

**THE ANNAPOLIS POTTERY  
AND ITS WABASH & ERIE CANAL CONNECTIONS**  
By Charles Davis

Edward D. Laughlin, Crawford Laughlin, David F. Huggins, David L. Atcheson and Alexander H. Lee were the fathers of the stoneware business in Annapolis, Penn township, Parke county, Indiana. The first company consisted of David L. Atcheson, David Huggins and Jacob Bennage, all Ohio men from Mogadore, Summit county, Ohio, the great stoneware center of the United States.

David Lowery Atcheson came to Indiana in the fall of 1840. He fell into company with Albert Coffin at Lafayette, Indiana. Albert was a partner of William G. Coffin in the Coffin Foundry on Sugar Creek in Foundry Hollow. Atcheson asked Coffin where to get clay and was told he could get it close to their foundry. Atcheson told him that when he got through with his visit he would come and see the clay. When Atcheson arrived he got some of it and took it to Thomas Woody's blacksmith shop in Annapolis. There he put it through the white heat, salted it, and found it made a very good body and took a good salt glaze. He concluded that this would be a good location for the stoneware business so he wrote to David Huggins about his discovery. David Atcheson and David Huggins formed a partnership and took Jacob Bennage in with them. They came to Annapolis in the winter of 1840 and bought a house on Lot #3 in block #6.

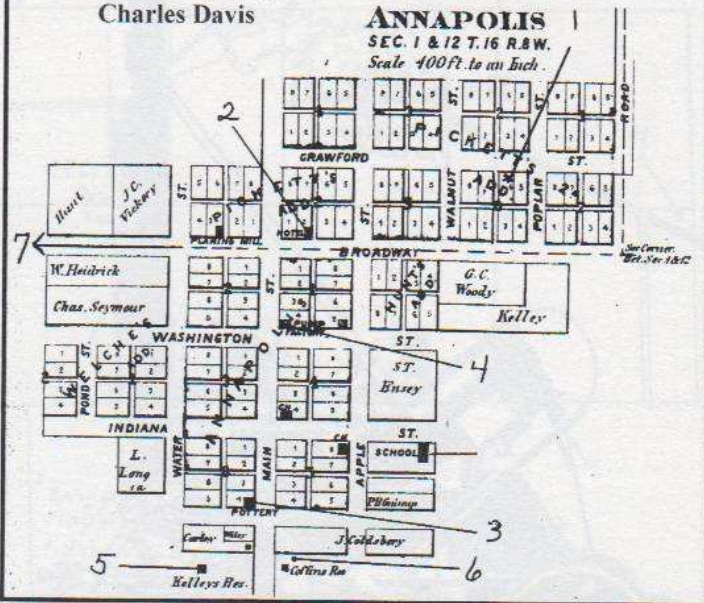
On March 6, 1841 David L. Atcheson was sold the "right to dig clay" on the Coffin property where they lived in Coke Oven Hollow for use in their pottery from Wm. G. Coffin, Samuel Harvey and Thomas Coffin (firm of Coffin, Harvey and Company) for the sum of \$1.00. Coffin and Harvey retained the right to sell clay to any other. D.R. 7/61 After a short time Jacob Bennage sold out to his brothers in Ohio and with them came John W. Welch.

In 1847 Alexander H. Lee came to Annapolis with his wife from Ohio and bought into the pottery as a partner. They lived just north of it. The firm then was called Atcheson and Lee. Lee was a principle turner. He was in partnership with several men over the years and, at one time, he and Francis Redford ran the Stumptown Pottery that was started by Samuel Jordan.

