

SHADES OF THE PAST

Williams Bay Historical Society
Established 2013

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MISSION OF OUR HISTORICAL SOCIETY:

The purpose of the Williams Bay Historical Society is to assist in the preservation and exhibition of items of historical interest that are within the boundaries of Williams Bay, and the immediate surrounding area. It will seek to provide the public with educational opportunities to learn about our unique local history. It will also seek to organize and assist in the commemoration of significant dates and events in Village history.



Day in the Bay — May 8, 2021 — Edgewater Park

Sue Vavra, President, Williams Bay Historical Society



Courtesy of Illustrator Kathleen Rickert Nelson – Copyright 2019

Join us as we Celebrate the History of our Volunteer Fire Department

- Learn the history of our Fire Department!
- Meet a Firefighter!
- See the Firetrucks!
- Tour the Firehouse!

Learn more about the Williams Bay Historical Society

- Learn about the Williams Bay Historical Society!
- Purchase our Book: *A Pictorial History of Williams Bay, Wisconsin!*
- Learn the history of Williams Bay!
- Talk with a Historian!
- Learn about Historical Society Membership!
- <http://wmsbayhistory.org>

Day in the Bay is an event scheduled by The Williams Bay Business Association.

Louis Rasmussen—Village Blacksmith

Louis Albert Rasmussen was born in Oconto County, Wisconsin on April 11, 1882 the son of George and Louise Rasmussen.

Louis married Martha Jehn on June 17, 1913. I have not been able to find when the Rasmussen family moved to Williams Bay but I did find they were living in the Village in the summer of 1917.

Louis and Martha had two sons Elborn and Warren. The family lived on Walworth Avenue [where the Post Office is] and Louis' blacksmith

shop was north of their home on Walworth Avenue.

Louis had an interest in village affairs. He served several terms on the Village Board and served on the fire, park, and finance and relief committees

Martha passed away on June 20, 1961. Louis passed away on June 16, 1965. They were interred at East Delavan Union Cemetery.



Support Historical Society with Purchases from Amazon

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Historical Society Garage Sale
May 28th and 29th
420 W. Geneva Street
9 am - 4 pm



Support the Historical Society by donating items for the Historical Society Garage sale. Donations may be dropped off by the garage door.

And shop the sale on May 28th and 29th.

For Comments or questions contact:

williamsbayhistoricalsociety@gmail.com

or

Williams Bay Historical Society

PO Box 678

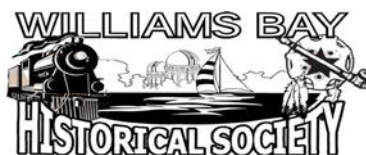
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Williams Family History Shared by Great, Great, Great Granddaughter of Captain Williams

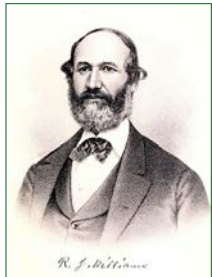
By Michelle Bie Love

About a year and a half ago an email introduced me to the great, great, great granddaughter of Captain Israel Williams. That chance meeting has become a priceless friendship. Since then we have shared information about the Williams family. Me sharing what I have learned about the family's early days in Wisconsin and Karen has shared detailed information about the Williams family and family photographs.

Israel married Lavina Joy, daughter of Nehemiah and Hannah (Leach) Joy in 1808. They had eleven children, nine lived to adulthood. The first of the Williams family to travel to Wisconsin were Moses (1809-1845), Israel Junior (1812-1883), Royal Joy (1818-1886), and Austin Jackson (1820-1845). Moses and Israel Junior arrived in the spring of 1836. Royal and Austin arrived in August of the same year. Moses and Israel Junior both built cabins on the south shore of Geneva Lake for themselves and their wives; Moses at what is now Abbey Springs and Israel Junior where the old Military Academy stood now the South Shore Club. Royal had a claim located in Walworth Township. Nothing has been found to indicate Austin had a claim at this time.

While his sons were making their new homes on the south shore of Geneva Lake, Captain Williams spent the fall of 1836 and early part of 1837 selling his extensive land holdings in Massachusetts in preparation for his family's long journey to Wisconsin. Captain Williams, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Williams mother Hannah Joy along with children Lavina (1816-1876), Hannah Leach (1822-1850), Fordice (1828-1855), and Festus (1833-1908) traveled on a Great Lakes steamer to Chicago. They arrived on the south shore of Geneva Lake on July 4, 1837. Son Francis remained in Massachusetts to finish his education.

Captain Williams made a land claim on the north shore of Geneva Lake in 1837 and moved his family to their homestead in the spring of 1838. Mrs. Joy passed away there on September 6, 1838 and was buried at the Potawatomi burial ground adjacent to the homestead. Moses and Austin contracted typhoid fever and died a few days apart in 1845. Captain Williams died in October 1846. Mrs. Williams died June 28, 1852.



