

RILEY SWAIM

AND HIS WABASH & ERIE CANAL CONNECTIONS

By Charles Davis

Riley Swaim was born February 18, 1823 in Randolph county, North Carolina. His father, Daniel Swaim, a native of Randolph county, was employed on a farm while he prepared himself to become a teacher. On reaching his majority, he continued teaching for the greater part of his life, holding many sessions in his own log kitchen. While yet in his youth he came to Indiana and taught at what today is known as Orange county. There, for some time, he taught at various block houses on the frontier and was probably the first school teacher in the state of Indiana. Daniel returned to North Carolina and chose his companion for life, Susan Lamb, marrying her around 1815. Susan bore him eleven children, all born in Randolph county, North Carolina.

Their first child, Jonathan, was the first one to settle in Parke county, Indiana in 1837. On February 9 1843 he made his first land purchase of 75 acres in Reserve township near the mouth of Sugar Creek for \$50. He entered business as a shoe maker, farmed his land, did general hauling with a team of horses, and also made a number of overland trips to Cincinnati and to New Orleans on flatboats. Jonathan married Eleanor Woody of Parke county on September 1, 1844. During the construction of the Wabash & Erie Canal that year, he bought a store in Annapolis on lot 5 block 2 in which to apply his trades. On December 18, 1850 he sold this business for \$300.

Like the rest of Annapolis, there is no doubt that Jonathan used the canal for his business dealings. The Sugar Creek Feeder Dam and Lock were located just two and a half miles west of town.

In 1848 he went back to Randolph county, North Carolina, and brought back his parents, Susan and Daniel, with several of their children. They then lived in Liberty township in Parke county, Indiana.

On August 25, 1849 Daniel Swaim bought 80 acres described as the West-Half of the Northwest quarter of section 16 for \$500. There he and his wife spent the remainder of their lives farming and raising stock. On May 12, 1852 Jonathan bought a farm in section 18 of Washington township. Jonathan got back into business in Annapolis again buying lots 1-7-8 in block 3 on August 5, 1860 from Henry Lamb for \$600. Deed Record 9/268 On September 5, 1871 he sold out to William Woody.

Jonathan was responsible for starting the Swaim Reunion. I, Charles Davis, found one of these as reported in

the *Rockville Republican* of August 20, 1890 on page 2.

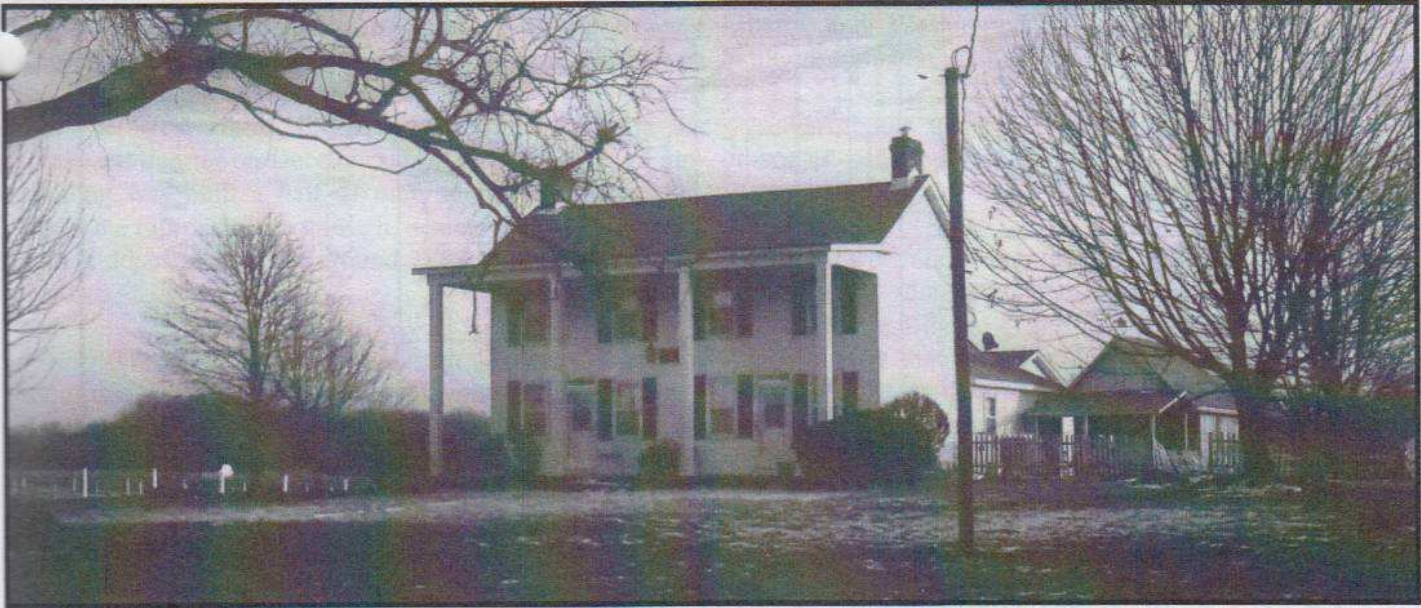
"I in company with about six hundred of the Swaim family had the pleasure of attending the Swaim reunion of the 13th at the residence of Jonathan Swaim, and as seeing is said to be believing I can say it was a grand success as a reunion. With a table seventy-two feet long, loaded to its fullest capacity, plenty of good drinking water, plenty of room for hitching teams, a beautiful shade, and a meeting of about six hundred persons of one family, how could it help being a time long to be remembered?"

