

SHADES OF THE PAST

Williams Bay Historical Society

Established 2013

MISSION OF THE 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.

Volume 4 Issue 4 Fall 2017

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SAVE THE DATE

Williams Bay Historical Society Annual Dinner - \$35 per person Friday, October 13

George Williams College
Mabel Cratty Building
350 Constance Boulevard
Williams Bay, WI 53191

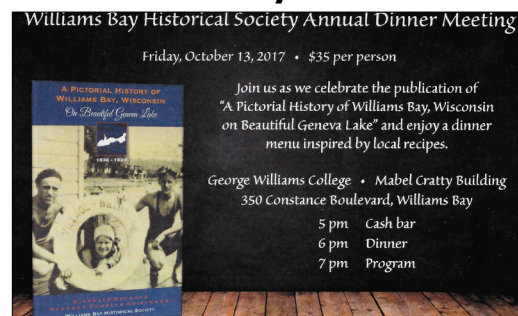
5 pm Cash Bar
6 pm Dinner
7 pm Program

A Pictorial History of Williams Bay will be available for purchase at the Annual Dinner

Boo in the Bay Craft Fair

Saturday, October 28 10 am - 4 pm
The Historical Society will have copies of our book, calendars, and other items for sale

Historical Society Annual Dinner on Friday, October 13



Join us as we celebrate the publication of "A Pictorial History of Williams Bay, Wisconsin on Beautiful Geneva Lake" at the annual Williams Bay Historical Society dinner meeting on Friday, October 13, at George Williams College in the historic Mabel Cratty Building, 350 Constance Boulevard, Williams Bay.

The evening will begin with a cash

bar at 5 pm, followed by dinner at 6 pm, and a program at 7 pm. The dinner menu will be inspired by local recipes. Dinner is \$35 per person, reservations required. Kindly RSVP by October 6. Please make checks payable to Williams Bay Historical Society.

Copies of "A Pictorial History of Williams Bay, Wisconsin on Beautiful Geneva Lake" will be available for purchase at the dinner. Cost of the book is \$20.

Annual memberships expire at the end of October and can be renewed at the dinner. Memberships are \$15 for single or \$25 for couple.

Schwan's Cares Fundraiser: Help the Historical Society reach our \$500 Goal—Every Order Makes a Difference!

The Williams Bay Historical Society is proud to partner with Schwan's Cares for a 45-day fundraising campaign!

Schwan's Foods offers more than 350 items delivered right to your door! Now through November 2, the society receives 20% of your total product purchase. These funds will help with the historical society's Collections Project.

Just follow these easy steps to get

started:

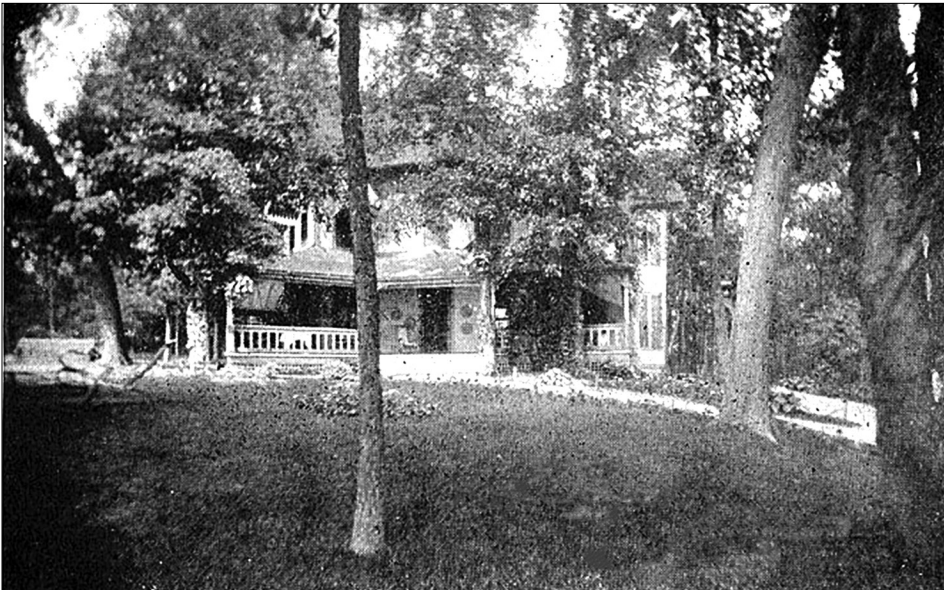
1. Visit schwans-cares.com
2. Search for campaign #34183
3. Click Shop to Give

