

## CANAWLERS AT REST

### JOHN L. SHANK

**b. August 1, 1821  
d. July 21, 1864**

**By Carolyn I. Schmidt**

John L. Shank was the grandson of John Shank, one of the earlier settlers in Franklin County, Indiana arriving there in 1812. He settled east of the 1793 treaty line. He and his wife, whose name we do not know for sure, had three children, Thomas, James and Susan. All of them were born in Bucks County, PA.

John Shank, the elder, was a grand juror on September 14, 1812 shortly after arriving in Franklin County. He, along with James Case and John Rockefeller, was on the War of 1812 Muster List for the Franklin County Indiana Militia under Captain Frederick Shults. He was called to jury duty again in August 1813 and May 1814. On May 24, 1814 he was appointed the supervisor of a road. Jobez Winship, James Hall, John Clendenning, and Reuben Brackney were also appointed supervisors. Again in August 1814 he is on a list of grand jurors. Then court records show that same August he was given charge of all of the main road from John Case's mill down to the quarter section on which Nathan Porter resided. The Brookville Road ran from the Ohio state line east of Brookville to Indianapolis. The contractors were Elijah Lacy, John Shank, Elisha Long, Sam'l Stinson, William Scott, Elias Willets, James Scott, John Scott, D. J. P. Fleming and William Seward. In May 1819 he was again on the list of grand jurors. After serving his community well, he died on February 25, 1822.

Thomas Shank, like his father, was also on the Muster List of the War of 1812. He served in the Franklin County Indiana Seventh Regiment in Captain John Brison's Company.

Thomas Shank married Sarah (Sary) J. Lefforge

whose parents were John L. Lefforge (b. 4-16-1766 d. 4-11-1834) and Mary I. Smith Lefforge (b. 11-23-1773 d. 7-01-1865) on October 5, 1820. They had ten children.

According to court records, upon the death of his father in 1822, Thomas Shank was appointed administrator of the estate of John Shank. Thomas filed a bond for \$1,000 with John Case and John Titus as his securities. He was slow to settle the estate. Nine years later on May 7, 1831 he received a citation for failing to make the final settlement. On November 22, 1831 Thomas filed an account current for the settlement of John Shank's estate in court. In September of 1832 he petitioned the court to settle the estate as an insolvent one. An ad for this was to be placed in the *Indiana Sentinel*, a Connersville newspaper for 6 weeks. Among the creditors who received 20 cents on each dollar claimed were: A. Jocelyn, John Jacobs, Jacob Harvey, E. McCarty, John Lefforge, David Hanna, and Wm. K. Morris. Finally In 1832 he again filed in court the following additional creditors of the estate: M. M. Ray, E. W. Thurston, Thomas Shank, John Allen. On December 3, 1832 John Allen filed a receipt for his distributive share in John Shank's estate.

Just when he thought he was finished with the court Thomas' father-in-law, John Lefforge died on April 11, 1834. There were problems settling Lefforge's estate and Thomas was back in court. Thomas and Sary Shank, Jacob Lefforge, Reubin and Mary Hawkins, Jesse and Celia Winship, John and William Lefforge heirs of John Lefforge deceased petitioned for partition of real estate VS the two youngest sons Charles & Lewis Lefforge heirs. Then in February 1835 the commissioners appointed to make this partition and set off the dower to the widow (Mary Lefforge) reported their results to the court. That same month Thomas and Sary Shank, Jacob Lefforge, Reuben and Mary Hankins, Jesse and Celia Winship, and John and William Lefforge heirs of John Lefforge deceased VS Charles Lefforge and Lewis Lefforge and the heirs of John Lefforge deceased states that in a petition for partition on November 10, 1834 a commission was appointed to partition John's real estate among his heirs and set off the widow her dower. They report that they have set off the widow her dower but that the rest of the real estate is not subject to an equitable partition and the court ordered this part of it sold. An ad of this sale was placed in the *Indiana American* for four successive weeks. The land was purchased by John Gant. The proceeds of the sale were divided among the heirs less the expenses of the sale. Lewis and Charles were listed as minors. A list of the items to be sold from John Lefforge's estate is on page 5 of this publication.

