

# CANAWLERS AT REST

## HUDSON McDONALD SHRODE

b. April 5, 1817  
d. August 2, 1849

By Carolyn I. Schmidt

Hudson McDonald Shrode was born on a farm in Boon Township, Warrick County, Indiana on April 5, 1817 to Francis and Rebecca Marrit (Hudson) Shrode. Francis Shrode had been born in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania on November 25, 1789, moved to Kentucky and then to Indiana Territory in 1814. He was described as a very tall, rawboned, stooped shouldered, Irishman who loved to tell stories about how he dealt with the Indians when coming to Indiana. He was elected and served for several years as judge in the old log Warrick county courthouse located in Boonville. He died in Boonville on November 23, 1872 at the age of 83.

Rebecca Marrit, Hudson's mother, had been born in North Carolina on October 6, 1797 and married Francis Shrode on December 5, 1816, six days before Indiana became a state. Hudson (Hut) was the oldest of their 14 children who were all

born in Warrick County.

In 1836 the original 20 miles of the southern division of the Central Canal from Evansville to the Pigeon Creek Dam in Warrick County, Indiana was being constructed. Hudson, age 19, began working on the canal and became a contractor on what would later become part of the Wabash & Erie Canal. Although he hired all the local people available to construct the canal, he didn't have enough workers and had to import several hundred Irishmen. They dug the canal by hand or used horse drawn slip scoops. The dirt was then put into narrow-rimmed wheelbarrows and transported to a site to build either the canal's berm or towpath banks or the dam across the creek. After Hudson died many of these wheelbarrows, which he had kept, were sold at a public sale.

Published reports about construction of the southern division of the Central Canal in 1836, 1838, said:

1836 "A survey and estimate of the line down the valley of Pigeon, was made by the resident Engineer, and after instituting a comparison between this line, and the former survey [down Bluegrass Creek] he has reported that by adopting the Pigeon line, there will be a saving in cost of \$284,892, and an increase of distance of about two miles.

"The valley of Pigeon is decidedly favorable to the construction of a canal. The "flats" or low bottoms are from one to two miles in width, presenting a very uniform inclination towards the Ohio of about two feet per mile, and the stream in winding its way through this valley seldom approaches so near to the adjoining high land as to prevent a favorable and cheap location of the canal. Excepting six or eight chains at Ditney bluff, the canal bank will no where require protection against the current, for the distance of thirty miles.

"The Acting Commissioner having decided upon the adoption of the Pigeon line, the final location preparatory to

### FRANCIS & REBECCA MARRIT SHRODE AND CHILDREN

Name	Born	Died	Married	Born	Died
Francis	11-25-1789	11-23-1872	Rebecca Marrit	12-5-1816	10-6-1797 11-27-1857
Rebecca Marrit	10-6-1797	11-27-1857	Francis Shrode	12-5-1816	11-25-1789 11-23-1872
<b>Hudson McDonald</b>	4-5-1817	8-2-1849	Susan Coats	3-18-1837	9-27-1813 1-10-1874
Isaac Heron	12-28-1818	12-7-1894 in Minnesota	Rhoda Jane Taylor		
Henry Wilson	2-20-1820	4-?-1870 in Texas	Minerva Ellen Hargrave		
Jacob Wise	9-15-1821	3-2-1851			
William Luce	10-10-1823	9-20-1900	Viola Derrue Guernsey		
David Shaw	3-18-1825	1-15-1895 in California			
Absalom	12-19-1826	12-24-1826			
Daniel	12-19-1826	12-24-1826			
Nancy Ann	12-1-1827	1-2-1911	William M. Spencer		
Sarah Margaret	7-31-1827	9-28-1831			
Sarah Crooks	2-9-1833	2-28-1905	Benjamin Allen		
Susan Rebecca	6-13-1835	3-20-1917	Carlos Owen Woodruff		
Francis Marion	6-13-1835	3-29-1876	Mary Taylor		6-28-1828
Ezekiel Perigo	12-24-1837	3-3-1894	Eliza Jane Feels		

placing it under contract, was commenced near the head of that stream. The southern termination having been fixed by law on the east side of Pigeon Creek, it was evidently proper to follow that side in the location in order to avoid the expense of crossing..."

