 27, 1937 *LeRoy Journal*, “One soldier’s grave in the Howard cemetery will be decorated with flowers on Saturday.” His grave was decorated again in May 1941, 1943, and 1944 per *The LeRoy Journal*.

Hester Mortimer 1832-1915. Wife of Nimrod F. Mortimer.

Infant of M/M Ralph Robbins April 26-27, 1899.

Narcissa nee Crumbaugh Thompson 1824-1898.

Simpson Thompson 1820-1892. He was born in Kentucky and came to Illinois in 1829, his family settling near Lexington, Ill. In 1845, married Narcissa Crumbaugh, the daughter of Henry Crumbaugh.

Add to *The Pantagraph* obituaries, those burials recorded by TMC GS in 1992:

Martha A. (Barnard) Busick d. May 27, 1870

Arthur A. Busick no dates

Harrison Denny no dates

On findagrave.com, I’ve read that Howard Cemetery is also known as Ford Woods Cemetery. I’m not able to find that usage in any other publication. Do you have any knowledge of this name in connection with Howard Cemetery at LeRoy, Illinois?

For such a small and inaccessible cemetery, much interest has been maintained over the decades. Our search for early records was noted in *The LeRoy Journal* on page 1, in April 1938:

“REQUEST FOR OLD CEMETERY RECORDS It is of interests to Mrs. Eva C. Grizzelle to know where she can obtain the early records of the Old Oak Grove and Howard Cemeteries. It is believed that such records were kept and probably preserved among old papers. She desires the records for information concerning early burials and requests that she may be informed of any knowledge of the records.”

All these decades later, in 2025, we are still searching for the old cemetery records for Howard Cemetery and hundreds of thousands of other cemeteries in this country. If you have documentation about a burial at Howard Cemetery in McLean County, Illinois, please let us know at mcgs.cemeteries@gmail.com

WHAT MADE GREAT GRANDPA MOVE? A list of Some Economic Factors

by Jill Martin

In researching my post-Civil War relatives, I discovered that several of the families shared a pattern of western movement. Movement seemed to be a common condition of life after the Civil War. For example, in the Illinois Adjutant General's Report, the author of the "History of the 33rd Illinois Volunteers" reported that in 1886 a roster of 500 of their surviving troops showed men in twenty different states and territories, with 13 of them living west of the Mississippi. No doubt, getting off the farm and seeing other areas of country during the war led those veterans to try to better their lot by moving on.

Quite probably personal motives were responsible for some of the moves. A family moved after a marriage, or the death of a member, to be nearer other relatives, or to try to put sorrow behind by distance. However, I also saw a correspondence between my family's moves and those of Laura Ingles Wilder family. Several of the Wilder's moves were explained in a Wilder biography as of an economic nature. So, I looked into the economy of the nineteenth century for an explanation of the frequent moves of these restless settlers.

Below is a preliminary list of events that may have influenced settlers from Illinois. Match these dates with those of major moves by your relatives and you may be surprised as I was at the number of correspondences.

- 1825 Erie Canal completion (followed by other canals opening up Indiana and Illinois to settlement)
- 1848 Gold discovered in California
- 1857 Gold discovered at Pike's Peak, Colorado
- 1857 Panic of 1857 – an economic disaster, it results in the recall of mortgages, low pay for crops
- 1860-65 Civil War
- 1863-65 Steep incline in prices; low crops prices; high rail costs to transport crops (good for manufacturers, hard on farmers)
- 1866 Depression following Civil War
- 1868 Ads begun in newspapers to attract emigrants west
- 1873 Railroad Panic – another economic downfall
- 1874 Gold discovered in Black Hills of the Dakotas (A means to get the public interested in a topic other than the depression and corruption of the Railroad Panic)
- 1874 Worldwide depression
- 1875 Grasshoppers on the plains of Dakota Territory and Kansas
- 1879 Economic Hard Times – another depression
- 1875-79 Poor crop years on the prairies
- 1887 Dawes Act (breaking up communal Native American reservation lands; opened to white settlement)
- 1886 Gold discovered in Alaskan Klondike
- 1889-01 Subsequent Land Runs in Oklahoma

MCGS Newsletter, Vol. 33, No. 9, October 1999

CLINTON J. DAVISSON

McLean County's Nobel Prize Winner

By Rand Veerman, TMC GS President



Clinton Joseph Davisson was born on October 22, 1881 in Bloomington, Illinois, the county seat of McLean County. His father, Joseph Davisson, was an artisan originally from Ohio who had settled in Bloomington after service in the Union Army and worked as a painter or builder contractor. His mother, Mary Calvert Davisson, came from Pennsylvania and worked as a teacher. Clinton had a sister, Carrie, who resided in Bloomington for 50 years, passing away in Fisher, IL in 1969.

Clinton was curious about science and physics from an early age. A *Pantagraph* article claims he used the family ice box to store wet cell batteries used for experiments. The family was not wealthy, so Clinton worked many jobs to get through school, including a stint as a night operator for the McLean County Telephone Company. He graduated from Bloomington High School in 1902, a hard-working young man from the Midwest.

Because he had to work to support his way thru school, he did not obtain his BS from University of Chicago until 1908. He continued to work and study obtaining his doctorate from Princeton in 1911, working under Owen Richardson. He would marry Charlotte Sara Richardson, the sister-in-law of his academic advisor, the same year he graduated. The couple would have four children together: three sons (Owen, James, Richard) and a daughter (Elizabeth). Their son Richard would follow in dad's footsteps becoming a physicist.

From 1911 to 1917 he was an instructor in physics at Carnegie Institute of Technology at Pittsburgh. He left to do war research at Western Electric and then joined Bell Telephone Laboratories. It was here that he conducted his experiments which led to his Nobel Prize in 1937 – shared with George Paget Thompson “for their experimental discovery of the diffraction of electrons by crystals.” He was one of the pivotal physicists of the early 20th century whose work confirmed that electrons, like light, can exhibit wave behavior. This is one of the principal foundations of quantum mechanics leading to the nuclear age. His combination of brilliance and persistence paid off with contributions recognized the world over.

In addition to the Nobel, he received the Comstock Prize in Physics from the National Academy of Sciences (1928), the Elliot Cresson Medal from the Franklin Institute (1931), and the Hughes Medal from the Royal Society (1935).

Clinton J. Davisson was an inspiration from humble beginnings in Bloomington, Illinois to the Nobel ceremony in Sweden. He died February 1, 1958, and his Find a Grave memorial is 226798821.

Sources: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clinton_Davisson
<https://adityalibrary.blogspot.com/2016/10/scientist-of-day-clinton-davisson.htm>
The Pantagraph, February 3, 1958, Page 18.

THE RISE AND FALL OF NUNCUPATIVE WILLS IN ILLINOIS: A GENEALOGICAL AND LEGAL HISTORY

By Rand Veerman, President, TMC GS
with a little AI assistance



When tracing family history, few documents are as valuable as wills. They reveal family relationships, economic status, social ties, and even last-minute decisions that shaped inheritance for generations. Yet many genealogists encounter situations where no written will seems to exist, even though property passed in a seemingly organized way. One possible explanation, especially in the 1800s, is the once-recognized practice of creating a **nuncupative will** — a last, spoken testament made on the deathbed.

Illinois, like many early American states, allowed nuncupative wills for over a century. But the doctrine had a turbulent history, gradually restricted by the courts and ultimately abolished in 1975. This article provides a clear historical overview of how oral wills emerged, evolved, and disappeared in Illinois, and the landmark cases that marked turning points along the way. Genealogists researching 19th-century Illinois estates may find that understanding this legal history sheds light on probate records, unexpected property transfers, or references in court files to “spoken wishes” or “verbal declarations.”

Early Illinois: Inheriting the English Tradition

In early settlement days, Illinois followed English law, which permitted oral wills under special circumstances. The frontier environment was one of limited literacy, sparse legal infrastructure, and sudden illness. In such settings, the law allowed a dying person to express their final wishes aloud, especially regarding **personal property** such as livestock, tools, furniture, money, or household goods. For genealogists, this means:

- Some families left a **written will**, while others left none.
- Yet property might still have been distributed according to a dying person's words.
- Probate books sometimes contain testimony from neighbors or family describing "the last words" of the deceased.

This legal flexibility fit the practical needs of early Illinois but also created opportunities for misunderstanding or fraud.

Growing Skepticism and Greater Formality

By the late 1800s, Illinois courts voiced increasing concerns about oral wills. Judges noted that these wills depended entirely on witness memory, could easily be misrepresented, and often led to family disputes. Courts began insisting on clearer proof of testamentary intent (the intention to make a will) and closer adherence to statutory requirements, such as:

- The testator must be **in extremis**, meaning close to death.
- The spoken wishes must be made before **two competent witnesses**.
- The statements must clearly be intended as a **final disposition of property**.
- Witnesses needed to understand that they were present for a **testamentary act**, not casual conversation.

Even with these concerns, the Illinois Supreme Court issued one of its most significant nuncupative-will decisions at the end of the 19th century.

In re Grossman's Estate (1898): The High-Water Mark

The 1898 case *In re Grossman's Estate* represents the most generous moment in Illinois history toward oral wills. In that case, the decedent, knowing death was near, declared his final wishes to people attending him, expressing whom he wanted to receive certain personal property. Witnesses testified consistently, and the Illinois Supreme Court held that:

- The decedent's statements showed clear **intent** to make a will.
- The witnesses understood the significance of what they heard.
- The statutory requirements were satisfied.

The court admitted the nuncupative will to probate.

For genealogists, *Grossman* is important because it explains why some late-19th-century estates include testimony of spoken declarations but no written document. It also stands as a last example of the courts giving oral wills the benefit of the doubt.

