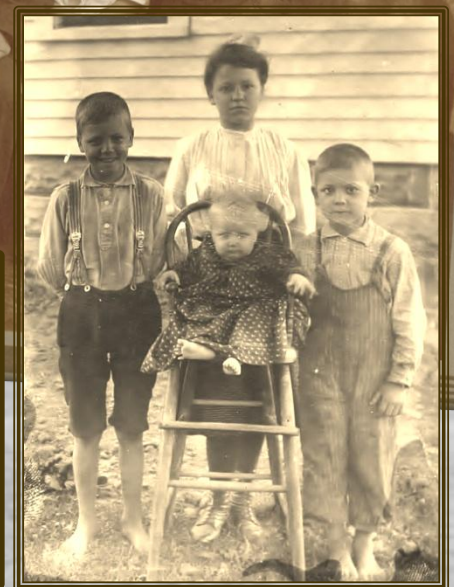


A Mennonite Family in Northern Indiana

A Simple American Story



*Wakarusa, Indiana, ca. 1890, viewing to the northwest.
From left: Chicago Drug Store, Lusher's Department
Store and Bauer Bros. Buggies and Harness.*

A Mennonite Family in Northern Indiana

A Simple American Story

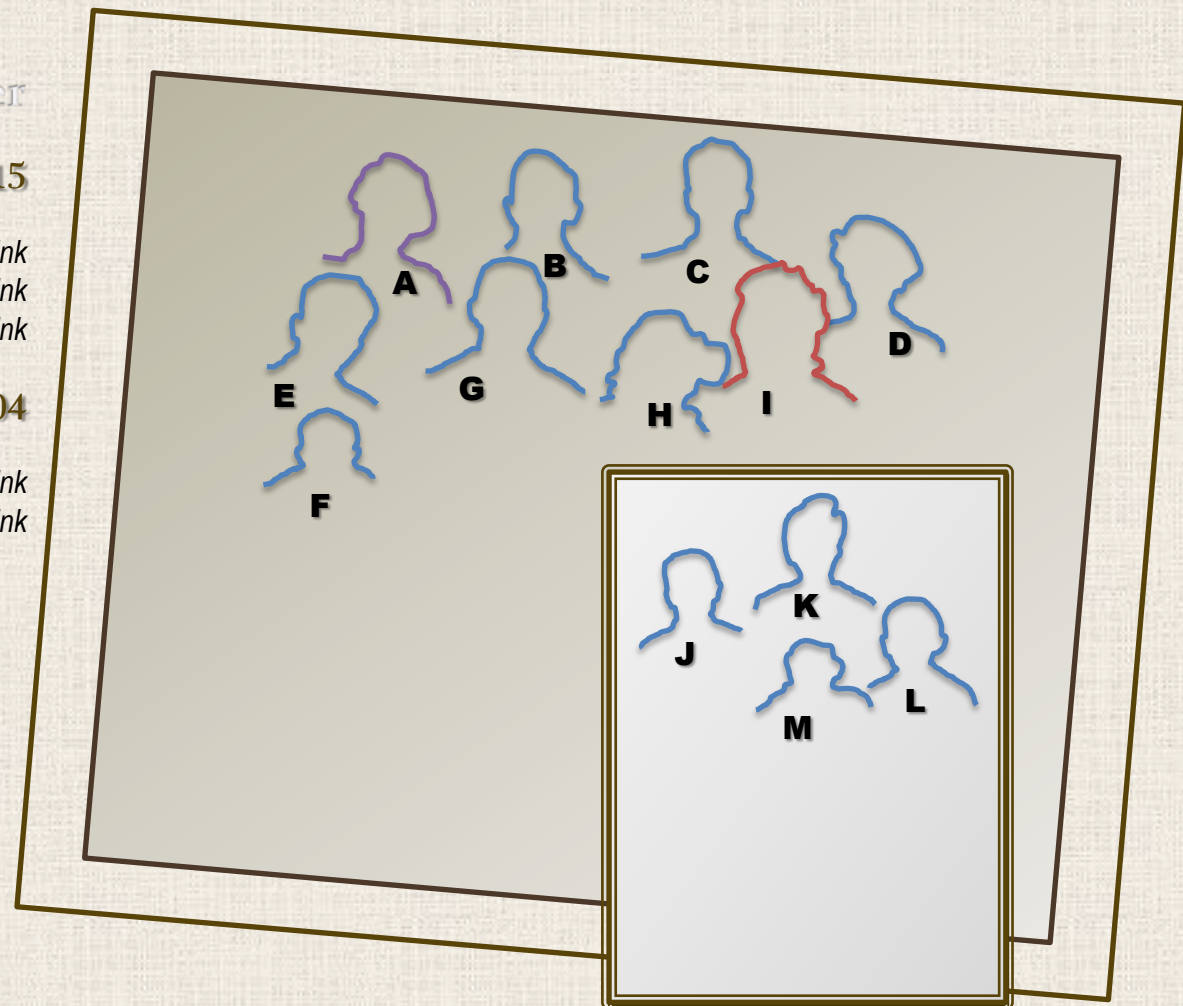
From Front Cover

Link family portrait taken in South Dakota, 1915

Standing: **A** - Beatrice (**Wilson**) Link, **B** - Elden Wallace Link, **C** - Oscar Ray Link, **D** - Edna Frances Link
Seated: **E** - Forest Elmer Link with **F** - Ned Wilson Link
G - Charles Ulysses Link, **H** - Mary Elizabeth Link, **I** - Clara Malinda (**Berkey**) Link

Picture of Link Children in Nappanee, 1904

Standing: **J** - Oscar Ray Link, **K** - Edna Frances Link, **L** - Elden Wallace Link
High Chair: **M** - Mary Elizabeth Link



From Germany to Ohio in the 1820s

Jacob Link was born November 28, 1825¹, in Württemberg, Germany. His parents were probably Mennonite. In his second year, they took Jacob and emigrated by ship and then by wagon to the Ohio River Valley of the United States. He had at least one sibling, a brother named Christian who later married and settled in the Kent, OH, area². Christian later built and owned the Link Building, on Main Street in Kent.

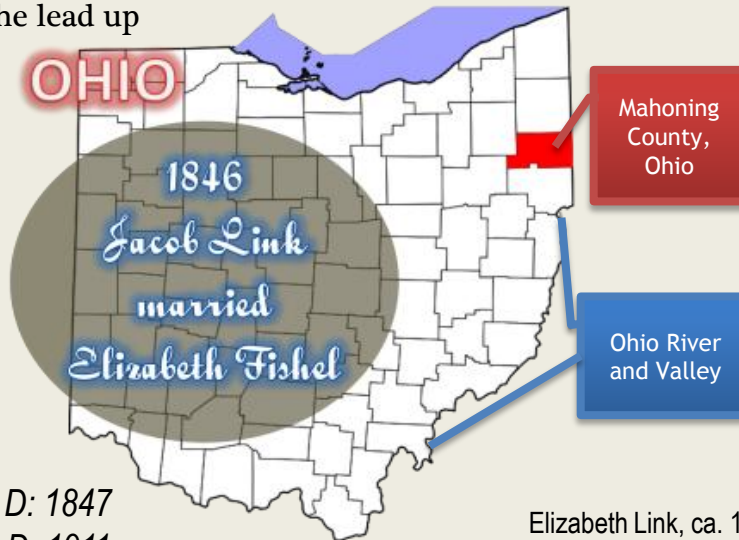
Jacob grew up in Mahoning County, OH, which today is dominated by Youngstown. In the year 2000 census, Youngstown had a population of 83,026. In 1860, Youngstown was home to just 5,300 souls, to one degree or another caught in the lead up to civil war.

In his 20th year, Jacob married Elizabeth Fishel on October 29, 1846², a Thursday. Elizabeth had been born in Columbiana County, OH, according to the 1870 census, almost certainly based on first-hand reports from the family. Columbiana County is directly below Mahoning County. Elizabeth's parents, however, were both originally from Pennsylvania. Jacob and Elizabeth went on to have eight children.

| | | |
|------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Infant | B: 1847 | D: 1847 |
| Susannah "Susan" | B: 4 May 1849 | D: 1911 |
| Anna "Mary" | B: Feb 1851 | D: 10 May 1872 |
| George | B: 1853 | D: 18 June 1870 |
| Margaret | B: 12 Feb 1857 | D: 17 Apr 1921 |
| Melissa Jane | B: 1859 | D: 27 Feb 1862 |
| Emma | B: 1863 | D: 12 May 1872 |
| Charles Ulysses | B: 19 Jan 1869 | D: 20 Dec 1938 |



Württemberg, Germany shown within the German Empire (1871-1918) from Wikipedia



Elizabeth Link, ca. 1882, in the only known photo of her. No photo of Jacob is known to exist.



¹Jacob Link died September 27, 1897 in Locke Township, Elkhart County, IN., of a heart attack following the evening meal.

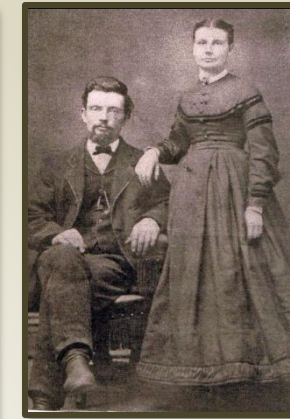
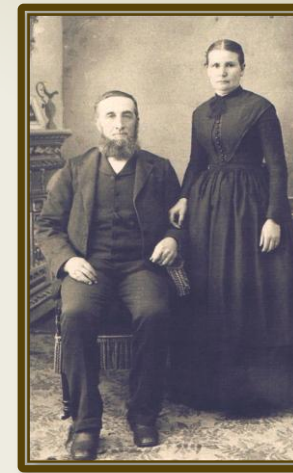
²According to the research of family historian Mary (Jones) Henry, Salem, OR.

Mennonite and Amish Country in Northern Indiana

Following the Civil War's conclusion in 1865, the couple moved to the northern Indiana county of Elkhart to establish a new chapter in their lives. Jacob and Elizabeth either purchased, or more likely established, a farm between the two Indiana villages of Nappanee and Wakarusa.

