

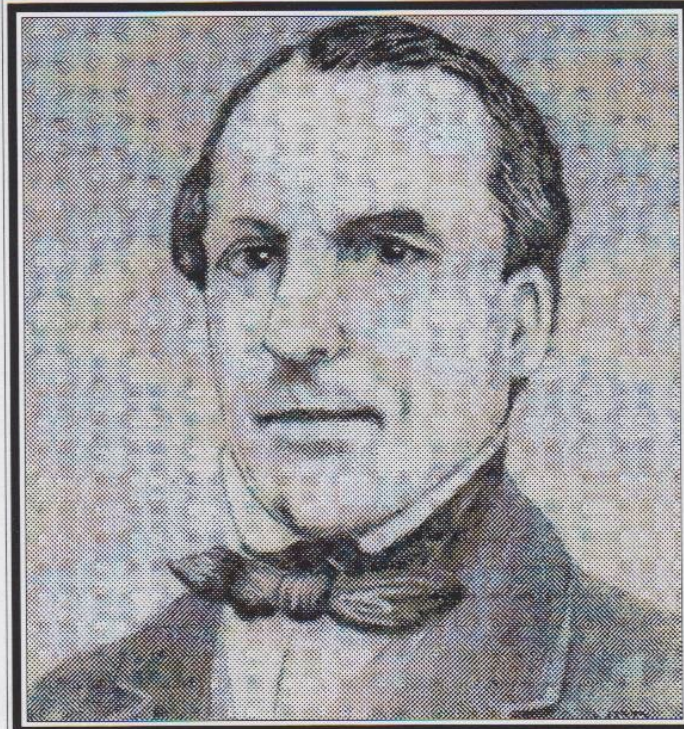
CANAWLERS  
AT REST

**MAJOR  
SAMUEL S.  
EDSALL**

**b. 1805  
d. Feb. 29, 1865**

By Jim Ellis

Drawing by Morris R. Perry from "Pioneers Resting in Lindenwood"



Samuel S. Edsall was one of nine children of Peter and Catharine Edsall. After Samuel was born in Greenville, Ohio, the family later moved to Shane's Prairie (Rockford, Ohio). After the father's death, Mrs. Edsall moved the nine children to a small cabin on the St. Mary's River near the Richardville Reserve in Fort Wayne in 1824

Samuel was the eldest, John became a tailor, Simon was a farmer, and Joseph served on the city's first Fire Brigade. Samuel and William were the leaders in the family. Their activities marked both their lives and the life of Fort Wayne.

When funds were sought to hire a pastor for the newly formed First Presbyterian Church in 1831, Samuel subscribed. There were a total of 44 subscriptions to fund the pastor's \$258. yearly salary.

The first Court House erected on the Public Square was a log building. In August of 1831, a contract was let to Samuel Edsall to cut brush and stumps off the Public Square and for the construction of a new Court House. This building was not completed until 1847. It was a two-story brick complete with steeple. By 1858, it was deemed inadequate.

On January 12, 1860 a contract for another courthouse designed by Edwin May of Indianapolis was let to Samuel Edsall and Company for \$63,613. It was

actually built by D. J. Silver. When completed the extras increased the cost to \$74,271 and the furnishings brought the total cost to \$78,000. Before it was completed Edsall sold his interest to John Brown and Virgil Kimball. Its cornerstone was finally laid on May 1, 1861. This building served until 1895, when the present building was erected.

When the Branch Bank of Indiana was organized in August of 1835 the first officers were Allen Hamilton, President and Hugh McCulloch Cashier. Samuel S. Edsall and Jesse Vermilyea were two of the fourteen Directors appointed.

In December of 1835 Samuel Edsall, along with Henry Work, was appointed "to employ a suitable number of teachers and pay them out of the fund set apart for school purposes." They reported on March 26, 1836 that they were not able to employ any teachers on "terms advantageous to the corporation." A discussion took place as to raising funds but was left for the town trustees to solve.

In 1839-40, a draft for a Charter for Fort Wayne, Indiana was drawn up by F. P. Randall and presented to the Legislature of Indiana. It was passed by the legislature and approved by the Governor. It became law and provided for an election of a President or Mayor, six members to form a Board of Trustees or Common Council, and subordinate officers of the Board or Common Council. This consisted of: Recorder, Attorney, Treasurer, High Constable, Collector, Assessor, Market



Master, Street Commissioner, Chief Engineer (which was filled by Samuel Edsall), Lumber Measurer and a Board of six Alderman of which Samuel Edsall and his brother William served. George W. Wood served as the first Mayor of Fort Wayne.

Samuel Edsall and William Rockhill operated a two-band saw mill near the St. Marys River Aqueduct on the Wabash & Erie Canal, established in 1842. It was operated by water power from the canal. Later, he and John Off, both millers, operated the Edsall-Orff Mill, known also as the Empire of "stone mill" and still later as the Orff Mill. This mill was the largest of its kind in Fort Wayne. Advertisements ran in the Fort Wayne Sentinel.

