

## Fifth in a Series—Biographies of our Ancestors

### The Union Ancestor of Michael Downs



*Above: Michael Down's Civil War Ancestor, William "Bill" Downs.*

My Great Great Uncle Bill was born in Ross County, Ohio on June 25, 1843 and is the son of Samuel and Ann Downs, who are both natives of Ohio. Samuel's Grandfather was John Downs who fought in the American Revolution with the 5<sup>th</sup> Virginia regiment commanded by Colonel Josiah Parker and received a land grant in Ohio for his service. William's parents moved to Union Township in Tippecanoe County, Indiana in 1848 where he lived until enlisting in Company G of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Indiana Volunteer Infantry. The Company was mustered into service at Camp Rose which was located in South Bend, Indiana and was assigned to the Fourteenth Army Corps then commanded by General Crittenden. Congressman and future Vice President of the United States Schuyler Colfax was present at the mustering in program. He fought at Chaplin's Hill (now known as the Battle of Perryville), Stones River, took part in Streight's Raid, and saw service at Decatur and Athens during John Bell Hood's raid into Tennessee in 1864. On July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1865 the regiment was de-federalized in Indianapolis and William returned home and purchased 40 acres of land. He was "prosperous and industrious" and soon was tilling 90 acres in White County, Indiana and "a good Republican with regular attendance at the Reformed Presbyterian Church." In 1866 he married Rachel Hammil, who

was the daughter of James H. and Nancy (Montgomery) Hammil, who were both natives of Tennessee. The couple was blessed with 6 children in a marriage that lasted over 55 years. Additionally, Bill was a member of the Monticello Post of the Grand Army of the Republic in Monticello, Indiana. Bill died in 1922 while Rachel lived until 1931, and both are buried in the Idaville Cemetery in Idaville, Indiana.

#### Sources:

Counties of White and Pulaski, Indiana, Historical and Biographical, published by F. A. Battey & Co., Chicago, 1883, page 308

A Standard History of White County Indiana by William H. Hamelle Ed., published in 1915

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