

We found (again, perhaps, for some of you) Grandpa Isaac's grave in Isonville, KY.

Sandy, Alex (our youngest son) and I drove from Nashville to Moorhead, KY on 11/19/2011 (Saturday). We spent the night in Moorhead (the closest town to Isonville with any hotels to speak of, as far as I can tell, and Kristen confirmed). We planned to attend the Olive Hill Branch Sacrament Meeting on Sunday morning. That appears to be the closest branch to Isonville, and we thought we might meet a few shirttail relatives there. However, Alex was sick all night Saturday night (and I'll look for any excuse to skip church), so we just drove up to Isonville from Moorehead on Sunday morning, and started puttering around. We drove around some of the roads in the area, and found a lot of "Ison" references – mostly in the form of names of roads.

Kristen Carson's email (sent to 52-cousins on 10/30/11) and the PDF document from Don Tenney (also sent to 52-cousins on 10/30/11) were both most helpful. (Copies of those are at the end of this.) We didn't find a post office – a couple of little buildings that might have once been, but the general store was there. We stopped in there and talked to one of the current generation of owners – a Ferguson. He told an interesting quip – said that he had been told that a couple of the Ferguson and Ison ancestors from a couple of generations back had worked on a movement to get the Ferguson and Ison kids to marry each other in order to develop a "master race" for the area, but apparently they couldn't get enough of them to like each other that much... He pointed out what he thought might be the Maude Ison Miller home, and said he used to hunt all around there. He thought the road was gated off now. We followed his directions (in general), and found an old white house that fit the description. The young lady who answered the door there didn't confirm that this was the Maude Ison Miller home, but did say there was a cemetery up the hill, but that the gate was locked. She pointed up the hill to the other side and said the guy with the key lived up there. We went "up there," and met Dave Wagner (I think that was his name – very thick accent) on his porch, and several of his grandkids (I assume) – some teenage boys and some little girls. He gladly gave us the key to the gate, and spent about 15 minutes chatting (him on the porch, me standing in the rain). We concluded that "Old Man Ison," as he knew him, must be Isaac Ison who died in 1977. He was very complimentary of Old Man Ison, talked about doing business with him (farming some of his ground) with nothing more than a verbal agreement. He said he didn't think we could drive up to the cemetery unless we had 4wd (we didn't think that far ahead when we rented the car), and one of the teenage boys there said the last time he hiked up that hill was the last for him, and if we were going to do it, we were better men than he. (He said it while standing there smoking a cigarette.) Dave suggested that we make a copy of his key so that we could get into the gate next time we came. We took his advice, and ran down to the general store, broke the Sabbath, and made a copy of the key. Then we went back up to the gate and on through. Just past the gate is a yard with some oil equipment. We turned left there up the hill, but didn't get very far before we agreed that we needed the 4wd. It was drizzling rain all day the day we were there – otherwise the road really wasn't bad. I think that on a dry day, we could probably have driven the rental car all the way up. In any case, we parked the car and started up in the mud. I'm old, fat, and two weeks past a heart attack, and even I didn't think the hike was that bad – probably about a half mile up through a couple of switchbacks. We meandered up the hill, and found the cemetery just off to the left at almost the top of the hill. There are probably a couple dozen graves in the cemetery. It's a pretty place, a

beautiful view from the top of the hill, although the cemetery is fairly rugged and not particularly well taken care of.

Here are some pictures and comments:



This is the picture that started all the curiosity. This is (from left): Bruce Tenney, Don Tenney, Tom Tenney, and Milo Tenney. I don't remember taking this picture (Coy found it), but it had to have been taken on a family vacation we took ("the" family vacation we took) when we drove back to the east coast in about 1971. I do recall that we stopped in Kentucky and visited Grandpa Isaac and spent time tramping around the hills there. Apparently Mom and Dad got us together long enough to take this picture at Grandpa Isaac's first wife's grave.



