

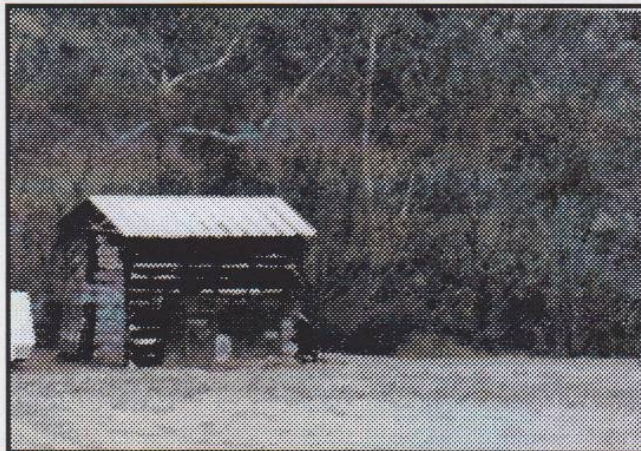
# CANAWLERS AT REST

## MAHLON C. GORDON

b. February 10, 1826

d. February 1904

By Carolyn I. Schmidt



The log cabin built by William Jr. and Elizabeth Gordon where Mahlon C. Gordon was reared still stands at Metamora, IN. The roof was replaced after the original one caught on fire.  
Photo by Bob Schmidt

William (born in Scotland) and Mary (Duedworth) Gordon (born 9-4-1731 near Liverpool, England, d. 9-12-1822), the grandparents of our subject Mahlon C. Gordon, lived on the Potomac River in Gordonville, Virginia about thirty miles above what was to become Washington, D.C. Although Mary was in mid-life when she married William, she lived to the age of ninety-one. William and Mary had six children, 5 girls and a boy:

Alice, died in Indiana

Nancy, died in Kentucky

Polly, died in Kentucky

Elizabeth

William Jr., the father of our subject and a twin

(b. 8-11-1779, d. 9-9, 1860)

Sarah, William's twin

(b. 8-11-1779, m. Mr. Bird of Kentucky, d. ? )

Two months before the birth of the twins, William Sr. was killed in the Revolutionary War leaving the widow Mary to sell the farm in Virginia. A few years after the war, when William Jr. was about sixteen-seventeen years of age, Mary moved her family to Lexington, Kentucky in 1796.

William Jr. met Elizabeth Kelly (b. 5-10-1786, d. 8-28-1862) and they were married in Lexington in 1803. He was 24 years old and was a tall man in stature and heavily built. Elizabeth had come to Kentucky the previous year with her parents Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Kelly and sisters Mary, Nancy and Margaret. She was only 17 years of age when she married William Jr. Immediately after their marriage, in 1811, William Jr. and Elizabeth Kelly Gordon moved to the Miami bottoms near Cleves, Ohio, staying for one summer in the home of Mr. Ewing and after harvesting one crop purchased a seven acre tract in Metamora township, Franklin county, Indiana, on

which William built a log cabin. The cabin still stands on Duck Creek Road about three-fourths of a mile north of where the old village of Metamora is located. In 1812 he moved his wife and family to the cabin. He later purchased several hundred acres in Metamora township along Duck Creek.

William Jr. and Elizabeth had thirteen children, seven boys and six girls:

Orville, a farmer in Metamora township

Julian, who died in infancy

Selina, who married Harvey Blacklidge, a farmer and merchant in Metamora

Eliza, who married Morin Pumphrey, of Connersville, Indiana

Eveline, who married Moses Bowman, of Shelbyville, Indiana

Milton, a merchant of Metamora

William, who died when a young man in Shelbyville

Leonidas, who died when a young man in Shelbyville

Isabella, who married Anderson Moore, a farmer living near Everton, Indiana

Angelina, who married Samuel Masters, of Laurel township

Mahlon C., our subject

Melvin, a farmer in Metamora township

Chilon (Taylor), a farmer in Metamora township

It was in William and Elizabeth's log cabin home where the first meeting of Methodists living in Franklin county was held. Also the first schoolhouse built in Metamora township stood on their farm.

