



**Sarah Abigail Mahoney (1822-1888)**

William and Sarah Abigail may have moved from Belfast to his property in Lincolnville on Ducktrap Stream, at least until May of 1843, because the family Bible says that their first son, Henry Oscar Wilson, was born in Lincolnville at that time. However, a move back to Belfast appears to have taken place at some time during the following two years, because in May of 1845 their second child, Lucy, was born (according to the family Bible) in Belfast, as was their third child, Edward, in 1846. It is possible that in 1843-1844 William and others, including his sister Sarah, sold their farms and made a reconnaissance trip out west at least as far as St. Louis (where Sarah married a Lincolnville man, Isaac Hills, in 1844), and possibly on into Illinois, then returned home to Maine by 1845.

Know all men by these presents That  
 John S. Wilson of Lincolnville County of Waldo and  
 State of Maine Yeoman in consideration of four hundred  
 dollars paid by William F. Wilson of the same Lincoln-  
 ville Yeoman the receipt whereof I do here by acknowledge-  
 do hereby remise release bargain sell and convey, and forever  
 quitclaim unto the said William F. Wilson his heirs and  
 assigns forever all my right title and interest in and to  
 the following described tract of land situate in Lincolnville  
 aforesaid better and bounded as following to wit. Beginning  
 at a stake and stone at the road leading from Lincoln-  
 ville to Belfast at the southeast corner of Joseph Gorley  
 land on Charles Richards westerly line thence running  
 south east sixty eight rods to Charles Richards South west  
 corner thence continuing said course South east forty four  
 rods to a stake and stone thence southwest to the middle  
 of Ducktrap Main Stream thence up the middle of said  
 Stream the same courses thereof until it striking South  
 Goalds land thence bounding on said Goalds southerly  
 line to the place of beginning containing ninety seven acres  
 more or less.

To have and to hold, the same, together with all  
 the privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging, to him  
 the said William F. Wilson his heirs and assigns forever.  
 And I do covenant with the said William F. Wilson his  
 heirs and assigns that I will warrant and forever defend  
 the premises to him the said William F. Wilson his heirs  
 and assigns forever, against the lawful claims and demands  
 of all persons claiming by, through, or under me.

In witness whereof the said John S. Wilson together  
 with Nancy my wife in token of her consent hereunto  
 and hereby relinquishing her right of dower to the above  
 described premises, have hereunto set our hands and  
 seals this fourth day of October in the year of our Lord  
 one thousand eight hundred and thirty one.

John S. Wilson  
 in presence of  
 Alvan Blood (John S. Wilson (Sd))  
 John Wilson (Nancy Wilson (Sd))  
 James Gardan

Waldo 4<sup>th</sup> October 1831 Personally appeared John  
 S. Wilson and acknowledged the above instrument to  
 be his free act and deed before me  
 John Wilson Justice of the Peace

Waldo Received Sept 17. 1833 and recorded and  
 compared by  
 Frey Hull, Register

Record of the sale of 97 acres of land on the Ducktrap Stream by John Sheen Wilson to his brother William Faulkner Wilson on 4 October 1831, the transaction recorded by their father John Wilson, Justice of the Peace, just 24 days before his death.

