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Dues (Check One) Yearly (July 1- June 30)

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\_\_\_ Family Life (\$175) \_\_\_ Institutional (\$25) \_\_\_ Contributing (\$50.00)

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FAMILY HISTORY DIVISION NEWTON  
COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Dues (Check One) Yearly (July 1- June 30)

Student (\$1) \_\_\_ Individual (\$3) \_\_\_ Individual Life (\$50) \_\_\_ Family (\$5) \_  
\_\_\_ Family Life (\$75) \_\_\_ Institutional (\$15) \_\_\_ Contributing (\$30) \_\_\_

As a member, you automatically receive a copy of our quarterly newsletter, THE  
NEWCOMER free! You will also receive notification of our monthly meetings for each  
division. Dues are payable yearly (July 1-June 30), check your mailing label for status of  
membership. Back issues of the Newcomer are available upon request for \$2.25 each.  
Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Send Payment to:  
Newton County Historical Society, Inc.  
Treasurer, PO Box 303, Kentland, IN 47951  
219-474-6944

## The Newcomer

A publication of the Newton County Historical Society, Inc. Published 4 times a year, Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter. Articles for submission are encouraged and may be sent to the editor, Beth A. Bassett, 1681 East, 1100 South, Brook, Indiana 47922. Deadline for submission is the last Friday of the second month of each quarter.

#### Officers of the Newton County Historical Society

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#### Officers of the Family History Division

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Janet Miller, Treasurer, Kentland  
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#### What's On Our Agenda . . .

The Newton County Historical Society meets every fourth Monday of each month, on the same day, the Family History Division meets at 3:00 at the Resource Center at 224 N. Third Street in Kentland and the Society general meetings are held in different locations in the County at 7:00 p.m. All members are notified of the place and time each month. Don't Forget - Memberships Make Great Gifts!!

We'd Like Your Input!! We are looking for suggestions for stories, articles and pictures for our next edition of The Newcomer. We know that there are many stories of our past ancestors and their way of life that are just waiting to be told! This newsletter is designed to do just that!! If you would like to write an article, submit a photo, contact the editor or a member of our society.

Visit our web site at [www.rootsweb.com/~innewton](http://www.rootsweb.com/~innewton)

# The Newcomer

A publication of the NEWTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.  
Indiana's YOUNGEST County  
SPRING 2002 • \$2.25

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## The Gaff Ranch

By Gerald Born

By 1904 the Gaff ranch located northeast of Morocco consisted of approximately 10,000 acres. It covered parts of four townships. In Beaver township the ranch included Sections 1, 2, 11, 12 and 1/2 of Sections 3, 10, and 15. In McClellan township it covered Sections 23, 25, 26, 34, 35, 36, and parts of Sections 24 and 27. In Colfax township it encompassed all of Section 30 and parts of Sections 19 and 31. Jackson township had Section 6 and part of 7.

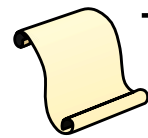
My knowledge of the Gaff ranch came in bits and pieces. I knew Uncle Claude Graves had been hired to police the boundaries and later worked on the ranch. I had read in one of Barce's books that a wealthy Cincinnati family who had made their money in the brewing industry were the owners. I had read of Dr. Recher and some other locals hunting there. Bethel Murphey had told me horse races were held at the ranch on a track they had constructed. I had purchased of Roger Hively the plat book that Rachel S. Gaff had made of the ranch. But the Gaff family themselves remained shadowy figures without form and substance. My inquiries as to who they were and how they happened to locate in Newton County drew blank stares. Nor was I able to find anything in Cincinnati records that told me of the family.

It is our good fortune that Beth Bassett's great-grandfather, O.M. Morton, had been brought by the Gaffs to manage the ranch. While doing research in Dearborn County, Indiana, where her family had lived prior to coming to Newton County she came upon biographies of the Gaff family, whose roots were more firmly entrenched in Dearborn County, than they were in Cincinnati just across the Ohio/Indiana border. This chance discovery opened up a whole new chapter for the history of Morocco, for it gives us rare insight to a family who had an important impact on the area and whose presence was noted, but little understood.

James W. Gaff was the man who formed the Gaff ranch as it was later known. He bought  
*Continued On Page Three*



The photograph is part of a collection owned by Don Morton, grandson of Orval Morton, former manager of the Gaff Ranch. It is thought that this was taken on the ranch, however, it may have been at Beaver Lake, the Kankakee or Iroquois River. Several of these unidentified individuals are in other photographs, featured in the Focus On Families article. Photo courtesy of Don Morton.



## The President's Corner Newton County Historical Society

By Yvonne Kay

As the Newton County Historical Society moves into the 21st century, we are trying to keep up with the new technology. The vast array of electronic devices that are now available have made the job of the Society much easier.

A case in point was our last general meeting. We met at the Mason's hall in Kentland. The program was filmed with our new video camera. Refreshments were served in another room where photos of the past leaders hung on the wall. Many were not identified. These too were filmed in case others might recognize them. Then my husband, John, put the data on a video tape and Wayne put it on a CD, so that they may be viewed on a video player or a computer. Prior to this we had tape recorded the programs, which was quite a breakthrough for its time.

The Morocco Sesquicentennial Collection was composed with the aid of our computer. A program was installed on the computer called Picture It, which was used to enhance the photos and retouch those that had spots or scratches. In the past, this would have taken weeks and cost hundreds of dollars. Now it can be done in minutes. The Family History Division was in charge of the project and they report that without the computer it would have taken years of intensive labor to put the book together. It was done in less than two years.

As a communication tool the computer is unequalled. Every week we have messages requesting information. Marriage records, cemetery records and biographies are now online, and many have expressed appreciation in having the information available. It has simplified correspondence and reduced the cost of postage. Also it is instantaneous and we do not have to wait for answers.

We plan to keep abreast of the developments and as new technologies become available we will use them to record and interpret history.



## Family History Division Update

By Gerald Born  
Director

Now that the Morocco book is at the printer, the Family History Division turned its attention to things that need to be done for the remainder of the year and for the years to come. Chief among them is finishing the work on the cemeteries. We plan to use the video camera to record the tombstones, which should help expedite the project. Roselawn Cemetery is the last one that has not all been recorded. When the weather clears this will be our first project.

Discussion turned to the artifacts that have been donated to the Society and the way in which they cared for. Three dresses have been given to the Society that are of significance. Two are about a hundred years old and the other belonged to Mrs. Murphey, who was chosen to be Mrs. America some years ago. It was thought that having them hanging on hangers might hasten their decay, as well as having them open to handling, which decreases their life.

Concern was expressed that the environment of the current building is not adequate to preserve artifacts and documents that have been given to the Society and which are now housed in the Resource Center. The newspapers stored in the attic space will dry out and become brittle. An observation was made that some humidity and temperature control would be necessary if the materials were to survive another century, which they could do with the proper care.

Born said that when people donated things to the Society it was with the anticipation that they would be cared for and be made available to the general public. If we cannot guarantee that this is possible, then we should not solicit materials and artifacts. Discussion then turned to the cost of such preservation, and the role the county plays in providing funding. The majority of the budget of the Society comes from county funds as provided by law. This is controlled by the County Commissioners. Born suggested that the Division request the President appoint a Task Force to meet with the County Commissioners and determine what their stance is on this particular subject. Having a consensus of those present that suggestion was made at the general meeting of the Society.

Word was received from member Suzie Hall that she is in the process of putting the Beaver Township data compiled by Born into the Family Tree Maker and connecting it all. This project is unique in the whole country and will be of great benefit.

With the funds received from advertising and from prepublication sales the cost of the printing the Morocco book has been met. This is encouraging, for other communities of Newton County will soon be having their sesquicentennial celebrations. Recently the Society received a gift of Kentland newspaper clippings that can form the basis of a similar book for Kentland. It is not too soon to be collecting material for Brook and Goodland.

### Society Scholarships Awarded

Three entries from North Newton High School and one from South Newton High School were received by the Scholarship Committee this year.

The committee was impressed with each essay, and commends the writers on a job well done.

The North Newton winner is Miss Devin Miller, Lake Village, with her entry entitled "The Colfax School". The South Newton winner is Ashley Whaley, Kentland, with her entry entitled "The George Ade Home".

A monetary scholarship of \$250.00 is given each year by the society to a North Newton and South Newton graduate.

Look for publication of these essays in the upcoming issues of *The Newcomer*.

**A limited number of the following publications are available for purchase:**

**JUST RELEASED!**

- "The Morocco Sesquicentennial Historical Collection"

- "Ralph - The Story of Bogus Island"

- Newton County Historical Coloring Book

- Available on CD only

- "Morocco Centennial Days, 1851-1951"

- "The Newcomer", Summer, 1994-Present

Stop in at the Resource Center in Kentland, 219-474-6944; or e-mail at [newtonhs@ffni.com](mailto:newtonhs@ffni.com), or contact a member of the society for more information.

## Historically Yours . . .

By Donna LaCosse  
County Historian

As you all know, next month is June and time to elect officers for the Newton County Historical Society. One year ago (June) I was elected to serve as County Historian. Twelve months in office and I still don't know what I am doing! I have learned a lot but have I learned the right things? Lucky for you, I can be replaced!!

On April 1, I attended the annual County Historian Roundtable in Indianapolis. That was my first visit to the State Office and I was impressed. Every thing was neat and clean; everyone was friendly and eager to please. I will visit again.

Did you know: history does not repeat itself? History is always changing as generations occur. We can't recreate the past accurately what is past is dead and gone and can not be recovered. History is the science of human nature. County, town and state history is never complete there is always information that was not recorded and will never be remembered.