By 1854 Annapolis had grown into a lively town. Page 2 of the *True Republican* on December 21 of that year describes Annapolis as follows:

"Annapolis is a very neat little village, containing

1874 Parke County Atlas  
With additions by  
Charles Davis



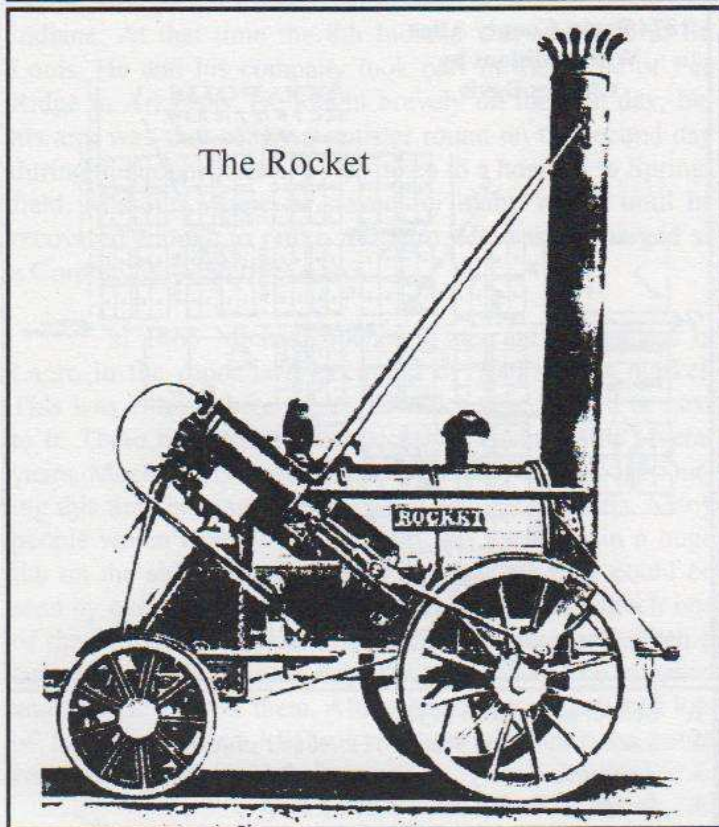
1. School established in 1846
2. Samuel T. Ensey, Franklin Hotel and store next to it
3. Annapolis Pottery
4. Joseph A. Gurley wooden pump shop
5. Site of Joseph John Guilford Cannon's boyhood home
6. Site of Coffin barn made from Annapolis pottery building
7. Road to Sugar Creek Feeder Dam & Lock
8. Annapolis brick school built in 1870

about 400 inhabitants. It has four stores, one hotel, two carriage and coach shops, one provision store, five blacksmith shops, two cabinet shops, one saddle shop, four shoe shops, and other business establishments. Her mechanics and business men are public spirited and industrious, and we wish them all prosperity in their various pursuits. Annapolis contains several churches, which are well built edifices, and some neat and tasteful residences."

Although we do not know the exact date of David L. Atcheson's death, his estate was settled in 1854. His one-third ownership of the pottery and his right to dig clay was put up for auction on March 4 that year. Wm. G. Coffin received this one-third. Alexander Lee bought out Edward Laughlin. He and John W. Welch formed a partnership and the old Laughlin kiln located on Lot #3 was town down. D.R. 14/266 In 1849 Alexander Lee and John Welch built the pottery shop on Lot #4. The pottery on Lot #4 would see continued use for sixty-nine years.

Alexander Lee's father, George Lay (Lee) came to Howard township in Parke county, Indiana sometime before

The Rocket



the Civil War. He was a strong Union man. Note that all of George's descendants spell their last name Lee, which is the English equivalent of Lay in Holland Dutch. George Lay claimed that he was the oldest engineer in the United States. For four years from 1832-1836 he ran a locomotive (the Rocket) on one of the first two railroads in the United States — the Baltimore and Ohio tracks from Baltimore to Frederick. He worked in the machine shop at York Pennsylvania for a number of years, making nearly all the patterns in those shops for the engines in use at that time. In 1864, during the Civil War, 20-30 local "copperheads" tried to kill Lay in his Howard township home. He armed himself with a corn knife when they broke in through the front door and with all his might hacked about their heads. The first fellow to enter was Toby Alward. He was cut and hacked so severely that his friends dragged him back outside. Watson Black accidentally shot himself while trying to get out of there and blew out half of his neck. He died shortly thereafter. Lay received two gun shot wounds, one in the arm and another in the thigh. He recovered. His wife, Jane, blew a horn out of a window for help during the fracas. *Rockville Republican* May 17, 1876 pg. 1 as found in Charles Davis' *Parke County: The Civil War During the Canal Era* 2006.

