

GILPIN, LEVI LAMBDIN

Levi Lambdin GILPIN, son of Samuel S. and Rebecca (ENGLE) GILPIN, was born on August 13, 1844, in a round log cabin in Perry township, Tuscarawas county, Ohio, the first born of the eleven children, seven sons and four daughters born to this parentage. The mother was eighty-seven and her youngest child forty-two years old when the first death of one of her children occurred, that of Samuel dark GILPIN. On her ninety-sixth birthday, October 20, 1919, her ten living children ate dinner with her in Portland. She died on February 22, 1920, and sleeps beside her husband in Green Park cemetery in Portland. Levi L. GILPIN's early years were spent on his father's farm, his schooling being confined to the winter terms. At the age of seventeen and of a weight of 112 pounds he enlisted, at Uhrichsville, Ohio, in Company E of the 51st regiment, Ohio Volunteers, for a term of three years, and went into training camp with the company, September 20, 1861, on the Tuscarawas county fairgrounds at Canal Dover. On November 3 the regiment was transferred to Camp Dennison (Ohio) and on November 17 to Louisville, Ky., and spent the early part of the winter at Camp Wickliffe, some seventy-five miles southeast of Louisville. After the Ft. Donelson campaign the regiment was the third to march into the city of Nashville and the state, county and city officers and police having left the city, Col. Stanley Matthews was appointed provost marshal and his regiment detailed as provost guards to police the city and guard the state house and other public buildings and the immense amount of military stores and provisions which were brought in by rail and river for the use of the army. Colonel Matthews asked to be relieved from this duty and on July 3, 1862, the regiment was relieved by the 8th Michigan regiment and returned to its place in Nelson's division at the front. When Bragg's rebel army invaded Kentucky, Buells Union army started to head him off. Nelson's division left McMinnsville, Tenn., September 1 and marched to Nashville seventy-one miles and thence to Louisville, 185 miles by rail, but much farther by the roundabout way taken to get to Louisville ahead of Bragg. When this march began young GILPIN was less than one month past eighteen years of age, but on the longest day's march forty-one miles, when nearing Louisville, he marched into camp with the regiment at 11 o'clock at night and was then detailed for guard duty the remainder of the night, because the man who preceded him on the company roll a big, stout fellow, who with many others of the same build had laughed at GILPIN's size when he enlisted had been left in a fence corner along the pike. They ceased to laugh at him after that, for he never fell out of ranks on a march during his term of service. After the battle of Perryville, Bragg retreated toward Cumberland Gap. He was followed beyond Mt. Vernon, Ky., and then the Union army marched back to Nashville. After the battle of Stone River the regiment was put in VanCleve's division of the 21st Army Corps and took part in the Chattanooga campaign and in the battles of Chickamauga, Lockout Mountain and Missionary Ridge. In all of these battles GILPIN took part, when but little past nineteen. In January, 1864, he re-enlisted with his company and regiment for three years, as veteran volunteers, and with the regiment enjoyed a thirty-day furlough to Ohio. The regiment, then in the 4th Army Corps, took part in all the battles of the Atlanta campaign and at the battle of Kenesaw Mountain (Ga.), June 23, 1864; he was severely wounded in the right arm, just above the elbow, by a Minnie ball. After six months and two weeks in hospital he was discharged January 10, 1865 because of a permanently crippled right arm.

His father had moved in 1863 from eastern Ohio to Adams county, Indiana. Lacking seven months of his majority, young GILPIN naturally returned to his father and mother and as on account of his disabled condition he needed better education, he entered school, April 4, 1865, at Liber College, south of Portland. He attended the summer and fall sessions of 1865, 1866 and 1867, meanwhile teaching during the winters to earn money for his expenses. He spent the early part of

1868 at Berlin (Ohio) College and on September 1, 1868, began work in the office of the auditor of Jay county, helping to make a tax duplicate and copying the duplicate after it was made. He made and copied the duplicate in J. W. Headington's law office in 1869. In the winter of 1868-69 he taught the Portland public school, with Nancy HAWKINS, as assistant teacher.

Levi Lambdin GILPIN and his assistant teacher, Miss Nancy HAWKINS, were united in marriage on September 12, 1869, and again taught the school the following winter. Mrs. GILPIN died on November 4, 1904. To this union were born six children, namely: Sarah Gertrude, who lives in Portland; Anna Rebecca, who died at the age of two years; Mary Helen, who married Jesse McKINNEY, a Dunkirk merchant; Gail and Grace (twin daughters), the former of whom died at the age of twelve years and the latter of whom married Levi S. GRIMES of Portland, and Garth G., who took a course in mechanical engineering at Purdue University and lives in Chicago. In 1870 Mr. GILPIN served as census enumerator for the townships of Penn, Jackson, Bearcreek, Wabash, Noble and Wayne, in this county, making the entire canvass on foot. In that census Camden (now Pennville) had 458 inhabitants and Portland, 462. In the fall of 1870 Mr. GILPIN bought the one-half interest of Nimrod Headington in the general store at Westchester and until in February, 1872, was a member of the firm of Griffith & Gilpin; selling, then his interest to Mr. Griffith and returning to Portland. Beginning on March 1, 1872, he served one year as deputy clerk of the court and during that time had the house built in which he has since lived, moving into it on July 29, 1872.

On March 1, 1873, Mr. GILPIN began the study of telegraphy and the details of local railroad and express business, under the instruction of Clinton C. Humphrey, then local agent for the G. R. & 1. Railroad Company at Portland. On June 1, 1874, he succeeded Mr. Humphrey and continued as joint agent for the railroad company and the express company until he resigned the railroad agency in March, 1881, and was checked out on April 7, 1881. The express company's office then was moved from the railroad station and he continued in the express business until November 1, 1895, when he took charge of the office of county recorder, having been elected recorder of Jay County in 1894. In 1898 Mr. GILPIN was re-elected recorder and continued to serve in that public capacity until January 1, 1904, after which he resumed the local agency of the United States Express Company and was thus engaged until the express company went out of business and closed its office in 1914. When the Farmers State Bank of Portland was opened on June 26, 1915, Mr. GILPIN was elected president of that institution and served in that capacity for five years, at the end of which time he resigned his executive position because of a growing defect in his hearing. In 1918 he was elected a member of the county council and was chosen by the other members as president of that body, which position he now (1921) occupies. Mr. GILPIN also has served as a member of the Portland school board. He is one of the original members of the Jay County Fair Association and served three years as secretary of that organization and some twenty years as a member of the board of directors of the same. For fifty-two years he has been a Freemason and has served as secretary of Jay Lodge, No. 87, F. and A. M. He was a charter member of the Stephen J. Bailey post (No. 154) of the Grand Army of the Republic at Portland, was the second commander of this post, has served as commander at other periods since and has also served as a staff officer for department and national commanders of the G. A. R. He is a member of the Portland Chamber of Commerce and has always taken an active and interested part in movements having to do with the promotion of the best interests of the city and county.

SOURCE: Milton T. Jay, M.D., History of Jay County Indiana, Historical Publishing Co., Indpls. 1922, Vol. II, pp.112-114. Transcribed by Eloine Chesnut.