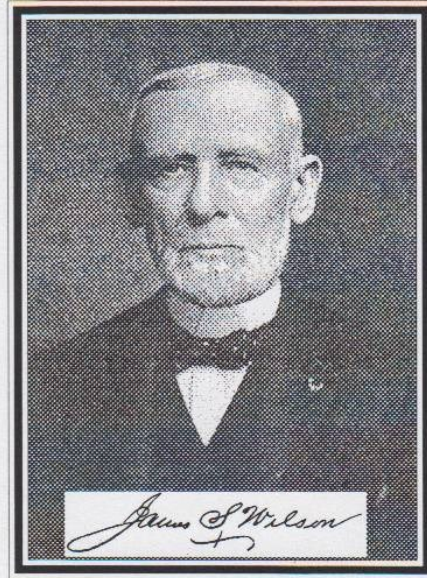


## CANAWLERS AT REST

### JAMES S. WILSON

b. October 9, 1823  
d. March 26, 1901

By Carolyn I. Schmidt



James S. Wilson was born to Andrew Wilson, a native of Pennsylvania, and Elizabeth (Schooley or Shoo-ley) Wilson, a native of England, on October 9, 1823 in Allegheny Co., Pennsylvania. He received his education at the common schools until he was twelve years old. At that time he became a salesman in a drug store. During three years spent there he acquired a practical business education. He also learned to be industrious, a habit that he continued throughout his life.

James decided to study medicine. He quit his job at the drug store, began his study and then became disenchanted with it. After only a short time he abandoned it and took a job as a steward on a packet boat. He served in this capacity from 1840-45.

On May 21, 1844, James married Delia (Delilah) Creveling (b. April 24, 1828, d. September 11, 1891) of Akron Ohio. They became the parents of two girls and a boy:

1. Indiana Wilson b. 1845 Pennsylvania  
Married Robert J. Connolly (he died)  
child Wilson J. Connolly b. 1871  
Married John L. Maurice 1893  
He had 2 sons: David W. and Charles L.  
He owned a meat market/was butcher  
Lived in Logansport, Indiana  
Member of Second Presbyterian church
2. Frederick Wilson b. 1848 Indiana (died before  
1860 census)
3. Virginia (Jennie) Wilson b. 1859 Indiana  
Married George W. Stevens (president of C. &  
O. Railway)  
Had 4 children: Helen, Paul J., George  
J. and Sharp J.  
Lived in Richmond, Virginia

In 1845, James arrived in Logansport, Indiana, as master (captain) of a canal boat on the Wabash & Erie Canal. He was freighting goods principally between Logansport and Toledo. His settlement date in Logansport is listed as 1845. We assume that his wife and baby Indiana came with him at this time.

In 1850, James abandoned the canal business to become a clerk for William Beach & Company in the Forest Mills. Seven years later he, in partnership with George Cecil, of Cecil & Company, took charge of the mills and operated them successfully until 1883. During that year he took over the entire control of the business. He successfully managed the Logansport Mills located on Broadway and was a local manufacturer until 1890.

The 1850 Federal Census lists James Wilson as a canal captain and he has no Real Estate. Francis H. Beard, age 12, is living with his family.

The 1860 census says he was a miller and values his Real Estate at \$4,000 and Personal Estate at \$900. He has a servant, Bridget Flanagan, age 20, living with his family.

The 1870 census says he was a flour manufacturer and values his Real Estate at \$24,500 and Personal Estate at \$2,400. His wife; two daughters; Indiana's husband Robert J. Connolly; Savannah Crolling, age 69, of Pennsylvania; Bradfield Caistone, age 29, domestic servant, of Ireland; and Quigley Lawrence, age 26, hostler, of England, are living in his home.

Sometime prior to 1880 Cecil and Wilson laid out an addition to Logansport.

The 1880 census says he is a miller and flour merchant. His wife; two daughters; Indiana's husband Robert J. Connolly and son Wilson J. Connolly age 9; Louisa Yagurka, age 20, domestic servant, of Prussia; and Jacob Geppinger, age 21, Hostler, of Ohio, are living in his home.

The Logansport Jenney Electric Light & Power Company, was organized on October 2, 1883 to light the city following the plan's adoption by the city council. The cost of lighting Logansport for one year was \$5,500. The list of its stockholders were: Cecil & Wilson (George & James), A. R. Shroyer, P. W. Moore, J. A. Adrian, Joseph Seiter, Victor E. Seiter and E. Hattery. The company was put into operation in January 1884 as the first city plant from the Jenney Electric Light Company of Fort Wayne, Indiana.