"The clay for the pottery was blasted from the hills at Coke Oven Hollow with sticks of dynamite, and blew huge chunks of clay high into the air. The clay was piled in

piles to weather. It was washed in a mill by a horse hitched to a sweep with small harrows dragging the clay and water round and round until the clay was dissolved and about as thick as cream. It was run down a trough with a screen into a vat. When the clay settled in the vat, the water was drawn off. It was then taken to a grinder mill by a horse, properly ground and tempered. It was then made into blocks and carried to the turner to make into crocks and jars. The turner worked the clay on his bench as he would a piece of dough. He then took a ball of it, placing it on his wheel, which he propelled with his foot. With wet hands, he shaped the clay into the desired shape. This was a work of art and few were proficient at this trade. David Lowery Atcheson and David Huggins were first class turners. After these pieces were dried, they were dipped in a slip and dried again. When they were ready for the kiln, the slip gave the pottery its color. The pottery shop was a two story building with many windows and was painted red like a barn. It had adjoining sheds and a nearby stable where the pottery horses were kept.

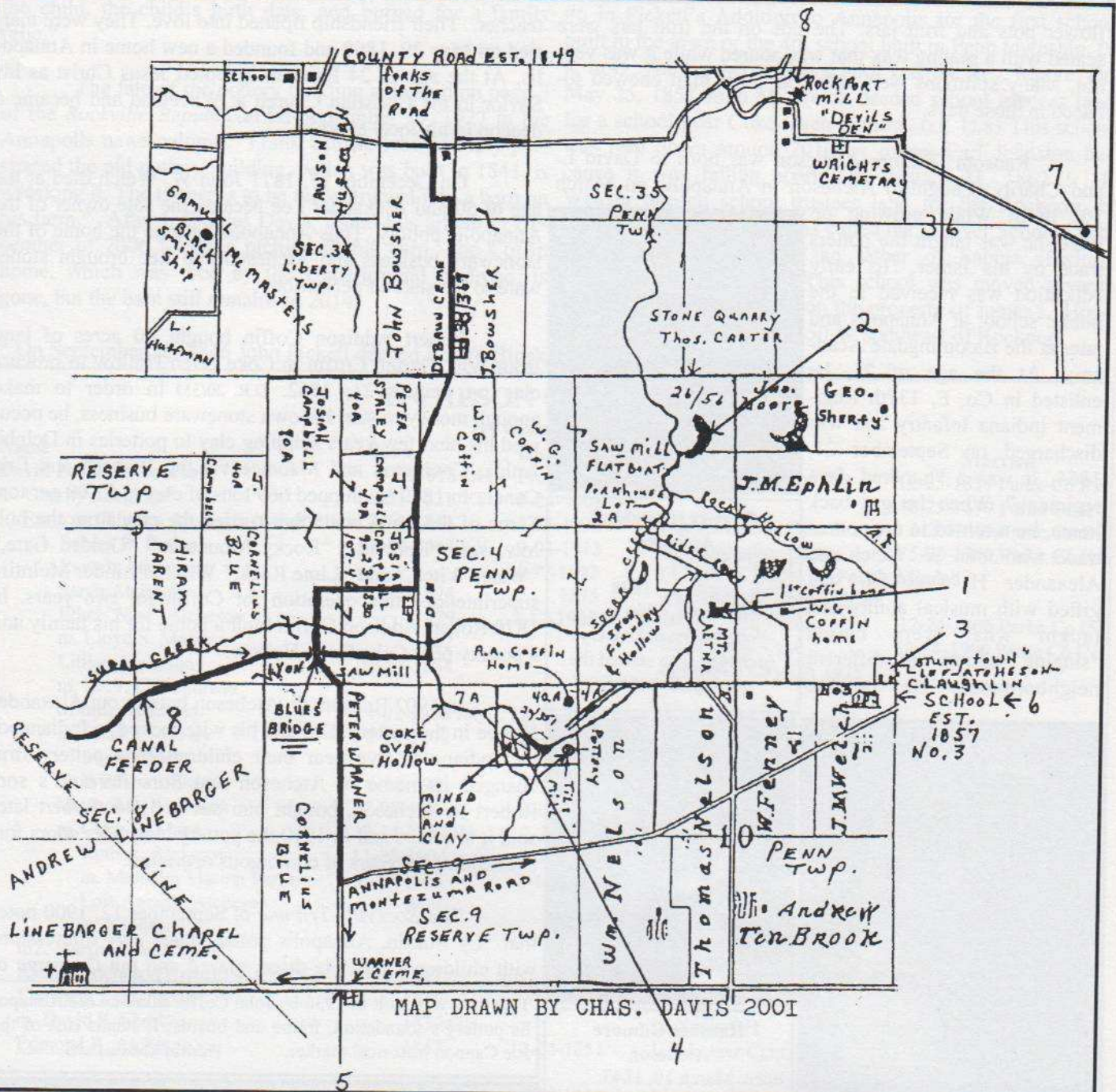
"Alexander H. Lee was a very kind and intelligent man. His appearance resembled Santa Claus with his white beard, round tummy and twinkling smile." One of the methods he used to transport the finished pottery was by wagon, hauling it to surrounding towns. In cold snowy weather, the wagon bed was placed on sled runners and bedded with straw.