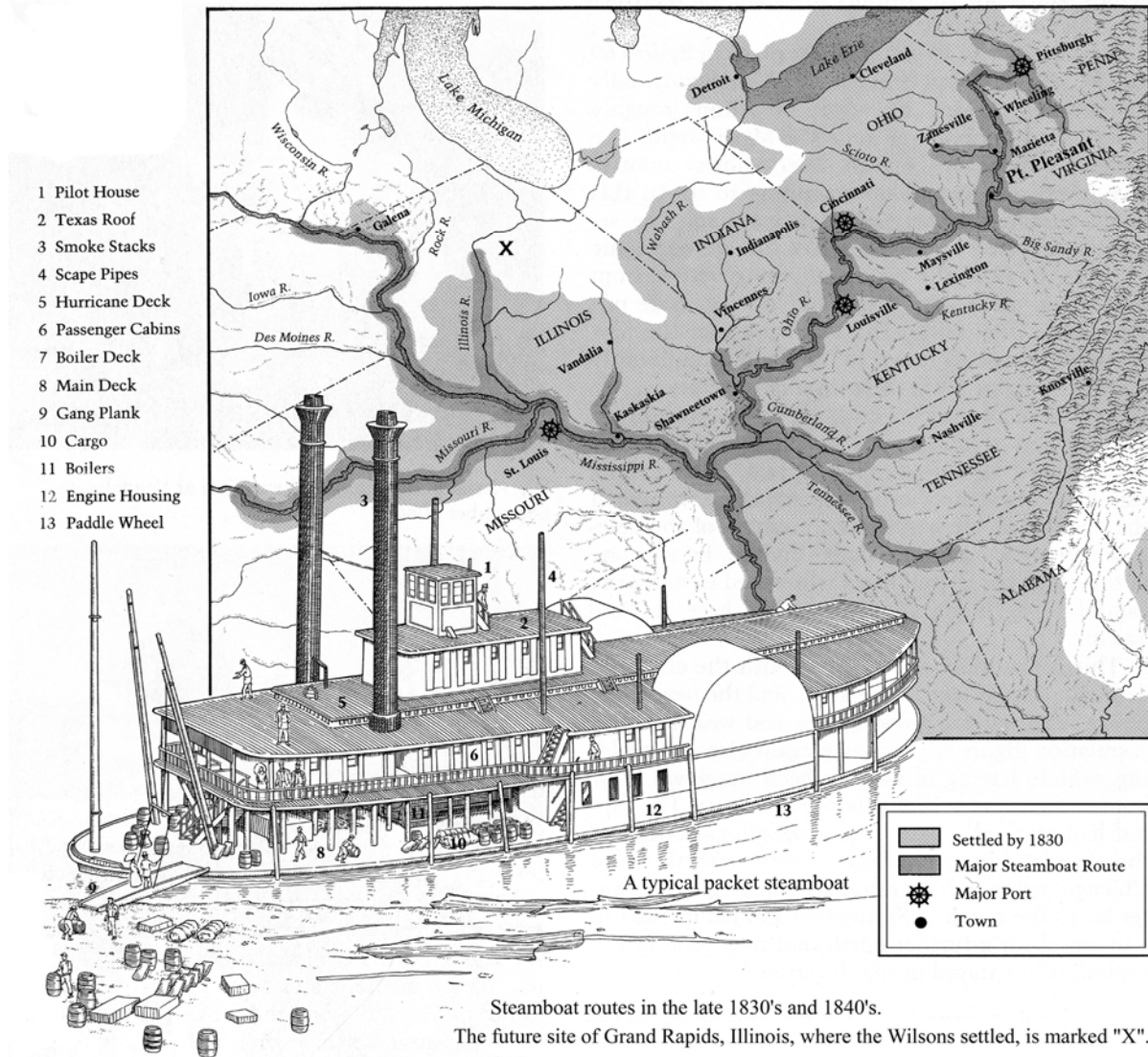
Shortly following the death of his mother (1848), with nothing more to hold him in Maine, William and his older brother John Sheen Wilson, decided to move their families west permanently in search of open spaces and abundant farmland. Perhaps the idea had been put in their heads by all the stories of adventure and opportunity on the frontier which their father had undoubtedly brought back with him when he returned to Maine from the Ohio Territory around 1830. According to the story passed down as family tradition in one line (according to our cousin Doug Hamer), they boarded a ship in Maine, probably in Belfast, and sailed southward along the coast to Virginia, where they disembarked, most likely in Portsmouth.