Historians are doing history using a very small amount of information a good historian must be a good detective. A good historian must talk about the good, bad and the ugly, and always remember that nothing is pure. A good historian needs to be aware of bad publicity while gathering the materials in which to answer the questions he or she is asked. Think about these remarks makes me want to hide until election is over!

### Land Owners, Colfax Township, -1904

Township 30 N, Range 8 W **Section 1:** Helmeith?, John A. Thompson and Lawler; **Section 2:** Thompson and Lawler; **Section 3:** Saml. E. Robbins, David Whisler, Fred R. Otis, Joseph S. Basheitz; Eunice C. Mead, George W. Castellen, School #3- Mead School; **Section 4:** Eunice C. Mead, George W. Castellen, Edw. V. Ransford, Lee W. Ross, John B. Harrell; **Section 5:** Joseph A. Dunham; Michael Duffy; **Section 6:** Michael Duffy. **Section 7:** Leroy Templeton; **Section 8:** Alonzo L. Howard; **Section 9:** John B. Harrell; **Section 10:** Carroll C. Kent; **Section 11:** Carroll C. Kent; **Section 12:** Carroll C. Kent. **Section 13:** Carroll C. Kent; **Section 14:** Carroll C. Kent; **Section 15:** Carroll C. Kent; **Section 16:** James A. Caldwell, Luella Handley, Geo. G. Handley, Daniel E. Odle, Henry C. Harris, School #1 -Odle School; **Section 17:** Henry C. Harris; **Section 18:** Leroy Templeton. **Section 19:** George E. McIntosh, Alexander B. Tolin etal. Thomas F. Gaff, etal. **Section 20:** Alexander B. Tolin etal; **Section 21:** Alexander B. Tolin etal; **Section 22:** Alexander B. Tolin, etal; Carroll C. Kent, Nannie I. Pritchett, Geo. Yeager Hrs., Edgar I. Brown; **Section 23:** Carroll C. Kent; **Section 24:** Carroll C. Kent. **Section 25:** Carroll C. Kent; **Section 26:** Carroll C. Kent, John & Mary Noyes; **Section 27:** Ransom Elijah, Edgar J. Brown, Eli Miller, Daniel J. Stutzman, W. A. Bro-?, Dan

Helmeith?, John A. Henney, James R. Elijah, John G. Williams, Alexander B. Tolin etal., School #2 -Wildrick School; **Section 28:** Alexander B. Tolin, etal; **Section 29:** Alexander B. Tolin, etal, James A. Sammons; **Section 30:** Thomas F. Gaff, etal. **Section 31:** Thomas F. Gaff, etal, Samuel C. Barker; **Section 32:** James A. Sammons, Saml. W. Britts?, Mary L. Barker, Gallagher Barker, M. G. & T. R. Barker, Samuel C. Barker, R. W. Coates, David D. Deardurff, J. & G. BD?; **Section 33:** James Hitt, John B--ms?, G. Barker, John Wildrick, H. N. Ingersoll, George T. Williams, Maria B. Sedgewick, Newton Lyons, Benjamin Elijah, Carl D. Wooten, Saml. Thompson, Mary J. Brown, Philly Brown, Marg. Wooten; **Section 34:** James R. Elijah, Charles Elijah, Parmelia Elijah, Ransom Elijah, Marg. J. Elijah; **Section 35:** S. H. Dickenson, Rosa Guildenzoph, (?) Guildenzoph, Betty J. Geesa; **Section 36:** S. H. Dickenson, Emil Herre, Joseph Koster,

Primary Sources are broken down into two categories, original and material evidence. Original Sources include eye witness sources, church and business records, newspaper publications of the era, letters, diaries and oral records. Material sources include photographs, cook books and buildings of all kinds.

Historians must always remember that materials produced from the Primary Source must be used with great care. He or she must also remember that memory plays tricks on us, therefore we must check out the facts before we answer questions. We must also remember that truth is only an opinion truth is not always the truth, and history is not an exact fact.

Problems we face as historians include having records closed to us; learning there are people who left no written records and very few oral records; there may be gaps in the census records and, now the "biggy," we can always expect the unexpected!

We were advised to "Be The Truth That We Are." History is certainly not an easy thing to do.

I do have a list of Indiana Resources, so if anyone needs a specific publication, give me a call at 219-285-2861, or email me at [hacosse@netnitco.net](mailto:hacosse@netnitco.net) and I will help all I can. So, until next issue, have a great summer and keep your history updated!

6	5	4	3	2	1
7	8	9	10	11	12
18	17	16	15	14	13
19	20	21	22	23	24
30	29	28	27	26	25
31	32	33	34	35	36

John Berenda, Kzig & Prichaska, Rosa Guildenzoph, Amelia Guildenzoph, Ida Herre, J. H. Guildenzoph, Julius Guildenzoph, School #4 -Switch School.

This information was transcribed from the 1904 map that is displayed at the Resource Center in Kentland. Colfax resident Jim Robbins explained that and owners settled on higher grounds and needed the timber to build and burn for heat. At that time, more than 2/3 of the township was covered with marsh. Submitted by Janet Miller.

*Continued From Page Three*

These papers, which consist of letters, bills, receipts, drafts and miscellaneous papers relate to farm operations; the raising of cotton and selling of horses at a Lake Providence, Louisiana, plantation; land dealings in Indiana, Illinois and Missouri; flatboat shipments down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers; and post-Civil War claims against the U. S. government for payment for hay delivered at the mouth of the White River, Arkansas and for the value of the barges, Ottawa, Younker, No. 3, and Wabash, No. 1. In addition to their many business interests, the Gaff brothers were heavily involved in civic affairs. They were backers for the town's first utility company, the Aurora Gas and Coke Company. They founded in 1856 the First National Bank of Aurora with Thomas Gaff as President. Thomas with his brother James helped organize the town's school system, served on the City Council (John Gaff was the mayor) and incorporated Riverview Cemetery. The brothers also bought a fire engine and the town clock for Aurora.

John Gaff moved his family to Lawrenceburg, the county seat of Dearborn County and is found there with his family in the 1870 census. Prior to the Civil War, James W. moved his family to Cincinnati and they are to be found there in the 1870 census and his widow in the 1880 census. He died in 1879 probably at Cincinnati. At the time of his death while maintaining his business connections with his brother, he had extended his empire to include 32 distinct firms and businesses.

James W. Gaff was the first of the brothers to build a splendid mansion at Aurora. Constructed on the southwest corner of Fourth and Main streets it was known as Linden Terrace, as he had landscaped with Linden trees imported from Germany. Possessed of great wealth, his home was an expression of his industry. He was extremely industrious and very careful about details, giving to them his minutest attention. He held various offices in the county, among them State Senator from 1863 to 1865. James W. Gaff was also a member of the school board and president of the agricultural society. The home fell into disrepair and was torn down.

Not to be outdone, Thomas hired Isaiah Rogers, a well-known architect for his design of modern hotels, to build Hill forest, which is now a National Historic Landmark. This magnificent mansion situated on ten acres of land overlooking the Ohio river

would be home to the Thomas Gaff family from 1855 to 1891. Designed in the Italian Renaissance style, it reflects Thomas Gaff's connection to the shipping industry, as the semi-circular front porch is reminiscent of the deck of the paddle-wheelers that once plied the Ohio river. (The Gaff brothers owned a fleet of steamboats used to transport their distillery and brewery products to distant markets).

The interior of the home boasted a flying staircase in the entrance hall, a feature that often was to be found in steamboats of the era. The curved doors and windows and a circular rooftop belvedere, which resembles a steamboat's pilothouse all add to the feeling of the river boat. The home remained in the Gaff family until 1926 when it was purchased by Will Stark, who manufactured furniture in Aurora.

It then became a clubhouse for the Veterans of Foreign Wars and in 1955 a group of local citizens banded together and purchased the mansion for restoration. It has been open to the public as an historic property museum since 1956.

John H. Gaff, of Lawrenceburg, the younger brother, was born in Springfield, New Jersey, September 13, 1820. He received a common school education and in 1835 was apprenticed to learn the jeweler's trade with a Mr. Ackerman in New York City and remained with him for six years, and then spent four years in Mexico City. In 1845 he returned to the United States and settled in Aurora and engaged with his brothers in the distilling business. While in the city he served two terms as mayor of Aurora. In 1864, with his family, John Gaff moved to Lawrenceburg, where he resided until his death in 1879. He continued in business with his brothers and Mr. Anson Marshall, and on the withdrawal of the latter a new firm was organized, consisting of John H. Gaff and Charles L. Howe, under the name of John H. Gaff Co. Mr. Gaff was actively identified with all of the interests of Lawrenceburg. He was a member of the board of education of that city.

It appears that the family was very private, as not much has been written about the wives and families of the Gaff brothers. By turning to the U.S. Census records and local cemetery and civil records, we are able to catch a glimpse into the private lives of these men. They are all found in the 1850 census of the city of Aurora, Dearborn County, Indiana. James W. was 33 years of age and was born in New Jersey. His wife, Rachel S. was 24 years old and was born in

Indiana. They had two children, Charles C. who was 4 and an unnamed girl who was 1. His occupation was that of a distiller and the value of his estate was listed as \$40,000.

Thomas Gaff, James' brother, who was 42 lived nearby. He, too, was listed as a distiller and also had an estate of \$40,000. So this was a wealthy family even in 1850. The distilling business in Pennsylvania must have produced some revenue. Living with Thomas was his wife, Sarah J., who was 35. Their children were Caroline M., 12, Vienna B., 11, Agnes, 7, and Helena, 3.

The three older children were born in Pennsylvania, while only Helena was born in Indiana. Also in the residence was Margaret Gaff, 67, born in Scotland and John H. Gaff and Therisa Gaff, both born in New Jersey and the children of the widowed Margaret. Dorothy Sheffer, a domestic, born in Germany was also found in the household. His personal estate was also \$40,000.

