

CHAPTER FOUR – ELIZABETH MCGEE FAMILY

Generation No. 2

1. ELIZABETH² MCGEE (*JOHN¹*) was born December 1833 in Butler County, Ohio, and died January 16, 1917 in Champaign County, Illinois. She married **JOHN DODSON** August 15, 1850 in Clinton County, Indiana, son of **WILLIAM DODSON** and **MARGARET WHITING**. He was born February 29, 1816 in Montgomery County, Ohio, and died 1908 in Champaign County, Illinois.

Notes for ELIZABETH MCGEE:

Not long after John McGee (Jr.) relocated his family to Clinton County, Indiana, his two daughters, Elizabeth and Martha McGee, married brothers, John and Jacob Dodson, respectively. The Dodson family was originally from Montgomery County, Ohio and had come to Tippecanoe County, Indiana in 1838. (Tippecanoe County borders Clinton County on the west.) John Dodson, age 34 and recently widowed, married Elizabeth McGee, age 17, on August 15, 1850 in Clinton County, Indiana. He was a wagon maker and carpenter by trade, and according to the Tippecanoe County Cemetery Index, his first wife, Anna, had died on November 29, 1849 at the age of 27 years old. A baby daughter, Margaret Dodson, age 4 months, died five weeks after her mother on January 4, 1850. Both mother and daughter are buried in Wyandotte Cemetery, Sheffield Township. John and Anna Dodson also had two sons, Levy and Henry Dodson, and Elizabeth McGee became their stepmother. After their marriage John and Elizabeth Dodson would have three children of their own; a daughter, Margaret, born in 1852, and two sons, Ira, born in 1856, and Edward, born in 1864.

The late 1850's brought considerable change to the McGee family in Clinton County. Elizabeth's mother, Jane (Cassell) McGee, is believed to have died in either Clinton or Tippecanoe County shortly before 1860, and after her death, Elizabeth's father, then almost 70, went to live with Elizabeth and John Dodson in Tippecanoe County. In late 1859, Elizabeth's brother, William McGee, and her sister, Martha (McGee) Dodson, departed Clinton County and moved to McLean County, Illinois. Around this same time, Elizabeth's youngest brother, Theodore McGee, left Clinton County and may have returned to southeastern Indiana where he lived with his brother Ralph McGee in Decatur County.

Elizabeth and John Dodson continued to reside in Tippecanoe County until 1865 or 1866, at which time they departed Indiana and moved to Champaign County, Illinois where they would reside for the rest of their lives. Elizabeth's father, John McGee, is thought to have died either in Tippecanoe County, Indiana before they moved away, or shortly after their arrival in Champaign County, Illinois, because he was no longer listed with the Dodson family in the 1870 U.S. Census. At this writing, the date of his death and his place of burial have not yet been determined.

John Dodson died in Urbana Township, Champaign County, Illinois in 1908 at the age of 92 years old, and after his death Elizabeth went to live with her oldest son, Ira Dodson, and his family. She died nine years later on January 16, 1917 at age 84.

Notes for JOHN DODSON:

*The 1850 census for Sheffield Township, Tippecanoe County, Indiana lists John Dodson, age 34, head, a wagon maker, b. in Ohio; his wife, **Elizabeth**, age 17, b. in Ohio; a son, Henry, age 8, b. in Ind.; and Levy (?), age 20, b. in Ohio.*

The 1860 tax records for Sheffield Township, Tippecanoe County, Indiana list Jno Dodson as the owner of two tracts of land located in the northeast quarter of Section 23, Township 22, Range 3. One tract contained 93 acres and was valued at \$2105, plus chattels worth \$1215. for a total taxable value of \$3320. The second tract located in the east half of the east half of the northeast quarter of Section 23, Township 22, Range 3, contained 25 acres with a total value of \$310. (Indiana State Library Archives, Indianapolis, Indiana.)