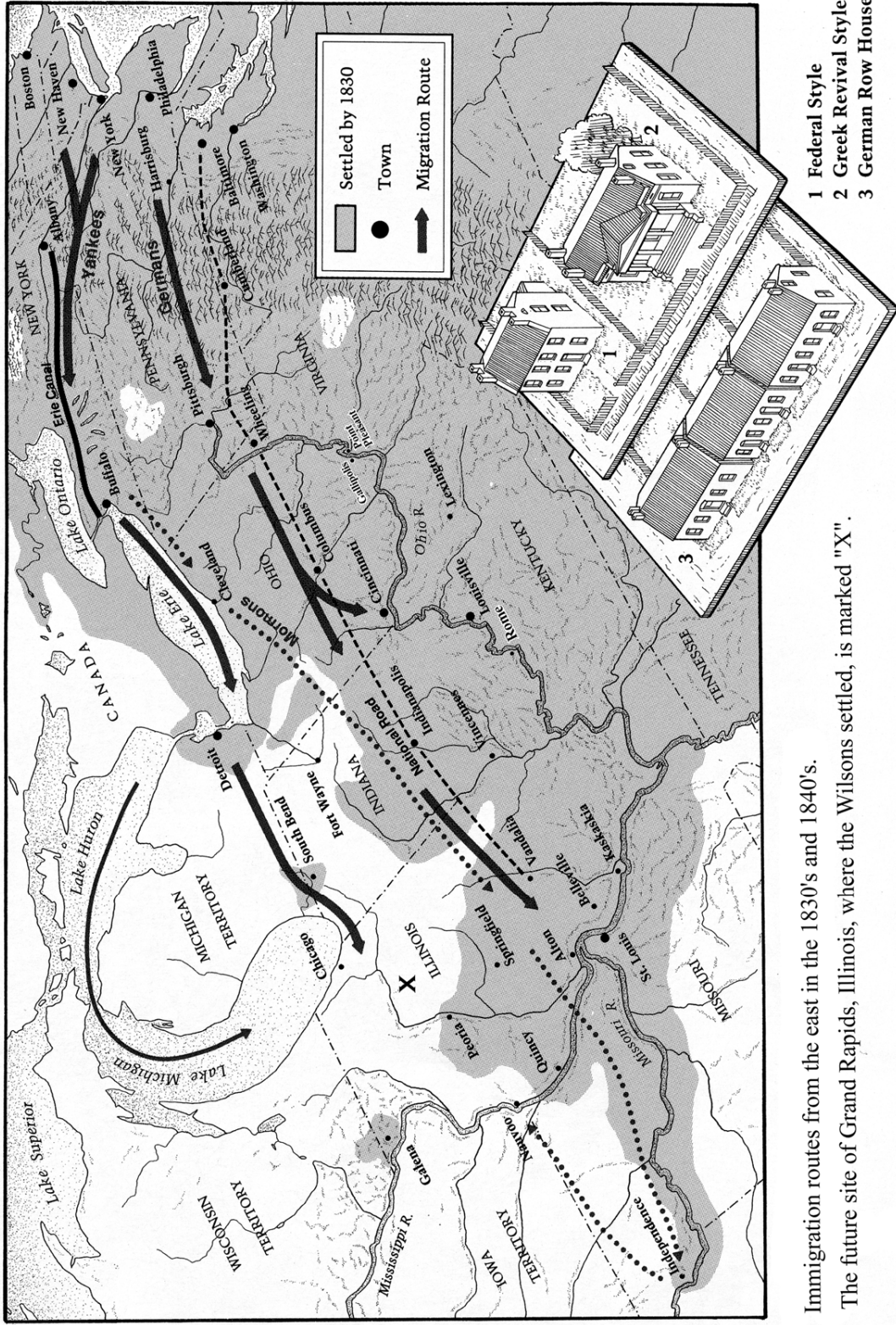
Document attesting that William Faulkner Wilson donated \$1 toward the construction of the Washington Monument during the presidency of Zachary Taylor (1849-1850)

The families proceeded inland along the well-traveled stage routes, then joined a wagon train. Sarah is said to have been appalled by the cruelty of slavery as practiced on the Virginia plantations, and was eager to continue on westward. They traveled by land as far west as the Ohio River at Point Pleasant, Virginia on the Ohio border-- perhaps retracing the route followed by their father 15 or 20 years earlier. They stayed in Point Pleasant for a couple of years, perhaps awaiting the government announcement of new areas on the western frontier being opened to homesteaders. Their fourth child, William F. Wilson, was born there in February 1849. Alice O. Wilson, John Sheen Wilson's daughter, was born in Point Pleasant on 18 Nov 1850; JSW's eldest son Charles was

married in Gallipolis, Ohio, just across the river from Point Pleasant, on 24 Oct 1850; and JSW's sons, Charles and William H. Wilson, elected to remain there for some years after the rest of the family had moved on to Illinois (William was married in Point Pleasant in 1860).



