

With permission of Violet's son, Mike Noble, I am posting this record here to share.

**A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF JAMES WILLIS ADKINS AND ELIZABETH BURNS
WRITTEN BY THEIR GREAT GRANDDAUGHTER, VIOLET (ADKINS) NOBLE**

James Willis Adkins was born 09 July 1829 in Fayette County, Virginia (later become Boone County, then Lincoln County). He was the third child of the twelve children born to John Adkins and Lovey Plumley who migrated from Giles County, Virginia to Big Laurel Creek (Hager, W. Va.), which is now in Lincoln County West Virginia. James Willis grew up on his father's farm on Big Laurel Creek. He and his brothers and sisters worked on the farm, planting and harvesting crops, caring for the animals and assisting their parents in every way to provide the necessities for a large family.

When James Willis was twenty-eight years old he married (05 Mar. 1857) his first cousin, Docia Adkins, the daughter of his uncle, Luke Adkins and Sarah Lovejoy. They had a son (name unknown), born 1860 and a daughter, Virginia Bell, born 1858. Docia died in child birth with her son. In 1861, James Willis married Elizabeth Burns, daughter of David Burns and Elizabeth Butcher. They were the parents of thirteen children, all born in Boone and Lincoln Counties, West Virginia.

James Willis was given land for a farm by his father, John Adkins. He bought up land surrounding his farm, enlarging his holdings until he owned almost all of the land on Big Laurel Creek. When his seven sons married, he deeded each of them enough land to have a farm.

James Willis and his children, until grown, farmed the land, cultivation, corn and oats for animal feed, a large vegetable garden for food for the family, a field of sugar cane to make molasses to eat with hot biscuits and butter at breakfast time. He had his own beehives which produced honey, which was mostly eaten at breakfast, with hot biscuits and butter. He raised cattle for sale. Although James Willis and his family didn't use tobacco, he like the farmers, planted a large field of tobacco for cash crop to buy things he couldn't grow on the farm.

James Willis Adkins was highly respected in his community. He was a man of integrity and "as honest as the day is long" (an old saying in the backwoods). He was always the first to help his neighbors in time of need.

(page missing)..... horse into the water. His grandson dragged him ashore, then rode home for help. James Willis is buried in Mark Adkins (his uncle) Cemetery, on Big Laurel Creek (Hager, W. Va.) in Lincoln County, West Virginia.

After the death of her husband, Elizabeth went to live with her youngest son, James Walker Adkins. Elizabeth died 21 Sep. 1921, at the age of eighty-five. She is buried beside her husband in the Mark Adkins Cemetery on Big Laurel Creek.