

Aquilla W. and Willis D. Collins
AEHC featured persons for August 2022

Aquilla W. Collins
Born before March 22, 1822 – March 22, 1894

By some accounts he was born in first part of 1822, Aquilla W. Collins is buried in our cemetery's Section 2, Lot 32, Space 4; and his grave is unmarked. He was cited as being 72 years of age at his passing and in one notation as being only 70 years of age. He might have been born in late 1821, early 1822, or 1823, or 1824! We think likely late 1821, since his brother was reportedly born in June 1822.

Willis D. Collins
June 11, 1822 – March 8, 1894
Willis D. Collins is buried in our cemetery's Section 2, Lot 44, Space 12.

Summary of our research: Aquilla W. and Willis D. Collins were two of the sons of William Collins (1796-unknown) and Elizabeth (Beckner) Collins (1800-1835).

William and Elizabeth (Beckner) Collins were both born in Kentucky and were married in Kentucky in 1818. The Collins family was of Irish descent and the Beckner family was of Dutch descent.

William and Elizabeth came to Posey Township in 1825 and began farming. Their marriage begat at least seven children: Mary Ida (Collins) McDuffie (1818- 1900), Aquilla W. Collins (subject of this article), Willis D. Collins (subject of this article), Amanda Jane (Collins) Parks (1825-1902), Harriet Collins (1827-1899), James J. Collins (1831-1904), William Collins (1832-1917), John Collins (1835-1914). Their siblings, except John, are buried in Arlington East Hill Cemetery.

Their mother, Elizabeth (Beckner) Collins, passed away at the age of 35 on October 17, 1835, and is buried in Nelson Family Cemetery (west of Arlington). Their father, William Collins, by some accountings may have remarried and left the area. His burial location was not found.

Aquilla W. Collins

Aquilla married Amanda E. (Zornes) Collins (1827-1890). Her family information was not found during our research. They were married in Rush County on September 22, 1850. We know they had at least 4 children: William (1852-1924), John (1856- unknow), Preston S. (1859-1933), and Sarah E. (1862- unknown).

William is buried in Bartholomew County and Preston in Grant County. No information found on John and Sarah during our research.

Aquilla was listed as a Stallion Keeper on 1864 tax record, a Farmer on the 1870 Census, and a Laborer on the 1880 Census. Part of his obituary stated, one of 'our old pioneers... highly respected, hard working, and honest man..'

Willis D. Collins

He married Ellenor "Ellen" (Hurst) (1826-1893). She was possibly born in Wayne County. Her Father is believed to be Thomas Hurst (1793-1867). Her Mother is believed to be Nancy (Montgomery) Hurst (unknown). The Hurst family with Thomas' second wife, Sidney (Haladay) Hurst (1804-1863) were living in Shelby County around 1834.

Willis and Ellen were married in 1847 in Shelby County. They had at least 6 children: Mary J. (1849-unknown), D. C. Collins (1852- unknown), Clarisa (Collins) Nordloh (1855-1920), Sarah (Collins) Brown (1857- 1890), Willis Collins (1857-1934), Perry D. Collins (1861-1946), and William H. Collins (1867-1896). Clarisa (Collins) Nordloh, Sarah (Collins) Brown, Perry D. Collins, and William H. Collins are all buried in Arlington East Hill Cemetery. Their son Willis is buried in Asbury Cemetery in Morristown. Burial location of Mary J. and D. C. Collins was not located during our research.

Darius Collins (1842-1873) was living with them on the 1850 Census. He is possibly Willis' son from a first marriage or a nephew. Darius is buried in Nelson Cemetery.

'Squire Willis D. Collins was cited as "... long an honorable and reputable citizen of Posey Township.... Held office of Justice of the Peace of his township for several terms."

Willis D. passed away two weeks before his brother Aquilla. Both were listed in same newspaper article, which is attached to this research.

In 2022, Rush County's Bicentennial Year, we will feature some of our earliest pioneers having a birth year of 1822 and who have been entrusted to our care. We want to honor those who helped to establish Rush County.

(Sources: Rush County Historical Society and Bicentennial, Ancestry, Find-a-Grave, Newspaper archives, Rush County 1888, and Arlington East Hill Cemetery records)

More information about our cemetery and its history can be found at www.arlingtoneasthillcemetery.com

Information about Rush County history and Bicentennial events can be found at www.rushcountyhistory.org and <https://rushcountybicentennial.weebly.com/>

Aquilla Collins, of Arlington, an old settler of Posey township, died yesterday evening at six o'clock. He was seventy-two years old. The funeral will be held to-morrow morning at nine o'clock. Burial at the Arlington cemetery.



'Squire Willis D. Collins died at his home, one and a half miles northwest of Arlington, last Thursday evening. He was upwards of seventy years old and was long an honorable and reputable citizen of Posey township. Mr. Collins held the office of Justice of the Peace of his township for several terms. The funeral services occurred on Saturday afternoon at one o'clock, conducted by Elder W. M. Guard, of Knightstown, and the remains were laid to rest in the Arlington cemetery.



Grim-visaged death has been ravaging our community since our last writing. For his first victim he claimed Willis D. Collins, on the 8th inst. He was a well-known citizen, highly respected, and for some years had been a justice of the peace and pension agent. The next victim was uncle Jacob Beckner, on the 21st. He was known all over the county, had been a wide-awake business man, and was a leading member of the Christian church. He was 89 years old when he died. The funeral services were held Friday, conducted by Rev. J. B. Blount, of Raleigh. On the 22d, Aquilla Collins departed this life, at the age of 72 years. He was one of our old pioneers and was highly respected, and had always been a hard-working and honest man. Funeral services were held at the house, Saturday, by Rev. Blount, and the burial was at the East Hill cemetery. Mon-