

CANAWLERS AT REST

CLEM AQUILLA JONES

b. March 15, 1822

d. November 29, 1901

Find A Grave 22759377

Aquilla Jones, the subject of this article, should not be confused with the older and more famous Aquilla Q. Jones (July 8, 1811-1891), a lawyer of Indianapolis, who was the Postmaster at Indianapolis and Treasurer of Indiana. We will call our subject Aquilla Jones instead of Clem Aquilla Jones, since only his tombstone has Clem before Aquilla Jones. In all census records, biographies, and history books he is simply Aquilla Jones.

Aquilla Jones was born in Surrey, North Carolina on March 15, 1822. His parents, Robert and Sophia Jones moved their family, including eleven year old Aquilla, from North Carolina to Indiana in 1833 by ox teams and settled in Greene County. Later the family was cruelly mistreated by the Indians. Sophia and her mother were scalped. Sophia died, but fortunately her mother, Aquilla's grandmother, survived. Aquilla's brother, John Jones, was captured by the Indians and carried away. After diligently searching for thirteen years and spending all of his money, Robert Jones at last found and recovered John for the family.

In 1844 Aquilla was a young man and full of spunk. He was an active worker in the local ranks of the Democratic Party and during the presidential campaign of James K. Polk, who became the 11th president of the United States serving from 1845-1849, he rode a steer through the streets of Bloomfield and carried a Polk staff.

On November 24, 1845, Aquilla, age 23, was married to Mary Burcham, age 25, in Greene County, Indiana. They had six children but many of them died young. Only John and Samuel were alive in 1908.

The Central Canal was planned to pass near Worthington, Indiana. Actual work had begun on it at Indianapolis and Evansville. As part of an agreement in the Butler Bill of 1847, it was decided to extend the Wabash & Erie via the Cross-Cut from Terre Haute to Worthington and then have it follow the old Central route to Evansville. Aquilla worked on the Wabash & Erie Canal that was being

built through Greene County. It was completed through the county during 1849-1850. Its route is described in the *History of Greene & Sullivan Counties* published in 1884 as follows:

“Entering the county at Johnstown; thence down to Worthington; thence along the west side of the river to Newberry, where a dam was built and the river crossed; thence southwestwardly into Daviess County.”

The canal was dug in the standard way of the time. Men with money contracted to build sections of it. Irishmen provided the labor using spades, shovels, picks, wheelbarrows, one-horse carts and sometimes scrapers.

Greene County citizens awaited the opening of the Cross-Cut portion of the Wabash & Erie Canal. There was a great celebration in 1850 when the first canal boat, the “Aeolus,” arrived carrying passengers from Terre Haute. Quite a few of the citizens from the county went to Terre Haute to ride that boat into Worthington. Others took a “grand excursion” up the canal to Terre Haute from Worthington when regular canal boat traffic opened to the north in 1850.

By 1853 the canal was opened all the way to Evansville. Even though there were six locks to control the water levels on the canal, heavily loaded boats trying to carry iron products, flour, grain, whiskey and other products had difficulty in this area. There simply wasn't enough water available to maintain the proper depth to float them.

From 1851 to 1859 business on the canal was fairly good. The canal system operated from Worthington south to Evansville for about 6 years and from Worthington to the north about 10 years. Then it was almost abandoned in this area. At various times they tried to revive it. It did some business until about 1863, but it could not be depended on. It soon became an eyesore and was regarded as a nuisance. The upkeep of the canal was too expensive. But it must be remembered Worthington was built because of the canal.

With his work on the canal completed and the canal's success somewhat doubtful, Aquilla, like many young men at the time, decided to head for the gold fields in California. He started at Bloomfield in Greene County in March 1854 with ox teams for the overland journey following the Kit Carson route to Sante Fe and California. This was three months before his sixth child was born.

He was on the road for nine months and two weeks. They ran out of flour and at one point his companions had to pay fifty dollars for fifty pounds of flour. They eventually arrived at their destination.

He spent four years in the "Golden State." He mined for a year but soon learned he could make a lot of money by burning charcoal. He spent the last three years there producing charcoal before deciding to return to Indiana.

He returned to Indiana via the Isthmus route to New York and then to Riley township, Vigo County, where he lived for about four years. We assume he was divorced from Mary, but have not found this record. On August 21, 1839 at age 37 he married Dorothea Ann Sanders (age 18). They had seven children.

Aquilla Jones was killed by a train on November 29, 1901. His obituary was in the *Terre Haute Express* the following day, Saturday, November 30, 1901. It reads as follows:

STRUCK BY A TRAIN
Aquilla Jones,
Aged Resident of Lost Creek Township,
Meets Sudden Death

"Aquilla Jones, aged 86 (79) years, a retired farmer, living near Seelyville was struck by Vandalia passenger train No. 15 westbound, at point, one mile east of Seelyville yesterday morning, at 9:40 o'clock and was instantly killed.