By 1860, James W. Gaff's worth had increased to \$40,000 in property and \$50,000 in personal property. It appears that the census taker mistakenly identified his wife as Martha, 38, born in Indiana, for Rachel S. Gaff was listed in 1860 and is again found in 1880. The following children are found in the household: Charles, 14, Harriet, 12, Thomas, 10, Clara, 8 and Richard 5. Besides the family there were a John Miller, Gardner, 28, from France and his daughter, 17, Servant, as well as William E. Gibson, 35, a B. Cooper, who had an estate of \$2,000 and may well have been a relative for his wife, Permelia, 28, was living there as well as the Gibson children, Charley, 5 and Clara, 1 and they are not listed as servants. Martha Burton 17, a servant from Indiana and Marcus Levy, 47, a clerk, completed the household.

It is interesting to note that when the First National Bank of Aurora was organized on December 9, 1864, with a capital of \$100,000, the first board of directors consisted of Thomas Gaff, James W. Gaff, Henry W. Smith, W. E. Gibson, John J. Backman, Louis G. Hurlbert and Abram Lozier. W. E. Gibson is the same fellow living with them in the above census. It is characterized in the 1882 history as being conservative and prudent in all its business, and yet liberal so far as compatible with meeting all the wants of the public. During the great panic of 1873, when the banks all over the country were forced to suspend payment, the First National Bank of Aurora paid every check presented.

## Pages Of The Past

*The following excerpts are from The Kentland Enterprise during the Spring of 1902. transcribed by Janet Miller*

### Washington Township

John Higgins, commissioner of the estate of Isaac Denney, on Tuesday sold the Denny farm in Washington township, some ninety three acres, to Will H. Ade for \$72.50 per acre.

Mr. and Mrs. William Pendergrass, recently married, are living on the C. V. Cox farm, in Washington township.

Superintendent and Mrs. S. F. Armstrong, of the county infirmary, went to Plymouth Tuesday in charge of five dependent children to be placed in the orphanage at that place.

### Morocco

Mr. and Mrs. Ross Lucas moved to the farm Monday. (March 6th)

Miss Bertha Padgett went to Chicago Monday to enter the Metropolitan Business College.

James Russell and Lucy Dunlap of Morocco were married by Squire Mock at the court house last Thursday.

Morocco is to be illuminated by electricity. A plant is to be installed in the near future.

### Mt. Ayr

Ned Barker has purchased the 40 acres just north of his place of his brother Galigher. Consideration, \$50.00 an acre.

Mt. Ayr received a load of sand for building purposes this week and shipped ten car loads of grain last week and has 20 cars waiting for this week and Wright & Yeoman shipped hogs this week. Mt. Ayr although a small town handles a good deal of material over the railroad.

A fifty drop board has been put in position and the telephone is all the go at present. Forty subscribers are expected and probably fifty by the end of the week. Miss Bertha Blankenbaker is hello girl.

### Colfax Township

Married, at 10 o'clock a.m. March 5, at the residence of S. M. Lemoine near Fair Oaks, Albert Rowen to Miss Myrtle Odle, Justice S. M. Lemonine officiating. The groom is a well known young business man of Newton county, the bride a daughter of Daniel Odle, trustee of Colfax township, Newton county. From the *Jasper County Democrat*.

A. W. Tolin of Fair Oaks was in Kentland Monday looking after ditch

matters in the Commissioners Court. Mr. Tolin and three other gentlemen were the purchasers of the Hill ranch in Colfax township, the possession of which they received March 1st. The ranch consists of 2,680 acres, and the new owners are making many improvements, and bringing the land under a state of cultivation. Seven tenant houses have been erected, and five hundred acres of land is now ready for planting. A dredge boat is in operation and when the lands have been thoroughly drained Mr. Tolin believes their holdings will materially increase in value.

### Rose Lawn

Mr. Zack Spitler and some of his comrades found some mastodon teeth near Thayer a few days ago.

A Pickle Factory. Will be Built at Thayer this Summer. Lumber Now on the Ground. George Alliss was among the Thayer visitors in Kentland Monday. George is always ready to say a good word for his home town, and reports everything booming in the north end, even to the carp in the Kankakee river. He says lumber is now on the ground for a pickle factory which will be built this summer, and the farmers who were beat last season on the beet deal will this season pickle their land. Some four hundred acres have been contracted and by planting time the acreage will probably be doubled. The crops are growing nicely and game is plentiful.

### Brook

George Ade has purchased W. T. McCray's half interest in the big stock farm in Iroquois township formerly owned by Mr. McCray and Will H. Ade. This fall Joseph Ade will resign his position as railway postal clerk and take charge of the farm.

Burglars attempted to break into one of the Brook banks Friday night, but were foiled by the night watch. The retreating brigands fired a few stray shots at the vigilant official and drove out of town.

Brook Reporter: Grant and Jefferson townships will get their stone roads some time but it is likely that the younger generations grandchildren will be the ones that will receive the most benefit out of them.



### Goodland

Goodland suffered a destructive fire Saturday night, possibly the largest in the history of the town. The loss, however, was comparatively small considering the number of buildings burned. The fire originated about nine o'clock in the hardware store of C. E. Burgess, located just north of the Jacobs building, and before it could be put under control had laid in ashes Toyne's grocery, the post office, Baldwin & Dagues' Bank, and Stein's dry goods and clothing store. The buildings, with the exception of the bank room, were frame, and possibly not worth to exceed \$4,000.00; the stocks of goods, excluding the post office and bank, were estimated at \$15,000.00. Considerable goods were saved, and the remainder was well covered by insurance. Two of the lots are owned by Mr. Burgess, two by Mrs. Blake Wilson and one by Baldwin & Dague, all of whom, it is said, will rebuild.

The Chicago & Alton railway company have awarded F. D. Gilman of Goodland \$5,500 for the killing of his wife in the wreck last July.

### Kentland

March surely came in like a lion, accompanied by a good sprinkling of the poor man's fertilizer.

The most reliable sign of spring in Kentland is when the women folks begin to clean house. The fever has struck some and paper hangers have been kept busy for the past week.

It will not be very long until every farmer in Jefferson township will be supplied with telephones. The service is growing rapidly, Mr. McCray having some forty eight names now on his list. The following have recently been added: Bert Pruett, Herman Messman, Chas. Hatch, Chas. Spangler, John Datzman, James Couch.

On Tuesday April the 8th, in the Purdue gymnasium the basket ball team of that University will meet the aggregation from Yale in what will undoubtedly be the most interesting game of the season. The Purdue team is a strong organization, having won every game played in the state in the last two years.

*Continued From Page Five*  
signed the document along with Thomas was living in Cincinnati at the time.

It was not until the death of Jane (Gaff) Shillito that other details of the families dealings came to light. Jane Shillito's will was dated November 23, 1903, while she was living at Barnstable, Massachusetts. In it she names Mary Wallace Shillito Rogers as her daughter. Thomas T. Gaff as her brother, and John Shillito Rogers as her nephew and godson. The largest portion of her estate was placed with the Trustees of the Gaff Estate under the control of the New York Life Insurance & Trust Company of New York City, when the will was proved in the May Term, 1914.

It appears that Thomas had all of the land transferred to him by the time a 1904 plat map of Newton County was done, as his name appears on what remained of the Gaff Ranch. By the time the 1916 county atlas of Newton County was published all of the Gaff holdings had been liquidated and other names appear where the Gaff ranch once was located. The major portion, where the main house was located, became the Willis ranch. Paul Willis lived on the ranch and had a turkey and chicken operation that was expanded by his son, George to include Pure Bred Aberdeen Angus cattle.

Quite a competition existed between the Willis Ranch, the Hillis Ranch and Green Acres, the farm belonging to Major Rafferty. All of them exhibited their black angus cattle at the International Livestock Show in Chicago and competition was keen. George Willis maintained his residence in Chicago and dealt in stocks and bonds. Ross Hillis was stabbed to death with a butcher knife. Major Rafferty married the niece of Samuel Insull.

Thomas T. Gaff commissioned Jules Henri de Sibour, a prominent architect in Washington, D.C. to design a home for him and his wife Zaidee in that city in 1904. He created a modern American rendition of an early seventeenth century manor house. Many of the architects creations would later become residences for the ambassadors of France, Luxembourg and Portugal. A number of innovations were included in the house--a hot-air system for drying clothes, a trap door on his icehouse for direct delivery of ice from the street and a movable wooden wall that closed off the domed skylight. After a short occupancy by the Gaffs the house was leased to several Washingtonians, among them Dwight F. Davis, Secretary of War under Calvin

Coolidge, and to the governments of Greece and Columbia. In 1944 the Colombian government purchased the house for its embassy. Mrs. Carey D. Langhorne, Gaff's daughter, who lived nearby at 129 Q Street, owned the property at the time.

A few words should be said about Mrs. Langhorne. Zaidee Forsythe Gaff was born in 1887 at Boston, and died on July 22, 1966 at her farm, St. Bride's Farm, Upperville, Fauquier County, Virginia. She was 79. She moved to Washington D.C. shortly after the turn of the century. She was an accomplished aviatrix and active in Red Cross Work during the Second World War. She was the founder of the Bundles for Britain during that war. She donated her private plane to the U.S. Government for its off-shore patrol at the beginning of World War II. She maintained homes at Delaplane, Virginia, 1929 Q Street, Northwest, Washington D.C., and in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. At her death she left four cousins, James G. Hinkle of Chestnut Hills, Massachusetts, Mrs. Elliott Bayly of The Plains, Virginia, Mrs. Fay Ingalls of Hot Springs, Virginia and Stuart Elliott of San Rafael, California.

