

# CANAWLERS AT REST

**ENION  
KENDALL**  
**b. October 1, 1795**  
**d. March 26, 1856**  
  
**By Carolyn I. Schmidt**

The June 2011 issue of "The Hoosier Packet" carried an article entitled "Wabash & Erie Canal Bard," which contained a reference to "Indian" Amos Kendall being the poet for the Wabash & Erie Canal. It intrigued your editor, who wanted to find more of his canal poems. No one named "Indian" or Amos Kendall was found in the Cass County, Indiana census, but Enion Kendall was there. It is believed that Enion sounded like "Indian" to the writer of the *Carroll County Citizen* article mentioned in the June publication. This led to a search of Cass County histories to see what could be found about Enion Kendall.

According to one history, Enion Kendall was described as "Cass County's pioneer poet, (who) could neither read nor write. Although his poetry was not great, he did have a nack (sic) making things rhyme. He had to dictate all his poetry."

Another history held a clue as to where more of Enion's poems might be found and gave his year of death as well as his place of residence. It said, "Enion Kendall is Logansport's pioneer poet, although he could neither read nor write. He was a wood sawer (sic) and lived in a shanty at the corner of Ninth and High streets, where he died in 1856. He wrote a lengthy rhyme, entitled 'History of Kansas and March of Western Army to Santa Fe and San Diego,' which was published in the *Delphi Times* in 1854 and now found in volume 14, Biddle Miscellany. He also wrote, or rather dictated, as he could not write, a poem on the great cyclone of 1845 and reproduced [it] in the *Logansport Journal* August 4, 1907. His rhymes, if not elegant, displayed some original poetic genius."

The third history again mentioned Biddle's Miscellany. It said, "Enion Kendall will prove entertaining to the readers of his poems. Without education, a wood sawyer by occupation, he showed a remarkable mind, considering his advantages. And though he was compelled to rely upon his friends to whom he dictated his poetry, and who made him send his 'Eliza Allen' to

Mexico 'in three parts' his poems display a remarkable imagination. He was voluminous and succeeded in making his poetry profitable, which can not be said of all poets. His muse sung in ante-bellum days, and since Judge (Horace) Biddle has included his printed poems in his bound copies of miscellany it is evident that he has found a place in history. His philosophy while not profound was practical. And in his effort to maintain himself by literary effort without being able to read or write he showed a lofty ambition. In truth this curiosity of literature deserves a place in local history."

Attempting to find Enion's canal poems, a trip was made to Logansport's library and also its historical society museum. It was learned that Judge Horace Biddle was a very learned man and a poet as well. He had his works published and copyrighted for his personal use in more than 14 volumes entitled *Biddle's Miscellany*, but he did not sell them. He was a friend of Enion and admired Enion's poetry enough to publish some of it in his bound volumes. The library had several of the volumes but none that had Enion's poems. The historical society had even more of Biddle's volumes. Two of Enion's poems were found, but they were not about the canal.

Only bits and pieces of one of Enion's canal poems was found — part in a newspaper article and part in a history. It may have had many more verses. It is about the wreck of the canal boat, "Kentucky," which was quite a disaster in the Logansport area. The Arthington Papers in the Cass County Museum record that "The week of June 15, 1844, the Packet boat "Kentucky" was lost 3.5 miles below Logan[sport]. It was coming from Lafayette. Suddenly the tow path gave away. Sixty rods around a small bend was another hole. They cast lines on the bearer bank and also the tow path, but both parted. The boat sailed through, struck a tree on its way to the Wabash River. It swung around and struck another tree and broke into. [in two] The hull was raised while the stern went over.

"Mr. Brown, of the Brown Hotel in Lafayette, was on the stern. He and some of the crew held on to the rail all night in ten feet of raging water. He and three of the crew were saved. Thos. Emerson, Jr., of Logansport, was drowned. He was the son of Thos. Emerson, Sr., of Albion, NY. He had been educated at Partridge Military School in Vermont. He was in the brewing business with C. Emerson.

