July 8, 2024

It has been 122 years since the death of my 2x great grandfather, John O’Bryan. I have been looking for information on who his parents were for 43 years. We all have that one (or more) brick wall and say our ancestor was in the witness protection program. I think I may have a true case of it. Here is the first installment of the story.

According to the papers that he filled out when he entered the Illinois Soldiers and Sailors Home in 1902, John was born in Bedford, Indiana in 1838. In 1861 he married Pernina Catherine Nation in Boonville, Warrick County, Indiana. The curious thing about this is that his wife was from White County, Illinois and I still have not figured out how he met her. He enlisted in the Army in Evansville, Indiana in 1862 and fought in the Civil War as a private in the 42nd Indiana Infantry, Company K. After the war, he was living with his wife and two young children in Pike County, Indiana, listed as a farmer. The 1880 census shows the family in Hamilton County, Illinois (Lasater Precinct) with their five children, and John was still engaged in farming. This census also states that John’s father was born in Kentucky and his mother was born in Indiana.

I found in 1881 that John was on the Pensioners Roll in Hamilton County, Illinois, post office of Logansport. He earned $4.00 per month for his disability from the Civil War.

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| 195,270 | O'Bryan, John | Logansport | dis. of abdominal viscera | $4.00 | Sept., 1881 |

Without having sent for John’s military record, I would not know many things about him. I will go into that more in the 2nd installment of this story.

Thackeray village, in Hamilton County, Illinois was the location for John and his family in the 1900 Census. John and his wife, Pernina, had six children living with them, four children who had married and were living elsewhere, and five children who had passed away at birth or at a very young age. They reported that they owned their home free of mortgage. Although John stated that he could both read and write, in many documents he signed his name with only an X. Pernina stated that she could read but could not write.

John O’Bryan went to the Soldiers and Sailors Home on January 31, 1902 and died there in March. He is buried on the grounds there in what is now called Sunset Cemetery.

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| O'BRYAN, JOHN | JANUARY 31, 1902 | 5850 | K | 42 IN INF |

Without having sent for John’s military record, there are many things I would not know about him. I will go into that more in the 2nd installment of this story, which will continue next month in the “Illinois Members Stories” section of this website.

I hope you will come back to watch this fascinating story unfold.