"He was slightly deaf and was walking along the

right of way when the train approached. Evidently he did not here it coming, for he stepped directly in front of the engine. Engineer Cronin was unable to avoid the accident.

"Mr. Jones was a highly esteemed citizen of Lost Creek township, and leaves considerable property. His wife died several years ago, and he lived with his son, Clem Jones, on the latter's farm, a mile and half southeast of Seelyville. He leaves 5 sons and two daughters as follows: Clem and Scott Jones living near Seelyville; Sam Jones, living north of Terre Haute, John P. Jones of Indianapolis, and Mrs. Charles Jones and Mrs. Oscar Boles [Bowles] of Brazil."

Although he was a member of the Christian church, he was buried in the Moses Cemetery, a Baptist cemetery in Rosedale, Vigo County, Indiana that was located nearby his son Clem's farm in Seelyville.

Barbara Horney has placed a photo of Aquilla's children and their spouses on the Sanders' Family Tree in Ancestry.com. It would not copy clear enough to print here. The inscription below the picture reads:

Three sons and two daughters of Aquilla Jones and Dorothea (Sanders) Jones. Back row standing: Luella Jones, Rebecca (Harpold) Jones, Kitty Clidy (Williams) Jones, and Louise Belle (Jones) Bowles. Front row sitting: James Thomas Jones, William Winfield Scott Jones, Clem Aquilla Jones, and Oscar Bowles. Note: Rebecca is the wife of Scott Jones. Clide is the wife of Clem Jones. Oscar Bowles is the husband of Louise Belle Jones.

Sources:

Ancestry.com
freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~docbratt/amos_sanders_family

AQUILLA JONES' FAMILY						
Name	Birth	Place	Death	Place	Marriage	Place
Robert Jones	1800					
Sophia Jones	1800					
Clem Aquilla Jones	3-13-1822	Surrey, N.C.	11-29-1901	Moses Cem. Vigo, IN	11-24-1845	Greene Co., IN
1. Mary Burcham	1821	North Carolina	1892	Greene Co., IN	11-24-1845	Greene Co., IN
A. Silas Jones		Greene Co. IN		prior 1908		
B. Rachel Jones		" "		prior 1908		
C. Betty Jones	1850	" "		1908		
D. John B/P Jones	1851	" "		1926		
E. Robert Jones	1853	" "		1908		
F. Samuel R. Jones	6-04-1854	" "	3-16-1911	Otter Creek, Vigo, IN	3-23-1873	Eliz. Jane Jackson
2. Dorthea Ann Sanders	11-26-1840	Indiana	1-20-1877	Moses Cem. Vigo, IN	8-21-1859	Vigo Co., IN
A. William Winfield "Scott" Jones	1861	Riley, Indiana	1922			Rebecca Harpold
B. Louise Belle Jones	1862	" "	1944			Oscar Bowles
C. James Thomas "Jim" Jones	1863	" "	1945			
D. Louella Laura "Ella" Jones	1868	" "	1950			Charles Jones?
E. Moody C. Jones	1869	" "	1941			
F. Clem Aquilla Jackson Jones	1873	Lost Creek, Indiana	1963			Kitty Clide Williams
G. Sarah Minnie Jones	8-??-1874	" "	4-18-1893			
John Jones (Aquilla's brother captured by Indians)						
Residences of Aquilla Jones		Find A Grave				
1860 Riley, Vigo, Indiana		Clem Aquilla Jones	22759377	Moses Cemetery, Vigo Co., IN		
1870 Lost Creek, Vigo, Indiana		Mary Burcham Jones	13237410	Walnut Grove Cem. Greene Co., IN		
1880 Lost Creek, Vigo, Indiana		Dorothea Sanders Jones	18831302	Moses Cemetery, Vigo Co., IN		

Find-A-Grave: Aquilla Jones
Google search



AT REST: Clem Aquilla Jones, Died Nov. 29, 1901 Aged 79 yrs. 8 ms. 14 d. Gravestone in Moses Cemetery N 9th St. Rosedale, Vigo County, Indiana

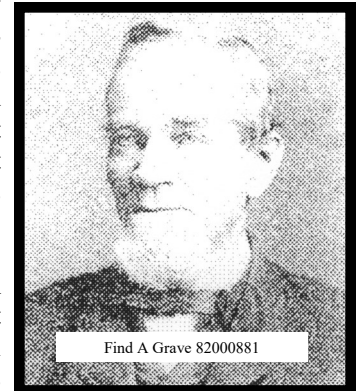
Aquilla Jones
Vigo County, Indiana Cemeteries
President James K. Polk
Oakley, Charles Cochran, *Greater Terre Haute And Vigo County: Closing the First Century's History of City and County.* New York, NY: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1908.
Schmidt, Carolyn. *Wabash & Erie Canal Cross-Cut: "Across the Cross-Cut."* Canal Society of Indiana, Ft. Wayne, IN: Office Depot, 2008.
Terre Haute Express, November 30, 1901.
United States Federal Census 1860

