



Canawlers At Rest ELIAS CRANE WILCOX

February 4, 1822– September 15, 1891

Find-A-Grave #54223544

Our subject Elias Crane Wilcox's great great grandfather was Peter Willcockse, who was an officer in the English army, a man of great force of character. He finally resigned his position, and was subsequently engaged in a duel on the ocean with a Frenchman. Peter arrived from England in 1736 and shortened his last name to Willcox. The Elizabethtown Association surveyed 424 acres of land in New Jersey for him. He settled on this land between Blue and Green Brooks. The farm was known as Peter Hill Farm. This is shown by the records in the Presbyterian Church at Westfield, New Jersey. He had five children.

Elias' great grandfather was William Willcox, who was born in New Jersey, and died at the age of sixty-six years after having lived on the same tract of land as that occupied by his family. He had seven daughters and four sons, one of whom followed Daniel Boone to Kentucky, and soon lost his life there.

Elias' grandfather was Levi Wilcox, who was born in New Jersey about the year 1760 and died in 1843, age about eighty-three. He was the person responsible for dropping one "l" from the family's last name. He was a farmer in Essex (now Union) County, and belonged to Capt. Wood's minute men. He married Esther Valentine. They had four children: Daniel M. Wilcox; Rachel Wilcox, who married William Van Blarkam, of Paterson, New Jersey; Betsey Wilcox, who married Capt. Joseph Doly, also of Peterson, and for her second husband Joseph Wilson, of Morristown, New Jersey; and Levi V. Wilcox, the father of our subject.

Elias' father was Levi Valentine Wilcox, who was born about the year 1797 at New Providence, Essex County, New Jersey, fifteen miles from New York City. There he received a common-school education. He served for a time as the Deputy Sheriff, after which he moved to Ohio, settling near New Lebanon. About 1816 he married Huldah Crane, of New Jersey.

Huldah was the daughter of John Crane (1762-March 4, 1844), of New Jersey, a farmer whose land was along the Passaic River one mile from New Providence. John, like Levi Wilcox, belonged to Capt Wood's minute men of Revolutionary War fame. His wife was Betsey Mulford, who died in 1828.

Levi V. and Hulda Wilcox had nine children: David B., Annie, Elias C., Orpha, Albert, Frank, Mulford, John and Mary. One died at age 14, another at age 19, and two after the age of 21. Those who survived were Col. Frank Wilcox, of Champaign, Illinois, Mrs. Annie Adkison, of Winterset, Iowa; John Wilcox, a farmer at Storm Lake, and our subject, Elias. For two years Levi V. was engaged in filling a contract on the Miami and Erie Canal, building several sections, his part of it being in the vicinity known as Shaker Swamps. Huldah Crane Wilcox died in 1836-37 in Indiana at about thirty-seven years of age. Shortly before or after her death, when

he was about forty years old, Levi V. moved to Fountain County, Indiana, on the Wabash River, in which place he bought a farm and spent some time in making improvements on it. Then selling this land, he crossed the Wabash River into Warren County, and there improved 400 acres of land, on which he resided until the time of his death in 1854 at age 57.

Elias Crane Wilcox, our subject, was born on the 4th of February, 1822, in Essex County, New Jersey. He received a good common-school education, after which he worked on the farm of his grandfather, living with him until seventeen years of age. He then clerked for two years for Woodruff & Co., of Elizabethtown, and in 1841 went to Indiana to join his parents. For a time he worked on a farm and then clerked in a store until 1847, when he was appointed Collector of Tolls on the Wabash & Erie Canal, at Covington, Indiana (1847-1854). He received his appointment from Stearns Fisher, well known as the Superintendent of the State Public Works.

On February 8, 1848, Elias married Rachael Virginia Fields, at Covington, Indiana. Rachel was born at Clarksburg, Virginia in 1828. She was the daughter of John Fields, who was born in Pennsylvania about 1802; lived for a while in Clarksburg, Virginia; and then moved to Covington, Indiana, where he was Postmaster and Justice of the Peace. Her mother was Miss Harris, a native of Virginia, who died about 1856. Her father, John, died in 1876 in Covington, Indiana. Elias and Rachel had four children all born in Covington, Indiana.