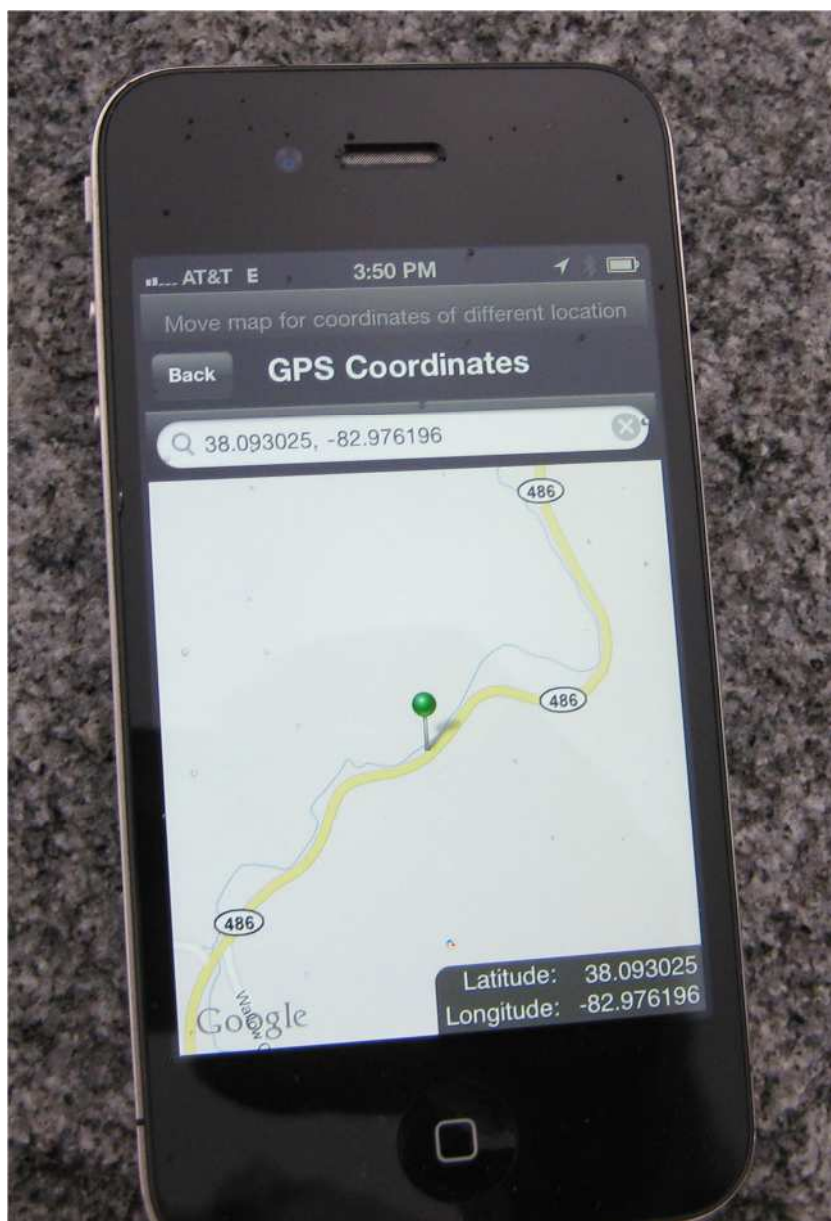
And here we are about 40 years later. Note 40 years of wear and tear and overeating on Milo, the missing cute younger brothers, and, now, Grandpa Isaac's grave to my left. The stones aren't very well lined up – it's one of the very-common-in-the-area little family cemeteries, but Grandpa and Minnie Fraley are buried together.



Here's a closeup of Grandpa Isaac's stone (above), and here's a view (below) in context with the old, original Minnie Bell Fraley stone. Grandpa Isaac's is the lighter stone on the right.



Here's a view of the cemetery from the little utility road that goes up the hill (and on past the cemetery).
(That's Alex standing up there amid the stones.)



Here's my iphone sitting on Grandpa Isaac's stone, showing what it thinks are GPS coordinates. (Sorry, I don't know enough about GPS to know if this free app I downloaded is giving real GPS coordinates or some other numbers. Coy?)