If you prefer to order by phone, simply call 855-870-7208 and reference campaign #34183 to start shopping.

That's it! Once you complete your order, Schwan's takes care of the rest.

Thank you!

Conference Point Camp's Oak Lawn—Summer Cottage of William and Joan Pinkerton Chalmers—Scheduled to be Demolished



Dronley summer cottage of William and Joan Chalmers

Sadly, another grand old summer cottage on Geneva Lake is scheduled to be demolished this fall.

The three-story wood frame cottage was built by William J. and Joan Pinkerton Chalmers in 1888 on property purchased from famed photographer George Bullock, a founding member of Congress Club. Mr. Bullock is best known for his many photographs and painting of Geneva Lake area.

The Chalmers named their estate after a region of Scotland and in honor of the couples shared Scottish heritage. During the approximately 30 years the Chalmers summered at their Williams Bay cottage, it under-

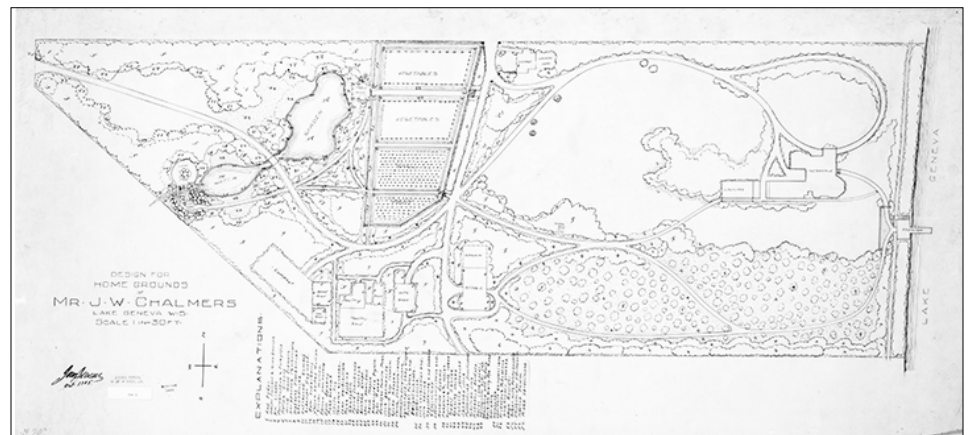
went several changes and additions. In 1905 William Chalmers hired renowned landscape designer Jens Jensen to re-design the grounds of his estate. About this same time a basement and wine cellar was added to the cottage.

William and Joan Chalmers entertained the movers and shakers of the day at their Chicago residence as well as at their summer cottage on Geneva Lake. From the likes of President Theodore Roosevelt's Secretary of the Treasury to the Scottish-born grand diva of Paris and Chicago opera Mary Garden, the great and near great were guests of the Chalmers.

The Chalmers left Geneva Lake and sold their beloved Dronley to Conference Point Camp which bordered their estate to the south. The purchase of Dronley expanded the camp to 30 acres with one-half mile of shoreline frontage. The Camp renamed the cottage Oak Lawn.

Regrettably, time and events have not been kind to the old building. During a recent tour of Conference Point Camp

(Continued on Page 4)



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SHADES OF THE PAST

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Chicago & North Western's Millionaires Special: Wells Street Station to Williams Bay



The Chicago & North Western railway had a train leaving its Chicago Wells Street Station (above) every week day at 3:45 pm for Williams Bay. On Friday afternoons a second train known as "Redfearn's Millionaire Mover" left the station first. Albert Redfearn was the conductor who had the distinction of knowing by name all the Chicago millionaires calling Geneva Lake their home.