In the fall of 1854 Elias was elected Clerk of the Court for Fountain County on the Whig/Republican ticket. (The Republican party had hardly been born.) In 1856 a case came to the court in Covington, Fountain County, Indiana concerning canal land scrip. As part of his duties Elias swore in Robert Hetfield and John Bodley. Hetfield and Bodley's testimonies as recorded by Elias in the 1857 Journal of the Indiana House of Representatives gives us insight into the value of canal scrip and canal construction.

“Covington, Ind., Dec. 31, 1856

“At the clerk's office of Fountain county, Robert Hetfield, a competent witness, being duly sworn in by Elias C. Wilcox, Esq., clerk of Fountain county, and being examined on behalf of the claimant, testified as follows:

“I was selling goods during the spring and fore part of the summer of 1842, in Covington, Fountain county, and was engaged in packing pork at said place the fall and winter of 1842-3, and was handling a good deal of canal land scrip. In my dealings and in collecting debts during the summer of 1842, when the scrip first issued, I took it for goods and on debts, from slow men, at its face; but, in money transactions, it was not worth more than 80 cents to the dollar. It depreciated after the land sales in the fall of 1842, and its general range during that fall and the winter following was from 50 to 60 cents to the dollar. In the summer of 1843 it went down still lower, and I should say the average value of scrip from the 15th day of May, 1842, to the 25th day of August, 1843, was about 50 cents to the dollar.

R. HETFIELD”

“John Bodley, a competent witness, being duly sworn by said Elias Wilcox, Clerk as aforesaid, and examined on behalf of said claimant, testified as follows:

“During the period from May 19, 1842, to August 25, 1843, I was engaged in general

trading in Fountain county, and was also sheriff of the county. I was connected with canaling operations. When the scrip first issued in the spring or summer of 1842, it passed, among the friends of the canal, at par—it passed in ordinary business transactions; but in cash transactions it was not worth more than 80 cents to the dollar. After the land sales, which I think took place in October, 1842, the scrip depreciated quite rapidly. It ranged at 50 to 60 cents to the dollar, and even less, and, during the summer of 1843, it went as low as 40 cents to the dollar; and I should think that an average of its value from May 19, 1842, to August 25, 1843, would be about 50 cents to the dollar. I have examined the contract made by Wright & Barcus, on the one part, and Thomas H. Blake, commissioner, on behalf of the State of Indiana, of the other part, and referred to in the deposition of James Blair. I was well acquainted with the character of the work embraced in that contract—have been repeatedly on it and examined it during its progress. I was also engaged on it quite extensively in doing work of that kind during its progress, and have a knowledge of the cost of performing such a work. If the work embraced in that contract had been paid for in par funds, at the contract price, the contractor would have realized a profit of from 30 to 40 per cent, on the whole amount of work embraced in the contract. Labor and provisions were higher during the years of 1838-9 than in the former years. I think the price of labor in the years 1838-9 was about 70 to 75 cents per day, and in the years 1842-3, we commenced by paying 62 cents per day and boarding, and went from that up to \$1.25 in scrip. There was no other kind of money paid out during these latter years that I know of. I was one of the commissioners to assess the damages on the contract of Nichols, under the act of the General Assembly of the State of Indiana, entitled “An act for the immediate relief of contractors and others engaged on public works,” passed in February, 1840. The contract of Nichols joined that of Wright & Barcus on the North, and while I was engaged in making the assessment on the Nichols contract, I had good opportunities of knowing the condition of the Wright & Barcus contract, and the amount of money invested in shanties and implements. From my knowledge of other assessments, and from my knowledge of the amount and value of the implements and shanties owned by Wright and Barcus on their work, I think that their loss, by the suspension of the work, independent of the loss of profits on the work must have been in the neighborhood of \$2,000. I frequently saw them at work on the contract of Wright & Barcus before the suspension of the work. The number of hands I should think was 40, on an average. Most of the work was done with scrapers. The scrapers furnished by Wright & Barcus. I think there were about 25 scrapers. I think they had some forty or fifty wheelbarrows, and at least from ten to fifteen shanties on the work. I don’t know by whom the shanties were built. They also had some teams of their own—at least three teams—including wagons and horses; also shovels and picks sufficient to carry on a work of that kind; and were as well or better stocked, with all the implements to carry it on, than jobs of that kind usually are. I don’t know to whom the shanties belonged; they were on the work and used by Wright & Barcus.