The article gives some of the family history, a picture was taken of the adult members, if a picture was wanted, they could see Mr. Logan of Bloomingdale. Songs were sung by the Swaim brothers and sisters. It gave a list of those attending relatives from all around Indiana and Illinois. Riley Swaim, of Parsons, Labette county, Kansas, heard from by letter; Curran Swaim, one of the boys from Mountain School House, North Carolina, was also heard from who said:

"About forty-five years ago I went out among strangers, and since that time, I have seldom met any of the name [Swaim] except my brothers and sisters. I was pretty well acquainted with the older set, the sons and daughters of John, and I never knew any thing very bad of them. None of them ever distinguished themselves particularly but they generally had common sense and common honesty. I never knew any of them to go crazy, as to congress, the penitentiary or the county jail. I do not now remember a single instance in which a Swaim killed himself by hard work and it possible that even I myself may not die from that cause. This I say of the first and second generations from John* and Elizabeth. The third, fourth, and fifth generations have grown to manhood and womanhood, and it would be strange if in so large a flock there were not some black sheep."

*The family recognizes John Swaim as the immediate ancestor, who moved from Surry to Randolph county North Carolina in 1767. He was soon after married to Elizabeth Vickrey.

Riley Swaim, our subject, was born in Greensboro, North Carolina, where he served an apprenticeship at blacksmithing and wagon making. For some years he followed freighting from Raleigh, the capital of North Carolina, to the Atlantic coast. In those days railroads were not carrying the traffic of the country and freighting with ox and mule teams was a profitable business. Following in his brother's footsteps he moved to Parke county, Indiana in 1844 when construction of the Wabash & Erie Canal began at Lodi. Finding the timber so abundant and of the best quality, he made up his mind to put his knowledge to good use and accordingly opened a wagon and plow



This two-story home in Liberty township, Parke county, Indiana was built by Riley Swaim in the late 1850s. The 16 Tangier Cemetery is to the left or east side of it. Photo by Charles Davis