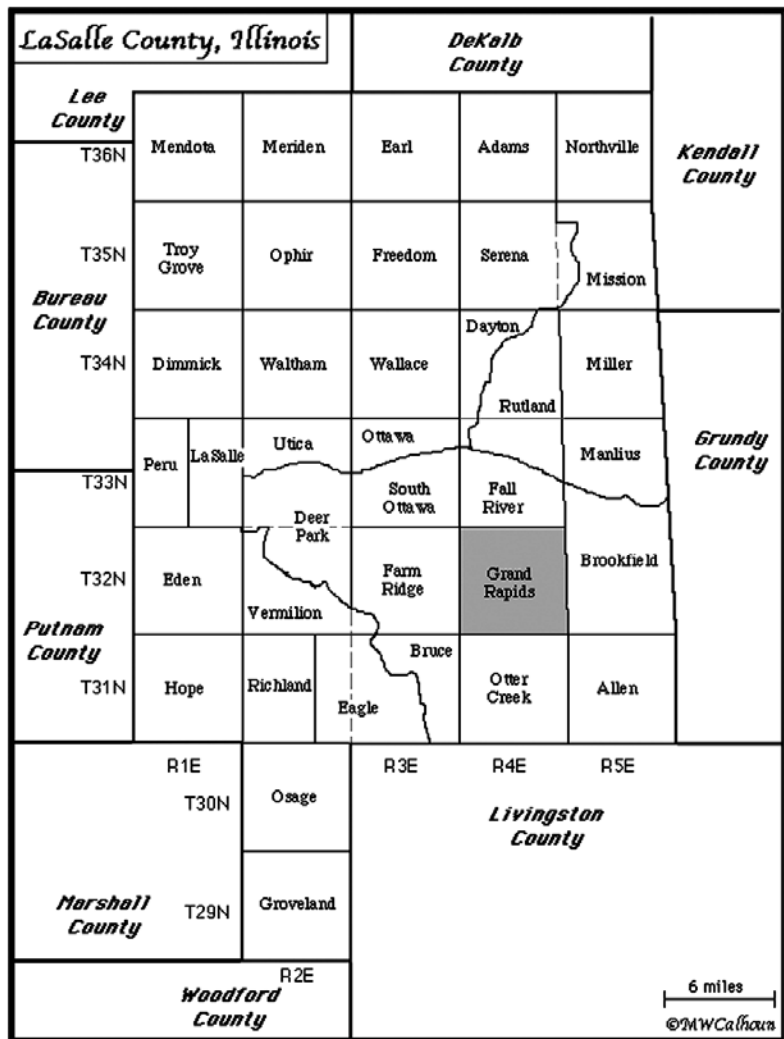
Point Pleasant was in those days an important frontier outpost. It had been the site of the bloodiest battle ever fought between Indians (in this case about 1,000 Indian warriors of the "Northern Confederacy" of Shawnee, Delaware, Mingo, Wyandotte, Iroquois and Cayuga tribes under Shawnee Chief Hokesqua, known in English as Chief Cornstalk) and white men, about 1,100 American colonial soldiers from Virginia under General Andrew Lewis. The Battle of Point Pleasant, on October 10, 1774, was the chief event of what historians refer to as Lord Dunmore's War, considered by many historians to be first battle of the American Revolution because the Indians (who lost the battle) had been incited against the colonists by the British.



Immigration routes from the east in the 1830's and 1840's.

