
JIM WILSON OF CAROLINE COUNTY: LYNCHING VICTIM REUNITED WITH HIS FAMILY

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Slavery, and later Jim Crow segregation laws, subjected African Americans to centuries of legal, political, and social oppression, vestiges of which continue today. But in the darkest times, they were victims of extreme brutality. Racial terror lynching is defined as the “unlawful killing of an African American by white mob violence, often with the apparent complicity of state and local officials, intended to incite racial terror and subservience to white supremacy.”¹ It is difficult to determine an exact count, but studies place the number of lynchings in the United States well above 4,000.² In the past twenty years, efforts to shed light on these murders have been undertaken by scholars, journalists, and civil rights organizations across the country.³

While lynching is often thought of as a Deep South phenomenon, Maryland was no stranger to its horrors. To date, 42 racially motivated lynchings have been identified between the years 1854 and 1933, representing 17 of Maryland’s 24 jurisdictions.⁴ In 2019, the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established to research racially motivated lynchings, engage with family and community members impacted by these killings, and make recommendations to address past wrongs.⁵

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On 8 May 2021, at the installation of a memorial to Howard Cooper in Baltimore County, Governor Larry Hogan pardoned Cooper and another 33 Maryland lynching victims for the criminal offenses of which they were accused.⁶ Hogan's action, the first of its kind in the United States, did not shed light on underlying innocence or guilt, but acknowledged that the extrajudicial killings "violated fundamental rights to due process and equal protection of the law."⁷

James "Jim" Wilson, lynched in Caroline County on 1 or 2 November 1862, was one of those pardoned.⁸ Jim, a young free man of color, had been accused of sexually assaulting and killing Edgar Plummer's eight-year-old daughter, whose body had been found on the morning of Thursday, October 30. Contemporaneous news accounts reported that Jim had "at once" and "frankly acknowledged" the crime, but two decades later, a conflicting report emerged.⁹ By its reckoning, Jim confessed only after being "swung up by the thumbs to a tree limb" for an hour; many in the community remained convinced that "he was too terrified to know what he was saying."¹⁰

Jim was arrested and taken to a jail in Greensborough on Thursday and moved later that same day to the Denton Jail. Emma Plummer's funeral was held on Friday from the family home; "the scenes there naturally intensified the already fearfully excited public mind."¹¹ On Saturday night, a mob armed with guns, pistols, and knives gathered outside the jail, easily overpowering the sheriff and deputies standing guard.¹² "In less time than it takes to tell it," a noose was placed around Jim's neck and he was hanged from a large sycamore outside the jail. Some in the crowd shot at his body with muskets and pistols. It was cut down, dragged through town, and tied to a tree outside an African American church. The crowd considered placing Jim's body in the church and setting it on fire, but instead took it to the banks of the Choptank River, cut it into pieces, and burned them, "a large fire having been kindled for that purpose."¹³ His charred and headless body was buried at Second Street by the Choptank, near

the remains of David Thomas, who had been lynched eight years earlier.¹⁴

After Jim's arrest, the *Baltimore Sun* expressed mildly that it was "doubtless best for the law to take its course," but held out little hope that would be allowed to happen as "people in the neighborhood were naturally much excited."¹⁵ The *American Union* of Denton opined that no one would have objected had Jim been hanged right away, but the passage of three days should have allowed cooler heads to prevail. No excuse could be summoned for the "brutal and inhuman manner" in which his body was treated.¹⁶ It was not the killing of Jim but the aftermath that shocked the conscience of the community and the entire state.

The act of racial terror undoubtedly left a wake of trauma in the African American community, both free and enslaved. As to the white community, the editors of the *American Union* lamented that Jim had been brought to Denton and that its citizens would be blamed.¹⁷ But there would be no accountability. The coroner's inquest, held on Sunday morning, ruled that Jim's was a "death by violence, at the hands of a mob." A man from Talbot County was singled out for blame, but his identity was "unascertained."¹⁸

The turmoil of the Civil War likely played a role. Less than six weeks before Jim's arrest, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, declaring that, as of 1 January 1863, persons held as slaves in states that were in rebellion shall be free.¹⁹ While the proclamation did not affect the legal status of those enslaved in Maryland, it would have been felt as a direct threat by many white Marylanders. On the day before his murder, Jim reportedly expressed awareness of the forces swirling around him, telling several visitors that "there was a good deal of talk among some of the colored people in his neighborhood respecting the present and prospective position of his race, growing out of the present condition of national affairs."²⁰ While the attribution to Jim of detached historical analysis merits much

skepticism, it is clear that the white writer viewed the events unfolding against a larger historical context.