A. R. Shroyer became the president and treasurer of the company; Victor E. Seiter, its secretary; William Dolan, its manager; and James S. Wilson, O. W. Moore, V. E. Seiter, A. R. Shroyer, R. T. McDonald, Wm. Dolan and J. N. Booth, its directors.

In 1890 James sold the water power/mills to the city of Logansport. They converted it to use for municipal power and lighting.

Delia Creveling, James' wife, died on September 11, 1891 at the age of 63. She was buried in Mt. Hope cemetery on September 13, 1891 in section 13 lot 0545 space 07 and shares James' tombstone.

When James could not be found in the Logansport, Indiana census of 1900, it was assumed that after Delia's death he had gone to live with one of his children. He was found in the Richmond City, Virginia, census living with Virginia, and her husband George W. Stevens; their four children; J. Sharp, a cousin, age 47, a railroad agent, of Pennsylvania; Philip Gibson, age 68, capitalist, of Virginia; and Kate S. Gibson, age 61, of Virginia.

James was a supporter of the Republican Party. He also was a member of the I.O.O.F. Later he became a member of the Elks in Richmond, Virginia.

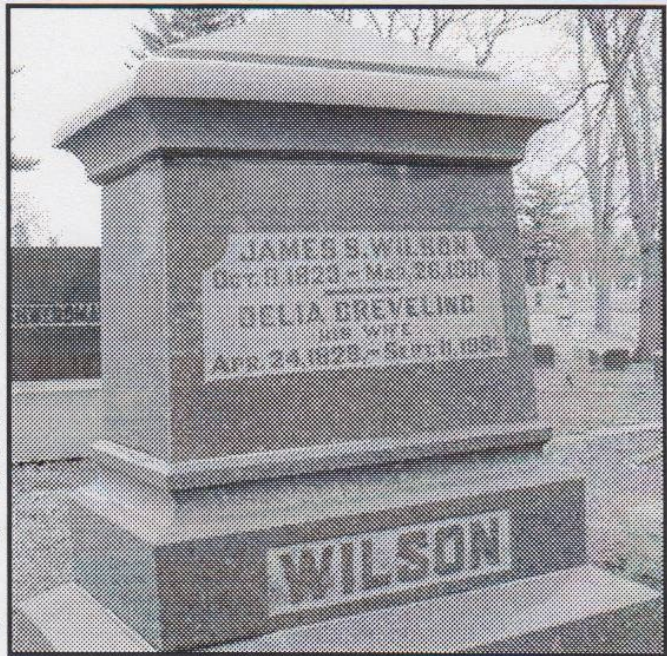
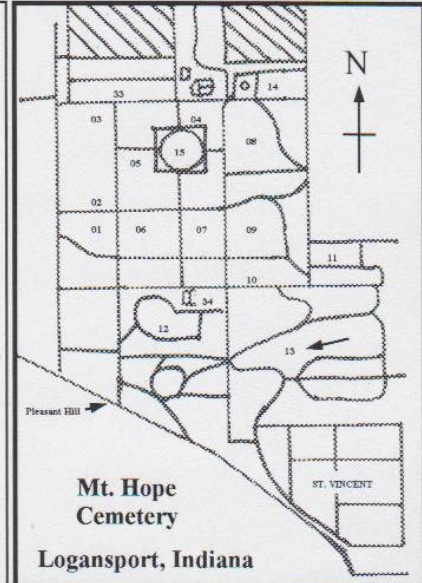
James S. Wilson died on March 26, 1901 at the age of 77. He was brought back home to Logansport to be buried on March 30, 1901, alongside Delia in Mount Hope Cemetery's section 13, lot 0545, space 06. It appears that his current tombstone replaced an earlier tombstone.

In the *History of Cass County* James Wilson is mentioned as follows:

"Mr. Wilson has probably manufactured more flour and handled more grain than any other man in Indiana, and during his long residence in Logansport his business record has never been impeached. He began life, if not in the field of adversity, at least unaided and dependent wholly upon self-effort. His capital consisted of a full share of brain power, energy and an inbred determination to succeed among men. Possessing a strong appreciation of the value of integrity and justice and well defined purity of purpose, it has won for him an enviable distinction in Business circles."

Mt. Hope Cemetery is a combination of several old cemeteries.

- 01 Highland 5th
- 02 Highland 4th
- 03 Mt Calvary II
- 04 Mt. Calvary I
- 05 Highland 2nd
- 06 Highland 3rd
- 07 Highland 1st
- 08 1st Addition
- 09 7th Addition
- 10 5th Addition
- 11 Highland 6th
- 12 Pleasant Hill
- 13 Old Part/Old Plot
- 14 Barnes Addition
- 15 Legion Circle
- 33 Highland 7th



Grave stone of James S. and Delia C. Wilson Photo- Bob Schmidt

Sources:

*Atlas of Cass County*. Kingman Brothers. 1878

Helm, Thomas B. *History of Cass County, Indiana*. Chicago, IL: Brant & Fuller. 1886.