The future site of Grand Rapids, Illinois, where the Wilsons settled, is marked "X".

Sometime in 1851 the family decided upon an area to settle in Illinois, probably on land that had never been farmed. By this time William's and John's sister, Sarah, her husband Isaac Hills and their family may have joined them, and perhaps also the family of their older brother George Ulmer Wilson and his wife Sarah Russ. The families of Sarah and George had both still been in Belfast as of the 1850 census, and George's daughter Isabel had died in Belfast in 1851, but they traveled west shortly thereafter, probably catching up with William and John at Point Pleasant in mid-1851. They all boarded a riverboat at Point Pleasant and traveled down the Ohio River to where it meets the Mississippi, then up the Mississippi to the Illinois River north of St. Louis, and finally up the Illinois River to Peoria or LaSalle in LaSalle County, in north-central Illinois.



Location of Grand Rapids Township in LaSalle County, Illinois.

It was there in LaSalle that William's fifth child, Marie Antoinette Wilson, was born on August 14, 1851, and his sister Sarah's daughter Mary was born in 1852. By 1853 the families of William and John had settled on adjacent farms in Grand Rapids

township, Illinois, still in LaSalle County, and their sister Sarah's family had settled in adjacent Ottawa Township where Sarah's husband could find work as a housebuilder and carpenter. The township of Grand Rapids was located northwest of Streator a few miles in or near what is now the LaSalle Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area, so it must have been a good place to live in the 1850's and 1860's, with fish and game plentiful. John Ulmer Wilson was born in Grand Rapids on 21 October 1853; Albert George Wilson was born there in 1856; and Sarah J. Wilson was born there in 1858. William F. Wilson's last child, Nancy Mary Wilson, was born in Grand Rapids on April 4, 1865. In 1860 there were 1,430 people living in Grand Rapids township.

William Faulkner Wilson's older brother, John Sheen Wilson (1808-1894) and his family had accompanied William's family to the Grand Rapids area; his daughter Lovicy married a man from LaSalle County in 1853, and in 1856 his son John Sheen Wilson Jr. married a woman born in Grand Rapids and settled there as well, until at least 1894, when the elder John died there.

By the time of the 1860 census, William Faulkner Wilson, wife Sarah and seven children (Oscar, Edward, Willie, Maria, John, Albert and Sarah) are listed as farming land worth \$4,000; his brother John Sheen Wilson, wife Nancy Gould Wilson and three of their children (Joseph, Warren and Alice) are farming nearby on land appraised at \$4,250; John Sheen Wilson's son John Jr. is farming close by as well, on land valued at \$1,100, with his wife Elizabeth and son John III; and John Sheen Wilson's other brother George is farming land worth \$2,000 with his wife Marian and one young son (Charles) on yet another tract.

At some time between 1862 and 1867 it appears that William's sister Lucy Jane, with her husband Peleg Bryant and family, also moved to Illinois. Lucy's daughter Belle was born in Moline on the Mississippi River in 1867. It was around that time that William's sister Lucetta Ann and her husband James Cunningham also moved from Maine to Illinois, to settle in the town of Ottawa in LaSalle County, where they are found on the 1870 and 1880 censuses. It may also have been around this same time that William's sister Mary Rebecca and her husband Yorick Cunningham moved west from Maine and settled in Indianapolis. And, in addition, it may well have been around this time that William's older brother, George Ulmer Wilson, moved to DeKalb County just north of LaSalle County.