While we will never know whether Jim Wilson was guilty of the murder of Emma Plummer, we do know that his humanity was denied by an uncontrolled white mob that refused to abide by the rule of law. One way to restore that humanity is to follow the clues that place him squarely within a family and community in which he was raised, loved, and trusted, prior to the horrific events of 1862.

WHO WERE THE PARENTS OF JIM WILSON?

In contemporaneous news articles, Jim, occasionally referred to as James, was identified as a free mulatto man.²¹ Several articles used the term “negro.”²² He was further described as a 28-year-old single man, who “resided with his father, who is also a free man, and is said to own six or seven thousand dollars worth of property.”²³ His last name was spelled “Willson” in one account, a common alternative spelling in Caroline County, for both Black and white families.²⁴

The *Denton Journal*, reporting in 1883 on the lingering effects of the lynching on the community, described Jim as a bright mulatto man of twenty-three, the “foreman and trusted protector of two maiden ladies who lived on a small farm in the neighborhood [of Greensborough where the victim lived], and had always been held in high esteem for politeness, industry and fidelity.”²⁵

In 1895, when another lynching brought the earlier events to mind, it was again recorded that Jim Wilson was, before the crime and lynching, “always regarded as one of the best Negroes in the county.”²⁶

Lynching victims were often young men with few ties to the community and no one to speak up on their behalf.²⁷ This was not true of Jim Wilson. The ongoing recognition of Jim’s character

suggests that he, and likely his family, had established themselves in the community long before 1862 and that his family was still present.

The key attributes of Jim's father were his status as a free colored man and his ownership of valuable real property nearby.

THREE POSSIBLE CANDIDATES

Two years before the lynching, only *three* free men of color named Wilson in Caroline County, Maryland, were identified in the 1860 census as landowners. The three men were:

- John H. Wilson lived near the Templeville Post Office, located in District 1, approximately ten miles by modern roads from the Greensborough Post Office. John was 45, Harriet was 40, and their presumed daughter Eliza was the oldest child at 18.²⁸ The family was identified as Black; his combined (real and personal property) assets were valued at \$1,100.

Ten years earlier, in the 1850 census enumeration, Eliza was six; the sole older sibling was Sarah, two years older than her sister. There was no young James in the household.²⁹

- Sherry Wilson, Black blacksmith, age 31, owned real estate valued at \$150, near the Denton Post Office, in District 3. He was too young to be James's father.³⁰
- Solomon Willson, age 60, lived near the Greensborough Post Office, located in District 2, where the murder and lynching took place.³¹ The value of Solomon's real estate holdings in 1860 was estimated at \$1,600, his personal estate at \$550.³² Living in the household with Solomon

were his presumed wife Nancy, whom he married in 1820,³³ and presumed children, ranging in age from 13 to 30: William, John, Mary, Robert, and Thomas. They are all identified as mulatto.

Solomon had purchased 200 acres of land from James and Araminta Carter on 9 November 1847 for \$612.50.³⁴ In 1850, he was the only landholding free man of color named Wilson enumerated in Caroline County, Maryland.³⁵ The 1850 household included Nancy, and the same children, plus two more sons named James and Solomon [Jr.]:

Solomon Wilson	58
Nancy	45
William	28
John	19
James	12
Mary	11
Solomon	8
Robert	7
Thomas	5

James's age, 12, suggests a birth date for him of 1838.

The 1840 federal census names only heads of household; others are represented by tick marks. Solomon Wilson, free colored man, aged 36–55, was enumerated in adjacent Queen Anne's County, with one female aged 24–36, three males under 10, and one female under 10, the same family composition represented in the 1850 census.³⁶

Solomon Wilson, based on family composition, racial identity, geographic location, and real estate holdings, is the only viable candidate to be the father of "Jim" Wilson.

RECORDS OF JAMES WILSON

Only *one* James Wilson of color was enumerated in the 1860 federal census in Caroline County, near the Greensborough Post Office, the same area where Solomon [Sr.] lived. He was a 25-year-old mulatto, working as a farm hand for Henry Cooper, a white farmer.³⁷

James's age in 1850 was recorded as 12, suggesting he would be closer to 22 in 1860, 24 in 1862. The articles published in 1862 referred to him as 28, more consistent with the 1860 census age of 25. The 1883 article reported him as a 23-year-old in 1862, 20 years after his death.³⁸ These age discrepancies are relatively minor and not uncommon. One of his brothers (John) was reported as 19 in both the 1850 and 1860 censuses, and another (William) gained only two years in a decade. His father Solomon is listed as 58 in 1850, and 60 ten years later.³⁹ The death certificate of Solomon [Jr.] reports his birth year as 1840, yet he is listed as eight years old in 1850. Census enumerators often relied on nearby neighbors if family members couldn't be located when they made their circuit. County birth records would not be kept in Maryland counties until 1898.

