

Wilson Family History Part 1 - 'Sweet Corn' Wilson

This month's family history features the Wilson family, which has a special connection to the Amherstburg Freedom Museum. It was William Wilson who lived in the Taylor Cabin on the Museum's property and we will look at a branch of his family, beginning with Uriah Wilson Sr. (1767-1852). Before we begin, we first would like to thank Debora Woods Wynn for providing photographs and information on her ancestors. Uriah married Mary Polly Newkirk of Owen, Kentucky. Their son Uriah Wilson Jr. (1805-1880) married Elizabeth House and the couple arrived in Amherstburg circa 1850-1851, coming from Kentucky with their eight children. Of the eight, we can name seven of their children: Washington, Elizabeth, Mary Jane, Sarah, James Richard, William and Martha Frances.

Washington was born circa 1823 in Bath, Kentucky and he is listed as a resident of Malden Township by 1851. Washington married Mary Elnora Starks, the daughter of Wesley and Louisiana Starks, and lived in Amherstburg until roughly 1870, when they moved to Windsor and later Washtenaw County, Michigan, circa 1900. The couple had at least eleven children: Elizabeth, Victoria, Anna, Charles, William, Samuel, Albert, Sabra, Mary Elnora, John Wesley and Walter. Several of their children married and lived in Washtenaw County. Before discussing Washington and Mary Elnora's children, there is a bit more to share about Washington. According to his death record, Washington was a gardener. His August 1900 obituary from the *Essex Free Press* adds to this by saying "For years he raised watermelons and sweet corn on the old crick ground on Church street in the city. He was known to everybody as 'Sweet Corn' Wilson."

Now it is time to share information about Washington and Mary Elnora's children: Elizabeth, Victoria, Anna, Charles, William, Samuel, Albert, Sabra, Mary Elnora, John Wesley and Walter. If you look at the 1861 Census for the Township of Malden, Elizabeth is listed as "Elizabeth Preston" with her parents and siblings, but her husband Pres Preston also appears in the household. Elizabeth and Preston had at least four children: Anna M., James W., Victoria and Ida. According to her marriage record, Anna M. married Herbert Jasper Lanchie, son of Milton Lanchie (mother not listed), on June 20, 1903 in Ann Arbor, Washtenaw, Michigan. At the time, Herbert was a Labourer and Anna was a Cook.

Anna's brother James W. married twice. His first marriage was to Minnie Bowles, the daughter of John Bowles. The couple married on March 19, 1890 in Ypsilanti, Washtenaw, Michigan. James' second marriage was to Nettie Lewis, the daughter of William Lewis and Margaret Smith. The couple married on June 4, 1902 in Montgomery, Ohio, and, at the time, James worked as a Clerk. James' sister Victoria is next. According to her death record, Victoria married a man with the last name Bennett, but his first name is not listed. This record also says that she was born on December 13, 1874. She passed away on July 31, 1942 in Ann Arbor, Washtenaw, Michigan. At the time she was 67 years old and a widow. Victoria's sister Ida appears on the 1894 Michigan State Census (for Lodi, Washtenaw, Michigan) with her mother Elizabeth Preston who is listed as 48 years old and a widow.

We will now move on to discuss Elizabeth Wilson Preston's sister Victoria who was born circa 1855. Victoria's sister Anna was born on June 5, 1857 in Amherstburg and on her August 23, 1937 death record she is listed as Anna Walker Western and living in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Several sources list her husband's last name of Western, but her husband's first name is not listed. At the time of Anna's passing she was 80 years old and a widow.

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 part 2.