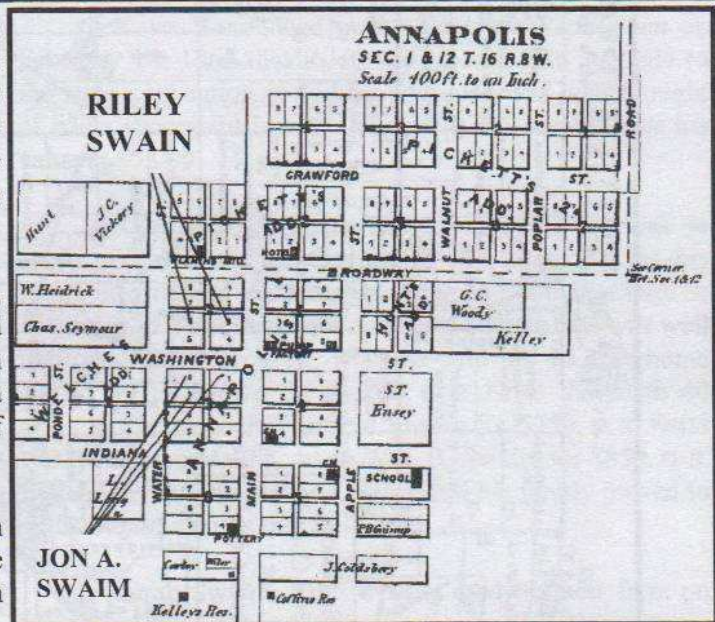
manufactory at Annapolis, which was comparable to the size of Chicago at that time. He began on a small scale at first. He worked at his trade for two years, then returned to his previous home in North Carolina for the winter. In the spring he returned to Annapolis where he did a large business making 2-wheel dump carts for the Irish laborers who were constructing the canal through Parke county.

The Swaim family had its losses. Riley's brother, William Swaim, born on January 4, 1825, was killed instantly on September 12, 1846. He was driving a team and a wagon with his dog on the seat beside him when a tree fell on him and killed him. He was only 21 years of age.

On March 18, 1847 Riley was married to Elizabeth Swaim, the daughter of William and Mary Swaim. The wedding took place in Parke county. Mary Lieuiza Swaim was born to Riley and Elizabeth in 1848.

On May 28, 1849, Riley, along with his brother-in-law, David Lindsey Osborn, bought lots 2 and 6 in block 2 in Annapolis for their factory. This business gradually expanded and enlarged until his wagons and plows were well known throughout the state. Many of the wagons turned out from his factory were large freight wagons, many of which found their way into the big freighting outfits that crossed the plains during the gold excitement in California in 1849. The last two wagons turned out from his factory joined an expedition from Omaha, Nebraska, some years later.

