

CANAWLERS AT REST

SILAS CONDIT BEACH, JR.

b. September 8, 1833

d. March 2, 1882

Find A Grave 26334843

By Carolyn I. Schmidt



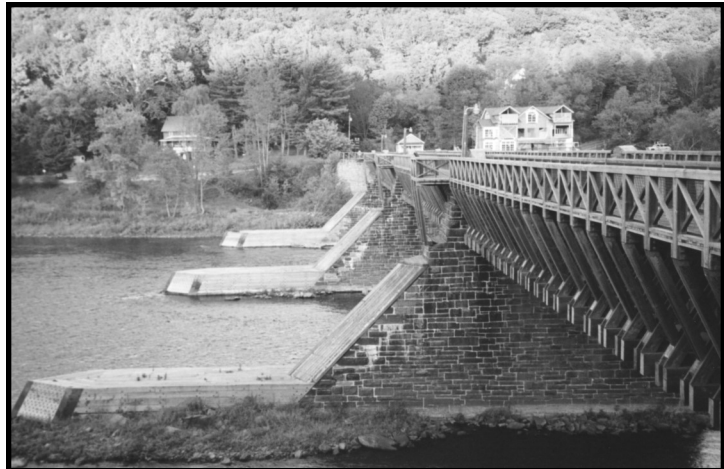
Silas Condit Beach was born to Silas Condit and Susan (Ludlow) Beach in Newton, Sussex County, New Jersey on September 8, 1833. His mother was born in New York in 1803 and his father in New Jersey in 1804. His father died in 1833 when Silas was only three months old. He was educated by his mother, who was a teacher and taught while she was a widow.

About 1841 when Silas was eight years old, Susan Beach was married to Charles C. Knapp, a brick layer and plasterer, who had no children. The new family moved to Honesdale, Pennsylvania and resided there for four years. During this time Silas' half-sister Sarah F. Knapp was born in 1843 and his half-brother Charles H. Knapp in 1845.

While in Honesdale Silas learned about the Delaware and Hudson Canal. Honesdale was a rural community in a coal mining region and was originally known as Dyberry Forks. The Wurts brothers, who owned coal bearing land, came up with the idea of building a canal to transport their coal. In May of 1823 Benjamin Wright assigned two junior engineers to survey a route for the Delaware and Hudson Canal from Honesdale, Pennsylvania to Kingston, New York from which boats could take the coal down the Hudson River to New York City. A stock company was formed in 1825 to build the canal and Philip Hone of New York City was named its first president on March 8, 1825. Then Honesdale named for him was laid out in 1826.

Construction of the Delaware and Hudson Canal began on July 13, 1825. John Roebling built four aqueduct bridges for it. He later designed the Brooklyn Bridge. The canal was basically completed by November 1827. It was 108 miles long and had 108 locks. This canal was the first million dollar private enterprise in the United States. It was abandoned in 1898 for the locomotive.

Toward the latter part of 1845 Charles, Susan and Silas moved to Brooklyn, New York where they resided for



This aqueduct built to carrying canal boats across the Delaware River at Lackawaxen, PA for the Delaware and Hudson Canal was one of four built by John Roebling. Today it is a road bridge.

Photos by Bob Schmidt

another four years. During these years Silas worked on a farm.

In the spring of 1850, when Silas was about 17 years of age, the family moved to Terre Haute, Indiana. The first leg of this three week journey was by railroad to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, then by canal boat over the mountains to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, then down the Ohio River and up the Wabash River to Terre Haute by steamboat.