The Restrictive Era: 1900–1935

After *Grossman*, Illinois courts increasingly limited the circumstances in which an oral will could be recognized. Several key cases shifted the doctrine:

1. *Graham v. Deuterman (1901)*

Witnesses had to know explicitly that they were hearing a *will*, not merely suggestions or instructions. Casual conversation in the last illness was no longer acceptable.

2. *Wallace v. Harris (1910)*

Witnesses had to agree almost word-for-word on what was said. Even modest inconsistencies could invalidate the will.

3. *Manning v. Mock (1916)*

The testator needed to **summon witnesses** or intentionally address them as witnesses to a will. This effectively imposed ceremony on a supposedly informal procedure.

4. *In re Will of Mills (1933)*

If the decedent had *any opportunity* to make a written will, even briefly, the oral will would not be allowed. Only sudden or catastrophic situations — where writing was genuinely impossible — could justify a nuncupative will.

Collectively, these decisions made oral wills extremely difficult to uphold. By the mid-20th century, Illinois courts almost always invalidated them.

Mid-Century Decline and Legislative Abolition

By the 1940s and 1950s, nuncupative wills were effectively extinct in court practice. Judges treated them as legal relics, and probate lawyers rarely attempted to establish them. Concerns about fraud, misinterpretation, and unpredictable testimony had overshadowed their original purpose.

Finally, in 1975, Illinois enacted a major overhaul of its probate laws. As part of this reform, the state **abolished all authority for nuncupative wills**. From that point forward:

- **All wills must be written**, signed by the testator, and witnessed according to statute.
- **No oral will has any legal validity** in Illinois today, regardless of circumstances.

For modern genealogists researching earlier generations, this means that post-1975 estates will never involve oral wills, while earlier estates may contain testimony or references to last spoken wishes.

Why This Matters for Genealogical Research

Understanding the rise and fall of oral wills in Illinois can help genealogists in several ways:

1. Explaining missing documents

If no written will exists for an ancestor who clearly directed property to specific individuals, an oral will — especially before 1900 — may explain the absence.

2. Interpreting probate testimony

Statements from neighbors or relatives may reflect oral-will proceedings rather than ordinary intestate (non-will) distribution.

3. Locating overlooked court files

Nuncupative wills often generated:

- Depositions
- Witness narratives
- Probate court findings

These materials may be in probate packets or circuit court case files.

4. Understanding family conflict

Oral wills frequently resulted in disputes, which may explain:

- Sudden rifts between siblings
- Litigation found in county dockets
- Unusual or contested property transfers

5. Contextualizing estate values

Because Illinois statutes limited oral wills to **personal property**, large farms or land holdings would not pass through them. This can clarify patterns of land inheritance.

Conclusion

The history of nuncupative wills in Illinois traces a fascinating arc: from a frontier necessity to a cautiously tolerated exception, to a disfavored and ultimately abolished legal relic. For genealogists, this history offers insight into probate practices, family decision-making, and the lived experiences of ancestors facing their final moments. Understanding the doctrine's evolution enriches our interpretation of estate records and deepens our appreciation of the complexities of historical inheritance law.

MCLEAN COUNTY WILLS, ESTATES, AND GUARDIAN CASES

By Rand Veerman

Will Book 1 is the first record of McLean County Circuit Clerk Probate Court. This court took care of Wills, Estates, Probate and Guardianship. The first case was a guardianship case for Arata F. Baldwin, who was "nineteen years the 25th day of February last [1838]." The case was heard by W. P. Brown, Probate Justice of the Peace, dated November 23, 1838. McLean County was founded on December 25, 1830, so getting a court system established took a while. In this case we learn his age, birthdate, and that John Moore was appointed guardian of Arata's property until age 21. Arata must have been a male because females required guardians only until age 18 as opposed to males who needed guardianship until age 21.

In the TMCGS microfilm collection we have several reels labeled McLean County Circuit Clerk. We had the microfilm scanned and converted to digital images. Some of the images came out very light and hard to read, so each page must be "massaged" using brightness and contrast to enhance readability. Everything is in cursive and some are difficult to read.

37
I Mary Greenman of the county of McLean in the state of Illinois do make and publish this my last Will and Testament in money and farm following that is to say
First it is my Will that my funeral expenses and all my just ~~debts~~ debts be fully paid Second I give and bequest to my son Teremiah Greenman the whole of my personal property of every description also what money may be due me as a Pension at my Decease Third I give and bequest unto my Daughter Mary Dunham my Silver Thimble having during my life time given her property more than equivalent to what would have been her part of my Deceased husbands property Fourth I give and bequest to my Grand Daughter Mary Thompson my Gold Watch and lastly I hereby constitute and appoint my son Teremiah Greenman to be the Executor for this my last Will and Testament revoking and annulling all former Wills by me made and ratifying and confirming this and no other to be my last Will and Testament
In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this Sixth day of October 1838
Mary Greenman

Page 37 of Will Book 1 after enhancement. The Last Will of Mary Greenman.
Digitized from microfilm by The McLean County Genealogical Society

In addition to what we find in Will Book 1, the Circuit Clerk has the original filings of each case. Each file is stored in a Box with a Case Number assigned. Nola G. Marquardt of TMC GS created a five-volume set of the probate and guardian cases indexed by Name providing the date, case type, and Box # and File # should you want to see what is in the Clerk's holdings. The set is available for purchase, or available to all members thru our website. The Clerk's office will conduct searches, but a fee may apply.

Box No.	Case No.	Date of Letters	Estate	Nature of Estate	Docket
931	20091	Oct 9 1937	Anderson, Luther	Admr.	D
651	15975	Feb 12 1927	Anderson, Madeleine	Gdm.	
273	7383		Anderson, Maggie C.	Will	
186	5757	Nov 23 1898	Anderson, Mary et al	Minors	
416	10034	May 28 1913	Anderson, Mary F.	Adm.	
265	7228	May 23 1904	Anderson, Mary Susan	Will	
813	18384	Apr 24 1933	Anderson, Matilda C.	Will	
938	20209	Jan 24 1938	Anderson, Maude Crigler	Admr.	D
755	17491	Nov 17 1930	Anderson, Millard F.	Admr.	

Sample (Anderson) of Probate Index created by Nola G. Marquardt for The McLean County Genealogical Society and available to members or for sale in our publication store online.

Will Book 1 contains an interesting assortment of cases. One of the oddest hearings concerns a gentleman who married a young woman under the age of 18 and then petitioned the court to become her guardian. It turned out ok as they stayed married and had nine children. Most of the estates are for people who died intestate (without a will).

Illinois law up until the turn of the century recognized "nuncupative" wills. These wills seem a little suspect by today's standards, and some of the wills entered into Will Book 1 are of the nuncupative type. Here are the differences:

- 1) A nuncupative will is a reconstruction of the deceased wishes as testified to by two or more witnesses. The wishes must have been expressed in the testator's final sickness. The witnesses are supposed to be disinterested parties.
- 2) The testator's will must be presented orally to court within 20 days of death (fresh memory of the wishes). The requirements are discussed in *In Grossman's Estate*, 175 Ill. 425, 51 N.E. 750 (1898).
- 3) Following the Illinois Supreme Court ruling *In Grossman's Estate*, the courts progressively tightened, Grossman was a permissive ruling.
- 4) Back then, many people could not read or write. Their signature is made by someone else or their mark was witnessed by someone else.
- 5) Today's wills require a written document that is signed by the deceased and witnessed by two individuals. In some cases, a third party can sign the document at the direction of the testator if properly witnessed. The changes outlawing nuncupative wills were made sometime between 1898 and 1939.

In resolution of an estate, the spouse had the option to request being administrator (controlling the assets and their distribution per law) supervised by the judge. In many of the cases when a female spouse survived her husband it is stated in the hearing that she is waiving the right of administration and nominating another (typically a male relative).



There is a difference between real property and personal property in how it is inherited. Real property is land. Personal Property is assets other than land. Illinois inheritance rules prior to January 1, 1972 involved the woman having a “dower” interest in all the real property owned by their husbands. The dower interest for an intestate probate provided the widow inherited a life estate in 1/3 of the real property they had accumulated together and a 1/3 fee simple interest in the personal property. The other heirs (children) of the deceased

would inherit 2/3 of the real property, a remainder interest in the wife’s life estate, and 2/3 of the personal property. When mom died, the children inherited the other 1/3 interest in the real property

This meant the children have vested ownership of any lands, cash or property as of the date of death. The court required a guardian be appointed to protect those minor’s interests. Often the mother would petition the court to be guardian of her own children, with court supervision over how assets were used. Periodically the judge would call the widow in for an accounting.

Disposition of Assets for Intestate Estate (no Will):

Let’s assume John Doe dies in 1840 intestate and leaving his wife and two children. The children are a son and a daughter. The estate is valued at \$900 and the deceased owned 120 acres of land.

- 1) The real estate (land) is divided as follows:
 - a) The widow received a life estate in one-third of the real property — this was her “dower” and is the right to utilize 40 acres ($1/3 \times 120$) for her life
 - b) The children (or their descendants) received the remainder in fee simple, divided equally among them (what was left after the widow’s dower), or 40 acres each
 - c) The children also inherit the remainder of their mother’s life estate. They are called remaindermen and shall split her acreage upon her death.

- 2) The personal estate (money, goods, livestock, etc.) was divided as follows:
 - a) The widow received one-third of the personal estate absolutely – \$300.00.
 - b) The remaining two-thirds were divided equally among the children (or their descendants, if a child had died). \$300.00 each.