Her husband, Cary Devall Langhorne was born May 14, 1873 in Lynchburg, Virginia, the son of John Devall Langhorne and Ann Catherine Taylor. He married Zadiee Gaff on April 30, 1907, and died of lobar pneumonia on April 20, 1948 at Delaplane, Fauquier County, Virginia. He graduated from Virginia Military Institute in 1894, was a surgeon in the U.S. Navy, and continued after his discharge. A Medal of Honor winner for valor for his part in the Mexican campaign at Vera Cruz in 1914, he also served in World War I. His residence is listed as St. Bride Estate, Upperville, Loudon County, Virginia.

This, then, is a short and quick history of the Gaff family, who owned and operated the Gaff ranch in Newton County. I have touched only the surface of the story, as there is not sufficient time to do further research, but if there were, I am sure a much more interesting and compelling story would emerge of these talented and ambitious Americans with Scottish roots.

A word should be added about the main section of the ranch after the Gaffs sold it. Mention has been made of the Willis ranch which superceded it. Orville and Arvilla (Ketcham) Morton and his families traveled from Dearborn County, Indiana, and relocated to Newton County to manage the Gaff Ranch in the late 1800's. Their

daughter, Lucy Maud, would meet Oscar Bassett, whose parents owned land just south of the Gaff Ranch. At the Gaff Ranch, the two met and married on Christmas Day, 1902 at Eagle's Mere, a public meeting place, church and school located in the northeast corner of the ranch. Their son, Raymond Bassett lived and worked there in the 40's when the operation had been expanded to include cattle. Also, Squire Doty lived on the Willis Ranch for many years. A large water tower provided the house with running water and it had its own gasoline generated light plant. Much more could be written about the Willis ranch and other ranches of the region, but time and space prohibit it.

## Do You Know Your County of Newton?

By Janet Miller

1. *The Izaak Walton League of Newton County was instrumental in helping to establish the Kankakee State Park and Forest, which comprised some 800 acres of marshland in the northeast corner of Newton County when it was founded. Six Newton County men were State Delegates from the League, can you name any of them?*
2. *When was the Newton County R.E.M.C. energized; and who was the first member to receive service?*
3. *Where in Newton County was the road, "Molasses Street", located?*
4. *What is the name of the Newton County Fair office building; and who does it honor?*
5. *What Newton County library has a bronze plaque dedicated to the memory of the original members of Co. B., 51st IN Veteran Volunteer Infantry? It was the first company enrolled in Newton County for the War of the Rebellion. (see answers on page twelve.)*

## The County Home

By Beth Bassett

*The Poor Farm/Asylum  
Aka Newton County Home/Farm*

Each year when the family would travel from Morocco to visit the annual Punkin Vine Fair, we would enter on the North side of the grounds. I remember the large brick building on the right, and thinking, that would be so great to live in a house right next to the fair grounds. When I would ask my parents who lived there, they replied "its the County Home", which didn't mean a thing to me, but by the time we had passed the home, I was searching the fair grounds for the ferris wheel, and wouldn't think about the place again, until now.

In some of the many items that Diana (McCartney) Bell donated to the Resource Center, there was a picture of the County Home. This photo raised my curiosity regarding the place, and after researching the 1910 Kentland Gazette and early history books, I found the following information.

The poor farm of Newton County comprised about 300 acres about 4 miles north of Kentland, in section 33. Washington Township, on the northern banks of the Iroquois River. Two tracts in other localities were bought and sold before the commissioners made the purchase of the original poor farm.

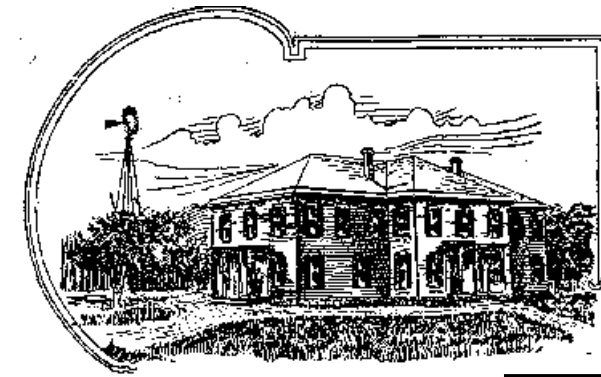
At the time of the location of the county seat at Kentland, A.J. Kent donated 160 acres of land to the county, which was designed for a poor farm, being the southeast quarter of section 23, town 28, range 8 west. That tract was never used for the purpose indicated, and in August, 1872, was sold to Jonathan W. Stryker.

In September 1868, the board had bought 200 acres from Solomon Warren in section 13, and also sold that farm in 1872, the purchaser being John Sell.

On January 28, 1878, in settling with D.A. Pfrimmer, a former treasurer, over 100 acres of the original poor farm was taken, in part settlement of his indebtedness to the county. Additional acres were purchased between 1886 and 1892.

For some time, the county used an ordinary farm dwelling to care for its few inmates, but in 1891 contracted with George D. Rider to erect a 32 room building for that purpose at a cost of over \$4,100. These plans included private quarters for the superintendent and family. There were at this time a few other farm buildings on the property plus a jail located about where the

## NEWTON'S HISTORICAL LANDMARKS



*From the Beginning to the End...*

*The sketch of the first county home appeared in the Newton County Enterprise, 1910, after it was partially destroyed by fire. Below is a photo of the home after reconstruction, and to the right depicts the home as it stood in 1983 when it was closed by the county.*

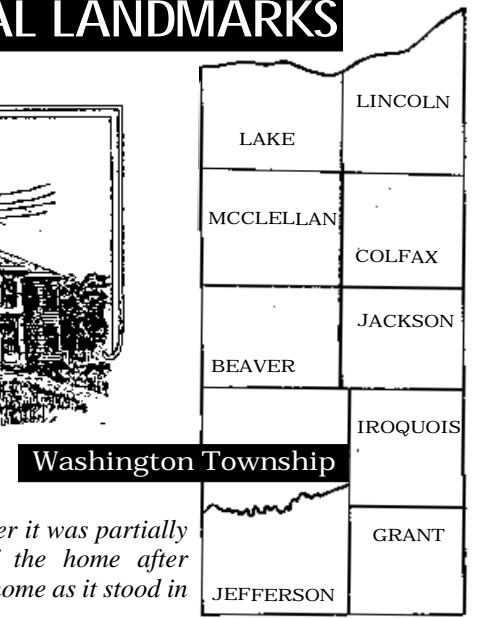


pump house was located.

At the turn of the century, Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong were the caretakers, and Elam Hooker and family served from 1904. A large fire completely destroyed the large frame home and pump house on the night of January 17, 1910. Mr. Hooker fixed up a home for his family in a shop building. A few inmates were sent to friends for care, while the remainder were housed in makeshift quarters in an old house leased from George Herriman on the fairground property.

In the following May, the commissioners contracted with Fred Friedline & Company to erect a 40 room brick building for nearly \$23,000, according to plans furnished by John Bruck, architect. The County Council recommended a popular bond issue of \$15,000 and appropriated \$18,000 for the building of the new poor asylum.

The cornerstone of the structure was laid by the Masonic Lodge of Kentland in August, 1910, and the building was completed before the close of the year. It held copies of newspapers of the day, The Newton County Enterprise, Kentland Democrat, Goodland Herald, Brook Reporter, Morocco Courier and the Mt. Ayr Pilot. Also included were the names of the



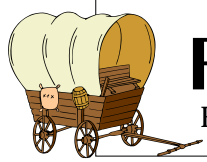
county officials, the history and officers of the Masonic Lodge, a program of the days activities, the name of the architect and the contractor, and silver, nickel and copper US coins. At the time of the laying of the stone, there were ten inmates as charges of the county, and it was more than self-supporting. Mr. Garritte served as superintendent during the late 1920's and Michael Murphy acted in this capacity during the 1930's. In 1943, William B. Haynes and family came to the County Farm to care for the residents and do the farming.

William B. Haynes died in 1947 and Mrs. Hazel Haynes was appointed superintendent with the oldest son, William P. "Jack", named farm manager. Jack was only 15 years old, but took the responsibility to help his mother and served the county well for 35 years.

Mrs. Hazel Haynes retired in 1957, and Jack Haynes was appointed superintendent. he was the youngest superintendent of a County Home in the State of Indiana.

Jack and Bev Haynes raised their children, Bill and Marsha, in the big house with the residents enjoying the family. In all his years there, Jack Haynes never locked a

*Continued On Page Twelve*



# Focus on Families

Family History Division • Gerald Born, Director • Janet Miller, Treasurer

## The Morton and Ketcham Connection By Beth Bassett

The research presented here on the Morton and Ketcham families was inspired by my cousin, Don Morton, whose father, Frank Morton and my grandmother, Lucy Maud (Morton) Bassett were brother and sister. Don called me one evening and said that he had a group of family photos that were from his father's home, and was hoping that I might be able to help identify some of the people in them. So, naturally, I couldn't pass the opportunity up to once again go on a wild goose chase for long-lost relatives that were hiding amongst the many leaves upon my family tree.

The photographs were absolutely wonderful. These picture post cards were dated early 1900's and were clear, professional snapshots of individuals from about that era--and not an identifying name written on the back! Don, his daughter Dorothy and I sat around their kitchen table and discussed the family, brought out the magnifying glass to get a clearer picture, and then just sat there in bewilderment. Each of us had a theory as to who they might be, and hoped that someone might be able to identify Orval M. Morton, Don's grandfather and my great-grandfather.

Two people came to mind immediately, my mother, Lorene (Zoborosky) Bassett and Hazel (Jessen) Thurston. My mother had

discussed the Morton family with me on different occasions, and I was aware that she knew the descendants of Maud and Frank's siblings. Hazel was raised in Beaver City by Robert and Vadne (Dawson) Morton, son of Orval. Don and I both thought that an afternoon visit with Hazel might give us the answers we were seeking.