From the polished trimmings of the fleet's iron horse, to the rear railing of parlor car, the equipment of the 535 was luxurious in its modern makeup. The "Millionaires Special" went through towns, villages, and hamlets at 60 miles per hour, not stopping until it reached Lake Geneva in a little over an hour and Williams Bay fifteen minutes later.

The second train, the one with the common folks, made the trip to Williams Bay in about an hour and fifty minutes. Private yachts belonging to millionaire businessmen from Chicago waited at the piers in Williams Bay to take them to their summer homes at the grand estates around the lake.

On any given Friday afternoon in the summer the seats of the parlor cars of the Millionaire Special were occupied, by mostly self-made millionaires, who were bankers, judges, meat packers, manufacturers, retail magnets, lawyers, soap makers, professors, brewers, doctors, and members of the Chicago Board of Trade with names like: Allerton, Ayers, Bartlett, Beidler, Billings, Boyles, Chalmers, Chandler, Clowry, Cooke, Crane, Drake, Dunlap, Fairbank, Glennon, Grommes, Harbert, Harris, Hatley, Healy, Hutchinson, Isham, Johnston, Jones, Keep, Leiter, Lefens, Lytton, McCrea, Mitchell, Moore, Parker, Potter, Rumsey, Ryerson, Sears, Seipp, Shaw, Smyth, Selfridge, Starring, Sturges, Swift, Swing, UIhleln, Wacker, Walker, Weiss, Wetherall, Wheeler, Withrow, Wilmarth, and Young on their way to their palatial summer homes on the shore of Geneva Lake.

On one Friday afternoon in July 1907, 40 millionaires boarded the 3:45 train to Williams Bay. According to calculations of wealth at the time, the net worth of these 40 millionaires was conservatively estimated to be \$200 million. Calculating the value of a 1907 dollar to the value of a dollar in 2017, those forty millionaires would have had an estimated net worth of \$5,224,862,886.

Reprinted from: A Pictorial History of Williams Bay, Wisconsin, by Michelle Bie Love and Deborah Dumelle Kristmann.

Photo credits: Wells Street Station 1902: Chicagology; Albert Redfearn: Chicago Tribune 1907

History Book Published in July by Historical Society



Williams Bay Historical Society published the first book focusing on the history of the Village in July. The 254 book details the early history of the area surrounding the future village of Williams Bay. From Chief Big Foot's village of Potawatomi to the arrival the Kinzie Party in 1831 to the first Yankee settlers, readers will see a side of our history they may not have heard before.

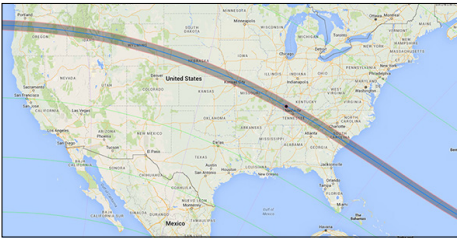
See what others have said in their review of the book.

Loved this book immensely... such a beautiful place full of history. Nice to give as a gift to guests who visit. Joy to see such old photos! Great book! - Edith O'Brien

A Pictorial History of Williams Bay captures the true history of some ordinary people and a charming little village... Using historical photos shared by members of the community, old postcards, and information and images from local libraries and museums, the authors created a book that illustrates what needs to be remembered from the past to continue growth in the future... Thank you... for letting us appreciate the history of Williams Bay. On a side note, the cover is so perfect for what the readers will find inside! - Carolyn

Normally I go through pictorial histories in about an hour, your book has wonderful photos and documented histories of the area, families, homes, and businesses. You have done a great job on the publication. - Nancy Lehman, President Historical Society of Walworth Big Foot Prairie.