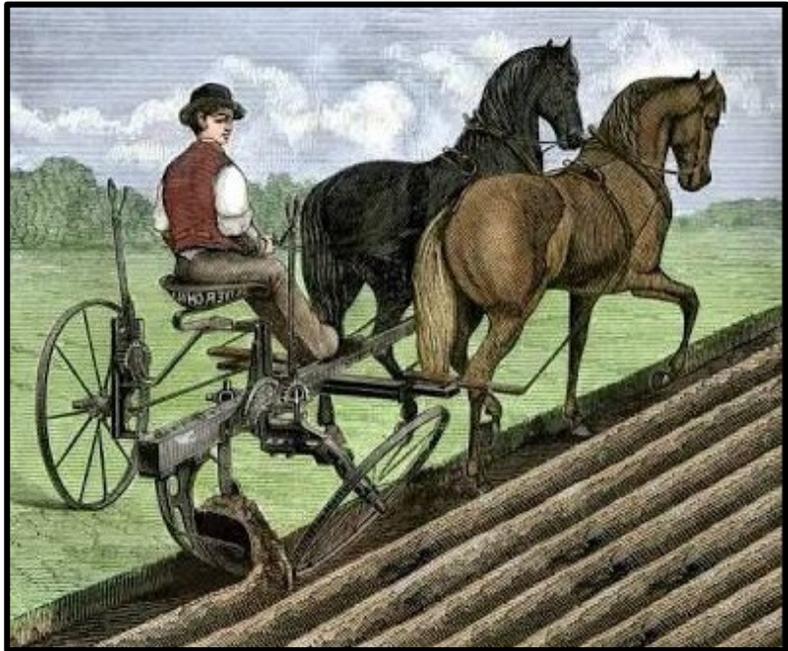
So, in this example — a wife and two children — the widow would take:

- **1/3 of the personal property outright,**
- **a life estate in 1/3 of the real property,**
and the two children would share equally the remaining 2/3 of the personal property and the reversion of the land (40 acres) upon their mother's passing.

The widow is prohibited from selling or getting a loan on the property because she does not own it outright. This dower right gave her **a life estate in one-third of the husband's lands** — she could **possess and receive income** (rents, crops) during her lifetime, but:

- She **did not own** the property in fee simple.
- Her interest **ended at her death.**
- The **children (heirs)** held the *reversion* — i.e., they would receive full title when she died.

Unfortunately, if the deceased husband was a farmer with small children, there would be no one to work the land. Renting the land was not sufficient to support a family. I have come across several names of deceased persons in the tax sale notices a few years after death. The wife was prohibited from selling - and renting was not profitable - so the tax man got it.



Illinois became a state on December 3, 1818 and in 1819 state law was established that banned primogeniture. That is the English practice of allowing only males to inherit property.

Most of the states abolished this soon after creation. The abolition of primogeniture was seen as more in line with the nation's ideals of equality and the desire to prevent concentration of wealth and power within a few families.

In 1951, Illinois law was changed to allow the spouse to inherit a fee simple interest in the land, but dower remained part of Illinois estate law until January 1, 1972.

When the probate case is opened, the petitioner to the court gives an estimated value of the estate. Routinely the judge will require that day a probate bond be given in the amount of 2x the estimated value. A bond in the 1850's was not a cash transaction like it is today. Instead of putting up cash, the bond guarantor pledged their personal fortunes to the estate should anything be found by the judge to be amiss in how the estate is handled. At least two people would guarantee the bond, usually the person appointed administrator (spouse or other) and another relative. In large estates,

\$5,000 and up, the judge would appoint a team of appraisers to inventory the estate and get back to the court to ensure the probate bond was high enough. On large bonds four or more people would be guarantors.

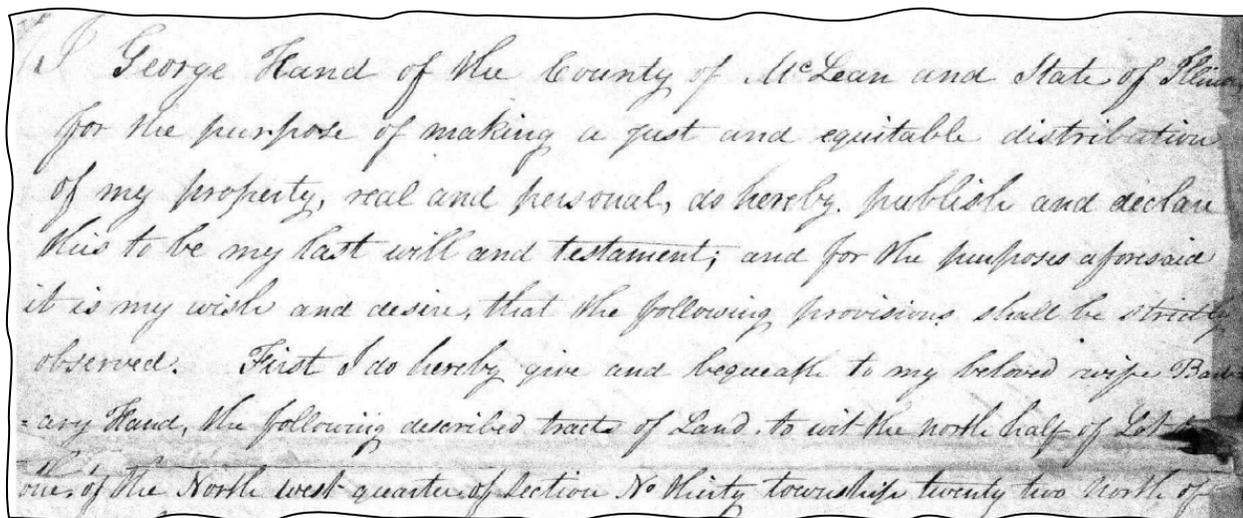
While the commercial bond business was not like it is today with licensed businesses, some men frequently acted as guarantors on probate bonds. It is likely they were compensated in some fashion for assuming this risk. It is easy to see how one estate can involve a lot of people. The deceased, witnesses to the will, appraisers, bond guarantors, and interested parties all factored in with the judge still finding problems and trying to be fair with all.

Genealogy Treasure in the McLean County Clerk Files

I asked the clerk to pull several files for me to get a representation of what could be found in the boxes. Some cases are very detailed with everything filed, and others contain next to nothing. Below are some of what I discovered.

George Hand estate – Date of Death August 27, 1845. Will Dated January 1844. Wife is Barbary and children are Melisa, Philip, Solomon, Lucinda, George Washington, Cynthia, and William Fletcher Hand. Married daughters are Betsey Marbary, Polly Marbary, Milley Stringfield, Nancy Brock, Susan Holloway, and Delila Weedman. That is 13 living children at the time of his death. All are named in the will with daughters getting bequests of \$400 for Melisa to the others splitting the residual of the estate after mom got her dower. Sons inherited land or cash of \$100. Estate is valued at \$2,500 with a \$5,000 probate bond set. No appraisers were appointed. There are 21 names associated with this estate.

The actual will was in the box and written on a large paper that is very brittle with age. The Clerk's office does not allow any electronic devices or cameras. A patron is limited to purchasing copies and the machine is not oversized. The copies chopped the will into 5 pages (the 5th was a codicil). I digitally enhanced this image to make it more readable



I George Hand of the County of McLean and State of Illinois for the purpose of making a just and equitable distribution of my property, real and personal, do hereby publish and declare this to be my last will and testament; and for the purposes aforesaid it is my wish and desire, that the following provisions shall be strictly observed. First I do hereby give and bequeath to my beloved wife Barbary Hand, the following described tracts of Land, to wit the north half of Lot one of the North west quarter of Section No Ninety township twenty two North of

Page 1 of George Hand Will from McLean County Circuit Clerk File 247

Know all Men by these Presents,

That we, *John Moore Barbary Hand John Mabary & James Adams*
of the county of *McLean* and state of Illinois, are held and
firmly bound unto the People of the state of Illinois, in the penal sum of
Five Thousand Dollars, current money of
the United States; for which payment, well and truly to be made and per-
formed, we, and each of us, bind ourselves, our heirs, executors, administra-
tors and assigns, jointly and severally, firmly by these Presents. Witness
our hands and seals this *16th* day of *September* A. D. 18*45*

The Condition of the above Obligation is such, That if
the said *John Moore Barbary Hand & John Mabary* executors
of the last will and testament of *George Hand*
deceased, do make, or cause to be made, a true and perfect inventory of all
and singular the goods and chattels, rights and credits, lands, tenements and
hereditaments, and the rents and profits issuing out of the same, of the said
deceased, which have or shall come to the hands, possession, or knowledge
of the said *John Moore Barbary Hand & John Mabary* into the posses-
sion of any other person for *them*; and the same so made do exhibit in
the Court of Probate for the said county of *McLean* agreeably to
law; and also make and render a fair and just account of *their* actings and
doings, as such executor, to said Court, when thereunto lawfully required,
and to well and truly fulfill the duties enjoined upon him in and by the said
will; and shall moreover pay, and deliver to the persons entitled thereto,
all the legacies and bequests contained in said will, so far as the estate of
the said testator will thereunto extend, according to the value thereof, and
as the law shall charge him; and shall in general do and perform all other
acts which may at any time be required of *them* by law, then this obliga-
tion to be void; otherwise to remain in full force and virtue.

A. Patterson
John Patterson

John Moore Barbary & Hand
John Mabary
James Adams

The box contained the original will and the codicil which changed Melisa's inheritance from \$400 to a life estate in a farm. That was unfortunate because Melissa died in 1856 at the age of 25.

In the box are witness statements as to the truthfulness of the will and codicil.

There is no inventory of the estate and nothing that indicates how the assets were distributed. Other files do contain detailed inventories.

Probate bond with guarantor signatures for the George Hand estate.

Joseph Slatten estate - Date of Death November 25, 1838. Initial petition said no will (intestate). A Will later appears and is in the file. Wife is Martha and children are not named in court filing. The Box contains a final agreement of disposition signed by John Slatten, Benjamin Slatten, W. S. Pew, William Deyer, John Miller, John Christenson, and Landers Slatten. Appraisers were ordered by the court. Estimate of value was \$3,000 so a \$6,000 bond was set and guaranteed by Benjamin Slatten (the appointed administrator) and Ropel Post. This file contained a lot of paperwork – 29 copies – many of which were the very detailed inventory – with items being valued down to the ½ penny. To see all documents, I recommend you visit the Clerk and examine them yourself as the staff stated several items were just too fragile to copy. Hopefully you can get a feel from these documents as to the difficulty of reading the writing, understanding what is happening, and the hardships our early settlers endured. Some files contain “gold” with birth and death dates, complete names, and names of neighbors or relatives.

