

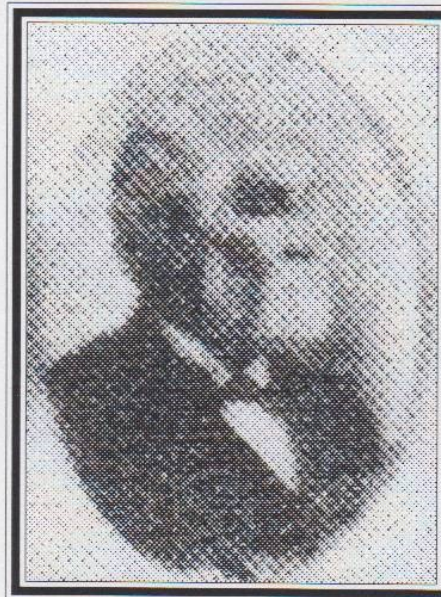
# CANAWLERS AT REST

## DR. JOHN HOUSEL DEPUY

b. August 30, 1820

d. July 20, 1904

By Carolyn I. Schmidt



John Housel DePuy was a descendent of one of three brothers who came from France and settled in New Jersey in an early period. He came from the same French stock as the noted New York lawyer and politician, Chauncey Depew, but the spelling on the family name underwent change.

John Housel DePuy was born on August 30, 1820, in Northumberland County, Pennsylvania into a farming family. When a young child in 1823, his father, John DePuy, moved the pioneering family to Stark County, Ohio, where the forest had to be thinned before much farming could be done. Young John spent many a fine day helping his father cut down trees, grub out the stumps and clear away the brush. During the bleaker winter months he went to a district school to get as much education as he could on the frontier. He knew that someday he wanted to become a doctor.

By the time John reached age 17, he had saved up a little money from his work and decided to further his education. He went to the Zanesville Academy to continue his studies. To further pursue his interest in medicine, he took a private reading course from Dr. Henry Everts, of Cleveland, in 1841. He then entered Willoughby Medical College. From there he attended Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and was graduated from it in 1845. It was time to establish a medical practice.

The Wabash and Erie Canal was completed to Lagro, Indiana, in 1836. It was watered and opened for business in July 1837. Many of those who labored on the canal decided to remain in Lagro.

In August of 1846 Dr. John DePuy moved to the growing canal town of Lagro, Indiana, to set up his

medical practice. He knew he would be needed there since Lagro's citizens, like others living in central and northern Indiana towns at that time, had fevers, ague and other bilious diseases. These maladies were prevalent for many years and before long Dr. DePuy's practice spread far and wide through Wabash County.

On September 28, 1847, he married Julia Ann Long. According to Indiana marriage records, the service was performed by William Salle in Wabash County. Julia had been born on October 17, 1825 to Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Long of Wabash County, Indiana. She joined him in Lagro and while there gave birth to their sons. Romeo L. DePuy was born in 1849 and Frank was born in 1857.

The 1850 Federal Census shows Dr. DePuy age 30 as a physician with real estate valued at \$15,000. Living with him are his wife, Julia Ann, age 24, his son, Romeo, age 1 and John Coons, a carpenter, age 23. The 1860 Federal Census shows Dr. DePuy at age 40 having \$40,000 in real estate and \$10,000 in his personal estate. Beside his profession of Doctor are the words "Gov Refirmed." His medical practice was flourishing and his estate was growing.

Patients loved Dr. DePuy. He was known for his "ready sympathy, his kind heart and his gentle nature." He became known all over Indiana in medical circles for his "devotion to the best ethics of his calling." However, his practice kept him very busy. Sometimes he would be gone several days and nights from his family traveling to his ailing patients on horseback. This type of life began taking its toll on him.

Although Lagro had been a good place to start his practice, it was a bustling, rough and rowdy canal

town. While visiting patients throughout the county, Dr. DePuy saw that the citizens of the town of Wabash City were of a better class. He decided to change his residence, slow down his practice, and turn his attention to agricultural pursuits. In 1864 he purchased a farm near what today is known as Wabash, Indiana, and moved his family there.

