

Illtid William Thomas

Born in Newton, Wales in 1838, Illtid came to America with his family in 1849 and settled in northern Georgia. He was the second of three boys and, like many men of his time, found himself called to duty during the Civil War. He enlisted as a private in the 26th Tennessee Infantry (CSA) at Knoxville. He was captured twice, wounded (fractured left forearm), and promoted twice. Sergeant Thomas was released with a group of sick prisoners from Point Lookout, Maryland on June 5, 1865, after taking the Oath of Allegiance, which restored his U.S. voting rights.

In 1868 he married Catherine Keith Anderson. In 1877, with their son Joseph, they moved to the Rogue Valley about two miles west of what would later become Medford. There Illtid farmed and became one of the first in the valley to grow fruit trees. At one time he owned much of what is now West Medford. Sadly, Illtid's wife, Catherine, died in 1902.

Illtid remarried, to Abby Kendall, and continued to farm. By 1906 he was listed in the city directory as a "capitalist" and was lending money to many of the city's merchants and businessmen. He held mortgages and notes backed by real estate.

One of his brick buildings, at 29 S. Grape Street in Medford, was operated as a livery stable and, today, is a retail store. Illtid died in 1917 and was survived by his second wife, son, and a grandson. His estate included commercial, residential, and agricultural property in and around Medford with assets totaling \$74,670 (value in 2020, more than \$1,500,000).