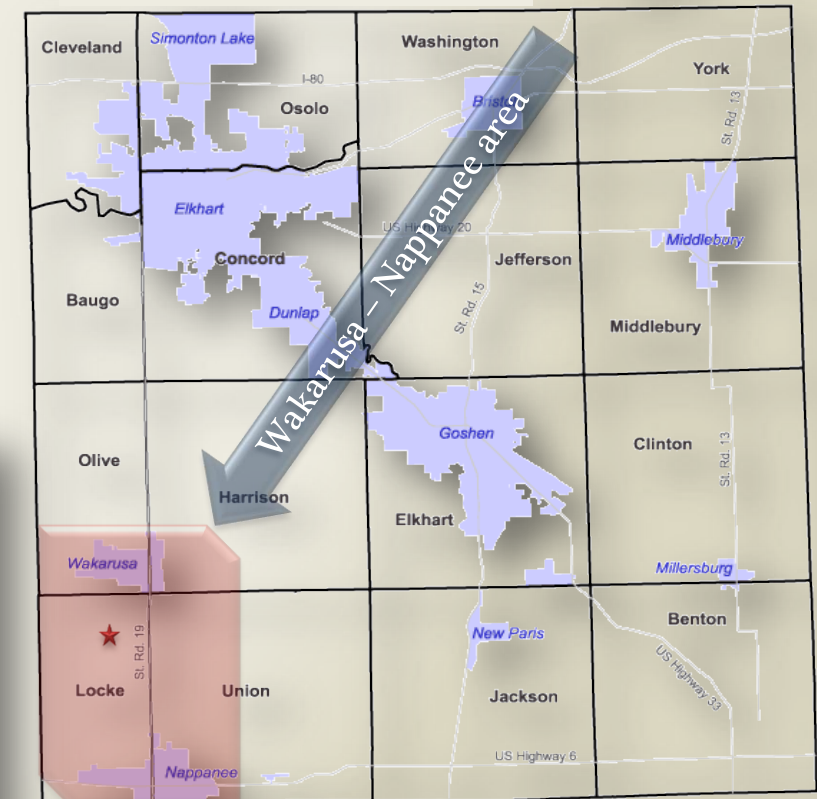
The area of Indiana they moved to was home to many Mennonite and Amish emigrants from Germany, so it is probable there was a connection either through church or friendship that guided them. Both Nappanee and Wakarusa remain small towns today. Jacob and Elizabeth attended Holdeman Mennonite Church, four miles from their farm home just outside Wakarusa. The church, founded in 1851, continues today.

The last of Jacob and Elizabeth's children was Charles Ulysses Link and the only child born in Indiana. Born on January 19, 1869, the Ulysses used as his middle name was in honor of the Union general who had just been voted President of the United States that year, Ulysses S. Grant.



Susannah, who was called "Susan," had first and second husbands. The first (far right) was Jacob Bachull, of Ohio, and the second (near right) was Isaac Leatherman of Elkhart County, IN.

INDIANA



Margaret Link, age 15 and Charles Ulysses Link age five, in 1874.



Margaret Link, ca. 1882.



Alvin and Margaret (Link) Leatherman family.

Charles Ulysses Link at age 19, ca. 1888.

Source: Census 2000 Tiger files
Map produced by the Indiana Business Research Center, IU Kelley School of Business

Heartbreak, Faith and Determination

Jacob and Elizabeth had lost five of their eight children by the time the 1880 census was taken. Their first child had died in infancy in 1847 in Ohio. Another, Melissa Jane, died at about three years of age in 1862, also before the family moved to Indiana.

During one particularly dark period for the family, three children died within two years in Indiana; two within two days of each other. George died on June 18, 1870 at age 16. Anna Mary Link, who was called by her middle name and had married Levi Chupp, had given birth to a child, Cora, just eight months earlier. She died of consumption on May 10th, 1872. Then, two days later on the 12th, nine-year-old Emma died. Both girls were buried during a joint funeral.

A story passed down by letter to Mary (Jones) Henry, daughter of Edna Link, describes what is probably the day that Emma died, two days following her sister.

“Mother wrote that she died a day after her 9th birthday. She was washing dishes when Grandma (Elizabeth) noticed a change and went to the neighbors for help. (Emma) died before any help could arrive.”

What this heart-wrenching story does not tell is almost as powerful as what it does. One wonders if the strain, uncertainty and sadness over the loss of a treasured older brother and older sister in so short a time was simply more than the heart of a just-turned nine-year-old could bear. The reason for death however, was scarlet fever. It certainly had to be a test of faith for the entire family. Such times strain the foundations of even the strongest.



Link Family Farm



Mary (Link) Chupp's marker



Emma Link



The Link family plot in North Union Cemetery, Locke Township. Anna Mary (Link) Chupp's grave marker is just to the left of this row, flat to the ground, a corner of which is visible. Mary, as she was known, was wife of Levi Chupp. They had one child who was eight months old when Mary died. The baby, Cora, came to live with Jacob and Elizabeth and was a close childhood friend of Charles Link.

Photographs of family headstones and research of several contributing facts and stories, including historical documents and photos, were provided through the courtesy of Lowell and Ginny Nunemaker, Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa, IN.

Locke Township, Elkhart County, Indiana

Lowell Nunemaker today lives about two miles from the original Link homestead and knows the logistics of this farmland, which have not changed greatly since those difficult days in 1872.

“The Link farm was very isolated, and still is today, so it would have been at least a half mile to the nearest neighbor to go for help and would have been three miles to Wakarusa and a doctor.”

The loss of so many children was more common at the time than today. Still, it would have been remarkable. United States life expectancy by the turn of the century was just under 50 years, compared to almost 78 today. The children's headstones are next to their parents, who arrived there later, in North Union Cemetery perhaps two miles from the farm. The simple markers are barely discernable today, but a family marker with two of the children's names on one side and their parents' names on the other can still be read with some degree of clarity. Anna Mary (Link) Chupp's marker is just to the outside of the Link plot and of a different style, likely chosen by husband Levi. It is now laid flat to the ground, and barely discernable, victim to the years of rain, ice and snow.

CHARLES ULYSSES LINK

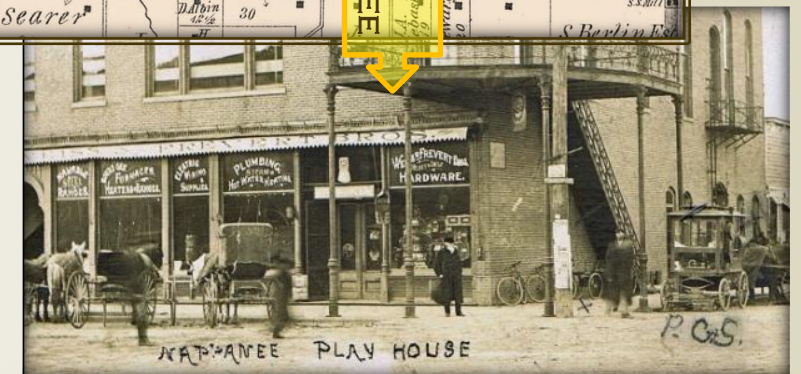
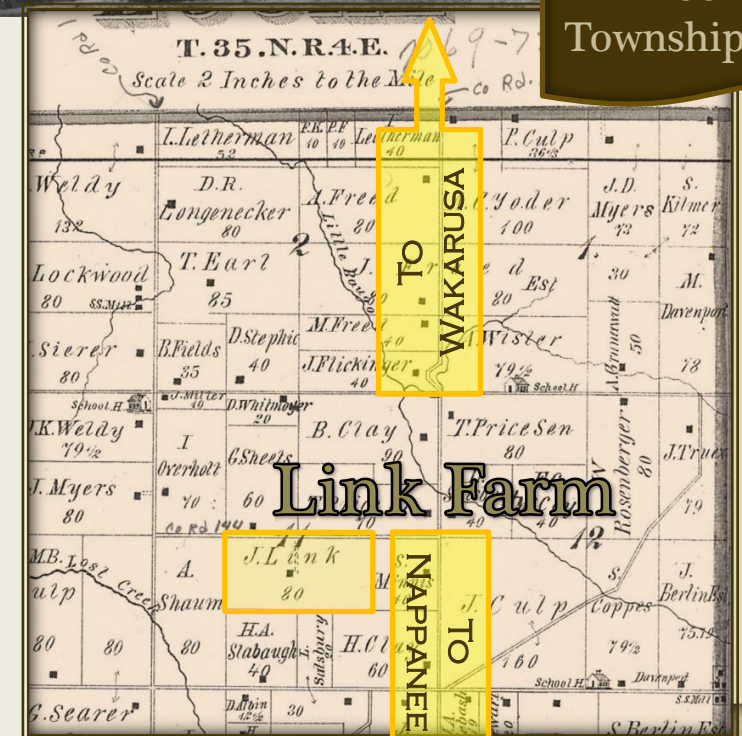
Born in 1869, just five months before the ceremonial golden spike was driven in Utah joining eastern and western halves of the country by rail, Charles Ulysses, who would be known as "C.U." or "Charley" most of his adult life, grew up in the rural atmosphere of Elkhart County. The farm, on an 80-acre tract, was close to Wakarusa, but not so close a wagon ride was not customary for the trip in for trading or to attend church. When Charles was 11, in 1880, he was recorded in the census information for that year along with sister Margaret.

In 1881, nearby Wakarusa had two wagon and carriage factories, two harness shops, two drug stores, two dry good stores, one hardware and implement store, one furniture store, one grist mill, two blacksmith shops, one meat market, one hotel, one millinery store, one barber shop, one saloon, two physicians, and one veterinary surgeon, (from the book, *History of Elkhart County, 1881*). There were about 400 inhabitants within city boundaries.

Anna Mary (Link) and Levi Chupp's daughter, Cora, later to become Cora Clouse, was Charles' closest friend for many childhood years. Charles and Cora attended Longstreet School and were both active in the Holdeman Church.