Dr. DePuy sold his sixty-acre farm in Lagro township, which was located on the east side of the Mail Trace Road and about three and a half miles north of Lagro, to John L. Hull, a stave and drainage tile maker. It was called Beulah Farm. Hull paid one hundred dollars down. Hull erected a simple four room house and replaced it with a larger dwelling seven years later.

Shortly after moving to Wabash Julia gave birth to another son. On December 27, 1864, only 14 days

after his birth, the child died and was buried in Lagro Township Cemetery.

Sometime in the 1869s the DePuys built a substantial home on the corner of Miami and Maple streets in Wabash. It had a high foundation around which the land was filled. Years later his granddaughter, Helen Depuy Ashley, sold the house to the Gaunt family. It had old-fashioned pink roses, purple lilacs, and tiger lilies in the garden. Overtime the garden became so dense with undergrowth that it formed a kind of wall that kept the ice from melting on the sidewalk during the winter.

The 1870 Federal Census shows Dr. DePuy at age 50 having real estate valued at \$10,000 and a personal estate valued at \$10,000. Julia, his wife, is age 44. Their son Romeo is attending school and is 21 years old. Frank is 12 years old.

**Top Row left to right:**

Col. J. H. Bruner, 74  
Jack Higgins, 79  
Franklin Keyes, 86  
David Coble, 82  
Judge J. D. Conner, 79  
Jesse Talbert, 79  
M. W. Ross, 75  
J. H. Talmadge, 74

Capt. J. M. Thompson, 71

John Tyre, 70  
Philip Alber, 80

**Second Row:**

Michael Hyman, 81  
R. P. Mitten, 65  
Leven Murphy, 85  
L. P. Bollison, 83  
Philip Davis, 79

T. E. Payne, 72

Dr. R. F. Blount, 67  
Hon. Calvin Cowgill, 79  
De. M. R. Crabill, 81  
W. H. DePuy, 70  
Cornelius Lumaree, 84

**Bottom Row:**

Henry Wenzel, 73  
John Greer, 70

Levi Bruner, 75

Miles Morgan, 83  
John Hoover, 83  
Dr. J. H. Ford, 96  
Dr. J. H. DePuy  
Albert Pawling, 90  
Thomas Underdown, 74  
J. S. Daugherty, 70  
David Bach, 74



1898 DePuy's 78th Birthday Party

Dr. DePuy purchased more and more real estate. He eventually accumulated 1,500 acres of land and bred fine livestock. He became as successful in this business venture as he had in the medical profession. Leading businessmen of Wabash, who dealt with him, noted his executive power and foresight and his honorable yet firm and unyielding decisions. Although he had no political aspirations, he took a keen interest in civic affairs and was recognized for his public spirit. He was known in several other fields that those of his professional activities.

Thirty-three pioneers of Wabash celebrated Dr. DePuy's seventy-eighth birthday in 1898 when he threw a party on August 30, his natal day. It was held at his home located on the corner of Maple and Miami streets. Following dinner, E. E. Williams took the picture (seen on the previous page) of all the members of the party seated on the porch of Rome DePuy's home, next door on West Maple Street. This picture hangs in the Wabash County Museum and is cherished by those who own a copy of it.

Another picture of Dr. DePuy can be found on a composite of practitioners of medicine and surgery from 1833-1933 compiled by Dr. J. T. Biggerstaff in 1933. It shows a man with white wavy hair and a short white beard. It can be seen on page 5 of this article. Unfortunately these pictures did not reproduce very well.

The 1900 Federal Census lists Dr. DePuy, age 79 as head of the household. His wife Julia is age 74. Living with them is a female servant named Goodlander Everly age 39.