Although newspapers reported that Jim Wilson was living with his father in 1862, his employment and residence at a nearby farm in 1860 is not inconsistent with a return to the family household, where most of his siblings remained. When James was enumerated at the home of Cooper, it may have been a short, harvest-related stay. The 1883 article reported subsequent employment for "two maiden ladies" that involved greater responsibility.

Most notably, James Wilson disappears from records after 1862, when the lynching occurred:

- No James Wilson of color registered for the Civil War draft in Caroline County, Maryland. Solomon [Jr.], age 24,

registered on 31 August 1863; he was listed as a married laborer and resident of Greensborough.⁴⁰

- Solomon Wilson [Sr.] drafted his will on 22 March 1866. In it, he named his wife, Nancy, his surviving sons Robert, Thomas, William H., and Solomon [Jr.], his daughter Mary A. Fountain, and four grandchildren, children of his deceased son John.⁴¹
- James does not appear in the 1870 or subsequent federal censuses in Caroline County, where most of his family continued to live.⁴²
- James was not named as a sibling by Solomon [Jr.] in his 1874 Freedman's Bank account record; only Robert, William, Thomas, and Mary Ann are listed.⁴³

CONCLUSION

Given the personal details reported in contemporaneous newspapers (age, race, marital status, residence, material status of family of origin), the timeline of records before and the lack of records after the lynching, and elimination of other paternal candidates, Solomon Wilson and his wife Nancy (Grinnage) are identified as the parents of James "Jim" Wilson.⁴⁴ His siblings were William, John, Mary Ann, Solomon [Jr.], Robert, and Thomas.

GENEALOGICAL SUMMARY

1. **SOLOMON WILSON** was born about 1795 in Maryland;⁴⁵ died before 10 April 1866 when his will, drafted on 22 March 1866, was presented for probate.⁴⁶

Solomon Wilson and **NANCY GRINNAGE**, born about 1805, obtained a marriage license on 12 June 1820 in Caroline County, Maryland.⁴⁷ Nancy died between 16 July 1872, when she filed a court petition, and 17 February 1874, when her husband's estate was distributed.⁴⁸

Their first known child, William H., was born two years after their marriage, but the next child to live to adulthood was born roughly a decade later.⁴⁹ The couple likely lost several infants in the intervening years. The family was not found in the 1830 census, but they were likely the free colored Solomon Wilson family living in Centreville, Queen Anne's County, in 1840, with three sons and one daughter under the age of 10.⁵⁰

In 1847, Solomon purchased 200 acres of land from James and Araminta Carter for \$612.50.⁵¹ Three years later, his land was valued roughly the same. He and his sons William and John were working the land.⁵² By 1860, the land had risen in value to \$1,600. Sons William and John were again listed as farmhands.⁵³ John was enumerated twice that year, both with his parents and living nearby with his wife and four children, confirming that he was still associated closely with the family farm.⁵⁴ In both 1850 and 1860, the family was identified as mulatto.

One can scarcely imagine the pain of the Wilson family after the violent and public death of their son and brother in early November of 1862. But Solomon and Nancy had other family-related heartaches.

Solomon, "being sick and weak in body," detailed his final wishes in his will drafted a few weeks before his death. His two youngest sons—Robert and Thomas—were singled out for disobeying "my orders and in my declining years, when the afflictions and infirmities of age pressed me down, having, as it were, discarded me, leaving me in my old age to suffer for the want of their personal attentions." They received \$1 each. He left the corn in the granary, the bacon, and the "crop of wheat now seeded on the farm," to his wife Nancy. He directed that, at her death, the estate be sold and the proceeds divided among his three dutiful children—William H. Wilson, Mary A. Fountain, and Solomon Wilson—and his four grandchildren by his deceased son John: John, Linford, William, and Emily Wilson.⁵⁵ His personal goods and chattels—primarily livestock and farming tools—were valued

at \$1,013.⁵⁶ Once expenses were paid, the estate was worth \$832. The final account shows that Solomon was treated by two doctors in his last illness; he was buried in a \$30 walnut coffin.⁵⁷

Six years later, Nancy, given the discretion to manage her husband's estate, petitioned the court for permission to sell her husband's personal property and invest the proceeds for her benefit.⁵⁸ The final distribution of Solomon Wilson's personal estate took place in 1874, after Nancy died.⁵⁹ William H. Wilson, his oldest son and executor, sold Solomon's real estate on 24 January 1877, in accordance with the terms of his will.⁶⁰

Solomon Wilson and Nancy Grinnage had the following children, born in either Queen Anne's or Caroline County, Maryland:

