

Eli Hullinger and Elizabeth Siddens Hullinger

Eli Hullinger, son of Daniel and Mrs. Mary Ann Hullinger, was born Sept. 22, 1870 near Leon, Iowa. He was baptized in the Baptist Faith in his early youth.



Eli was married on January 7, 1890, to Mary Elizabeth Siddens. Her mother was Mary Anne Ford and her father, Alexander Siddens. The Siddens came from Terre Haute, Indiana, where Mary Elizabeth was born. When she was a year or two old they came to Union County, Iowa, and homesteaded just south of Afton. Later, when she was maybe four, they went to Kansas to try it there, but grasshoppers drove them out and they came back to Iowa. There were seven children in that family. Their name and approximate dates are:

1. Albert, born 1860, died 1878
2. Eliza, born 1862, married Robert Perigo
3. Henry, born 1864
4. Mary Elizabeth (Lizzie Hullinger), born 1870
5. Eva (Cox), born 1872
6. Frank, born 1868
7. Charlie, born 1875

Grandma Lizzie told me she remembered her father carrying her to see her brother, Albert, after his death. They had all been very sick with typhoid

fever, which was an epidemic in those days and very dangerous. Frank is the father of the Afton cousins who visit us, Walter or Dock, Harry and his sons, and the twin girls, Evia Sage, Eva Jeeters, and Ethel Vaughn.

Eli and Lizzie met at a dance in or somewhere near Afton. I have heard that he told the boys he was going to pick out his wife that night. Virginia said he told her that when he saw Lizzie he thought she was the prettiest girl he ever saw. During the evening they were leaning out the window watching the train go by when he "bussed" her. Watching the train go by was something you did in those days when trains were new. He had worked teams on that railroad when it was being built. They were both twenty. Eli was a good singer and loved to dance. His brother, Willie, was good with the violin and they were much in demand as entertainers. They had many songs they worked up together and many years later Eli would entertain the grandchildren with them. But in 1890 "their hearts were young and gay," and so that romance started. And again we hear the story of hard times with no jobs to be had. So they tried to farm on rented land which was poor and hilly.

Eli and Lizzie were trying to cope with the new country as most of the older folks did. They had learned the eastern ways too well and could not adjust. Lizzie died July 6, 1951, and Eli died March 10, 1956, so it fell to the boys to learn and grow with the land.

Eli and Lizzie are buried in the cemetery in Vivian, South Dakota.