"Some of the pottery was shipped by boat on the Wabash and Erie Canal. John W. Welch, Alexander's partner, helped with these shipments. The pottery was wagoned west from Annapolis for about three miles to the Sugar Creek Feeder Dam where it could be loaded into canal boats, which were then locked into the feeder to reach the main line of the canal. Mr. Welch was the commander of the canal boat "Thomas Carter," which was owned by Thomas Carter."

Thomas Carter at that time lived at the Aetna Manufacturing Company near Coke Oven Hollow. This company was another pottery that was operated by David Atcheson and others. It was dissolved in 1855 when its partner/owners Stephen and James S. Gapen became sick at sea. They died and their remains were put into burlap bags and cast overboard for a water burial. Thomas Carter and his brother, John Newlin Carter, quarried stone along Sugar Creek and shipped it by boats to points along the route to Terre Haute for use in canal structures.

The articles made and sold by the potteries were crocks, jugs, jars, churns, coffee pots, tea pots, pitchers,

# THE HOOSIER PACKET - DECEMBER 2014



## Sugar Creek Feeder to Wabash & Erie Canal in Parke County

1. Aetna Manufacturing Company (pottery) April 6, 1841 D.R. 7/613 Coffin, Harvey & Co., to David L. Atcheson the right to dig clay. Partners: Stephen & James S. Gapen
2. Thomas Carter Stone Quarry, canal boats of stone for canal structures D.R. 26/56
3. Stumptown Pottery Shop, Jorden, Lee, Redford, Atcheson
4. Coke Oven Hollow, Robert Addison Coffin to Welch & Lee right to dig clay for Annapolis Pottery November 7, 1867 D.R. 26/99. CSI mini-tour 2004
5. Road to Sugar Creek Feeder Dam and east to Annapolis
6. School close to Coke Oven Hollow 1857
7. Rockport school, James B. Ewing teacher 1862
8. Prier Wright, Rockport Mill, Wright's Mill, Devil's Den
9. Canal Feeder

flower pots and fruit jars. The lids on the fruit jars were sealed with a sealing wax that was poured while it was very hot. Many spittoons were made as most men chewed tobacco in those days.