Locke Township 1874



Nappanee, IN - From postcard-style photograph, common for the time, and denoting in pencil the location of the writer's PCS, or "pop corn stand."

Charles Meets His Future Wife in Wakarusa

Although the family's Mennonite faith was an important part of Charles' family life, there was still room for other activities including fun of many kinds. Edna Frances (Link) Jones remembered stories her father told of parties, singing schools, spell downs, cipher downs¹ and debates. The Link family members were all singing enthusiasts. Charles also played the clarinet and for a time led the Wakarusa Band.

It was in Wakarusa that Charles first met Clara Malinda Berkey. Clara was working in one of the two dry goods stores there. The Berkey family was also of German descent and owned a farm one and a quarter miles north of Wakarusa in Olive Township. When a barn fire that started during threshing on the Berkey farm killed one of Clara's brothers, John F. Berkey, in 1875, Reverend John Metzler of the Methodist Church gave the entire funeral in German. Many area church services were given in German unless there were guests who were not of German descent.

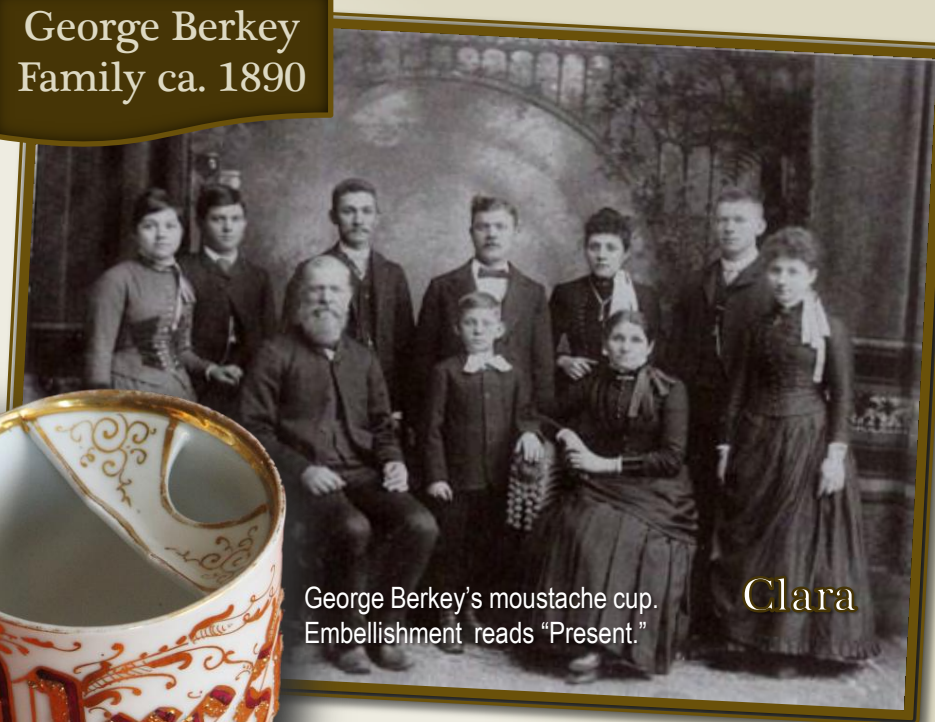
Clara was born August 31, 1873² in Wakarusa. In the Berkey family photo, right, she would have been either 16 or 17. This portrait would have been a year before she married Charles, January 18, 1891. Clara's mother, Frances (Newcomer) Berkey, was born February 14, 1837, in Fayette County, PA. (*Died October 1, 1924, Elkhart County, IN.*) Clara's father, George Berkey was born September 25, 1830, in Paint Township, Holmes County, OH. (*Died September 5, 1918, Elkhart County, IN.*) Clara's family members in the photograph include Mary Elizabeth, Jesse "Jess" Nelson, Uriah Calvin, William Henry, Susan Matilda "Tillie," and Samuel Harvey next to Clara on the upper row. In the lower row are father George, a young brother Hugh Thomas (who lived to be 102), and mother Frances.

According to family researcher, Mary (Jones) Henry (granddaughter of Charles and Clara) George Berkey's father, John Barkey (spelled with an "a") was a minister of the Longenecker Mennonite Church in Holmes County, OH. Frances' father was also a minister. All four parents of George and Frances are buried next to each other in the cemetery beside the church. A book written in 1980 by James O. Lehman, *Growth Amidst Struggle*, includes information about both Barkey/Berkey and Newcomer families in the life of that community and church. The Berkey family in Indiana however, were Methodists and had been from before leaving Ohio, according to the obituary of George who was a trustee in that church.

¹ To cipher is to make a mathematical computation. A cipher down would be the math equivalent to a spelling bee.

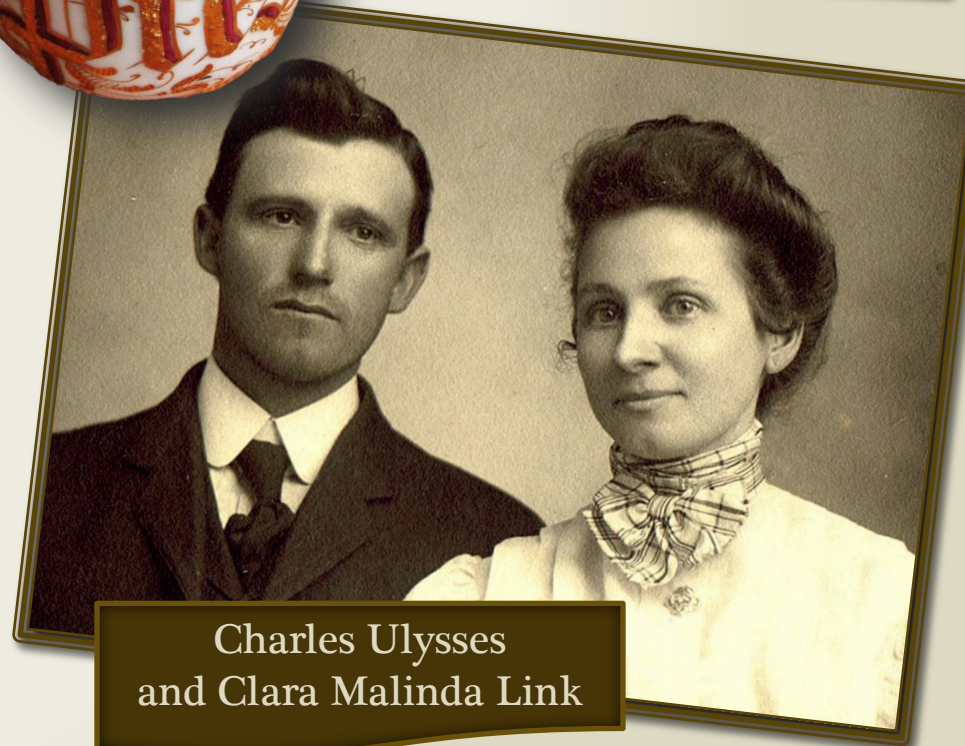
² From the pedigree records of Mary (Jones) Henry.

George Berkey
Family ca. 1890



George Berkey's moustache cup.
Embellishment reads "Present."

Clara



Charles Ulysses
and Clara Malinda Link

Active Political and Social Lives

The Berkeys and Links shared a staunch support for the Republican Party. Edna (Link) Jones remembered C.U. describing what it was like to be a young Republican supporter during the election of 1884.

“Young people then were very enthusiastic and had good times on election years. There were great rallies and parades with decorated wagons,” Edna recalled hearing her father describe. “The girls, dressed in white, rode in the wagons. The men wore hats denoting their party. After the election there was a big bonfire and the hats of the defeated party were burned. Mother was able to save my father's hat during the election campaign for Blaine and Logan vs. Cleveland and Hendricks. This helped them become friends.”

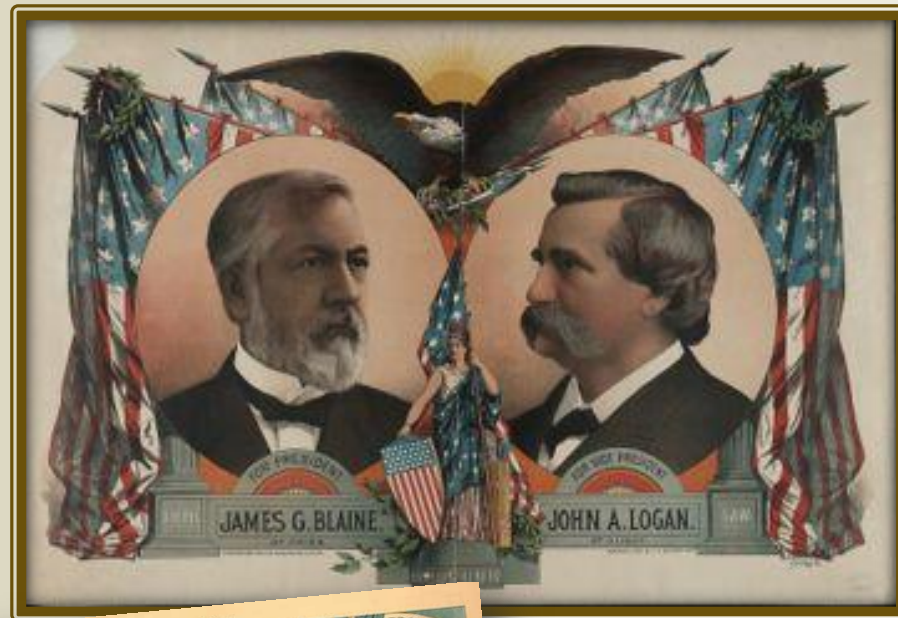
Politics were intense in the 1884 election, according to C.U.'s story. Edna wrote in a letter about a recollection of her mother illustrating the rivalry.

“Mother remembers one Democrat lady who tried to prevent her Republican husband from voting by locking him upstairs. But he got out through the window and went to town and voted.”

