

Up and Down the Roads of Macomb

BY MAE D. COX

Recently I journeyed over to Macomb for a reunion, and after locating where it was to be held, still had an hour or so to kill before it started. Since my Davenport ancestors once lived around here, I decided to explore some of the backroads and revisit where they (George William Davenport and Arthur & May Davenport) had once lived.

The old family homestead (we lovingly call it the *Macomb Farm*) was a half-mile east of Macomb, south two miles, east one mile, and south about a quarter-mile. It was neat to drive on the road where my great-grandparents and grandparents once rode horses and drove their wagons. The red dirt back then turned to sticky clay after a hard rain and they couldn't go anywhere until it dried out. They told that if they tried to walk the muddy road, their boots or shoes got stuck in the ruts, and they'd go home in their socks.

Starting up the hill towards the farm, I realized that dense brush and thick trees made it near impossible to see anything. Rolling down the window, though, let in the most delightful sounds of frogs and cicadas, and the aroma of plush thickets and country air. I crept through that half mile of road at a snail's pace thoroughly mesmerized by nature and my surroundings. It's too bad you can't buy that fragrance in a room spray or candle!

After our family sold the farm in the 1950s, the old house burned to the ground and was replaced; plus the original 80 acres was divided and sold in parcels. There appear to be several dwellings on the property now, each majestically shaded by towering oaks.

Blackjacks and scrub-oaks dot the fields; trees I remember were there when I was just a tot. How I envy those folks their secluded havens.

Just south of there was Anderson School attended by several family members in the 1930s. It's been converted to a house, now occupied. From there, I tried to find where George William first lived when he came up from Love County. Supposedly it was south of the *Macomb Farm* on Salt Creek. Plumes of gravel-dust kicked up behind my car and engulfed me each time I slowed to gaze at the countryside. It wasn't long before my car was coated in fine white dust,



inside and out. It was worth it though, as this was so pleasurable exploring.

Driving up and down several section lines, I was quite impressed at the quality of the roads. Most country roads are full of potholes and ruts. These on the otherhand, are well maintained and are paved or graveled. One or two were dirt, but those were the exception and even then were grated and in good condition. Guess their county commissioners are on the ball over that way!

After a couple miles this way, then that, I spied a group of fellows by a barn and pulled in to ask if anyone knew of Salt Creek. One of

the gentlemen stepped over to my car and said he knew how to get there. My mouth fell open as he stood talking and this little critter crawled up on his shoulder. He said it was a two-month-old coon named *Rocky*. It wore a fancy collar, and a leash too. That little critter fascinated me and I asked if I could snap a photo. *Sure*, he says. So I did.

Marty Sweeney was the fellow and, after I told him my ancestors had lived in the area, he visited with me a bit. He didn't recognize the *Davenport* name and asked if there were any other names. Yes, the Griffins were another family related to my clan. He perked up and said he knew that family as he owned one of their farms *just down yonder*, pointing southeast. That would have made it somewhere a couple miles south of the Davenport place... and possibly back west a tad. He also knew of Eugene Griffin who lived around the corner from our old homestead. I'm thinking he said he bought the Finis Griffin farm. It could be he just mentioned that name though. Not sure. Marty was a nice guy, real friendly.

Following Marty's directions to Salt Creek (go back a mile, then south a mile or so), I found the recently built bridge over the creek



though there was no sign declaring it as such. My plan to snap a photo was thwarted as the creek and whole vicinity were hidden by brush and overhanging trees.

By then it was time to head back to Macomb for the reunion. That was such a nice respite, plus meeting

Rocky was a big highlight. I just love the countryside and the delightful folks who live there — and their critters too!

The author retains all rights to, and copyright of this article.