

WILLIAM FRANKLIN DAVIDSON AND ANNA (COLEMAN) DAVIDSON



Mr. and Mrs. William Franklin Davidson

Alice Davidson Collection

William Franklin Davidson was born March 28, 1843, in Stark County, Illinois. His parents were Green Clay Davidson and Nancy (Million) Davidson. Green Clay's father, who was born in England, served as a Captain in the U.S. Army in the War of 1812. Nancy Million descended from an old Virginia family and was born in Kentucky, where her parents were extensive cotton planters and slave owners. Green Clay Davidson was a juggler for the Sands and Lee Circus, and met Nancy Million while on tour with the circus in Kentucky.

After the couple were married, Green Clay was injured while performing a hangman's act for the circus and had to

use a silver breathing tube for three months. He then decided to change occupations, and the couple took up a 160 acre homestead in Stark County, Illinois, where they stayed for four years. While there William Franklin was born. The Davidsons then moved to Peoria, Illinois, where they purchased a hotel and livery barn.

On March 28, 1852, the family set out for Oregon, crossing the plains by horse-drawn covered wagon in a party of 250. Their son William Franklin was nine years old at the time. After stopping for a short while at Forest Grove, Oregon, they moved to Dayton in early 1853, and purchased another hotel and livery stable. The business was very successful, and after two years they purchased a half interest in a mercantile store. They continued to prosper the next two years. In 1857, they disposed of the enterprises and moved to St. Paul, where they purchased the 640 acre Deguire land claim and ferry. They operated the ferry and built a store and warehouse. In the bad flood of 1861, Mr. Davidson lost 20,000 bushels of grain—mostly wheat and oats—worth \$2 a bushel. The loss was so great that he was eventually forced to sell everything he had to pay his creditors. Then, starting from practically nothing, he managed to establish a store in Fairfield. After operating the store for three years the Green Clay Davidsons moved to Salem.

Anna Coleman, the eldest daughter of the James Colemans of St. Paul, was born in Louisa County, Iowa, and crossed the plains to Oregon in a covered wagon when she was one year old. She was the first daughter of American immigrants to be baptized in the brick church. She lived with her parents in Yamhill County until the family moved to St. Paul when she was 16 years old.

On May 24, 1864, William Franklin Davidson, 22, and Anna Coleman, 19, were married in the St. Paul Catholic Church.

The young couple first rented land from Mrs. Davidson's father and farmed for several years. They later operated a sawmill near Fairfield. In 1867, they purchased 320 acres about one and a half miles southeast of St. Paul, and began a farming operation which was to be carried on successfully for many years. They raised wheat, oats, corn and clover

and had horses, cattle and hogs. As time went on they added rather large hop fields to their general farming operations. For thirty years, including ten years as Roads Commissioner, Mr. Davidson contributed greatly to the development of better roads in the area.

The Davidsons' sons, James "Fred", Eugene "Gene", John "Jack", and Ralph, conducted large and very successful farming operations in the St. Paul area for many years. Chester, the youngest son, was one of the better carpenters in the community. As they were growing up they were interested in all types of sports and had a race track adjacent to their farm. Each Sunday many of the St. Paul residents would gather there for horse races. The Davidson boys were among the best jockeys in the community. One, John "Jack", was one of the fastest foot racers in St. Paul. James "Fred" Davidson's son, Harold Davidson, served as Portland City Attorney from 1933 to 1942. Harold's sister Alice, who was a member of St. Paul High School's first graduating class, began a long and distinguished teaching career at Four Corners Public School in the early 1920's.

Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Davidson had twelve children, as follows: Mary, who married Hugh Kirkpatrick of Idaho; Laura, who married Jerome Jackson of Hubbard; Jane, who married James Smith of St. Paul; Arzelia, who married Paul Reddie of Salem; James "Fred", who married Mary Anna Gooding of St. Paul; John "Jack", who married Clara Merten of St. Paul; Blanche, who married Charles Gooding of St. Paul; Edna, who died in early childhood; Eugene, who married Elizabeth Merten of St. Paul; Ralph, who married Hazel Littlefield of Newberg; Hilda, who married Fred Gearin of St. Paul; and Chester, who married Gretchen Breyman.

On April 24, 1907, Mrs. Davidson died at age 61. Mr. Davidson died on February 13, 1927, when he was 84.

Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Davidson and their children were friendly, hard working, good conversationalists, and active participants in the social affairs of the area. They and their descendants have been a vital part of the St. Paul community for about 120 years. At the present time the fifth generation of Davidsons, whose original St. Paul ancestors

were the Green Clay Davidsons and the James Colemans, are operating some of the most productive farms in the St. Paul area.

FRANCOIS HENRY ERNST AND MARY MADELINE (VESER) ERNST



Mr. and Mrs. Francois Ernst

Norman Ernst Collection

Francois Ernst was born in Colmar, Alsace, France, on July 3, 1840. His father served in the French Army under Napoleon I and participated in the Battle of Waterloo. Francois Ernst served in the French Army under Napoleon III.

Mary Madeline Vesper was born October 2, 1838, in Colmar. In 1865, Francois Ernst, 25, and Mary Madeline Vesper, 27, were married.

The following year their first child, Mary, was born in Paris. In 1869, the Ernsts decided to come to the United States. After arriving in New York they went to San Francisco by steamship, crossing the Isthmus of Panama by railroad. They proceeded up the coast by steamship and

HUSBAND GREEN CLAY DAVIDSON
 Born 1818 Place BELLEVILLE, ILLINOIS

Chr. _____ Place _____

Marr. _____ Place _____

Died AUG. 15, 1878 Place _____

Bur. _____
 HUSBAND'S FATHER JAMES DAVIDSON
 HUSBAND'S OTHER WIVES _____

Place ST. BARBARA'S CATHOLIC CEMETERY - SALEM, OREGON
 HUSBAND'S MOTHER MARY AMELIA AMENT

WIFE NANCY MILLION

Born 1825 Place KENTUCKY

Chr. _____ Place _____

Died _____ Place _____

Bur. _____ Place _____

WIFE'S FATHER _____

WIFE'S MOTHER _____

WIFE'S OTHER HUSBANDS _____

SEX	NAMES OF CHILDREN	DATE BORN	WHERE BORN			DATE DIED	MARRIAGE
M-F	LIST IN FULL IN ORDER OF BIRTH	DAY MONTH YEAR	TOWN	COUNTY	STATE	DAY MONTH YEAR	FIRST MARRIAGE
M	1 <u>GIDEON B. DAVIDSON</u>	<u>1841</u>	<u>-</u>		<u>ILL.</u>		NAME <u>MIRANDA -</u> DATE
M	2 <u>WILLIAM FRANKLIN DAVIDSON</u>	<u>28, MAR., 1843</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>STARK</u>	<u>ILL.</u>	<u>13, FEB., 1927</u>	NAME <u>C. ANNA COLEMAN</u> DATE <u>MAY 24, 1864</u>
M	3 <u>BIRD DAVIDSON</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>PEORIA</u>		<u>ILL.</u>		NAME DATE
F	4 <u>MARY AMELIA DAVIDSON</u>	<u>29, JAN., 1853</u>	<u>DAYTON</u>	<u>YAMHILL</u>	<u>ORE.</u>	<u>12, APR., 1941</u>	NAME <u>ANDREW P. MAENESS</u> DATE <u>SEPT. 29, 1869</u>
M	5 <u>GREEN CLAY DAVIDSON</u>	<u>1855</u>	<u>DAYTON</u>	<u>YAMHILL</u>	<u>ORE.</u>		NAME DATE
F	6 <u>NANCY MAY DAVIDSON</u>	<u>8, MAY, 1860</u>	<u>ST. PAUL</u>	<u>MARION</u>	<u>ORE.</u>		NAME <u>JOHN ROSS</u> DATE
	7						NAME DATE
	8						NAME DATE
	9						NAME DATE
	10						NAME DATE
	11						NAME DATE
	12						NAME DATE
	13						NAME DATE

OTHER INFORMATION

LIST ADDITIONAL MARRIAGES FOR CHILDREN IN THIS SPACE

Some notes on the descendants of William Davidson of Londonderry, Colchester County

Jump directly to William's will (1791).

Notes:

1. As the same personal names tended to be used generation-after-generation, I shall use a simple sequential numbering system to clarify the generations.
2. This document was originally created for intra-family circulation, hence the lack of references or other documentation.
3. There are several separate and distinct DAVIDSON lines of in Nova Scotia -- especially in Falmouth, Hants County and Bridgewater, Lunenburg Co. Please note therefore that in this document I am only tracing the direct ancestors of Morris Fulton Davidson (1908-1978).

Are you descended from someone listed here? Please send me some e-mail about your line.