Now some Isonville:



There are (as near as I could tell) three entrances into Isonville, and each is marked with this sign. I don't know who Don Rigsby is. (I figured he's the guy who painted the sign, but Sandy thinks there's more to it than that...)



If you don't want to go all the way to Olive Hill for church, there's a perfectly good one here.



Here's the general store in Isonville from up the hill behind it.

Now, if you want to go to Isonville and find it yourself: Read Kristen's email – she was obviously a lot more involved than we were. We spent essentially an afternoon snooping around – she has much more thorough information. But here are some current pictures and instructions:



This is the view coming into Isonville from Moorhead on Hwy 32. The general store is in the middle of the picture.



You want to keep going straight past these signs, not up the hill to the right here.



This view is from right in front of the general store. Keep going straight across the bridge here in front of you.



This is now just across the bridge. Follow the 706 sign here by turning left just across the bridge. The general store is just behind us here.



This is just after that left turn onto 706. You're going to follow this for a half mile or so before you turn right off of this.



Keep going along 706 past this house and past Fraley Ln.



Here's the intersection where you'll turn right toward the Claude Ison Miller home. This is just past the Fraley Ln sign. This has to be what Don's internet research calls "Anderson Branch Rd." Google Maps looks like it calls it "Anderson Ison Branch Road," which makes the name "Anderson Cemetery" (see the sign later) make more sense. But there's no sign here. You want to make a hairpin turn to the right – don't take that fork to the left up the hill. Note that 706 keeps going past this intersection – to the left of the picture.



Here's a view up (what I think is) Anderson Branch Rd. just after turning off of 706. Note that 706 is right behind us here; Fraley Ln and that white house is just down there to the right out of the picture.



Here we are just a little farther (less than a half mile) up (what I think is) Anderson Branch Rd., just before we turn off to the right to the Maude Ison Miller home. Note that you keep to the right here. Up to the left is Dave Wagner's place.



Not real clear exactly where Redhawk Rd is, but this sign is at the intersection in the previous picture. Straight in front of the camera here is the road up to Dave Wagner's place. The road you want to stay on is to the right of this picture. The Claude Ison Miller home is just off to the right of this picture.



Here's the sign at the road that turns off to the Maude Ison Miller home. Turn right (off the pavement) here. That's the Maude Ison Miller home up there on the left. I wondered why this is called the Anderson Cemetery – I don't recall seeing any Anderson's there. Some further research indicates that the Anderson here is Anderson Ison. But, in any case, the gate is up there past the right side of the house – kind of underneath CEM on the sign.



Go up past the house to the gate. A four-wheeler can get past the gate on the right side, but a car can't.



If the lock still looks like this one, then the key I can give you will probably work. If you didn't get a key from me, then maybe you can find Dave Wagner. If you can't, then you'll have to hoof it. Which is really not that big a deal – from this gate I would guess it's less than a mile – an uphill mile – to the cemetery.



You need to fork left here when you get to the oil equipment yard. The green gate is behind us in this shot.



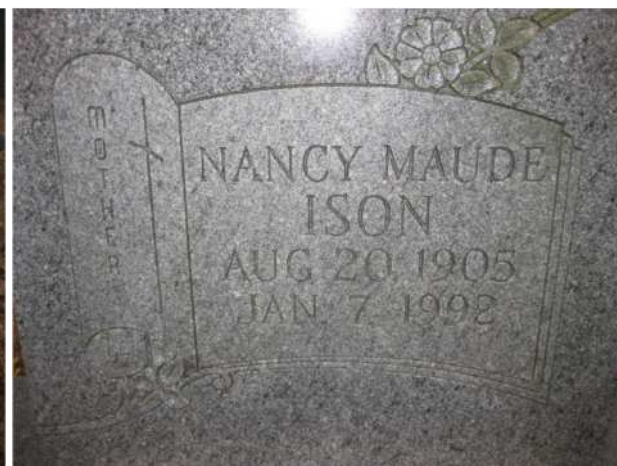
Here's where we parked on a muddy, rainy day. If the ground is dry, I think you could get all the way up to the cemetery in a car. This is just past the oil equipment yard – which is just behind the camera here, to the right.