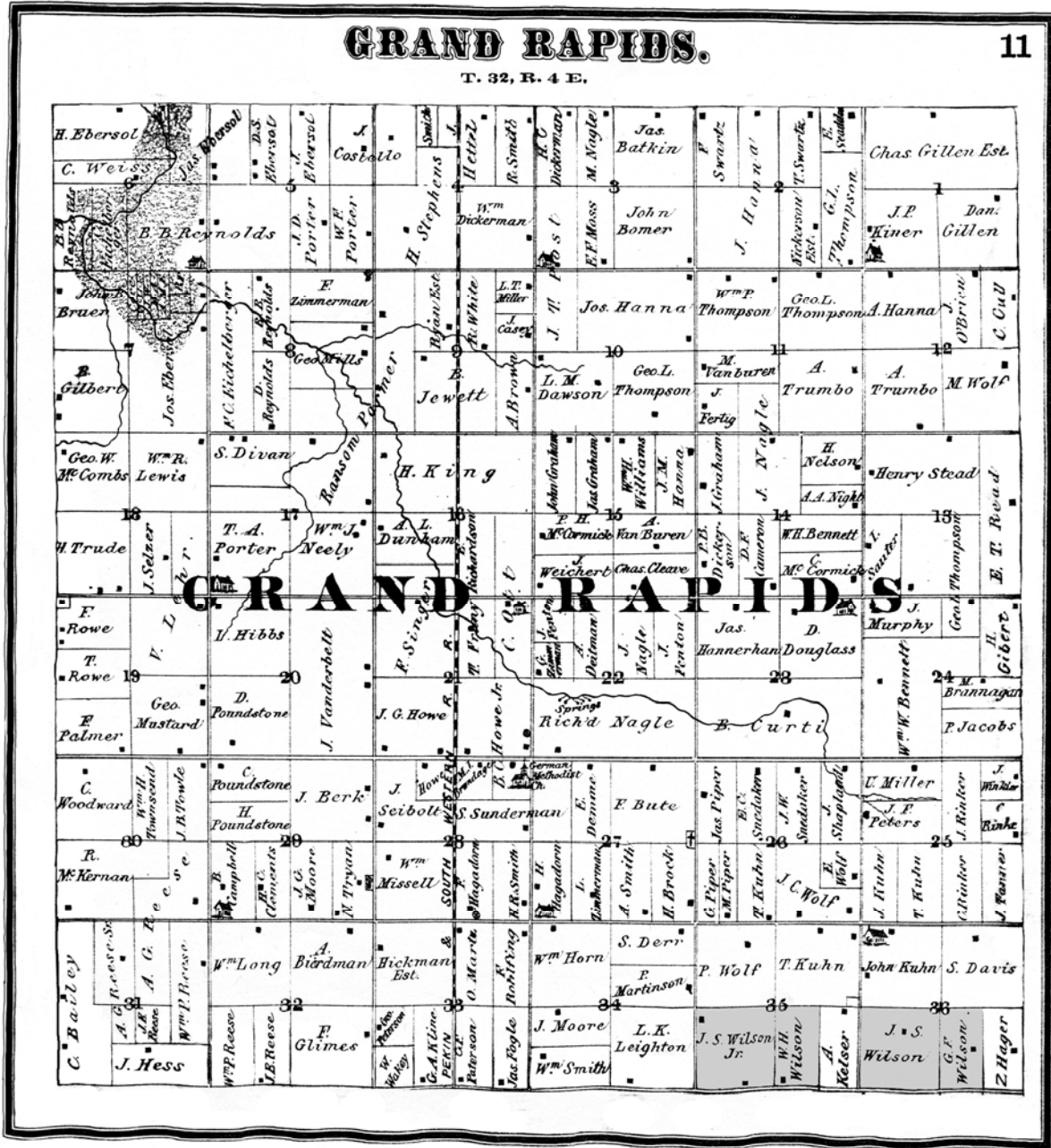
No one today knows what may have caused a rift in the family, but at some point between 1866 and 1869 the William Faulkner Wilson family and the Sarah Wilson Hills family left the John Sheen Wilson family (and perhaps also the Lucetta Wilson Cunningham, Lucy Jane Wilson Bryant and George Ulmer Wilson families) behind in the LaSalle County area and moved to what came to be known as the "Wilson Settlement" about 5.5 miles northwest of La Hogue, near Gilman, in Iroquois County, Illinois. Sarah and her husband, who was a carpenter and not a farmer, settled in the town of Gilman, where they are listed in the 1870 census. Lucy Jane and Peleg Byant may have left Illinois around this time, and had returned to his family's home in Massachusetts by 1870. In 1873 Sarah Wilson Hills and her family (except for son Nathan's family, which

remained in Gilman) relocated permanently to Michigan. And Lucetta Wilson and her husband James Cunningham moved from Ottawa a short distance to South

Ottawa, Illinois, where they appear on the census for 1880 (where they went thereafter is unknown).

