

WILLIAM HIGGINS
&
ROSANNA YOAKUM

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“William Higgins was born April 12, 1774 in Barren Co. Kentucky (his parents were Richard Higgins and Elizabeth ?). He was married to Elizabeth Downing about 1780 in Barren Co., Kentucky. They had one child and the mother died (Elizabeth born 18 March 1797). He was married, March 6, 1800, to Rosanna Yoakum (Megery) who was born 18 Dec 1778 in Barren County. She had five children, and died there. In 1817 Mr. Higgins moved his family to St. Clair Co., Illinois and was there married to Rosanna Duncan and they had a son, Oliver Perry Higgins born 17 Aug 1819.

He started with his family, in 1818, to the San-ga-ma country. They stopped on Sugar Creek with the Drennan's, until Jan. Or Feb., 1819, when they moved about fifteen miles north and built a cabin on the south side of the Sangamon River, above where the Chicago & Alton railroad now crosses. While he was living in camp, before his cabin was completed, himself and wife crossed to the north side of the river on horseback. They were belated, and spent one night in the river bottom near the mouth of Fancy Creek. A few days later Mr. Higgins went to the north side alone, found five bee trees, and killed a panther, which measured nine feet from tip to tip. He went over soon after, accompanied by his wife and two daughters, one of whom is now –1876 – the wife of David England (Margaret Higgins). These three are believed to have been the first white women who ever crossed to the north of the river, in what is now Sangamon County. Stephen England and his two sons-in-law came on their exploring expedition, and stopped with Mr. Higgins who accompanied them to the north side, and led the way to the vicinity of where Cantrall now stands, and all four selected sites for improvement. The creek was for several years called, in honor of his having first visited the locality, Higgins Creek; since changed to Cantrall's Creek.

Soon after this, a Mr. Chapman, son-in-law of Judge Latham, crossed the river and built a cabin on the north side, between where the Chicago & Alton and Gilman, Clinton & Springfield railroads now cross. His wife is thought to have been the fourth white woman on that side of the river. Mr. Chapman established a canoe ferry there, which for three years was the only chance for crossing the river. Persons could be taken over safe and dry, animals could swim, and wagons were taken to pieces, and with their loads were carried over, piece by piece. About three years later a boat was first used for a ferry.

The latter part of April, 1819, Stephen England, his two sons-in-law, his son David and two of his daughters, crossed over and finished building their houses and planting their crops. Those two daughters of Mr. England were the fifth and sixth women north of the river. One of them, Lucy, was the wife of John Cline. This account was given to me by David England and his wife, who was Margaret Higgins.

Of the five children of William Higgins, by his second wife (Rosanna Yoakum)– were CATHERINE, born May 12, 1801 in Kentucky, married Wm. Bradbury in St. Clair County and both died there leaving four children.

MARGARET, born Sept. 6, 1804, in Barren Co., Kentucky, married David England (these were the great-grandparents of Myrtle Mott Loutensock, my mother)
LOUISIANA, born Nov. 16, 1806, in Kentucky, married in Sangamon Co., to George Harper, raised a family, and lives in Oregon.

INDIANA, born March 24, 1809, in Kentucky, married Wm. Crane, in Sangamon Co., She died leaving one child, Joseph A. Crane, who is now a practicing attorney, in Freeport, Illinois.

WILLIAM H., born Feb. 25, 1813, in Kentucky, married Priscilla Kearney, have five children, and live in Cedar county, Missouri.

ROSANNA, born Dec. 16, 1816, in Kentucky, married in Sangamon Co., to Milton Claypool. He died, leaving a widow and eleven children, in Jo Davies County, Illinois

William Higgins built a boat and in 1823 took his goods down the Sangamon, and up the Illinois rivers to a point near Lewiston, and after that built a mill near Canton, Ill. He moved from there to the northern part of the State, where he and his third wife (Rosanna Duncan) both died, leaving four children."

"History of the Early Settlers, Sangamon County, Illinois"

By John Carroll Power

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Following was added by Margaret Loutensock Stone:

Many researchers give the name of the second wife of William Higgins as Rosanna Megery and not Rosanna Yoakum. The story is told that when Rosanna was very young her mother died and she went to live with her sister who had married a Scotchman Hugh McCary and people pronounced it Megery. I sent to Barren County Court House and asked if they had a marriage record of William Higgins to Rosanna Megery or Yoakum and they sent me a copy of the page on file in the Clerk of Barren County Court, Glasgow, Kentucky of marriages performed by Alexander Davidson 1799-1801-1802, which reads as follows:

"This is to certify that on the 6 of March the rites of marriage was solemnized between William Higgins and Rosannah Yocom by me."

The 1830 Census shows William Higgins and wife living in Warren County, Illinois but in 1840 his wife was listed as "Head of Household", 40-50 yrs old with 2 males 10-15 yrs, and 2 males 15-20 yrs .William Higgins must have died sometime between 1830 and 1840.

Their son Oliver Perry Higgins, born in 1819, was shown in Hancock, Illinois in 1840 Census and at Pottawattamie Co., Iowa in the 1850 Census. Since this was where Winter Quarters was located, we decided to look further and found that he had married Sylvia Edmonds (born New York) in Nauvoo, Illinois. We found he had become a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and they had their endowments in the original Nauvoo Temple before coming West with the pioneers - Joel Edmonds Company. They stayed in Utah a short time and had a daughter born in the Logan area and then went to the San Francisco area in California.

We are still at this time searching for more information on their descendants and find that one of them settled around Franklin, Idaho

Our line from William Higgins and Rosannah Yoakum are as follows:

William Higgins & Rosannah Yoakum,
Margaret Higgins & David England
Mary Ann England & James Wellington Mott
Milam Mott & Tena May Rybicka
Myrtle Mott & Hyrum W. Loutensock Sr.
Margaret Irene Loutensock & Ira Corbett Stone, Jr.

The Motts and Englands remained in the Illinois area around Cantrall, Springfield and Athens for many years except for my grandfather, Milam who was left an orphan at 4 years of age and was raised by his older brother, Allen, and wife. After graduating from high school he attended the new Valparaiso Methodist University for one year. He then moved west to Colorado and there he met and married my grandmother, Tena May Rybicka.. They later moved to Salt Lake and then California where they stayed until death. Mother met Hyrum William Loutensock while they lived in Salt Lake where they were married and later moved to California.

Through the LDS Family Search Program (IGI) we recently (2006) obtained information on the parents of Rosanna Yoakum . Mathias Yoakum and Elizabeth ? are shown as her parents and we are herewith attaching pedigree sheets of their ancestors together with a disk to add to your computer files.