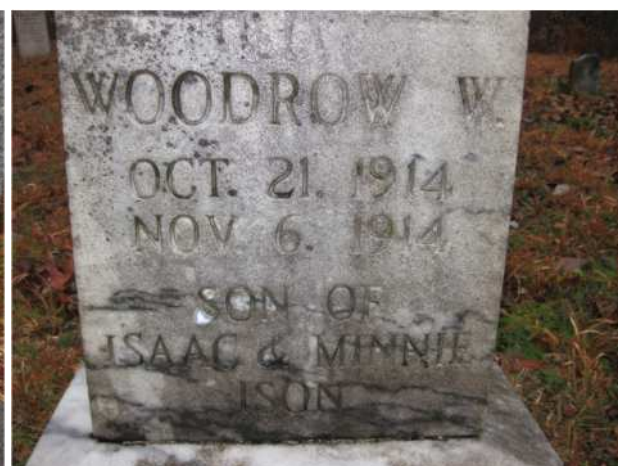


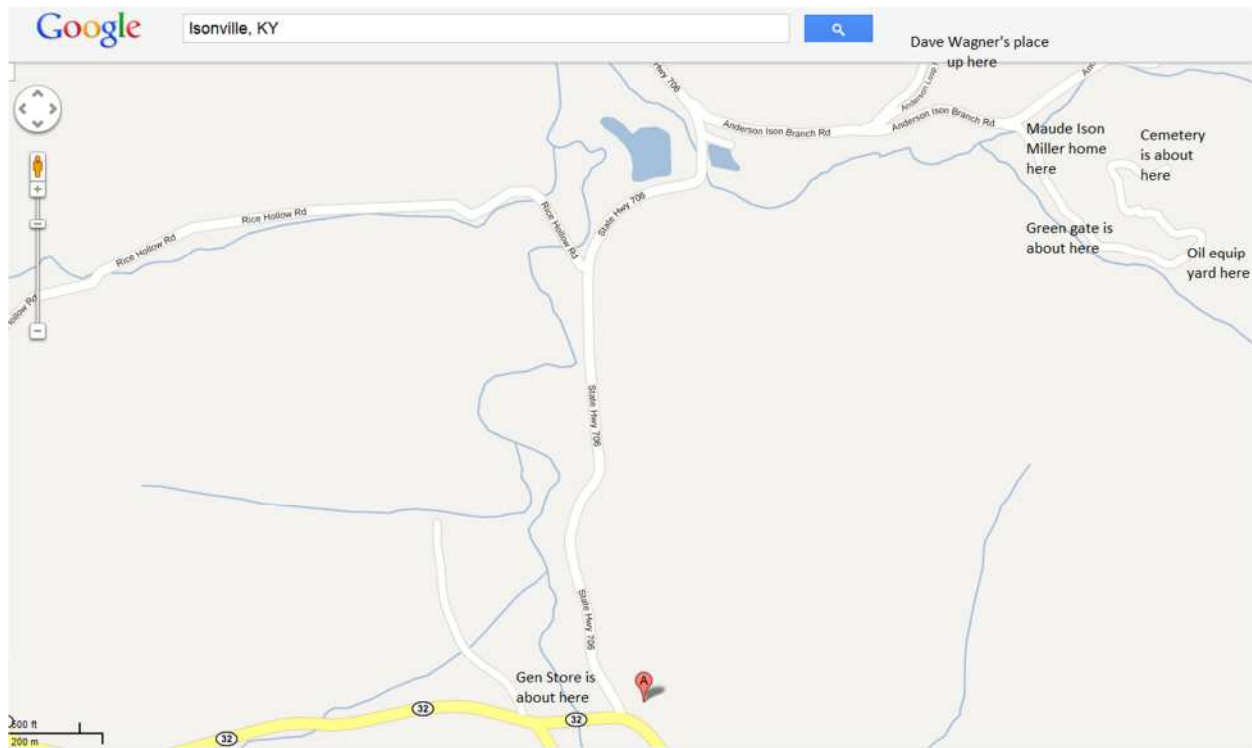
These are pictures of the road (and one view from the road) we walked up from where we parked the car. I think these are in order. The last one shows Sandy on the left and the cemetery on the right up the hill.