Back to the Nova Scotia Genealogy Resources Page.

This work is based almost entirely upon primary sources, there having been no previously published work specifically on the DAVIDSON family. The family does, however, receive mention in the published genealogies of the O'BRIEN, FULTON, and CURTIS families, for example. Wherever possible, facts and details have been verified by consulting a variety of sources. The original records (e.g. the Londonderry Township book) have been used whenever possible.

The first Nova Scotia DAVIDSON in the line was William1 Davidson. He was born in "the North of Ireland" around 1740. Tradition states that he came on board the *Hopewell* in 1761 but it is not possible to verify this as no passenger list has survived. He settled at the village of Portapique, in Londonderry township, Colchester county, about 1762. It is not known WHERE in Ireland he came from.

In the 1770 census of the Township, he is listed as having a household consisting of four people: 1 man, 2 women, and 1 girl. All four were listed as Protestants and the Country of origin was divided equally between Irish and American. Sometime before 1770, he had married Jane FLETCHER (1743 - 1785), whose family came from New England. After Jane's death, he married a Susannah VANCE.

William1 also appears as an original grantee of the township in March, 1775 where he received two rights (1000 acres altogether). When he died in February, 1792, his five [eldest] sons -- William2, Thomas, Samuel, and David -- "were all willed pieces of land in and around the Portapique area". The [Halifax] Royal Gazette of June 19, 1792 carried the notice of his death and settlement of his estate. His eldest son William was appointed executor.

William2 Davidson was born on May 11, 1770 and married Sarah Anne DENNY (1771-1845) around 1789. William2 lived at the village of Portapique in Londonderry township where he died in 1862. A William Davidson appears on the 1792 poll tax lists for Londonderry and is assessed at less than one shilling.

William2 may have been the same William Davidson of Londonderry, Protestant, who received a 200 acre grant "between the North boundry of Londonderry and the settlements of Cumberland county" in 1820. In February 1819, he contributed 10 shillings to the improvement of the road between "Portapeake" and Westchester.

On April 10, 1822, William² Davidson, Sr., of Londonderry "in consideration of parental love and affection", and the sum of five shillings, transferred [what appear to be] his entire land holdings to his son, William³, "in order to enable him to make a comfortable and guaranteed livelihood". The total land was in excess of 180 acres; not even taking into account any improvements thereto.

William³, the second son of William², was born on Oct 11, 1796 and married Hannah FULTON (1794 - Nov. 19, 1849) in the late 1820's and had eight children including his only son, James William⁴. He also contributed 10 shillings to the above-mentioned road petition.

The [Halifax] Acadian Recorder for February 2, 1839 reports that he died at Londonderry on January 22, leaving a widow and several children. He died intestate and matters were not finally settled until March 20, 1846.

James William⁴ was born in 1832 or 1833 and married Rebecca Ann O'BRIEN (1840-1883) at Noel, Hants County, on March 3, 1858. On the 1871 census, he listed his occupation as a farmer and ethnic origin as Irish. By the time of the 1881 census, he was a "farmer and fisherman" and still perceived himself as Irish. He was a Presbyterian. After his first wife's death, he married a Charlotte FULTON, widow.

Part of the land William³ was "sold" by his father was in-turn passed on to James William⁴ in a deed registered in 1852 (the date of execution is not clear) for the sum of £200. The property included:

One house lot in Portaupiaue village... bounded on the North by the Highway, on the West by land belonging to William Davidson, on the East by land owned by Robert Hill and on the South by the Village Road, containing eight acres more or less.

The property also included several lots of wood and marshland as well as a forty-five acre farm and the various improvements thereto.

The 1868-9 Provincial directory lists a James W. Davidson at Portapique (in the census district of Lower Londonderry). Interestingly, his occupation is shown as a miller! The succeeding Provincial directories from 1890 through 1902 show him as a farmer at Bass River so it appears he moved there at some point. He died in 1915 having outlived his son by five years.

Ironically, James William⁴'s only dealings with the law came after he had died. On January 20, 1916, Hedley CREELMAN launched a suit in the Nova Scotia Supreme Court (Colchester county) against "the children and grandchildren of the said Dennis O'Brien and Rebecca Davidson". He was named therein as "James W. Davidson of Bass River".