Ransom Gilmore Atcheson was born to David L. and Charity (Laughlin) Atcheson in Annapolis on March 10, 1843. While growing up there, he was taught the potters trade by his father. His early education was received in the public school at Annapolis and later at the Bloomingdale Academy. At the age of 21, he enlisted in Co. E, 137th Regiment Indiana Infantry and was discharged on September 21, 1864. It was a "hundred days regiment." When he got back home, he returned to the potters trade with John W. Welch and Alexander H. Lee. He was gifted with musical ability and taught what were called "singing schools" in different neighborhoods. He became



**Charity (Laughlin) Atcheson**  
 Born: 1821 VT  
 Died: March 24, 1908  
 Buried: Xenia, Ohio  
 Wife of David Lowery Atcheson who started the Annapolis pottery

teacher. Their friendship ripened into love. They were married on May 29, 1869 and founded a new home in Annapolis. At the age of 24 Ransom accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior in the Christian Church at Waveland and became a deacon in his local church.

On December 17, 1871 John W. Welch died at the age of 50 and Alexander Lee became the sole owner of the Annapolis pottery. Thus Annapolis became the home of the stoneware business and Atcheson and Lee brought stoneware to the state of perfection.

Robert Addison Coffin bought 40 acres of land from Wm. Garten Coffin in Coke Oven Hollow to procure clay on August 21, 1862. D.R. 20/351 In order to make enough money to start his own stoneware business, he occupied his next few years shipping clay to potteries in Delphi, Attica, Covington and Maumee via the Wabash and Erie Canal. In 1869 he shipped 669 tons of clay at \$1.00 per ton. Some of the canal boats that carried the clay from the hollow were "Robhull," "Rocky Mountain," "Golden Gate," "Water Witch," and "Lime Rock." William Linder McIntire superintended this operation for Coffin for two years. In 1870 Robert Addison Coffin built a home for his family and a pottery near Coke Oven Hollow.

In 1902 Ransom G. Atcheson bought out Alexander H. Lee in the pottery. Lee and his wife moved to Indianapolis, Indiana to live near their children. The pottery firm changed its name to Atcheson and Son. Ransom's son, Robert R. Atcheson, bought him out in 1906. Robert later sold it to others and in 1910 the pottery closed its doors forever ending 69 years of continuous operation.

The *Rockville Tribune* of September 12, 1900 notes that "Cy Martin, Annapolis potter, made clay impressions with children's feet. He dried, glazed and put the name of

This barn was built in 1936 by John Coffin from the old Annapolis pottery's foundation, frame and boards. It stands east of the Joe Cannon historical marker. Photo by Charles Davis

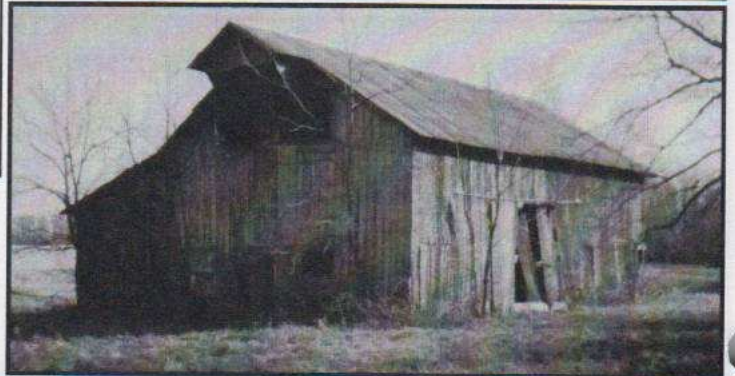


**Ransom Gilmore Atcheson & Martha Emma Maris Atcheson,**  
 his second wife



**Ransom Gilmore Atcheson**  
 Born: March 10, 1843  
 Died February 24, 1932  
 Buried: Bloomingdale, IN  
 Son of David L. Atcheson  
 Ransom owed Annapolis pottery in 1902

acquainted with Sabina B. Ewing in the Rockport school where her father, James B. Ewing,\* was the



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the child, the child's birth date, and burned for a family relic."