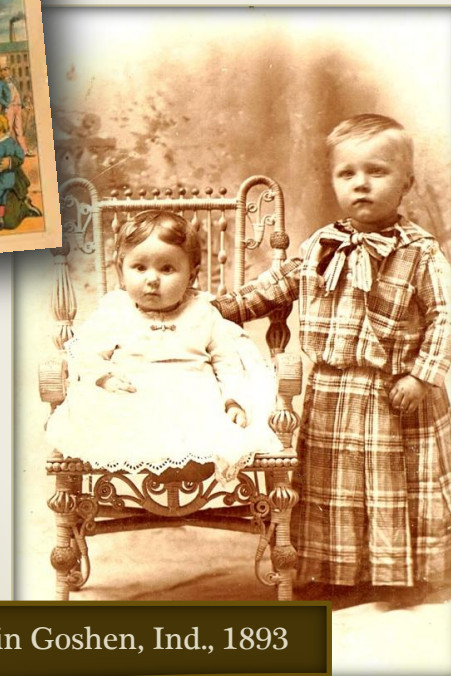
Charles Ulysses Link and Clara Malinda Berkey were married on January 18, 1891, and lived on the Link family farm. They started their family at the farm, having six children. Mabel Ruth was born in 1901 in the city of Elkhart, perhaps in a hospital there, and died at just under six months of mumps. Holdeman Brother Frank Hartman preached the sermon.

Forest Elmer Link – 1891, Edna Frances Link – 1893, Oscar Ray Link – 1895,
Elden Wallace Link – 1897, Mabel Ruth Link – 1901, Mary Elizabeth Link – 1904

As children were once again being raised on the farm, life became busier for everyone. Clara did cooking, baking and canning at home as well as the milking and washing. C.U. now managed farming operations.



Headstone of infant Mabel Ruth Link who died of complications from mumps.



Forest and sister Edna taken in Goshen, Ind., 1893

Illustration of Leon Czolgosz shooting President William McKinley with a concealed revolver at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, NY, September 6, 1901.



Czolgosz, an anarchist, hid a revolver under a handkerchief. McKinley later died of gangrene resulting from his stomach wound on September 14, 1901, as he whispered words to the hymn, "Nearer my God to Thee, Nearer to Thee."
– Library of Congress.

Elden Wallace Link,
ca. 1915



Mary Elizabeth Link,
ca. 1922



A Rural Life

Elden Wallace Link was very young when he lived on the second of two Link farms in Locke County. Both were literally "across the road" from each other. At the time, he was the youngest of four, his sister Mabel Ruth having just been born November 1st. Sister Mary Elizabeth would not arrive until November 28, 1904, when the family lived in Nappanee. Although only four at the time, he had several memories from those days he included in a letter he later wrote in 1980.

"The first Christmas I remember was in the year 1901. That was the year President McKinley was shot. Also it was the year we had a barn raising: We were living on a small farm north of Nappanee, IN. Our house was plain, modest, no curtains, but clean (and) having a small amount of furniture – some of it home built. One room in the house remained closed. That's where our Mother usually had a quilt in the frame."

Elden continued, "Father was an itinerant singing teacher, and since Mennonites did not believe [at that time] in musical instruments in the church, he taught the *do mi sol do* system using a tuning fork to get true pitch."



CHRISTMAS ON THE FARM

"This was the day to celebrate the birth of the Christ child... We stumbled downstairs early Christmas morning to find our stockings filled with an orange, hard candies, nuts and popcorn – [and] a pair of mittens was also pinned on my stocking..."

"After chores," Elden wrote, "it was time we washed for breakfast, then sat in a group for Bible reading, then on our knees for prayer. During the rest of the day, we strung popcorn and cranberries, played in the snow banks and, to please Father, did a lot of family singing."

Daily Life, Known Family Rituals

Family activities were generally set on a schedule everyone came to expect. Saturday evenings the family went to Wakarusa to do a week's worth of trading. Saturday night baths and Sunday school preparation were next on the list before the family members settled into their beds.

The first meal of each day was preceded by Bible reading and prayer. Edna (Link) Jones recalled "On Sunday mornings the family drove four miles to a country church (Holdeman Mennonite) rain or shine. Father (Charles) was Sunday school superintendent and chorister for singing. There was no organ, but folks did sing," she recalled of those days while recounting some of her childhood memories during an interview with one of brother Forest's grandsons in 1977.

JACOB HELPS BUILD A NEW HOLDEMAN MEETINGHOUSE IN 1875

Excerpted from the 150th Anniversary Celebration Program, *Our Journey of Faith*, September 7-9, 2001, Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa, IN

The Holdeman founders came into Elkhart County and found it a rich but challenging environment. Timber including very large ash, oak, maple, hickory, walnut, tulip-poplar and beech had to be cleared for each farming area. Sawmills were few, but much of the board-footage cleared was put to use building. Seventeen charter members met, probably in the home of George Holdeman, and set about building a log structure about 24 feet by 34 feet. Of the original members, 14 belonged to the Holdeman family. Members were considered part of the Yellow Creek ministry nearby. The meetinghouse was completed in 1851.

Just over one acre was purchased across the road from the log meeting house west of Wakarusa and platted for a new church building and cemetery. Later the cemetery was relocated to North Union Cemetery [where Jacob, Elizabeth and three of their children were later buried].

In 1875, funds were sufficient to build a frame meetinghouse. The head carpenter was Jacob Link, assisted by Jacob Beutler. Cost of the original construction was \$400.50. Several renovations and enlargements were made to the meetinghouse, which served for 99 years.

After plans for a new building were completed in 1974, the structure was taken down piece-by-piece and reconstructed on another site by another Mennonite group where it continues to serve as a house of God today.

Second Holdeman Meetinghouse, built 1875



Late 1800's



Tulip Tree Leaves

Mid 1900's



Clearland reconstructed church from lumber that had already served 99 years as a church.

Year 2010

Jacob Link served as the head carpenter for the second Holdeman Mennonite Church, built in 1875, which was a house of worship for 99 years before replacement in 1974. Even then, its use was not exhausted as another group of Mennonites took the meetinghouse down and reconstructed it as the Clearland Old Order Mennonite Church on another site.

FORMER LONGSTREET SCHOOL PUPIL WRITES

WRITTEN BY C. U. LINK

Mount Vernon, South Dakota
August 21, 1937

Friends, Neighbors, and my old Schoolmates,

I have been asked to come to your meeting of old-timers of the Longstreet School, and if I could not come in person I should write a letter. I am very sorry that I could not come so will try and write you a letter.

I was not asked to write on any particular subject so will jar my memory and think back to my dear old Longstreet school days. It is rather hard for me to say some things I might say as being away so long there may some of my school mates have passed away that I have not been informed of, so if I should make some mistakes you will excuse me. About as far back as I can remember is that my first school teacher's name was Mr. Myers, and I really liked him as he habied me more or less. As we

There were eighty-four scholars in our school and it was quite a job for the teacher to keep the best of order and there were about eighteen of us big boys and rather mean ones so it became necessary for the trustee to get a teacher that could straighten us out. He found a teacher by the name of Charles Camp that could handle it. It gives me a chill yet when I think of him but he learned me to think fast anyway. Anthony Myers and Dan Delcamp got in some mischief and got me in too. The teacher said we three should see him first thing in the morning. The

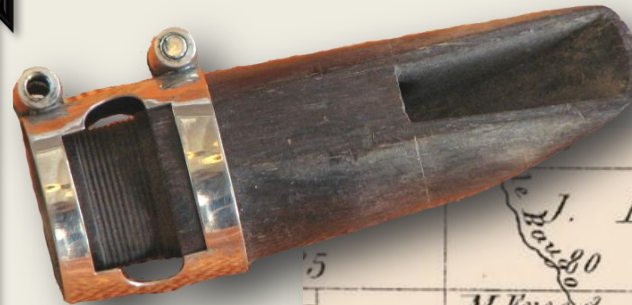
schoolhouse was near the woods and Anthony and Dan worked their heads that night and in the morning I noticed that they had on extra pair of pants so the teacher stepped out doors and when he came in he had a long beech gad or rather a small sapling. He then called us up collectively, not single, then my head worked and I got as close to the teacher as I could. Dan was next but poor Anthony was on the end. Dan knew how to move his body and could easy stand the hits but Anthony got a real licking.

We had enough large boys for real baseball games and I think Joe Freed and Jake Myers generally chose up for a game as we kept growing up we organized a Longstreet nine and we had quite a good team. Finally Conrad Doering moved in our district. Ed and Isaac Doering were good players we learned and we soon had them in our nine and then we really thought we had a team. We also learned that Ed was a band leader and we soon organized a band. That band put pep in the whole community. Longstreet was put on the map. It was very amusing on our practice nights as you could hear those horns and drums in every direction going to practice. Most of the members came from the north and east. You could hear Herman Bringolf tooting his second bass and as he came by the Freed boys, Joe joined with his tenor, Elmer with his cornet, and finally Henry with his tenor or snare drum, so as they came by Doerings, Isaac joined with the bass and Ed of course did not need practice and from the east you could hear Joe Lechlitner, George Miller, Dan Delcamp, Jacob Myers, and

Longstreet School – Charles and Cora

Two generations of Link children attended one-room Longstreet School northeast of the Link farm. Charles Link and Cora Chupp would have attended together. The school had an active and rousing band made up from members coming from all directions, but mainly north of the Link farm. "That band put pep in the whole community. Longstreet was put on the map," according to Charles in a letter he wrote that ran in the Wakarusa newspaper August, 21, 1937, just over over a year before his death.

"There were eighty-four scholars in our school and it was quite a job for the teacher to keep the best of order and there were about eighteen of us big boys and rather mean ones..." – Charles U. Link



Clarinet mouthpiece used by either Charles or Forest Link, from the family collection.



Oscar Link playing his musical instrument of choice, the trumpet.