*The 1860 census for Sheffield Township, Tippecanoe County, Indiana lists John Dodson, age 44, head, a wagon maker, b. in Ohio; his wife, **Elizabeth**, age 27, b. in Ohio; a son, Henry, age 18, a farmer, b. in Ind.; a son, Ira, age 4, b. in Ind.; and a daughter, Margaret, age 8, b. in Ind. Also living in the home was John McGee, age 68, occupation of "taylor," b. in Pa. (Note: The boy, Henry, age 18, was John Dodson's son from his previous marriage.)*

1865 is the last year that John Dodson appeared on the tax rolls for Tippecanoe County, Indiana. Although he is shown as owning no real estate in 1865, the value of his chattels, i.e., property other than real estate, structures, etc. was assessed at \$3685. for which he paid \$115.59 in taxes.

In 1866, the family moved from Tippecanoe County, Indiana to Urbana Township, Champaign County, Illinois where they are found in the 1870 U.S. Census. However, Elizabeth's father, John McGee, was no longer living in their household in 1870, and it is believed that died either in Tippecanoe County, Indiana or shortly after they arrived in Illinois.

*The 1870 census for Urbana Township, Champaign County, Illinois lists John Dadson, age 54, head, a farmer, b. in Ohio; his wife, **Elisabeth**, age 33, b. in Ohio; a son, Ira, age 15, b. in Ind.; a son, Edward, age 5, b. in Ind.; and a daughter, Maggie, age 18, b. in Ind.*

*The 1880 census for Urbana Township, Champaign County, Illinois lists John Dodson, age 64, head, a farmer, b. in Ohio; his wife, **Elizabeth**, age 38, b. in Ind., father b. in Pa., mother b. in S. Car.; a son, Ira H., a farmer, b. in Ind.; and a son, Eddie S., age 15, works on the farm, b. in Ind.*

*The 1900 census for Urbana Township, Champaign County, Illinois lists John Dodson, age 84, head, a farmer, b. in Ohio; his wife, **Elizabeth**, age 66, b. in Ohio, father b. in Ohio, mother b. in Ohio; a son, Ira Dodson, age 43, a farmer, b. in Ind.; a daughter-in-law, Carrie, age 28; a granddaughter, Ida, age 9, b. in Ohio; and a servant, Charles Handley, age 18. The elderly Dodson's had been married for approximately 50 years, and the younger couple for nine years. Living immediately next door was another son of John and Elizabeth Dodson, Edward Dodson, and his family.*

Elizabeth Dodson became a widow in 1908, and in the 1910 census she is shown living with her son, Ira Dodson and his family.

The 1910 census for Urbana Township, Champaign County, Illinois lists Ira H. Dodson, age 54, head, a farmer; his wife, Carrie B., age 42; a daughter, Mattie M., age 19; and his mother, Elizabeth, age 76, a widow, b. in Ind., father b. in Pa., mother b. in Ohio.

The following excerpt is from "History of Champaign County, Illinois," by J. O. Cunningham, 1905.

John Dodson was born in Montgomery County, Ohio, February 29, 1816, and was educated there in the public schools. Later he engaged in farming, continuing in that line of industry until he reached the age of twenty years, when he served an apprenticeship in the wagon-making and carpenter's trade, during which time he constructed a great number of grain cradles. He followed these trades in Ohio for three years, and in 1838 moved to Tippecanoe County, Ind., and there followed the same line of business in connection with farming and blacksmithing. He came to Illinois in 1865 and purchased a farm of 215 acres, on which he has since resided. In his political faith he is an earnest Republican, and has held the office of School Director for a number of years. In his religious relations he is an attendant of the Universalist Church.

In December, 1838, Mr. Dodson married Miss Anna Hess, a daughter of Abraham and Ellen Hess, and two children were born of this union, namely: Margaret Ellen and Harry. Mrs. Dodson died and Mr. Dodson later married Miss Elizabeth McGee, a daughter of John and Ellen McGee, and to them two children were born: Ira H. and Edward S.