McLean County
We Martha Slatten Milover
and John Slatten and Landers Slatten
sons of Joseph Slatten late of said County
and state deceased do hereby relinquish our
right to Administer on said Estate and
it is our wish that Benjamin Slatten
be appointed to Administer of the said
Estate witness our hands this 18th day
of December A.D. 1838
Martha Slatten
Landers Slatten
John Slatten

The surviving spouse has the right to be administrator of their spouse's estate. This right must be relinquished before another person can be appointed by the court. The above document

relinquishes the role of administrator to Benjamin Slatten signed by widow Martha Slatten and sons Landers Slatten and John Slatten.

McLean COUNTY,)
The People of the State of Illinois, To John Robb, John Strange and Joseph Tyler of the county of McLean and State of Illinois, Greeting:
This is to authorize you, jointly, to appraise the goods, chattels, and personal estate of Joseph Slatten late of the county of McLean and State of Illinois, deceased, so far as the same shall come to your sight and knowledge, each of you having first taken the oath (or affirmation) hereto annexed; a certificate whereof, you are to return, annexed to an appraisement bill of said goods, chattels, and personal estate, by you appraised, in dollars and cents; and in the said bill of appraisement you are to set down in a column or columns, opposite to each article appraised, the value thereof.
Witness, J.P. Brown Probate Justice of the Peace, in and for said county of, McLean at his office in Bloomington this 2^d day of January AD 1837.
J.P. Brown Probate Justice of the Peace.

Appointment of John Robb, John Strange, and Joseph Tyler as appraisers to the estate of Joseph Slatten.

Appraisers were not usually appointed for estates under \$1,000.

A note for \$700.00 owed by Moses L. Knapp. Due in 5 years with a 12% interest rate. Paid \$10 on the note in October 1837. Inventoried with the estate of Joseph Slatten. It is not known who inherited this note or if it was ever paid.

A further Inventory of the Estate of Joseph Slatten deceased of property which we have since inventory filed
Note for Jos. Slatten against Moses L. Knapp of date June 1836 for seven hundred dollars due at five yrs with twelve per cent interest from date payable annually =
Credit ten Dollars in 1837. October =
I certify the foregoing to be a true inventory of the effects of said Joseph deceased since first inventory

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, That we, *Benjamin Slatten and John Slatten*

of the county of *McLean* and State of Illinois, are held and firmly bound unto the State of Illinois, in the penal sum of *Six thousand* Dollars, current money of the United States, which payment, well and truly to be made and performed, we, and each of us, bind ourselves, our heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns, jointly, severally, and firmly by these presents. Witness our hands and seals, this *2^d* day of *January* 183*8*.

The Condition of the above Obligation is such, That if the said *Benjamin Slatten* Administrator of all and singular the goods and chattels, rights and credits of *Joseph Slatten* deceased, doth make, or cause to be made, a true and perfect inventory, of all and singular the goods and chattels, rights and credits of the said deceased, which shall come to the hands, possession, or knowledge of *him* the said *Benjamin Slatten* as such Administrator or to the hands of any person or persons for *him*; and the same so made, doth exhibit, or cause to be exhibited, in the Court of Probate for the county of *McLean* agreeably to law; and such goods and chattels, rights and credits, which shall be found remaining upon the account of the said Administrator the same being first examined and allowed by the Court of Probate, shall deliver and pay unto such person or persons, respectively, as may be legally entitled thereto; and further, do make a just and true account of all *his* acts and doings therein, when thereunto required by the said Court; and if it shall hereafter appear that any last will and testament was made by the deceased, and the same proved in Court, and letters testamentary or of administration be obtained thereon, and the said *Benjamin Slatten* doth in such case, on being required thereto, render and deliver up the Letters of Administration granted to *him* as aforesaid, and shall, in general, do and perform all other acts which may, at any time be required of *him* by law, then this obligation to be void, otherwise to remain in full force and virtue.

In presence of *W. P. Brewer* *Benjamin Slatten*
John Slatten

Probate Bond agreement for \$6,000 guaranteed by Benjamin Slatten and John Slatten for the estate of Joseph Slatten who died November 25, 1838. From estate files of McLean County Circuit Clerk.

December 30 "1837

\$1000 Two days after date I promise to pay
John Slatten or order the sum of one
thousand dollars for value received
as witness my hand and seal this day
and year above written.

Joseph Slatten

\$1000.00 note inventoried in estate of Joseph Slatten due in two days owed to John Slatten. The purpose of this note is not known. Perhaps it was to ensure John received assets from the estate of at least \$1,000.

I Benjamin Slatten Administrator
Estate of Joseph Slatten Dec. of McLean
County Ill. in conformity with Law
have set apart of said estate the
following articles to wit
one Bed & bedding sufficient for the
family - Provision sufficient for one
year

The following Described articles the
Widow retained at the appraisment

	\$	cents
one Red and White Cow	12	00
1 Red & white calf	02	50
3 ewes & lambs	06	00
1 Iron Kettle	02	00
1 Meat tub	01	00
3 Barrels	00	25
1 Big Spinning Wheel	01	00
1 - Stand	01	00
1 - Sieve	00	37 1/2
1 Pot Hammel	01	50
scales & Weights	00	62 1/2
1 candle stick	00	50
2 chair	00	62 1/2
1 Lot Coloured Ware	03	00
1 Cupboard	08	00
1 Looking Glass	00	50
1 Bureau	20	00
4 Blankets	08	50
1 Bible	02	50

\$71.87 1/2

Total amount

Benjamin Slatten Administrator

Widow's share personal property. Other property was often sold to divide up amongst heirs.

Four pages of additional inventory were in the box detailing every animal and item. Examples from other pages:

Churn	\$1.00
Grinding stone	\$1.00
Folding Leaf table	\$2.50
Clock	\$8.00
Lot of Books	\$5.00
2 plates	\$0.37
2 hoes	\$0.25
1 Box of Spring Wheat	\$9.37
1 Big shining wheel	\$1.00
1 pair scales	\$0.62
1 Black & white cow	\$12.00
1 red calf	\$2.00
4 Blankets	\$8.50
2 Bedsteds (sic)	\$3.00
1 Bible	\$2.50
1 corner cubbord (sic)	\$8.00
1 Lot pewterware	\$2.75
1 Lot colored ware	\$8.00
1 white mare	\$15.00
1 brown cow	\$12.00
1 Hay stack	\$6.00
1 Log chain	\$3.50
1 bee hive	\$3.00

one estate of Joseph Slatten dec'd to
 David Wheeler Dr.
 20 Madrin. & attendance of 14-75
 Sept. 17, 1858

This may certify that I believe the
 above amount to be correct and am
 willing it should be allowed.
 V. May 20, 1859

I, Joseph Slatten of the County of McLean
 and State of Illinois do hereby certify that my last
 will - I wish to give and devise with my
 wife Martha - all and every my property
 - Lands, tenements, and hereditaments with the
 appurtenances - to her and to my heirs in fee, estate
 living and being - in the County of McLean and State
 of Illinois - known and described as follows -
 The East-half of the North West-Quarter of
 Section Twenty-eight (28) in the East-half of the
 West-Quarter of Section Twenty-eight (28) in the West-
 Quarter of the North West-Quarter of Section 36 in the
 Township of North, one North of Albany
 one East of the Third Principal Meridian -
 To have unto her the said Martha Slatten for
 the term of her life, and after her decease
 to my son Joseph his heirs and assigns
 forever - I Witness whereof I have hereunto
 set my hand and seal this eleventh day
 of June in the Year of our Lord one thousand
 - and Eight hundred and thirty eight -
 Joseph Slatten
 My name published and declared
 by the said Joseph Slatten, as
 and for his last will and testament
 in presence of us who at his request
 signed as witnesses before him in his
 presence and in the presence of
 each other
 Russell Pelt
 Nathan Reed

A surprise in the file of Joseph Slatten was this will. Remember, the original petition cited no will and the case was filed as Intestate. The will document references wife Martha receiving a life estate in one tract of the farm ground and then having it pass to his son Joseph. This is different from what the intestate distribution of assets would have been.

Also the following Real Estate, to wit:

The South East corner of Lot No (2) two in Block No (18) Eighteen, in Posts Addition to the town of Waynesville (as follows) Extending North twenty four feet from the South East corner of said Lot & extending West from said S. E. corner twenty feet, twenty four feet wide -

Lots Nos (5) Five and (6) Six in Block No (8) Eight in the Addition to the Town of Waynesville -

The East Half of the North West quarter of Section No 28 in Township No 21 North of Range No 1 East containing Eighty Acres -

The East half of the South West quarter of Section No 28 in Township 21 North of Range No 1 East containing Eighty Acres -

The North half of the North West quarter of Section No 33 in Township No 21 North of Range 1 East containing Forty Acres -

The West half of the South East quarter of Section No 28 in Township No 21 North of Range No 1 East containing Ten Acres -

I do hereby certify the above to be a true Inventory of the Estate of Joseph Slatten deceased so far as the same has come to my knowledge
 February 26th 1859 Benjamin Slatten
 Administrator

210 acres of land were involved in the Joseph Slatten estate. McLean County Circuit Clerk file.

The documents included in this article are meant to encourage you to seek out your relative's probate files. As with many genealogical things, you may luck out to find some documents that help us to understand what our ancestors went through.

