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William T. Irwin Life History Report

Client: [Client name here]

Date: 15 December 2023

Subject: Irwin Family

Contract: [Details on contract signed, including number of research hours & rate]

Research goal: Identify the family and life story of William T. Irwin, who died in Hendricks County, Indiana in 1923.

Narrative of findings:

I. Early Life in Kentucky

On Friday, April 6, 1923, the *Brownsburg Record* published an obituary for 82-year-old William T. Irwin. The obituary provided the names of William's parents, wives, and children, along with a brief summary of his life.¹ This report aims to expand on the details of William's life recorded in his obituary.

William was born in Lewis County, Kentucky, before state law required the collection of vital records.² His obituary lists his birth date as November 26, 1840.³ His wife of 25 years, Mary (Denny) Irwin, was likely the author and source of this date. Additionally, in the 1900 census,

¹ "Obituary," *The Brownsburg Record*, 6 April 1923, page 1, column 6; digital image, *NewspaperArchive* (<https://newspaperarchive.com>: accessed 4 May 2023).

² Ron Bryant, "Kentucky's Pioneering Role in Vital Records Documentation," Kentucky Genealogical Society, 2003, <https://kygs.org/history-kentucky-vital-records/>. Kentucky laws required the collection of vital statistics from 1852-1862 and again from 1874-1878. In 1910, the Kentucky legislature passed a law establishing a Bureau of Vital Statistics and the state has recorded all birth and death records since.

³ "Obituary," *The Brownsburg Record*, 6 April 1923.

***Sample report note:** This is a preview of a larger report and is therefore not complete. Not shown are the full source list, recommendations for future research, and appendices that include copies of primary source documents.

which included a specific question regarding birth month and year, November 1840 is listed for William.⁴ Assuming that William and his family knew his birthdate, and having found no evidence to the contrary, this report accepts November 26, 1840, as accurate.

William's obituary names his parents as William and Susan Irwin. A search of the 1850 census for Lewis County, Kentucky, found only one entry for a William T. Irwin with a father also named William and a mother named Susan.⁵ The household contained the following individuals:

Name	Age
William Irwin	36
Susan A. Irwin	32
John W. Irwin	11
Wm T. Irwin	9
Edward T. Irwin	8
Margaret A. Irwin	3
Christianna Doyal	72

The 1860 census enumerated the same family living in Lewis County, with a few changes in the household:⁶

Name	Age
William Irwin	47
Susan A. Irwin	42
John W. Irwin	20
William T. Irwin	19
Edward T. Irwin	18
Margaret A. Irwin	13
Susan A. Irwin	9/12
Jane E. Thurman	22

William's 1923 obituary noted that he was one of six children.⁷ As seen in the 1850 and 1860 censuses, William was one of at least five children. He had an older brother, John, a younger

⁴ 1900 U.S. census, Boone County, Indiana, population schedule, Perry Township, sheet 7B, dwelling 147, family 149, William T. Irwin household; digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>; accessed 4 May 2023); citing NARA microfilm publication T623.

⁵ 1850 U.S. census, Lewis County, Kentucky, population schedule, page 208 (stamped), dwelling 69, family 69, William Irwin household; digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>; accessed 4 May 2023); citing NARA microfilm publication M432.

⁶ 1860 U.S. census, Lewis County, Kentucky, population schedule, page 97 (penned), dwelling 716, family 716, William Irwin household; digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>; accessed 4 May 2023); citing NARA microfilm publication M653.

⁷ "Obituary," *The Brownsburg Record*, 6 April 1923.

brother, Edward, and two younger sisters, Margaret and Susan. Either his obituary was mistaken, or there was a sixth sibling that cannot be identified using census records alone.

In the 1840 census, in which only the names of heads of households were listed, William Irwin Sr.'s household was enumerated as having one male under the age of 5 (likely John W. Irwin based on what is known from the 1850 census), one male between the ages of 20 and 30 (likely William Irwin Sr. based on what is known from the 1850 census), one female between the ages of 20 and 30 (likely Susan Irwin based on what is known from the 1850 census), and one female under the age of 5.⁸ The female under the age of 5 does not appear in the 1850 or 1860 censuses with the rest of the Irwin family, which could suggest a possible older sister of William. Her absence from the 1850 census indicates she had either died or left the household by then. Although this report did not pursue this unnamed female beyond census records, she is included as a subject in the *Recommendations for Future Research*. Twenty-two-year-old Jane E. Thurman, enumerated as living with the Irwins in the 1860 census, offers an intriguing place to start.⁹