Powell, Dr. Jehu Z. *History of Cass County, Indiana*. 1913.

Mount Hope Cemetery Records, vol. 2 p. 176. In Logansport City Bldg.

Taber, Graham. *History of Logansport and Cass County, Indiana*. Logansport, IN: Pharos Tribune. 1947.

<http://incass-inmiami.org/cass/cemeteries/mthope/MTHwilmwim.html>

## FROGS AND THE CANAL

CSI's mascot is the frog since frogs have continued to live in Indiana's canals from the time they were built until today. Toledo, Ohio, is often referred to as "Frog Town" since in its early days it was swampy with frogs everywhere. When frogs became a delicacy, they were shipped by canal boat to Cincinnati restaurants as seen in the following article submitted by George and Shirley Clark:

Ft. Wayne *Sentinel* August 8, 1846  
Reprinted from the Cincinnati *Atlas*

NEW ARTICLE OF TRADE. — We have from time to time noticed the establishment and progress of several branches of trade in the Queen City (Cincinnati); and among the rest the importation and *ingulphation* of large quantities of green sea turtle. In our road, on Monday, we came across another new article of *gastromanie*, which we take pleasure in noticing, as it not only marks the progress of commerce, but indicates the march of civilization; it is only *refined taste* that can appreciate and value such delicacies, — and because the article is likely to make some *noise* in the market. It was no more or less than an invoice of live *Frogs* from the Junction of the Wabash and Miami Canals.\* They were regularly shipped and consigned to Mr. Bates, subject to freight and charges as customary for "Bull Frogs." The consignee informs us that this is likely to become a considerable branch of trade, as the article is in great demand among our fashionable Restaurateurs. Arrangements have been made for the regular shipment from the Wabash and Maumee counties, and there need be no fears of a "short crop," as the product in that region is abundant and never failing.

*Vive la Commercial! Viva la Gastromania!! Viva Johnny Crapand!!! — Cincinnati Atlas.*

\*The Miami and Erie Canal joined the Wabash and Erie Canal in Junction, Ohio. The portion of the Wabash and Erie from Junction to Toledo was renamed the Miami and Erie Canal in March 14, 1849. CSI usually refers to it as the (Miami) Wabash & Erie Canal.

## CANAL BROUGHT LABORERS TO LAGRO

When it was learned that a canal would be built through an area, young men soon followed seeking work. They often remained when their work was completed thus settling in towns along the canal. This is the case of Lagro in Wabash county, Indiana as is seen in these excerpts from Thomas B. Helm's *History of Wabash County, Indiana* published in Chicago, Illinois by John Morris Printer in 1884.

"In the spring of 1834 (April), John Russell, Samuel Layser, Mitchel Hushaw, Henry Hushaw, Thomas Nelson and Adam Nelson, six young men, active and muscular, came on foot from near Indianapolis to La Gro, expecting to get work on the new "canal." They got it before long, their work at first being to erect shanties for the laborers; but the letting [of contracts] was done in May, 1836, and the boys got all the work they wanted; and they continued in the canal labor (some of them, and perhaps all) with intervals of intermission it may be for many months."

"John Russell, after working on the canal through the summer of 1834, went home, and persuaded his father to return with him to Wabash County and enter some land, which he did. In the course of the winter, John Russell was married to the daughter of Daniel Ballinger, and became a householder in the county of Wabash in the spring of 1835. Mr. Russell and his wife were the first couple married in La Gro."

"John Eagan came from Ireland to La Gro, and, working on the canal and saving his wages, he entered three eighties as soon as the canal was completed."

"Thomas Fitzgibbon, who had been a successful contractor on the canal, and who came in 1831, continuing also his work in connection therewith, entered a section of land south of the Wabash River, southwest of La Gro, upon which he resided till his death, in 1865, being then in his seventy-second year. He was buried in the Catholic Cemetery at La Gro." [St. Patrick's Cemetery]

"John Watkins (still a resident at La Gro) burned upon the ground where the court house [Wabash, Indiana] now stands the lime to build the lock on the canal which was where the Lock Mills are at this time." [Cissna's Mills were located by the Cissna, sometimes called the Hipskind, Lock #16 in Wabash.]

"The town of La Gro is located on the north side of the Wabash River, on both sides of La Gro creek, as also on the north side of the Wabash & Erie Canal."