Here are some random shots of the cemetery and some of the stones. If anyone wants the actual pictures so you can see more detail (and more pictures), I'll be glad to give them to you.









Here's a Google map with some of the landmarks. Note that I got almost no phone service around most of Isonville, with either AT&T or Verizon, so you'll want to plan ahead and not rely on getting Google maps on your phone when you're around in the area. I was able to get an AT&T phone signal when we were at the top of the hill at the cemetery.

Here's Don's email and the PDF he attached – some very useful information:

Hey, guess what? The internet works in Hawaii!

I had a little time to do some research on the internet and think I may have found some information on Grandpa Isaac's grave.

Attached is a document with what I found. Here is a little more explanation -

The Social Security Death Index indicates the date of death was 1 April 1977 whereas Uncle Lincoln's journal has it on 5 April. I'm not sure which is correct, I suppose there could be good explanations for either to be in error but I am confident it is our Grandpa Isaac. That pointed me to Boyd County, Kentucky. I was pretty sure that Isaac and Grandpa (Robert Lee) were cousins so I started looking for Richmond's (Great Grandpa's) family and found that his brother Anderson had a son named Isaac who died in 1977 and was buried at the rear of the Maude Ison Miller home (yellow highlight). A little research on Elliot County, KY cemeteries turned up the same location for Isaac Ison's grave and Google Maps did the rest for me.

I generally don't consider looking around on the internet to be true research so I won't be upset if somebody pokes a hole in my "research" but hopefully this helpful.

Don

US Social Security Death Index

https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.2/ZG4X-1PZ/p_13029597521

viewed on 10/29/11

First Name: Isaac

Middle Name:

Last Name: Ison Name

Suffix:

Birth Date: 11 August 1882

Social Security Number: 527-70-9957

Place of Issuance: Arizona

Last Residence: Boyd, Kentucky

Zip Code of Last Residence: 41101

Death Date: 1 April 1977

Estimated Age at Death: 95

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Roots Web

<http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=:3003373&id=I70>

viewed on 10/29/11

☐ ID: I70

☐ Name: Doctor ISON

- ☐ *Sex:* M
- ☐ *Birth:* 17 FEB 1812 in Stoney Creek VA (Scott Co)
- ☐ *Death:* 17 JAN 1882 in Elliott Co KY
- ☐ *Change Date:* 13 APR 2004 at 15:58:01

Father: Archibald ISON b: 1775/1780 in Stoney Creek VA (Washington Co Now Scott Co) *Mother:* Mary (Polly) GILLIAM b: 1782 in Morgan Co KY *Marriage* 1 Elizabeth FRALEY b: 25 MAR 1820 in VA

- ☐ *Married:* 15 MAY 1845 in Lawrence Co KY

Children

1. Anderson ISON b: 21 JUN 1846
2. Samuel Briton ISON b: 20 JAN 1848 in Elliott Co KY
3. Phebe Jane ISON b: 9 SEP 1849 in Elliott Co KY
4. Allen ISON b: 24 JAN 1852 in Elliott Co KY
5. Aaron (twin?) ISON b: 3 JAN 1854 in Elliott Co KY
6. Ronald (twin) ISON b: 3 JAN 1854 in Morgan Co KY
7. Richmond ISON b: 28 FEB 1856 in Morgan Co KY
8. Beauregard Madison ISON b: 1858
9. Hulda Jane ISON b: 22 JUN 1859 in Morgan Co KY
10. Marion Frances ISON b: 1863/1864
11. Josephine ISON b: 1862
12. Albert ISON

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<http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=:3003373&id=I1709>

viewed on 10/29/11

☐ *ID:* I1709

☐ *Name:* Anderson ISON

☐ *Sex:* M

☐ *Birth:* 21 JUN 1846

☐ *Death:* 10 FEB 1932

☐ *Burial:* Anderson Ison Cemetery (Rice Hollow Road West Of St Rd 706; North Of St Rt 32 At Isonville)