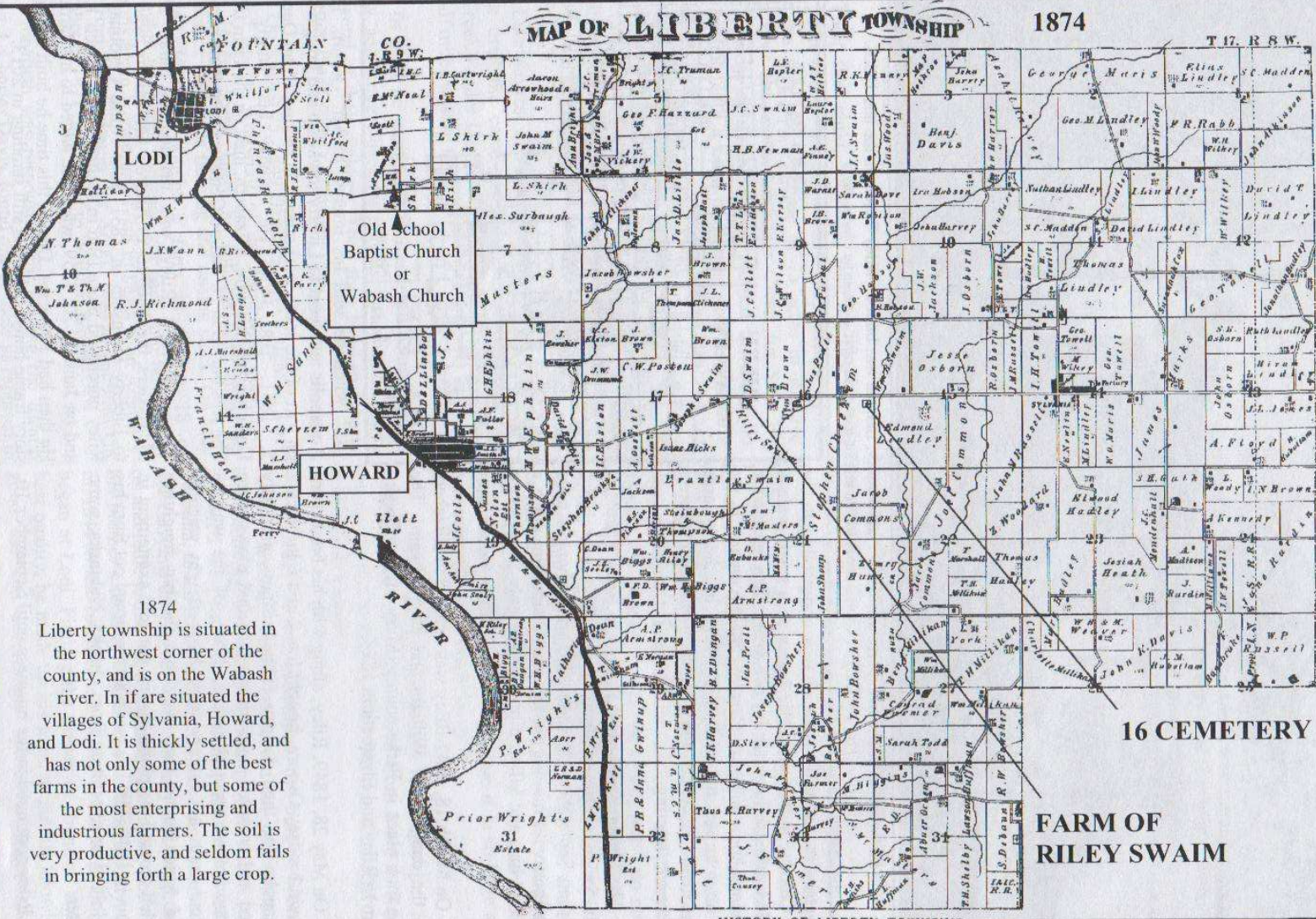
Riley continued in the business until September 10,



1851 when he sold his interest to Mr. Osborn. He left Annapolis and went to Liberty township and bought a farm on part of the south west quarter in section 16 on December 5, 1851. D.R. 14/265 He moved his family there. Unfortunately his wife, Elizabeth, died on the farm in 1856. She was buried in 16 Tangier Cemetery near their home.

In 1858 Riley was married to Sarah Marilla McMasters, the daughter of Andrew McMasters, who came to Liberty township in 1831 from North Carolina. Then Riley purchased more land in section 16 on March 1, 1858 and on January 20, 1859, which he added to his farm land. He then had 120 acres. During this time he built a large two story frame house, which is still standing in 2013.

MAP OF LIBERTY TOWNSHIP 1874



1874
 Liberty township is situated in the northwest corner of the county, and is on the Wabash river. In it are situated the villages of Sylvania, Howard, and Lodi. It is thickly settled, and has not only some of the best farms in the county, but some of the most enterprising and industrious farmers. The soil is very productive, and seldom fails in bringing forth a large crop.

Riley and Sarah were members of the Reserve Church of the Old Baptist School denomination. This was a log house that was used for many years and was located near the West Union cemetery in section seven in the southwest quarter on December 22, 1838. D. R. 5/243. A new building was built a half of mile south of the first site. When the railroad came through, it removed the church and built a depot on the site around 1887 when the road was finished.

The other Old School Baptist Church was located about two miles north of the canal town of Howard. It was started about 1835 by preacher David Shirk. It was a log building situated in the southwest corner of section 6, Liberty township on a lot of fourteen by twenty rods. On March 25, 1848 Mr. Shirk deeded the church to trustees Soloman B. Stanton and Joseph Shirk. D. R. 11/86 They renamed it the "Wabash Church," which states they have "no affinity or fellowship with New School or Missionary Baptist."