Sary Shank died on November 11, 1848 and was

## THE HOOSIER PACKET - JUNE 2014

John Shank's Family						
Name	Birth	Place	Death	Place	Marriage	Place
John Shank			2-25-1822	Franklin Co. IN		
m. (Polly ?)						
Thomas Shank	8-17-1793	Bucks Co. PA	9-17-1867	Brookville Tsp. IN		
m1. Sarah J. Lefforge (Sary)	4-22-1807	Henderson Co. NJ	11-11-1848	Little Cedar Cem. Brookville IN	10-15-1820	
<b>John L. Shank</b>	8-01-1821	Franklin Co. IN	7-21-1864	Franklin Co. IN	Quick/Shank Cem. Brookville, IN	Row 2 Stone 3
Mary Shank	9-09-1823	Franklin Co. IN	5-06-1904	Red Oak, Montgomery Co. IA		
m. Eleazer Root					3-21-1823	
Susannah (Susan) Shank	3-05-1826	Franklin Co. IN	3-08-1920	Ceddar Grove Franklin Co. IN		
m. Josiah McCafferty					12-16-1849	
William Shank	3-09-1828	Franklin Co. IN	7-12-1905	Red Oak, Monmtgomery Co. IA		
m. Sarinda Withers					4-06-1851	
Rachel Shank	8-??-1830	Franklin Co. IN	aft. 1904	Red Oak, Montgomery Co. IA		
Emily A. Shank	aft. 1830					
George W. C. Shank	aft. 1830					
Francis Marion Shank	10-26-1832	Franklin Co. IN	8-24-1927	Red Oak, Montgomery Co. IA		
Sarah Jane	1-27-1839	Franklin Co. IN	1929	Montgomery Co. IA		
Charlotte Helen	10-21-1843	Franklin Co. IN	1-10-1933	Red Oak Junction Cem. Red Oak IA		
m. Theodore Reifel	1841	Germany	2-01-1889	Red Oak Junction Cem.	3-21-1867	Franklin Co. IN
m2. Mary Beck	5-09-1811	VA	3-22-1879	Quick/Shank Cem. Brookville Twp., IN	12-20-1849	Dearborn IN
Rosanna (Anna) Shank	@1854					
Henry Shank						
James S. Shank	9-13-1803	Bucks Co. PA	11-02-1862	Red Oak, IA		
m. Amanda Case	1809	OH	1854	Evergreen Cem. Red Oak IA	3-23-1828	
Zebulon M. Pike Shank	1-08-1829	Franklin Co. IN	7-31-1905	Red Oak Montgomery Co., IA		
William A. Shank	1831	Franklin Co. IN				
Henry Charles Shank	5-29-1833	Franklin Co. IN	2-13-1893	Red Oak, Montgomery Co. IA		
Antony Shank	7-27-1832	Shelby6 Co. IN	2-25-1892	Red Oak, Montgomery Co IA		
m. Mary	1848	IL				
Mary Shank	1837	Shelby6 Co. IN				
James Shank	1840	Shelby Co. IN				
Hannah Shank	1847	Howard Co. IN				
John L. Shank	4-??-1850	Harrison Twp. Howard Co. IN				
Susan Shank	10-??-1785	Bucks Co. PA	1815	Franklin Co. IN		

buried in Little Cedar Cemetery on the Ariens Farm in Brookville Township. Thomas then married Mary Beck on December 20, 1849 and had two more children. The 1850 U.S. Federal Census showed that Thomas was a farmer with real estate valued at \$4,260. In 1860 his real estate was valued at \$4,000 with a personal estate of \$1,000. He passed away on September 17, 1867 and was laid to rest in Row 2 Stone 2 of Quick/Shank Cemetery in Brookville, Indiana. Mary Beck Shank died on March 22, 1879 and was also buried in the Quick/Shank Cemetery.

John L. Shank, our subject and first child of Thomas and Sary Shank, was born on August 1, 1821 in Franklin County, near Brookville. At this time the settlement of southeastern Indiana was growing rapidly due to the transportation routes provided by the Whitewater, Great Miami and Ohio rivers. Brookville also was growing rapidly due to the remarkable fertility of the soil. Soon farmers saw the need of better transportation for their farm products to market and wanted to build a canal.

A convention of delegates from Dearborn, Fayette,

Franklin, Randolph, Union and Wayne counties in Indiana assembled at Harrison, Ohio in 1822-23 to consider the feasibility of building a canal. August Jocelyn, a minister of the gospel who also edited the *Western Agriculturist* at Brookville, began writing articles and speaking to his congregations about the need for a canal. Following the convention, a United States Army colonel named Shriver began to survey a route for the canal but died when he had gotten as far as Garrison's Creek. After a short period of time Colonel Stansbury, a United States civil engineer, completed the survey.