1844 **SAW LOGS WANTED.**

**T**HE undersigned will pay the highest price for any quantity of good Saw Logs delivered on the bank of the Canal, at any point within 30 miles of Fort Wayne.

As he intends to give the full value for all logs he buys, and will pay in goods or lumber at the lowest prices those having timber-land within reach of the canal will find this a good opportunity to turn it to profit.

SAML. EDSALL,  
Aqueduct Mill

Fort Wayne, Feb. 3, 1844. 431

**Cash for 20,000 Bushels OF WHEAT,**  
**At the Empire Mills.**

Dec. 12,  
1846

**W**E are prepared to pay Cash and the Highest Price for 20,000 bushels of good merchantable Wheat.

Farmers and Teamsters will save themselves much trouble and expense by driving directly up to the **STONE MILLS** and unloading; they will always get the highest price, and avoid the annoyance of being pestered by the barkers and whipper snappers from the Stores, who now infest our streets and are such a bore to all who bring wheat to our market. We are not much given to boasting; but as some of our neighbors are talking of wanting 10,000 bushels of wheat, we would inform wheat raisers that we can take in 20,000; as our Mill, besides being the best, is the biggest, the highest, and the strongest in the country. We have a convenient **WAGON-YARD** and **STABLE**, for teams coming to the Mill, and a **HOUSE** for the Teamsters; we always furnish feed for the horses, and occasionally throw in Supper and Breakfast for their drivers. This is nothing new with us—we have always thought it our duty to do so, and should not now mention it if our neighbors had not set the example.

We keep constantly on hand **FLOUR OF THE BEST QUALITY** and all kinds of Mill Stuff; and promptly grind every thing in the shape of Custom Work—always excepting White Oak Tan Bark, or the "face of the Poor."

**SMITH & EDSALL,**  
Empire Mills, at the Aqueduct.

Samuel and his brother William S. also started a dry goods and grocery establishment prior to 1846. This advertisement ran in the Fort Wayne Sentinel on Nov. 27, 1847.

**Cash Paid at all Times**

**F**OR Beeswax, Gin-ong, Timothy Seed, Clover do., Flax do., Dyer Skins, Wheat, &c., by **S. & W. S. EDSALL.**

**H**ARDWARE.—A complete assortment for sale by **S. & W. S. EDSALL.**

**C**OLLINS' And Simmons' AXES for sale by **S. & W. S. EDSALL.**

**I**RON of all sorts and sizes for sale by **S. & W. S. EDSALL.**

**P**RINTS from Sixpence to two Shillings for sale by **S. & W. S. EDSALL.**

**For the Ladies.**

**S.** & W. S. Edsall have just received and now offer for sale at their New Store, a lot of Fashionable Goods, embracing **SHAWLS** of the latest styles, from \$1 50 to \$18 00.—**DRESS SILK**, plain and figured; **Plaid and Striped Cassimeres**; **Plain and figured Delain**; **Sriped and Plaid Lama Cloth**; **Plain and figured Bombazines and Alpaccas**; **Dress and Purse Trimmings** of every variety; **Linon Cambrich Hdkefs.**; **Fancy Dress do.**; **Thread Lace**; **Edging, Inserting, &c.**

Oct. 16, '47. **S. & W. S. EDSALL.**

**C**LOTHS, CASSIMERES and all kinds of **VESTINGS**, a good assortment for sale cheap by **S. & W. L. EDSALL.**

**H**ATS & CAPS, of the latest style for sale by **S. & W. S. EDSALL.**

**P**OWDER, Lead, Shot, and percussion caps water proof and common, for sale very low by **S. & W. S. EDSALL.**

**N**AILS & GLASS of all kinds, for sale cheap by **S. & W. S. EDSALL.**

At a meeting held on May 17, 1843 at the American House in Fort Wayne, committees were appointed by Judge Hanna to plan the grand celebration for the opening of the Wabash & Erie Canal from Lafayette, IN to Toledo, Ohio. The reception committee consisted of Mayor Henry Lotz and the members of the city council of which Samuel was a member.

Samuel Edsall was Parade Marshall for the Grand Dedication of the Wabash & Erie Canal on July 4, 1843. An editorial in the Fort Wayne Sentinel at that time commented: "We are informed that a very lively interest is felt in this matter by the citizens along the whole line, and all who



can make it conveniently will attend. Several volunteer companies and bands of music will attend, and altogether we presume the celebration will be the largest and most imposing ever witnessed in this state." An excerpt from the *Twentieth Century History of Fort Wayne* (U. S. Bicentennial Edition) by John Ankenbruck, reads,

"in the procession were Samuel Edsall, parade marshal; the Toledo Guards which were a flashy unit of the day; veterans of the Revolution and the War of 1812; Hugh McCulloch, the reader; and Rev. G. M. Boyd, the chaplain; U.S. senators A. S. White and Ed Hannegan; political boss Jesse D. Bright; the Defiance Band; the Marion Band; the German Band; a contingent of Miami Warriors; the Kekongia Band and many ladies decked out for a fancy occasion."