- i. **WILLIAM H. WILSON**, born April 1822; married **LOUISA BLACK** on 16 May 1872;⁶¹ died 29 December 1909, Greensboro, Caroline County, Maryland.⁶² The couple had no children together; her daughter, Zenie Black, married William's nephew John T. Wilson on 7 February 1882.⁶³ They lived with the younger couple in 1900.⁶⁴
- ii. **JOHN WILSON**, born about 1832;⁶⁵ he and **ELIZABETH MATTHEWS**, were granted a Caroline County marriage license on 28 March 1853.⁶⁶ John died before 22 March 1866, when his father Solomon drafted a will and provided for John's four surviving children:⁶⁷ (1) John T., born about 1856, died 15 July 1909;⁶⁸ (2) Linford, born about 1856,⁶⁹ possibly living in Chicago, Illinois, in 1900;⁷⁰ (3) William, born about 1858; and (4) Emily, born in April of 1860.⁷¹ In 1870, only John and Linford can be found in the federal census, living with their uncle, William H., and widowed grandmother, Nancy.⁷² All

four were named in court records in February of 1874, when their grandfather's estate was distributed.⁷³

- iii. **JAMES "JIM" WILSON** was born about 1835–1838 in Maryland; died on 1 or 2 November 1862.⁷⁴
- iv. **MARY ANN WILSON**, born about 1839, possibly 30 May;⁷⁵ married **BENJAMIN FOUNTAIN**, 2 January 1862, in Kent County, Delaware;⁷⁶ died 1 June 1923, Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware.⁷⁷ Eight children were born to the marriage, seven of whom are known.⁷⁸ All were born in Delaware, except possibly Willmina: (1) John Wesley Fountain, born 1 June 1862, died 1 December 1923, Wilmington;⁷⁹ (2) Willmina Fountain, born about 1864 in either Maryland or Delaware;⁸⁰ (3) Anna L. Fountain, born about 10 February 1866, died 23 March 1933, in Farmhurst, New Castle County, Delaware;⁸¹ (4) Josephine Fountain, born about 1868;⁸² (5) Clementine Fountain, born 14 April 1870, died 11 February 1924;⁸³ (6) Nancy Jane Fountain, born about 1873, likely died 9 February 1895;⁸⁴ and (7) Thomas Edward Fountain, born 1 October 1879, died 6 February 1965.⁸⁵ Mary Ann and Benjamin also adopted a daughter, Gertrude Watkins, born about 1875.⁸⁶
- v. **SOLOMON WILSON [JR]**, born 17 August 1840;⁸⁷ married **MARY AUGUSTA CARTER** about 1861;⁸⁸ died 23 April 1918, Greensboro, Caroline County, Maryland.⁸⁹ The couple had 11 children, six of whom are known; only four were living by 1900:⁹⁰ (1) William Elwood Wilson, born 8 September 1865, died 19 January 1938;⁹¹ (2) Almira Wilson, born 23 May 1868,⁹² died 6 April 1930, in Wilmington, Delaware;⁹³ (3) Mary Augusta Wilson, born about 1873; (4) Ormond Wilson, born about 1879;⁹⁴ (5)

Robert B. Wilson, born April 1882⁹⁵ or 24 September 1883⁹⁶ and died after 1930;⁹⁷ and (6) Howard Clifton Wilson, born February 1887, died 24 May 1950 in Cheswold, Kent County, Delaware.⁹⁸

- vi. **ROBERT WILSON**, born about 1844;⁹⁹ married **ADELINE THOMAS**, about 1862.¹⁰⁰ Robert and Adeline had five children: (1) Harriett Ann Wilson, born about 1862;¹⁰¹ (2) Jetty Wilson, born 1867, died 22 August 1937;¹⁰² (3) Emma Wilson, born about 1867; (4) Emily Etta born about 1868;¹⁰³ and (5) Linford Wilson, born about 1869, died 20 February 1917 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.¹⁰⁴
- vii. **THOMAS WILSON**, born in May 1846. Although cut out of his father's will, he maintained close ties to other family members. In 1870, he resided with his older brother William and his widowed mother Nancy.¹⁰⁵ In 1900, he was living in the Wilmington household of his sister and brother-in-law, Mary and Benjamin Fountain.¹⁰⁶ Thomas died on 27 May 1906.¹⁰⁷

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⁴³ “U.S., Freedman’s Bank Records, 1865–1874,” digital images, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com : accessed 2 December 2021), J. Solomon Wilson, born Caroline County, age 32, wife Mary, children Elymra [*sic*], William, brothers and sisters, Robert, William, Thomas, and Mary Ann; Record Group 101, Records of the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency; Roll 13: Baltimore, Maryland; May 3, 1866–June 23, 1874.

⁴⁴ Caroline County, Court, Marriage Licenses, 1816–1873 [ordered chronologically], entry for Solomon Willson and Nancy Grinnage, 12 June 1820.