EVERGREEN CEMETERY, LAWNDALE TOWNSHIP, COLFAX, ILLINOIS

A cemetery in disrepair...but not for lack of trying

By Cheryl Budde, MCGS Corresponding Secretary



August 21, 1986 – *The Colfax Press* – “Lawndale cemetery will be cleaned the first rainy day after Aug. 23. All interested are invited to attend.”

July 2, 1897 – *The Colfax Press* – “Lawndale cemetery will be cleaned Tuesday, July 6. Everyone is invited to come and help. Don’t think that ‘there will be enough without me,’ for the more that come the sooner the work will be finished.”

August 3, 1900 – *The Colfax Press* – “The Evergreen cemetery is to be fixed up in good shape. Funds are being solicited for

the purpose, and \$120 has already been pledged. The ground is to be thoroughly overhauled and leveled and cleared that it may be kept clean with a lawnmower. It is a naturally handsome burying-ground, and timely attention will improve it a great deal.”

August 10, 1900 – *The Colfax Press* – “Notice. The committee in charge of improvements in Evergreen cemetery invite bids for cleaning and leveling the ground so that it may be kept clean with a lawnmower. A meeting will be held at the church on Monday, Aug. 13 at 4 p.m. to receive bids.”

September 20, 1901 – *The Colfax Press* – “The contract for grubbing, mowing and leveling the Lawndale cemetery has been let to Robert Greenlee, consideration, \$70. Work is expected to commence this week and is to be finished by Nov. 1. It is hoped that by next year the cemetery can be attended to with a lawn mower.



July 25, 1980 – *The Daily Pantagraph* – “The funds ran out, and Evergreen Cemetery doesn’t look like hallowed ground anymore.” The cemetery began when John Smith dedicated two acres for Evergreen Methodist Church and its cemetery. The church was torn down in the early 1930’s and the surrounding timbers were sold. The funds gained by that sale were added to a fund started by Mary Jane Hawthorne for cemetery upkeep. At some point the funds ran out and Lawndale Township has taken care of the mowing ever since. Mowing was not enough to keep the cemetery

hallowed ground. Yucca plants covered tombstones. In 1980, a backhoe was used to cut through underbrush. Stones and ornamental pieces were in heaps among the weeds.”

Some of the earliest Lawndale area settlers are buried in this cemetery, including John Cassedy, came here from New York in 1851 (later a member of the Illinois legislature). It was he who gave the township its name and who was the first township supervisor. This cemetery has numerous infants and small children buried here. John, George and William Henline and their families settled here in 1828; they were among the few settlers living in that area at that time. Just a few years later, in 1832, when the Blackhawk War broke out, there were enough settlers in the Lawndale, Martin and Lexington Townships that Henline Fort was built.

Some of the early settlers came from Ohio in the 1850's, among those families: Burdett, Burdette, Cassedy, Henline, Matheny, Moon, and Smith. By 1860, there were some 50 families living in Lawndale Township. Those early settlers looked for land where timber was available, providing a source of fuel, building material, and shelter for game. Later, tillable ground became as important as the timber. Colfax is about ½ mile from the Lawndale township line; it became the trading center for Lawndale, as did Lexington to the northwest and Anchor to the south. The proximity of Colfax is probably one of the reasons that a town didn't grow around the church, though there was a schoolhouse which also served as a town hall. Another factor: no railroad, which both Colfax and Anchor had.

Most of the earliest burials are probably lost to time. The newest burial is that of Avis M. nee Anderson Duvall Amann who was buried in August 2025. Avis' brother, Lyle was buried there in 2017. His wife Maggie A. (died 1974) and young daughter Cecilia (1967) are also fairly recent burials. Lyle Wilbur Anderson's birth was noted in *The Colfax Press* with more than the usual fanfare, “Master Lyle Wilber Anderson came into this world with what purports to be a championship in grandparents: twelve grandparents and great-grandparents stretched out to take him. Even more amazing, all with the exception of two reside in this locality.” (Note 1: I know how unique this is as I also had all of my grand- and great-grandparents living when I was born. My mother loved telling of this family achievement.) (Note 2: It was Lyle and Avis Mae's mother, Gladys Beatrice Fincham Anderson who donated the granite marker for Evergreen Cemetery in 2005. She is a descendant of both John Smith and Robert Fincham and many others in McLean County, Illinois.)

Elmo Scott Watson (1892-1951) wrote much about the history of Lawndale Township. In her publication, Muriel Martens Hoffman's (1914-2007) “History of Lawndale, Martin, and Anchor Townships and the Villages of Colfax and Anchor – McLean County, Illinois” provides even more insight into the life and times of a small town northwest of Colfax. I've had a copy of Elmo Scott Watson's history of Lawndale Township on my shelf for years and years, not knowing that he taught journalism at Northwestern University, or that he earned his Doctor of Letters at Illinois Wesleyan. I knew Muriel Martens Hoffman from her letters when I was actively researching my family history in McLean County. As an active historian and researcher of genealogy who published several family and local histories, she was also a founding member of the McLean County Genealogical Society. It was a few lines in her obituary that caught my attention as I write this morning, “Muriel's knowledge of area families and history resulted in a stream of inquiries by

persons doing family research. When asked by family and friends, ‘Do we have any famous relatives?’ her response was, ‘We have come from a long line of people who achieved what they may have accomplished through hard work.’ The lesson for the asker is clear.”

For additional reading: *Ancestors Yours and Mine*, Vol. I, # 4, pg. 94-95, Nov. 1975. “Evergreen Church, Lawndale Twp.”

Archivist Bill Kemp of the McLean County Historical Society, article in *The Pantagraph* (Feb. 19, 2012) about “Once-thriving Lawndale Township” provides more of the history of this long-gone town and its people. And, if you are driving around looking for Evergreen Cemetery in Lawndale Township, you will probably be thankful for GPS!

ILLINOIS INSANE ASYLUM

Adjudged Insane.

—Andrew Arkbach, a German who could speak no English, was sent to the county farm as an insane person yesterday. He is about 40 years old, and lives on the West Side. His mania has been in the line of thievery. Recently he took away all the contents of a neighbor's barn, piece by piece, including a lot of corn. When apprehended he was hard at work planting corn in his cellar, which was considered good evidence of a mind distraught.

Andrew Arkbach
Pantagraph, May 6, 1897. Page 7.

William Johnson
Pantagraph, August 21, 1897. Page 6.

Returned to Poor House.

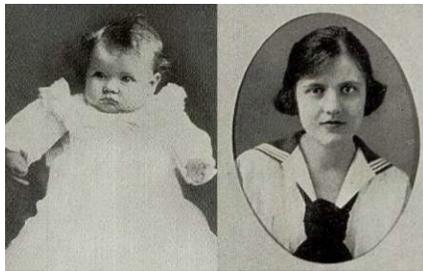
—William Johnson, of Leroy; John Gleason, of Bloomington, and Johanna Schaeka, Normal, inmates of the Kankakee insane asylum, have been pronounced incurably insane, and sent back to the McLean county poor farm, Deputy Sheriff George Johnson returning with them after taking Miss Agnes Amstadt to the asylum.

The Illinois insane asylum was located in Kankakee, and the McLean County Poor Farm was located in Bloomington. The above articles give you an indication as to what type of clients each served. If the person was not a threat, then Kankakee would send them back to the Poor Farm for care.

CLASS OF 1919 - AEGIS STAFF BLOOMINGTON HIGH SCHOOL YEARBOOK

By Pam Veerman, TMC GS Treasurer

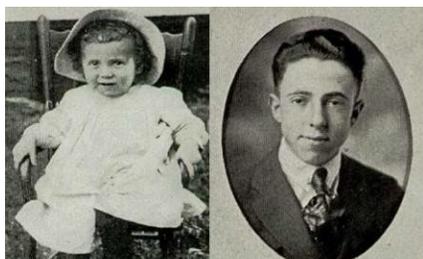
Over the years, many high schools include baby photos of their students at graduation or in the school yearbook. The AEGIS yearbook for the Bloomington High School Class of 1919 included baby pictures of their yearbook staff. Here are the pictures and a few select profiles:



Lela Carr—1900-1993
Literary Editor

Lela Bernice Carr was born in Macon, Illinois on June 19, 1900. She was the daughter of Seth and Georgia (Arnold) Carr. Although her parents lived in Macon, Illinois, Lela attended school in Bloomington. The Carr family has a long history in this country. Lela's 3x great grandfather, Joseph B Carr, was a soldier in the Revolutionary War. He was also a pioneer in Illinois coming to St Clair County in 1798. Ms. Carr graduated from the University of Chicago with a bachelor's degree in 1923. Lela accepted a position to teach school in Birmingham, Alabama. In 1928, she became Director of Welfare with the Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company in Birmingham,

Alabama. Lela held this position until 1934 when she accepted an offer to be a case worker with the Family Welfare Association in Decatur, Illinois. Ms. Carr returned to the University of Chicago and graduated with a master's degree in 1940. After graduation, she accepted a position as a caseworker with the Family Welfare Agency in Rockford, Illinois. Lela held this position until 1945 when she accepted a case supervisor position with the State Welfare department in Springfield, Illinois. She continued to work for the state of Illinois until her retirement in 1968. In 1977, Illinois Department and Family Services appointed a committee to make an in-depth review of the programs at the Illinois Soldiers' and Sailors' Children's School in Normal, Illinois. The Illinois House was considering closing the facility due to the excessive cost per resident to keep it running. Ms. Carr was appointed to head a sub-committee to evaluate the ISSCS programs. In 1978, the committee recommended ISSCS remain open but needed to add more residents to reduce the per resident cost. Efforts to increase the number of residents were not successful and ISSCS was closed in October 1979. Lela Bernice Carr passed away February 22, 1993.



