

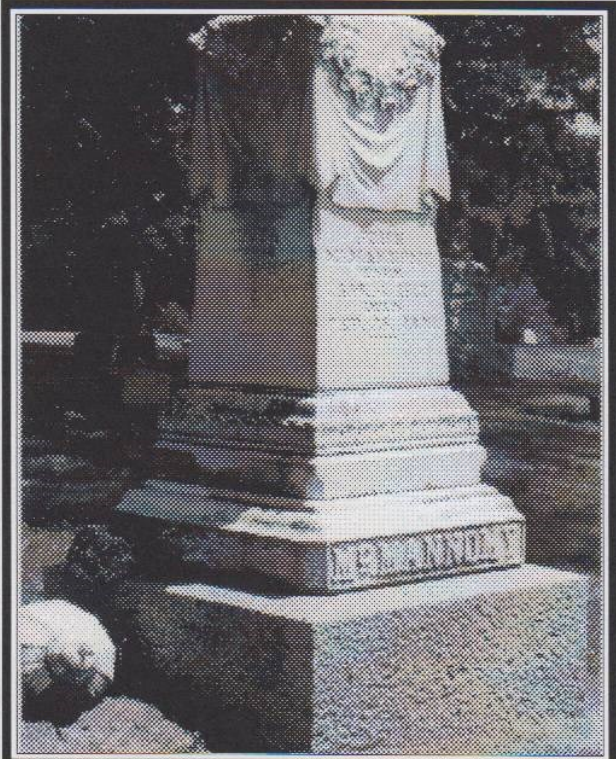
CANAWLERS AT REST

THE McMANNOMY BROTHERS

JOHN COL. JAMES

By Carolyn I. Schmidt

Photos by Bob Schmidt



JOHN McMANNOMY

b. April 4, 1812

d. February 26, 1899

JOHN McMANNOMY

John McMannomy was born on April 4, 1812, in Philadelphia, PA to Patrick and Nancy (McDerit) McMannomy, who were originally from Donegal county, Ireland. He was the first of their six children. He and his family moved to Ross county, Ohio prior to 1825. He moved to Covington, IN in November 1830.

Eliza Van Dorn became John's wife in 1835. They had six children: Mary McMannomy Loeb, Isabella McMannomy Sangster, Nancy McMannomy Loeb, John Ross McMannomy, Frank McMannomy and William McMannomy.

Always engaging in large enterprises, John and John Bodley secured large contracts for building sections of the Wabash & Erie Canal in 1842. He was appointed state superintendent when the canal was completed and continued in this position until it was abandoned. He pushed some very large contracts to completion.

John's wife Eliza died in 1862. He later married Elizabeth Bodine. After she died he married Jane Davison, a sister of his second wife.

John took part in building the county jail, parts of the Big 4 railroad, and the branch of the C. & E. I. railroad from Bismark, IN to Coal Creek. He also built the tow path road to Attica.

In 1852, after catching the "Gold Fever," he went to California. There he was appointed by the governor to assist emigrants over the Alkali deserts. He was a soldier during the Black Hawk war.

In 1876, a new school house was erected on the site of the former school house in Covington, IN. John McMannomy and E. H. Nebeker were the contractors. The structure served as both a grade and high school building until the overflow made it necessary to erect another building for the four lower grades.

John was a democrat and, although he never sought an office for himself, he was very interested in politics. He recommended and endorsed his friends, Senator Daniel Voorhees, Thomas A Hendricks, and Joseph E. McDonald.

John McMannomy died at 8:30 p.m. on Sunday February 26, 1899 in Covington, at his home on Third

street following several instances of paralysis. He was 86 years, 10 months, and 22 days old. He was described in his obituary as a quiet, unassuming, perfect gentleman of the old school, who was a good citizen, an upright man and a loving, tender and true husband and father.

Funeral services for John were held at St. Joseph Catholic Church, where he was a member, on Wednesday morning at 10 a.m.. He is buried in Prescott Grove Cemetery.

John McMannomy has a large grave marker in Prescott Grove Cemetery. The stone basket of flowers at its top has been broken off and is in two pieces beside the main stone. When facing the marker, the front reads:

John McMannomy
Born Apr. 4, 1812
Died Feb. 26, 1899

The left side of the marker reads:

