

CANAWLERS AT REST

WILLIAM DOUGLASS

b. August 4, 1815
d. June 11, 1909

By Carolyn I. Schmidt

William Douglass was born to David Douglass, a native of Pennsylvania whose ancestors were from Scotland, and Elizabeth (Flory) Douglass, a native of Kentucky whose ancestors were Dutch, on August 4, 1815 in Miami County, Ohio. He was their youngest son.

The first sixteen years of his life, William lived in Ohio. In 1832, he and his older brother, Joseph Douglass, moved to Indiana and spent a short time in Cass County. William found employment with an Indian tribe located near present day Warsaw, Indiana. He worked as a farmer and hunter for them and, in his spare time, took part in their games and sports. During his three years with them he learned to speak their language and retained this ability for the rest of his life.

William returned to Cass County in 1835 and attempted various vocations. He spent awhile as a teamster between Logansport and Michigan City, Indiana. He experienced many difficulties partially because of the condition of the roads at that time. He gave up teaming to become a farmer.

Amanda Thomas, daughter of Henry Thomas of Kentucky, married William Douglass on March 16, 1837. They had five children:

Alice b. circa 1842 died 1877

May b. circa 1846 died prior to 1886

James b. circa 1848

Frank b. circa 1850

Marion b. prior to May, 1852

Unfortunately after 15 years of marriage Amanda Douglass passed away in May, 1852.

In 1850 William gave up his agricultural pursuits

to run his own canal boat between Terre Haute, Indiana, and Toledo, Ohio, on the Wabash & Erie Canal, the section of the canal between Junction and Toledo then being known as the Miami & Erie Canal. For seven years William's business of freighting goods and grain to and from all the towns along the canal was successful.

In 1853, about a year after Amanda's death, William was married for the second time to Rosanna (Rosa) Trapp of Pennsylvania. William was about 19 years older than Rosa, who was about 19 years old at the time of the wedding. They had eight children but only two of them were alive in 1886:

Edward b. circa 1858

Charles

William's marriage to Rosanna lasted approximately 30 years.

Once again William became restless. In 1857 he abandoned his boating interests and became engaged as a traveling agent for a Detroit fur house. Finally he found his niche. He traveled extensively for a period of 21 years over which time he purchased more furs than an other Hoosier.

The Federal Census of 1860 shows William's Real Estate value at \$6,000. In 1870 it shows his Real Estate value at \$25,000 and his Personal Estate value at \$1,000.

In 1876, he also engaged in selling agricultural implements. He was successful in this field and continued it along with his fur buying.

In 1878 William left the Detroit fur firm to become a fur buyer for a Chicago business. He purchased for them until 1882.

Sometime prior to 1880, William Douglass laid out an addition to Logansport. He was highly respected and was on a list of pioneers and old residents for Logansport's Golden Jubilee held May 21, 1892.

The 1880 Federal Census shows William, age 63 a dealer in agricultural implements, and Rosa Douglass, age 45, living with Joseph Springer, their boarder. James Douglass, their son and Springer's son-in-law, is living there with his wife. James is also a dealer in agricultural implements Rosa is suffering from consumption. She passed away on April 15, 1882.

In February 1883 William married for a third time. His bride was Mrs. Sarah R. Neff. She was about 50 years old and he was about 68 years old. She passed away on February 19, 1918, at age 85.

Although William ardently supported the Republi-

can Party, he never sought office. He was a member of the Disciples Church for years and his wife Sarah was an active worker in the Logansport congregation.

William Douglass passed away on June 11, 1909 at the age of 93. He was preceded in death by two wives and 8 of his 13 children. He was laid to rest in Logansport's Mt. Hope Cemetery in Section 13 Lot 0048 Space 2 on June 14, 1909. A large tomb stone with DOUGLASS across the bottom gives his date of birth and death on a tablet on one side of the stone.