Just east of Riley Swaim's home is the 16 Tangier Cemetery, which got its name because it was in Section 16 and is now called the Tangier cemetery. Many of the Swaim family are buried there. At one time a Baptist church was at this site. It is possible that the Swaim family attended services here too. A Mr. Alason Church deeded to the school trustees, Alason Church and Wm. Rardin, the northeast corner of the southeast quarter of Section 16, a lot of 8 by 9 rods for a "school house and church known as 16" on November 15, 1854. D. R. 15/452 On page 453 on the same date Mr. Church deeded to the trustees a lot of land for the cemetery. The school/church building stood in front of the cemetery on the north side. Using schools for churches was common at that time as deeds and history show. James Hanson Beadle remembered both going to Sunday school there as a child in the 1850s and the canal at Howard. The deed doesn't state what denomination it was, but a Baptist church was there in 1896 and was dissolved around 1925. I found Misc. Deed 4/30 of 1891 for election of trustees for the church that states it was a Regular Baptist.

Riley's father, Daniel Swaim, died in 1856 and his mother, Susanna Lamb Swaim, died at the home of their son, Joseph, in 1877. After their deaths, Daniel and Susanna's 80 acres that they had homesteaded was sold on March 26, 1878. D. R. 37/489 It was sold by their heirs: Eleanor Swaim, Riley Swaim, Sarah Rayl, John M. Swaim, Wesley Osborn, Henry Osborn and wives, Wm. C. Robbins and wife Fanny, Jon Swaim, Wm. Horner and wife Roxanna to Joseph C. Swaim, also a son of Daniel and Susanna. Joseph lived west of this property in section 17. Most of the Swaim families lived their entire lives in

Liberty and Washington townships. The William and Fanny Robbins family migrated to Kansas.

Another tragic accident happened to Riley and others as was reported in the *Rockville Republican* on Wednesday, June 10, 1863 entitled "Melancholy Accident."

"Two young men, Jesse Osborn and Mr. Brown while riding along the road near the farm of John McMasters in Liberty township, were crushed to death, together with the horses which they were riding, by a falling tree from the road side, on Friday. Osborn, our informant states, was killed instantly. Brown survived some hours. Mr. Riley Swaim, who was but a short distance in advance of the two unfortunate young men, barely escaped with his life, the falling tree striking and slightly injuring him, completely demolishing the wagon in which he was riding, and instantly killing one of the horses attached." Jesse Osborn is buried in the Rush Creek Cemetery. He has no head stone.

It was announced in the *Rockville Republican* on February 14, 1866 that Riley was chosen as a delegate to the state convention in Indianapolis. He was well thought of and a successful farmer. The 1870 U.S. census lists his value at \$5,000.

Riley took a trip to Kansas in 1880. He was so captivated with the appearance of this state that on his return he arranged to sell out his farm and bought a farm of 160 acres in Parsons, LeBette county, Kansas that was well improved. On March 12, 1880 he sold his 40 acre home site to Ira B. Brown for \$1,200, D. R. 39/503 the south 40 acres to Christopher Whitfield Swaim for \$750, D. R. 39/438 and the southeast 40 acres to Wm. B. Swaim for \$850. D. R. 39/434 After selling his land, Riley and his family moved to their farm in Kansas that fall.

Sarah Swaim, Riley's wife, died on their farm on May 13, 1887 and was buried in Spring Hill Cemetery in Parsons, Kansas. His sons, Daniel E. and Charles S. left there and went into gold mining at Ouray, Colorado and became the owners of a mine around 1890.