So, I gathered the pictures, made photo copies, scanned them into my computer system, and started down the path with Don and Dorothy after the wild goose.

My mother was able to reveal the set of twins and their siblings. Wilmer Morton's twins, Ethel and Bethel, sister Alma, brother Wilber and the other sister, Elsie. Much to our delight, Hazel identified one of the pictures as herself, and she knew Bob and Vadne, and Clara (Dawson) and Elmer "Shorty" Talbert! Unfortunately, to this day we have not been able to identify any of Orval.

After the two meetings, we once again looked at the photos and discovered a few clues that led to some identifications. Items such as expressions on faces, the look of the eyes, one woman had the same coat on in both pictures, one as a young lady, the other as an elderly woman. Remarks made on the back of some of the photos as, "to Aunt Arvilla" from Amy, tied together the

families of the Ketchams and the Mortons, not only beginning in the 1900's, but today - as we sat and looked through the photo album and into the faces of these family members.

Of course, I couldn't stop there. I needed to have facts that confirmed our assumptions. I knew that when Orval and his wife Harriett Arvilla (Ketcham) came to Newton County, he managed the Gaff Ranch, located where my father worked in the 1940's and my grandmother grew up. Mother had always said that Grandma Maud was from Moores Hill, Indiana, and Arvilla's death record showed that she was born in Dearborn County, Indiana, so that would be the place my research would begin.

Upon visiting the Dearborn County website through Rootsweb.com, who hosts the Newton County web site, there were very few research records to be found. However, one title, "Hillforest: National Historic Landmark", caught my eye - and click - there I found the name of Thomas T. Gaff, in the history of Hillforest. His name is on the 1904 map that hangs at the Resource Center in Kentland, as the owner of the Gaff Ranch. Bingo - I knew I had a connection. I e-mailed Gerald Born about my find, anxious to know if he had any information

*Items such as expressions on faces, the look of the eyes, one woman had the same coat on in both pictures, one as a young lady, the other as an elderly woman. Remarks made on the back of some of the photos as, "to Aunt Arvilla" from Amy, tied together the families of the Ketchams and the Mortons. Far left, Myron and Alice, "Mollie" (Ketcham) Morton. Center, Mollie and Amy Morton. Right, Amy Morton and her husband, his name is unknown.*



*This photograph was identified by Hazel (Jessen) Thurston (pictured as a child in other photo on the right). Back, left to right, Clara (Dawson) and Elmer "Shorty" Talbert, unknown, unknown, Vadne (Dawson) and Robert C. Morton. Front, unknown, Cecil Miller, unknown. Photo courtesy of Don Morton.*



regarding the Gaff Ranch. He was thrilled to find a connection regarding the Gaffs, and this led him to further research of the Gaffs and their properties in Newton County. That information is found in our lead article of this newsletter.

These families were neighbors from the 1840's through the 1880's, and I'm sure prior to that, however, my research records begin with the 1840 census of Dearborn County, Indiana. The first name found is that of Mary Morton. Mary is the mother of Benjamin Morton, father to Orval. She is listed as head of household, and Benjamin would have been 10 years of age. This relationship was confirmed in the 1860 census, where Mary is shown living with Benjamin, and is listed as his mother, age 67, born in Tennessee. The 1880 records also show that Benjamin was born in Indiana in 1830, and his father in Ohio. I was not able to locate any records that indicated Benjamin's father's name.

On the same census page as Mary Morton, we find a David Ketcham, and a Robert Ketcham. More than likely, one of these is the father of Robert Ketcham.

Robert, in 1850, is listed as a farmer, owning \$700 in real estate, born in Ohio, and is the head of household. Listed as age 25 with wife Frances (Canfield), age 24, daughters Ann E., age 4 and Mary F., age 2, along with a son, John W., age 4 months. Living with them is his mother, Nancy Ketcham, age 55, born in New York, and a Seneca Ketcham, age 17, who owned real

estate valuing \$700.00

A few farms down, we find Benjamin Morton, living with the Nichs family, as a laborer, age 21. Two farms down, the Anthony Gaf family is listed - this spelling is as it was listed in the census records.

By 1860, both Benjamin and Robert's families had grown and prospered. Benjamin had married, and had 2 children. The family was listed as Benjamin, age 40, owning real estate and property valued at \$3900, and living with wife Ellen J., born 1836 in Indiana, son Orval, age 16, daughter Alice B., age 14 and mother Mary, age 67. Up the road lived Robert Ketcham, a farmer, owning \$5,000 in real estate and property, living with wife Frances, age 34, daughter Mary, age 12, sons John, 10, Monroe, 7, Edwin 5, and Myron 2. His mother, Nancy, age 73 is also listed.

Other Mortons and Ketchams were living in Dearborn County at the same time. John Morton, Henry Morton, and William Morton; George Ketcham and wife Sarah, who may be Robert's brother, with children Sarah, Daniel, William, Hannah and Ketusah; Nelson Ketcham and wife Juliad and L.G. Ketcham with wife Rebeka. George is tied into the family in later years when Frank, son of Orville would move to the Chicago area and work with a Frank and George Ketcham.

By 1880, the families had married amongst each other, and Benjamin and Ellen J. had another child, Ida May, born in

1869. Living next to them were Orval and his wife Hattie A. (Ketchum), daughter of Robert Ketcham, with their son Wilmer C., age 4 months. The next family listed is that of Myron Ketchum, son of Robert Ketcham and Alice B. (Morton), daughter of Benjamin and Ellen J., with their son Walter, age 1.

Down the road a piece, we find Robert and Frances Ketcham and son Charles, living next to their son Edward, with wife Alzora and Eliza. Edward and family would re-locate to Morocco with other family members. He worked for the Don Brothers of Morocco, and was the sexton for two cemeteries for many years.

I was unable to find any death records for Benjamin and Ellen "Jane" Morton, and Mary Morton, as well as Robert and Frances. Very disappointing since I have such a clear picture of their family life from the 1850's to the 1880's. Their children, Orville "Orval" Mae, Alice "Mollie" B. and Ida May, prospered as their parents did, and keeping close family ties over the upcoming years between the families seemed a priority.

Arvilla Ketcham, b. March 18, 1862 in Aurora, Indiana d. May 31, 1927, in Newton County, Indiana, and Orval Mae Morton, b. May 18, 1854 in Manchester, Indiana, d. June 11, 1925 in Newton County, Indiana, were married on November 10, 1878 in

*Continued On Next Page  
Continued From Page Nine*

Dearborn County, Indiana. They had 6 children. Wilmer Casius, b. Feb. 2, 1880 in Manchester, Indiana, married Maude Beckwith, born July 22, 1883; Robert Charles, born May 1884, married Vadne Dawson, born 1888; Lucy Maud, born Dec. 14, 1886, married Oscar Bassett, born July 5, 1883; Chester Scott, b. Oct 19, 1893, married Alice Peterson; Frank, b. April 12, 1895, married Blanch Montgomery, b. June 17, 1897, and Opal Maybelle, b. July 29, 1898, married William Watt (d. 1925), and a Zanazaro.

As usual, something always pops into your research that can throw you off track. In the death record for Orville Morton, and in his obituary, it is stated that his mother was Lucy (Rice) Morton of Momence, Illinois. In all census records, we see that Benjamin was married to an Ellen Jane, until I can find death records for his siblings, this little fact will remain a mystery! However, it may explain why my grandmother Bassett was named Lucy Maud.

Robert and Frances (Canfield) Ketcham's other children, John W., born Feb, 1850, Edward Canfield, b. 28 Feb, 1855, married Alzora Z. McMullen, b. 1856; Myron, b. 1859, married Alice B. "Mollie" Morton; Charles, b. 1864; and Mary Frances, b. Aug 6, 1848, married Reuben H. Terrill.

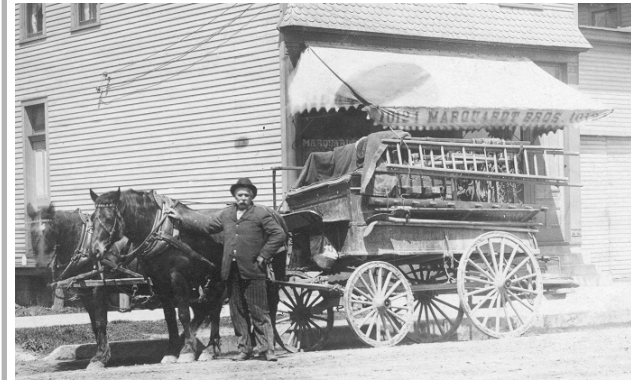
The two families arrived in Newton

County together. According to the obituary of Edward Canfield Ketcham, son of Robert and Frances. It states "Mr. Ketcham first came to Newton County with his family in 1889, and lived for a few months on a farm on the edge of Beaver Lake. They lived in the house now (1940), occupied by the Lloyd Williamson family, northeast of Enos. In those days, the farmers used oxen which were more sure-footed than horses in the marsh. Mr. Ketcham could recall the great flocks of birds which came over the lake and during his first short residence here knew the country as it was before the lake was drained". Edward was the father of Paul Ketcham, who owned and operated the IGA store in Morocco for many years.

In a "People at Work" profile from the *Newton County Enterprise*, Robert C. Morton, who served as the Day Marshall for Kentland, states that his family also arrived in Newton County in 1889 and lived on a farm near Morocco. He, too, remembered the territory at that time, stating that it was thinly populated, with several thousand acres to each farm.

Orval Morton raised his children on the Gaff Ranch. Frank was born there in 1895.