The fate of the pottery building appeared on page 3 of the *Rockville Republican* on September 29, 1927 in the Annapolis news column. "Frank Coffin, who recently purchased the old pottery building, which was built in 1841, is wrecking it. The timber is to be reconstructed into a barn on his farm." After I, Charles Davis, found this article in December of 2006 I took a picture of this barn. The Coffin home, which was used by the Underground Railroad, is gone, but the barn still remains in 2014.

#6 in Pickett's Addition to Annapolis for the first school built in the town or the 4th school built in Penn township. D. R. 10/49 The teacher at this school was the Rev. Moore. On May 25, 1857 John M. Welch deeded school trustees land for a school near Coke Oven Hollow. D.R. 17/85 This school was torn down around 2010 by owner Earl Johnston because it was falling apart. On January 31, 1862 J. H. Weaver deeded school trustees land for the Rockport or Devil's Den school that was called the Weaver School. D.R. 20/108 James B. Ewing, the father of Sabina (Ewing) Atcheson taught school. This school was moved several years ago and in 2014 sits on the property of James L. Hoover, next to County Road 150 W southeast of Rockport.

\* On September 28, 1846 John Pickett deeded Lot #6 Block

### ATCHESON GENEALOGY

By Charles Davis

Name	Born	Died	Burial	Married
<b>David Lowery Atcheson</b>	1818 OH	Probate 1856		12-25-1839 Parke Co IN
m. Charity Laughlin*	8-21-1821 VT	3-24-1908 OH		12-25-1839 Parke Co IN
<u>Ransom Gilmore Atcheson</u> (twin)**	3-10-1843	2-24-1932	Bloomington Cem.	5-20-1869 Parke Co IN
m1. Sabina B. Ewing	11-20-1848 KY	9-04-1913	Bloomington Cem.	5-20-1859 Parke Co IN
Everett Atcheson		1-??-1902	Ft. Wayne Home for Feeble Minded	
Sarah Atcheson	1874	1875	Coffin Cem. Annapolis IN	
Ethel "Mae" Atcheson	1879	3-17-1935	Rush Creek Cem.	12-24-1900 Parke Co IN
m. Lloyd S. Madden	1882		Rush Creek Cem.	12-24-1900 Parke Co IN
Lillian Atcheson	10-??-1884		of Garden City CA 1975	
m. Dr. J. C. Bondreau				
Minnie Atcheson	4-02-1886 IN	12-18-1975	South Bend IN	
m. Frank C. Sibley	2-29-1892	12-31-1931		
Mary Sibley			of South Bend	
William Sibley	6-10-1921	7-30-1982	of San Mateo CA	
Howard R. Atcheson	7-08-1882	6-17-1973	Scottsburg IN	
m. Carie R. Mace	2-14-1883 IN	7-22-1973	Scottsburg IN	
Ruth A. Atcheson	11-28-1904	8-05-2000	Indianapolis IN	8-06-1927
m. Malcolm Marion Porter	6-30-1905	8-17-1999		8-06-1927
Lois Annette Atcheson	6-07-1909		of Speedway IN	
m. ? Johnson				
m2. Martha Emma Maris				9-05-1914 Parke Co IN
<u>Rauson Atcheson</u> (twin)	3-10-1843	alive 1850 Census		
<u>Elizabeth J. Atcheson</u>	1846			12-02-1860 Parke Co IN
m. David S. Eberly	1839 OH		of Xenia OH	12-02-1860 Parke Co IN
<u>Edmond R. Atcheson</u>	1847	12-24-1851	Linebarger Cem.	