☐ *Change Date:* 15 APR 2004 at 10:51:55

Father: Doctor ISON b: 17 FEB 1812 in Stoney Creek VA (Scott Co) *Mother:* Elizabeth FRALEY b: 25 MAR 1820 in VA *Marriage* 1 Mary Anne (Polly) HEARST b: 12 JAN 1844

☐ *Married:* 30 JUL 1866

Children

1. Isaac ISON b: 1882

2. Susan ISON b: 14 MAY 1885

3. Thurman ISON b: 17 OCT 1888

4. Lucy ISON

5. Elizabeth (Betts) ISON

6. Karen ISON

7. Lou ISON

8. James A ISON

9. Mary ISON

10. Doctor ISON b: MAR 1877

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<http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=:3003373&id=I1727>

viewed on 10/29/11

☐ *ID:* I1727

☐ *Name:* Isaac ISON

☐ *Sex:* M

☐ *Birth:* 1882

☐ *Death:* 1977

☐ *Burial:* Isaac Ison Cemetery (Anderson Branch Rd 1.6 Mi East Of St Rd 706; Hill At Rear Of Maude Ison Miller Home

☐ *Change Date:* 12 MAR 2004 at 15:01:54

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<http://205.204.134.47/cemetery.asp>

viewed on 10/29/11

Information provided by: Kentucky Historical Society 10/30/2011 100 West Broadway, Frankfort,
KY 40601, 502.564.1792

Cemetery Information

Isaac Ison Cemetery

Cemetery Name:

County Name:

Elliott

USGS Quadrangle:

Isonville

Physical Location:

Anderson Branch Rd., about 1.6
miles E. of Rd. 706

Cemetery Type:

UNKNOWN

General Notes:

Here's Kristen Carson's email – more very useful information:

Don,

That's some great research there.

If Milo's going to make the trip, let me add what I know.

The locals will help you find the Maud Miller place. You can stop in at the general store at the west end of town, where Hwy 706 meets Hwy. 32. Ask whoever's on duty and, while they might remember a Maud Miller, they will refer you to one of the local genealogy buffs. It may take two or three stops, but that is part of the fun.

Last time I visited, Mary Fyffe and Samone Ratcliff were the go-to ladies for genealogy in Elliott County. Unless either of them have died, the locals will probably send you to them. Mary was elderly but vigorous when I met her. Samone had cancer relatively young and went into remission, but I haven't heard from her in quite a while.

I'm also assuming that the general store is still there. It has something of an eternal nature about it, as in some of the stock on the shelves has been there since my girlhood days.

Or you could ask at the post office, a little hutch at the east end of town, near Hwy 486. That is, unless it has gone the way of rural postal close-downs.

It's never a quick trip into the mountains and until recently, Elliott County hadn't a single motel. The drive in and out from the nearest lodgings (Morehead for me, since I was traveling from Indiana) really cut into the time I had to visit and ask questions. I only feel comfortable going 40 mph on those twisty roads. I often felt the locals' impatience when they got stuck behind me. They tear around those curves at 55 or 60 mph. Anyway, ten years ago, someone built the Laurel Gorge Inn, anticipating a healthy trade from people who come to visit their relatives in the two new prisons that were being built just then. I shudder to think what prison relatives might have done to the beautiful quilts on the Inn's beds. But at any rate, the country back there is truly gorgeous. And your trip back to Anderson Branch Road will provide you with the adventure of driving on some of the one-lane roads back in the hills.

You may want to include a stop at Richmond and Martha's homeplace. I did that on several of my trips. Angela even got some pictures for me. It sits on a most fetching spot on Rocky Branch Road. (Follow 706 north from the Anderson Branch turn-off.) If you want help finding it, ask the locals for Frank Gillum's place. In case Frank is dead, I think the wife's name is Charlene. She is young enough to still be around. She's his second wife and he's so proud of her because when they hunted wild turkeys, she bagged more than he did.

The people are very friendly. You may find them staring hard at your face and declaring that, yes, they really do see a family resemblance. And they're all our cousins. Heck, they're all each others' cousins, about six times over.

Have a great time up in the hills.

Kristen