

ENOS AND SARAH (RAMSEY) RHODES

Enos A. Rhodes, was the only child of Beacham C. and Sarah (Hensley) Rhodes. According to family tradition, Enos Rhodes had a very hard time in his childhood and teen aged years. His parents were married on 27 Dec 1849, in Shelby Co. IL¹, and Enos was born 25 Oct 1851². The 1850 Federal census for Shelby Co. IL lists Beacham Rhodes and his wife, Sarah living in Shelby Co. IL.

In March 1855, Enos' father bought some land in Shelby County from his brother, John³. Then only seven months later Beacham sold the land back to John for the same price that he paid for it⁴. Of course there could be many reasons for this, but it seems to suggest that something had happened in the Beacham Rhodes household that disrupted their plans. Since we have no record of Enos' mother, Sarah (Hensley) Rhodes after she appears in the 1850 census, it seems probable that at sometime in mid March 1855 She may have died, or that the marriage otherwise broke up. We have no information of her death or burial, nor do we have any information on a divorce, but it seems likely that something happened to the family in 1855 to cause a disruption in Enos' life. In that year he would have been four years old.

Enos' father was married second to Sarah Farley⁵ in Effingham County on 26 Oct 1856 and they had one daughter, Nevada. Sarah (Farley) apparently died before 1860 because Beacham was married third to Betsy (Rosanna Elizabeth Bingaman) early in 1860⁶, which was in Enos' 8th year. It would appear that during the years that he should have been starting in school, he was in an unstable environment and no one paid much attention to his training.

In the 1860 Federal census Beacham Rhodes is listed as head of a household with Betsy, his wife, and son, Enos. At the time of this census Enos would have been aged 9. It is known that Enos could not read or write, but that he was fully mentally competent, as evidenced by the fact that he held a good job as a carpenter for the Pennsylvania Railroad for 30 plus years; therefore, the reason for his illiteracy was simply that he had never been exposed to a school environment.

The year 1862 must have been very traumatic to young Enos Rhodes. In March of that year his father was arrested for passing counterfeit money. Beacham was brought to trial in the Effingham County court and in the October term, he was found guilty and sentenced to one year in the penitentiary at Joliet Illinois. One day was to be in solitary confinement and the rest at hard labor⁷. This must have been very hard for an eleven year old boy to accept.

According to family traditon, Enos Rhodes was bound out as a boy⁸. Apparently it was result of his father's arrest, conviction and incarceration. Beacham was released and his citizenship was restored in Oct 1863, but the 1870 census shows Enos residing in the household of Epriam Deal, so it is assumed that this is the person to whom he was bound and with whom he lived until reaching maturity. Family tradition indicates that he was not well treated by his bondsman⁹. It seems obvious that at the very least his schooling was neglected, and since Mr. Deal was a farmer he probably worked very hard on the farm. In his young years Enos was known to have a great amount of physical strength, which was probably developed by hard work on the farm.

On 15 Dec 1870, in Effingham IL, Enos married Caldonia Crowell¹⁰, a young girl who was

living in the household of Eli Rentfrow, a neighbor. This marriage did not last long and in the September 1873 term Enos obtained a divorce on the grounds of infidelity¹¹. Apparently the marriage was in trouble from the start because in April 1871 Enos filed a bill for divorce, but the case was apparently dropped and re-entered in 1873 when the divorce decree was granted by the court.

We have not found any significant information on Enos' activities during the next four years but on 12 Dec 1877 he married his cousin, Sarah Jane Ramsey¹², in Effingham Co. IL. Sarah's mother was Nancy (Hensley) Ramsey, who was a sister of Sarah (Hensley) Rhodes, Enos' mother.

Sarah Ramsey was born 30 Nov 1860 to James and Nancy (Hensley) Ramsey¹³. James and Nancy were married in Shelby Co. IL on 7 Nov 1852¹⁴. James had inherited some land in Shelby Co. from his father, Preston. In June 1854 James and Nancy sold their Shelby county land to James Mahan¹⁵ and the couple moved to Christian County. It was there that Sarah Jane, their only living child was born. In 1862, when Sarah was only two years old, her father along with uncles Michael and Benjamin Ramsey joined Company E of the 115th Illinois Volunteers¹⁶. The unit was sent south to engage in battle and while the unit was in Boyle Co. KY James and his brother Benjamin died of complications from Typhoid Fever. Their brother Michael had already died of disease while in Fayette Co. KY¹⁷. James and Benjamin are buried in a military cemetery in Danville KY, and Michael's body was shipped back to Shelby county where he is buried in the Old Stonington Cemetery.