⁴⁵ Solomon was listed as age 58 in 1850 and 60 in in 1860, suggesting birth years of 1792 and 1800, respectively. See 1850 U.S. census, Caroline County, Md., pop. sched. [districts not identified], p. 106a (stamped), dwelling 597, family 597, Solomon Willson; and 1860 U.S. census, Caroline Co., Md., pop. sched., Greensborough Post Office, p. 294, dwelling 2041, family 2028, Solomon Wilson.

⁴⁶ “Maryland Register of Wills Records, 1629–1999,” Caroline County, Wills WGN B: 199, will of Solomon Wilson, written 22 March 1866, proven 10 April 1866.

⁴⁷ Caroline County, Md., Court, Marriage Licenses, 1816–1873, organized chronologically, Solomon Willson and Nancy Grinnage, 12 June 1820; MSA C534-3. For Nancy’s estimated date of birth, see 1850 U.S. census, Caroline County, Maryland, pop. sched. [districts not identified], p. 106a (stamped), dwelling 597, family 597, Solomon Willson.

⁴⁸ Caroline County, Md., Register of Wills, Petitions & Orders, petition filed by Nancy Wilson, widow, for the sale of Solomon Wilson’s personal estate, 16 July 1872; MSA C3148-4. Caroline County, Register of Wills, Distributions, Original, Third and final account of the estate of Solomon Wilson, 17 February 1874; MSA C501-2.

⁴⁹ In 1850, the age difference was reported as nine years; in 1860, 11 years. See 1850 U.S. census, Caroline County, Maryland, pop. sched. [districts not identified], p. 106a (stamped), dwelling 597, family 597, Solomon Willson; and 1860 U.S. census, Caroline Co., Md., pop. sched., Greensborough Post Office, p. 294, dwelling 2041, family 2028, Solomon Wilson.

⁵⁰ 1840 U.S. census, Queen Anne’s County, Md., pop. sched., Centreville, p. 75, line 3, Solomon Wilson.

⁵¹ Caroline Co., Md., Court, Land Records, Liber X: 510, James and Araminta Carter to Solomon Wilson, 9 November 1847.

⁵² 1850 U.S. census, Caroline Co., Md., pop. sched. [districts not identified], p. 106a (stamped), dwelling 597, family 597, Solomon Willson.

⁵³ 1860 U.S. census, Caroline Co., Md., pop. sched., Greensborough Post Office, p. 294, dwelling 2041, family 2028, Solomon Wilson.

- ⁵⁴ 1860 U.S. census, Caroline Co., Md., pop. sched., Greensborough Post Office, p. 260, dwelling 1806, family 1791, John Wilson.
- ⁵⁵ “Maryland Register of Wills Records, 1629–1999,” Caroline County, Wills WGN no B: 199, will of Solomon Wilson, written 22 March 1866, proven 10 April 1866.
- ⁵⁶ Caroline Co., Md., Register of Wills, Inventories, Original, Inventory of the Goods and chattels of Solomon Wilson, dec’d, 1 May 1866; MSA C517-12.
- ⁵⁷ Caroline Co., Md., Register of Wills, Administration Accounts, Original, First and Final Account of the estate of Solomon Wilson, dec’d, 23 October 1866; MSA C460-23.
- ⁵⁸ Caroline Co., Md., Register of Wills, Petitions & Orders, Petition filed by Nancy Wilson, widow, for the sale of Solomon Wilson’s personal estate, 16 July 1872.
- ⁵⁹ Caroline Co., Md., Register of Wills, Distributions, Original, Third and final account of the estate of Solomon Wilson, 17 February 1874.
- ⁶⁰ Caroline Co., Md., Court, Land Records, Liber THK 35: 467, William H. Wilson, Executor, to Arthur J. Greenly, 24 January 1877.
- ⁶¹ Caroline County, Md., Court, Marriage Licenses, 1816–1873, organized chronologically, William H. Willson and Louisa Black, 16 May 1872. See also Md., Board of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, death certificate no. 482, Caroline County (12 January 1919), Zenia Wilson, daughter of Thomas Wilson and Louisa Black, W. H. Wilson, informant; MSA SE43. The reference to Thomas Wilson as her father suggests she was fathered by William’s younger brother, but his estimated birth year of 1846 compared to Zenia’s estimated birth year of 1855 makes that unlikely.
- ⁶² Md., Dept. of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, death certificate [unnumbered] (29 December 1909), William H. Wilson, age 88, widower, black, farmer, son of Solomon Wilson and Nancy Grinage, brother Solomon Wilson, informant; MSA SE42.
- ⁶³ Caroline County, Md., Court, Marriage Licenses, 1873–1886, organized chronologically, John Thomas Wilson, col., and Zeani Black, col’d., 7 February 1882; MSA C535-2.
- ⁶⁴ 1900 U.S. census, Caroline County, Md., pop. sched., second district, ED 3, sheet no. 9B, dwelling 162, family 166, John F. Wilson; digital images, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com : accessed 5 December 2021); citing NARA microfilm publication T623, Family History Library (FHL) microfilm 1,240,619. See also Maryland, Board of Health, death certificate no. 482, Caroline County (12 January 1919), Zenia Wilson, daughter of Thomas Wilson and Louisa Black, W. H. Wilson, informant; MSA SE43.
- ⁶⁵ 1860 U.S. census, Caroline County, Md., pop. sched., Greensborough Post Office, p. 260, dwelling 1806, family 1791, John Wilson.
- ⁶⁶ Caroline County, Md., Court, Marriage Licenses, 1816–1873, organized chronologically, John Willson, negro, and Eliza Matthews, negress, 28 March 1853.