James O'Brien⁵ was born on July 29, 1871, probably at Portapique. At the time of the 1881 census, he was attending school. On November 22, 1898, he married Annabella "Belle" SHEA at Cambridge, Hants Co. He lived at Riverside, Bible Hill and served as a brakeman for the Intercolonial railway. He died on February 28, 1910 in the tragic accident at Folly Mountain when he was crushed under the derailed train. He is buried in the family lot at the Bass River cemetery.

Sometime after 1916, Annabella married a Robert G. HINGLEY and moved to Saint John, New Brunswick. She died there on October 14, 1943 and is interred at Kempton, Colchester Co. In the 1914-5 Provincial Directory she is listed as "Mrs. J. O. Davidson, Widow" as is also named in the above-mentioned suit as "Belle (or Bella) Davidson of Valley, Colchester County".

Finally, Morris Fulton⁶ was born January 6, 1907 in Truro. He was married in Saint John, New Brunswick, on April 6, 1935, to Edith Lillian WELSH (1915-). He died on September 7, 1978 at Halifax and is buried in Saint John. Requiescant in Pace.

The Last Will and Testament of William¹ Davidson

In the Name of God. Amen. Be it known to all Men that I William Davidson yeoman and proprietor in Londonderry Inhabitant in the Village of Portapique in the District of Colchester Province of Nova Scotia North America. Being weakly and sickly of Body but sound of Judgement and of perfect Memory being fully persuaded of the Certainty of my Death though uncertain as to the Time, after reccomending my Soul to God and Committing my Body to the Dust in the Hope of a glorious Resurrection, For preventing all differences and Disputes after my Decease - Do Hereby appoint and Order my Temporal affaris as follows VIZ:

1st To Susannah my Spouse That she have Twenty Bushels of Wheat off the farm every year with fifty Bushels of Potatoes. The Third of the Household furniture to be her own property and at her own disposal. The third part of the Stock on the farm when it shall come to be divided as afforementioned my Wife to have the privilege of dwelling in the House while she remains inmarried.

2d To William my eldest Son. That Right or Share of Land which I purchased from William Matheson.

3d To Thomas my Second Son. That Right I purchased of Robert Spencer.

4th To Samuel my Third Son. That Right or Share which originally belonged to John Wilkes.

5 To David and Robert my two youngest Sons. The Right or Share I now live on will all the Buildings and Improvements thereon.

6 To my two daughters Agnes and Jean. That they have Twenty pounds to each of them to Come of their Brothers share when it shall be divided and that they live with their Brothers and be maintained in food and Clothing besides what is left to them as their portion. That my Daughter Isabel when she comes of Age have Twenty pounds besides her being supported by the farm during her minority.

7 I appoint That my Sons make no division or Separation of the farm or stock until such times as all Debts due at my decease be fully paid off and the whole of the Marsh be [?] Dyked nor that they be obliged to pay any of their sisters portions until all debts be cleared.

8 That if my Wife Susannah survive me. That during her widowhood she have the Thrid of the profits of the Stock on the farm and the privilege of one third of the House to live in and be furnished with firewood. And if she shall marry what [?] she removes that she shall have two Milk Cows one pair of two-year-old steers [?] and one Horse or Mare and the Twenty Bushels of Wheat formerly apportioned her be continued to her during the space of Twenty years if she lives that long.

9 That the farming utinsils continue the Common property of my family while they live together and as soon as all Debts are cleared and my Sons betake themselves to their Respective shares That the farming utinsels be divided among them at the Judgement of neutral persons.

10 I hereby appoint and Constitute my oldest Son William my principal Executor of my above Will and Testament and the James Fulton, Esq and the Reverend David Smith as advisors with and [?] to them in fulfilling thereof in all its different articles.

Further I appoint That my two youngest sons David and Robert be supported and maintained by the farm during their minority under the care and inspection of their Brother William and his [?] and that when they come of age The farm House and Barn left them be divided between them at the Judgement of man as nearly equal as possible.

I appoint further That when all Debts and funeral charges are paid off That my wife's share of the stock is set apart [from] the rest be equally divided among my sons.

I appoint further That if any of my Sons should die That his portion be equally divided between the surviving Brothers.

The above written on this and the preceeding page I hereby appoint to be my latter Will and Testament Reserving still power to my self to add and change as I please.

In Testmony thereof I have here unto set set my hand and seal this Eleventh day of July the thriteith and first year of his Majesty's Reign in the year of Our Lord one Thousand Seven Hundred and Ninety one years.

William Davidson

Last Updated: August 11, 1996