Riley left his farm and moved to Ouray on July 2, 1896 and made his home with his children. He stayed in the homes of son's Charles and Daniel and his daughter, Anna Jane Burtle. He had a stroke at Daniel's home just west of Portland in July 1903. He was well liked by all who knew him. When his friends at the Ouray *Herald* heard he was ill they put the following in their paper on July 3, 1903, "He was a great reader and kept himself well posted on all important events transpiring throughout the world, and was patriotic to an enthusiastic degree. He was a

THE HOOSIER PACKET - SEPTEMBER 2013

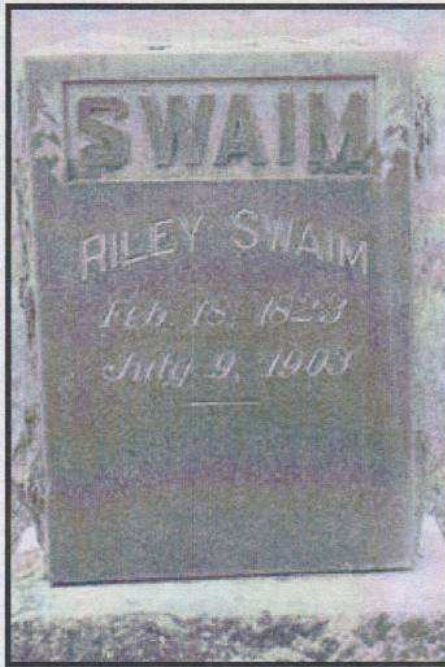
frequent visitor at this office to look over our exchanges, and had planned to come to town Saturday to enjoy a chat with some of his friends and learn what was going on. The *Herald* hopes he may yet rally and that a kind providence may spare him to them for many years."

Riley Swaim died on July 9, 1903. He was buried in the Cedar Hill Cemetery at Ouray, in Ouray County, Colorado.

SWAIM
RILEY SWAIM
Feb. 18, 1823
July 9, 1903

Photo courtesy
David Kemp Halls

Find-A-Grave Memorial
#103065931



Sources:

- Beadle, John Hanson. *1880 History of Parke County Indiana.* Pages 363-364-415.
- Combined 1874, 1908, 1916 Isaac Straus Centennial Memorial and Name Index of Parke County, Indiana.*
- Davis, Mary Jane. Computer research
- Deeds, Rockville, Indiana Court House, Recorder's Office
- Find-A-Grave Memorials
 - # 27084544 Susan Bevard
 - # 27084560 Jacob Bevard
 - # 72273808 Sarah McMasters Swaim
 - #103065931 Riley Swaim
 - #103065958 Charles Sherman Swaim
 - #103065980 Daniel E. Swaim
 - #103066005 Mary R. Swaim
 - #103066102 Edgar A Burtle
- Genealogy records for families: Steward, Strain, Sutherland, Swaim. Rockville Public Library p. 1-2, 23, 24,25,26,33.
- Marriagesand Obituaries on Microfilm, Rockville Public Library
- Ouray Public Library Feb. 7, 2013, Christine Reese, Director
- Obituary of Riley Swaim, *Ouray Herald* July 10, 1903
- Portrait and Biographical Record of Parke, Fountain and Montgomery Counties 1893.* Pgs 575-576 Picture of Jonathan Swaim and biography

Riley Swaim's Family

Name	Birth	Death	Burial/Place	Marriage
Daniel Swaim	11-10-1790	6-06-1856	16 Cem. Tangier, IN	
m. Susana Lamb Swaim	4-20-1799	11-20-1877	16 Cem. Tangier, IN	
1. Jonathan Swaim	10-19-1816	9-12-1897	Friends Cem. Bloomingdale, IN	
m. Eleanor Woody Swaim	1-28-1825	6-12-1913	Friends Cem. Bloomingdale, IN	9-01-1844
A. Mary Susan Swaim	3-03-1846	9-09-1847		
B. Betsey Ann Swaim	11-29-1847	9-29-1873	Friends Cem. Bloomingdale, IN	
C. John Randolph Swaim	7-16-1849	12-26-1940	Friends Cem. Bloomingdale, IN	
m. Amanda Rayle Swaim	9-22-1848	1-07-1920	Friends Cem. Bloomingdale, IN	7-23-1871
1. Horace Virgil Swaim		1891		
2. Walter Woody Swaim			of Mt. View AK	
3. Vern Frank Swaim			of Peoria IL	
D. Henry Clay Swaim	10-27-1851	1-??-1933	Friends Cem. Bloomingdale, IN	
m. Clara J. Teague Swaim	1857	6-??-1932	Friends Cem. Bloomingdale, IN	8-11-1875
1. Bonner Earl Swaim	8-31-1880	12-18-1925	Friends Cem. Bloomingdale, IN	
m. Iva Pearl Yow Swaim	1883	1972	Friends Cem. Bloomingdale, IN	11-28-1901
a. Helen Cornelia Swaim Price	1902	1991		
m. Price				
b. Earl Gaston Swaim	11-23-1904	5-31-1969	Memory Gardens Rockville	
m. Nellie Testing Swaim			Memory Gardens Rockville	6-19-1926
1. Barbara Swaim Hardesty				
2. Janet Swaim Deffner				
3. John Swaim				
c. Mary Eleanor Swaim Cronkhite	1907	1986		
m. Kenneth Cronkhite				
d. William Henry Swaim	12-26-1912	8-31-1941	Memory Garden Rockville	
m. Mary Frances Cox Swaim	1911	1988	Memory Garden Rockville	8-22-1934
1. David Swaim				
2. Bonner Swaim				