⁶⁷ “Maryland Register of Wills Records, 1629–1999,” Caroline County, Wills WGN no B: 199, will of Solomon Wilson, written 22 March 1866, proven 10 April 1866.

⁶⁸ Md., Dept. of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, death certificate [unnumbered] (15 July 1909, Caroline County), John T. Wilson, 51, farmer, of TB, son of John Wilson and Lizzie Mathis, informant Zenia Wilson, wife, near Greensboro; MSA SE42.

⁶⁹ 1860 U.S. census, Caroline County, Md., pop. sched., Greensborough Post Office, p. 260, dwelling 1806, family 1791, John Wilson.

⁷⁰ 1900 U.S. census, Cook County, Illinois, pop. sched., Chicago, Ward 17, enumeration district (ED) 547, 14, dwelling 21, family 129, Linford Wilson born Maryland; digital images, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com : accessed 19 March 2024); citing NARA microfilm publication T623, roll 267.

⁷¹ 1860 U.S. census, Caroline County, Md., pop. sched., Greensborough Post Office, p. 260, dwelling 1806, family 1791, John Wilson.

⁷² 1870 U.S. census, Caroline County, Md., pop. sched., Third District, p. 204 (stamped), dwelling 323, family 323, Wm. H. Wilson.

⁷³ Caroline County, Md., Register of Wills, Distributions, Original, Third and final account of the estate of Solomon Wilson, 17 February 1874.

⁷⁴ For his birth year, see 1850 U.S. census, Caroline County, Md., pop. sched. [districts not identified], p. 106a (stamped), dwelling 597, family 597, Solomon Willson; and 1860 U.S. census, Caroline County, Md., pop. sched., Greensborough Post Office, p. 261, dwelling 1814, family 1801, James Wilson in household headed by Henry Cooper. For his death, see “Local Matters—The Murder in Caroline County,” *The [Baltimore] Sun*, 4 November 1862, p. 1, col. 6.

⁷⁵ For the year, see 1860 U.S. census, Caroline County, Md., pop. sched., Greensborough Post Office, p. 294, dwelling 2041, family 2028, Solomon Wilson. For the month and day, “Delaware, Death Records, 1861–1933,” certificate no. 1775, registered no. 879, Mary A. Fountain, dau. of Solomon Wilson and Nancy Wilson, both of Maryland, 1 June 1923; digital images, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com : accessed 10 December 2021); citing Delaware Vital Records Microfilm at Delaware Public Archives, Dover.

⁷⁶ “Delaware, Marriage Records, 1806–1933,” registration no. 13327, Benjamin Fountain, 24, white [*sic*], of Kent County, Del., and Mary Ann Wilson, 23, white [*sic*], of Caroline County, Md., 2 January 1862; digital images, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com : accessed 10 December 2021); citing Delaware Vital Records, Delaware Public Archives, Dover.

⁷⁷ “Delaware, Death Records, 1861–1933,” certificate no. 1775, registered no. 879, Mary A. Fountain, dau. of Solomon Wilson and Nancy Wilson, both of Maryland, 1 June 1923.

⁷⁸ 1900 U.S. census, New Castle County, Delaware, pop. sched., Ward 6, Wilmington, ED 25, sheet no. 23A, dwelling 446, family 497, Benjamin

Fountain; digital images, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com : accessed 20 December 2021); citing NARA microfilm publication T623, FHL microfilm 1,240,155.

⁷⁹ “Delaware, Death Records, 1861–1933,” certificate no. 3124, registered no. 1555, J. Wesley Fountain, age 61, 6 months, widowed, informant, C. Gray [sister], 1 December 1923.

