

Huston Pioneers of Jefferson County, Ohio



Three Generations of Pioneers and Their Families

by Cynthia (Huston) Fletcher

I wish I could have met John and Isabella...those strong and courageous ancestors of mine who fled their homeland in search of freedom and opportunity, and who helped to shape who I am today.

In Ireland, **John Huston** was born around 1799, and **Isabella Drew** on August 16th 1807. I wish I knew exactly how they met and when they married, but I don't. I do believe John, at age 25, departed the Londonderry port on the ship "James M." in the summer of 1824 and arrived at the Port of Philadelphia on August 21st of that year.

I imagine **John** as a dark-haired and ruggedly handsome Irishman who soon found employment near the Philly shores - possibly in canal building or construction. He may have met young **Isabella** at an Irish camp following her long shift at a local factory. I can't be sure, but I do know they had much in common. Both came from the same area in Ireland - County Tyrone. Both survived a devastating depression in their homeland following the Napoleonic War, and both survived a dangerous six to eight week voyage across the vast Atlantic in a "coffin ship." Both may have lost family in Ireland.

At some point, the couple traveled west, possibly on foot, crossing the Ohio River on a flat boat made of logs (likely), and set out to tame a piece of the wilderness in the Scots-Irish community of **Brush Creek Township** in **Jefferson County, Ohio**. They would work hard to make this public land their own.

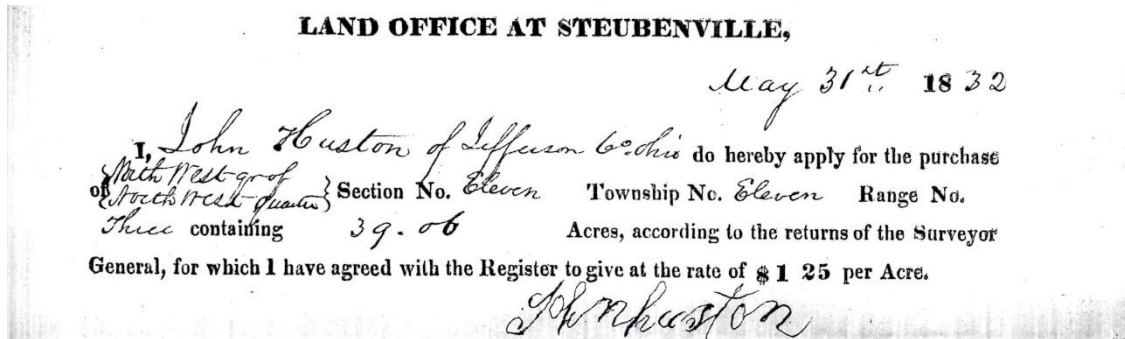
Isabella gave birth to **three children** in Brush Creek Township.

Oliver Huston, was born in August of 1830. This first-born was surely the twinkle in his father's eyes, and the love in his mother's heart.

Margaret Jane, born July 29, 1832. She would be referred to throughout life as 'Jane' and is said to have been a very kind and caring person who tended to the needs of many others. "As a neighbor, she was exceedingly interested and kind (obituary)."

James Huston, my great-great grandfather, was born Oct. 4, 1833 (according to 1836 Common Pleas record). James would grow up to be a hard-working farmer and father.

On May 31st, 1832, John Huston visited the Steubenville Land Office, a log cabin now located at Fort Steuben, and purchased the public land he and Isabella had settled on.



By Jan. 1, 1833, John became the rightful owner of this land, as well as another 40-acre lot in Brush Creek Township. The Land Act of 1820 made this possible.

Image	Accession	Names†	Date	Doc #	State	Meridian	Twp - Rng	Aliquots	Sec. #	County
	OH0130 .146	HUSTON, JOHN	1/1/1833	3156	OH	Ohio River Survey	012N - 003W	NE¼SE¼	15	Jefferson
	OH0130 .156	HUSTON, JOHN	1/1/1833	3166	OH	Ohio River Survey	011N - 003W	NW¼NW¼	11	Jefferson

From: Bureau of Land Management



On August 24, 1833, John Huston walked into the courthouse and filed his papers to become a U.S. citizen. A husband could pass his citizenship on to his wife.

1834 was a tragic year for the Huston's. On the 30th of March, little **Oliver**, just 3 years old, passed away.

Alexander Clark, a former school teacher in Brush Creek Township, mentioned in his 1866 book, "The Old Log Schoolhouse," a dreadful epidemic, around this time, of "lung fever," which took the life of at least one family member in every household following a bitter cold winter.

Whatever it was, it wreaked havoc on this poor young family. On May 28th, less than two months following Oliver's death, **John Huston** also passed away. He was 35 years old and the sole provider for a young wife and two surviving infants. If baby James had died instead, none of his hundreds of descendants, including myself, would have ever existed.

Isabella Huston was a widow at 26, living in a strange land so far from home, with two babies in diapers. She would never marry again.