William's mother's maiden name was not noted in his obituary. Additionally, a death certificate for William, where her maiden name would likely be recorded, has not yet been found.¹⁰ However, the death certificate for his sister Margaret reveals that their mother's maiden name was Doyle (also spelled Doyal in historical records).¹¹ Using this information, William Irwin and Susan Doyle's Lewis County marriage record can be located, providing a marriage date of December 21, 1837.¹² Seventy-two-year-old Christianna Doyal, enumerated as living with the Irwins in the 1850 census, is therefore likely a family member and possibly William's grandmother. This report does not pursue her relationship to the Irwins, though she is listed in *Recommendations for Future Research*.

II. Move to Indiana and First Marriage

William's obituary states that he came to Indiana in 1863.¹³ Notes uploaded from public users on *Ancestry.com* indicate that a newspaper story published in a 1927 edition of the *Lewis County Herald*, written by a member of the Irwin family, details the Irwins' temporary move to Indiana. This newspaper article is not available digitally, and due to time constraints, it and the Irwins' move to Indiana has not been fully investigated. These subjects are included in *Recommendations for Future Research*.

⁸ 1840 U.S. census, Lewis County, Kentucky, population schedule, page 73 (stamped), line 7, Wm Irwin; digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>; accessed 4 May 2023); citing NARA microfilm publication M704.

⁹ Jane's age in 1860 would make her around 2 years old in 1840, fitting the basic profile of the unnamed female enumerated in the 1840 census. A marriage could account for her non-Irwin last name in 1860.

¹⁰ A death certificate for William cannot be located through keyword searches or manual searches of indexes. Alternate spellings of the last name were searched as well, including Irving, Irvine, and Erwin.

¹¹ Commonwealth of Kentucky Bureau of Vital Statistics, death certificate 22617 (1922), Margret Ann Irwin; digital images, *FamilySearch*, "Kentucky Death Records, 1911-1967," (<https://www.familysearch.org>; accessed 4 May 2023).

¹² Marriage Registers, Lewis County, Kentucky, 1837, no. 38, entry for William Irvine and Susan Doyal; digital images, *FamilySearch*, "Kentucky Marriages, 1785-1979," (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:N9M1-V2G>; accessed 4 May 2023).

¹³ "Obituary," *The Brownsburg Record*, 6 April 1923.

Regardless of when and why they came, the Irwins did not come to Indiana by chance. William likely grew up hearing stories about his uncles, John and Edward Doyal, who had bought land in Indiana and relocated there. John Doyal purchased his first parcel of land in southeastern Boone County from the federal government in 1838.¹⁴ The land was located on the Boone-Hendricks County line, and in 1840 his brother Edward bought parcels of land in Hendricks County that abutted John's.¹⁵ The two brothers farmed and raised families in Indiana for the next two decades, while their younger sister, Susan, remained in Kentucky and raised William and his siblings.

After William relocated to Indiana, he married Sarah Elizabeth Sandusky in Boone County on January 2, 1870, their marriage license issued at the courthouse in Lebanon.¹⁶ Unlike William, Sarah was born and raised in Indiana and belonged to some of the first families to settle in northeastern Hendricks County. She grew up on multiple farms just south of the Boone County line, in the same area that William's uncles had settled.¹⁷ It is likely that Sarah was well acquainted with William's extended family. The two were perhaps introduced by William's Doyal relatives when William arrived from Kentucky in the 1860s.

At the time of William and Sarah's marriage in 1870, Sarah was a land-owning woman. In 1843, when Sarah was three years old, her father, John Sandusky, deeded 80 acres of land to a trust for the benefit of her and her mother, Harriet McDaniel.¹⁸ The trustee was Isaac McDaniel, one of Harriet's brothers and Sarah's uncle. The timing of this deed—executed in March 1843—is peculiar given the state of Harriet and John's marriage at the time. In April 1843, around two weeks after this deed was signed, Harriet and John were in court for a divorce suit brought by Harriet. They both agreed to dismiss the case.¹⁹ However, in 1846, John filed for divorce, stating in his complaint that Harriet had "abandoned" him in December 1842, had yet to return, and

¹⁴ John W. Doyal (Boone County, Indiana) homestead patent no. 30707; "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records (<http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/PatentSearch>: accessed 6 May 2023).