J. BODLEY”

Elias was re-elected in 1858 as Fountain County’s Clerk of the Court. He held this position until November, 1862 serving a total of two terms.

From that date until the close of the war Elias occupied the position of Provost Marshal for Fountain County, a perilous one at that time, having his headquarters in Covington, his home. He continued as Marshal until the close of the Civil War. He spent the summer of 1866 traveling over the State of Arkansas in behalf of the Western Stage Company. He was there opening

mail routes and appointing Postmasters, for which he had a commission from the Government already signed, Elias taking bond and returning to the Government. The next year he moved to Champaign County, Illinois, where he raised a very large crop of grain plus 160 acres of corn, the latter selling at eighty cents per bushel.

In the spring of 1868 Elias moved to Union County, Iowa, near where Creston is located today. There he bought a new farm of 160 acres, and improved it with a house, barn, and other farm buildings. He remained there two years. In the fall of 1869 he was selected by the people, without any effort on his part, and was nominated for County Auditor. The nomination resulted in his election. After occupying the position for two years he was re-elected in 1871 and held the office until 1873. To the end of the year during this term he lived at Afton, Iowa. In 1874 he moved to Sheridan, Iowa and engaged in the lumber business, which he continued for three years. In 1877 he moved to Fremont County and located at Farragut, Iowa, where he had charge of a stock of goods until 1881, afterward selling, and moving to Wymore, Gage County, Nebraska when the city had just been platted.

In June, 1882, the Blue Valley Bank was organized, and Elias became its cashier, serving in that capacity for five years. In the meantime he was elected City Treasurer, to which position he was successively elected. He was also the Treasurer of the School Board and was engaged in the real-estate and insurance business. He attended the convention held at Philadelphia in 1856, which nominated John C. Fremont, and from then on he was a Republican. He was also a Chapter member and Master of the Blue Lodge, of Wymore.

Elias and Rachel Wilcox's four children were: Edward Bartine Wilcox, who was born on December 21, 1849 and passed away in 1851, at the age of two; Albert Coleman Wilcox, who was born on July 19, 1852, and died December 10, 1934. Albert married Carrie Wallace, of Sheridan, Iowa, and they were the parents of two children: Anna and Laird E. They lived in McPherson County, Kansas, where Albert had charge of the McKinley Hellicker Investment Company for the State of Kansas; Katherine Lillias Wilcox, who was born on February 25, 1855, and died December 12, 1927; and Frank Fields Wilcox, who was born on July 21, 1864, and died October 25, 1925. He was in the loan business in Horace, Greeley County, Kansas.

The 1860 Federal Census shows Elias at age thirty-eight a county clerk, with real estate valued at \$12,200, a personal estate of \$3,000, and living in Covington, Indiana. By 1870 he is listed as a farmer in Afton, Union County, Iowa, with real estate of \$700 and a personal estate of \$1,000. The 1880 Census shows him living in Farragut, Fremont County, Iowa where he is a merchant.

Elias Crane Wilcox died on September 15, 1891 in McPherson, Kansas where his son Albert lived. He was 69 years old. He was laid to rest in McPherson Cemetery in McPherson, Kansas. Find-A-Grave # 54223544

Rachel Wilcox, his wife, died on April 28, 1906 in New Rochelle, New York. She was 77 years old.



E.C. WILCOX
FEB. 4, 1822
SEPT. 15, 1891

**McPherson Cemetery,
 McPherson, Kansas**

Sources:

Ancestry.com

[http://person.ancestry.com/tree/82331523/](http://person.ancestry.com/tree/82331523/person/36461225969/facts)

[person/36461225969/facts](http://person.ancestry.com/tree/80916032/person/34429092221/story)

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U.S. Federal Census: 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880

Find-A-Grave: #54223544 E. C. Wilcox

History of Fremont County, Iowa. Des Moines, IA: Iowa

Historical Company, 1881.