Henry Lechlitner with their tenors, altos, cornets, and the east crowd had the bass drum, played by John Myers, from the south there was only (Lost Link) with his little clarinet. There was also one from the west that was Wes Lockwood with his baritone, and could that fellow play! He could make that horn crack so loud one would think he would burst it. Now imagine all these boys playing on the way to practice, but when we got there Ed's work began. I forgot to tell you that Noah Lehman was our best debater in school. He was gifted with plenty of wind power but Noah would not join the band, he was too busy on band practice nights practicing selling cattle, horses, hogs, and sheep, getting ready for public sales and he took his father's barnyard for the practice. We had some hard things to overcome with our hand. The time came when the old schoolhouse was sold and we needed it badly but there was also a neighbor that could use it. We needed money and we gave programs and he'd suppers, etc. Right here I will tell you of one of my embarrassments, I had in my pocket a little cake and ice cream supper. They appointed me as one of the waiters and there was a couple that came from Goshen, quite prominent people. It was my lot to wait on them. I brought the berries and cake, then I asked them politely, "Do you wish milk on your berries?" They looked at each other for a moment, then said, they preferred cream. Our band was busy on political or campaign years. We went to many places, even the farmers would invite and give us good eats and sometimes drinks. I well remember

In reading over this letter I see an awful mistake. I did not mean to say much as I am sure you have a good program arranged, but going back over school days covers too great a territory, so I beg your pardon and thank you for your patience and endurance in listening to the reading of this letter.

Signed,
C. U. Link



Pratt, KS, Military Band

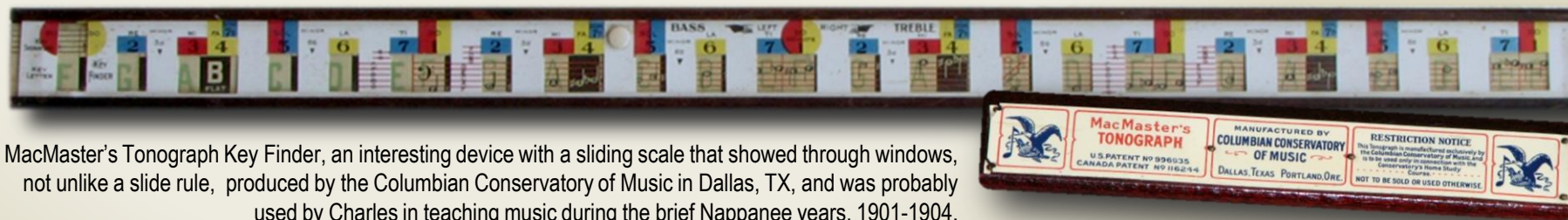
Choral Music, a Source of Strength in the Mennonite Church

Mennonites have, for hundreds of years, been strong believers in the value of song in praise. The Link family was no exception. A number of the family members became talented singers, sang often in church and at school, and those traditions have been passed down to several members even of the most recent generations. Instrumentation, however, was seen differently by the Church. In the year 1874, reed and pipe organs were just being introduced in selected congregations.

FROM THE GLOBAL ANABAPTIST MENNONITE ENCYCLOPEDIA ONLINE

The first pipe organ installed in an American Mennonite church was at West Swamp, PA in 1874. By 1890 most of the Eastern District Conference (GCM) churches were using either a pipe or reed organ. The Berne (Indiana) Mennonite Church installed a reed organ in 1890 and a pipe organ in 1914. Eva Sprunger's centennial history of the Berne church (First Hundred Years) says, "Instrumental music was considered sinful and was not allowed. ... It was not until 1901 that opposition was sufficiently overcome to pass a resolution permitting the use . . . in the Sunday School." The Western District (GCM) passed a resolution in 1881 leaving the decision regarding the use of musical instruments in worship to the individual congregations.

As the family leader, Charles was an enthusiastic musician, and his love for instrumental music in the final analysis perhaps put him at odds with strong church leadership of the late 1800's. In a letter of recollections by Elden Link in 1980, he wrote that "In spite of our religious life, Dad loved to play the clarinet." Elden went on to explain that this passion led ultimately to selling the farm and moving, in 1901, to Nappanee where the family joined the Methodist Church.



MacMaster's Tonograph Key Finder, an interesting device with a sliding scale that showed through windows, not unlike a slide rule, produced by the Columbian Conservatory of Music in Dallas, TX, and was probably used by Charles in teaching music during the brief Nappanee years, 1901-1904.

Longstreet School - Forest and Edna

One of the six Link children born to C.U. and Clara Malinda, Forest Elmer Link was the first in line with a birthday of September 3, 1891. Brought into a musical family, he felt right at home in choirs and performing before groups throughout his life.

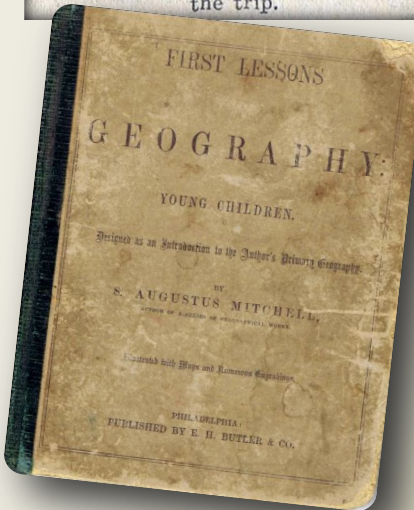
SCHOOL DAYS IN LOCKE AND OLIVE TOWNSHIPS

From the farm of his grandparents and parents, he and his sister Edna, who came along two years after Forest, walked about a mile and a half to the same one-room Longstreet School their father had attended. It was the second built there, now a more substantial brick building. Edna enjoyed his company and they both enjoyed school.

Edna recalls Forest was mischievous at times and liked to sing as his father had. Like his father, Forest also learned to play the clarinet. About that mischievousness, "If Miss Kantz [the teacher] left the room, he quickly got to the front," Edna recalled, "and threw his index fingers out of joint by wiggling them, or wiggled his ears, or even turned a handspring," she said.



John Berkey, brother of Clara Malinda (Berkey) Link, went to District 4 School in Olive Township. Olive comprised Wakarusa and areas to the north, where the Berkey farm was. This was his Geography book, by Augustus Mitchell, published in 1870. John died in a fire that burned the Berkey barn during threshing in 1875.



Forest with his clarinet and in an interesting Indian motif of band uniform, not long after moving to Pratt, KS, in 1913.

Longstreet School

“His seat was right in front, and he always managed to get back and busy at work when she returned. But the other children were snickering, and I didn't really know if I should be proud or worried about him.” – Edna (Link) Jones

Worry may have been appropriate, but Forest eventually turned his love of being in front of others into an active social and public life including serving as state president of the Kansas Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks (known popularly as “the Elk's Club”) and also Kansas District Governor of the Lions Club and Pratt County Clerk, an elected position.



Left, Forest Link, Longstreet School, 1897-98 class photo



Photo of 1907 Longstreet School courtesy Nora Wade, whose mother is the class.



Lockwood School

Link Farm

Above, Longstreet School (ca. 1907) and Lockwood School, left, (1920-21 school year) had similar names and similar designs. Although Lockwood was slightly closer to the Link Farm, two generations of the Link children attended Longstreet. This photo of the class at Longstreet would have been taken just after the Links moved to South Dakota from Nappanee. Lowell Nunemaker's grandfather, Carl Nunemaker, who went to the school at the time Forest and Edna attended, is in the second row, third from the left. His maternal grandmother, Bertha Weldy Harter is the young lady directly behind the class sign. Three sisters of Carl are in the top row.

A Student's View of Longstreet

Lowell Nunemaker's great grandmother, Rhoda Weldy, also attended Longstreet School, and was assigned the task of writing a descriptive composition about it. Her assignment, written about 1892, comes from a collection of historical family documents.

*“Composition - School House
The Long St. schoolhouse was erected in the summer of 1887.
It was built the size as follows...*

“... 30 feet long, about 25 feet wide and 15 feet high from the ceiling to the floor. The house has four windows in each side and two doors at the south end, a large porch extending over the two doors, the doors being about 6 feet high and there is a large glass above each door. The blackboard is slate and contains 9 slates, each slate is 3 feet wide. Which is on the north wall of the schoolhouse and extends the whole length of the north wall.

“The dinner pail shelves are between the two doors.¹ (There are thirteen dinner pail shelves here.)...a water pail...and a water spring. And there is a clock above the blackboard but it is no good. Every time you look at the clock it is five minutes past one. The program is nearly (be)side of the clock. There are curtains at each window, they are greenish color trimmed with something that looks like gold. There are also six pictures in the school house each one is about 2-1/2 feet wide, 2 ft high.

“We have a box with large maps in (it), and a brush to brush the dust. We have a large dictionary and an encyclopedia, but the encyclopedia is nearly wore out. There are 30 desks and 33 seats, 2 chairs and a desk for the teacher. The roof of the schoolhouse is slate, the belfry² is about three feet square and about four feet high. We have a large, round oak stove that (sits) nearly in the center of the room. The stove is about five feet high. There are about 4 or five penmanship charts here and a chart for small scholars.

“The first school that was taught in this schoolhouse began on December 1887, the first two terms were taught by Stanford Willard. The third and fourth by Abe Yoder. The third term there were about 42 scholars enrolled. The fourth term there were 33 scholars enrolled which brings it to the present time, and today there are 30 (scholars now).”

¹Dinner pails were literally “lunch buckets” brought by the children. The pails were placed on a shelf until the noon meal, known as dinner, often the greatest meal of the day.

²The belfry was the area holding the schoolhouse bell. Presumably the bell was visible from inside the room.

Newspaper article about the sale of both Longstreet and Lockwood schools. Walter Weldy bought the Lockwood building for the sum of \$13.50 to repair and use as an implement shed.

Wakarusa

**OLD SCHOOLS
DISPOSED OF**

One Sells for \$13.50, the Other Brings \$16.50, at Public Sale.

WAKARUSA, Ind.: Irvin Staley, trustee of Locke township, sold the Longstreet and Lockwood school buildings Saturday afternoon. These buildings have not been used for school purposes for a number of years: The Lockwood school, located two miles south and one mile west of Wakarusa, was sold to Walter Weldy, who owns the farm where the building stands. The price paid was \$13.50. Mr. Weldy intends to repair this building and use it for an implement shed.

Rhoda Weldy's original composition.