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Name	Birth	Death	Burial/Place	Marriage
2. Archie Lincoln Swaim	11-28-1827	7-24-1983	Memory Gardens, Rockville	
m. Mabel May Wood Swaim	1889	1967		
E. Sarah Caroline Swaim Rayle	2-05-1853	2-?-1930	Friends Cem. Bloomingdale, IN	
m. Harper Rayle	1843	6-??-1929	Friends Cem. Bloomingdale, IN	2-19-1874
F. Amanda Eleanor Swaim	10-22-1854	2-18-1914	Friends Cem. Bloomingdale, IN	
G. Ruth Emma Swaim Maris	6-3-1857	11-29-1939	Friends Cem. Bloomingdale, IN	
m. Joseph A. Maris	2-10-1855	3-08-1879	Poplar Grove Cem.	11-15-1877
1. Melvin Ora Maris	1879	3-08-1897	Friends Cem. Bloomingdale, IN	
H. Joseph Lincoln Swaim	5-23-1860	8-18-1943	Friends Cem. Bloomingdale, IN	
m. Elva A. McCoy Swaim	1864	12-17-1952	Friends Cem. Bloomingdale, IN	6-30-1893
2. Anna A. Swaim Rich	1-29-1819	7-08-1954	16 Cem. Tangier	
m. Allen Rich	8-08-1820	5-07-1891	16 Cem. Tangier	1844
3. Elizabeth Betsy Swaim Osborn	2-12-1821	10-16-1863	16 Cem. Tangier	
m. David L. Osborn	1823	1-02-1881	Friends Cem. Bloomingdale, IN	
A. Mary E. Osborn				
B. John Osborn				
C. Albert Osborn				
D. Oscar Osborn				
E. Amanda Osborn				
4. Riley Swaim	2-18-1823	7-09-1903	Cedar Hill Cem. Ouray Co. CO	
m1. Elizabeth Swaim	7-01-1825	2-24-1856	16 Cem. Tangier	3-18-1847
A. Mary Lieuiza Swaim Chezum	9-20-1848			
m1. Stephen Chezum	4-09-1847	5-19-1921	Butterfield, MO	
1. Cyrus M. Chezum	@ 1870			
2. Charles E. Chezum	1872			
3. William R. Chezum	1873			
m2. Barber			Parsons, KS on 1903 census	
m2. Sarah Marilla McMasters Swaim	5-25-1825	8-13-1887	Spring Hill Cem. Parsons KS	3-04-1858
B. Louisa Swaim	1-14-1859			
C. William Andrew Swaim	5-09-1860			
m. Jemima Dungan Swaim	1859			9-18-1879
1. Florence May Swaim Knous	@ 1886			
m. Orrin Knous				4-08-1906
D. Daniel Elsworth Swaim	7-24-1862	1933	Cedar Hill Cem. Ouray Co. CO	
m. Mary Knous	11-03-1868	1-02-1918	Cedar Hill Cem. Ouray Co. CO	12-22-1897
E. Charles Sherman Swaim	2-02-1865	10-10-1914	Cedar Hill Cem. Ouray Co, CO	
m. Emma Swaim	1874			1895
F. Anna Jane Swaim Burtle	2-03-1869		Ouray Co, CO	
m. Edgar Burtle	1863	1901	Cedar Hill Cem. Ouray Co., CO	1892
5. William Swaim	1-04-1825	9-12-1846		
6. Cynthia Swaim Robbins	1-26-1827	2-25-1873	16 Cem. Tangier	
m. Henry Robbins			16 Cem. Tangier	9-28-1848
A. Ida Robbins				
B. Roxanna Robbins Horner	@ 1852			
m. William Horner				7-16-1868
1. Betty Horner				
2. Ellen Horner				
3. Janey Horner				
C. Josephine Robbins Newton			lived in Cherokee Co., KS	
m. William Newton				
7. Fanny Swaim Robbins	7-02-1830	1-07-1894	16 Cem. Tangier	
m. William Clarkson Robbins	182	9-01-1897	16 Cem. Tangier	4-4-1850
A. Susan Robbins Bevard	11-10-1855	7-10-1919	McGee Cem. Hollowell KS	
m. Jacob Bevard	9-17-1855	11-10-1916	McGee Cem. Hollowell KS	1875
1. Cora Bevard				
2. Pearl Bevard				
3. George Bevard				
4. Ola Bevard				
5. Ray Bevard				