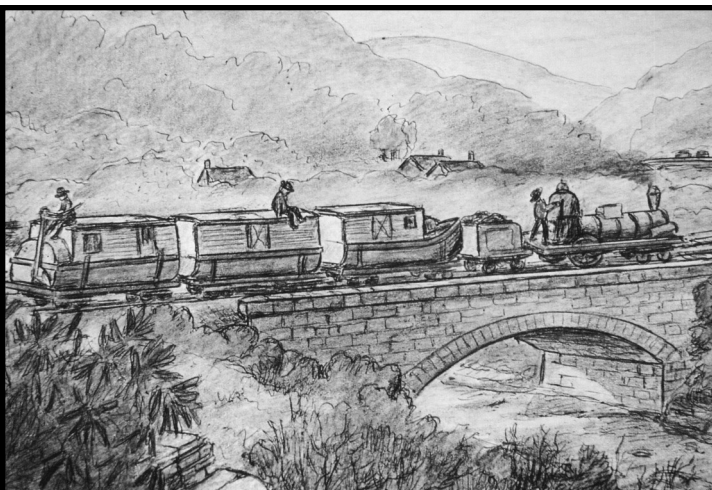
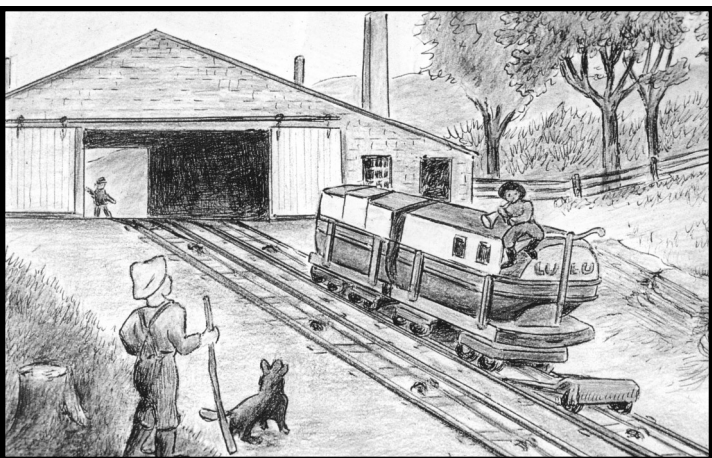
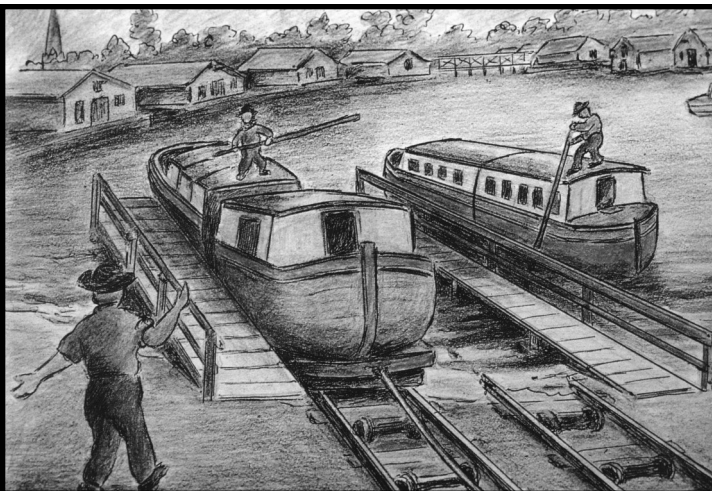
The portion of the move that was especially interesting was transporting the canal boat over the mountains. Ground was broken for the Pennsylvania Main Line Canal at Harrisburg on July 4, 1826. It was an unusual canal in that the canal boats were transported over the mountains by rail.

The Pennsylvania transportation companies had developed "sectional boats," which usually had two or three sections. The first section was the front of the boat, the second was the middle, and the last was the back of the boat. While in the Pennsylvania Mainline Canal these boats were joined together. When they reached the mountains, the sections were separated in the canal basin, put on flat railcars and pulled by hemp cables up planes on the Allegheny Portage Railroad. At the top of each plane in a huge engine house were horizontal reciprocating steam engines with cylinders varying between 14-15 feet in diameter with a stroke of 6- feet and a speed of 14 RPM. Also used were horizontal pulleys 7-9 feet in diameter and vertical pulleys (sheaves) 8 feet in diameter. The pulleys activated the cables that raised/lowered the railroad cars loaded with boat sections on the planes. The huge engines were powered by coal fired boilers. At lane number eight, which was 3116 feet long, the cars were pulled to the top in nine minutes and required six pounds of coal per minute and 60 gallons of water to generate the needed steam.