1837 "Laborers have been less abundant on this division, especially during the spring and summer, than on most other lines in the State. The operations of contractors were much hindered during the early part of the season by the accumulation of water on the surface of the ground, the face of the country being remarkable level and the soil an impervious clay. Both of these difficulties were in a great degree removed during the latter part of the year."

1838 "Twenty miles of this canal, extending north from Evansville, including the feeder dam across Pigeon, are very nearly completed, and the water may be let in early next season."

1839 "Nineteen and a half miles of this line, extending from Evansville to the feeder from Pigeon, including the extension to Lamasco for water power, has been completed, and made ready for the admission of water, at a total cost of \$236,092, not including superintendence. This sum includes the work done on the four abandoned sections above the feeder."

1840 Noah Noble, then a member of the State Board of Internal Improvement, reported to that board at Indianapolis on November 25, 1840 the following:

"That part of this division extending from Evansville to the Pigeon Creek Feeder is finished and navigable. It was transferred from the charge of the late Superintendent to the care of the Board, by a special act of last session, and placed by the Board under the charge of a Superintendent, whose report shows that no business has been done of this portion, owing principally to the want of water. The amount expended for repairs, including pay to Superintendent, is \$154.50.

"The unfinished part of this division, embracing the heavy work on the Pigeon and Patoka Summits, and the Patoka and White river embankments, remains as it was last year. Like all other of the unfinished works, it is in a state of dilapidation.

Not long after beginning work on the canal Hudson married Susan Coats on March 18, 1837. Susan, who was born in Salisbury, North Carolina, had lost her parents when she was very small. She migrated by a wagon pulled by oxen to the southern part of the Indiana with her brother-in-law and two sisters when she was a young woman. On their way they stopped in Kentucky and raised a crop of tobacco before coming to southwestern Indiana.

Hudson and Susan had four children, Sarah Margaret, John Henry, Rebecca Ann and Jacob Allen. Their playmates were Indian children.

Hudson was on the list of Warrick County, Indiana pioneers. He understood his Indian neighbors and lived peacefully with them. He also got along well with others of his own race. He was a Methodist and a Republican.

Hudson accumulated enough money while working on the canal to purchase land. On August 1, 1839 he bought the North West quarter of the North East quarter of Section Six, in Township Five South, of Range Eight West, in the District of lands subject to sale at Vincennes, Indiana, containing thirty-nine acres. (Certificate No. 20161)

This land was located near his birthplace. On it he built a large, two room, log cabin about a quarter of a mile from the road. The Shrodes were known for building the best homes of the day and this one was no exception. The two spacious rooms were side by side with a huge brick chimney between them. The spaces between the large, square-cut logs were chinked with mud. Each room had a large fireplace connected to the chimney and had a polished stone hearth. Hearth stones came from a neighbor's quarry. A cellar was under the kitchen and pantry room. In it they stored the apples, cabbage, and potatoes he raised on his farm as well as other provisions.

Near the cabin Hudson built a huge log barn. It housed all his livestock and the food he raised for his animals. He also planted a variety of fruit trees that provided enough fruit for his family.

Over the years the roads were changed to run along section lines and cut off the home from the road. The huge old oak trees were cut down and sold. Coal that was close to the surface under the farm was dug out by locals for their winter coal supplies. This left the ground with surface holes. Then the

Name	HUDSON AND SUSAN COATS		SHRODE & CHILDREN		
	Born	Died	Married	Buried	Occupation
<b>Hudson McDonald Shrode</b>	4-5-1817	8-2-1849	3-18-1837	Wesley Chapel Cem.	Canal Contractor
Susan Coats Shrode	9-27-1813	1-10-1874	3-18-1837	Wesley Chapel Cem.	
Sarah Margaret Shrode	6-10-1838	2-10-1889	Elijah Dewees	Morrison Cem.	Teacher
John Henry Shrode	10-12-1840	11-18-1856		Wesley Chapel Cem.	
Rebecca Ann Shrode	10-3-1842	10-3-1917	Levi Horatio Warner	Morrison Cem.	
Jacob Allen Shrode	10-7-1844		Mary Catherine Cox		

land was leased to a company for a hundred dollars an acre and was stripped it of what coal remained. Unsightly hills remain and the land will be worthless for a long time.