Solar Eclipse: Eyes on the Sky at Yerkes Observatory



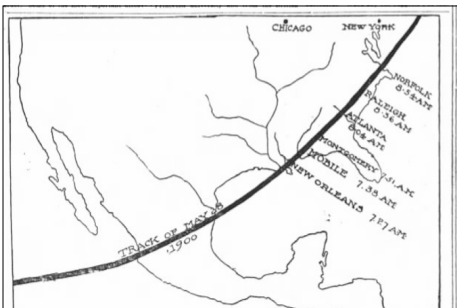
Path of August 21, 2017 Total Eclipse of the Sun

On August 21, 2017, a total solar eclipse—a rare event in which the Moon passes directly between the Earth and the Sun, blocking out light from the Sun—was visible in the United States.



Nasa image of the August 21, 2017 solar eclipse

Along one stretch arching across the country, the entire sun was blocked out for a couple of minutes; an experience called totality. From Yerkes, only a partial eclipse was visible, but with over 80% of the Sun covered, it was still an amazing sight.



Path of May 28, 1900 Total Eclipse of the Sun

Astronomers from Yerkes Observatory first studied a total eclipse of the sun in May of 1900.

The work of the expedition sent from Yerkes Observatory for the total eclipse on May 28, 1900 was very

thorough and of exceptional interest. Professor George Hale, Director of the Observatory and a specialist in the study of the sun and its varied phenomena was determined to obtain all the knowledge possible from the eclipse.

For several weeks prior to the eclipse almost the entire work force at the Observatory prepared for the event. The eclipse was viewed from the observing station at Wadesboro, NC.

The observing party from Yerkes Observatory consisted of Director George Hale, Professor Edward E. Barnard, Professor S. W. Burham, Professor Edwin B. Frost, Ferdinand Ellerman, and George W. Ritchey.



Corona of the sun. Taken by Edward E. Barnard and George W. Ritchey Yerkes Observatory expedition Wadesboro, North Carolina May 28, 1900. Photo credit: University of Chicago Photographic Archive, apf6-02118 Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

The last total eclipse of the sun visible in the United State prior to 1900 occurred on January 1, 1889; more than 8 years before Yerkes Observatory opened.

The next total eclipse of the sun visible in the United States will take place on April 8, 2024.

Oak Lawn

(Continued from page 2)

Christiaan Snedeker, Advancement Director at Conference Point said “When the Lake Geneva Foundation took over the camp in 2010, we inherited past property decisions that had nothing to do with preserving Oak Lawn. They turned this beautiful mansion into a bunkhouse. The real tragedy of Oak Lawn is that it could have been preserved.” Snedeker continued, “When we reached out to donors [and various preservation foundations] to preserve the old building, there was almost no response.”



According to Snedeker, structural studies showed the building’s foundation needed at least \$1 million for repairs and another \$1 million to bring the remainder of the building in compliance with ADA regulations and to correct changes made to the building in the past.

Oak Lawn is scheduled to be demolished soon and a new two-story 27 room residence and meeting center built in its place. The design of new building will keep the historical ambiance of the property but will have modern amenities and be ADA accessible, something Oak Lawn does not have, Snedeker said they hope to salvage some of the interior and exterior features from Oak Lawn and incorporated them in the new building. (Continued on page 5)

Conference Point Camp's Oak Lawn—Summer Cottage of William and Joan Pinkerton

(Continued from page 4)

Over the years, a rumor spread that the Chalmers left their cottage after their daughter Joan drown in Geneva Lake. This rumor is false. Though it is true that both Mr. and Mrs. Chalmers outlived both of their children, neither died before Dronley was sold in 1919.

William James Chalmers, son of Scottish-born immigrants Thomas Stuart Chalmers and Janet Telfer Chalmers was born at 112 West Monroe Street, Chicago on July 10, 1852. Thomas was engaged in the manufacture of mining machinery, first as superintendent at Eagles Works Manufacturing Company and later formed his own mining equipment company.