\*Father: James T. Laughlin 8-02-1787 5-03-1860 Linebarger Cem. IN  
 Mother: Jane Kelly 11-??-1792 10-13-1856 Linebarger Cem. IN

Charity Laughlin Atcheson born in Mt. Vernon VT.  
 probably died in the home of her daughter Elizabeth Eberly in Xenia OH

\*\*Ransom G. Atcheson served  
 Pvt. Company I 137th Reg. Ind. Inf.  
 Called the "100 days Reg." 1864

Left: Ethel Atcheson Madden  
 Granddaughter of  
 David Lowery Atcheson  
 Right: Cora Neet

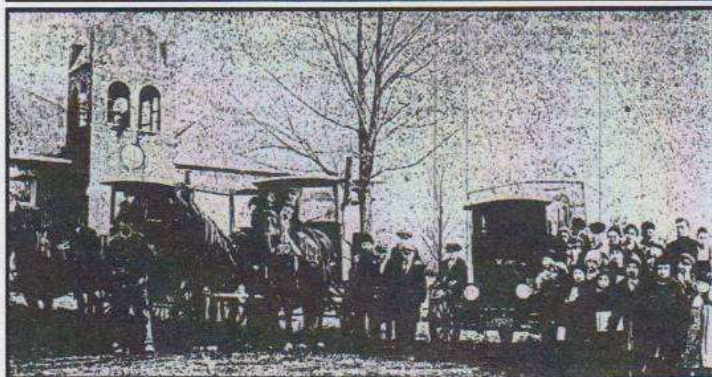


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## LAY-LEE GENEALOGY

By Charles Davis

Name	Born	Died	Burial	Married
George Lay	1801 PA	3-21-1884	Crown Hill Indianapolis IN	
m. Jane Wigham	1805	6-11-1880	Crown Hill Indianapolis IN	
<b>Alexander H. Lee</b>	6-??-1826	10-21-1905	Crown Hill Indianapolis IN	12-28-1848 Parke Co IN
m. Jane Laughlin	1830	12-10-1910		12-28-1848 Parke Co IN
<u>George Lee</u>	1849	1850		
<u>David Leonadus (Lon) Lee</u>	3-21-1852	4-10-1908	Ogden UT	11-24-1876 Parke Co IN
m. Jane "Jennie" E. Clark	4-28-1857	12-22-1922	California	11-24-1876 Parke Co IN
Nellie E. Lee	4-12-1881	6-03-1965	California	12-24-1899
m. George Washington Snively	5-10-1878	11-12-1951	California	12-24-1899
George Lee Snively	7-25-1901	10-07-1966		
Clea M. Snively	4-04-1904	7-04-1976		
Mildred Lavinia Snively	4-15-1906	7-20-1991		
<u>James Lee</u>	1854	1854	Coffin Cem. Annapolis IN	
<u>James F. Lee</u>	1854		of Indianapolis 1910	
m. Mattie Brockway	1861			
Omer Lee	1879			
<u>Martha Lee</u>	1856			
<u>Charles Lee</u>	1857		of Indianapolis 1910	
<u>Isabel Lee</u>	1860			10-09-1875 Parke Co IN
m. Edward Y. Sutherland	1852			10-09-1875 Parke Co IN
Nettie Sutherland	@1874			
Mayme G. Sutherland	1875	After 1957		12-31-1896
m. Norval S. "Pete" Stanley	1866	2-28-1945	Bloomington Cem IN	12-31-1896
Clarence Stanley	1898	3-02-1945	Poplar Grove Cem.	9-20-1919 Parke Co IN
m. Lottie Delp	5-07-1901	10-18-1925	Poplar Grove Cem.	9-20-1919 Parke Co IN
Max Stanley	1921		in Armed Forces 1945	
Fred Stanley	1903	9-13-1957	Ocala FL Bloomington Cem.	
<u>Emma Lee</u>	1863			
<u>Carrie Lee</u>	1865		at Indianapolis 1895	
<u>Alexander H. Lee Jr.</u>	1868	6-03-1919	Crown Hill Cem. Indianapolis	
William G. Lee	1828		of Keokuk IA 1860s	



Means of transporting Annapolis children to school in 1919.  
*Rockville Republican* Wednesday March 5, 1919



