

BAILEY- COX – DAVID FAMILY

How we came to be connected with the Kankakee River and Grand Kankakee Marsh.

I believe that learning about the land, surrounding and events that happened in our ancestor's lifetime help us to understand our ancestor's and what qualities they passed on to their descendants. I have been interested in researching and telling the family history for many years.

The early history of the combined David – Cox-- Bailey families began in 1870-71 when John Wesley David and Catherine (Babcock) David and their children left Frontenac County, Ontario, Canada in 1870 and with other families migrated to Iroquois County, Illinois. The children were: Matilda, Charles Wesley, and Prudence. Mercy, another child, had died in Canada a year prior to the journey to Illinois. Mary was born in Illinois 1876 and was later married to Emerson Manter. Matilda always told her grandchildren that the trip was made in wagons. They were farmers heading for Illinois where other related families had settled and before 1870.

Matilda David married Israel Lincoln Cox at Milford, Illinois on October 15, 1877. He was born in Iroquois County, Illinois in 1854. His parents, natives of Ohio, Walter B. Cox and Lucinda Jane Sallee had moved to Illinois before 1853. In 1880, Israel and Matilda lived near Lake Village, Indiana. Their first child Iona was 2 years of age. April 29, 1885 Israel and Matilda purchased 2 lots in the town of Roselawn for the sum of forty dollars. Their second child, Aggie, my grandmother, was born in 1882; Schuyler, 1884; Edward 1885; and James Ira 1889.

Farmland was purchased in Lincoln Township, section 29, four miles southwest of Roselawn, a home and outbuildings were built there before 1899. The eighty acres was a sandy ridge that had formerly been the northern edge of the marsh that surrounded Beaver Lake. It was less than one half mile south of what was known as Schafer's Ridge where the infamous horse thief, Mike Schafer, had a cabin several years before. Some the oldest members the Bailey family still call that area Shafer's Hill. One mile east of the Cox farm was the farm where Charles David lived; it too was part of the Black Marsh. Buckhorn School in section 21 was across the road from the David farm. Several of the Cox and David children attended school there.

Chesafy (Dawson) Bailey, a widow and a native of Warren County, Indiana; her children: Perry, Fanny, Frank and Charles Albert moved to Roselawn, Indiana. Another son, James Bailey, and his family also moved there at the same time. On the 1900 Census for Town of Roselawn: Chesafy managed a hotel, Perry and James worked at the Lawler and Otis Ranches. Aggie Cox and Perry Bailey were married at Roselawn, October 1899.

The draining of Beaver Lake had occurred several years before and the dredging of the lateral ditches extending through the Grand Kankakee Marsh to the Kankakee River had begun. Perry may have begun work as a dredge operator as early as 1902. He dug some of the lateral ditches

in Newton County before going to work in other Midwestern states circa 1908. James and family left the area in 1908 and James found work in Montana as a logger.



1909 –

L-R rear: Perry Bailey; Maude; Oscar; Aggie; Flora in front, Ethel on lap.

Aggie and the children made trips by train from Roselawn to the various places in other states where Perry was working for the McWilliams Dredging Company. After living from 1912-1923 in Tazewell County, Illinois and West Plains, Missouri, The Perry Bailey family came back to Newton County and settled west of Roselawn on a small farm where they raised vegetables, strawberries, potatoes and gladiolas to sell in surrounding towns.

I was born at the Rawlison farm located at the edge of what the 1876 Historical Newton County Map indicates as the West Black Marsh. My father, Chester Bailey, worked there for Mike Rawlison. During the years of 1948-1951 we lived in Colfax Township. The farm had once been part of the Duffy Ranch and had been part of the marshy area northeast of the shores of Beaver Lake. Soil there was a muck or peat soil, fertile, but hard to plow in the spring without using a caterpillar tractor.

In 1952, we moved to Schneider in Lake County. Fred McRoberts, the principal of Schneider Grade School would take the seventh and eighth grade students on hikes in the spring along the river to look for morel mushrooms. My four siblings and my four children grew up not far from the river. We learned to enjoy and respect the river and its history.

Many of the Cox and David descendants continue to live close to the Roselawn area and the Kankakee River. It would be an interesting, but monumental task to enumerate an area within 5 miles of the Kankakee River in Newton County to determine how many descendants of these 3 families live or have lived near the River and Marsh in the last 130 years.

Written March 22, 2013 for KVHS –Eleanor Bailey

