

“ROBERT THOMPSON. Amongst the early settlers in the northern part of Indiana county was Robert Thompson, who was born in Londonderry, Ireland, in 1737, and came to America in 1778, with his wife, Mary, *nee* Cannon, and six children: Hugh, Martha, James, John, Margaretta and Elizabeth. After a few years’ residence in the vicinity of ‘Old Salem’ Presbyterian church, Westmoreland county, Pa., they, in 1795, removed to what is now Rayne township, Indiana county, on Thompson’s run, nearly two miles above where Kellysburg now is. Their son Hugh and his young wife, Martha, *nee* Thompson, had attempted to settle there alone in 1793, but Indian hostilities compelled them to return to their former abode south of the Conemaugh river. Their permanent settlement in 1795 was made comparatively safe after General Wayne’s defeat of the Indians in August, 1794. Robert Thompson was known as a man of noble character and sterling worth, and his wife as a most estimable woman. We learn from an interesting book entitled, ‘History of the Presbytery of Kittanning,’ that they, with their son Hugh, and son-in-law, Hugh Cannon, were amongst the founders of Gilgal Presbyterian Congregation about four miles from their home. WE quote from page 196 of that book a follows:

“ Gilgal, a mother of churches, traces her origin to an improvement in 1797 by Robert Thompson, Hugh Thompson and Hugh Cannon, from Westmoreland county, who were soon followed by other Presbyterians, etc.’

“To Mrs. Thompson belongs the honor giving to that organization its name, Gilgal. In physical, mental and moral qualities, and by their wholesome influence, these people were of those living at that early period, who builded *well* and better than they knew in the great structures of state, church and social life that we now enjoy nearly one hundred years later. It is related of this old patriarch, Robert Thompson and his family, that on the evening of the day in which they arrived upon their land in Rayne township, he, without even a cabin for shelter, conducted family worship, seated with older members of the family upon fallen timber in the woods, and the younger children in their arms. His farm was selected from the northern portion of this tract of land, and after his death, Oct. 13, 1809, and the death of his wife, Jan. 25, 1815, it was occupied by his son, James, and his daughter Margaretta, neither of whom ever married. James died Feb. 13, 1849, and Margaretta was burned to death Feb. 29, 1864. Of his other children, Elizabeth, the youngest daughter, who married Henry Van Horn in 1815, resided in East Mahoning township, where she died Feb. 13, 1858. Her children were Mary C., Dorcas L., James T., Tabitha L., Robert T., Isaiah V. and Harry A. JOHN, the youngest son, who married Mary McCluskey in 1810, settled and lived upon a farm west of his father until his death, Mar. 27, 1859. his family were Mary Jane, Matilda, Eliza A., Robert and Margaretta. Martha, the eldest daughter, resided with her husband, Hugh Cannon, upon a farm which was the southern portion of the original tract settled upon in 1795. She died Sept. 5, 1848, and was the mother of seven sons and one daughter: William, Robert, John, Fergus, James, Joseph, Hugh M. and Mary T. Hugh, the eldest son, continued his residence on the middle portion of the same tract (where he permanently settled in 1795), until his death, June 13, 1829. ROBERT THOMPSON, his wife and above-named six sons and daughters, lived beyond “three-score and ten,” except Hugh, who died in his 63d year, and their last resting-place is in the cemetery near Gilgal church, where they all worshiped. Hugh Thompson was an intelligent, large-hearted citizen, whose life was that of exemplary manhood. His wife was of scotch descent, although born in Ireland—the

fifth child of James and Mary Thompson, who, in 1793, emigrated from Westmoreland county, Pa., to Nicholas county, Kentucky. She was a 'born lady,' gentle, wise and practical; in personal bearing attractive and impressive.

"The family of Hugh and Martha Thompson were two daughters and seven sons: Mary, born Oct. 10, 1792, married John Fenton, died Oct. 5, 1829; Jane C., born July 26, 1794, married John B. Henderson, and died May 1, 1837; Joseph born Jan. 12, 1797, married Euphemia Moorhead, was at one time associate judge of this county, and died Oct. 27, 1882; James, born July 24, 1799, married Ann Ayers, died May 9, 1837, whilst in Philadelphia buying a stock of merchandise; Robert, born Dec. 13, 1801, married Mary Leasure, died Jan. 10, 1879; John, born June 1, 1804, married Ellen J. Patton, was a well-known and prominent citizen of Ebensburg, Pa., where he died Dec. 5, 1879; William C., born April 2, 1807, married Harriet Furgeson near Mansfield, Ohio, and afterwards moved to Steuben county, Indiana, where he died May 31, 1890; Hugh A., born April 1, 1810, married Elizabeth Munholland, was for two terms clerk in State department under ex-Governor Curtin, more recently cashier of First National bank, Indiana, Pa., and died April 23, 1886; Samuel H., born March 5, 1814, married Fbra A. Stewart, April 12, 1838.