Norval Goelzer—1902 1989
Advertising Manager

Norval Phillip Goelzer was born in Bloomington, Illinois to Charles Phillip and Anna P. (Holland) Goelzer on February 17, 1902. Mr. Goelzer attended Illinois Wesleyan University. He was hired as superintendent of Towanda schools after graduating in 1923. Norval was responsible for supervising the schools and teaching mathematics and science in the high school. Being an athlete in his school years, he started and coached basketball and track teams at Towanda high school. Norval married Margaret Lenna Rhea in Chicago on June 2, 1924. Mr. Goelzer held the superintendent position until he

joined his father in business purchasing the Heldman Clothing Store in 1925. Charles Goelzer was a manager and buyer for My Store clothing department for 28 years. The new business was named

Charles P. Goelzer & Son located on Main Street in Bloomington. Sadly, Charles Goelzer died of pneumonia on December 18, 1927. Norval and his mother Anna continued the business until closing the store in December 1931. The business filed for bankruptcy. The remaining stock and fixtures were auctioned off in January 1932. After the store closing, Norval became an insurance salesman for Freese & Jefferson, Inc. From this position, he was hired as an underwriting clerk with State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company in 1934. Norval found success with State Farm. In 1935, he was appointed manager of the underwriting division. Mr. Goelzer became manager of the Pacific Coast office of State Farm in 1936. Norval, Margaret and their two daughters moved to Berkeley, California. Mr. Goelzer led the expansion of the western office from 1936 to 1959, first as manager and then promoted to vice president in 1944. Norval was very service oriented. He contributed to the Berkeley community with leadership and fund-raising roles with Berkeley War Finance Committee, Community Chest, and United Crusade. Mr. Goelzer was also active with the Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Club. In 1960, Norval was promoted to vice president of the underwriting division of State Farm. He and Margaret moved back to Bloomington after 23 years on the west coast. State Farm promoted Norval again in 1962 to senior vice president. He held this role until his retirement in 1967. After retirement, he and his wife moved back to California. Margaret Goelzer passed away January 1, 1985, and Norval Goelzer died September 15, 1989, in Walnut Creek, California.



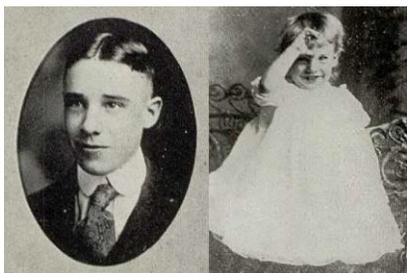
Rachel Merwin – 1899-1981
Recording Editor

Rachel Virginia Merwin was born in Bloomington, Illinois on May 19, 1899. She was the daughter of Clarence B. and Antoinette (Stone) Merwin. The Merwin family has a long history dating back to 1630 when her 6x great grandfather Miles Merwin arrived in America. Seven-year-old Miles traveled with his aunt and uncle from Plymouth, England to Nantasket, Massachusetts. Many hardships were experienced, but Miles survived marrying twice and fathering twelve children. Rachel's grandfather was Washington Irving Merwin of Kinderhook, New York. Washington's father, Jesse Merwin was a good friend of the author Washington Irving. As documented in a letter,

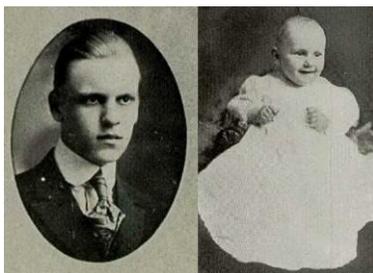
Washington Irving informed Jesse Merwin that Merwin was the inspiration for the character Ichabod Crane in the story "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." Jesse Merwin honored his good friend by naming his son after the famous author. The Merwin family came to McLean County in the 1870s. Clarence Merwin married Antoinette Stone in 1892. They were blessed with three daughters. Tragically, Rachel Merwin's sister Ruth was killed in December 1912. Ruth Merwin attended a party at the Lewis Stevenson home. Several boys at the party were home for the holidays from military school. Encouraged by the group, the boys prepared to demonstrate the manual of arms. Obtaining an old rifle and thoroughly examining the weapon for safety, the boys took turns showing the drills. While Adlai Stevenson II was demonstrating his skills, the rifle fired hitting Ruth and killing her instantly. A coroner's jury deemed this an accidental death and Adlai was exonerated. Two years later, Rachel's father Clarence passed away unexpectedly at the age of fifty-two. Rachel, her mother, and sister Margaret continued without their loved ones. After high school, Ms. Merwin studied for two years in Chicago and later graduated from Goucher College in Baltimore, Maryland. She was accepted to Columbia University School of Architecture in New York City. Rachel graduated in 1926. The American Institute of Architecture awarded her the gold medal for the greatest proficiency in all lines of work during the four-year program. This was the first time an award was made to a woman. Ms. Merwin also received second place honors in the

McKim fellowship competition. While at Columbia, Rachel met John Coggeshall and they were married in London, England in 1927. After graduation, Rachel was employed by the New York firm of Fuller & Dick. During her time with the firm, she designed residences and was a consultant for the British and Czechoslovakian buildings for the 1939 New York World's Fair. Unfortunately, Rachel's marriage did not last. She and John Coggeshall were divorced in 1943. Ms. Merwin became a freelance architect working in New York. In the winter, Rachel lived in New Smyrna Beach, Florida with her sister Margaret. Ms. Merwin split her time between New York and Florida until she passed away on January 2, 1981, in New Smyrna Beach.

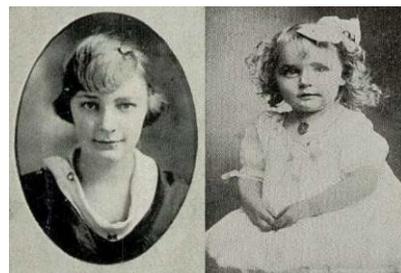
Other members of the 1919 AEGIS yearbook staff:



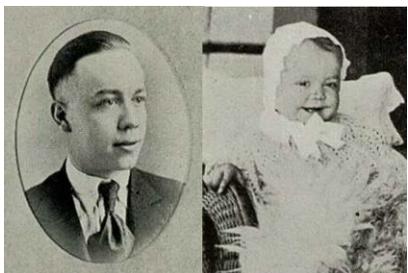
Parker Dooley – 1902-1966
Editor in Chief



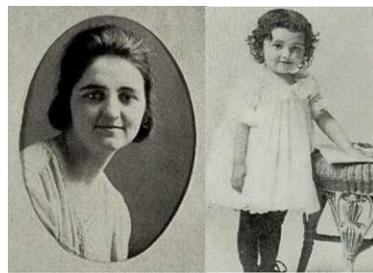
Herbert Bickel – 1903-1980
Athletic Editor



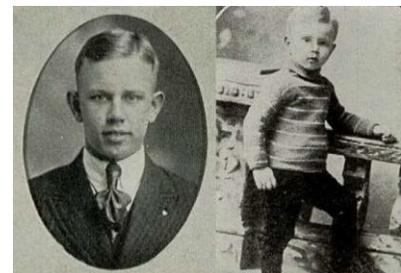
Bernice Read – 1902-1990
Alumni Editor



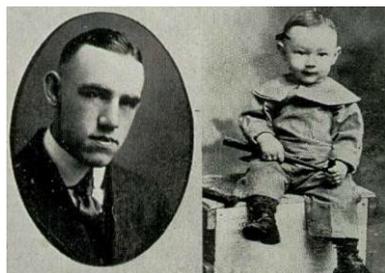
Morgan Albee – 1900-1973
Custodian Service Flag



Lelee Neuerberg – 1901-1952
Art Editor



William Duncan – 1900-1971
Subscription Manager



Edwin Lederer – 1900-1982
Assistant Advertising Manager



Robert Reenstjerna – 1901-1994
Humorous Editor

BLOOMINGTON STOVE COMPANY - SOME NOTES

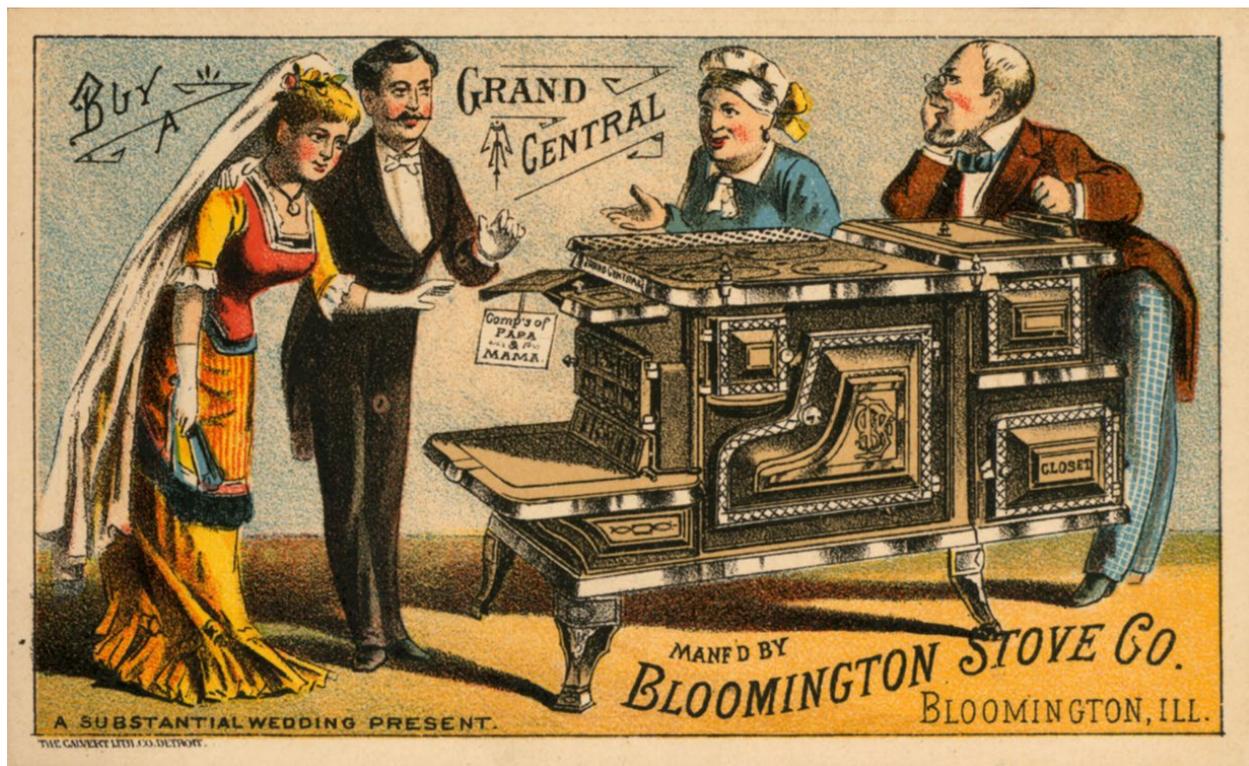
By Rand Veerman, TMC GS President

Bloomington Stove company was organized in 1870 to manufacture cast iron stoves and for many years was considered one of Bloomington-Normal's most successful businesses. It was perfectly located at the hub of rail corridors allowing the heavy stoves to ship across the United States. Skilled labor in B-N was in ready supply – *The Pantagraph* shows infrequent ads for skilled workers running occasionally meaning they kept their staff for longer periods of time. Many articles cite the company as employing between 40 and 45 individuals. After the Civil War, there was a boon of new households being formed, so their timing for entering the market was perfect.