*Composition
Schoolhouse*

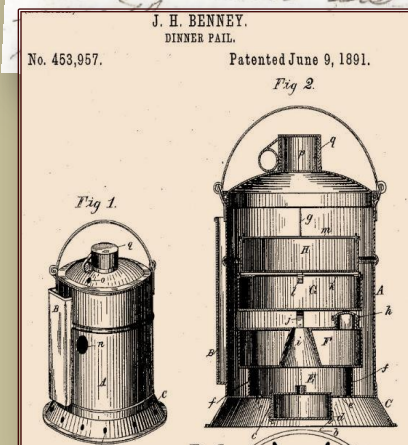
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1891 dinner pail patent drawing by J.H. Benney of Evansville, IN. www.evansvillehistory.net

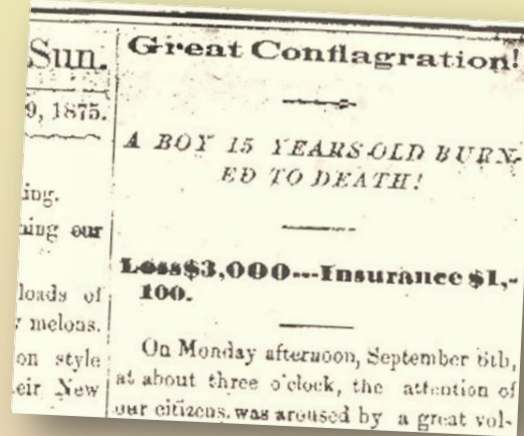
Great Conflagration!

From the *Wakarusa Sun*,
September 9, 1875

A BOY 15 YEARS OLD BURNED TO DEATH!
Loss \$3,000 - Insurance \$1,100.

On Monday afternoon, September 6th, at about three o'clock, the attention of our citizens was aroused by a great volume of smoke and blaze arising north of town. It was evidently a house, barn or a straw stack burning, but nothing positive as to where or what it was. It was soon learned to be George Berkey's barn, 1 ¼ miles north of Wakarusa, on the Elkhart road.

Several teams and wagons [that] were in the street were soon filled with men, (our reporter among them) and rushed to the scene of disaster. The particulars are as follows:

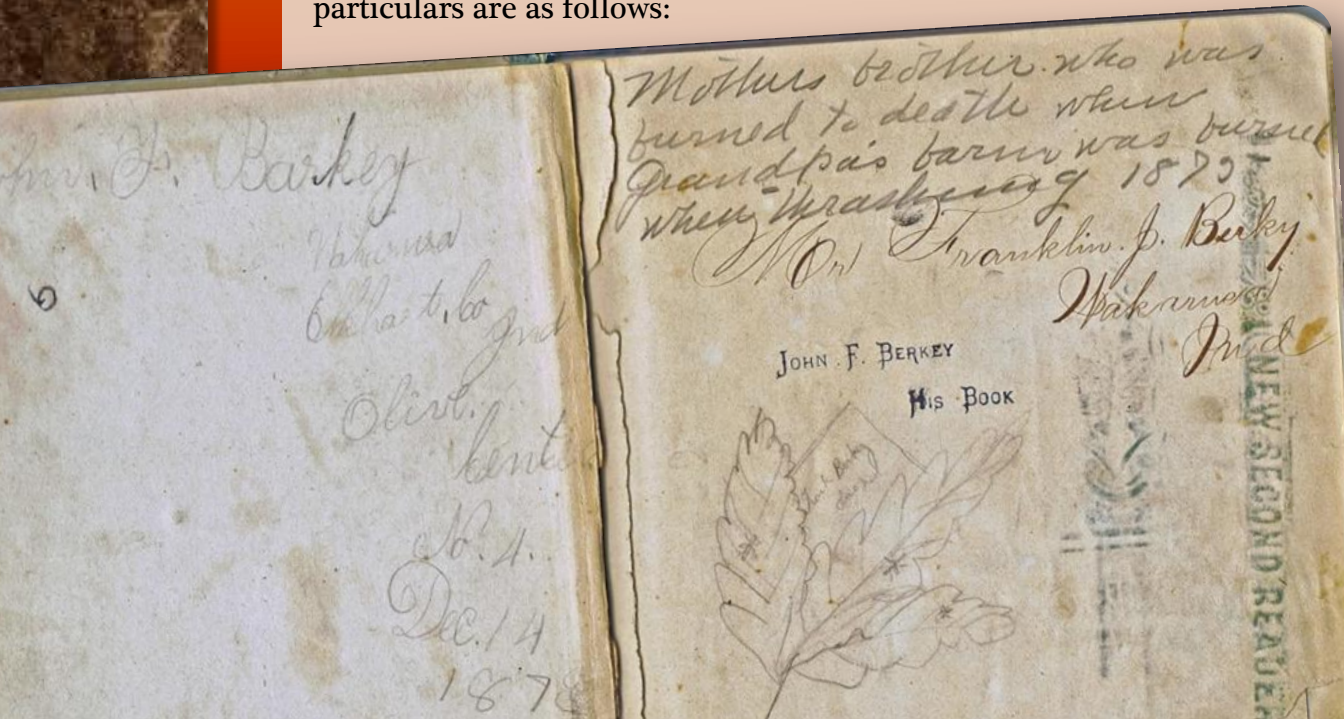


Mr. Berkey was threshing his crops with the Ruse boy's horse power and seperator [sic], (the sepperator [sic] was in the barn.) They had threshed the out crop, and began threshing the wheat. The wheat, was in a large mow, above the seperator, and three young boys on the mow, throwing down sheves [sic]. The other hands were working about the straw-stack and seperator [sic]. From some over sight, or defect in the journal itself, the journal of the "tumbling jack" became over heat[ed] sufficiently to ignite the straw and dust about the seperator, and in less than five minutes, the whole inside of the barn was a sheet of flame. The men at the seperator and straw-stack, had barely time to escape. Some of them even, were badly singed by the flames, and the boys in the mow - the one standing nearest the machine, saved himself by jumping down on the floor. The second one (a son of C.S. Neusbaum,) crawled down the ladder and got out of the barn severely burned. The third boy, alas! A son of Mr. Berkey's, named Johnny, aged about 15 years, was, in the excitement and confusion, not missed, until the timbers of the barn had fell [sic] in and then came the horrid thought that *he did not escape*.

Strict search was made, and his name called a thousand times, by a crowd, and more than a thousand predictions made, that he could not escape. Some thought that in his bewilderment that he had run away, and would make his appearance the next morning, but the wise heads, all said that he never got out of that mow alive, and so it proved. Upon the next morning the charred remains were found on the ruined mow.

This is a bad shock to Mr. Berkey. He has lost a faithful son. This is a calamity! He lost his fine bank barn, and all his summer crops, together with his farming and agricultural implements, which is a misfortune of more than \$3,000... The funeral, which took place Wednesday, at the Schaums' Church, 3 miles north, was one of the largest, that has been held in this neighborhood for a number of years. There were at least 700 sympathizing friends in attendance. Mr. and Mrs. Berkey has [sic] the heart felt sympathies of this whole neighborhood, in this their hour of grief.

John F. Berkey died in a fire that burned the Berkey barn during threshing in 1875. The inside of his Geography book, shown earlier, has a hand-written note in pencil by one of the grandchildren, "Mother's brother, who was burned to death when Grandpa's barn was burned while thrashing [sic] 1875."

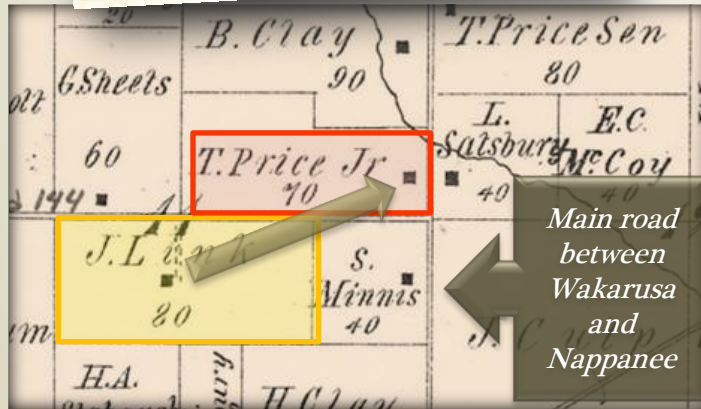


Generational Changes in Lifestyle

Granger promotional poster, 1873



Farmer's Alliance and People's (or Populist) Party rally bills



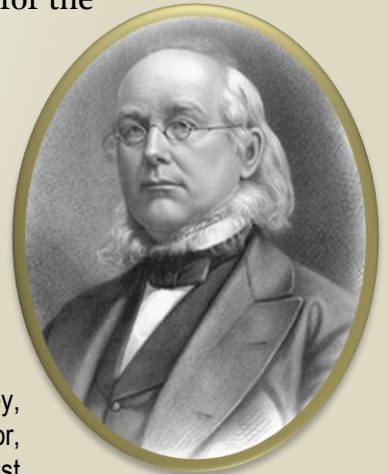
Probable location of the 50-acre farm bought by Charles after Jacob's death in 1897. Twenty of the 70 acres shown (from 1874) may have been sold to square off the land parcel to the north during the transaction. The land today is 50 acres, has an apple orchard and is on the main road between Wakarusa and Nappanee which is documented in family history. Local farmers have also verified this location for the second Link farm. This proximity to Longstreet would have kept Forest Link in school for the class photograph he appears in March 4, 1898.
 Farm location information researched by Willis Nunemaker.

Farming times were not favorable from a national perspective in the last three decades of the 1800's. Between 1870 and 1897 wheat fell from \$1.06 per bushel to \$0.63, and corn fell from \$0.43 to \$0.29 a bushel¹. Farmers sought redress of their grievances through organization. There were three major efforts: the Grange, the Farmers' Alliance, and the Populist Party.

