



Linnell Pioneers in Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin and Beyond

By Dan McConnell



The site of our next Linnell Family Reunion is North Central Illinois, near Rockford, IL. This area was the first or second destination of many of our pioneering Linnells as they headed West in search of opportunity.

The first of his children to migrate to the midwest was Samuel, who travelled by wagon across Michigan to Illinois in 1845. Later, in the 1850's Samuel and his family moved to Kilbourne, WI, now called the Wisconsin Dells.

The second to migrate west in late 1845 was Thomas Jefferson Linnell, my great-great-grandfather, who came by boat [a flatboat by family tradition].

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mon settlement. Once they reached Chicago, however, they went overland to Rockford to be with his brother Samuel's family. After living in Rockford for five years, Thomas Jefferson Linnell purchased a farm in adjacent Boone County, and later retired to Belvidere, the County seat, where he died at 97.

Of Thomas Jefferson Linnell's children [see photo] Selwyn and Lester moved on to raise families in South Dakota, Amy Tofflemire, Jane Thorne, Lucina Magoon, and Jessie Sampson [married names] moved their families to Iowa, and Maryette Sewell's family stayed in Boone County.

The Thomas Jefferson Linnell Farm in Boone County [see photo] still exists. Though the farmhouse was taken down in recent years, the barn was converted into a dwelling, which can be seen today. Near to this farm were those of the Tofflemires and Sewells, whose sons married Linnell daughters.

The families of other of Samuel's children who pioneered this area included those of Rufus Linnell, to Henry County, IL, Eunice Linnell See to Michigan and Illinois, and John Linnell to Michigan, Wisconsin, and Illinois.

We hope you will join us to relive these pioneer days at the Linnell Family Reunion in Rockford next June.

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Linnell Family Association Newsletter
c/o Jerry Linnell
416 Constitution Ave NE
Washington, DC 20002

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Letter From The Chairman

By Jerry Linnell

Greetings from the Nation's Capital. Let me apologize to you for the late arrival of your newsletter. Busy work schedules and lack of material for inclusion in the newsletter have led to this delay. And while I am at it, let me say that we all need to participate in getting some publishable material to the newsletter editor so we will have lots of material to choose from.

Here we are after the November elections, about which I must say I am very pleased; it means there will be change here in the Nation's Capital. Let's hope that our new President and the new Congress can help us right the flagship America and we can get on to cooperation and production of new and better ways of making our country a greater place for everyone.

So in that regard, let me talk a little about the Linnell Family Association and its challenges. I have a big one for you: Who is willing to step forward to keep our ship afloat and on course? There will be vacancies in the following steering committee positions come the reunion in Illinois next June: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and a position or two on the scholarship committee. We have two new people who have volunteered to step forward to help, and it could not come at a better time. Brian Linnell, out in Washington, will become our new newsletter editor. Lori Linnell, out in California, has volunteered to be our new membership chair. I thank both of them for filling two very important positions on the LFA Steering Committee.

And another challenge: Can you take the time and make the effort to perhaps have a "family reunion" within the larger LFA reunion next June in Illinois? Having your immediate family and cousins participate in the LFA reunion in Rockford will be instrumental in the success of our planned activities at that time. So in your holiday cards this year, jot a little extra note of your plans to attend the reunion and try to get your family members psyched up about it.

I want to thank you for your splendid response to the dues notice in the last newsletter. And as always, I send Jane and my best wishes to all of LFA cousins for a splendid holiday season.

May I also add a note of condolence to Bonnie and Dixie Soderlund on the loss of Marvel (Muggie) Linnell Soderlund this past July. Talk about a trooper and a bright light in the Linnell family. So many of us cousins will miss her wonderful smile, musical talent, and of course her caring personality—to name just a few of her many attributes. God Bless You, Marvel.

The Story of Making A 1976 Bicentennial Liberty Bell Model

(Part 1 of 2) By Orrell Linnell

The year 1976 was coming up and the 200th birthday of this great nation would be an event calling for recognition and celebration. Plans started being made to make it a year not easily forgotten. Almost everyone, I think, wanted to take part in some way. Amongst the memorabilia that started showing up frequently was the Philadelphia Liberty Bell.

At that time my wife, Lottie, and I were operating a small contract broiler farm [in Otisfield], raising chickens for Lipman Poultry Co. in Augusta.

Lottie was a hard worker and quick with her hands. We had two barns of chicks to take care of. We were filling large tube feeders with the grain, washing out eight-inch automatic waterers and I would stoke 26 coal brooder stoves.

We each took a barn and when we got our morning chores done we had coffee and then had some time to ourselves. Lottie had built up a little custom dressmaking business, which she enjoyed because it brought people out to the farm, giving her someone to talk to. I had my workshop in the basement of the house.

Years earlier I had been fascinated with the idea of wood turning. To be able to use a sharp tool and cut away on a spinning piece of wood and make something beautiful seemed appealing. I had never even seen it done but had the urge to try it.

I built a lathe—using common sense—with items kicking around the farm and the help of Sears and Roebuck. I made provisions for turning deep bowls, called "outboard" turning. The lathe worked, so I taught myself by making many bowls. I experimented with anything that could be made by "turning wood."

I knew that I wanted to participate in our nation's 200th birthday. As a wood turning, I was always looking for something different to try, so I thought I might attempt to turn a model of the Liberty Bell.

I had learned earlier that solid wood when worked on does not always remain stable. Releasing the stress that is in wood, sometimes lets it warp or crack. I learned that by cutting wood into pieces and gluing it back together, items can be made to remain stable. Using this principle almost any size object can be made.

Making a model of the bell was exciting and challenging to me. I had an ample supply of good mahogany kiln-dried wood. It was nice mahogany.

The Story of Making A 1976 Bicentennial Liberty Bell Model continued...

At the time, the only picture I had was a 3 x 3-inch picture. The bell would need to be kept in proportion, so remembering the equation for proportion from my second year of algebra and using a six-inch steel rule graduated in 64ths of an inch, and with a pocket calculator my nephew had given me for Christmas, I was able to figure all the correct dimensions for each part. I reasoned that a bell with a 20-inch rim was all I could turn comfortably and all measurements were figured from that.

...to be continued in our next newsletter!

Family Website

Mark Wynn maintains our LFA website. Please visit to find up-to-date news, information and recent additions to the Linnell Family records. The website address is:

<http://linnellfamily.home.comcast.net/~linnellfamily/>

Questions and Opinions

At the 2009 LFA family reunion, the Steering Committee will be putting together a list of volunteers to hold positions on that committee. One of the vacancies will be that of Chairperson. One of questions to come up is: Should the chairperson of the LFA Steering Committee have the last name Linnell?

Here are some questions in reference to the newsletter have also come up recently: Should we continue the paper production of the newsletter or put it online for those who so wish? Should we not send a newsletter to those cousins who do not pay their dues?

What is your opinion? Write to Jerry: Jerl@aol.com and/or the newsletter editors with your response.

From the Editors

We invite you to share your stories with our cousins around the globe! Submissions are preferred via email. Please include the text of the article in the body of the email. All pictures should be high-quality JPGs. If you are unable to submit via email, please send regular post to the editors, Heather or Katie Linnell. Take a look at the Steering Committee list on this page for their contact information.

THE LINNELL FAMILY ASSOCIATION Steering Committee 2006-2009

The purposes of the Association are to promote fellowship among Linnell Family members through reunions, the publication of the Linnell Family Newsletter, and the preservation of family records.

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