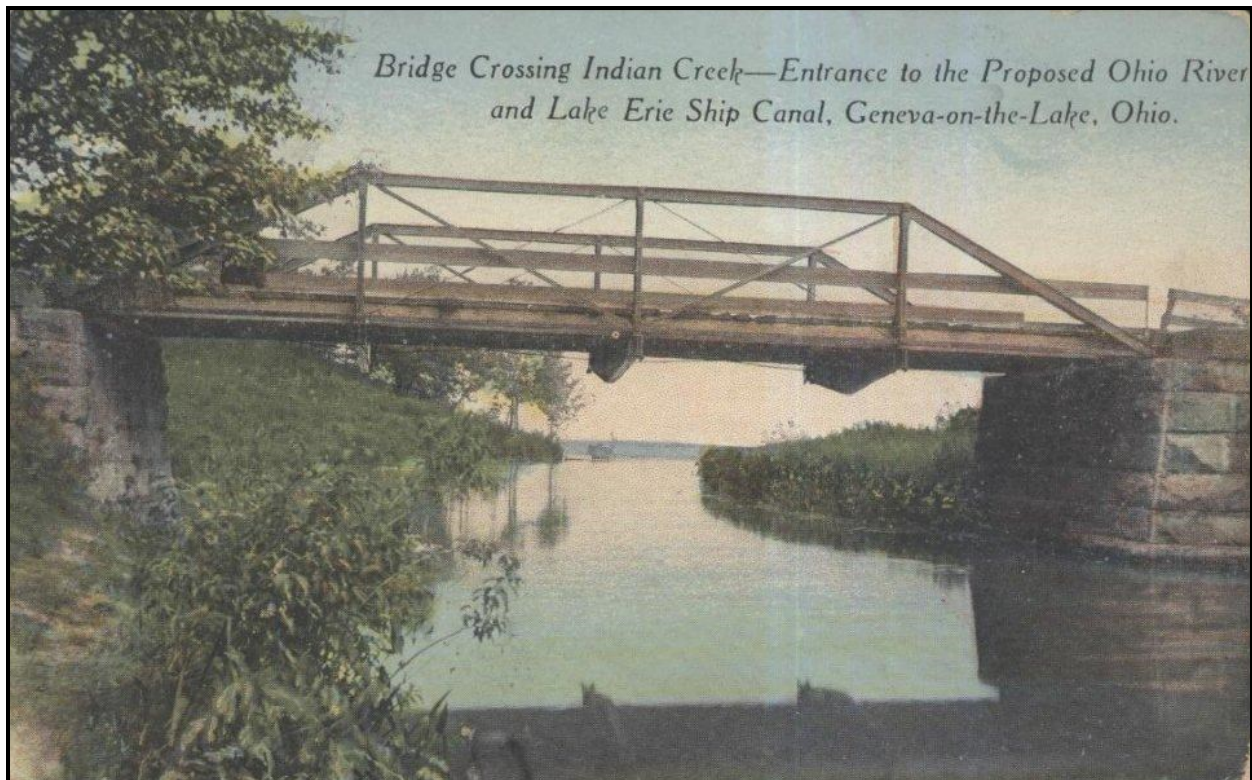
Journal of the House of Representatives, of the State of Indiana, During the Thirty-ninth Session of the General Assembly, Commencing Thursday, January 8, 1857. Indianapolis, IN: Joseph J. Bingham, State Printer, 1857.