"It had rained so hard, that the water had risen fifteen feet in two hours. The body of Robt. Johnston Griffin, of NYC, a hardware merchant at Fort Wayne, was found below Delphi. Peter P. Bailey was his partner. Sunday evening, July 7, a body was found in the mouth of the Wea, believed to be Mr. Burns of English Quarry."

The *Logansport Telegraph* on June 22, 1844 ran the following two articles about the disaster:

"It is now ascertained that the break in the canal was

occasioned by the heavy rains which occurred on last Saturday evening. — The rain fell in torrents, and so great was the quantity of water, that the culverts could not afford sufficient vent for the passage of the water and it forced its way through the canal. At every point where there was a stream, the water forced its way through the canal. At the place where the Packet Boat Kentucky was lost, the water rose about 15 feet in two hours. The body of Mr. THOMAS EMERSON, was found on last Monday and interred on Tuesday with every attention and respect due the deceased. The body of Mr. Robert Jay Griffin was found below the dam, near Delphi. The body of Mr. Burns has not yet been found."

"OBITUARY.

"At all times death is a serious moment in the events of MAN'S existence, for his existence does not end with the throwing off of this mortal coil, He is destined to live on and on through an eternity of being. Our Town has been lately clad in mourning by the visitation of this event in the closing of the mortal career of THOMAS EMERSON Jr. on the 15th inst. Under circumstances of a painful nature. He was on , simply, a pleasure trip of a few miles only, to meet with a returning packet boat, when that returning boat was to be the fatal instrument on which his career was terminated by the disastrous breaking on the canal in consequence of the flood which has lately spread over our valley. Mr. Emerson was aged about 37 years, a native of the State of Vermont and son of Thomas Emerson Esq., at one time, one of the most wealthy citizens of New England and at present a resident of Albion in the State of N. Y. Thos. Emerson Jr. was educated at the highly respectable military School of Mr. Partridge in Vermont, so well known as one of the first disciplinarians in military tactics in the Union. The young men with whom Mr. Emerson Jr. was in the habit of daily association will miss him from their social board and by this painful event learn a lesson of the frailty of human life and the uncertainty of the continuance of those social enjoyments so well calculated to impress the mind with an indifference in regard to death. This death was doubly painful, sudden it was, and entirely unexpected on the part of all who knew him, and all who were with him in the exciting moment which ended in his death and two other persons. None of us can desire such a death; rather would we be surrounded by those we love and have the hand of devoted affection close the windows through which our souls had enjoyed the sight of nature's beauties and honest and sincere friends of our daily association. For this reason we deplore the manner of his exit, and consequent loss of a good hearted and amiable young man — may his associates learn wisdom from this bereavement. His distant friends may rest assured that they have the sympathies of the citizens of Logansport in this unlooked for cause of sorrow and mourning. Com."

Several weeks later on July 12, 1844, the *Logansport Telegraph* carried the following note:

"The body of a dead man [Mr. Burns of English Quarry] was found in the mouth of the Wea, on Sunday evening last. It

had been in the water several days, and was supposed to be the body of one of the unfortunate persons drowned some two or three weeks ago, a short distance below Logansport, at the time the Canal Packet was lost. *Tip. Jour.*"

After this tragedy, Enion wrote a poem about it. Unfortunately we only have the following few stanzas:

The wind it howled,  
The wind it did,  
The ship it rolled.  
The passengers hid  
Down in the hold,  
That's what they did.

The crew more brave,  
As the wind did roar,  
Their lives to save,  
All jumped ashore.  
The chambermaid  
And two men more  
Took refuge in a sycamore.

Another of Enion's poems, published years after his death in the *Logansport Journal* of August 4, 1907, can be seen on the following page. It is written about the 1845 tornado in Logansport and was referred to as a cyclone in one early Cass County history. It shows his crude craftsmanship and spelling. Some of his poems were more polished.