On October 1, 1840 Hudson purchased the North East quarter of the North West quarter of Section Six, in Township Five South, of Range Eight West, in the District of Lands subject to sale at Vincennes, Indiana, containing fifty acres and ninety-five hundredths of an acre. (Certificate No. 24342)

Following his construction work on the canal Hudson became farming his newly acquired land and became a successful farmer. But this alone did not satisfy him. He loved and hoarded money and wanted more. He started buying up poultry and eggs, putting them on a canal boat at Millersburgh, go down the canal to Evansville, transfer them to a raft, float them down the Ohio River and the Mississippi River to New Orleans where he sold them for a big profit. He then returned to Evansville by a steamboat and made his way back to Warrick County by canal boat. At home on the hearth before his fireplace, he would count the gold coins he had emptied into pie pans. When every coin had been counted over and over he would place them in his cellar, which was his bank.

Hudson was a Justice of the Peace for many years. This was quite an honor for, at the time, the position of Justice of the Peace was about equivalent to the position of Judge today in prestige.

On February 1, 1849 Hudson purchased the South West quarter of North East quarter of Section Six in Township Five South, of Range Eight West, in the District of Lands subject to sale at Vincennes, Indiana, containing thirty-nine acres. (Certificate No. 33974) He made preparations to move to this farm on White River. He rented the old farm on which he lived.

Hudson made another trip to Orleans in 1849. It was to be his last. He contracted cholera and on his return trip got as far as Millersburgh, Indiana. He was so ill that he was taken off the canal boat to the home of Aunt Annie Cox where he died on August 2, 1849 at the young age of 32. He was buried in Wesley Chapel Cemetery in Boonville, Warrick County, Indiana. It is located in a desolate stripped mined area northwest of Boonville. When the coal companies stripped the area they were required to let the cemeteries stay where they were and provide roads to them. To reach the cemetery from Boonville, take New Harmony Road to Bateman Road, turn right and go to Wesley Chapel Road and turn right. The cemetery is on the southeast corner of Wesley Chapel Road.

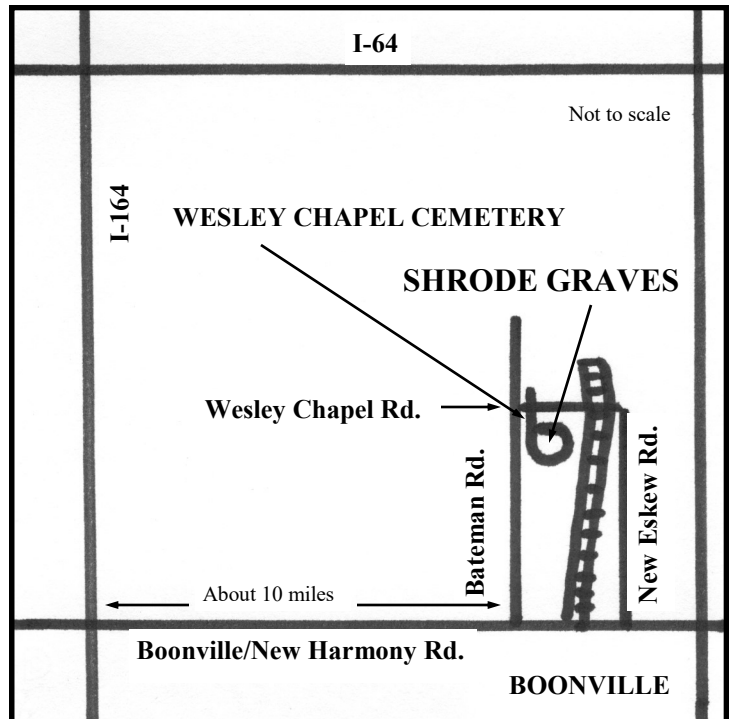
His lichen covered grave stone, which he shares with his wife Susan and son John H., sits under a tree near the center of the cemetery. It is extremely difficult to read. On the west side of the marker it says:

AT REST  
HUDSON M. SHRODE  
APR. 5, 1817  
AUG. 2, 1849

The north side has his wife Susan's information. The east side has John H. Shrode's birth and death dates.

