

## THE HOOSIER PACKET - NOVEMBER 2015

### SAMUEL DENNY HILL

#### AND HIS WABASH & ERIE CANAL CONNECTIONS

By Charles Davis

Samuel Denny Hill was born in Circleville, Ohio on May 8, 1829 to Doctor James C. and Margaret Hill. His grandfather Samuel Hill Sr. came to Wabash township, Parke county, Indiana from Pickway, Ohio around 1825 being one of the earliest pioneers of that area.

Sam Sr. bought land from the government, the west half of the south east quarter of section six, about a mile and a half from where I, Charles Davis, live. Then he bought 320 acres in the north of section 36, Reserve township. This is on the east side of Montezuma, Indiana. He donated a 8 x 20 plot of ground in section 16 to the township trustees, Joseph M. Hayes, and John Holstead, on November 29, 1836 for a public burying ground. Deed Record 4/135 This is now called the Old Montezuma Cemetery. Sam Sr. died October 27, 1838 and was buried in this cemetery in the Hill plot. At his death, he owned land in Edgar county, Illinois; Vermillion county, Illinois; Tippecanoe county, Indiana and lots in the town of Baltimore plus the 160 acres at Montezuma. This property was divided among his heirs. Samuel Denny Hill, our subject, and his brother William Seymour Hill ended up with most of this land and holdings because of the frequent deaths in this family.

Samuel D. Hill's father, Dr. James C. Hill, came to Montezuma in 1830 when Samuel was one year old. That year James bought the homestead, lots 13 and 14 in Montezuma and set up his medical practice. The house was the first frame home built in Montezuma by William Webster. At this time James' brother, Samuel Jr., also came to Montezuma and, with his partner James Nesmith, bought lot 12 just across the street from the homestead. Sam Jr. bought a still from James Chesnut in 1831. Chesnut had the still house at the Armiesburg Mill about 1000 feet north of the mill. Relief Record Vol. 1 He also bought another still from Clemon Gleson in 1832. D. R. 1/372 Sam Jr. died in 1836.

After Dr. Hill died, Samuel D's mother married Pratt Frink, who later died in 1847. Samuel D. and his brother, Wm. S. Frink, grew up in Montezuma and were educated in the common schools there. When the canal opened through Montezuma in 1848, they both clerked for Erastus M. Benson and Hon. John G. Davis in their canal warehouses on Benson's Basin. They were aged 18 and 16 respectively and continued as clerks for eight years.

On April 7, 1857 Samuel D. Hill was married to



Built around 1830 on Lot #14 on Water Street by Wm. Webster, this is one of the oldest homes in Montezuma, Indiana. It was the homestead of Dr. James C. Hill and fronted on the Wabash & Erie Canal.  
Photo by Charles Davis

Margaret Ensworth, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. David Ensworth in Circleville, Ohio. They returned to Montezuma and settled in the old Hill homestead on Water Street. Their house faced the canal and was "made of poplar floor joists ten or eleven inches in diameter, trimmed on one side with an adze to give a flat surface and provide a firm understructure. The same wood was used throughout the structure. Very few changes appear to have been done to the building with the passing of the years. A large, sturdy built fireplace did at one time occupy about half of the south wall of the living room, but this has been eliminated to provide for more modern heating." *Montezuma Enterprise*, December 11, 1852

"The location of the house is a matter for lovers of history to dream about. Imagine in his mind's eye a tenant sitting on his front stoop and exchanging the news of the day with people on the canal boats as they moved slowly past the house with their cargos of grain or pork or livestock. So close was the canal to the house that it also had its dangerous aspect. One of Montezuma's oldest residents in 1952, John Wineland, told the story on himself that when he was in his own small boyhood he could scarcely round the corner of the house until his mother would be in urgent pursuit of him, fearful lest he should fall into the waters of the canal. John humorously added that, although his mother didn't know it, he must have fallen into the canal a hundred times during the childhood years he lived in this house."