⁸⁰ According to the 1870 census, Willmina was born in Delaware. In 1880, she alone of the children in the household was reported as a native of Maryland. 1870 U.S. census, Kent County, Delaware, pop. sched., Mispilion [*sic*] Hundred Sub [?] No. 17, p. 34 (stamped), dwelling 481, family 481, Daniel Fountain; digital images, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com : accessed 10 December 2021); citing NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 119. 1880 U.S. census, New Castle County, Delaware, pop. sched., Wilmington, ED 17, p. 3 (stamped), dwelling 38, family 42, Benjamin Fountain; digital images, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com : accessed 10 December 2021); citing NARA microfilm publication T9, roll 119.

⁸¹ Multiple contributors, “Find A Grave,” database, *FindAGrave.com* (www.findagrave.com : accessed 10 December 2021), Anna L. Fountain Doman, 1872–1933, memorial no. 58312703 [including death certificate]; www.findagrave.com/memorial/58312703/anna-l-doman. Anna’s death certificate reports 10 February 1872 as her birth date, but she was enumerated with her parents in their 1870 household.

⁸² 1870 U.S. census, Kent County, Delaware, pop. sched., Mispilion [*sic*] Hundred Sub [?] No. 17, p. 34 (stamped), dwelling 481, family 481, Daniel Fountain.

⁸³ “Delaware, Death Records, 1861–1933,” certificate no. 339, registered no. 192, Clementine A. Gray, dau. of Benjamin Fountain and Mary Ann Wilson, 11 February 1924. Clementine’s death certificate reports 1871 as her birth year, but she was enumerated with her parents in 1870. See 1870 U.S. census, Kent County, Delaware, pop. sched., Mispilion [*sic*] Hundred Sub[?] No. 17, p. 34 (stamped), dwelling 481, family 481, Daniel Fountain.

⁸⁴ “Delaware, Death Records, 1861–1933,” Jane Fountain, age 23, 9 February 1895, dau. of Benjamin Fountain and Rachel [*sic*].

⁸⁵ Multiple contributors, “Find A Grave,” database, *FindAGrave.com* (www.findagrave.com : accessed 10 December 2021), Thomas Edward Fountain, 1879–1965, memorial no. 58313349 [including death certificate]; www.findagrave.com/memorial/58313349/thomas_edward_fountain.

⁸⁶ 1880 U.S. census, New Castle County, Delaware, pop. sched., Wilmington, ED 17, p. 3 (stamped), dwelling 38, family 42, Benjamin Fountain; digital images, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com : accessed 10 December 2021); citing NARA microfilm publication T9, roll 119.

⁸⁷ Maryland, Board of Health, death certificate no. 6329 (23 April 1918, Caroline County), Solomon Wilson, son of Solomon Wilson and Nancy Grinage; SE43; MSA.

⁸⁸ 1900 U.S. census, Caroline Co., Md., pop. sched., Seventh District, Town of Ridgely, ED 9, Sheet no 4B, dwelling 86, family 92, Solimon Wilson.

⁸⁹ Maryland, Board of Health, death certificate no. 6329 (23 April 1918, Caroline County), Solomon Wilson, son of Solomon Wilson and Nancy Grinage; MSA SE43.

⁹⁰ 1900 U.S. census, Caroline Co., Md., pop. sched., Seventh District, Town of Ridgely, ED 9, Sheet no 4B, dwelling 86, family 92, Solimon Wilson.

⁹¹ Maryland, Board of Health, death certificate no. 0300 (19 January 1938, Caroline County), William Elwood Wilson, son of Solomon Wilson and Mary Augusta Carter; MSA SE43.

⁹² For the correct month, see 1900 U.S. census, Caroline County, Maryland, pop. sched., Seventh District, Town of Ridgely, ED 9, Sheet no 4B, dwelling 86, family 92, Solimon Wilson; digital images, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com : accessed 6 December 2021); citing NARA microfilm publication T623, FHL microfilm 1,240,619. See also “Delaware, Death Records, 1861–1933,” death certificate no. 971, registered no. 448, Elmira Dean (6 April 1930), born 26 May 1870, dau. of Solomon Wilson and August Carter, both of Md.; informant Robert Dean, 901 Brown St. But see also “Find A Grave,” database, *FindAGrave.com* (www.findagrave.com : accessed 19 March 2024), Almira Dean (1868-1930), memorial no. 69342578; www.findagrave.com/memorial/69342578/almira-dean. The entry includes discussion about her birthdate and the spelling variation of her name.

⁹³ “Delaware, Death Records, 1861–1933,” death certificate no. 971, registered no. 448, Elmira Dean (6 April 1930), born 26 May 1870, dau. of Solomon Wilson and August Carter, both of Md.; informant Robert Dean, 901 Brown St.