Mahlon C. Gordon was reared on the old Gordon homestead. At the age of twelve he became aware of the Whitewater Canal when his father, William Gordon, Jr. contracted with the State of Indiana to build sections



77 and 78 of it on November 14, 1838. William also worked on sections 74, 78, 79, 82 and 83 and his son, Milton B. worked on sections 66, 69, 70, 74, 78 and 79.

By the time the canal was completed young Mahlon was old enough and ran a canal boat on the Whitewater Canal. In 1845-46 Mahlon, along with his brother Milton Gordon, built the first flour mill in Metamora. A huge fire of 1856 destroyed this mill and another built by William Rubottom and Hyatt in 1847-1848. The Gordon brothers rebuilt their mill in 1857. It was still standing in 1915 although not in use. In 1850-51 the brothers built an extensive water-powered flour mill and a woolen mill at Millville below Metamora by Lock #24. This lock was named Gordon's Lock for the two brothers who owned the mills. It had an 8 foot lift and was one of 56 locks constructed to accommodate a 491 foot drop in elevation along the Whitewater Canal.

Water from the Whitewater Canal was used to turn the mill wheels. Mahlon C. operated both of these mills successfully for several years. Then another fire destroyed both of them. The woolen mill was not rebuilt; however, Clifford & Davis erected another flouring mill at the site. It was sold to Andrew Miller. The Gordon flouring mill was dismantled. The remaining building was used for the manufacture of woodenware.

Mahlon C. married Rebecca Ann McWhorter on December 6, 1849. She was born on December 25, 1826 in Metamora and died April 26, 1914. She was the daughter of John McWhorter, the first tavern keeper in Metamora. They had six children all born in Metamora township, Franklin county, Indiana:

Alice M., born in 1852, who married Thomas Cauthar,

Frank (John), born about 1855-56

Adrian B., born June 12, 1858, a farmer of Brookville township

Queen, born about 1861

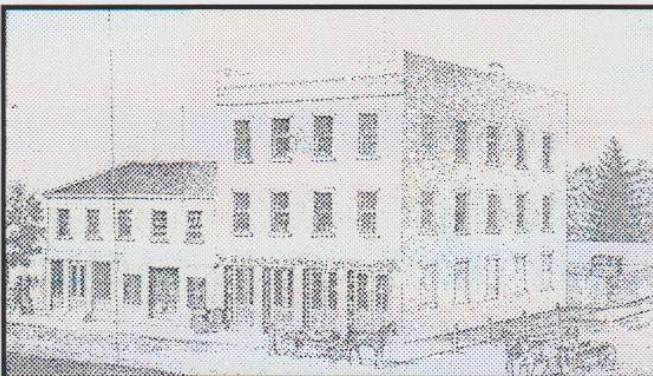
Judson C., who was born January 19, 1864

Bertha E., who was born about 1868-69 and married Doctor Millard F. Cupp of Metamora on December 25, 1890 in Franklin county, Indiana

The brothers Mahlon and Milton B. Gordon worked together as a team. They built the Odd Fellows building on the corner of Banes and Main streets in 1853. A plaque on this building reads:

#### Odd Fellows Hall

Erected in 1853. Built of Brick, it is the only three story building in Metamora. Ground floor was a general merchandising establishment operated by 3 generations of the Gordon family: Milton, Noble and Donald. Metamora post office once located in Gordon store. Second floor



This drawing of the Odd Fellows Hall built by Mahlon and Milton Gordon was found in the 1882 Atlas of Franklin county, IN.



ODD FELLOWS BUILDING

Photo by Bob Schmidt

originally a town hall, later occupied by Knights of Pythias Lodge. Odd Fellows Lodge located on third floor and was instituted by General P. Hackleman, Franklin County native and Union General, killed in action in 1862. Local Masonic Lodge formed in this building on May 23, 1857.