William Van Schoick was already a successful businessman in brick making, he was no stranger to scheduling and ordering and putting things together. He was a stockholder and director upon formation and assumed the Presidency in 1885. George W. Brown was a longtime general manager and superintendent.

Stoves were more than hardware, they were household centerpieces. Manufacturers competed on heating efficiency, but also on how they looked. The company had a winning formula demonstrated by their sale of over 200,000 stoves over the years. Unfortunately, Mr. Van Schoick died in 1899. Competition was high as another local stove works started up, the Co-operative Stove Co. This company was started by some disgruntled employees. Times changed and the company had trouble, eventually being sold at a foreclosure auction in 1906 with W.O. Davis of *The Pantagraph* as principal creditor.

Postcard advertising Bloomington Stove Co.



“HOW TIME FLIES”
From the pages of *The Pantagraph*

Researched by Norma Steele of Withers Library Staff

MCLEAN COUNTY FIRSTS, Gleanings, Vol.. 2, No. 2, June 1968

The first child born in McLean County (actually part of Tazewell County as McLean County wasn't founded until 1830) was Elizabeth Ann Hendrix, 3 May 1823.

The first death in McLean County was a child of Thomas and Mary Malinda Orendorff.

The first white couple married in McLean County after the County was organized was Charity Weedman and Robert Rutledge. The ceremony performed on 9 June 1831 by Justice of the Peace, Nathan Brittin.

1885 – The 25th child has been born to a man and wife in Dillon township in Tazewell Co.

1926. Bloomington, in the days before the Civil War, contained a woman doctor, the first of her sex to practice in this community. Her name was Sarah Peckingpaugh, and she was the Carry Nation of the pre-war days and a pioneer temperance crusader. On her various trips in the rural districts, she always carried two revolvers and was not afraid to use them if occasion demanded. She was no molly coddle with a side saddle, but she rode astride and distained the horrified comment of the gentler sex who revolted at such unfeminine conduct. Every month or two, the temperance crusaders would break loose with a saloon wrecking stunt and Dr. Peckinpaugh was always the intrepid leader. The police officer, there were but few on duty in those days, usually strolled the other way when the women broke loose with their hatchets and hammers.”

EQUESTRIAN STATUES

Many towns and cities have equestrian statues in their parks. When you see such a Statue, notice position of the horse's feet: If they are all on the ground, it means the rider died a natural death. If one hoof is raised it means the rider died of wounds sustained in battle. Two hoofs in the air meant the rider was killed in battle. This is an international code followed by all sculptors.

Effingham Co. Gen. Soc. Vol. XII #2, Feb. 1991

SOCIAL SECURITY INFORMATION

“If your ancestor had a Social Security Number of 700-728, he worked for the railroad at some time, probably between 1937-1943. The Railroad Retirement Pension was set up at that same time as Social Security and railroaders received their own Social Security numerical prefix.

TMCGS Newsletter Vol. 25, No. 10, Nov. 1991

1904 Lexington has a country club with a membership of 25 families, or 100 persons. Included in this number are many of the most prominent persons of that city, as well as of the surrounding neighborhood. The location is two and a half miles east of Lexington, on Turkey Creek, being on the farm of Mr. Noah Franklin. A handsome pavilion has been erected this season, and it was dedicated last Friday with a dinner party, when 97 members sat down to a most sumptuous meal.

Dec. 14, 1929. Saybrook. Efforts to find the Saybrook home of Gen. James Harbord, begun here some weeks ago by the Progressive Literary Club have not only been successful but have also revealed many interesting events in the colorful life of the former chief of staff. The house in which Gen. Harbord once lived is a story and a half frame structure now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. M. F. Weakman and has been in possession of the Weakman family for 60 years. It is built of native lumber, has boarding of black walnut and sills of hewn oak. The original fence, which was built to keep "little Jimmie" close to home, is still intact.

March 12, 1955. Three McLean County doctors have been presented 50 year pins for the practice of medicine in Illinois. They are Dr. James C. McNutt and Dr. Frank H. Henderson of Bloomington, and Dr. George R. McGee of Hudson. Presentation of the pins, which enroll them in the nation's first "Fifty Year" Club for doctors, was made at a meeting of the McLean County Medical Society the past week. The club for physicians was started in Illinois in 1934, first in the United States. Its first member in McLean County was Dr. Rhoda G. Yolton, who received her pin in 1938.

Gleanings, Vol. 14, No. 2, June 1980

MEMORIUM Alice R. Ogle 87, died at Heritage Manor Nursing Home, Normal, on November 6, 1990. Interment was in Afton Cemetery Cherokee, Iowa. Miss Ogle was born August 6, 1903, at Cherokee County, Iowa, a daughter of Frank M. and Velma Anne Loft Ogle.

When we were "evicted" from both Withers Public Library and the Normal Public Library (at the time their new library building was completed) in the Spring of 1973, our Librarian then, Miss Alice Ogle, graciously offered to place the books in her home. She kept the library open to all on Wednesday afternoons, and on other days by special appointment. After this, Miss Ogle was made an HONORARY MEMBER of our Genealogical Society.

In 1977 Miss Alice Ogle presented us with a good used copier, which we were able to parlay, at a minimal cost to our Society, into the rental of the fine copier we now have. She also provided the steel shelving on the south wall of our room, on which we now shelve the many quarterlies we receive."

Gleanings, Vol. 24, No. 11, Dec. 1990

A LARGE FAMILY GATHERING AT GILMORE-RUTLEDGE REUNION

The LeRoy Journal, August 30, 1929
Contributed by Helen Meadors

The sixth annual reunion of the Gilmore-Rutledge families was attended by over one hundred at Miller Park last Sunday. The reunion included the descendants of James and Prudie Rutledge and William and Phoebe Gilmore.

Not the oldest member of the family, but the oldest one present at the reunion was Mrs. Jane Dolley of LeRoy, and the youngest was Helen, the sixteen-month-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Humphrey.

A complete family program was held following the dinner, including among other numbers, readings by Harry Humphrey and Mrs. Frank Story, both of this city, and a study of the Gilmore family by Mrs. Anna Gilmore, tracing the lineage back without a break for 200 years.

Miss Margaret Rutledge was elected president; Mrs. Mattie Storey, vice president; Etta Sarver, secretary-treasurer, all of LeRoy.

The Rutledge family is the same to which Ann Rutledge, the sweetheart of Abraham Lincoln, belonged. Heyworth and LeRoy were their pioneer regions while LeRoy and Bloomington were the early homes of the Gilmores.

The next reunion will probably be held in LeRoy.”



Image created by Rand Veerman using chatGPT version 5.2

QUERIES

How To Write A Good One

When was the last time you thought about asking for help through a query? If you have a McLean County brick wall, why not submit a query to MCGS? The Research committee will try to answer as much as possible. If they cannot find the answer, a query can be published in future MCGS Newsletters or Journals. Queries can be submitted to: Research at P. O. Box 488, Normal, IL 61761-0488 or to mcgs.research@gmail.com

Excerpts from “Five Points to Writing a Better Query or Letter” by Carol Sims Rademacher for *Illinois Magazine* September-October 1991, pg. 38. Even though the points are now over 20 years old, they hold true today.

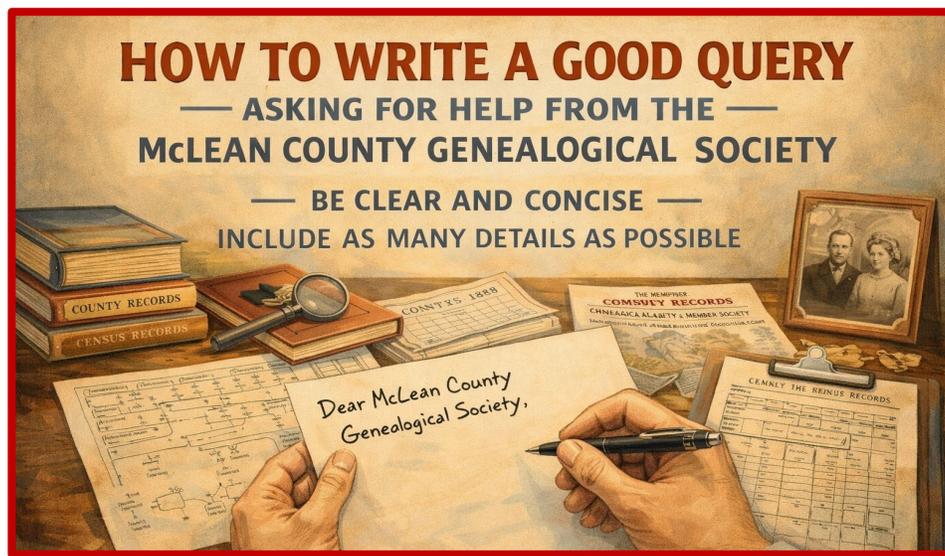


Image created by Rand Veerman using chatGPT version 5.2

PLEASE:

1. Be clear and precise. Provide names, dates and locations where you are able. Be specific and include sources you've already tried.
2. Print or type the query with your name and address, including email if you are sending your query via the U.S. Postal Service.
3. 3. Include the first and last names of the person you are seeking. A query requesting “information on any (surname only) in McLean County, Illinois” could result in a massive project
4. Include location. Bloomington? Stanford? Ellsworth? Somewhere else in McLean County? Close to DeWitt, Tazewell or another adjacent county? That information helps in a search
5. Including the date or time period in which the person lived is very important. Please include that information with your query.