With the Morton children growing up and the Gaff Ranch sold off to several owners, about 1904, Orville and Arvilla moved to Morgan Park, Illinois. Judy Morton, daughter of John Morton, son of Frank, states in her family history that her grandfather, Frank, "worked in Chicago in his early life and drove a team of horses and wagons for Frank Ketcham, a contractor - draying - hauled furniture all over Chicago. He also worked in a blacksmith shop owned by George Ketcham." So, with George being an uncle to Arvilla, it is quite possible that they wanted to be close to family once again. However, they only lived in that area for a period of seven years, and returned to Morocco and remained there. They are buried at Oaklawn Cemetery in Morocco,



*The top two photos are unidentified, they these men appear in the picture on page one in the Gaff Ranch article. They may be Ketchams. Right, Frank, left, and Don Morton at the home place in 1941 after a fishing expedition.*

Indiana.

This brings us back to the photographs that I mentioned at the beginning of the story. Those pictures were taken during the time that Orval and Arvilla lived in Morgan Park. Most of them are from their son Myron's family, who lived near Indianapolis. Their daughter Amy sent most of them to her "Aunt" Arvilla. This gave me the clues I needed to put names to some of the pictures. If anyone would like more exact dates and generations that follow these, please feel free to contact me.

The gathering of the census records and family obituaries, are just the facts that linked together two families that lived, worked, and survived in an era of growth and opportunity. However, it was one simple phone call from one cousin to another, along with the need to know more about those family members that brings the closeness they felt back to their descendants in the year 2002. Thanks Don.

## I Remember The Railroads

*By Bob Simons*

We soon forget how important the railroads were to farming and developing Newton County. The railroads I am familiar with are or were the T.P. & W., or known as the Pennsylvania Railroad, and the New York Central Railroad.

The T. P. & W. was built around 1859, through the southern part of Newton County. The railroad served several businesses as it went through Kentland. Two grain elevators were served: McCray-Morrison and the Stars. The Kentland Lumber was owned by Mr. Smart. These elevators and lumber yard had large coal bins. Coal was very important to the livelihood of all the natives. The railroad served a small stock yard on the east side of Kentland and also the Newton County Stone. In my early years, I could ride to Goodland for 15 cents. At one time the railroad bridge burned out east of Kentland (McKee Ditch). The engine, which was pulling a passenger car, dropped into the ditch. At one time the freight business was called the Meat Route, shipping meat from the west to the eastern markets.

The New York Central was mostly a coal route, although there was a passenger train and some called it a milk train. The depot was an excellent piece of architecture. After the passenger business declined the depot was sold and moved to Florida, as the story is told. This railroad was built around 1900, through what was once the Fairgrounds on the west side of Kentland. This surely was the last of the race track, etc.

The coal docks, north of Kentland one mile, were an important stop for engines to fuel up with water and coal. The engines would uncouple and move on to take on water and coal. This was an important stop because of the large amount of water from this well. In this area was a large stock yard where all the livestock raised in this area could be loaded and shipped to Chicago Union Stockyards. My father operated the yards and often on warm days I would spray water on the hogs after they were loaded and waiting for the engine to pull the car out. Gov. McCray used the yards for unloading and loading cattle. This is the area that the Hagenbuch-Wallace unloaded their circus train. I think this was about 1927. Ringling Bros. Circus came to Kentland about 1918, the year the flu was bad.

My family and I lived on West Iroquois Drive by the railroad tracks. The railroad had double tracks and at one time there was a lot of traffic. The trains would stop to refuel and a number of things happened. At

night it was not unusual to hear coal being thrown off piece by piece for someone to heat their homes. It was not unusual for a tramp to show up at the door for a hand out while the train was stopped to refuel.



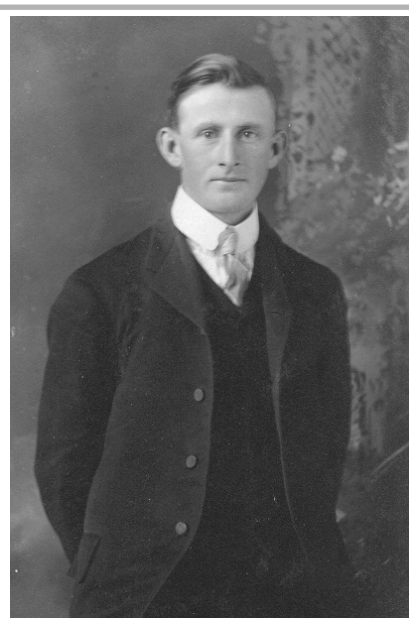
## Mystery Photo Identified

*By Gerald Born*

While browsing among a group of photos at a Watseka antique shop, I came upon this photo. I recognized Pete Gorman, as he had been a neighbor of ours at one time. I knew of his brother, John Gorman and Jim Burns, but did not recognize the others in the snapshot. On the rear of the print they were identified thusly: Front Row, Aunt Samantha, Aunt Lillian, Aunt Marie, Grandma, Mom, Back Row, Uncle Philander, Uncle John, Uncle Martin, Uncle Seymore, John Gorman, Jim Burns, Pete Gorman.

Recently I have been corresponding with Doug and Wendy Bower on the Internet, and through the wonders of that medium found a relative who knew their identity. On a hunch I had sent the mystery photo and here is the information they sent back. These are the Hickman/Gorman family. 1. Philander Hickman married Samantha (Harriett) Gurthrie in Newton County, Indiana on March 6, 1890. They are both buried in North Star Cemetery. 2. Aunt Lillian is Lillian Hickman. I have found no marriage record for her. She was in Martin Hickman's household in 1900 along with their mother Eliza Tarkington Hickman and Rosa Mack. (I can't figure out where Martha and Simeon (Thomas C.) Mack were since Riosa was living with Martha's brother Martin Hickman). 3. Aunt Maria is Maria Gorman (sister to my Mary Ann (Gorman) Bower and to John and Peter Gorman). She married Martin Hickman on November 27, 1901 in Newton County. They are buried in Oakland Cemetery. 4. Uncle Seymour is Seymour Hickman. He is buried in North Star Cemetery and I haven't found any marriage for him so far. With the exception of Uncle John, I think that covers everyone. What are grandma and mom's names?

To date we have not been able to positively identify the names of grandma and mom, but it seems that they probably are related. The person writing the information on the back of the photo had to be a relative, probably a child of one of the couples in the picture. I would guess they belong to the Hickman side of the family, but it is not wise to assume anything. We will keep looking.



*This photo, first thought to be Orval Morton, began the search for the Morton/Ketcham connection. All photos courtesy of Don Morton.*

**More on Osage Orange**

By Gerald Born

The article in the last issue on Osage orange and the passing of the hedge row created quite a bit of interest. While discussing it with Jim Robbins, our pundit from Colfax Township, he commented on several things that were not covered in the article and I pass them along as they add important information. First, he said that although barbed wire was invented in 1865, it was not in common use because of the expense. It was an expensive solution to the problem and people kept planting the Osage orange until the turn of the 20th century. This is not to say that there wasn't a great deal of upkeep on the hedge row. It was a rampant

grower and had to be cut back often or it became unruly. This was a nasty job as the tree had thorns on it and many a farmer had bloody knuckles from the job.

Jim also commented on the place the hedge row played in providing sanctuary to wildlife. With the passing of the hedge row, the wild critters are having fewer places to live and hide. Since writing the article, I have become more aware of just how many of the trees have been planted in Newton County. Just yesterday I passed a hedge row in Jackson Township that was nothing more than stumps, the trees having fallen victim to the chain saw. It is easy to see how the whole landscape is being altered by the removal of the trees. I passed one just east of

Morocco that has to have been planted soon after the pioneers arrived in Beaver Township. It is huge and gnarled and a grand old dame of the prairie. Soon many more will be a thing of the past.

*Have you heard the saying - "don't plant corn until the leaves on the hedge are as big as a squirrel's ear" ? - from Art Sigo's book, Born at the Right Time.*

**Family History Inquiries**

Seeking residence locations for **DALE INGRIM REED**, lived in Goodland. E-mail: dconklin@gbronline.com.

Looking for info on **WILLIAM AND MARY HARRINGTON** ca. 1850-1910. E-mail: cpreston@cts.com.

Visit the NCHS web site for more inquiries regarding the county.

**The County Home**

*Continued From Page Eleven*

door. He always referred to the facility as the County Home and encouraged others to do so. Mr. Haynes found purpose in life in helping people who were unable to care for themselves. He was especially saddened when in 1983, the commissioners found it necessary to close the County Home. Due to the state fire code requiring the installation of sprinkler systems and the cost of heating it became economically unfeasible for the county to maintain the home.

On December 15, 1983, the Newton County Home officially closed. There were seven residents who were moved to other facilities.

In the two years to follow, much publicity was noted in the local papers regarding the dispersal of the contents of the home by the county. In a letter to the editor which appeared in the June 13, 1985 issue of the *Morocco Courier*, the three commissioners at the time, William Blaney, Walt Miller and Peter Bisbis, expressed their concern regarding the publicity and dispersal of the items. They encountered two grand jury proceedings and the county incurred \$6,000 in court costs, and they explained that their entry of a guilty plea would stop the court costs. After publication, the matter seemed to be settled.

*(Editor's note: This article is a combination of information taken from the Jasper and Newton County History, 1915 and The History of Newton County, 1985 article written by Greta Taylor. A copy of the Letter To The Editor in the Morocco Courier, June, 1985 is available for further research at the Resource Center.)*

Thomas Gaff still was living in Aurora in 1860 along with his wife Margaret, 45, born in New York and his children Agnes, 18 and Zelly, 15. His new house and a different life style must have created the need for more servants for by 1870 we find a much larger household. At that time his estate was listed as \$50,000 of real property and \$25,000 of personal property. His age was given as 60 and that of his wife, Sarah, was given as 60 as well. Their children, Agnes, 27, and Rachel Rilla, 26, were still living with their parents.