After the death of her husband, Nancy Ramsey recommended to the court that her choice of an administrator of James Ramsey's estate was A. B. Chapman. Mr. Chapman took the administrator's oath and the estate was settled in February 1864¹⁸.

On 23 Oct 1864 Nancy married Richard T. Hughes, a widower who lived in Ewington IL near Effingham¹⁹. Richard was 63 years old at the time, and had been married three times before. His first wife was Catherine Keys²⁰ whom he married in Ohio and had a large family. The family moved to Effingham County IL in 1849 and Catherine died soon thereafter.

Richard then married Sarah Hindaman²¹ who died soon after the marriage and did not have any children. Richard's third marriage was to Rebecca Yarnell²² by whom he had two boys, Joseph and Carlos who lived to maturity. Two other children died in childhood. Thus when Sarah Jane Ramsey was four years old she came into a home where she had two older step brothers, and this is the environment in which she grew to maturity.

Her stepfather, Richard Hughes was very good to her and attended to her welfare. He saw to it that she got a government pension for her father's service in the army and he invested the money she received in Effingham County land²³. He also sent her to school and bought a horse for her to ride to school. When Sarah married Enos Rhodes on 11 Dec 1877²⁴ she had just passed her 17th birthday eleven days previously. On 15 Jan 1879 their first child, a son whom they named William Lee, was born to them²⁵.

The 1880 Federal census for Effingham Co. IL lists Enos Rhodes, his wife Sarah J., Son William and mother-in-law, Nancy living in a household. Sometime in the middle of 1880, the family loaded their possessions in a covered wagon, hitched a team of horses to it and headed westward along the old National trail²⁶. They were headed for Missouri. Probably about a month later they arrived in Springfield MO., judging from the distance from Effingham IL to Springfield MO and the miles usually travelled per day in a covered wagon. If these assumptions are near correct they probably arrived in Springfield sometime in July or August 1880.

The reason for the trip to MO is not known, but it may have been that they had family or friends there. It is known that some of the Ramseys and Hensleys migrated to that part of Missouri, so it is possible that this is the reason for going there. Since they went by wagon, it is pretty evident that they had intended to settle in Missouri or maybe even farther west. However, another child was soon to be born to them so they stopped in Springfield.

On 7 Dec 1880, only a few months after they arrived, Nancy (Hensley, Ramsey) Hughes, Sarah's mother, died. A little over two months later, 15 February 1881, a little girl was born, and her name was Laura Etta Rhodes²⁷. Apparently these events convinced the Rhodes' that westward migration was not for them so, sometime in 1881, probably after their baby girl was a few months old the Rhodes family returned to their farm near Ewington IL.

On 24 Feb 1882 Enos and Sarah sold their 61 acre farm near Ewington to Wyley Shelton for \$50.00²⁸. This was the land that Richard Hughes had purchased for Sarah out of the money she received from the government because of the death of her father, James Ramsey, while serving in the army during the Civil War. The description of this parcel of land is as follows: All that part of the west half of the northeast quarter of section 35 T8N R5E, 61 acres more or less. It was soon thereafter that Enos began working for the Pennsylvania Railroad in the track service Department where he remained employed for 38 years until retirement on his 70th birthday, 25 Oct 1921²⁹.

In 1883 Enos and Sarah had another child, a girl whom they named Margaret Viola. Margaret was born 10 Aug 1883 and died 29 Aug, only 19 days later³⁰. It was Apr 20 1886 when their next and last child was born. This was a girl named Clara May, and she died 15 Aug 1887, just before she was 16 months old³¹. The Rhodes family lived in various places in Effingham until on 1 Jun 1888 they bought a home on Virginia Avenue. The land they purchased on Virginia Ave. was described as being part of the east half of the NW quarter of the SE quarter of sec. 20 of T8N R5E of the third principle meridian. It ran 250 ft. along the center line of Virginia Ave. and was about 175 ft. in depth from the street to the center line of the alley³². This constitutes one acre of land. There was a small 3 room house on the property to which Enos added two more rooms soon after they moved there.

The land had been an old apple orchard and the trees still bore fruit several years after the Rhodes' moved there. In the fall they would harvest the apples and make apple butter in a large copper kettle over an open fire³³. Willie and Laura had many fond memories of the place on Virginia Avenue where they grew to maturity. The Rhodes' gave one lot to each of their children, Willie and his sister Laura, and when Willie married Jennie Belle Hughes on 12 Aug 1917, he

built a house on his lot where he and his bride set up housekeeping and where their first three children were born.