John and little **Oliver** were laid to rest at the **Chestnut Grove Cemetery** on land owned by **Martin Adams**, Justice of the Peace, distillery owner, and one of the first settlers in Brush Creek Valley.

In 1836, **Isabella's** closest neighbors, **Matthew Russell** and **John Russell** were appointed guardians of 4-year-old Jane and 3-year-old James. *The large Russell family, who owned land all over this region, would later become relatives.*

From Common Pleas Journal H, page 327, Sept. 1836

"It is ordered that Isabella Huston be appointed Administrix of John Huston dec'd. Bond \$100. Robert Russell and Joseph D. Holmes Surties. Matthew Russell, James Love, and John Russell Appraisers.

Matthew Russell appointed guardian of James Huston, age three on the 4th day of Oct. next. Bond \$200. James Love and Robert Russell surties. John Russel appointed guardian of Jane Huston, age four July 29th last. Bond \$200. Surties James Love and Robert Russell."

Later, on Aug. 31, 1838, the court appointed **Ross Black** as "guardian and ad litem to the "infant defendants", **James Huston** and **Jane Huston**.

At the same hearing, Isabella was ordered to deliver a deed to **William Kerr** for the land in section 15 of Brush Creek Township.

Common Pleas record:

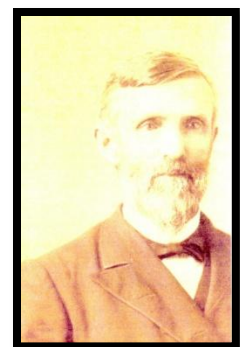
"August 1838 – Isabella HUSTON adms. of John HUSTON, dec'd vs. Jane and James HUSTON, heirs of John Huston, to complete contract. Petition filed 10-21-1837. John Huston made a verbal contract with William Kerr in 1833. John Huston is bound to make good warrant deed to William Kerr N.E. quarter of S.E. section 15 township 12 range 3. Widow, Isabella Huston. Children: Jane and James Huston, minors, their guardian Ross Black."

The family eventually united, probably when Jane and James were old enough to help their mother on the farm. When the **1850 census of Brush Creek Township** was taken, both **Jane** and **James** (age 18 and almost 17) were living with their loving mother, listed as "Isabeth" (census-takers often spelled the way they heard it). James had attended school within the last year. 20-year-old **John McClure** was living with them as a "laborer."

On **Sept. 2, 1852**, 20-year-old **Jane Huston** married **Martin Van Buren Easterday**, a young German Lutheran born in Jefferson County to **Christian and Anna (Stemple) Easterday** in 1825. Martin was a graduate of Muhlenberg College of Allentown, PA.

The newlyweds soon moved to Nokomis, Montgomery County, Illinois, where a **Daniel Easterday** was the very first settler. Martin would later serve his state of Illinois during the **Civil War**, in command of Company F - 126th Illinois Volunteer Infantry, and fought in five known battles.

On **October 18th, 1853**, 20-year-old **James Huston** (my direct ancestor) married 21-year-old **Elizabeth Russell**, eldest of **Arthur and Sarah Russell**. Elizabeth's grandparents, **Matthew and Susannah Russell**, (also my ancestors) were said to be among the very first settlers of Brush Creek Township. In 1801 Arthur was born in Brush Creek Twp - in 1869 he died there.



Arthur Russell

It is said that Arthur Russell, 29, and Sarah Russell, 14, were 2nd cousins when married. At 16 she gave birth to Elizabeth, followed by 11 more children. She died at age 50 (1815 – 1865) w/minors still at home. Years after their deaths, three adult children would die in Jefferson County, Ohio from Tuberculosis.

Sometime around 1860, **Isabella Huston** joined her daughter, **Jane**, in Nokomis, Ill. By this time, Jane had given birth to four children and had already lost one or two.

On May 9, 1864, **Isabella** signed over all rights to the land in Brush Creek Township to her son, **James Huston**. James and Elizabeth and family would stay until around 1870, and lived a short distance from the "**Battle of Salineville**," at which time many residents in nearby villages were terrified by rebel soldiers passing through.

James and Elizabeth Huston's children, all born in Jefferson County, Ohio:

- John William Huston, 1854
- **Arthur Augustus Huston**, 1855 (my ancestor)
- Edwin Huston, 1858
- Robert Anderson Huston, 1860
- Sarah Jane Isabel Huston, 1864
- Allison L. Huston, born 1865

Photo Date: ca 1915

James Huston Sitting

Sons, L-R: John, Arthur, Edwin (Ed), Robert (Bob), Allison

Huston photos given to me in 1982 by great Aunt Wilma, youngest surviving daughter of Arthur & Susan Huston





Above: Elizabeth and James Huston (left) visiting Arthur & Susan, in Middlebranch, Nebraska, 1902

Isabella Huston moved with the Easterday's from Illinois to **Tecumseh, Nebraska** around 1871-73. There, **Martin Easterday** served two terms as County Treasurer in Tecumseh. Promin

Photo to right: Martin V. Easterday (from obituary)

Martin V. Easterday's impressive Johnson County, NE biography lists Margaret Jane's parents as **John and Isabella (Drew) Huston**, and mentions Isabella, after the death of her husband, "kept the farm, superintended its operations, and succeeded in keeping her family together, bringing them up as both parents would have desired."