JOSEPH BURNS AND HIS WABASH & ERIE CANAL CONNECTIONS By Charles Davis

Joseph Burns, son of James and Mary Burns, was born in Pickaway county, Ohio on March 17, 1822. He came with his parents and six siblings to Parke county, In-



diana on October 23, 1828. When they arrived ¼ miles north of where Armiesburg now stands they set up camp and lived partly in the big old Virginia wagon bed in which they had moved from Piqua county, Ohio. The next day they began erecting a log cabin from the trees and poles that stood on the ground around the site and in a short time had built a cabin about 18 feet square and two stories high.



The floor of the cabin was made from slabs, the loft with planks from Cox's mill nearby. The chimney was about 5 feet long and made of logs, sticks and mud and lined with stone procured from the "Wea" Indian burying place that was on the bank of Raccoon Creek about 300 feet from where the aqueduct of the Wabash and Erie Canal afterwards crossed the creek. From this pile of stones Joseph procured many Indian Relics such as pie beads, tomahawks and a piece of metal, which he supposed had been used for a breast plate.

Their cabin was located across the road from Chief Christmas "Noel" Dagenet. Near this place the walnut trees were peeled and no doubt had been used by the Indians not a great many years before in building their dwellings. At this time a small number of Indians, perhaps 20 to 40, visited Christmas Dagenet, who was half French and half Wea (Miami) and owned one mile square of land. Davis, Charles. "Christmas 'Noel' Dagenet and His Wabash & Erie Canal Connections" *Indiana Canals*, Spring 2001, pg. 8.

The Indians would come about once a year and would pass by the Burns' house once a day, sometimes oftener, going from Dagenet's to the creek and the dense woods that then lined the Raccoon bottom to hunt and fish. There was whiskey to be had at Armiesburg. They would get all dressed up in their Indian garb and get gloriously full of it.

At first the Indians scared the Burns' children. However, they soon became accustomed to seeing them because their father, James Burns, served in Bereman's company during the War of 1812 and had been a prisoner of the Indians. He had learned a little of their language. They would often stop and talk to him. I, Charles Davis, ordered and put a head stone on his grave in March 2001.

Joseph Burns, our subject, recalls, "I remember I claimed a colt, which was running in the yard around the cabin. One Indian had a fisherman gig he made. He made a rush at the colt with the gig and I fully believed my colt would be killed. My father spoke to him and he let the gig fall and gave a hoop, a laugh and went on down the road."

At this time Chief Dagenet lived in a cabin with a row of log cabins starting on the north near Dagenet's house and running south to near the south line of the section. This row of cabins was called "String Town" and it is said that in one of these cabins the first court was held in Parke county. The other cabins were occupied by Dagenet's relatives, some of them part Indian and French.

There are no recorded deeds from the time when the Burns family settled on this farm. Joseph worked there until the age of 19 when he went into business for himself. He worked by the day or month on flatboats running down the Mississippi to New Orleans and saved \$500. From his earnings he settled in Montezuma, Indiana.

John Given Davis owned a ferry-boat on the Wabash River. His boat had previously been operated by Thomas Vanlandingham and later his sons, Septimus and "Uncle Wyck," for many years. In 1849 Joseph rented and managed the ferry-boat for Davis for several years.

On November 14, 1860 Joseph Burns bought the ferry from Davis for \$1000. Deed Record 24/301 It included

the landing sites on the east and west side of the Wabash River. The deed reads: "all rights of ferrying across the Wabash river, at and adjacent to the town of Montezuma in Parke county east of said river and also that small parcel of gore land situated between the Wabash river on the west, the Wabash and Erie Canal on the east, and North street on the north, and running south not over 250 yards or to Patterson street or so much thereof as belongs to said John Davis and wife purchased by Road and Davis of Ambrose Whitlock." The deed was recorded December 2, 1865. Joseph operated this ferry until the Wabash River bridge was built in 1892. He made his fortune on this ferry and the Wabash & Erie Canal.