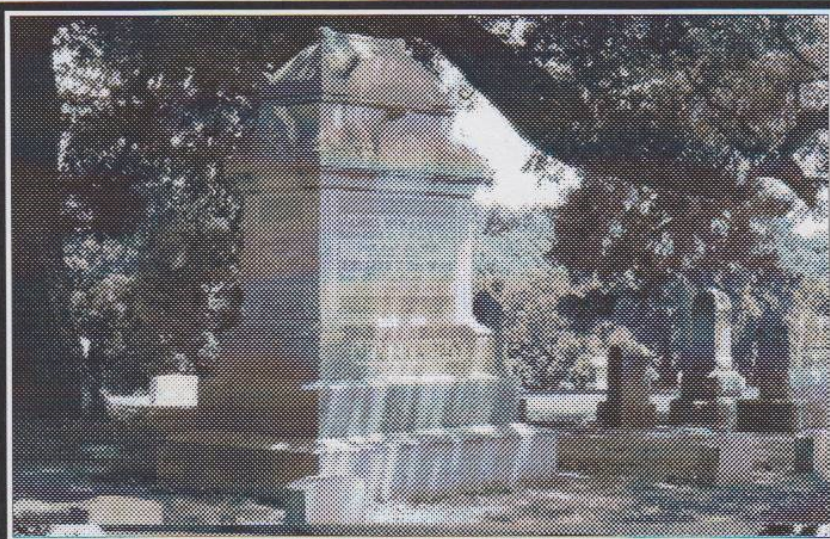
Eliza Wife of John McMannomy
Born Sept. 17, 1817
Died August 12, 1863

The right side of the marker reads:

J. Ross McMannomy
Nov. 8, 1849 Dec. 13, 1919
Frank McMannomy
Oct. 3, 1848 Jan. 11, 1920
William
Son of John & Eliza McMannomy
Born Mar. 9, 1854
Died July 25, 1859

The back of the marker reads:

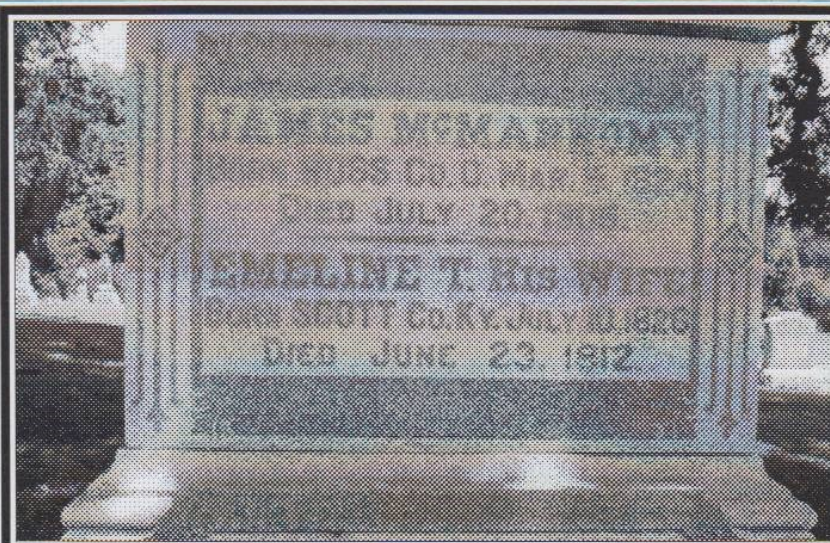
Elizabeth
Wife of John McMannomy
Born Aug. 16, 1816
Died Mar. 24, 1876



COL. JAMES McMANNOMY

b. March 5, 1824

d. July 20, 1906



Colonel James McMannomy

James McMannomy was born in Ross county, Ohio on March 5, 1824, to Patrick and Nancy (McDerit) McMannomy. He was the sixth of their six children. His brothers and sisters were John (previously mentioned), Elizabeth (1815-1856), William (1818-1846), Catherine (1822-1880), and Annie (?-1876). At the age of 14, in 1838, he moved to Covington, IN where he was employed by his brother John to work building the Wabash & Erie Canal.

Just below Attica the great gravel beds gave the canal builders a lot of trouble because they would not hold water. To put more water into the canal, a feeder dam was built at Shawnee creek and the entire volume of water from that creek was fed into the canal. James McMannomy of Covington and Douglas Trott were completing the approaches to the feeder dam and the waterway to the canal. On one Monday morning they found the Irish laborers coming late to work. A dispute arose. A huge Irishman, still tanked from the Sunday carousal, took a position on a scaffold on which they had been wheeling dirt. Mr. Trott wanted past the fellow and

struck him with his fist knocking him off. When he landed at the bottom he broke his neck.

The sad news was sent to his wife, who was a cook at the camp. She cried and cried. It was soon discovered that she was not grieving over her husband's death but the fact that he had nothing but a dirty shirt in which to be buried. James had on a new shirt, which he gave the crying widow. It was placed on the dead man and he was buried in a new shirt along the canal. The death of the Irishman was never investigated by the coroner or the grand jury. This is an example of how little value was placed on the lives of the Irish workers.