⁹⁴ 1880 U.S. census, Caroline Co., Md., pop. sched., Hillsboro, ED 6, p. 250 (stamped), dwelling/family not specified, Solomon Wilson; digital images, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com : accessed 6 December 2021); citing NARA microfilm publication T9, roll not specified. Both Mary Augusta and Ormond died before 1900. 1900 U.S. census, Caroline County, Maryland, pop. sched., Seventh District, Town of Ridgely, ED 9, Sheet no 4B, dwelling 86, family 92, Solimon Wilson.

⁹⁵ 1900 U.S. census, Caroline Co., Md., pop. sched., Seventh District, Town of Ridgely, ED 9, Sheet no 4B, dwelling 86, family 92, Solimon Wilson.

⁹⁶ “U.S., World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917–1918,” digital images, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com : accessed 7 December 2021), Robert Beau [illegible] Wilson, born 24 September 1883, wife Mable Wilson, resident of Caroline County, Md.; citing NARA microfilm publication M1509.

⁹⁷ 1930 U.S. census, Salem County, New Jersey, pop. sched., Mannington Township, Claysville Village, ED 7, sheet 1B, dwelling 40, family 42, Robert Wilson; digital images, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com : accessed 7 December 2021); citing NARA microfilm publication T626, FHL microfilm 2,341,117. Robert cannot be found in the census after 1930; his youngest son Gilbert

was living with his sister and brother-in-law in 1940. See 1940 U.S. census, Salem County, N.J., pop. sched., Mannington Township, ED 17-12, sheet 9A, household no. 164, Russel W. Clark; digital images, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com : accessed 10 March 2024); citing NARA microfilm publication T627, roll 2380.

⁹⁸ Multiple contributors, “Find A Grave,” database, *FindAGrave.com* (www.findagrave.com : accessed 30 March 2024), Howard Clifton Wilson, 1883–1950, memorial no. 5953344 [including death certificate]; www.findagrave.com/memorial/5953344/howard_clifton-wilson.

⁹⁹ The federal census reporting for Robert’s age varies dramatically; the estimate of 1844 is based on the two census records closest to his birth. See 1850 U.S. census, Caroline Co., Md., pop. sched., [districts not identified], p. 106a (stamped), dwelling 597, family 597, Solomon Willson; and 1860 U.S. census, Caroline Co., Md., pop. sched., Greensborough Post Office, p. 296, dwelling 2041, family 2028, Solomon Wilson.

¹⁰⁰ The estimated marriage date is based on the age of their oldest child in 1870. See 1870 U.S. census, Caroline County, Md., pop. sched., 2nd District, Greensborough, p. 174 (stamped), Robert Wilson.

¹⁰¹ 1870 U.S. census, Caroline Co., Md., pop. sched., 2nd District, Greensborough, p. 174 (stamped), Robert Wilson.

¹⁰² Maryland, Board of Health, death certificate no. 9099 (22 August 1937, Talbot County), Jetty Wilson, daughter of Robert Wilson and Adeline Thomas; MSA SE43.

¹⁰³ 1870 U.S. census, Caroline Co., Md., pop. sched., 2nd District, Greensborough, p. 174 (stamped), Robert Wilson.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. Pennsylvania Department of Health, “Pennsylvania Death Certificates, 1906–1967,” database with images, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com : accessed 5 December 2021), Linford Wilson, 20 February 1917, cert. no. 5375, age 47, son of Robert and Elline, all of Greensboro, Md.; citing records of the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Record Group 11, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

¹⁰⁵ 1870 U.S. census, Caroline Co., Md., pop. sched., Third District, p. 204 (stamped), dwelling 323, family 323, Wm. H. Wilson.

¹⁰⁶ 1900 U.S. census, New Castle Co., Delaware, pop. sched., Ward 6, Wilmington, ED 25, sheet no. 23A, dwelling 446, family 497, Benjamin Fountain; digital images, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com : accessed 20 December 2021); citing NARA microfilm publication T623, FHL microfilm 1,240,155. The census reports his birth year as 1849 but that is inconsistent with other census records: age 5 in 1850, age 13 in 1860, and age 25 in 1870. See 1850 U.S. census, Caroline County, Md., pop. sched. [districts not identified], p. 106a (stamped), dwelling 597, family 597, Solomon Willson; and 1860 U.S. census, Caroline Co., Md., pop. sched., Greensborough Post Office, p. 294, dwelling 2041, family 2028, Solomon Wilson. 1870 U.S. census, Caroline

County, Md., pop. sched., Third District, p. 204 (stamped), dwelling 323, family 323, Wm. H. Wilson.

¹⁰⁷ "Delaware, Death Records, 1861–1933," New Castle, 1906–1912, Register, p. 276, Thomas Wilson, age 60, 1114 French Street, 27 May 1906. 1114 French Street matches the address of the Fountain family in 1900.