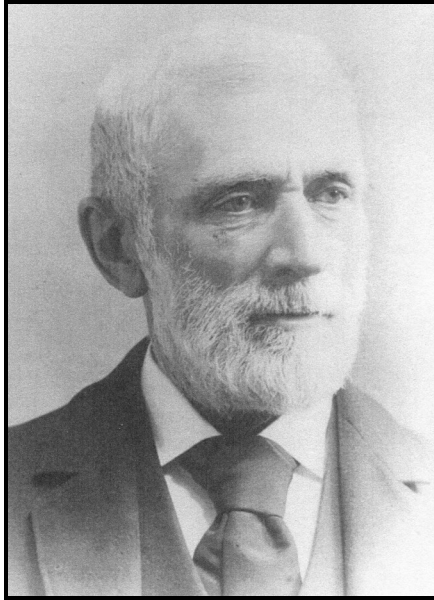
Portrait and Biographical Album of Champaign County, Illinois. Chicago, IL: Chapman Brothers, 1887.

Portrait and Biographical Album of Gage County, Nebraska. Chicago, IL: Chapman Brothers, 1888.

Entrance to Proposed Ohio River and Lake Erie Ship Canal Was Where Bridge Crossed Indian Creek at Geneva-on-the-Lake, Ohio.

From Neil Sowards





Charles Rugan Peddle
Courtesy of Vigo County Public Library
October 5, 1820-April 19, 1893
Find-A-Grave #19694183

Peddle's Recollections of Over 150 Years Ago

By Mike McCormick

On February 14, 1852—over 150 years ago—the Terre Haute & Richmond (TH&R) Railroad made its first 73-mile voyage to Indianapolis.

For nearly a century, railroads were Vigo County's premier industry.

Chartered in 1847 by Chauncey Rose, Samuel Crawford, James Farrington, Elisha Mills Huntington and James H. Turner, the TH&R—soon to be known as the Terre Haute & Indianapolis Railroad—provided the primary western terminal for eastbound rail traffic until late 1857.

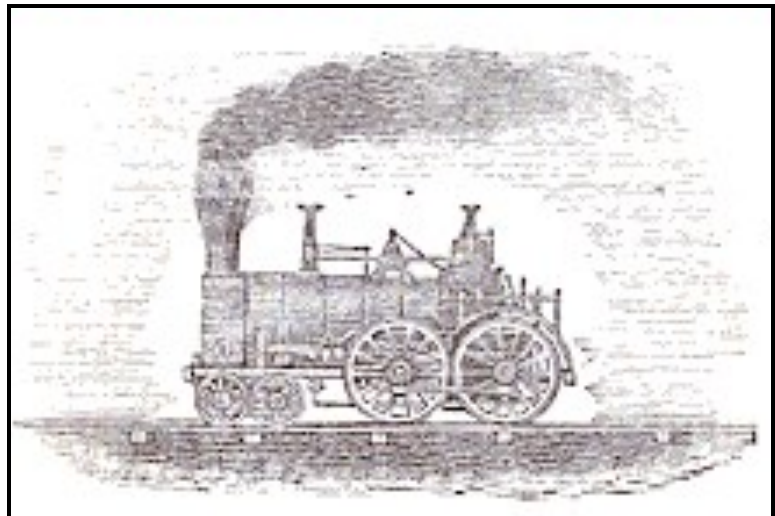
Crucial to the railroad's initial success was Charles R. Peddle.

Rose and Peddle, a resident of Philadelphia, began communicating in early 1851. Their first meeting occurred in the Astor House at New York City on April 1 of that year.

During that meeting Rose hired Peddle as “master mechanic” for the TH&R and authorized him to supervise the shipment of four Hinkley steam locomotives from Hinkley & Drury Locomotive Works in Boston to Indiana.

Two engines were shipped to Terre Haute, the other two went to Indianapolis.

Rose was a master of detail. During his return trip to Terre Haute, he stopped at Albany and Greenbush (N.Y.), Buffalo (N.Y.), and Toledo and Cincinnati (Ohio) to make precise arrangements. He outlines his instructions in a letter to Peddle dated April 7.



“On their (the engines) arrival in Terre Haute (on June 6, 1851) Miller picked up a few hands and unloaded them on the canal bank near the projected track. He put one of them in running order, assisted by Constant W. Mancourt, his fireman, and held himself in readiness for whatever service should be requested.

“I took the other two engines (from Toledo) to Cincinnati by canal, where the canal boat—a staunch one—was locked down into the Ohio River and provided with a pair of sweeps and a steering oar.