In 1842, James went to New Orleans on a flat boat. He returned to work on the canal and farm.

James enlisted in Company B 2nd Regiment in 1846 and left for the Mexican war on June 14th. His locally enlisted company was driven overland to Madison, IN by Lou Hetfield, James' close friend. From Madison they went by river boat to war. He was soon elected Second Lieutenant. After thirteen months of service, he returned to Franklin county, IN.

The "Raging Tads" was organized in Covington in 1847 and was made up of 20 men each about 20 years old. They met every Thanksgiving for an evening banquet. They sealed up a bottle of Port wine to be opened by the survivor. When James and Lou Hetfield became the last surviving members, they agreed that the members of both of their families would banquet and open the wine at the Thanksgiving following one of their deaths. James attended 59 banquets but died before the 60th.

In the 1850s he caught "Gold Fever" and traveled overland to the California gold fields. His quest for gold was successful. Upon his return he purchased Sec. 28 of Troy township. He still owned it at the time of his death.

Emaline Ward (July 10, 1826 - June 23, 1912), the daughter of John and Tamer Ward, married James on February 8 (another source says 11th), 1851. They had four children, but two twin daughters died in infancy. Their surviving children were: Divit (May 14, 1856-March 12, 1874) and Emma (November 8, 1867-?), who married William B. Coffing. Emma gave them four grandchildren.

James joined Fountain Lodge No. 63, F. & A.M. at Covington in 1851. He received his Master's degree on his wedding day.

James enlisted in Company H, 63rd Regiment for the Civil War in August, 1863. In received the title of

Sanford Gray, of Montgomery county, and James founded the Horse Thief Detective Association, which was probably his most notable act during his life. James was the Captain of the Fountain county company and held the office until his death. On October 2-3, 1899 when James attended the annual meeting at Crawfordsville, he was elected Grand Organizer of the Wabash Association.

He also was a founder of the Fountain-Warren and Vermillion Agricultural Association. He took an active part in its management.

Like his brother John, he was a democrat and ardent party supporter. He had no political aspirations for himself. Although he did not belong to a church, he lived a Christian life.

For several years prior to his death he resided on his farm that was then owned by his daughter Emma, Mrs. William B. Coffing. The floor of the large barn there was made of discarded three-inch-thick planks from the old plank road that ran between Covington and Crawfordsville that was built in 1851.

Colonel James McMannomy died on Friday morning July 20, 1906, in the home of his daughter Mrs. William B. Coffing. The following Monday morning funeral services conducted by Rev. J. P. Henson of the Masonic Lodge and attended by 40 mourners were held at the Coffing residence. He was laid to rest in Prescott Grove Cemetery where a large granite monument had been placed earlier. His eight pall bearers were Byron Russell, Mark Rogers, Lou Hetfield, Capt. LaTourette, John Bilsland, Jas. Everly, James Bodine and J. L. Allen.

James McMannomy has a large family plot marker in Prescott Grove Cemetery with four head stones in front of it that read from left to right:

Catherine, Father, Mother, Divit.

When facing the family marker the front side reads:

James McMannomy

Born Ross Co., O. March 5, 1824

Died July 20, 1906

Emeline T. His Wife

Born Scott Co., Ky. July 10, 1836

June 28, 1912

The marker's left side reads:

Catherina McMannomy

Born Sept. 9. 1818

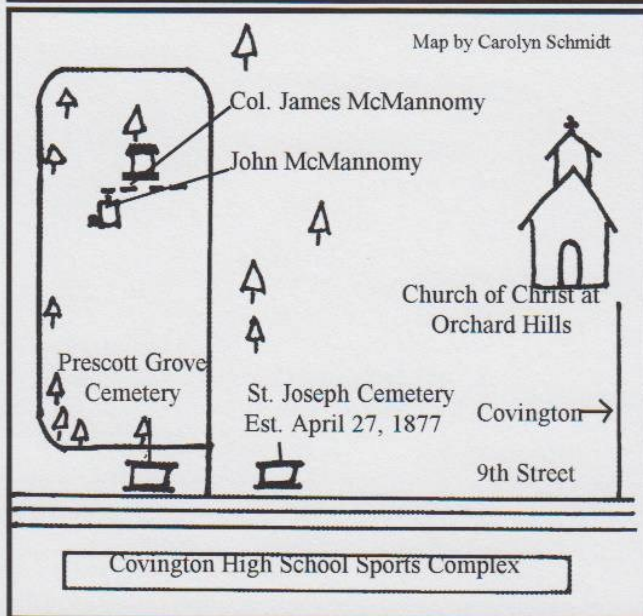
Died Jan 14, 1888

The marker's right side reads:

Divit McMannomy

Born May 27, 1856

Died Mar. 25, 1875



Infant daughters Born & Died

June 10, 1852

There is no information on the back of the marker.