¹⁵ Edward T. Doyal (Hendricks County, Indiana) homestead patent no. 33625 & 33626; "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records (<http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/PatentSearch>: accessed 6 May 2023).

¹⁶ Marriage Records, Boone County, Indiana, v. 5: 339, marriage of William T. Irwin and Sarah E. Sandusky (1869); digital images, *FamilySearch*, "Indiana Marriages, 1811-1979," (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XXVL-X8X>: accessed 6 May 2023). Note that William & Sarah's marriage license was issued on December 31, 1869, and their marriage took place on January 2, 1870.

¹⁷ Warner, C.S., and Worley & Bracher, *Map of Hendricks County, Indiana*. Philadelphia: Stone & Titus, 1865; digital image, Library of Congress (<https://www.loc.gov/item/2013593185/>: accessed 6 May 2023); Warner, C.S., and Worley & Bracher, *Map of Boone and Clinton Counties, Indiana*. Philadelphia: Cowles & Titus, 1865; digital image, Library of Congress (<https://www.loc.gov/item/2013593190/>: accessed 6 May 2023). These 1865 maps of Hendricks and Boone Counties provide a good illustration of the neighborhood that Sarah grew up in and the spatial relationship of neighbors. She likely called three separate farms home at one point or another: her father John Sandusky's farm, her grandparents Asa and Sarah McDaniel's farm, as well as her stepfather Aaron Homan's farm. All were located in the northeastern portion of Hendricks County.

¹⁸ Deed Records, Hendricks County, Indiana, v. 9: 247, John B. Sowdusky to Harriet Sowdusky (1843); digital images, *FamilySearch*, "Deed records, 1825-1889," (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/246951>: accessed 6 May 2023). Sandusky is spelled a myriad of ways in the historical record, including Sowdusky, Sodusky, and Sadowsky.

¹⁹ Hendricks County Circuit Court Records, Hendricks County, Indiana, v. 3: 706, Harriet Sodusky vs. John Sodusky, divorce no. 15 (1843); digital images, Hendricks County Government Digital Archives (<http://hcapps.co.hendricks.in.us/DataWarehouse/Archive/SectionMenus/CivilOrderIndex.aspx>: accessed 9 May 2023).

provided no explanation for her absence. Harriet was ultimately subpoenaed, and after she failed to appear in court, the court granted John a divorce.²⁰

After the divorce, Harriet and Sarah went to live with Harriet's parents, Asa and Sarah McDaniel, who owned a farm in the same area.²¹ In 1854, Harriet remarried Aaron Homan, a widowed lawyer 30 years her senior.²² Harriet and Sarah were listed as living with Aaron in 1860, along with Harriet and Aaron's four-year-old son (and Sarah's half-brother), Washington.²³ Harriet and Aaron eventually moved to Cartersburg in the southern part of Hendricks County; Harriet died there in 1864.²⁴ Sarah does not appear to have followed her mother and stepfather to Cartersburg. In 1865, she was listed as a milliner in Fayette, a small town in Boone County just north of the Boone-Hendricks line.²⁵ After her mother's death, Sarah became the sole owner of the 80 acres held in trust by her uncle. In 1866, Isaac McDaniel ended the trust and transferred the land to Sarah's sole ownership.²⁶

After their marriage in 1870, William and Sarah lived in southeastern Boone County near William's uncle John Doyal.²⁷ At the very beginning of their marriage, a conflict arose between William and Sarah's father. A single entry in the records of the Hendricks County Circuit Court for the November 1870 term reveals that William and his brother Edward filed a lawsuit against John Sandusky. The order book does not specify why the lawsuit was filed, only that Sarah's father filed for a motion to dismiss it, and the court agreed to do so. William and Edward were ordered to pay the court costs. Their uncle, Edward Doyal, interceded and took responsibility for paying the costs himself.²⁸

²⁰ Hendricks County Circuit Court Complete Books, Hendricks County, Indiana, v. 6: 114, John B. Sodowsky vs. Harriet Sodowsky, (1846); digital images, *FamilySearch*, "Complete Records, Circuit Court, Hendricks County, Indiana, 1834-1920," (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/1421068>: accessed 7 May 2023).