The parents of Mr. Dodson were William and Margaret (Whiting) Dodson, both of whom were natives of Virginia. They moved from that state about the year 1812, traveling all the way to Ohio on horseback. Mr. Dodson was drafted for services in the War of 1812, but was prevented from going to the front on account of illness.

More About JOHN DODSON:

Occupation: Blacksmith, Wagon Maker, Wheat Farmer

Children of ELIZABETH MCGEE and JOHN DODSON are:

- i. **MARGARET³ DODSON**, b. abt. 1852, Tippecanoe County, Indiana.
2. ii. **IRA DODSON**, b. August 10, 1856, Tippecanoe County, Indiana; d. October 18, 1929, Champaign County, Illinois.
3. iii. **EDWARD S. DODSON**, b. September 1864, Tippecanoe County, Indiana; d. December 10, 1946, Champaign County, Illinois.

Generation No. 3

2. IRA³ DODSON (*ELIZABETH² MCGEE, JOHN¹*) was born August 10, 1856 in Tippecanoe County, Indiana, and died October 18, 1929 in Champaign County, Illinois. He married **CARRIE BELL SLAYBACK** March 13, 1889, daughter of **WILSON SLAYBACK** and **MARY VANCE**. She was born July 1871 in Tippecanoe County, Indiana.

Notes for IRA DODSON:

The 1900 census for Urbana Township, Champaign County, Illinois lists John Dodson, age 84, head; his wife, Elizabeth, age 66; a son, Ira, age 43, a farmer; a daughter-in-law, Carrie, age 28; and a granddaughter, Ida N., age 9.

The 1910 census for Urbana Township, Champaign County, Illinois lists Ira H. Dodson, age 54, head, a farmer; his wife, Carrie B., age 42; a daughter, Mattie M., age 19; and his mother, Elizabeth, age 76, a widow.

*The 1920 census for Urbana Township, Champaign County, Illinois lists **Ira H. Dodson**, age 63, head, a farmer; and his wife, **Carrie B.**, age 52.*

The following excerpt is taken from "A Standard History of Champaign County, Illinois," J. R. Stewart, Supervising Editor, Lewis Publishing Company, Chicago and New York, Vols. I & II, 1918.

Surnames: DODSON, MCGEE, SLAYBACK

IRA H. DODSON. Among the families that have been identified with Champaign County for more than half a century are the Dodson's, represented by Mr. Ira H. Dodson, who still has a portion of the old homestead in Urbana Township.

Mr. Dodson was born in Tippecanoe County, Indiana, August 10, 1855, a son of John and Elizabeth (McGee) Dodson. His father was born in Ohio and his mother in Indiana. In 1865, the Dodson's came to Illinois, locating in Urbana Township, where the father bought 192 acres of land. John and Elizabeth Dodson had two sons, Edward and Ira, and there was also a half-brother, Henry Dodson, who served a soldier in the Civil War. John Dodson was a notable character in Champaign County, where he lived for a great many years and where he died at the venerable age of ninety-two in 1908. He was one of the greatest wheat raisers in the county. His wife passed away January 16, 1917, aged eighty-two.

Ten years of age when the family came to Champaign County, Ira Dodson grew up here and attended District School no. 4 in Urbana Township. He remained with his parents, taking a helpful part in the management of the farm, and was a prosperous agriculturist before he married and set up a home of his own.

March 13, 1889, Mr. Dodson married Miss Carrie Bell Slayback. She was born in Tippecanoe County, Indiana, daughter of Wilson and Mary Ellen (Vance) Slayback. Her father was a native of Ohio and her mother of Illinois, and Mrs. Dodson was one of five children. She was educated in the public schools of Indiana, at Dayton School No. 4.

After their marriage Mr. and Mrs. Dodson settled down and began their wedded life on his father's homestead where he had spent his boyhood days. This homestead has received many pleasing improvements at the hands of Mr. Dodson. It is located on the Interurban Railroad, and while a country home it is accessible to all the advantages and conveniences of the city.