Royal Joy Williams

Royal had returned to Massachusetts in 1844 where he worked as a chair maker. He married Lucretia Warren Smith on April 25, 1847 in Albany, NY. Lucretia was the daughter of Samuel and Abigail (Williams) Warren; she was born on November 9, 1924. Royal and Lucretia had four children: George Briggs born at Conway, Massachusetts on November 22, 1848, Ellen born in 1855, Edward F. born August 15,

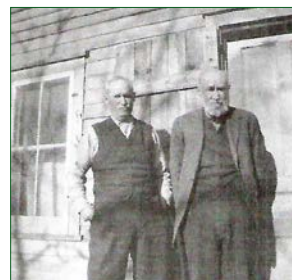
1856, and Harley born August 13, 1861. The last three children were born in Williams Bay.

Following his mother's death in 1852, Royal returned to Williams Bay in 1853 to settle her estate. The circumstance of her estate was quite unusual for the time. Captain Williams left \$406 to his children and the remainder of his estate which included houses, lands, goods, and chattels was left to "my dear and beloved wife Lavina Williams who I nominate and appoint sole executrix" in his will dated and recorded in Walworth County on July 15, 1846.

Royal and his family remained in Williams Bay until about 1865. Daughter Ellen died on July 31, 1869 at the age of 14 at Willimantic, CT. Following Ellen's death the family returned to Williams Bay. Royal died on August 29, 1886. Lucretia died at the home of her son Harley in Williams Bay on December 27, 1907. Lucretia's obituary in the Greenfield Gazette and Courier Greenfield, MA dated January 4, 1908 said "Williams Bay was her home for all but 4 years; about 7 months near Jamestown, VA [where Royal managed a plantation] and the rest in Connecticut." Royal, Lucretia, and three of their children George (1848-1924), Ellen (1855-1869), and Harley (1861-1910) are interred in Walworth Cemetery.

Edward married Marie Bernhardt on April 18, 1888 in Rock County. Marie was the daughter of Jacob and Johannah (Tyldner) Bernhardt; she was born at Beloit on October 28, 1866. Edward and Marie had four children: June born May 3, 1891, Webster Wannamaker born September 7, 1892, Frank Edward born October 4, 1894, and Helen Dorothy born December 11, 1899. All four of the children were born in Williams Bay.

George Williams wrote this about his little niece on Monday, October 11, 1897 "Junie is dead. Mate [Marie] said she died at ten minutes to five this morning. Mother said something about Junie being paralyzed, yesterday, I think it was. Mate said her left side was partially paralyzed. Junie fell on Will DeGroff's sidewalk [now Privato Pizza Bistro, formerly Charlie Os] last spring and hurt her head and had never got over it. Mrs. Francis & Collins Williams wife laid her out and Stella Rouse, now Mrs. Davis, was there. I thought it so strange that she should die. Mother



Edward (left) and George at the Williams homestead

said she guessed the Dr. did the best he could or something of that sort. Mother said they were not going to have the funeral till Wednesday as Ed had to send word to family. She will be bur-

ied in Walworth alongside her Aunt Ellen who died in 1869."

Marie was appointed postmistress in August of 1892, her post office was the first to be called Williams Bay. Prior Post Offices were called Geneva Bay and Bay Hill. During her time as postmistress the mail began arriving daily by train. Marie fell ill and died Friday, November 29, 1901. Edward married Jeanette Briggs on May 4, 1904 in Illinois.

Webster and Frank were in the US Army in WW I; Webster in the Quarter Master Corps and Frank in Company F of the 64th Infantry. Frank married Martha L. Hansen at Crystal Lake on October 6, 1917. Martha was the daughter of Johann and Friederika (Schmidt) Hansen, she was born February 12, 1894 in Crystal Lake.



Frank, Edward, Helen, and Webster in 1919

Frank and Martha had two children: Royal Eugene born on October 29, 1921 in Williams Bay and Irene born in Illinois in 1924. Frank and Martha moved to Seattle, year unknown.

Edward died in Seattle November 5, 1933. Frank who had abandoned his family in Washington died in Santa Clara, CA on March 24, 1940, he is buried at the San Francisco National Cemetery. Martha died at Seattle on January 23, 1986. Royal E. Williams died on March 9, 1990 at Everett, WA.



Frank, Martha, and Irene in Williams Bay ca 1929

Webster and his wife Esther farmed near Marshall in Dane County. Webster died in 1958.

In 1920 Helen was married to Adolph Croley, a sailor in the US Navy. Helen married a gentleman named G.A. Arnold in Colorado in 1939.



Webster and Esther

Thank you Karen and Irene for sharing family photographs and information about your family.



Louis Soplanda mowing the grass in Edgewater Park. Circa 1930s/1940s.



Williams Bay High School Band ca mid 1940s.

Back in the Day Friends, Family, and Neighbors



After the hunt—Paul B. Jenkins and son circa 1920s.



Huldah Stam carries buckets of milk to the house circa 1914.



Les Sawyer's Grocery Store on the southeast corner of Geneva St and Walworth Avenue circa 1920s.



7th and 8th grade students Williams Bay Public School June 7, 1906.