Searching Ancestry.com and the Indiana Federal Census it was learned that Enion Kendall was born in Guilford, North Carolina to William and Elizabeth (Williams) Kendall on October 1, 1795. He was their second to youngest child. His siblings were Joseph, Margrid, John, William C. and Isaac Kendall. Enion was married twice.

We do not know when Enion came to Indiana. However, his first marriage was to Mary Ellen "Polly" Gates, who was the daughter of John Gates. John Gates died in Tippecanoe County, Indiana in 1829. Enion and Polly were married on July 17, 1828 by Reuben Kelsey, a Justice of the Peace, in Lafayette, Tippecanoe County, Indiana. Enion was 20 years her senior. They had three children. Two must have died in early childhood. Only the name of Ira, 1833-1898, is known. They were divorced about ten years later on September 4, 1838.

Cass County histories list Enion's occupation as sawyer. Since he supposedly wrote poems about the Wabash & Erie Canal, it is possible he sawed wood for some of its structures. It was completed to Logansport around 1837-38 and to Lafayette around 1840-41.

On February 7, 1841 Enion married Deborah White, who was born circa 1820 in Kentucky. They were married in Logansport. He was 25 years her senior. They had six children. The first three, Samuel, James and Mary, were born in Tippecanoe County, Indiana. The last three, George, Maria, and Ida were born in Cass County, Indiana.

**THE TORNADO IN LOGANSFORT**

By Enion Kendall

twas on the first day of July  
A tempest rose the wind blue hi,  
And in a furious shape did dash,  
And tore what things, it pleased, to smash

the first we "heer" all in its way,  
into west Logan, it there did stray,  
And there a whirlwind, in by turns,  
it cawt the hous of nabor burns.

And tore part of the roof asunder,  
which cawed them all to quake and wonder,  
As it did pass, across eel river.  
All who saw it, how they did quiver,

to see the water whirled in the air,  
it maid all present, both gap and stair,  
it stretched its coarse towards the ski  
and swept the river nearly dri

report says Taber a standin by,  
with eyes lifted up to wards the sky,  
said if this storm comes over toun,  
my election it will al fall down

the next we here as swift, it did dash,  
tore pollard's kitchen roof to smash,  
kind providence held owt his arm,  
his family, they received no harm.

the corte hows, next a standing by,  
its hite is full three stories hie,  
it cawt the roof all in its flite,  
as if it was nothing but a kite.

the places rent, fell to the ground,  
tops of the chimblys tumbling down,  
this whirlwind it did caws much wonder,  
the market hows was rent asunder,

mister biddles office, a standing by,  
was myracolowsly saved as it blue hie  
with peters in it, did him affrite  
he thawt he mite bid this worould good nite.

now i must mention mr ross,  
to his office, it thence flew across,  
his buggy carried a way in the round,

and then returned safe to the ground  
the peoples lot, i shal not mention  
becaws it is not my intention

the next that comes into my vew,  
the methodist church was damaged to,  
then passing by all with its mite,  
with fury dashed and raged with spite.

John Hows, next in my round,  
he lives in the upper end of town,  
as he was cawt out in the strete,  
the storm it did, him badly beat

this made him feel somewhat flat,  
be caws it swept away his had,  
this cawed him far to feel disorders,  
he lost a hundred dollars, in verbal orders.

some people were cawt in the street,  
when this hurricane did meet,  
then to their scrapers ladi down flat,  
poor isaac clary lost his hat

this mite wind then stretching ore,  
lit upon the canal shore,  
some showmen had their canvas strcht arond  
it there blue up, fell to the ground

it also soard them out of site,  
to se there canvas take its flite,  
and as it did break up there show  
it all fell down, broke one mans to

next place it past mister skeltons hous,  
and hit upon it like a mous,  
in fury raged so verry hard,  
his kitchen roof was swept in palmers yard

the whilrwind tore things al along,  
which I must put down in my song

then passing on it quickly blue,  
brings victerys farm in my vew,  
his fences blown down to the ground,  
his crop in danger, there he found

well take a glance at mister cook,  
and on him I now must look,  
the site of the storm, it scared him so,  
at the site of the storm, away did go

gathered up his sundy cloas and monny to,  
and cauled up his family, while it was in vew,  
then to the field, he did repare,  
in hopes to be, more safer there

what damage I can not tel,  
therefore shal no longer dwel

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**LOGANSFORT'S A SPLENDID CITY**

By Enion Kendall

Logansport's a splendid city,  
As any need be seen  
Situat on Eel and Wabash River,  
Immediately between.