While operating the ferry on the Wabash River, Joseph discovered fire clay on the west bluff of the river in Vermillion county. When the first section of the C. & E. I. R. R. was being constructed by Joseph Collett, he met Collett and they organized a fire-brick company. It opened in 1872 as the Burns and Collett Fire Brick Company just two weeks before the first C. & E.I. Train ran between Terre Haute and Danville, Illinois, passing right in front of the plant. In a few years Joseph purchased Collett's interest in

GENEALOGY OF JOSEPH BURNS

By Charles Davis 2011

		BORN	DIED	BURIED	MARRIED	FIND A GRAVE
James Burns	Mifflin, PA	1-23-1790	12-26-1853	Montezuma		
1. Mary A. Wolfe		1-24-1793	3-??-1831/34	Old Montezuma Cem.		
<u>Children</u>						
A. Joseph Burns Sr.		3-17-1822	12-17-1903		11-10-1847	82000881
1. Caroline Vanlandingham		1-24-1828	3-30-1849	Old Montezuma Cem.	11-10-1847	79141292
<u>Children</u>						
A. Caroline Burns		3-14-1849	5-19-1937	Lawrence, KS	10-03-1867	
m. Enos Newton Kuhn					10-03-1867	
2. Permelia Vanlandingham		11-22-1822	6-06-1852	Parke Co.	6-12-1850	
3. Mary F. Millikin		7-15-1834	12-13-1882		1857	74723121
<u>Children</u>						
A. Mary Louise Burns		6-??-1859	2-15-1942	Montezuma, IN		
B. Edward H. Burns		9-23-1861	6-02-1921	Chicago, IL		
C. Hattie Burns		10-17-1862	1-17-2863	Parke Co., IN		
D. Belle B. Burns		1866	1921			
E. J. Francis "Frank" Burns		7-24-1868	8-04-1875	Montezuma, IN		
F. Robert Burns		1-11-1871	1-11-1875	Montezuma, IN		
G. Joseph Hugar Burns Jr.		3-14-1877	4-28-1962	Montezuma, IN		
4. Ann Elizabeth Donaldson		4-??-1836	3-??-1911	Tuscola, IL	1880/1882	
wife of Elisha Cannon, brother of Congressman Joseph Gurney Cannon						
B. Sarah Burns						
C. Margaret Burns						
D. Robert Burns						
E. Jane Burns						
F. Mary Burns						
G. John Burns		11-22-1822	6-06-1852	Old Montezuma Cem.		
2. Mary Thompson						
<u>Children</u>						
A. Samuel Burns						
B. James Burns						
C. Isabella Burns						
D. Elizabeth Burns						

the company. He later sold an interest to his son-in-law, Salem P. Hancock. The new Corporation became Burns and Hancock Fire Brick & Clay Col, and remained so until it was sold in 1947. They shipped brick to 12 states. In 1906 they installed an electric light plant, used the power coming from the Burns & Hancock brick plant in West Montezuma and furnished electricity to the town of Montezuma. It was a success and lit 40 street lights at no expense to the town.

Joseph owned 600 acres of fertile land in West Montezuma. I don't know where Joseph lived most of his life, but I do know that in his later years he lived in "the Burns house." On December 28, 1889 he purchased his home on lot 150, Jefferson (North) street in Montezuma from John X. Ireland for \$150 plus a mortgage of \$700. D.R. 50/437. While running through the deed records I got the impression that the house was built around 1866 by Thomas S. Hood, a banking and grain businessman, who moved to Dana, Indiana, where he died on April 24, 1894. The house is still standing, is vacant, and is one of the few old homes left in town. It is of Italianate design and has a hand cut sandstone block foundation.

Joseph Burns is another success story. He made it good during the Wabash & Erie Canal era. He is buried in



Built around 1866 by Thomas S. Hood, this home on lot 150 on Jefferson Street in Montezuma, Indiana was purchased by Joseph Burns on December 28, 1889. He lived there until his death in 1903.
Photo by Charles Davis

Oakland Cemetery, Montezuma, Parke County, Indiana.

Sources:

Beckwith, *History of Vigo and Parke Counties*, 1880.
Bowen, *Parke County-Vermillion Co. History*. 1913.
Combined Atlas 1874-1908-1916 Isaac Straus Centennial Memorial of Parke Co., IN.
Davis, Charles. "Walter C. Donaldson and His Wabash & Erie Canal Connections"
Deed records at Rockville court house
Families of Parke County, Reserve township, 1983.
Federal Census Records 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, & 1900
Foster, Robert Burns. Picture of Joseph Burns Sr.

Indiana Marriage Records on Ancestry.com
Joseph Burns obituary, *Rockville Tribune*. 12-20-1903, p. 1.
Old Times in Montezuma Reminiscences of Dr. B. F. Hudson, Wycliffe Vanlandingham 4-21-1914.
Parke County Marriages in Rockville Library.
Public Member Trees, Ancestry.com
Recollections of Joseph Burns © 1892 SC 152 Indiana State Library



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

The following have joined the Canal Society of Indiana at the single/family membership rate of \$25 unless otherwise noted:

Annemarie Deville - Ft. Wayne, IN
Ronald & Helen Haywood - Indianapolis, IN
Teresa Lowe - Connersville, IN
John Polles - West Lafayette, IN

Welcome Aboard!