

- **Claiborne County (TN) Progress**

Nell Quesenbery Report

September 16, 1982

LIVESAY MANOR

By Nell Quesenbery

Whilst many of us trace our roots back to wee hovels, snug cottages and more common types of hearths and hedge, others lay claim to the manor-born.

Manor - The lands of feudal noblemen.

Manor House - The large house in which the noblemen lived.

Hall - A British landowner's house.

Recently, I received a letter from Bess Livesay, of Charleston, West Virginia. Bess had called me during her trip to Tennessee for the annual Livesay reunion that brings people sharing this surname together from many places. This year, the Livesay reunion was held in Kingsport, Tennessee.

In the phone conversation, Bess once again thanked me for writing in the Progress Herman's wish to prove to his West Virginia neighbor that pomegranates were real.

Herman, former County Court Clerk of Claiborne County, claims that he received enough pomegranate seed to supply all of West Virginia.

Seeds were sent from several states. Mrs. Luther Williams, Mrs. Carl Collins, Mrs. Minnie Crutchfield and Carson "Cowboy" Maples told me they planned to send Herman seed.

I'm particularly fond of Herman and Bess because in the old Detroit days, they were part of the Corey Street gang.

Bess's Letter:

Herman and Bess Livesay

1217 Woodland Drive

Charleston, West Virginia 25302

August 27, 1982

Dearest Nell,

Sorry we didn't get down your way again.

After we returned from the Livesay reunion at Kingsport, we decided we'd better get home. Herman needed to get several things done for Fall and Winter.

Herman is sending you pictures and a clipping about the Old Livesay Hall in England for the Progress.

Hope your virus has all cleared up and you are okay.

Hello to all.

Love,

Bess and Herman

Herman's Clipping:

The manor of Livesay, from which the surname probably originated, had been in the de Bury family at least as early as the time of Henry I (between the years 1068 and 1135), possibly from pre-Conquest times. (Norman Conquest)

Under the feudal system, the kings conferred titles and privileges which included large amounts of land (and Manors) called “honours.” In the time of King Henry III, Sir Adam de Bury was one of the twelve knights appointed to make perambulation of the forests of Lancashire.

There is a picture of Livesay Old Hall - an engraving dated 1877 by Herbert Railton published in the *British Architect and Northern Engineer*, dated February 1, 1878. The description follows:

“The Hall is the Manor House of the township of Livesay in Blackburn Parish and is situated in the valley of Darwen about two miles southwest of the town of Blackburn. It is a fine example of the stone-built Lancashire Halls of the Stuart period.

“The Livesays were lords of the Manor of Livesay for centuries - the one here described and earlier structures - from Galfred de Livesay, living about 1220, to Ralph Livesay, Esquire, who died in 1766, he being the last male representative of Livesay Hall.

“Livesay Hall is further described as a long building with projecting gabled wings on the south front and massive chimney projections on the rearward view.

“Over the doorway in the central part of the building the Arms of Livesay appear sculptured on a stone panel, and on a stone wall is inscribed the motto, ‘Deo Soli Gloria’ (‘to God alone is the glory’) with the initials I.L. - A.L. (the ‘I’ sometimes being interchangeable with the ‘J,’ which stands for James Livesay, Esquire, and Alice, his wife.) Also inscribed is the date 1608, the time of the restoration of the middle portion of the Hall.

“The northeast wing to the right in the drawing (added by Ralph Livesay, Esquire) has on its front a letter stone with a motto: ‘Virtus est Vera Nobilitas’ (‘Virtue is true nobility’), the initials R.L. - A.L., Ralph and Ann Livesay, and the date 1666.

“Another inscribed stone over the doorway in the opposite wing, seen on the left of the view, has on it the initials R.L., A.L. and P.L., standing for Ralph, Ann and Porter Livesay, their son, and the date 1689. The south wing was restored in 1689.

“The interior of the older end of the house, now in a state of decay, shows the wide arched fireplace in the kitchen, covered oak panels over the fireplace in the dining room, other paneled rooms, and a broad open staircase.”

Part of Herman's clipping contained detailed family information. This was not published. Any interested person can write to Herman for this additional information. Also, Herman, the Progress will use your pictures if they are clear enough.

Crimson Sweet Watermelons

On the tiny tips of our tongue is where our sweet tastebuds lie. In these last warm days of summer, I delightfully feast on Dexter and Helen Lakin's chilled Crimson Sweet watermelons.

Dexter raised these huge round, deeply green striped melons in his Lone Mountain garden. One such melon weighing nearly forty pounds just won a blue ribbon at the Claiborne County Fair of 1982.