

The Mulder Family Part 4 – A Man in Uniform

So far, we have only discussed one of John Mulder and Emily Leek's children: John Joseph Jr. Now we will turn to Rachael, James, Harriet and Emily. There is little documentation for Rachael. She is listed in the 1851 Census, but beyond that she is not mentioned in the Census. As for Emily, there was no information available for her. More information exists for Rachael and Emily's siblings James and Harriet.

James Mulder was born circa 1833 and he married Ellen Matthews-Bird, the daughter of William and Mary Bird, on March 23, 1864 in Colchester. The couple had two children: James (1866) and Judson (1867). Shortly after their marriage, James and Ellen moved to Detroit and according to the US Census, he worked as a coachman. James and Ellen's son James Jr. married Ida Kirtley, the daughter of Henry and Esther Kirtley, on June 9, 1889 in Colchester, but they lived in Detroit. At the time, James was a 24-year-old farmer, while Ida was 18. James married a second time to Mary Ann Henderson, the daughter of Toy and Sarah Henderson, and the couple lived in Ypsilanti, Michigan. According to their marriage record, James and Mary married on November 26, 1914. The record states that Mary was married once before and James was married twice before. We know that he was married to Ida Kirtley, but the records do not reveal who his other wife was. We do know that Ida married a second time to Edward Love on February 28, 1906 in Windsor.

James' sister, and the final member of the Mulder family to be discussed, is Harriet. Harriet was born circa 1838 and married John Nelson. The couple lived in Michigan. Harriet must have lived there for the rest of her life because her January 1923 death record states that she passed in Alma, Gratiot, Michigan at the age of 80. According to the book *New Canaan*, Harriet's husband John was born into slavery in 1830 on the farm of George Lynn near

Louisville, Kentucky. Interestingly, John Nelson at one point changed his name to Alexander Carter, likely to assist himself in his escape from enslavement. He escaped in roughly 1854 and came to Canada. Records for John Nelson list him as John Nelson, not Alexander Carter, indicating that he changed his name back to John Nelson after he arrived in Canada.

Harriet and John Nelson had nine children: Annie (1860), Eliza (1861), Sarah (1876), John (1868), James (1872), Robert (1874), Forest Hezekiah (1876), Morris (1880), and Winnifred "Winnie" (1888). Morris and Winnifred were born in Michigan, but the remaining seven were born in Colchester South.

Annie married Elijah Armstrong, the son of John and Mary Armstrong in Colchester South, while Eliza married a Mr. Stewart. Sarah Nelson, a cook, married a "Railroad man," Gilbert Taylor (son of Steve Taylor and Mary Ann Simpson), while James, Morris and Forest Hezekiah moved to Michigan with their parents and married there as well. James married Ada Harding, the daughter of Solomon Harding, while Morris married Marjory Walker, the daughter of Marion and Marie Walker, and Forest married Jessie Hamilton, the daughter of Edgar and Laura Hamilton.

Their father, John Nelson, was a very brave man considering he left Colchester South, travelled to Michigan and joined the Union army during the Civil War. According to *New Canaan* in roughly 1863, John became a member of the 102nd United States Colored Troop. Milo Johnson adds "The 102nd transferred to Massachusetts where the Union Army inducted the unit to the 55th Massachusetts Infantry which fought many battles in the Civil War. The Union Army discharged John Nelson from the unit at Wilmington, North Carolina, in April of 1865. He then returned home to his family in Colchester South, Essex, Ontario. John Nelson purchased land

north of the town of Harrow near the area which was commonly called Hillsville. The community, according to Milo Johnson, “stretched westward, from 3rd Concession at the Richmond drain, towards the McLean Side Road, east of Walker Road; and from Roseborough, near 3rd Concession, it stretched north towards the 4th Concession.” Hillsville had two main churches: Mount Calvary Church of God in Christ (Baptist Church) and Central Grove on the corner of the 4th Concession and Walker Road. John Nelson farmed on the 4th Concession, Lot 12. Per the 1900 United States Census, the family immigrated to the United States in 1880. John was compensated for his military service because records show that Harriet was able to collect John’s Civil War pension from 1906 until her passing in January 1923.

What we publish is not a complete history of any family and is based on the documents that are available. We welcome photos and information to fill in the gaps. See you next week for another history of an amazing family.