

AMY M. (STURTEVANT) LOUCKS

Kearny County, Kansas

Charles A. Loucks, son of Amy Loucks, was the first to write this story

In 1931, parts of the story were added to a book written by Leola Howard Blanchard titled "Conquest of Southwest Kansas."

Also... "Pioneer Women" written by Joanna L. Stratton added parts of this story in 1981.

** Additional information added about Amy M. (Sturtevant) Loucks*

Probably no woman in Western Kansas pioneer history has contributed more to humanity's welfare and happiness during the early years than Amy M. (Sturtevant) Loucks. She was born on 20 Aug 1843 in Western Pennsylvania, where she was also reared. She received a high school and academic education and taught in the public schools. Through association with her brother, a practicing physician, Amy Loucks became interested in medicine and surgery science and gave considerable study to those subjects.

In 1866 she was married to William P. Loucks, and in 1879 they moved to Lakin, Kansas. At that time, Kearny County was unorganized territory, like most of the state's western area. It was entirely a "cow county" as there was no substantial settlement. There were no schools, churches, or other organized societies. The nearest doctor and the near-approaches to civilization were at Dodge City, seventy-five miles away. The Santa Fe Railroad had extended their line through the town of Lakin in the 1870s. The town consisted of a depot, an "eating house", a store operated by John O'Loughlin that supplied goods for the cattle ranches, and a saloon.

Mrs. Loucks' ability and helpfulness made her a friend to all who were in distress. She treated their injuries, nursed them to health, or said a prayer at their death. To show her resourcefulness and ability, listed here are several instances:

1. There was a man scalped by the Indians and left on the prairie for dead. After being found, he was brought to Lakin. The scalp had not been entirely removed, but was pulled down over his eyes. She replaced the scalp, stitched it with fiddle string and an ordinary needle, and nursed him back to physical health. She then communicated with his relatives in the east and sent him to them. Although the poor fellow lived for many years, he never regained his sanity.

2. A posse summoned her to treat a badly wounded prisoner. With a small vial of carbolic acid as an antiseptic, a knitting needle as a probe, and a pair of common pincers (*a tool for grasping small objects*), she removed the bullet and saved the man's life.

3. At another time, with a razor as a lance and her embroidery scissors, she

removed three fingers from the crushed hand of a railroad brakeman.

4. In those days, the railroad ran an “immigrant train.” One day the conductor telegraphed Mrs. Loucks to meet the train on arrival at Lakin. She found a woman who was about to become a mother, and before she could be removed to a private place, Mrs. Loucks needed to perform the act of midwifery on the freight truck on the depot platform.

5. A railroad wreck that occurred near Lakin caused the death of several railroad employees and many passengers to be injured.

6. Mrs. Loucks administered first aid to many people awaiting the arrival of a special train from Dodge City carrying the railroad surgeon. In appreciation of the act, J. R. Nickerson, the Division Superintendent and later the President of the company, gave her a railroad pass. The pass was a courtesy extended to her as long as she lived.

Not only did she administer to the afflicted, she was always doing those things that promote the county’s general welfare and happiness. In 1879, she organized and taught the first school in Kearny County. There were 17 pupils enrolled, including her two small sons. She was always active in church work and was instrumental in organizing the first church in Lakin. During the prohibition campaign, she labored unceasingly for the cause. Due to her influence, the Lakin precinct of Ford County returned a majority (of votes) for the amendment.

She was administering to the sick when she contracted the disease that took her life, and she passed away on 12 Mar 1905, with one son and her husband having preceded her. The words of comfort to her remaining son and host of friends were taken from Matthew 25:34. *“Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was sick, and ye visited me. Inasmuch ye did it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye did it unto me.”*

Additional Information
AMY M. (STURTEVANT) LOUCKS

Newspaper Obituary

The Lakin (Kansas) Advocate, Thursday, 16 Mar 1905

Mrs. AMY STURTEVANT LOUCKS entered into rest on the Sabbath morning, 12 Mar 1905, at the age of 61 years, six months, and twelve days, after a very brief illness.

Mrs. Loucks was born in Springboro, Crawford County, Pennsylvania, on 28 Aug 1843, and joined in marriage with Mr. WILLIAM P. LOUCKS on 6 May 1866. In 1879, she came west and located in Lakin, Kansas, with her husband and two sons.

Her son, **FAY A. LOUCKS**, (*In 1880, at the age of 13, he worked as a sheep herder*) died at the age of 20 years in 1886. Her husband also preceded her, having died on 30 Sept 1903. She has left behind her remaining son, **CHARLES A. LOUCKS** of Lakin; a brother, Dr. L. P. Sturtevant, of Conneaut, Ashtabula County, Ohio, and a sister, Mrs. Harry Linn, of Springfield, Clark County, Ohio.

Mrs. Loucks was a life-long Christian and, early in life, united with the Christian Union Church. Later, she transferred her membership to the Presbyterian Church in Springfield, Ohio, where she has resided for several years.

She was a nurse by profession, but her ministries were of love. In the pioneer days of this county, with no physician nearer than Dodge City, a distance of 72 miles, her ability and helpfulness made her the friend of all who were in sickness or sorrow. The people were as free in seeking her aid, as she was eager to minister to their needs. She was also the organizer and first teacher of the first school in Kearny County. In this, and many other ways, the citizens of the community are indebted to her efforts in the pioneer days.

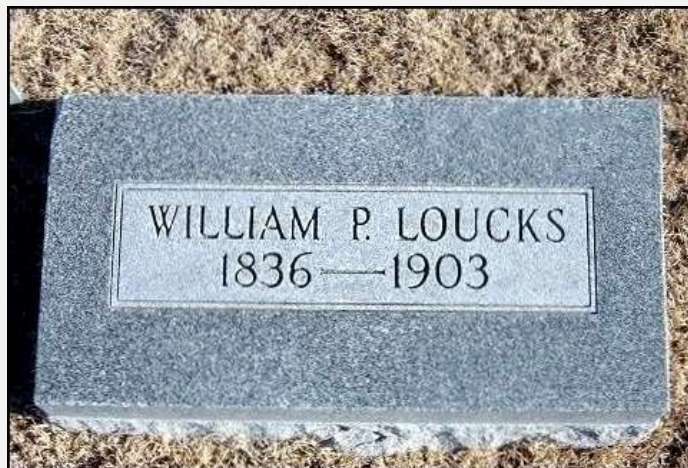
During the past several years, she has resided in Springfield, Ohio. For two years, she was a girl's matron in the Odd Fellows Home, three years boys matron in the Masonic Home, and later had charge of the Masonic institution's new hospital. She afterward was companion and nurse of Mrs. M. S. Lloyd, widow of General Lloyd of Steubenville, Ohio. She had returned to her son Charlie's home in Lakin for a brief visit and rest, expecting to return east very shortly. As accustomed, she was ministering to the sick when she contracted a cold from which dreaded pneumonia developed, and after a week of suffering, she passed away.

Funeral services were conducted in the Presbyterian Church on Monday, Mar 13th by Rev. William Bullock of Garden City, assisted by Rev. D. J. M. Jones of Lakin.

Cemetery Headstones



WILLIAM P. LOUCKS & AMY M. (STURTEVANT) LOUCKS



LAKIN CEMETERY
Lakin, Kearny County, Kansas
Headstone photographs provided by Leon Barton