Nothing was done about the canal until about 10 years later. In February 1834 the Indiana State Legislature directed the canal commissioners to hire competent engineers to start a survey early in the summer to locate a canal from a point at or near the mouth of Nettle creek, in Wayne county, to Lawrenceburg, Indiana. They hired William Goodkins as engineer-in-chief, Jesse L. Williams as assistant engineer. Other assistant engineers were employed during its construction and existence. They included Simpson

## THE HOOSIER PACKET - JUNE 2014

Talbot, Elisha Long, John H. Farquhar, Martin Crowell, Henry C. Moore, Stephen D. Wright, \_\_\_ Dewey, John Minesinger and John (L.) Shank. The canal was built to the west side of the Whitewater River as far as Laurel. There it crossed to the east bank and continued down to Brookville

and thence on to Lawrenceburg, its terminus. *The Connersville Watchman* reported that “a corps of engineers are surveying the route of the contemplated canal down the valley of the White Water” in 1834.

### JOHN LEFFORGE’S ESTATE

James Mackinney and Enoch McCarty appraised the personal property of John Lefforge, Thomas Shank’s father-in-law, on April 29, 1834 for purposes of being sold under the provisions of his Will. They determined its total worth to be \$771.27 of which \$424.02 was to be kept for family use and \$347.25 that is listed below was to be sold. This gives us insight as to the value of things in 1834.

Item	Value
1 yoke oxen & yoke	\$40.00
1 heifer	5.00
7 sheep & 3 lambs	7.75
16 head of hogs	22.00
1 sorrel mare	28.00
1 yr. old horse colt	20.00
1 bay mare	37.50
1 2 yr. old horse	20.00
1 grey mare	30.00
1 cow & calf	11.00
1 yr. old bull calf	2.50
1 yr. old bull calf	3.00
1 field (7 acres) wheat & rye	21.00
1 oats stack	7.50
1 wheat stack	10.00
1 peacock plow	36.25
1 peacock plow	25.50
2 bull plows	2.00
1 windmill	16.00
2 old scythe blades	.25
1 foot adze	1.25
1 shovel	.37½
1 hand saw, auger & place	1.00
Hammer & trowel	1.25
2 axes	1.75
1 seine	26.25
1 log chain	2.75
1 frow	.37½
1 clevis, 2 rings, 2 iron wedges	1.62½
1 gun, shotpouch, powder horn	10.00
2 cow bells	.50
1 pr. Stretchers	1.25
1 kettle	1.50
2 kegs	.37½

The 1850 U.S. Federal Census shows John as an engineer living in Connersville, Indiana. The 1860 census shows him living in a Cambridge City Hotel with Nathan Richardson, G. B. Durant, H.M. Schockly, George Rump and John Casper. He was the acting superintendent of the railroad. John L. Shank died on July 21, 1864 and was buried in the Quick/Shank Cemetery.

The Whitewater Canal was completed, opened to Cambridge City in 1846, and extended to Hagerstown in 1847 by local businessmen. When completed it ran from Lawrenceburg to Hagerstown. It was 76 miles long and had 56 locks and 7 feeder dams. The Whitewater Valley Railroad bought the canal in 1866 and laid their tracks upon the old towpath.

#### Sources:

- Ancestry.com Public Member Trees for John Shank
- Atlas of Franklin County Indiana, 1882. Reprinted 1976 by the  
Bookmark:Sponsored by the Laurel Kiwanis Club-Laurel,  
Indiana
- Cemetery Records of Brookville, Indiana Library.
- 1817 Tax List Brookville Twp. Indiana
- Family Tree Maker’s Genealogy Report:
  - Descendants of John Lefforge
  - Descendants of John Shank
  - Descendants of John L. Shank
  - Descendants of Thomas Shank
- Fox, Henry Clay. *Memoirs of Wayne County and the City of Richmond, Indiana*. Madison, WI: Western Historical Association, 1912.
- Hess, Willard C. *Indiana Source Book*. The Hoosier Genealogist. 1979
- History of Montgomery County, Iowa. Des Moines, IA: Iowa Historical and Biographical Co., 1881.
- Holmes, Maurice. *Court Records of Franklin County, Indiana*. January 1987.
- Miller, James M. “The Whitewater Canal,” *Indiana Magazine of History*. September 1907.
- Probate order Book 2, Franklin Co., Indiana.
- Reifel, August Jacob. *History of Franklin County, Indiana: Her People, Industries, etc*. Indianapolis, IN: B.F. Bowen & Co., Inc., 1915.
- U.S. Federal Census for Indiana 1830,1840,1850,1860,1870
- U.S. Federal Census for Iowa, Montgomery County, Red Oak Twp., Red Oak Junction 1860
- War of 1812 Muster List