Beneath his information on the same tablet is that of his second wife. It says: Rosanna Trapp, wife of William Douglass (b. Aug. 18, 1834, d. Apr. 15, 1882).

On another side of the stone a tablet gives the information on his first wife, Amanda Thomas (b. Jun 28, 1819, d. May 26, 1852.) Beneath her name are those of their children:

Sarah E. (b. Jan. 9, 1835, d. Dec. 20, 1842)

Francis J. (b. May 4, 1840, d. Mar. 20, 1841)

Alice A. Skelton (b. Jul 13, 1842, d. Mar. 4, 1877)

Sarah R. Neff, William's third wife, is buried with her first husband J. Neff in Section 13 Lot 0540 Space 4 and all that is given on the stone is her death date of February 19, 1918.

Thomas Helm, in his *History of Cass County, Indiana* describes William Douglass as follows:

"Mr. Douglass is a true type of the successful self-made men of Indiana. Beginning life's battle in a field of adversity, with the aid of little or no capital and a meager experience, wholly dependent upon personal effort, his good sense, sound judgment and discreet management have forced success out of what, to many others, would have been certain defeat, and, at the same time, secured to him a prominent position among the leading business men of Cass and surrounding counties."

Sources:

Bryer, J. T. Esq. *Pioneers & Old Residents*. Longwell & Cummings, Pub. Indexed 1996 by Wolfe, Barbara Schull and Black, Mark Daniel

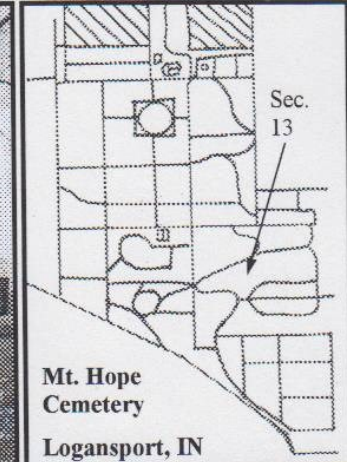
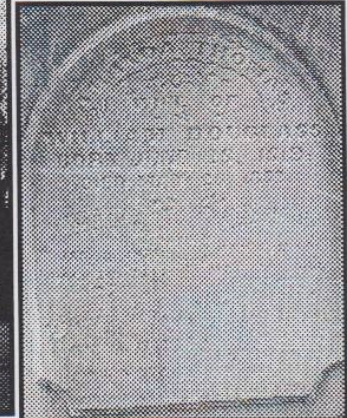
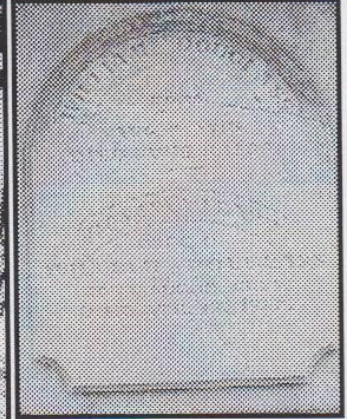
Helm, Thomas B. *History of Cass County, Indiana*. Chicago, IL: Brant & Fuller. 1886.

1840,1860, 1870, 1880, 1900 Federal Census

Index to Death Record Cass County, Indiana 1882-1920, Vol. 1, Letters A-L, compiled by Indiana Works Projects Administration. 1940. Logansport City Health Office

Taber, Graham. *History of Logansport and Cass County, Indiana*. Logansport, IN: Pharos Tribune. 1947.

<http://incass-inmiami.org/cass/cemeteries/mthope/MTHwilmwim.html>



Mt. Hope Cemetery

Logansport, IN

Douglass tombstone with tablet for William & Rosanna Trapp and tablet for Amanda Thomas, Sarah A., Francis J, & Alice A. Shelton.
Neff tombstone for Sarah R.

Mt. Hope Cemetery is a combination of several old cemeteries.

Section 13 is the Old Part/Old Plot.