"MAJOR SAMUEL H. THOMPSON, the youngest in the above family, began business life as a merchant, but on account of the great financial crisis of that period he afterwards engaged in farming. The farm on which he first lived nearly twenty-four years was bought by Johnston Lightcap in 1861, and in 1862 he moved upon a larger farm above Kellysburg, on Thompson's run, which he had purchased from Daniel Stanard, Esq. His death occurred there August 15, 1865, and the death of his wife May 11, 1869. His sons, T. St. Clair and Wm. Laird, now own and occupy the southern portion of this farm. Major Thompson was a man of clear conception, strong moral courage, sound judgment and generous disposition. Socially, he was agreeable, humorous and witty; firm in his opinions, yet tolerant and liberal; always found on the moral and progressive side of public issues, as well as fearless and consistent in the expression and practice of his convictions. These characteristics, with his mental ability and readiness, enabled him to be equal to any occasion in the discussion of all public questions, in which he was always well and thoroughly informed. In determining upon public men and measures he 'hewed close to the line,' and when quite a young man became an intense hater of the institution of human chattel slavery, despised the position of the North as errand-boy and lick-spittle for the South in that agitation, cut loose from the political associations of family and friends and took a forward part in the Anti-Slavery movement of that period, when the principal arguments used against such men by the dominant political parties were social ostracism, epithets, slander, rotten eggs, mob law, the destruction of their printing-presses and the occasional killing of an editor to make proceedings more effective. He was secretary of about the first Indiana county anti-slavery organization; afterward its nominee for prothonotary when their strength was less than on hundred votes in the county, and was also connected with the underground railroad system. To use one of his own expressions on the subject, he 'denied the right of any man to own, hold in bondage or dispose of human beings as chattels unless a bill of sale was first produced from Almighty God, properly executed and signed.' His son, Hugh S., remembers that when quite a small lad a squad of escaping slaves, two of them mothers with babes in their arms, called at his father's one morning for food and

directions about the roads; some days later two grim-looking strangers on horseback, with large whips in their hands, passed where he was at play on the road-side and inquired 'if any black people had gone along there lately.' Not understanding the matter, and not knowing that the men were slave hunters, he very innocently told them all about it, right along. But it was the only and last 'pointer' he ever gave men and women-stealers, for upon telling his father of the affair at dinner that day he received some instructive reproof and an explanatory admonition that enlightened him considerably.

"The subject of this part of our sketch was also quite active in educational affairs, serving as director when the school system had its early trails, and was one of the original board of managers of the Marion select school, which has been a successful institution during the last one-third of a century. At the time of his death he was one of this county's auditors, elected on the republican ticket. He will be remembered, too, as one of the founders of Smyrna United Presbyterian Congregation, near Georgeville, and one of its ruling elders for over twenty years. His family were eight sons and one daughter: Hugh S., J. Stewart, Archie S., J. Wilson, F. St. Clair, Reynolds E., Robt. Alexander, Elizabeth H., now living with her husband, Dr. G. W. Simpson in Santa Barbara, Cal., and Wm. Laird Reynolds died March 29, 1877. Four these sons—all of the family old enough and physically able—were volunteer soldiers during the late war, Stewart, archie, Wilson and St. Clair, the last-named being one of the youngest from this county, and with his regiment amongst the first to enter Richmond. ARCHIE and WILSON were in important and perilous positions in U. S. Signal service, where they occasionally met with Gen. grant and other army officers; and after being discharged in August, 1865 they arrived home only a few hours before their father's death, when the dying patriot was only able to give utterance to one of his last expressions, in clear accents of thankfulness, 'My country has been saved. My boys are home.'

"His wife was the daughter of John Stewart, an old time merchant. Many are yet living who remember this excellent woman's wisdom and kindness, the richness of her womanly worth, her remarkable correctness in judgment of human nature and the practical affairs of life, and the unsurpassed degree of her faith in God and His promises. She, with her husband and son Reynolds, lie in Oakland cemetery, Indiana, Pennsylvania."