Enos and Sarah Rhodes still lived in their house on Virginia Ave. when Enos died on 3 May 1934³⁴. At that time they had lived on this place continuously for 46 years. Sarah continued to live there alone until 1944 when she sold the place and went to live with her daughter, Laura (Rhodes) Turner. So the Rhodes family owned the place at 601 Virginia Ave. for a total of 56 years.

After Willie and his family moved to Decatur IL in 1923, they would always make at least two trips to Effingham each year to visit. Enos Rhodes became disabled with high blood pressure in about 1925 and could not do much physical work. But Sarah always had a large garden and raised some vegetables to sell which helped supplement their income from Enos' railroad pension.

Sarah lived with the Turners until her death in 1954 at the age of 94 years.³⁵

1. Marriage License; Beacham Rhodes to Sarah Hensley: Original record on file in the Shelby County IL Clerk's Office.

2. Death Certificate; Enos Rhodes: Original record on file in the Effingham Co. IL County Clerk's Office.

3. Shelby Co. IL Deed; John Rhodes to Beacham Rhodes, dated 3 Mar 1855: Original record on file in the Shelby Co. IL County Clerk's Office; Deed Book 16 p95

4. Shelby Co IL Deed; Beacham Rhodes to John Rhodes, dated 28 Sep 1855: Original record on file in the Shelby Co. IL County Clerk's Office; Deed book 16 p481.

5. Effingham County Genealogical Society. Effingham County Marriages 1833-1877. March 1987: Effingham Co. IL

6. Ibid

7. Effingham Co. IL Circuit Court records; Case of The State VS Beacham Rhodes, on the charge of Counterfeiting, dated Mar 1862: Original records on file in the Archives of the Effingham Co. IL Circuit Court.

8. Family tradition handed down by Enos' son William.

9. ibid

10. Marriage License; Enos Rhodes to Caldonia Crowell: Original record on file in the Effingham Cop. IL County Clerk's Office.

-
11. Effingham Co. IL Circuit Court records; Divorce papers, Enos Rhodes VS Caldonia Rhodes: Original records on file in the Effingham Co. IL Circuit Court Clerk's Office.
 12. Marriage License; Enos Rhodes to Sarah Ramsey: Original record on file in the Effingham Co. IL County Clerk's Office.
 13. Death Certificate; Sarah J. Rhodes: Original record on file in the Macon Co. IL County Clerk's Office, Decatur IL.
 14. Marriage License; James Ramsey to Nancy Hensley, dated 5 Nov. 1852: Original record on file in the Shelby Co. IL County Clerk's Office.
 15. Shelby Co IL Deed; James Ramsey and Nancy, his wife to James Mahan, dated Jun 1854: Original record on file in the Shelby Co. IL County Clerk's office; Book 17 p19.
 16. Civil War Service Reports; Reports of James, Michael and Benjamin Ramsey's services in the Civil War: Original records on file in the Illinois State Archives, Springfield IL.
 17. *ibid*
 18. Christian Co. IL Estate Settlements; Records of the settlement of the estate of James Ramsey: Original records on file in the Christian Co. IL Circuit Court Clerk's Office.
 19. Unpublished papers of Robert A. Howell on the Hughes Family History.
 20. *ibid*
 21. Effingham County Genealogical Society, Effingham County Illinois Marriages 1833-1877. Effingham Co. IL. 1987:E. C. G. S.
 22. *ibid*
 23. Effingham Co. IL Deeds; Sarah Rhodes and Enos Rhodes to Wiley Shelton, dated 24 Feb 1882: Original record filed in the Effingham Co. IL County Clerk's Office.
 24. *op cit*. Marriage license of Enos Rhodes and Sarah Ramsey.
 25. Effingham Co. IL Birth Record; Return of a birth, William Lee Rhodes born 13 Jan 1879 to Enos and Sarah Rhodes: Original record on file in the Effingham Co. IL County Clerk's Office.
 26. Family tradition handed down verbally by William Rhodes to his son.
 27. Bible records; Leaves from a Rhodes bible: Original in the genealogy files of Bruce and Hazel Turner. Bruce is a first cousin of the writer.
 28. *op cit*. Sarah & Enos Rhodes' deed to Wiley Shelton.

29. op cit. Death certificate for Enos Rhodes.

30. op cit. Rhodes Bible.

31. op cit. Rhodes Bible.

32. Effingham County Deeds; Samuel Hinden and Mary, his wife to Sarah Rhodes, dated 9 Nov 1895: Original record on file in the Effingham Co. IL County Clerk's Office.

33. Stories told to the writer by is father William Rhodes.

34. op cit. Death Certificate for Enos Rhodes.

35. death certificate: Sarah Jane Rhodes: Original record on file in the Macon Co. IL County Clerk's Office, Decatur IL.