“The captain of the boat, named Cooney, was an old Ohio River man and, under his guidance, we shoved out from the shore into the swift and turbid current and floated down to Madison. It was a rather perilous trip as every swell caused by passing steamboats swept over the gunwales of the craft and made frequent use of the pump necessary.

“John Brough, president of the Madison and Indianapolis Railroad, gave me all the assistance necessary to unload the engines, haul them up to the levee to the railroad track, and tow them to the shops in North Madison.

“Here I put them together and run them separately under steam to Indianapolis. One of them was turned over to William Baugh, now known as ‘Uncle Billy’ Baugh, at the request of Thomas A. Norris, the late constructing engineer of the TH&R Railroad.

“The other engine was held in reserve for ballasting the road when needed.

“Accompanied by my wife and baby I took my passage on the stagecoach on Saturday.”

Forty years later Peddle recalled that first meeting and the subsequent events:

“I accompanied Mr. Rose to Boston the next day (April 2) to look after the engines, which were nearly completed, and hired a man named W. E. Miller, father of a well-known Vandalia engineer by the same name, to test one of them when they were put into service.

“The engines, when completed, were towed to Buffalo by rail, and there they were hauled through the streets by horses to the docks in the harbor about three-quarters of a mile away.

“Some of the streets were unpaved and were axle deep in mud. Two of the engines were loaded on a sailing vessel and I went with them over the lake (Lake Erie) to Toledo.

“There they were unloaded, hauled to another dock and let down on skids into a canal boat, a rather ticklish operation as the swell from the lake and from passing steamboats kept the canal boat in constant motion.

“The two engines were forwarded to Terre Haute by the Wabash and Erie Canal as directed by Mr. Rose and consigned to Samuel Crawford.

“I had to wait several days for the two remaining engines left in charge of Miller on account of the difficulty in getting a suitable vessel in Buffalo and I sent Miller, on arrival, in a packet boat to overtake the two engines en route to Terre Haute.

“I reached Terre Haute a little after sunrise on Sunday morning, where we were welcomed by the genial host of the Prairie House, Touissant C. Buntin, and provided with a first class break-

fast.”

Though a 10-mile stretch between Fillmore and Greencastle was still unfinished, the Terre Haute & Richmond transported westbound passengers from Indianapolis to Terre Haute as early as December 5, 1851. Patrons were required to use a stagecoach to commute the intervening distance.

By the end of 1851, the railroad owned seven locomotives, three passenger cars, 40 boxcars, 30 platform cars, 70 gravel cars, a baggage car and a mail car.

Rose and Peddle accompanied engineer Baugh on the maiden trip to Indianapolis on Saturday, February 14, (1852). Passengers were charged 5 cents a mile or \$3.65.

Peddle, who became the superintendent, continued to work for the Terre Haute & Indianapolis, known as “The Vandalia Line,” until retirement.

He remained Rose’s close confidante in other matters, as well, serving on the board of managers at Rose Polytechnic Institute from 1874 until his death in 1893.

From Sam Ligget, CSI director, Terre Haute, IN

Note that: “Two of the locomotives came to Terre Haute via the Wabash & Erie Canal, and the other two came via the Miami & Erie Canal, the Ohio River, and the Madison & Indianapolis Railroad to Indianapolis, then finally by the Terre Haute & Richmond Railroad to Terre Haute.”

Unique Canal Boat Race

From Arnie Bandstra

An unusual boat race was held on the Illinois & Michigan Canal in Ottawa, Illinois on Saturday August 6, 2017 to draw attention to the Ottawa Canal Association’s plan to re-water a section of the old canal. Starting next year an Illinois National Guard engineering unit will excavate the race course from La Salle to Columbus streets and beyond. They plan to re-water it to provide a recreational resource.



The dry grass covered bed of the canal made pulling the boats harder than if it had been watered. Held as part of Ottawa’s Riverfest, there were two races. In the first race two-person crews pulled a canoe with a child aboard about 40 yards down the canal bed and back. Individuals pulled kayaks in the second race. A great time was had by all.

Photo courtesy Ottawa *Times*