

CANAWLERS AT REST

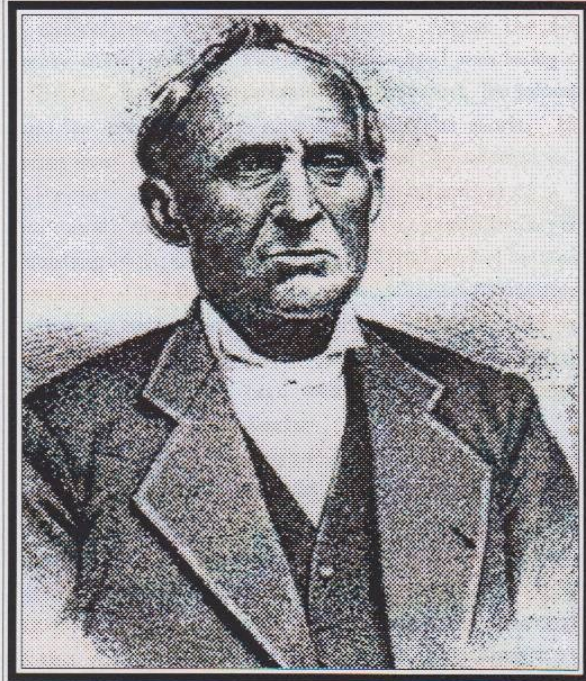
WILLIAM W. HANEY

b. December 25, 1809

d. April 20, 1889

By Carolyn I. Schmidt

Picture from Biographical and Genealogical
History of Cass, Miami, Howard and Tipton
Counties, Indiana



Many men were notable for their work on or contributions to canals, but there were few whose careers centered around canals as William W. Haney. He planned, led and supervised others to complete northern Indiana's chief artery of commerce in the 1830-40s.

Born to Joseph and Mary (Weaver) Haney in Bucks county, Pennsylvania in 1809, William grew up in a home with small means and had only a rudimentary education provided by primitive local schools. This lack of education did not stop him. He had a keen mind and a good memory which served him well. As a boy on the family farm he was trained to be practical and his labors made him strong. Upon leaving the farm he worked in a hotel and then he was a clerk in a store. Through working with people he learned to be a good judge of character and quickly discovered how not to have anyone take advantage of him.

In 1826, at the age of seventeen, William joined an engineering corps that was constructing the Delaware division of the Pennsylvania canal. He worked on the section between Easton and Bristol for a year. This was followed by boating coal along the river for a short season. He then worked for a year in R. Latimore's hotel in Easton as a bar tender and a stage

agent. As his abilities grew, he was next made a division superintendent on the Pennsylvania canal for a year and then returned to boating coal. Once again for two years he supervised a branch of the Pennsylvania canal before taking over a contract to construct the Delaware and Raritan canal feeder that was originally let to Moore & Brown. The feeder, which was located on the New Jersey side of the Delaware river, took a year to build. When it was completed he became the superintendent of the feeder for a year.

Having accumulated a great knowledge of canal building and superintendence William decided to move westward. He began his journey on March 17, 1835. He traveled by steamboat, flatboat and pirogue to Indiana. He arrived at Peru, then a frontier village in an unbroken wilderness on the Wabash river near the mouth of the Mississinewa river, on July 4, 1835. There he found great activity for building the Wabash & Erie Canal. He took charge of a work force of men and began construction on the canal. Their job was to open a stone quarry below Peru. They provided John Cooper, the contractor, the limestone necessary for building the Peru dam across the Wabash river to feed the Wabash & Erie Canal. In the fall of the year Haney took another contract to construct a section of the canal at Lewisburg. He finished it the following year.

In those days transportation was almost entirely by water until the development of railroad technology. The beneficial effect of the canals Haney helped construct cannot be over estimated. They opened up eastern markets to the pioneers who grew crops in the western wilderness.

Haney married Louisiana Fidler (b. 9-17-1819, d. 2-16-1906) about one and a half years later on December 13, 1836. They had two children - a son William E. Haney born on December 28, 1837 and a daughter Maria Emma born December 31, 1845. Maria died before either of her parents.

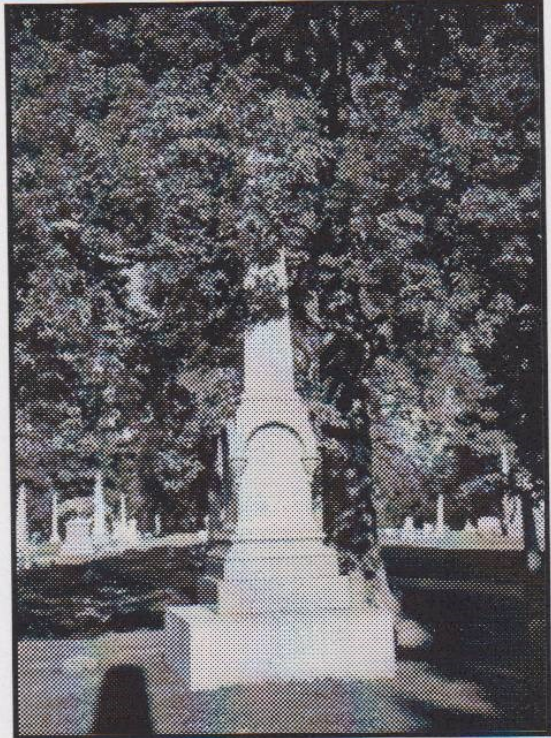
Haney formed a partnership with Alexander Wilson and established a merchandising business in Lewisburg. He also developed a large trade with the Native Americans until their removal in 1846. After three years, Haney was able to buy out Wilson's interest in the store. Haney conducted business in Lewisburg until the summer of 1851. He sold real estate, canal script and other securities.