Son of  
**Alexander H. Lee:**  
  
**David  
Leonadus Lon"  
Lee**  
  
And his wife  
**Jane "Jennie"  
(Clark) Lee**

Sources:  
Computer research by Mary Jane Davis  
Connelly, J. B. "Recollections of an Historic Old Town," *Rockville Tribune*, November 22, 1905—son of David Connelly, Annapolis businessman.  
Davis, Charles. *Annapolis and Its Wabash & Erie Canal Connections*.  
Deeds research in Rockville Court House by Charles Davis  
Estate Records 1854 for #3 in Circuit Clerks Office  
*Indiana Patriot*, February 1, 1872. Notice of John W. Welch's death  
*Indianapolis Star*, December 26, 1910 page 10 column 7 Death notice of Jane Lee, wife of Alexander Lee, Died at home of her son James Lee

Lee, Alexander H. History of the Pottery Business. November 2, 1893 in the Rockville library  
*Parke County Indiana Census Records 1830-1860-1970-1880*  
*Parke County Whig* February 24, 1854 Sheriff's Sale of David L. Atcheson lease right to dig clay for pottery.  
*Rockville Republican*, January 31, 1872 page 2, John W. Welch died December 12, 1871, Bloomington Cemetery  
*Rockville Republican*, December 1917 obituary of Wm N. Welch, son of John W. Welch.  
*Rockville Republican* March 3, 1932 obituary of R. G. Atcheson  
*Rockville Tribune* October 25, 1905 Notice of Alexander Lee's death at Indianapolis  
Tax List of 1851 Jacob Cartwell and Crawford Laughlin. Lot #3 Block #6 Total Value \$190. Lot #6 Block #6 Total Value \$205. Lots connected to the pottery.  
Tax List 1851 Welch and Laughlin Lot #4 Block #6 Total Value \$125.  
*Teague, Thompson, Towell, Trowsdale, Truitt, Van Hook, Van Huss Genealogy* book in Rockville, Indiana library. Section 2 letter written by Mrs. Frank Sibley (Minnie Atcheson Sibley) of South Bend, Indiana, daughter of Ransom G. Atcheson, given to Dorothy Atcheson Maddan Luther, daughter of Ransom G. Atcheson in 1965.

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## WELCH GENEALOGY

By Charles Davis

Name	Born	Died	Burial	Married
<b>John W. Welch</b>	10-11-1821 OH	12-18-1871	Bloomington Cem. IN	8-23-1843 Parke Co IN
m. Elizabeth Jane McClure	4-10-1824 VA	9-18-1877	Bloomington Cem. IN	8-23-1843 Parke Co IN
<u>William N. Welch</u>	4-25-1844	4-16-1917	Bloomington Cem. IN	12-28-1876 Parke Co IN
m. Mary Catherine Maris*	6-21-1852	1-12-1922	Bloomington Cem. IN	12-28-1876 Parke Co IN
<u>Dr. John M. Welch</u>	1846		of Chrisman	
<u>Martha Welch</u>	9-15-1852	11-27-1854	Bloomington Cem.	
<u>Mattie Welch</u> **		2-14-1934	Oakwood Cem Chicago IL	11-19-1879 Parke Co IN
m. William H. Elson	11-22-1854	2-??-1935	Oakwood Cem Chicago IL	11-19-1879 Parke Co IN
Frank Elson	12-29-1883		of New Rochelle, NY Educator	
<u>Jessie Welch</u>	7-22-1856	9-21-1873	Bloomington Cem.	

\*Father: Jonathan Maris 5-08-1823 1-16-1892 Newburg OR

Mother: Julia Ann Hill 2-20-1823 10-09-1902 Newburg OR

Mary Catherine (Maris) Welch lived with her husband Wm. N. Welch on her late parents' farm east of Annapolis until his death in 1917. She was interested in saving the Maris family record and organized the Maris reunions in September 1884 as president of the family meetings. At her death she had a sister, Amanda Maris Woodard, of Newburg, Oregon and a brother Newton Maris of Portland, Oregon.

\*\* The Parke county marriage records list Mattie as Martha E. Welch when married to Wm. "Harry" Elson. Her obituary mentions a cousin Charles N. Woody of Annapolis, where she was born and raised.