These issues and responses to decreasing income and increasing production costs were known together as the Agrarian Protest Movement. Because farming was still the backbone of the American economy, these issues were much more politically significant than farming issues in the 21st Century. Today, farming involves less than two percent of the U.S. population.² The 1896 presidential bid of William Jennings Bryan was based on the Populist Party platform. Although William McKinley won, his support of the gold standard as opposed to the various regulatory approaches supported by the Agrarian Movement actually benefited farming more in the long run. The first two decades of the 1900's were better economically for farmers as a result.

Apparently, the Link farm continued to either prosper, or at least provide adequate sustenance for the three generations living there in the 1880's and 1890s. Elizabeth (Fishel) Link died May 4, 1893, at 64. Jacob died of a heart attack after the evening meal September 27, 1897 in his 73rd year. Many changes took place for the remaining generations as a result. The Link farm was sold. An 1874 plat map of Locke Township showed the farm contained 80 acres. It is likely the proceeds were allocated amongst the children. C.U. bought a 50-acre farm on the main road between Wakarusa and Nappanee. This farm included an apple orchard. Corn was the main crop. A community barn-raising on the site took place. (This well-built barn was just taken down in about 2007.) In Amish and Mennonite communities, these events were often large and supported by persons from other farms in the area. Edna recalled these as "happy times for the Links and their neighbors."

Charles however, began to make long-term plans for changes. The new farm was abandoned, according to Edna, perhaps six years after being started, and the Link family moved to Nappanee to rent a home. In Nappanee the family joined the Methodist Church. Elden described his father's work as being that of an "itinerant music teacher." Within a short time living in the rental home, Charley began working toward his new dreams, brought on, in part by reading a very popular book of the time by *New York Tribune* editor, Horace Greeley, "*Go West Young Man.*"



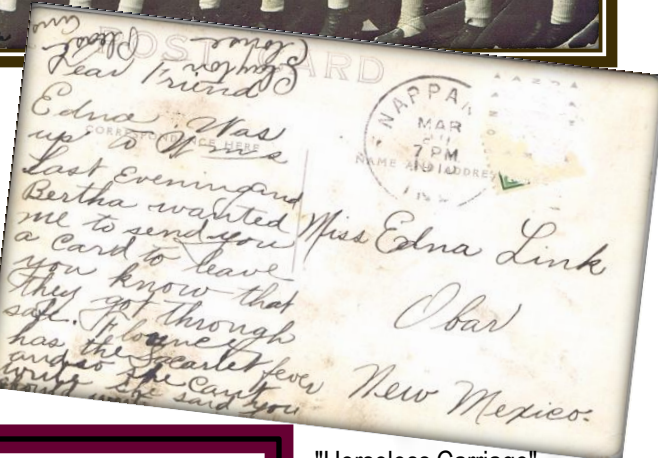
Horace Greeley, newspaper editor, expansionist

¹ Gale Encyclopedia of U.S. Economic History.
² Wikipedia.



Nappanee H.S. Baseball Team

Above and to right, Some time after the Link family left the Nappanee area, and also after a short time in South Dakota, Clayton Clouse sent to Edna Link, by then in Obar, NM, this postcard of the team. Whether Clayton is in the picture is unknown.

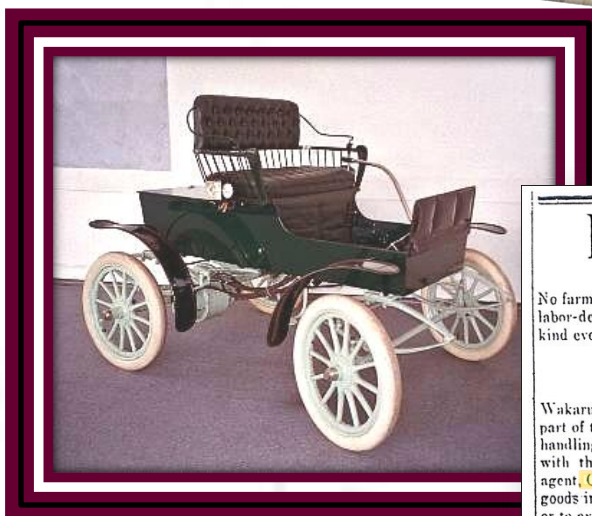


“Go West Young Man”

Like many farming families of the late 1800's, the Link family had struggled with decreasing market prices and increasing production prices. In the transition from one farm the family had operated for decades to a different one following his father's death, something happened in a short while. Charles stopped farming in 1901 only four years after starting a new farm. It is probable the difference over playing of instruments in church had some role in his and Clara's decisions, as described by Elden Link. I have come to believe, however, that a much deeper factor may have been that Charles simply had a desire to experience new vistas to the West. This was a common affliction of the time, known from 1845 to the early 1860's as Manifest Destiny – the concept that America should spread from ocean to ocean, and all the lands between be tamed and settled. Whatever the reasons, having started in Ohio, and after spending most of two generations in Indiana, another move westward was soon in the offing. In the mean time, they experienced life as city residents of nearby Nappanee to the south.

- Richard A. Link

“In the winter (of 1902), Father (Charles Ulysses) heard of cheap land in California and went, and I think homesteaded on a tract of land, and intended that we should move there. Since water was not found, we stayed in Nappanee and he bought some lots in the north part of town, just two houses from our Nappanee Methodist Church and near the school house,” according to a letter from Edna. The Links raised a garden on the lots which produced a bounty. A “modern home” followed, “with bathroom and basement,” that the family was proud of. Other 20th Century advances, such as their first encounter with a horseless carriage, seemed exciting in town after years on the farms in Locke Township.



"Horseless Carriage" - 1904 Pope Waverly, Pope Motor Car Company, Indianapolis, IN

Charles represented the J.H. Doering company while in Nappanee. He also taught music.

Hay Slings!

No farmer can afford to be without this labor-saving, labor-despatching mechanism. The best thing of its kind ever invented, ever tried, ever sold. Remember

JOHN H. DOERING,

Wakarusa, is sole agent for Hay Sling goods in the part of the state. There have been a number of agents handling these goods, but the business is exclusive with the undersigned and his regularly appointed agent, Charles Link, who is selling the hay sling goods in these parts. If any farmer wishes to buy or to examine the hay slings they can do so by seeing or writing Chas. Link at Nappanee, if not convenient to call on me at Wakarusa.

J. H. DOERING.



Loudon brand of hay sling being used in harvest.

Edna recalled a family carriage outing, with “Father (Charles) tightening the reins, and saying, 'everyone hold on tight! Here comes Coonie Walkman in his horseless carriage.' It really did look much like a single buggy with no horse. Our horses shied, pranced and ran, but Father was able to hold them.”

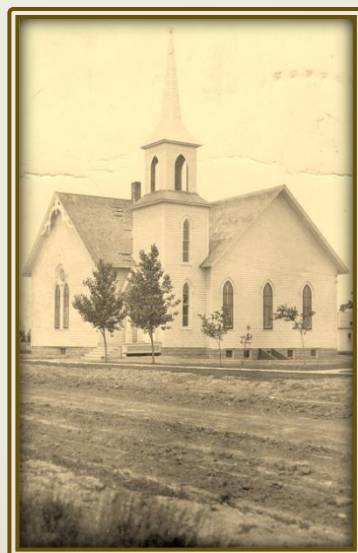
The Link family's second farm in Davison County, South Dakota, after returning from New Mexico



Above, Charles, Clara, Mary and Edna. Charles is standing in front of a dug out designed for safety during tornadoes. Elden Link wrote years later in a letter, "This land was all hay land and the land had never been cultivated, and as we learned later was an excellent place for prairie fires, tornadoes and blizzards. We immediately dug and built a cyclone cave."

Right above, Davison County, SD, where land was purchased by C.U. at \$33 an acre. Far Right, a crowded immigrant railroad car heads west.

Methodist Episcopal Church, Mt. Vernon, SD



Heading West

During this time, C.U.'s sights were still set to the West. A friend of the family in Nappanee had heard of affordable, good farm land available in Davison County, South Dakota. C.U. and others organized trips to the area to review the land. In the spring of 1906, he purchased a farm of 160 acres situated between Mt. Vernon and Mitchell, SD. The cost was \$33 an acre. The home in Nappanee was sold and the next move westward began.

"An immigrant (railroad) car was filled with household goods, implements, a horse and a cow. This (new) farm had no buildings, so we rented a place in Mt. Vernon while a house and barn were being built."

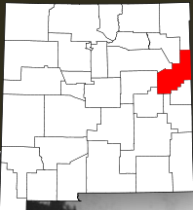
- Edna (Link) Jones



The Links determined that they would attend the Methodist Church in Mt. Vernon. Again, music was an important part of their church and home lives.

Obar, New Mexico,
historical marker

Quay County, NM



The Homestead Act and Obar, NM

After two years in South Dakota, Charles had endured enough of the cold that winter brought in that place. At a tidy profit, the land was sold and the family homesteaded again, but this time in one of the last regions filled by the remaining options left available by the Homestead Act.

A ghost town today, with only a stone marker and plaque to note the town's existence, Obar, NM, was the new home of the Link family for five years. Inadequate rain and a promised railroad crossing that failed to materialize conspired against the farm, which eventually "went bust." Eventually, all the farming there failed and ranching predominates today. Nothing significant is left of the town site, in a desolate area north of Tucumcari.



Wylie Hotel of Obar

The Links had both a farm and later bought a boarding house in Quay County, NM, used by railway workers and others traveling through. When the promised crossing of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad by the Northwestern and Mineral Wells Railway out of Texas did not come to pass, the boarding house was destined to remain unprofitable. This photo may be of the Wylie Hotel, which the Links ran. Guests stand along the top floor rooms. What appears to be a sleeping porch for cooler night breezes is at the back.

Obar, NM, on highway 54, just south of Nara Visa and to the north of Tucumcari. A ghost town today with scarcely a remaining foundation, and a plaque with the name of C. Link to mark "a partial list of the several hundred pioneer families who homesteaded in the Obar area during the early 1900's."

By late 1913, most of the remaining family returned to South Dakota where the "banker Newell" of the First National Bank had told them if things did not go well, he would help them re-start. He did, and the family prospered again. Several descendents of Charles and Malinda remain in South Dakota today.