Samuel Edsall was an active member of the Fort Wayne Light Infantry, which was organized to protect the populace from the Irish canal diggers. Later, in 1858 the Kekongia Guard was formed to keep Law and Order. Still later, he was active in the Relief Society during the Civil War that helped the needy families of soldiers.

Some say that the most important work completed by Samuel and his brother William was the Bluffton Plank Road. This contract was given to the Edsall's following the completion of a steam-powered saw mill. The road was finished in 1850 at a cost of \$40,000.00. That same year the brothers were awarded a contract to build 43 miles of roadbed for the Wabash Railroad, from Ohio to the Wabash River.

1853-55 Samuel served as a State Senator from Allen County. His district included Allen, Adams and Wells counties.

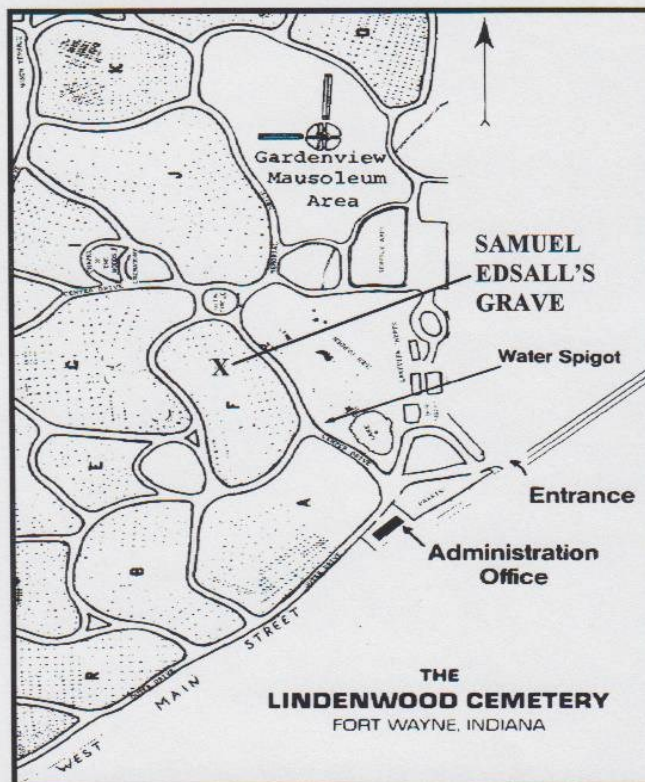
On July 13, 1858 Samuel organized an excursion to Warsaw, IN., which included a picnic, for the Wayne Street Methodist Sabbath School. He was the marshal of the day. On July 27, 1858 he organized a similar excursion for the Free School. The *Weekly Republican* estimated that approximately 5000 people attended this later event located in Thralls Grove on the banks of Lake Centre near Warsaw, IN. Tickets cost fifty cents for adults. Attendees boarded the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne and Chicago Railroad at 8 A.M. for a 2½ hour ride to the park where others joined them. Parents and other citizens were asked to donate money to the schools pointing out that the total cost for free schooling per parent was cheaper than tuition for one child's private schooling. Unless funds were raised the schools would not reopen in 1859.

In 1858 Samuel was elected to serve as treasurer for Allen county, IN. On May 4 of the same year he was

elected Fort Wayne School Trustee during a regular public election. The council named James Humphrey in place of Edsall completely ignoring the vote. A quarrel between the factions hurt the school system. Between May of 1859 and January of 1860, the indebtedness reached \$16,486.84 and created a huge problem for the trustees such as Edsall. Samuel Edsall was still on the school board in 1863.

Samuel Edsall also participated in proceedings to prepare resolutions that declared loyalty to the government after Abraham Lincoln's election. On December 15 people of "all classes and political beliefs" gathered at Colerick's hall to support the government. On July 4, 1861, after some Allen county soldiers had departed, another demonstration took place. Samuel Edsall served as marshal of the day.

Major Samuel S. Edsall died on February; 29, 1865 at Fort Wayne, Indiana. His entombment is in Lindenwood Cemetery, Section "F", Lot #6.



Map courtesy of *Pioneers Resting in Historic Lindenwood*.

Sources:

- Fort Wayne/Allen County Public Library - Fact sheet
- Fort Wayne Sentinel**. Advertisements
- Griswold, Bert. **The Pictorial History of Fort Wayne**. Chicago, IL/Robert O. Law Co., 1917
- Pioneers Resting in Historic Lindenwood**. Lindenwood Historical Foundation.