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The McLean County Genealogical Society is a 501.(c)(3) non-profit organization founded in 1966 dedicated to helping its members study their family genealogies, and to preserving and publishing genealogical records. Our only qualification for membership is a genuine interest in genealogy and history. For in person meetings, the Society usually joins the Normal Public Library Genealogy Meetup on the First Tuesday of every month at 2:00 p.m. Check the website for confirmation and registration information: tmcgs.org. These meetings are a roundtable discussion of overcoming brick walls, advancement on DNA matching, obtaining foreign records, military records, etc. Other meetings will be

announced on the website or via email. You may email the Society for information:

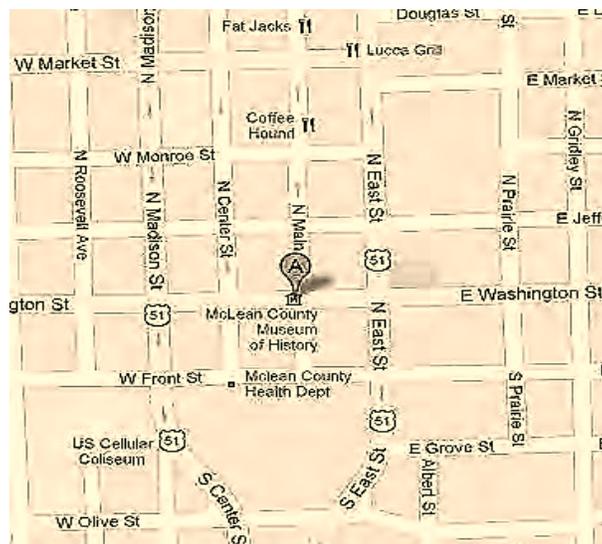
mccgs.directors@gmail.com

Single Membership is \$20.00, and Family Membership is \$25.00 for U.S. & Canada and Elsewhere \$5.00 more. Annual memberships run from January 1 December 31. Each family member receives their own Membership Card which entitles them to FREE ENTRANCE to the McLean County Museum of History and Library; our publication, *Gleanings from the Heart of the Cornbelt*, and our newsletter. Members receive digital access to all society publications via the website. Beginning in 2026, members will receive access to an exclusive library of training videos produced by genealogist Thomas MacEntee.

- Questions on membership should be addressed to mccgs.membership@gmail.com.
- For research, contact mccgs.research@gmail.com.
- For all other inquiries, please contact mccgs.president@gmail.com.

Our Library is located on the 2nd floor of the McLean County Museum of History, on Courthouse Square, 202-210 N. Main St., Bloomington, IL 61701. The main entrance, handicapped accessible, is on Washington Street (South Side) of the building. There is an elevator available.

Since covid we have been focusing on making your research easier by digitizing records and putting them on our website. We have a large collection of microfilm records that we are gradually converting to digital. Your donations facilitate this and are gratefully accepted. If you have an interesting story that is connected to McLean County and would like to share via publication in *Gleanings*, please reach out as we would like to discuss it with you. *Gleanings* becomes part of the U. S. Library of Congress collection and local library collections so your story will live for generations.





The McLean County Genealogical Society

P. O. Box 488, Normal, IL 61761-0488

Email: mcgs.directors@gmail.com

WEBSITE: tmcgs.org

January 1 through December 31

Membership YEAR -

Please complete this form. Mail with your check to: TMC GS at the above address.

Please inform us if you change your Mailing Address or Email Address at the above Email address. Membership cards, Login credentials, Newsletters and Journals are sent electronically via Email.

PLEASE ENCLOSE A SASE if a printed membership card is needed.

TMC GS members are allowed FREE entry to the McLean County Museum of History where our library and computers are housed on the second floor.

MEMBERSHIP CLASSES: INDIVIDUAL - \$20 OR FAMILY - \$25

Mr Mrs Mr & Mrs Ms Miss Dr **Current Member No.**

Name

Address

City State Zip + 4

Phone Email

Other Family Members

We publish member numbers and the surnames they are researching in the Newsletter (keeping your name and email private). TMC GS acts as a go-between providing emails between members by request using the member number. If you would like to participate, please provide up to 16 surnames you are researching.

We welcome new TMC GS Board members. If you have a desire to participate and share your ideas and knowledge, please contact us at: mcgs.directors@gmail.com

Send Newsletters & Journals via USPS (additional \$15.00 required for printing & postage enclosed)

DONATIONS TO TMC GS		Please enter \$ amounts enclosed:	
We are an IRS registered 501.c3 organization.			
We appreciate your tax-deductible donations:			
Endowment	\$ <input type="text"/>	Individual membership @ \$20	\$ <input type="text"/>
Operations	\$ <input type="text"/>	Family membership @ \$25	\$ <input type="text"/>
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Family membership consists of up to 5 additional people in the same household. Family members can be a spouse, partner or children under the age of 21.

Revision Date: August 8, 2025

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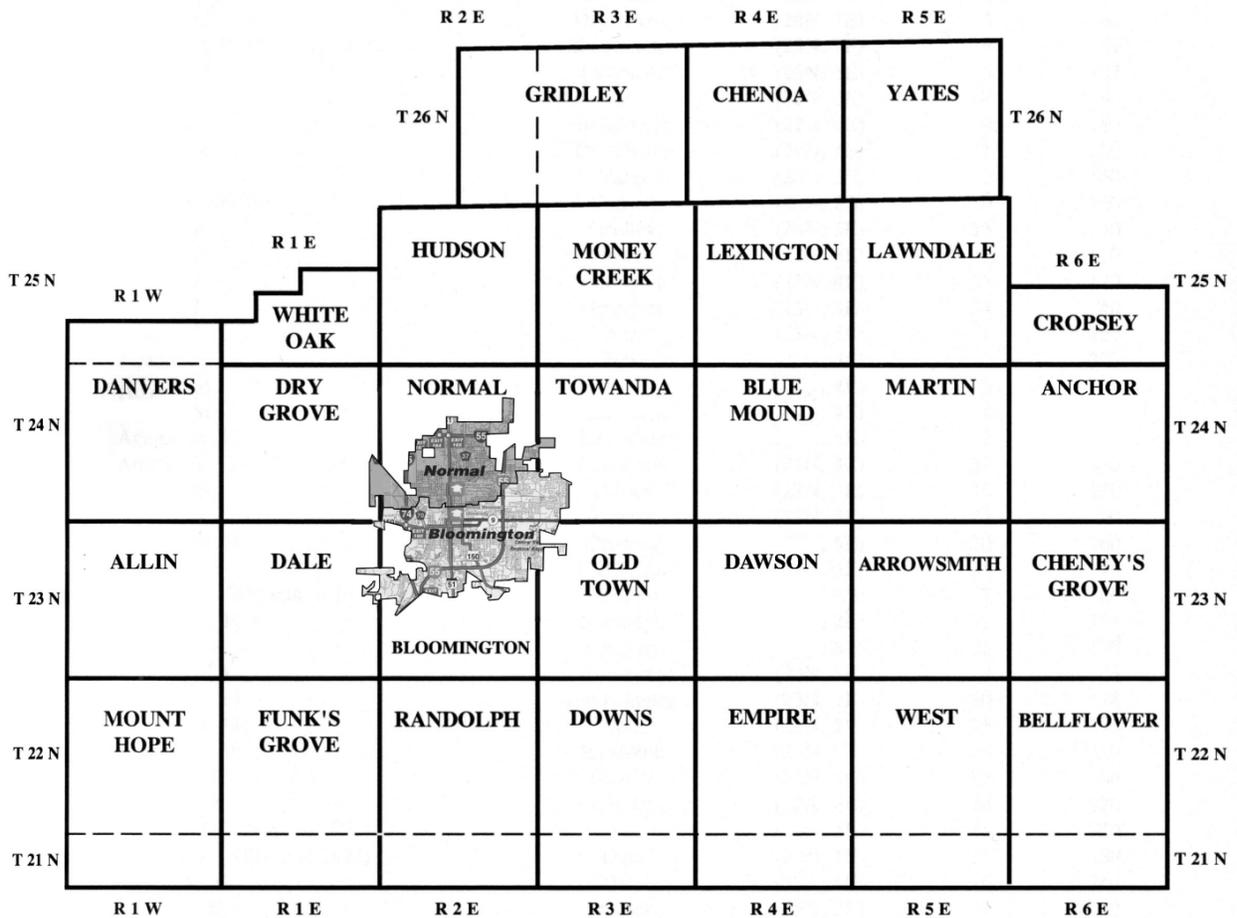
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MCLEAN COUNTY, ILLINOIS

COUNTY SEAT - BLOOMINGTON

McLean County Townships



Legend

Civil Twp. Border

Cong. Twp. Border



THE McLEAN COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
P. O. BOX 488
NORMAL, IL 61761-0488



The McLean County Museum of History