After marriage Samuel commenced farming, which he carried on extensively and successfully. He and Margaret had five children in this old homestead. In 1872 he was elected by the Democrat party to fill the office of trustee for Reserve township. He did so for many years.

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His brother, Wm. Seymour Hill, farmed as his partner. Wm. S. married Indiana Delire Hughes. She was the daughter of Canal businessman Morris Hughes. Wm. Seymour Hill passed away in 1904.

Samuel Denny Hill died in 1913. The Hill homestead stayed in the family from 1830 to 1946. D.R. 110/496 This house still stands in 2015, is 185 years old and is still lived in.

## SAMUEL DENNY HILL'S FAMILY

Compiled by Charles and Mary J. Davis

<u>Name</u>	<u>Birth</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Death</u>	<u>Cemetery</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Marriage</u>
Hill, Samuel Sr.	10-25-1751		1-27-11838	Old Montezuma	Montezuma IN	1777
m. Comstock, Martha	7-28-1758		7-06-1829	Old Montezuma	Montezuma IN	1777
Hill, Sarah..	1794		about 1837			10-10-1816
m. Hayes, Col Joseph M	10-19-1799	Rockbridge VA	5-11-1837		Grand Gulf MS	10-10-1816
Hill, Sanuel Jr..	1795		4-24-1836	Old Montezuma	Edgar Co IL	10-05-1834
m. Seymous, Minerva			1837			
Hill, William Fulton	1827		4-16-1847	Old Montezuma	Montezuma IN	
Hill, Martha						
Hill, Dr. James C.	1798		7-26-1834	Old Montezuma	Montezuma IN	7-17-1827
m. Seymour, Margarety	1804	Ross Co OH	1-19-1883			7-17-1827
Hill, James C.	1833		1-28-1828	Old Montezuma	Montezuma IN	10-10-1866
Hill, Seymour W.	1-??-1832		11-04-1904	Oakland	Montezuma IN	10-10-1866
m. Hughes, Indiana Delire	8-16-1843		3-15-1924	Oakland	Montezuma IN	
Hill, Margaret Morris	12-??-1869		8-05-1929	Oakland	Montezuma IN	
Hill, Mary Julia	6-??-1877		11-21-1950	Oakland	Montezuma IN	
<b>Hill, Samuel Denny</b>	5-18-1829	Circleville OH	10-01-1913	Oakland	Montezuma IN	4-07-1856
m. Ensworth, Margaret A	9-11-1837	Circleville OH	1-27-1912	Oakland	Montezuma IN	4-07-1850
Hill, Frank Edwin	8-17-1858		8-08-1838	Oakland	Vermillion Co	
Hill, James C.	9-08-1862		3-27-1932	Tacoma	Tacoma WA	1893
Hill, Edwin Samuel	2-13-1866		3-04-1950	Tacoma	Tacoma WA	1893
m. Hutcheson, Elizabeth M	3-??-1872		1-24-1932	Tacoma	Tacoma WA	
Hill, Edna Elizabeth	9-25-1906		9-27-1906	Tacoma	Tacoma WA	
Hill, Samuel Edwin Jr.	10-25-1907		12-25-1989		Yuma, AZ	
Hill, Margaret	9-10-1909		11-15-1999	Tacoma	Tacoma WA	
Hill, William Seymour	9-02-1860		7-01-1929	Oakland	Montezuma IN	
Hill, Emma R	4-24-1858		5-26-1921	Oakland	Montezuma IN	4-11-1878
m. Henry, James Henry	1843		2-07-1923	Oakland	Montezuma IN	4-11-18878
Henry, James Henry Jr.	1889		1889	Oakland	Montezuma IN	
Henry, Thomas	1889				St. Louis?	

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SAMUEL DENNY HILL  
1829-1913

Oakland Cemetery, Montezuma, Indiana  
Clerked for Benson and Davis in Wabash & Erie Canal  
Warehouses on Benson's Basin



MARGARET E. HILL  
1837-1926

Oakland Cemetery, Montezuma, Indiana  
Wife of Samuel Denny Hill

Photos by Charles Davis