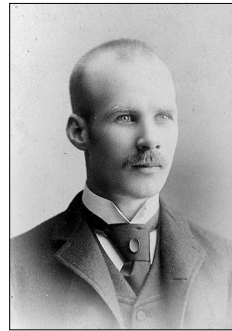
William was educated in the Chicago public school system, attending the Scammon School on Madison Street between Union and Harvard streets. He then attended the old Chicago high school on West Monroe Street between Des Plaines and Halsted Streets. Upon completion of his high school studies at age 14, he became an apprentice in the machinist trade at Eagles Works Manufacturing Company. He would remain at the shop for four years learning the specifics of machinist engineering.

After a year-long trip to Europe, William returned to Chicago in 1872. Upon his return he assisted his father in the formation of Fraser and Chalmers & Company.

Joan Pinkerton born July 22, 1855, was the only surviving daughter of Alan Pinkerton founder of the Pinkerton National Detective Agency and his wife Joan Carfrae Pinkerton. Born and raised in Chicago, Joan was well education

and described as a strikingly beautiful brunette who was extremely popular and independent.

Joan was introduced to William Chalmers, a dashing and handsome young man, at a party in 1876 by Joan's classmate Lizzie Chalmers. Joan and William had much in common; both were children of Scottish immigrants, they shared a love of music, and a commitment to civic and social organizations.



William became a regular guest at the Pinkerton home at 357 West Monroe Street. Mrs. Pinkerton encouraged the budding romance while Mr. Pinkerton opposed the relationship believing William would never accomplish much.

Despite Mr. Pinkerton's objections, the young couple married on October 21, 1878 at the Third Presbyterian Church located at the intersection of Ashland and Ogden Avenues. Dr. A. E. Kittridge officiated at the ceremony. Five hundred invitations were sent out but some 3,000 people arrived at the church. The Chicago Tribune reported "the galleries, the seats, and the floor—every available space was taken. A large number stood up on the seats; much to



the disgust of the church trustees. Outside [the church] the streets were jammed with horses and carriages for blocks around. There was never such a wedding in Chicago."

The Chalmers were well known for their philanthropy. William was a director of the Worlds Columbian Exposition. During the Washburne administration he served on the Chicago Board of Education, and the commission that made the elevation of the Illinois Central railroad possible. His other civic activities included serving on the board of directors of the Commercial National Bank; and memberships in the Chicago Union League; Chicago Athletic Club; Lake Geneva Country Club; Engineers Club of New York; and the Saddle and Cycle Club of Chicago.

Joan was President of the West End Woman's Club; member of the Saddle and Cycle; the Fortnightly; and the Woman's Athletic Club, and taught a Sunday school class at the Third Presbyterian Church.

The Chalmers supported many others causes including the Illinois Saint Andrew Society and the Scottish Home. Mrs. Chalmers was especially interested in helping disabled children, her sister Isabel was a disabled child who died in 1863. The Home for Destitute and Crippled Children was a favored charity of Mrs. Chalmers, she wanted the children to have a place to go in the country once they were able to leave the home to continue their recovery. The Country Home for Crippled Children was founded in 1911. Mrs. Chalmers was instrumental in raising the necessary funds to purchase (Continued on page 6)

Conference Point Camp's Oak Lawn—Summer Cottage of William and Joan Pinkerton

(Continued from page 5)

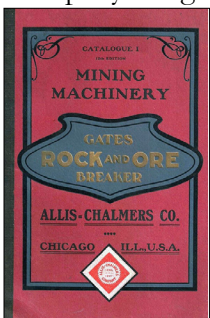
68 acres of land at Prince Crossing, a station 32 miles from Chicago for the home.

A year after their marriage, the Chalmers first child was born, and she like others in the family, was named Joan.

The Chalmers second child, a son, was born in 1881 and named Thomas Stuart Pinkerton Chalmers after his paternal grandfather.