The trading business carried on,  
Are brisk for to be sure,  
So much produce brought from every part,  
I've never seen before.

Her wealth and beauty it doth' excel,  
And hard it is to beat,  
And as for grandeur need not tell,  
For everything is neat.

Dry goods unto this place is brought,  
The finest and the best,  
All be a set of merchantmen,  
Just come from the east.

Sell cheap for cash or such produce,  
Or things as they may need,  
That they may transport to a distant clime,  
The hungry for to feed.

The canal has made a good highway,  
To carry on the trade,  
The boats are running up and down,  
On them the goods conveyed.

Good times are not just coming on,  
And money is more plenty,  
The industrious will reap their reward,  
With their pockets never empty.

The place is on a rich and pleasant soil,  
Well it for cultivation,  
And its advantages very great,  
For people of every nation.

I hope these lines will please you well,

Sometime between 1847 and 1850 Enion moved his family from Lafayette to Logansport. He was proud to rear his family in Logansport, Cass County, Indiana and wrote the poem "Logansport's A Splendid City" describing it during the canal era. It is seen above.

At age 61 while living in his shanty on the corner of Ninth and High Streets in Logansport, Enion Kendall passed away on March 26, 1856. Although never a wealthy man, he had captured the history of the area through his crude poetry for future generations.

The *Logansport Journal* of April 5, 1856 carried the fol-

lowing article quoted in its entirety:

**DEATH OF ENION KENDALL.**

(COMMUNICATED)

ENION KENDALL is dead! He died after much bodily affliction, on the 26th day of March 1856, and was buried on the 27th. In him was found a most singular combination of the elements of our common nature. Indeed there are but few specimens of mankind that are true exponents of the great type of humanity. Poor Kendall departed from the standard not farther than many others of much higher pretensions. Whilst his intellect as a whole must be regarded as very weak, yet in many respects he possessed a sound judgment. — The hallucination that he was a poet (and the same delusion has troubled many sounder minds than his) seemed to be fixed in his nature. He

**PARENTS & SIBLINGS OF ENION KENDALL**

| <u>NAME</u>          | <u>BORN</u> | <u>PLACE</u>                | <u>DIED</u> | <u>PLACE</u> | <u>BURIAL</u>  |
|----------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|-------------|--------------|----------------|
| William Kendall      | 7-29-1754   | York Co., PA                | 1826        |              |                |
| Elizabeth Williams   | 1-3-1757    | Nottingham, Chester Co., PA | 1830        |              |                |
| CHILDREN             |             |                             |             |              |                |
| Joseph Kendall       | 4-7-1788    |                             | 1838        |              |                |
| Margrid Kendall      | 3-28-1790   |                             | 3-10-1790   |              |                |
| John Kendall         | 3-8-1791    |                             | 6-11-1793   |              |                |
| William C. Kendall   | 4-7-1793    | Guilford Co., NC            | 2-27-1882   | Lafayette    | Pretty Prairie |
| <u>Enion Kendall</u> | 10-1-1795   | Guilford Co., NC            | 3-26-1856   |              |                |
| Isaac Kendall        | 7-29-1798   |                             | 1853        |              |                |