SOURCES:

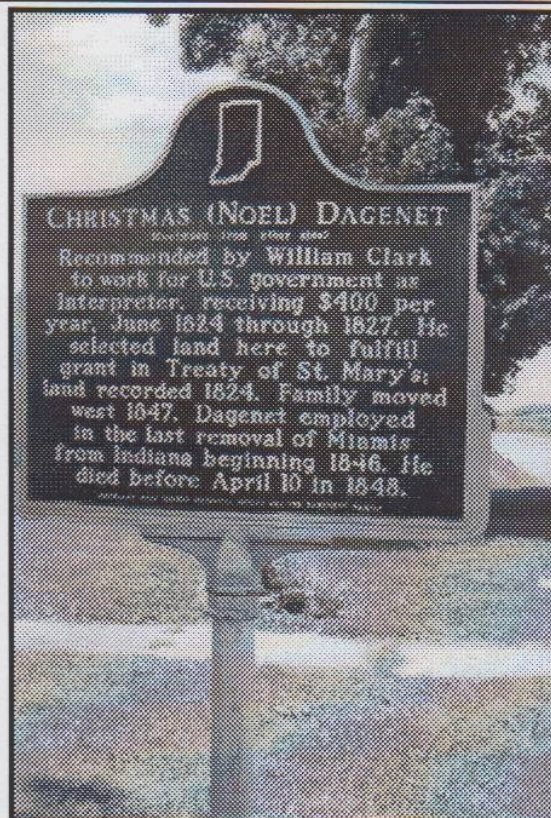
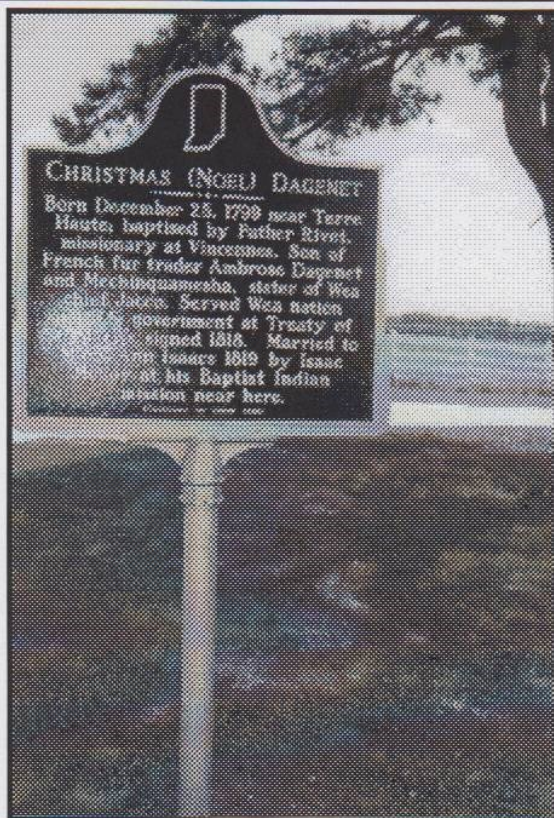
Immel, Mary Blair. "Family Records of Civil War Colonel, Gold Rusher, Horse Thief Detective, and Prosperous Farmer, James McMannomy." *The Hoosier Genealogist*. Indianapolis, IN: Indiana Historical Society. Vol. 44 No. 1, 2004.

The Centennial Book. Fountain County, IN.:DAR Richard Henry Lee Chapter, 1926.

Wabash & Erie Canal: Attica/Covington. Fort Wayne, IN: Canal Society of Indiana., 1995.

Grave Markers in Prescott Grove Cemetery, Covington, IN.

To reach Prescott Grove Cemetery from I-74 turn north at the Covington exit and proceed toward town. The road becomes 11th Street. Turn left on Liberty and go west 2 blocks. Turn right on 9th Street and go north. When you pass Peach Lane and the Church of Christ at Orchard Hills turn right between the pillars into Prescott Grove/St. Joseph Cemetery. Take an immediate left and go to the top of the long circular drive. The grave markers are on the right behind a large pin oak tree when facing 9th Street. Across the street from the cemetery are the Covington High School Sports Fields.



This Indiana State Format Marker for Christmas (Noel) Dagenet was dedicated and erected in Armiesburg on June 12, 2004. CSI thanks Charles Davis, CSI member from Rockville, for his research and for applying for this marker. The Wabash & Erie Canal passed over Raccoon Creek via an aqueduct nearby.

Photos by Bob Schmidt