**Thus it was that the nine surviving children of John Wilson and Mary Ulmer finally went their separate ways. The four who had moved west to Illinois ca. 1848-51 (George, John, Sarah, William), the two who had moved to Illinois after 1860 (Lucetta and Lucy), the one who moved to Indiana after 1855 (Mary), and the two who stayed behind in Maine (Susanna and Richard) appear to have had very little, if any, contact with each other after 1870.**





Plat Map, Grand Rapids Township, LaSalle Co. IL in 1870



Mary Holland Berndt photo

Gravestone of William Faulkner Wilson (1811-1893), son of John Wilson and Mary Ulmer of Lincolnville, Maine. Gilman Cemetery, Gilman, Illinois

The William Faulkner Wilson family appears on the 1870 census for Douglass Township, near Gilman, now with six children (William, Maria, John Ulmer Wilson, Albert George, Sarah and Mary, Edward having died in 1864, during the Civil War, and Oscar having moved out to live by himself, though he never married). Marie Antoinette Wilson married Charles F. Lee in the County Seat of Watseka on 18 April 1872. Many Wilsons (including William and Sarah Abigail) are buried in the Gilman cemetery.

Perhaps the La Hogue area was not totally satisfactory either, however, because around 1876 William's family headed off again, to Missouri and, briefly, Arkansas, in search of good land they could acquire for farming. Land patent records in Arkansas show that a William F. Wilson acquired 80 acres in Benton County [E half of NE quarter of Sec 12, T18N, R32W] on 24 June 1878. This area is on the northern border of Arkansas with Missouri. We cannot be positive that this was "our" William F. Wilson, but family tradition says that while he was in Arkansas, William contracted typhoid fever and nearly died before recovering.

The family next appears in 1880 in Crawford County, Missouri near Sullivan, where sons John Ulmer Wilson and his younger brother Albert George Wilson had taken jobs working as miners in the lead mines. John Ulmer Wilson had married Melissa Pervina Jackson at Smith Jackson's home in the nearby Indian Creek area of Washington County in 1876, and their first two children, William and James, were born in Crawford County in 1878 and 1880. The 1880 census for Boone Township, Crawford County, shows William F. Wilson (age 70) and wife Abigail (age 60) living with their children Oscar (age 35) and Albert (age 22); living directly adjacent are John [Ulmer] Wilson (age 28) with wife Melissa (age 17) and their first son, William (age 2). Daughter Sarah Josephine "Sadie" Wilson had married a Sullivan blacksmith named Charles Blanton 1877.

By 1883 everyone except Sadie (who remained in Sullivan with her husband) had returned to the LaHogue area, where Albert George Wilson married Melissa Jackson's sister Molly Jackson that same year. They maintained a cordial relationship with the other Jackson siblings, especially Melissa and Molly's sister, Olive Francis "Fanny" Jackson, who often came to visit.

No less than three of William and Sarah Abigail's children married members of the Lee family in Illinois. William Wilson Jr. married Mary Elizabeth Lee; Marie Antoinette Wilson married Charles Lee; and Nancy Wilson married Walter Lee. Charles Lee and Marie Antoinette Wilson's eighth son, Guy Wilson Lee, married Olive Florence "Flo" Wilson, a daughter of John Ulmer Wilson. Charles Lee and Marie Antoinette Wilson's third son, John Henry Lee, Married Fanny Jackson. [For this reason charts are presented in the Family Charts section for the Lee families.]

Sarah Abigail Mahoney Wilson died on December 12, 1888; five years later William Faulkner Wilson died on May 18, 1893, at the age of 82, just a little more than a year after the birth of his grandson John Edgar Wilson, the son of John Ulmer Wilson. They are buried in the Gilman cemetery.