**ENION KENDALL'S WIVES AND CHILDREN**

|                               |           |              |           |                           |              |
|-------------------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|---------------------------|--------------|
| Enion Kendall                 | 10-1-1795 | Guilford, NC | 3-26-1856 | Logansport, Cass Co. IN   | 9th St. Cem. |
| 1. MARRIAGE 7-17-1828         |           |              |           | Lafayette, Tippecanoe Co. |              |
| By Reuben Kelsey, JP          |           |              |           |                           |              |
| Mary Ellen "Polly" Gates 1808 |           |              |           |                           |              |

|                 |      |         |      |  |  |
|-----------------|------|---------|------|--|--|
| CHILDREN        |      |         |      |  |  |
| Unknown Kendall | 1830 |         |      |  |  |
| Ira Kendall     | 1833 | Indiana | 1898 |  |  |
| Unknown Kendall | 1836 |         |      |  |  |

DIVORCED 9-4-1838

|                      |       |          |  |                      |  |
|----------------------|-------|----------|--|----------------------|--|
| 2. MARRIAGE 2-7-1841 |       |          |  |                      |  |
| Deborah White        | ©1820 | Kentucky |  | Logansport, Cass Co. |  |

|                    |           |                   |           |            |              |
|--------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|------------|--------------|
| CHILDREN           |           |                   |           |            |              |
| Samuel P. Kendall  | 1842      | Tippecanoe Co, IN |           |            |              |
| James H. Kendall   | 1-?-1844  | Tippecanoe Co, IN |           |            |              |
| Mary J. M. Kendall | 1847      | Tippecanoe Co, IN | 3-30-1864 | Logansport | 9th St. Cem. |
| George W. Kendall  | 10-4-1850 | Eel, Cass Co, IN  |           |            |              |
| Maria Kendall      | 1852      | Eel, Cass Co., IN |           |            |              |
| Ida Kendall        | 1857      | Eel, Cass Co., IN | 1870      |            |              |

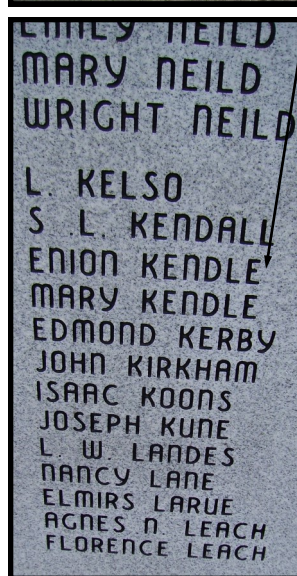
regarded himself as a genius struggling with an unappreciating world, and never doubted but that posterity would do his fame ample justice; and though there was nothing of the true poet in him, yet he had a singular facility of expressing language in rhythm; and though his effusions were the merest doggerel, yet he occasionally uttered a genuine poetical expression. Poor fellow his life was a burden, yet there must be some compensation in the great range of Eternity for the lowly and afflicted here. How fares it now with this poor Lazarus and his fellow beings who more fortunate on earth perhaps yesterday trifled with his weakness neglected his want, or even spurned his misfortunes. They die. One, if put in a gilded coffin and with great pomp is borne to the grave, the press makes haste to announce the sad bereavement, and a costly monument records "not what he was but what he should have been." The other is confined in a rude box, perhaps carried to the grave by some official unannounced, unmourned, save by a few as humble as himself. His monument a little heap of God's green earth. If he has an epitaph it is written in the skies. They are both in the grave, and the world knows no difference between them. Such is unequal life and such is equal death. The judgment follows. But poor Kendall, in his lowly poverty, with his inelegant and diseased body, and his weak unbalanced mind, was yet "the noblest work of God" — an honest man.

**SOURCES:**

Ancestry.m:  
 Indiana Marriage Collection 1800-1941  
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With special thanks to the genealogical librarian at the Logansport Public Library and the Cass County Historical Society Museum volunteer for their help with Judge Biddle's Miscellany.



## Ninth Street Cemetery Logansport, Indiana

Dedicated to the early Logansport settlers whose unmarked graves reside at the Ninth Street Cemetery.

Due to so many broken stones and unmarked graves this new marker was erected. Note that Enion's last name is spelled Kendle on the stone. Mary Kendle is his daughter.

Photos by Bob Schmidt

Photos by Bob Schmidt

If anyone knows where Enion Kendall's canal poetry can be found please notify CSI headquarters.