In the evening of July 20, 1904 the following article appeared in *The Daily Plain Dealer* :

**DR. J. H. DEPUY IS WEAKER.  
His Condition is Steadily Growing Worse and the End is Slowly Approaching**

Dr. J. H. DePuy [DePuy] is still alive at a late hour this afternoon but is slowly growing weaker and the end is believed to be near by the relatives who are about his bedside. He lies in an unconscious state and his constant decline points to his death in the next few hours. His inability to take nourishment makes any improvement impossible and all hope for even a slight betterment in his condition has been abandoned.

On July 20, 1904, Dr. John Housel DePuy passed away at the age of 83 years, 10 months and 20 days. The citizens of Wabash and Wabash County mourned the death of their friend, doctor, and colleague.

The following article appeared on the front page of *The Daily Plain Dealer* on July 21, 1904.

**DR. J. H. DEPUY DEAD  
WAS ONE OF THE BEST KNOWN  
RESIDENTS OF WABASH COUNTY  
FUNERAL TOMORROW MORNING**

**Will be Held From the Late Residence at Ten O'clock, Revs. G. B. Work and Charles Little Officiating.**

Dr. John H. DePuy, one of the best known pioneer residents of Wabash county passed away at his home at the corner of Maple and Miami streets, Wednesday afternoon at 4:15 o'clock.

He had been in a serious condition for but a few days, being down town Thursday, driving for the last time. He grew worse and for the last two or three days his condition was quite bad and it was known that his death was but a question of a few brief hours.

Dr. DePuy had lived to a great age and his death was the result of a gradual wearing away of the machinery and not the result of any particular ailment, the infirmities of his advanced years gradually telling on his strength and ending his long and useful life.

For the past five years he has been in feeble health and has spent much of his time in sanitariums where he was given some benefit but was not able to prolong his life for any great time.

He retained his mental vigor until a short time before his death and continued to take an interest in life about him although with a rapidly decreasing ability to conduct his business.

He had not practiced medicine for several years, having gained wealth and in his last few years he retired from active duty although he was a daily visitor at his office on Wabash street when in the city and able to be out. He was at one time the leading practitioner in Wabash county and was known not only over the county but all over the state.

He has resided in Wabash county for many years and since living in Wabash has resided in the house where he died continuously. He was active in other business and succeeded in accumulating a large fortune from a beginning of almost nothing.

He will be remembered for his kindness of heart, especially towards children, of whom he was particularly fond.

John H. DePuy was of French-English descent, his great grandfather being born in the city of Paris, and his mother's people in England. The doctor was born in Northumberland county, Pennsylvania, August 30 [30], 1820. When three years old, he removed with his parents, John and Julia A. (Housel) DePuy, to Stark county, Ohio, where his father engaged in farming. At the age of seventeen, he entered school at Massillon, Ohio, where he remained for two years, afterward attending school at Painsville, Ohio, for eighteen months. In 1841, he went to Cleveland and worked in a shipyard one year. In the fall of 1842, he began the study of medicine in the office of Dr. Henry Evarts, of Cleveland, where he remained four years, in the meanwhile attending medical lectures at Willoughby college, Ohio, and also at Jefferson college, Pennsylvania. He located at Lagro, in Wabash county, and there visited his first patient, August 7, 1846. He continued the practice of medicine at that place until the spring of 1864, when he removed to Wabash, and has since confined himself to his office practice and to looking after his business interests. In September, 1847, he married Miss Julia A. Long, of Lagro. To

them were born two sons, Romeo, and Frank who assisted the father in the management of his business. He landed in Lagro with but \$6 and was said to be worth nearly \$150,000. He was originally a republican but in 1873 followed Horace Greely in the new departure. Since he had affiliated with the democratic party, and became one of the most ardent and influential advocates of its doctrines. In religious matters he was liberal believing that all men should be allowed to think as they please, and to shape their own destiny as best suits them, so long as they do not interfere with the rights of others.