²¹ 1850 U.S. census, Hendricks County, Indiana, population schedule, Brown Township, page 163 (stamped), dwelling 1156, family 1168, Asa McDaniel household; digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>: accessed 8 May 2023); citing NARA microfilm publication M432. Asa and Sarah McDaniel's farm was only about a mile north of John Sandusky's farm.

²² Marriage Records, Hendricks County, Indiana, v. 4: 478, marriage of Aaron Homan and Harriet Sandusky (1854); digital images, *FamilySearch*, "Indiana Marriages, 1811-1979," (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:V8MW-CXN>: accessed 8 May 2023).

²³ 1860 U.S. census, Hendricks County, Indiana, population schedule, Brown Township, page 20 (penned), dwelling 136, family 136, Aroon [sic] Homan household; digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>: accessed 8 May 2023); citing NARA microfilm publication M653. Harriet and Aaron's son, Washington, is incorrectly enumerated with the last name Sandusky.

²⁴ "Cartersburg," *Hendricks County Union*, 23 June 1864, page 3, column 2; digital image, *NewspaperArchive* (<https://newspaperarchive.com>: accessed 8 May 2023).

²⁵ Warner, C.S., and Worley & Bracher, Map of Boone and Clinton Counties, Indiana. Philadelphia: Cowles & Titus, 1865; digital image, Library of Congress (<https://www.loc.gov/item/2013593190/> accessed 6 May 2023). "Miss S. E. Sandusky" can be located in the business directory for the town of Fayette in the upper right-hand corner of the map.

²⁶ Deed Records, Hendricks County, Indiana, v. 30: 582, Isaac McDaniel to Sarah E. Sadowsky (1866); digital images, *FamilySearch*, "Deed records, 1825-1889," (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/246951>: accessed 6 May 2023).

²⁷ 1870 U.S. census, Boone County, Indiana, population schedule, Perry Township, page 9 (penned), dwelling 59, family 59, William Erwin household; digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>: accessed 8 May 2023); citing NARA microfilm publication M593.

²⁸ Hendricks County Circuit Court Records, Hendricks County, Indiana, v. 11: 291, Edward Irvin & Wm Irvin vs. John B. Sandusky, appeal no. 192 (1870); digital images, Hendricks County Government Digital Archives (<http://hcapps.co.hendricks.in.us/DataWarehouse/Archive/SectionMenus/CivilOrderIndex.aspx>: accessed 9 May 2023). The judge in this case, John S. Tarkington, was the father of famous Indiana author Booth Tarkington.

III. Expansion of Farm and Divorce

By 1871, William and Sarah had moved south across the county line into Hendricks County.²⁹ William still owned no land of his own, but tax records indicate that they had settled on Sarah's 80 acres.³⁰ 1871 was also the year that William and Sarah experienced the loss of what was likely their first child. Sarah's gravestone is the only record of this event. Along with her name, birth date, and death date, the stone reads: "Infant son of W.T. & S.E. Irwin Apr 1871."³¹

According to census records, William and Sarah's daughter Susan, their second child, was born in July 1873.³² The new family of three, living on and farming Sarah's 80 acres, were across the road from the 40-acre farm of the Jones family.³³ In 1874, both the patriarch and matriarch of the Jones family died.³⁴ An estate sale was held on the property in January 1875, and William purchased a two-year-old colt from the Jones estate for twenty-six dollars.³⁵ With the apparent goal of expanding his and Sarah's 80-acre farm, beginning in 1876 and continuing through 1877,

²⁹ 1871 Hendricks County Treasurer Tax Duplicate, book 2, page 132, entry for Wm T. Irwin; digital image, Hendricks County Government Digital Archives

(<http://hcapps.co.hendricks.in.us/DataWarehouse/Archive/SectionMenus/TaxDuplicateIndex.aspx>: accessed 8 May 2023).

Sarah is listed in the tax records as owning land in Hendricks County since her mother died in 1864, even though for a time she lived in Boone County with William. This report assumes that William's listing in the tax records indicates their actual residence in Hendricks County.

³⁰ 1871 Hendricks County Treasurer Tax Duplicate, book 2, page 139, entry for Sarah E. Sandusky; digital image, Hendricks County Government Digital Archives

(<http://hcapps.co.hendricks.in.us/DataWarehouse/Archive/SectionMenus/TaxDuplicateIndex.aspx>: accessed 8 May 2023).