Mr. and Mrs. Dodson are the parents of one daughter, Martha. She was educated in the home district school, where she spent eleven years, and then completed her literary training in the Urbana High School and also took musical instruction.

The lives of Mr. and Mrs. Dodson have been closely identified with Champaign County for many years, and their efforts have contributed to the fulfillment of the old scriptural phrase of making a former desert blossom as a rose. Mr. Dodson has many memories of the time when Champaign County was a region of raw prairie and swamp, and the present condition of the county has been accomplished largely through the miracle of drainage.

The Dodson family located in Champaign County before the Big Four Railway was constructed, and their first home was on the original farm. The Old District School was nearby, and subsequently the district was divided and a new schoolhouse built on Mr. Know's land. Mr. Ira Dodson attended both of these schools. Among his early teachers the one best remembered by all the students was a Mr. Cunningham, who was distinguished by the peculiarity of his costume, consisting of a calico gown and slippers. Mr. Dodson attended his last school in the high school at Urbana, under J. W. Hayes.

Mrs. Dodson and her daughter are active members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In politics Mr. Dodson has given his undivided support to the Republican Party since he was able to cast his first vote. He has done more than merely vote and has used his public spirited efforts to forward the good things of the community. For six years he served as director of the public schools and has always sought to make the local schools the best possible.

Fraternally he is identified with the Knights of Pythias and the Modern Woodmen of America, and his wife is a member of the Royal neighbors and the Pythian Sisters. Miss Martha Dodson has for years shown special interest in church affairs, her membership being with the Urbana Methodist Episcopal Church. Her working membership is just what is needed for every progressive church in the country.

The industry of Mr. Dodson has brought him abundant success, and he now enjoys a large and complete farm of 108 acres. Progress has been the keynote of his life and his well tilled fields are ample evidence of that quality. He is also a very systematic and orderly man in regard to his farm work, and everything is done just at the proper time and in the manner best fitted to accomplish results.

His father, Mr. John Dodson, was for thirty years a successful mechanic in Indiana, being a blacksmith and wagon maker. He worked at his trade before the Civil War. Among other useful things which were made in his shop were the old-fashioned grain cradles. Mr. Ira Dodson has as one of his most prized possessions one of these old-fashioned cradles made by his father. John Dodson also employed several hands in conducting his blacksmith shop in Indiana. His home was near a Dunkard settlement, and he made the old-fashioned buggies for the Dunkard people to ride in. It was many years before the Dodson family acquired their first self-binder for harvesting grain. Mr. Ira Dodson always associates the purchase of that modern farming instrument with the year that General Coxe's army marched to Washington, D. C. The army marched past the Dodson home. One other notable procession went by the Dodson place. At the time of McKinley's inauguration a great horn, six feet across the bell, was made at Decatur, Illinois, and was carried past the Dodson place on the shoulders of six men. It was used in the great inaugural parade at Washington.

After coming to Champaign County, John Dodson gave his principal time and attention to farming. He was an excellent manager and at the time of his death possessed 214 acres. He had drained this land, had improved it with good buildings and with trees, and today it stands as a monument to his industry. When he made his will, he directed that his two sons, Edward and Ira, his sole heirs, should each choose a man, who in turn should choose a third, and this arbitration committee should divide the property equally between the sons. But wisely enough the two sons, working in complete amity and agreement, did the work of division for themselves and thus kept the entire matter out of court, avoiding any litigation or delay and much expense.

More About IRA DODSON:

Occupation: Farmer

Notes for CARRIE BELL SLAYBACK:

The 1930 census for Urbana Township, Champaign County, Illinois lists Carrie B. Dodson, age 62, head, a widow.

Child of IRA DODSON and CARRIE SLAYBACK is:

- i. **MARTHA⁴ DODSON**, b. June 1890, state of Illinois.

