

**WHERE DID DALLAS LAKE GETS ITS NAME?** My search for the answer started at the LaGrange County Library's Genealogy Department and what I found just may answer that question.

In 1837, at the age of 48, William Dallas of Ohio, settled in Lagrange County, Indiana and upon arrival had with him his sister and fourteen mother-less children. Nine of the children were William's children, Samuel (18), Lorenzo (17), Joseph (16), George (15), Martha (13), Rebeca (12), Susannah (5), Levi (3) and Holmes (2). Mary Dallas, wife of William died in 1835 eight days after losing an infant son at birth.

William purchased land in Clearspring Township in Lagrange County. A Record of Purchase describes more specifically the location of the land purchased by William Dallas. It states "Whereas William Dallas, of Preble County, Ohio, has deposited in the General Land Office of the United States a Certificate of the Register of the Land Offices at Fort Wayne, whereby it appears the full payment has been made by the said William Dallas, ...for the sale of public lands, for the south west quarter of the south west quarter of Section twenty-six, in Township thirty-six North ...containing forty acres,... on the twentieth day of March, in the year of our Lord on thousand eight hundred and thirty-seven..." This puts this property in an area just north of where the North Branch of the Little Elkhart River intersects with what is now, County Road 700 South. Today, much of this area is property owned by Paul and Ida Yoder (River Woodworking, business).

The History of Lagrange County book states that "Mr. Dallas at once began to utilize the water-power of the river, and in 1837 built a grist-mill near his home which was near the Elkhart River, near where it emerges from a group of lakes of which the most eastern and largest is Dallas Lake that lies partly in the Clearspring Township." According to the LaGrange County Centennial book, "this mill stood at a point just north of the line between sections 26 and 35", consistent with the property location described above in the Record of Purchase. The History of Lagrange County book goes on to describe this "as a considerable undertaking for a man in his circumstances, and in such a remote place. But his perseverance carried it through, and it was soon completed and ready to grind the grist for the few farmers for miles around. Before this time the wheat had been carried to Goshen, Ontario or Van Buren. "Uncle Billy's corn-cracker" as it was called, was of a very primitive and simple construction. The building, built of whitewood logs was so low that the man who put the grain in the hopper had to make a humble passage beneath the rafters. There were no castings about the mill; all was wood except the mill-stones, (*see photo on Dallas Lake Association History/Trivia page of website*) and of these there were but one pair, and the millstone shaft, a flat bar of iron. A bolt only was necessary and that was soon supplied, but there were no cog-wheels or belting, and consequently this had to be revolved at first by hand, a process which required a good deal of muscle. Sometimes the patrons of the mill were called on to assist in this operation. The mill had a capacity for grinding about fifty bushels in twenty-four hours, but never was called on for such an extraordinary business. To this mill men came with their grain from the whole neighborhood (and neighborhoods were large in those days) in ox carts, on horseback, afoot or in canoes. It was an accommodating institution, run by one of the most accommodating men that ever blessed a new community with his presence.

Three or four years later, Mr. Dallas built a saw-mill nearby, which, after his death was run by Van Kirk until the dam broke, about 1851. "Uncle Billy" Dallas, as he was familiarly called, died in 1847, but his many virtues still lived in the memory of the old settlers." His memory still continues through his Dallas Lake namesake.

While researching the Dallas family I also learned of another family who settled in this area and discovered where Atwood Lake got its name. According to the History of Northeast Indiana book, "Andrew Jackson Atwood and his wife Sarah came to Indiana in 1853 and settled on the shore of a little lake which for many years has been known as Atwood Lake. Andrew Jackson Atwood spent the rest of his life there. He was a man of substantial influence in public affairs as well as prosperous in business." According to his great, great grandsons, the land that we now refer to as the south shore of Dallas Lake was also owned by their great, great grandfather Andrew Jackson Atwood and passed down through Atwood family. The family sold the land in the early 1960's and the new owners developed the property.

Andrew Atwood and his wife Sarah had five children. One of the children, James became a prominent citizen of Lagrange County. He was born in New York State in 1846. History of Northeast Indiana book states "The career of James F. Atwood reflects practical and useful ideals, and its range of activities has included the promotion of agriculture and the best interests of the community in politics and education. From early manhood he was a farmer and owned 325 acres of land and earned an enviable prosperity sufficient for all his future needs." Interestingly, James married Clarissa Dallas, daughter of Lorenzo Dallas and grand-daughter of William and Mary Dallas. Clarissa died in 1910 and after her death James married Ida Dallas who was born in 1873. James died in 1930 at the age of 83.

Interesting that two lakes adjoined by a small parcel of land also share a connection through the marriage of James Atwood to Clarissa Dallas only to re-marry after her death to Ida Dallas. This revelation certainly adds an historical mystique to the namesakes of Dallas Lake and Atwood Lake. The tombstone below is one of many from the Dallas and Atwood families who are buried in Lakeside Cemetery, located in Lagrange County on the south side of 700 South near where it intersects with 00EW between the lakes of Dallas and Atwood.