<http://www.usgennet.org/usa/ne/topic/resources/OLLibrary/pbjp/pages/bajp0042.htm>



Before 1880, the Easterday family bought a farm in nearby Nemaha. **Isabella** was listed as a **73-year-old** mother-in-law (to Martin) on the 1880 census, and living with **Martin and Margaret J.** Living with them was a 40-yr-old Irish farm laborer (Michael), an 18-yr-old German school teacher (Emma), and a 19-year-old German domestic servant (Julie).

By this time, **James and Elizabeth Huston** had left Jefferson County and moved to Missouri (about 1870). Around 1875, following the **1874 grasshopper plague** across the great plains (Missouri too!), the family packed up and moved to **Cheney, Nebraska**, not far from **Isabella** and **Jane**, where many others had loaded up wagons to escape the greedy grasshoppers who had devoured crops, sheep's wool, even clothing. A ready-built and abandoned home must have been easy to find!

On Dec. 16, 1883, Isabella (Drew) Huston passed away in Nemaha. She was sorely missed by her daughter, who later had a nice stone installed marked "Mother of Jane Easterday." There is also a hand-carved note at the top...."We Will Meet Again."

From the Tecumseh Chieftain, Dec. 22, 1883: Death of Mrs. I. Huston. "At the residence of M.V. Easterday, on Sunday, December 16th, 1883, Mrs. Isabella Huston, mother of Mrs. Jane Easterday, aged seventy-eight years. Mrs. Huston was one of the earliest settlers in Tecumseh, coming here from Illinois in 1873. A few years ago she had an attack of paralysis, which disabled her very much, making her helpless in some respects, and materially affecting her speech. Since that time she has been kindly cared for in the home of her daughter, Mrs. M.V. Easterday, where she has had all the care and attention her helpless condition required. She has had a long life, and her last years have been spent in weakness and trial. She has gone, like corn fully ripe, unto the heavenly garner. The funeral services were held at the family residence on Monday afternoon, conducted by Rev. George Scott.

The Easterday's later moved to Piece County, Washington.

Margaret Jane (Huston) Easterday passed away on Dec. 9, 1908 in Steilacoom, WA.
Her son, Charles Milton Easterday, became a Washington State Senator – check for yourself.

Martin V. Easterday passed away on April 22, 1915, Tacoma, WA.

James Huston died Oct. 15, 1917, Nebraska Hospital for the Insane. I wondered why some of us are so crazy! Actually, he was 84 and developed Alzheimer's.

Elizabeth (Russell) Huston passed away months later, on May 19, 1918, Cheney, NE.

See Huston and Easterday Gravestone Photos at findagrave.com



Arthur Huston (grandson of John & Isabella) and Susan Baker on their wedding day in Saltillo, NE,

Jan. 19, 1879

Arthur Augustus Huston – born Sept. 16, 1855, Brush Creek Twp, Jefferson County, Ohio.
Died Aug. 10, 1941, Pierre, South Dakota

Susan Baker – born July 16, 1860, Celina, Ohio
Died Dec. 16, 1919, Middlebranch, Holt County, Nebraska

My great-grandparents

Children of Arthur & Susan (Baker) Huston

Harry Garfield Huston.....born 8 April 1880
Gertrude Florence Huston..... born 10 November 1881
Guy Edward Huston.....born 28 October 1883
James Augustus Huston..... born 2 June 1888
Minnie Doretta Huston..... born 6 April 1890
Mildred Naomi.....born 27 July 1892

Jack Baker Huston.....born 22 Sept. 1896 (my direct line)

Wilma Ida Huston (Aunt Wilma).....born 30 Oct. 1898
Gladys Irene Huston.....born 9 May 1902 (died 1903)

Jack and Margaret (McCullough) Huston

My Grandparents



Jack Baker Huston - born near Lincoln, NE on Sept. 22, 1896 to Arthur and Susan Huston. Died Feb. 12, 1970, Rapid City, SD

Margaret McCullough Huston was born Jan. 13, 1898, Kansas City, MO. Died Aug. 1, 1987, Rapid City, S.D.

Children: Arthur, Jack Jr., Mary Jane, **REX HUSTON** (my father), Joseph, Huey, Joann, Marguerite, and Sharon

On August 13, 1953, my handsome father, **Rex W. Huston** (1928-2000) married my beautiful blue-eyed mother, **Arleta R. McKillip** (1935), both from Midland, S.D.

Mom was only 18.

Children: Sharon (1954), Cynthia (1955), Raymond (1957), Rex, Jr. (1959)