Also included in the household were Charles Howe, 28, who was born in New York, and his children, Willard, 9, Harvey, 7, and Nicheldine, 2. A number of servants were also shown. G. Heingelmar, 36, was a coachman, as was Henry Warman, 25. Bavaria was their country of origin. Then there was Marg Linch, 26, who was in the nursery, Ana Riter, 20, a cook from Bavaria, Mary Ohm, 18, a chambermaid from England and Carrie Hulman, 20 of Indiana, Sirius Sheehy, 12, of Indiana, and Sarah Sevshel, 48, also of Indiana.

The Howe family is of interest for on November 2, 1871, Agnes Gaff married the same Charles L. Howe found in the census record. It is not known who Charles L. Howe was but his name appears along with James W. Gaff, President, J. R. Vail, Secretary, as Vice-President of the Crescent Brewing Company, previously mentioned. This company was the owner of the Arctic Ice Machine, which could produce 25 tons of ice a day to be used in their business.

Charles L. Howe was also president of The Aurora Distilling Company when the company was reorganized. It was the parent company of the Gaff brothers and started by them in 1843. It was successfully operated by them until 1881, when a joint stock company was organized with a capital of \$300,000 which assumed control of the concern, greatly extending their productive capacity and materially adding to the reputation of their product.

A word should be said here about the business itself. The operation occupied about five acres of ground with their buildings, cattle sheds, distillery and warehouses. The latter covered about one half of the space.

The distillery was 260 feet in length by 80 feet in width and two stories high. A few statistics in regard to its operation are in order. Some 450,000 bushels of grain were consumed yearly, producing from 60,000 to 65,000 barrels of whisky, requiring a staff of

fifty. The capacity of the still was 150 to 200 barrels per day, requiring the consumption of 2,000 bushels of corn, malt and rye, which after the distilling process was used as food for cattle. As many as 1,600 to 1,700 head of fat cattle were sent to market each spring yielding nearly \$75,000. The mash of almost half a million bushels of grain was thus made to serve the double purpose of manufacturing and cattle food. The last thing in the process of manufacturing was the attachment of the internal revenue stamp, from which the government realized ninety cents per gallon, a total of over \$1,500,000 per year. The company ran four bonded warehouses in the U.S. containing 16,000 barrels of whisky with some 4,400 more in Bremen, Germany. Dearborn and Ohio Counties supplied all the grain used, as well as a large per cent of the cattle.

The Thomas Gaff family had lost two children in the 1840s Emma Gaff (17 July 1847 to June 10, 1848) and James Gaff (October 6, 1841 to August 20, 1843). They were buried in the Old Aurora Graveyard, as was their oldest daughter Carolyn Margaret Gaff (November 9, 1837-November 7, 1853).

By 1870 James W., 52, a Distiller of Spirits was now worth \$300,000 and had a personal property of \$30,000. Rachel, 44, is listed as his wife born in Indiana. Their children Charles, 23, a distiller, Jane 19, at home, James W., 17, at school, Thomas, 15, Rachel, 12, and Mary, 8, constituted the family. Also in the household were servants brought from Ireland: David Lanigan 40, a driver of carriages, Martin Flaherty, 19, a servant, Kate Maloiray, 20, Maggie Sullivan, 23, and Ellen Conner, 22 completed the household. Shortly after James W. Gaff moved his family to Cincinnati, Ohio and that is where Rachel S. Gaff is found in 1880. James W. Gaff had died the previous year.

In 1880 the household was headed by Mrs. R. S. Gaff, 50, born in Indiana as were her parents. James W. Gaff, a son, 28, was a distiller; T. T. Gaff, 24, a son and lawyer was at home as were the sisters, R. S. Gaff, and Mary Gaff, 22, and 20 respectively. William Roe, 50, from England, Walter Haulon, 20, a servant from Ireland, Mary McGill, 30, a servant from Ireland, Bridget Lemon, 30, a servant from Ireland, and Julia Flanagan, 23, a servant from Ireland completed the household.

Rachel S. Gaff started selling some of the Newton County holdings soon after her husband's death. From July 14, 1880 until

her death in 1899, there are a number of land transfers of portions of the Gaff ranch. She sold land to George Galvin, Arielle Lamphere, Fayette Lamphere, Daniel Stoner, Nancy Stoner, Clara Howlett, David S. Hanger, John Ekey, the State of Indiana and the largest transfer was 21 parcels to the American Farm Company.

Her will was recorded in Newton County and gives more details about this very astute and wealthy woman. The will opens by saying that Rachael Gaff was formerly of Cincinnati, Ohio. It appears that she was then living in Barnstable, Massachusetts where three of her children were also living. It is possible that the family had holdings in this place and yet another mansion.

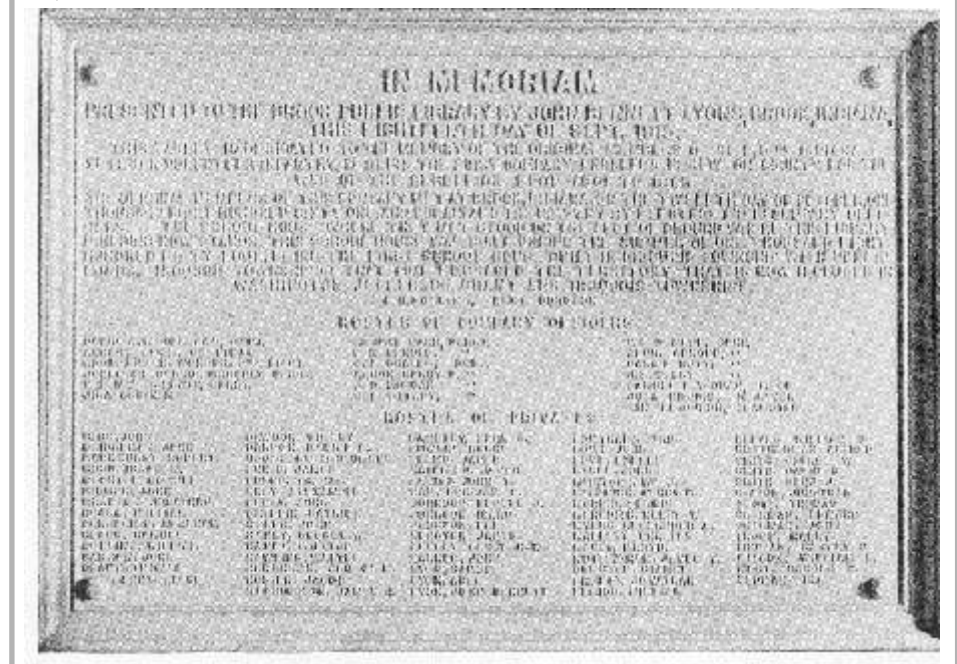
She bequeaths \$5,000 to her son, Thomas T. Gaff in consideration of his special services in and attention to the management of my business affairs. She gives \$5,000 to James D. Parker for his long and faithful services. To each grandchild who was living at her death the sum of \$5,000. To her maid, Katharine J. Hines, she leaves \$500. To William Roe in consideration of his long, continuous and faithful service she leaves \$20 per month for and during the time of his natural life. She leaves to the Children's Home, the Home of the Friendless and the Widow's Home all of Cincinnati, the sum of \$1,000 each. All the rest of the of her estate she bequeaths to her children, share and share alike. She stipulates that should any attempt be made to set aside her will then the person or persons so attempting shall forfeit all claims to any share in the estate. Thomas T. Gaff and the above James D. Parker were appointed the executors of the estate with the stipulation that should either one of them pass then her sons-in-law, Gordon Shillito, Daniel H. J. Holmes, or Charles M. Hinkle be appointed co-executors. If there were any disagreement between her executors, the will of her son would prevail. The will was dated December 2, 1899.

In proving the will at Barnstable, Massachusetts it states that she died there on March 24, 1901. Her children are named: Thomas T. Gaff, Jane G. Shillito, Mary G. Hinkle all of Barnstable and Rachel S; Holmes of Covington, Kentucky. Thomas Con T. Gaff posted a million dollar bond. On May 14, 1901 after an inventory of her property the following was submitted to the court: Real Estate, \$948,000, Personal Estate \$419,000. James D. Parker, who

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**Answers To Do You Know Your County of Newton?** By Janet Miller

1. The six State Delegates from the Newton County Izaak Walton League were: Claude Warr and Orv Hamacher, Brook; C. E. Kohls and Joseph E. Hiestand, Kentland; and Frank Manning and Lloyd Arbuckle, Lake Village. 2. The Newton County R.E.M.C. was energized in 1940 and Albert Bower, rural Kentland, was the first to receive service. 3. "Molasses Street" was located in Jackson Township, 2 miles North and a little West of Mt. Ayr on Road 300E. The road was a mile in length running North and South. Some of the old settlers living there were: Ben Y oder, Eli and Ira Chupp, David Hostetler and Harry Hufty. "Molasses Street" got its name from the molasses press that was located on this road. 4. The name of the office building at the Newton County Fair is the John Connell Memorial Building. It honors John M. Connell who was a much respected Secretary of the Fair from 1954 to 1986. 5. The Brook Iroquois Public Library, Brook, IN, has the bronze plaque. This plaque pictured below, is approximately 4 feet by 5 feet in size and lists the roster of the men who served in this company. The plaque was presented to the library by John Bennett Lyons, a member of the company, on September 18, 1915.