Mahlon and Milton entered the dry-goods business in 1857 and ran the general store for many

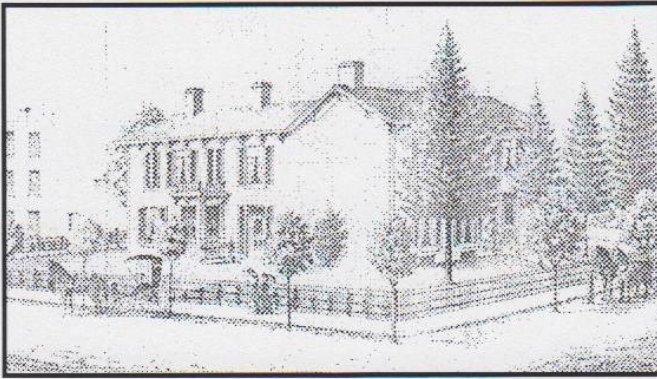
years. It was located on Main street near Banes street in Metamora. It is sometimes called Gordon Hall. A plaque placed on the building in 1976 reads:

#### Canal Front Dry Goods Store

Two story frame of Federal Style built by Jonathan Banes in 1848. First known as the firm of Jenks, Banes and Calvin Jones. Harry and Alvin Blackledge 1852-57. Mahlon and Milton Gordon 1857-62. Wm. N. Gordon started banking business in west half 1910. Later relocated across the canal, east half was Caroline Gordon's Candle Shop. Back addition was an old icehouse, upstairs was community hall for dancing, roller skating and yearly traveling medicine show.

Mahlon eventually dropped out of the store and Milton's son, William Noble Gordon, became Milton's new partner. Milton was still with the store at the time of his death in 1857.





Mahlon C. and Milton B. Gordon built this double sided residence on the corner of Banes and Mount Street in Metamora. It still stands today. Drawing from 1882 Atlas of Franklin Co., IN.

In 1860 Mahlon and Milton built a large two-story, Greek Revival-Italianate, double residence on the corner of Banes and Mount Street in Metamora. The home had a limestone hitching post and sidewalk and an iron fence.

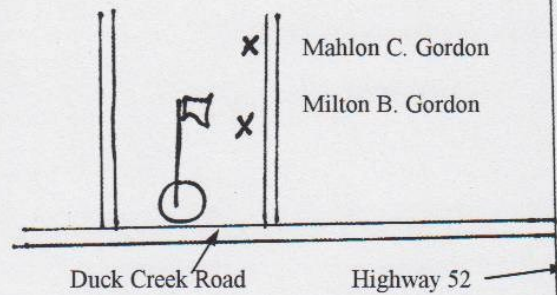
Mahlon was a staunch Republican. He also belonged to the Methodist Church. He took his religion in earnest. He was a member of the Odd Fellows. He purchased a large farm from his father-in-law, Thomas Kelly. Mahlon was the largest landholder in the county.

Mahlon C. Gordon died in February 1904 and was buried in Metamora Cemetery on Duck Creek Road just a short distance from the original family log cabin. To reach the cemetery when traveling east on highway 52 turn left on Duck Creek Road. You will come to the cemetery which has a flag pole near the road and two lanes on either side of it. Go right into the first lane. You will see an elaborate granite stone with Gordon on it that is the grave of Milton B. Gordon (b.1-10-1816, d. 3-4-1892) and his wife Sophia (b. 2-1-1828, d. 6-9-1907). Further down the lane is the small flat grave stone of Mahlon C. Gordon (b. 1826, d. 1904).

Judson C. Gordon, Mahlon's son, was educated in the public schools in Metamora, remained on the homestead and never married. Upon Mahlon's death, Judson inherited and took over the management of the 375 acres of excellent land. In 1915 Judson had a herd of sixty-five registered Aberdeen-Angus cattle, which he sold for breeding purposes, and full-blooded, registered Duroc-Jersey hogs. As a stock feeder he was one of the best in the state at that time. Judson was also a member of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows and a staunch Republican like his father.

Gordon's Lock No. 24 is a fine hammered dressed cut-stone lock that in the past few years has been restored with new gates. It is along Highway 52

## METAMORA CEMETERY



Above:  
Gravestone  
of Mahlon  
C. Gordon,  
Metamora  
Cemetery.

Right:  
Gravestone  
of Milton B.  
and Sophia  
Gordon in  
Metamora  
Cemetery.