On the planes boat sections were pulled up on one track while other boat sections were lowered on another track beside it. Between the planes the boat sections were pulled by railroad engines or sometimes mules.

The canal boats either on the canal or on the rails passed over stone or wooden aqueducts some of which were the covered bridge style, over culverts and through tunnels. In the canal they passed through stone locks and were weighed at weigh locks. They by-passed dangerous rapids in the river, passed boat-building yards, salt wells, refineries, and forges. Passengers often had to "duck-their-nuts" when going under a low road bridge when going through towns.

After arriving at Pittsburgh Silas and his family boarded a steamboat on the Ohio River, went down the Ohio River and up the Wabash River to Terre Haute, Indiana. After arriving in Terre Haute he learned the brick and plastering business from his step-father and worked in that trade until the latter part of the Civil War when he became a contractor and builder. He was one of the pioneer contractors of Terre Haute building the McKean blocks, did the



The Allegheny Portage Railroad was a part of the Pennsylvania Mainline Canal. It carried special canal boats built in sections across the Allegheny Mountains. There were both sectional passenger and sectional freight boats.
 Drawings from *A Picture-Journey Along the Pennsylvania Main Line Canal 1826-1857* by Philip J. Hoffman, published by The American Canal and Transportation Center, York, PA, 1993 with permission to print from the American Canal Society.

brick work on the post office, built the Minshall home, the Joseph Strong buildings, Ray's wholesale houses, etc.

On November 18, 1856 Silas was married to Ada-

line Conn, a sister of Nelson W. Conn. In 1860 their son William C. Beach was born in Vigo County, Indiana. Adeline died on April 2, 1879 and was buried in Woodlawn Cemetery in Terre Haute, Indiana. On November 3, 1880 Silas was married to Amelie C. Baur, a daughter of John J. Baur of Terre Haute.

For over five years Silas was a member of the board of public works. Then from 1882-83 he was a member of the Terre Haute city council. He was a charter member of the Wabash Building and Loan Association and also belonged to the first Harrison Club; the First Congregational Church, which he joined in 1863 and was a trustee; the Fort Harrison Club; and was on the board of trustees of the Rose Orphan's Home.

Silas Condit Beach, Jr. died on March 2, 1910 in Chicago, Cook County, Illinois. His body was returned to Terre Haute where he was buried on March 3, 1910 in Section 2 of Highland Lawn Cemetery. Many of Terre Haute's most substantial residences and business houses stand as monuments to his skill and ability.

Silas' second wife, Amelie C. (Baur) Beach died in 1925. She was buried beside him.

Silas C. Beach
1833-1910
Amelie C. Beach
1853-1925



Family of Silas C. Beach Jr.						
Name	Birth	Place	Death	Place	Marriage	Place
Silas Condit Beach Sr.	4-29-1804	New Jersey	12-03-1833	Newton Sussex NJ		
m. Susan Ludlow	1803	New York, NY	2-23-1882	Terre Haute, IN		
<u>Children</u>						
1. Mary Ludlow Beach	1827		1920			
2. Silas C. Beach Jr.	9-08-1833	Newton Sussex NJ	3-02-1910	Chicago Cook IL	11-18-1856	Vigo Co., IN
m. Adaline Conn			IN 4-02-1879	Vigo Co., IN	11-18-1856	Vigo Co., IN
<u>Children</u>						
A. William C. Beach	1860	Vigo Co., IN	abt. 6-08-1936	Vigo Co., IN	1-24-1889	Vigo Co., IN
m. Adelia Rankin	8-?-1868		abt. 5-04-1942	Vigo Co., IN	1-24-1889	Vigo Co., IN
<u>Children</u>						
1. Harriet L. Beach	1891	Vigo Co., IN				
2. Thelma E. Beach	1897	Vigo Co., IN				
m. Amelie C. Baur	1853	KY	11-03-1925	Vigo Co., IN	11-03-1880	Vigo Co., IN
Susan Ludlow's second marriage						
Charles C. Knapp (step father Silas Jr.)	1816		1888		about 1841	
<u>Half siblings of Silas C. Beach Jr.</u>						
3. Sarah F. Knapp	1843					
4. Charles H. Knapp	1845					