# Photographs & Memories . . .

Upper left, C. C. Kent's Pond. This card was sent to Miss Bessie Maier, East Chicago, IN Cryptic message, "All well and having a good ta ta! As near as I can tell it is postmarked in Kentland in 1908. Photo contributed by Gerald Born



Lower left, published in the Morocco Courier in 1985, was this picture of the first public school in Mount Ayr.



Far right, Brook Band Member Bert Turner poses for a portrait at the Kellenberger Cabinet Portrait Studio located in Brook, Indiana.



Do you have old photos you would like to share? You can e-mail them to newtonhs@ffni.com, or send them to the editor. All photos will be returned.

## Brief History of the Hoosier Homestead Award Program

In 1976, former Lieutenant Governor Robert D. Orr, along with the Indiana Department of Commerce's Division of Agriculture, (now the Office of the Commissioner of Agriculture), created a statewide program called the Hoosier Homestead Award. This program recognizes farms that have been owned by the same family for one hundred years or more. It stresses the contributions these family farms have made to the economic, cultural and social advancement of Indiana.

/award\_1.html, or contact the Office of the Commissioner of Agriculture, ISTA Center, Suite 414, 150 West Market Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204. Submitted by Beth Bassett.

To date, 3427 farms have been certified as Hoosier Homesteads, 35 in Newton County. Eight hundred and sixty-one families have retained ownership of their farm for over 150 years. The oldest homestead farm belongs to Edward J. Jordan, Wheatland, Indiana. It has been in the family since 1797.

Upon certification as a Hoosier Homestead Farm, the award recipients are eligible to purchase a yard sign that indicates the farm has remained in the family for more than 100 years. Information of historical value on each Hoosier Homestead farm is then deposited with the Indiana State Archives for future reference.

Your farm may qualify for the Hoosier Homestead Award, visit their site [www.state.in.us/icpr/webfile/homestead](http://www.state.in.us/icpr/webfile/homestead)

First Applicant	Second Applicant	Homestead Date	Award Date
Anderson, James William	James William Anderson	January 11, 1879	April 3, 1980
Baird, Clay	Helen Baird	May 3, 1870	June 21, 1976
Baird, Clay C.	Helen Baird	May 11, 1870	June 21, 1976
Bedinger, D.W.	Virginia Bedinger	January 30, 1885	October 13, 1988
Bower, Louise	Louise Bower	September 21, 1869	June 21, 1976
Bower, Paul J.	Paul J. Bower	September 3, 1869	December 6, 1976
Boyd, William L. (Estate)	Adcy, Chocster & Roy Boyd	May 16, 1889	July 11, 1989
Burton, Irol	Irol Burton	August 1, 1868	April 13, 1978
Carter, Mrs. (Nellie) Irwin	Nellie (Mrs. Irwin) Carter	December 28, 1875	October 12, 1976
Christenson, Robert G.	Robert C. Christenson	July 27, 1886	October 13, 1988
Claussen, Margie	Charles G. McCullough	September 26, 1840	December 18, 1995
Dennison, Helen H.	Helen H. Dennison	December 10, 1888	August 09, 1976
Guard, Mary Edna	Mary Edna Guard	December 15, 1866	December 06, 1976
Henderson, Delmar	Dor Henderson	September 19, 1898	October 13, 1988
Hershman, Richard R.	Richard R. Hershman	March 15, 1872	December 06, 1976
Hutchinson, Ralph A.	Patricia J. Hutchinson	February 1, 1886	December 13, 1993
Kessler, John D.	John D. Kessler	December 16, 1844	June 21, 1976
Krull, Helen K.	Helen K. Krull	April 11, 1870	October 25, 1985
Luchtman, Mary Elaine Chancellor	Mary Elaine Chancellor Luchtman	September 15, 1865	January 28, 1987
Lyons, Everett A.	Louis B. Lyons	October 25, 1868	April 19, 1983
Markland, Bianche L.	Bianche L. Markland	April 27, 1882	June 28, 1994
McCarty, Freda	Kenneth McCarty	October 15, 1874	April 13, 1976
McKee, Robert P.	Phyllis McKee	September 14, 1865	January 28, 1987
Miller, Mrs. Richard	Genevera Carlson	May 25, 1875	February 14, 1977
Pull, Lowell	Beulah Pull	November 1, 1880	October 13, 1988
Roberts, Bela F., Sr.	Bela F. Roberts, Sr.	February 23, 1869	October 12, 1976
Romine, Leon Earl	Leon Earl Romine	January 1, 1874	August 01, 1976
Shafer, John T.	Ann R. Shafer	February 19, 1859	January 13, 1983
Simons, Robert R.	Robert R. Simons	October 10, 1872	August 09, 1976
Smith, Viola June	Viola June Smith	January 1, 1869	August 09, 1976
Sondgerath, Mrs. Violet	Mrs. Violet Sondgerath	January 18, 1872	October 12, 1976
Strole, Frances Allen	Francis Allen Strole	January 13, 1869	December 06, 1976
Taylor, Greia (Mrs. Wilbur)	Mrs. Cecil Zella Whaley	February 5, 1861	April 19, 1983
Whaley, Darwin L.	Kathryn L. Whaley	December 2, 1875	October 18, 1982
Whaley, Edith Violet	Edith Violet Whaley	March 1, 1889	July 11, 1989

Continued From Page One  
the property in small parcels of 40 and 80 acres from a number of land owners in the area. The earliest land transfer I could find was the purchase of forty acres from Orrin Elijah and his wife on August 27, 1875. In the year 1875 through 1877 the purchases were as follows 648 acres from Leo K. Clark, 9 acres from George Clark, 160 acres from George Spitler, 80 acres from Lewis Smith, 40 acres plus an undivided part of a section from John Peacock, from the partners of Ward, Graham and Hall, Section 29, 40 acres from the Sheriff of Newton County, 80 acres from John Odle, 80 acres from Noble K. Parks, 80 acres from Thomas Cox, 45 acres from B. B. McDonald, 80 acres from William H. H. Graham, who it appears was a lawyer and who may have handled the procurement of lands for the Gaffs, 40 acres from George W. Jones, 40 acres from Glenn H. Wheaton (from whom Wheaton Arms got its name), and 120 acres from Alexander J. Kent.

Other members of the family also became involved. James' wife, Rachel S. Gaff bought land as did Gilbert Gaff and David B. Gaff. Gilbert purchased 80 acres from the Sheriff of Newton County. Rachel S. bought lands from Jacob Chizum, Daniel Stoner, David Hanger, Bright's Subdivision of Beaver Lake, and from Elizabeth Todd. These purchases over such a long period of time suggests that the Gaff family was intimately aware of Newton County and the potential that they believed the land might one day have. It appears that their conservation efforts were aimed at keeping others out of their private domain, though none of their papers have been found that might indicate what their intentions for the use of the land may have been.

There were three Gaff brothers, all of whom were at one time involved in the brewing and distilling business. Their parents, James and Margaret (Wilson) Gaff, came from Scotland and settled in Springfield, New Jersey, three years after the birth of their oldest son, Thomas, (1808-1879) near Edinburgh. Thomas learned his father's trade of papermaking, but it was from his uncle, Charles Wilson, of Brooklyn, New York, that he was to learn the distilling business which was to be the foundation of his wealth and also that of his brothers, James W. (1816-1879) and John (1820-1879). In partnership with his brothers, Thomas Gaff opened a distillery in Philadelphia. The business was a success until the Panic of 1837, which sent the

## Hillforest Mansion, Aurora, Indiana



This magnificent mansion situated on ten acres of land overlooking the Ohio river would be home to the Thomas Gaff family from 1855 to 1891.

brothers looking for new opportunities. The brothers moved their business to Aurora, Indiana, after receiving promises of tax incentives and land. James came to Aurora, a pretty town on the Ohio river in 1841, followed by Thomas Gaff in 1843, and John in 1845. It appears that Margaret Gaff, who married Thomas J. Taylor in Dearborn County, Indiana, on June 24, 1846, was their sister. There may have been other children, but their names have not yet been found.

In 1843, a distillery was established on the banks of Hogan Creek by Thomas and James W. Gaff. Located one block north of downtown Aurora, the distillery produced bourbon, rye, and Thistle Dew scotch whiskey. This business was so successful that it soon led to the opening of the Crescent Brewing Company, which made Aurora Lager Beer. Such was the quality of this product that it was exported to the German market.

It seems that there is no end to the businesses that the brothers ran, either independently or in partnership with family and friends. Thomas Gaff (1808-1884) was a merchant (exhibited as an Aurora merchant in 1858-9 dealing in dry goods, groceries, etc.), banker and manufacturer. Thomas was characterized in an 1880 history of Indiana's eminent and self-made men: "As a financier, he is regarded as one of the best in the country. His executive

ability is remarkable. No transaction within the range of his complicated affairs escapes his observation. He is generous, and ready to relieve the deserving poor. Few men have been more liberal in the contributions to religious and charitable objects."

The Gaff brothers businesses were varied and widespread, including farming, Nevada silver mines, a Cincinnati jewelry store, foundry and machine works, turnpike and canal construction, steamboat operations, and banking. Thomas Gaff was a joint partner in two Columbus, Indiana mills, Thomas Gent & Co. and T.C. Sayre & Co. Their mill in Columbus produced "Cerealine," which was touted as the first ready-made cereal in the world.

The Gaff brothers also owned a fleet of steamboats used to transport their goods on the Ohio River. During the Civil War, the Gaffs furnished these boats and supplies for the Union cause. The Forest Queen provided the headquarters for Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman during the Siege of Vicksburg after the steamboat under the command of Capt. C. D. Conway of Aurora successfully ran the blockade at Vicksburg, Virginia. Later the boat was burned by the Confederates at St. Louis, Missouri.

The Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana, contains manuscripts of Thomas Gaff, which cover a period of 1857-1872.

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