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<u>Name</u>	<u>Birth</u>	<u>Death</u>	<u>Burial/Place</u>	<u>Marriage</u>
6. Raymond Bevard				
7. Charles Bevard				
B. Martisa Robbins				
C. Roxella Robbins				
D. Anna M. Robbins Hadley	12-29-1850	11-13-1933	Rush Creek Cem. Parke IN	
m. Joseph Hadley	9-08-1849	6-11-1918	Rush Creek Cem. Parke IN	8-01-1872
E. James Robbins	1853			
F. Henry Robbins	5-31-1865	6-04-1865	16 Cem. Tangier	
G. John R. Robbins	1865	9-09-1899	16 Cem. Tangier	
H. Clara E. Robbins Rabb	1868	1937	16 Cem. Tangier	
m. Grant Rabb	1869	1938	16 Cem. Tangier	11-29-1891
I. Cynthia E. Robbins	3-07-1876	9-07-1876	Rush Creek Cem. Parke IN	
8. Joseph C. Swaim	7-18-1833	7-14-1897	16 Cem. Tangier	
m. Susan A. Hazzard Swaim	10-29-1834	4-19-1919	16 Cem. Tangier	3-31-1864
A. Emma A. Swaim Drummond	2-20-1865	10-02-1924	16 Cem. Tangier	
m. William E. Drummond	11-07-1866	8-02-1930	16 Cem. Tangier	11-11-1894
B. Lizzie S. Swaim Hadley	9-10-1866	2-19-1941	Rush Creek Cem. Parke In	
m. Albert Hadley	2-07-1866	11-26-1935	Rush Creek Cem. Parke In	9-28-1890
C. Susan Swaim	1-16-1868			
D. Ida Bell Swaim	3-31-1872			
E. Ella M. Swaim	3-31-1872			
9. Malissa Swaim	4-27-1836	1-02-1839	Randolph Co., NC	
10. Joshua Madison Swaim	12-29-1839	9-17-1859	16 Cem. Tangier	
11. John Milton Swaim	4-07-1844	11-26-1912	Rockville Cem. IN	
m. Sarah Jenne Swaim	12-?-1848	5-10-1916	Rockville Cem., IN	12-30-1869
A. Oliver Swaim	10-24-1870	12-24-1906	Rockville Cem., IN	
B. Harrison Riley Swaim	1873	8-03-1962	Friends Cem. Bloomingdale, IN	
m. Celia Newlin Swaim	3-08-1877	5-01-1957	Friends Cem. Bloomingdale, IN	