Haney then moved to Logansport, IN on July 15, 1851. There he established a general store but, after a short period of time, he sold out all of his stock. His interests were in selling real estate and private banking, which he continued until his death. He was the president of a branch of the Bank of Indiana at Logansport.

Over the years Haney acquired a great knowledge of the law. He was admitted to the bar shortly after locating in Logansport. Although he never had a case in court, he conducted an office practice. He was known for his honor, strict integrity, rigid business procedures, and genial personality.

Haney was a member of the Broadway Methodist Episcopal church in Logansport. He liberally supported the church. He was a true friend to the poor and needy.

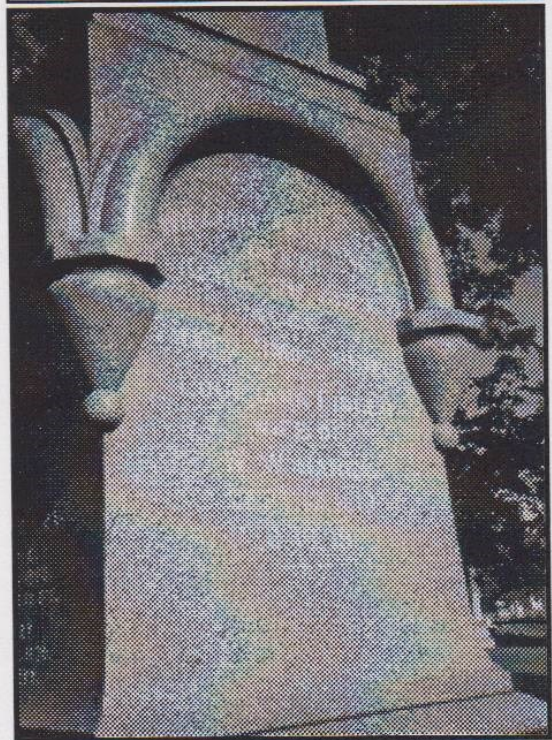
At the time of his death in Logansport on April 20, 1889, Haney was 80 years old and one of the state's richest men. The estimated value of his estate was between a half million to 600,000 thousand dollars.

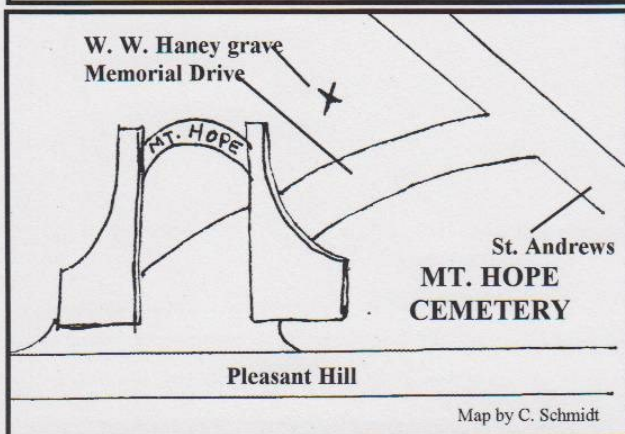


Above: A pinkish red stone marks the grave site of William W. and Louisiana Haney at Mt. Hope.

Below: This side of the stone reads: William W. Haney, Died Apr 20, 1889. Louisiana Fidler wife of W. W. Haney, Sept. 17, 1819, Feb. 16, 1906.

Photos by Bob Schmidt





to get angry or excited, much less, vindictive or sullen. No one knew better of good and ill of life and humanity. Mr. Haney did not pretend to be anything else than a business man, and never sought office or promotion of any kind. He did not set up to be a charitable man any more than a talented man; and yet his kindly voice, friendly ways, and unquestionable honesty gave him a happy and honored old age and made him a general favorite with all classes."

Haney was buried in Logansport's Mt. Hope cemetery following a service at the Broadway M. E. Church led by ministers Dr. Ford and Dr. Bush. A pinkish red granite stone marks the site of his grave atop a hill on Memorial Drive. To reach the site enter Mt. Hope Cemetery off of Pleasant Hill road, pass through the arches onto Memorial Drive. His stone is on the hill to your left before you get to St. Andrews Drive.

Sources:

Biographical and Genealogical History of Cass, Miami, Howard and Tipton Counties, Indiana. Vol. 1. Chicago / The Lewis Publishing Company. 1898.

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