Edna taught school at Obar and Montoya, NM. She is at the upper right, not all that much taller than some of her young students.



Edna (Link) Jones in 1977 during the visit when she first told brother Forest's grandson her story of the Link Family in America.



Charles and Clara remained married until Charles' passing in 1938. Clara lived on to 1960. Having lost much of her hearing to measles at age 16, the children insisted after Charles' death that she buy hearing aids, which she did, and which helped her greatly in later life.

Beginnings of Three Generations of City Business Operators

Forest Link moved out and up the railroad line, first to Liberal, KS, where he learned the “tonsorial arts,” then eventually to Pratt, KS, where he settled and lived out his life. He married shortly after arriving in Pratt and his wife, Beatrice, “Bea” Wilson gave birth to a boy, their only child, Ned Wilson Link.

Forest eventually purchased the Royal Barber Shop, but later decided there was something more interesting; the expanding world of electronics. “Link Electric” began after Forest worked for Ortie Stewart in the same business for a time. Business expanded from appliances to installing the first Delco light plants on many local farms, to wiring buildings and even installing “aerials” on tall towers erected for receiving some of the first television pictures seen in Pratt.

Ned Link studied architectural engineering at Kansas State University for three years before returning to Pratt, the first in his direct line to attend a college in America. He joined his father in the shop, the first of three manager positions that led to owning his own business in Lawrence, KS, he later sold to his second son, Richard, “Rick” Link in 1996.

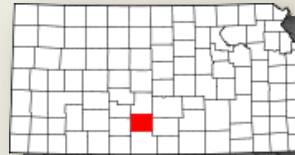
They had worked together for 13 years. Rick built up, and later sold the business again in 2005.

Royal Barber Shop, Pratt, KS. Forest standing at the first chair for a portrait may signal at the time of this photograph, he owned the business.



Ned's first son, Forest Lee Link, became the next pastor in the family line in about 1959.

Manual barber shears used by Forest. From the family collection.

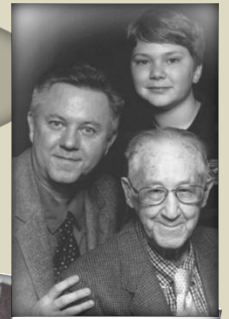


Pratt County, KS



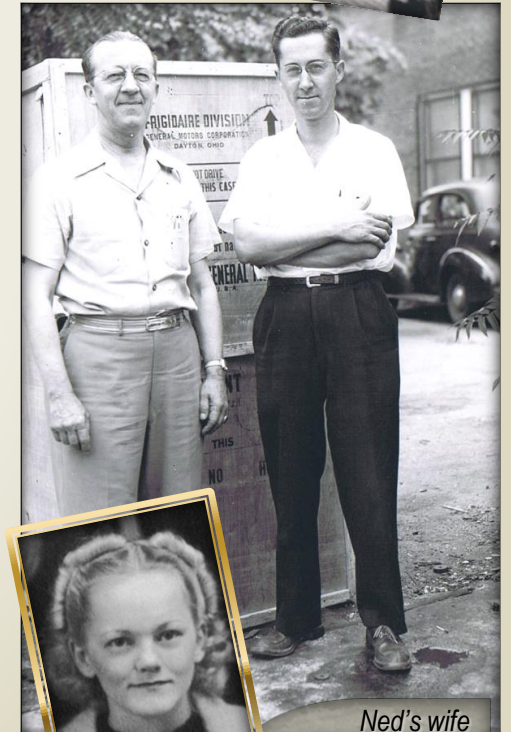
Advertising on the JumboTron, 1940's style.

Ned in 2010, flanked by son Rick, and Rick's second son, Guy.



There were two different locations for the Link Electric “shop” in Pratt. This is the inside of the first, one block off Main Street at 3rd St. and Ninnescah (named after the river that runs through Pratt), taken in 1939.

Lynn Cannon, bookkeeper, is at left and Forest is at the right. The person in the center is not identified. The second Link Electric location was on Main Street on the north side, at 3rd St. just west of Owl Drug and People's Bank, which was at the actual corner.



Ned's wife of nearly 70 years, Lois (Browne) Link.



Ned's daughter, Susan (Link) Roxburgh worked in banking, and at ASU in fund raising.

Forest Elmer Link in the late 1930s with his son, Ned Wilson Link, getting ready to un-crate a Frigidaire refrigerator. Forest, and later Ned, ran Link Electric which survived into the 1960s and was sold.





The Return Home

After leaving Obar, NM, and reaching South Dakota for the second time late in 1913, Charles took part of the family back to Indiana for a visit.

Standing: **A** Wilma Miller, **B** Susan Matilda "Tillie" (Berkey) Miller, **C** Clara Malinda (Berkey) Link, **D** Uriah Calvin Berkey, **E** Charles Ulysses Link, **F** Walter Price, **G** John Miller

On Chairs:

H Doris Berkey, **I** George Berkey, **J** Frances (Newcomer) Berkey, **K** Mary Elizabeth (Berkey) Lehman, **L** Jake Lehman

Front seated on lawn:

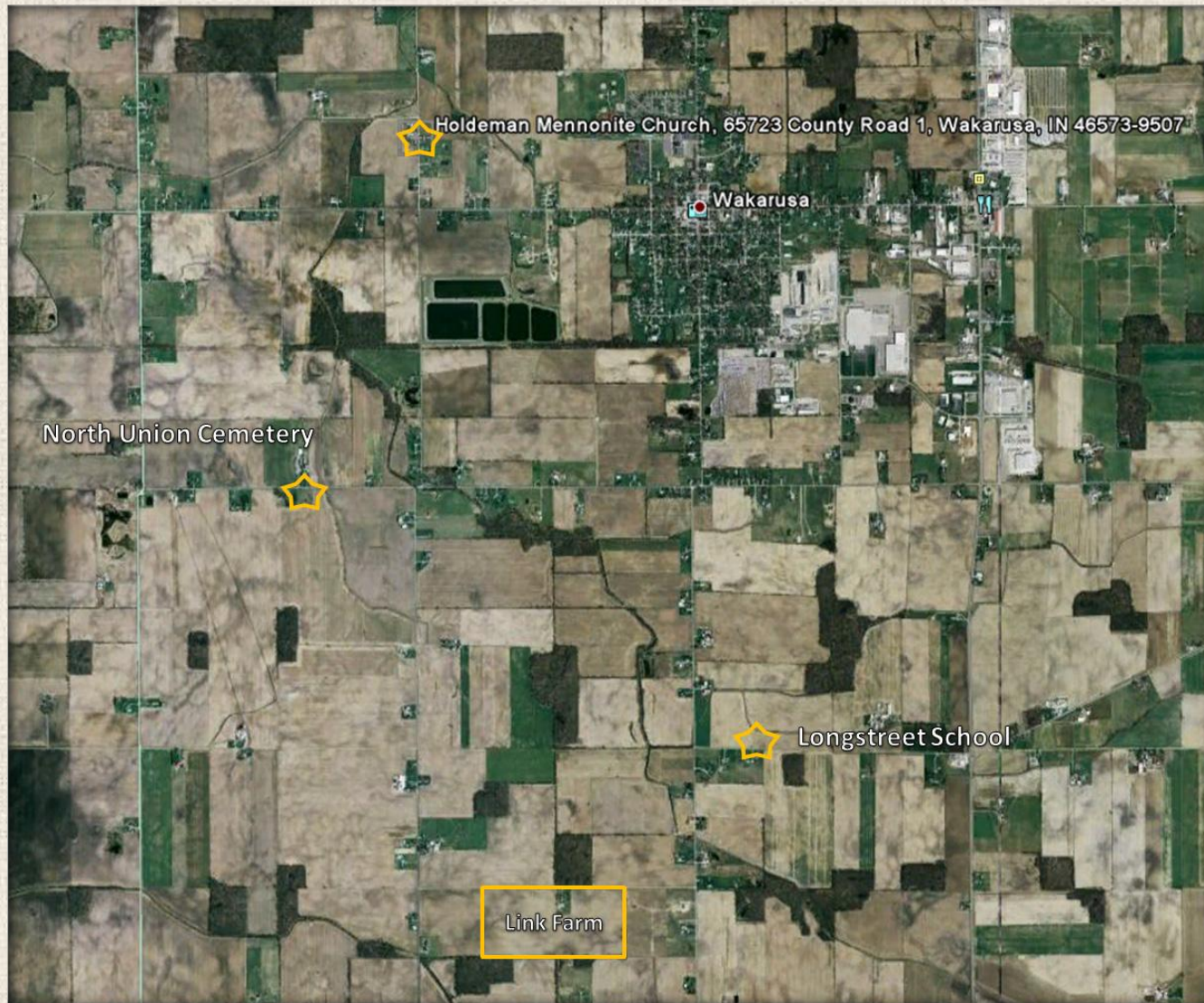
N Mary Elizabeth Link, **O** Ella Miller, **P** Elden Wallace Link, **Q** Vera Berkey, **R** Samuel "Sam" Harvey Berkey, **S** Skilly, **T** Hugh Thomas Berkey,* **U** Winnie Berkey, **V** unidentified, **W** Berkey grandbaby, **X-Z** grandchildren

As identified by Clara M. Link.

*Hugh T. Berkey lived to be 102 years old. He appears the most completely relaxed in this portrait, laying on his side with feet crossed.

"You need to be congratulated for your good judgment in sticking to the Old Hoosier State. She is a reliable state. I never saw a total failure while living there." - C.U. Link, 1937

A Mennonite Family In Northern Indiana



Mary (Jones) Henry, whose family research with husband Dick in the 1980's and periodically for over three decades afterward assisted in the telling of this story. Mary is Edna (Link) and Monte Jones' daughter.



Ned Link with Ginny and Lowell Nunemaker
November 2010, Lawrence, KS

With special gratitude to Lowell and Ginny Nunemaker,
and Holdeman Mennonite Church,
Wakarusa, Indiana,

Based on map from
Google Maps™
mapping service

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Richard A. Link
Lawrence, Kansas
www.linkfamilyhistory.com