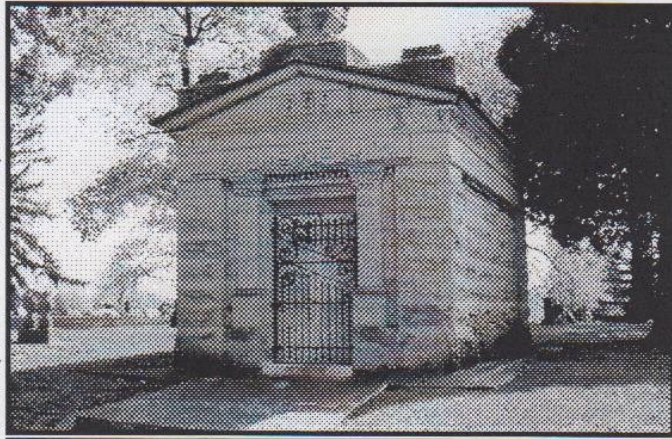
The funeral will be held from the late residence tomorrow morning at ten o'clock. Rev. G. B. Work, pastor of the Wabash street Methodist church, and Rev. Charles Little, pastor of the Presbyterian church, will officiate. Friends who desire to view the remains may do so tomorrow morning by calling at the house the hour for the funeral. The interment will be in Falls cemetery in the DePuy vault.

The DePuy vault may be reached from the second entrance to Falls Cemetery on Falls Avenue off of Stitt Street in Wabash. When entering veer to the right and go straight past the next lane to the right. The vault will be on your right. DEPUY and 1899, the date it was built, are on the front of it. No other information about the DePuys is given. Chains keep the doors to the vault from being opened.

**Sources:**

1850, 1860, 1870 and 1900 Federal Census.

Indiana Marriage Collection, 1800-194. *Wabash County, Indiana: Marriage Records 1835-1854 Pt. 1: 1835-1854 Pt. 2.* Compiled by Wabash County Historical Museum. Book A OS Page 51.



The DePuy vault was built in Falls Cemetery in Wabash, Indiana, in 1899 and Dr. John Housel DePuy was put there in 1900.

Photo by Bob Schmidt

*The Daily Plain Dealer.* Wabash, Indiana. July 20 and July 21, 1904.

Thompson, Linda. *Wabash County Indiana Death Records October 1899-January 1905.* Warsaw, IN: Scheuer Publications. 1997 page 82 line 1558.

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Woodward, Ronald. *Cemeteries of Lagro Township, Wabash County, Indiana.* Warsaw, IN: Scheuer Publications. 1991.

"Death of Uncle Jack Higgins, 106, Meant the Breaking of the Last Link in this Fraternity Chain: A DePuy Party in 1898. *Wabash Daily Times-Star.* April 28, 1925.

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**JOHN GIVAN DAVIS  
AND HIS  
W & E CANAL CONNECTIONS**

By Charles Davis

Eli Davis Sr. was born in 1772, Now Hill, MD. He married Sarah \_\_\_ on June 5, 1798. Eli was a Baptist minister and moved to Fleming county, KY. On March 1, 1825, he entered a land patent in Parke county, Indiana, for the East-half of the Southwest quarter in section 10, Greene township. Deed Record book 53, p. 255. He and his family moved to this location in 1826 and commenced building the first brick house in Parke county. The brick was made and burned on site by Eli and his sons.

John Givan Davis was born to Eli and Sarah on October 10, 1810 in Fleming county, KY. After his family had moved to Parke county John attended a log school for about six months and afterward taught there. He remained on the farm with his family until he was grown.

On August 7, 1829, John bought lot 52 in Rockville, starting a business venture in dry-goods. DR 1/55 Then he bought 16.50 acres of June 20, 1831, north of Market street in Rockville. That year he was elected Sheriff of Parke county.

While John was the sheriff, the county court ordered the Armiesburg Mill on Raccoon creek be sold. It was part of the estate of Abner Cox, who built it. He sold it to Col. Arthur Patterson for \$1,580, along with 20 acres on August 29, 1833. DR 1/183 Col. Patterson died in 1848. His



*Very truly yours  
John G. Davis*

**JOHN GIVAN DAVIS  
B. 10-10-1810 Fleming Co., KY  
D. 1-18-1866 Terre Haute, IN**