3. EDWARD S.³ DODSON (*ELIZABETH² MCGEE, JOHN¹*) was born September 1864 in Tippecanoe County, Indiana, and died December 10, 1946 in Champaign County, Illinois. He married **VIRGINIA SHEPHERD**. She was born April 1867 in the state of Illinois, and died September 11, 1947 in Champaign County, Illinois.

Notes for EDWARD S. DODSON:

*The 1900 census for Urbana Township, Champaign County, Illinois lists **Edward S. Dodson**, age 35, head, a farmer; his wife, Virginia, age 33; and a son, John W., age 14. The couple had been married for 15 years and there only child was still living.*

*The 1910 census for Urbana Township, Champaign County, Illinois lists **Edward Dotson**, age 45, head, a farmer; his wife, Jennie V., age 43; a son, Walter J., age 24, a farm laborer; and a daughter, Ruth E., age 8.*

*The 1920 census for Urbana Township, Champaign County, Illinois lists **Edward S. Dodson**, age 52, head, a greenhouse florist; his wife, Jennie F., age 51; and a daughter, Ruth, age 17.*

*The 1930 census for Urbana Township, Champaign County, Illinois lists **Edd S. Dodson**, age 65, head, the proprietor of a greenhouse; and his wife, Jennie, age 61.*

More About EDWARD S. DODSON:

Occupation: Farmer, Greenhouse Proprietor

Children of EDWARD DODSON and VIRGINIA SHEPHERD are:

4. i. **JOHN WALTER⁴ DODSON**, b. March 15, 1886, state of Illinois; d. January 1969, Champaign County, Illinois.
- ii. **RUTH ELIZABETH DODSON**, b. January 18, 1902, Champaign County, Illinois.

Generation No. 4

4. JOHN WALTER⁴ DODSON (*EDWARD S.³, ELIZABETH² MCGEE, JOHN¹*) was born March 15, 1886 in the state of Illinois, and died January 1969 in Champaign County, Illinois. He married **ELLA CARTER**, daughter of MARTIN CARTER and EVA. She was born March 16, 1890 in Champaign County, Illinois, and died June 26, 1967 in Champaign County, Illinois.

Notes for JOHN WALTER DODSON:

*The 1920 census for Urbana Township, Champaign County, Illinois lists **Walter Dodson**, age 33, head, a farmer; his wife, Ella, age 24; and a daughter, Elanor, age 8.*

*The 1930 census for Urbana Township, Champaign County, Illinois lists **Walter John Dodson**, age 44, head, a farmer; his wife, Ella, age 40; and a daughter, Elinor, age 18. Also living on the farm was Walter Dunn, age 42, a farm laborer.*

More About JOHN WALTER DODSON:

Occupation: Farmer

Notes for ELLA CARTER:

Obituary of Ella Dodson (The News-Gazette, Urbana, Illinois, June 26, 1967)

Ella Dodson

Mrs. Ella Dodson, 77, of 1007 W. Stoughton St., Urbana, died at 8:45 a.m. Monday at Greenbrier Manor where she had been a patient five years. She had lived at Route 3, Urbana, all her life until moving to the Stoughton St. address in 1953.

Funeral arrangements are to be completed at Renner Funeral Home.

The daughter of Martin and Eva Carter, she was born March 16, 1890, in Urbana Township. She was married to J. Walter Dodson in 1910 in Peoria.

Mrs. Dodson was a charter member of the Mayview Home Bureau.

Mrs. Dodson leaves her husband, one daughter, Mrs. Mary Elinore Sinnott, of 1007 W. Stoughton St., presently in Texas who is returning home for the funeral; a sister, Mrs. Fay Curry of Laotta, Ind.; two grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Child of JOHN DODSON and ELLA CARTER is:

- i. **MARY ELEANOR⁵ DODSON**, b. abt. 1912, prob. Champaign County, Illinois; m. ? SINNOTT.