Sarah is still listed here under her maiden name Sandusky. Since tax records for 1871 indicate that William owned no land in Hendricks County, this report assumes that William and Sarah were living on Sarah's land. The \$400 dollar "value of improvements" recorded on her land suggests a farm was located on the property.

³¹ *FindAGrave*, database with images (<http://www.findagrave.com>: accessed 8 May 2023), memorial 77443331, Sarah Elizabeth Sandusky Irwin, McDaniel Family Cemetery, Brownsburg, Hendricks County, Indiana; grave marker photograph by Ryan Holly.

³² 1880 U.S. census, Hendricks County, Indiana, population schedule, Brown Township, page 15 (penned), dwelling 136 family 146, William T. Irwin household; digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>: accessed 8 May 2023); citing NARA microfilm publication T9; 1900 U.S. census, Hendricks County, Indiana, population schedule, Center Township, Danville Town, sheet 17A, dwelling 401 family 432, Sarah E. Irwin household; digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>: accessed 8 May 2023); citing NARA microfilm publication T623. Census records are used in the absence of a birth record; in the 1900 census, where birth month and year were explicit questions, July 1873 is listed for Susan. Her age in the 1880 census supports this. Further, in the 1900 census, Sarah is recorded as being the mother of two children, one who is still living. This would confirm that her son who died in 1871 was her and William's first child, and Susan their second.

³³ Warner, C.S., and Worley & Bracher, *Map of Boone and Clinton Counties, Indiana*. Philadelphia: Cowles & Titus, 1865; digital image, Library of Congress (<https://www.loc.gov/item/2013593190/>: accessed 6 May 2023). The spatial relationship between the Jones farm and Sarah's 80 acres can be seen by viewing both parcels in the Brown Township section of this map. After locating the "B" in Brown, look slightly down to the right to find the properties. Sarah's 80 acres are still listed under "Mrs. Sandusky" likely due to the fact that, at the time the information for this map was gathered, her mother was still living.

³⁴ *FindAGrave*, database with images (<http://www.findagrave.com>: accessed 10 May 2023), memorials 14895621 and 14612433, Benjamin Jones and Mary Dodson Jones, Sparks Cemetery, Pittsboro, Hendricks County, Indiana; grave marker photographs by Marc Doty.

³⁵ "Account of the Sale of the Personal Property of Benjamin Jones" in Hendricks County Probate Packets, Hendricks County Court of Common Pleas, no. 688, Estate of Benjamin Jones (1874); digital images, Indiana Genealogical Society (https://www.indgensoc.org/membersonly/county/hendricks/probate_records/: accessed 10 May 2023).

William purchased all 11 shares of the Jones farm from the Jones children for a total of \$1,402.50.³⁶

Early in the summer of 1880, William began making bricks in preparation for the construction of a new home.³⁷ Tax records indicate that by the year 1881, the Irwins' new house was completed.³⁸

³⁶ Deed Records, Hendricks County, Indiana, v. 47: 28, Uriah E. Jones and wife to W. T. Irwin (1876); v. 47: 29, Uriah E. Jones Et al to Wm T. Irwin (1876); v. 47: 391, Thos W. Jones and wife to William T. Irwin (1877); v. 47: 423, J. S. Jones and wife to W. T. Irwin (1877); v. 49: 520, William Jones by P. Curtis guardian to Wm T. Irwin (1877); digital images, *FamilySearch*, "Deed records, 1825-1889," (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/246951>: accessed 6 May 2023). All 11 shares took some time to transfer as some Jones children were living in Kansas and Missouri, and one of the children, deemed insane, was under a guardianship. On average, William paid \$127.50 per share.

³⁷ "Brownsburg," *Hendricks County Union*, 13 May 1880, page 5, column 4, "Mr. Irwin of Brown"; digital image, NewspaperArchive (<https://newspaperarchive.com>: accessed 8 May 2023),

³⁸ 1881 Hendricks County Treasurer Tax Duplicate, book 2, [image 147], entry for William P. Irvin [sic]; digital image, Hendricks County Government Digital Archives (<http://hcapps.co.hendricks.in.us/DataWarehouse/Archive/SectionMenus/TaxDuplicateIndex.aspx>: accessed 10 May 2023). The value of improvements for the Irwin property rose from \$200 to \$800 in 1881, likely indicating the construction of the home mentioned in the 1880 newspaper notice.