Susan, Hudson's wife, was left with four children to raise. She knew nothing about conducting business and hired her neighbor to see after the family's affairs. There was really nothing that needed to be done, but the neighbor paid himself royally. He took the newly purchased White River farm for his services leaving Susan with little to keep the family together.

Luckily Susan knew how to sew and became a tailor. She made men's clothing by hand for a very large county store



called Jarretts, which was quite prosperous at that time. As soon as her daughter was old enough, Susan taught her how to sew and together they worked all day and well into the night either by light from the fire, from a rag twisted up in a saucer of grease, from a candle or, in later years, from a coal oil lamp. Susan's granddaughter, who eventually married a Jarrett, re-

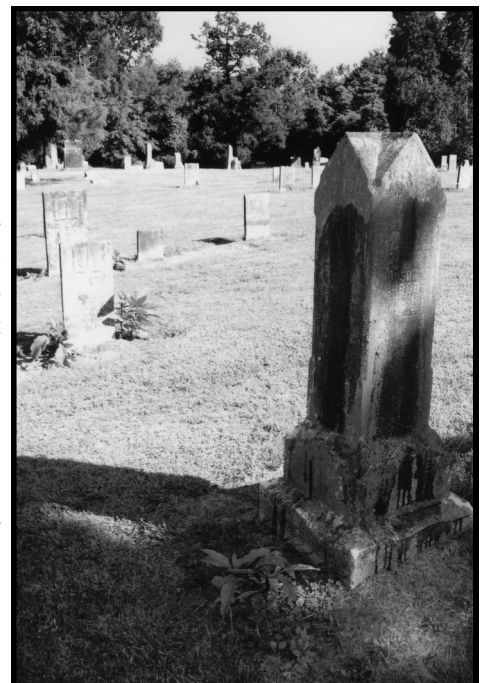
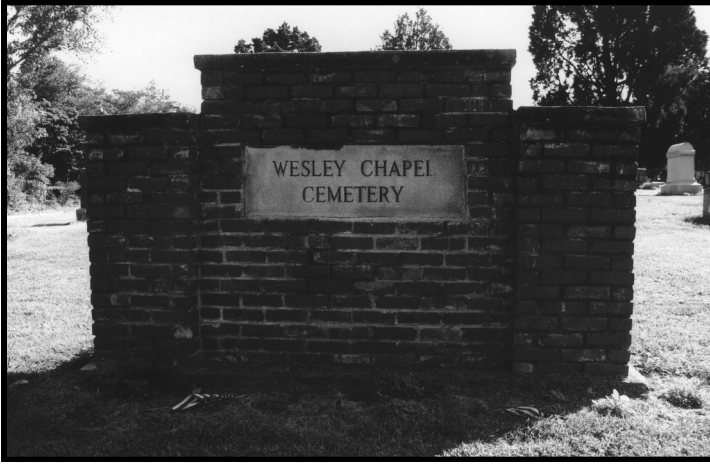


Photo by Bob Schmidt



Wesley Chapel Cemetery is located amid land strip mined for coal. It is well kept but in a very desolate area. Photo Bob Schmidt

U.S. Federal Census Mortality Schedules Index

Federal Census for 1840, 1850, 1860, 1870

General Land Grants of the United States certificates

Taylor, Ira Thomas. *American's Greatest Pioneer Family: A History of the Shrode Family in America*. 1945.

marked on the quality of work she saw on her father's black satin wedding vest that Susan made. She said that Susan's stitches were more even than what a machine could have made.

The 1860 Federal Census shows Susan living with her daughter and son-in-law Sarah Margaret and Elijah Dewees. After her son got married she went to live with him. In the 1870 Census she was living with her son and daughter-in-law Jacob and Mary Shrode. Susan died on January 10, 1874 in Hart Township at Union (Eby, Indiana). She was buried in Wesley Chapel Cemetery beside Hudson, her husband.

Sources:

Ancestry.com

[http://trees.ancestry.com/tree/1935695/family/family\\_group](http://trees.ancestry.com/tree/1935695/family/family_group)