In the mid-1880's, the Chalmers built a new home at 315 S. Ashland Avenue. It contained 15 rooms with a ballroom on the third floor. Across the street lived Chicago Mayor Carter H. Harrison. Harrison was assassinated in his home on October 28, 1893. The first persons on the scene were the Chalmers. They had heard the gunshots and ran to give assistance and comfort to the dying Mayor. The man who shot Harrison, Eugene Patrick Prendergast, was tried twice and found guilty both times.

In 1900 Edwin Reynolds, superintendent of E. P. Allis & Company met with William Chalmers, president of Fraser and Chalmers at a hotel in Chicago. During the meeting the businessmen discussed merging their two companies. On May 8, 1901 Fraser and Chalmers, E.P. Allis & Company, Gates Iron Works, and Dickson Manufacturing Company merged and incorporated as Allis-Chalmers Company manufacturer of industrial mining machinery. Today most people who recognize the name Allis-Chalmers



associate it with the orange farm tractor.



The Chalmers daughter, Joan attended the Sieboth-Kennedy School as did many girls from wealthy Chicago families. It was said the graduates of the Sieboth-Kennedy School “married young and married well.” On December 4, 1902, at the age of 23, Joan Chalmers married Norman Williams, Jr. The wedding took place at the Third Presbyterian Church. Joan and Norman Williams had two children; a daughter also named Joan and a son named Norman.

Just seven months after the U.S. entered into World War I, Thomas was in the second graduating class of officers at Fort Sheridan. On November 23, 1917, 2,218 men graduated as second lieutenants. Before leaving for overseas, Thomas was promoted to Captain and in France received his final promotion to Major.

After the war Thomas returned to Chicago where he continued his life as one of Chicago's most eligible bachelors and along with his father, and brother-in-law Norman Williams, began a new company called Chalmers and Williams. They manufactured mining machinery and operated a supply house. Thomas served as president of the company.

Tragedy struck the Chalmers family early in 1923. Thomas died on



March 26, 1923 at the age of 34. The cause of death was listed as chronic Hepatitis, the secondary cause was anemia. He died at his residence, 220 E. Walton Place, and was buried in Graceland Cemetery in Chicago. He left an estate of approximately \$250,000 to be divided into three equal parts. One gift was for the Country Home for Convalescent Children at Prince Crossing, Illinois and one each for his niece and nephew, Joan and Norman Williams.

Norman and Joan Williams spent two years traveling and living in Europe. They spent the fall of 1922 in Woodstock, Vermont before traveling to Chicago for Christmas. Joan Williams became ill and was eventually taken to St. Luke's hospital where she was reported critically ill “of a malady which puzzles our physicians.” She died, April 3, 1923, eight days after her brother's death. According to the death certificate, she died as a result of a staph infection. Joan Chalmers Williams was buried in Woodstock, Vermont. (The causes of death of Joan and Thomas were not related.)

William Chalmers, retired chairman of the Allis-Chalmers Company of Milwaukee, died on December 10, 1938. Joan Pinkerton Chalmers died on January 25, 1940. William and Joan were buried with their son in Graceland Cemetery.

Two grandchildren survived: Mrs. F. Hamilton Merrill of New York and Norman Williams, Jr. of Woodstock, VT.

© Article by Michelle Bie Love.

Photo credit: Chalmers family, Conference Point Camp, Deborah Dumelle Kristmann, and Michelle Bie Love.

Descendents of Israel and Lavina Joy Williams¹

Capt. Israel Williams Senior.

b. 24 SEP 1789 • Hampshire County, MA
d. 14 OCT 1846 • Williams Bay, Walworth County, WI,

Lavina Joy

b, 17 AUG 1787 • Cummington, Hampshire, MA,
d. 28 JUN 1851 • Williams Bay, Walworth County, WI,

Descendents of Israel and Lavina Williams

Moses Daniels Williams (b. 1809–d. 1845)

m. **Lucinda** (b. ?–d. ?)

William Williams (d. 1811 age 1.5 days)

Israel Williams Junior (b. 1812–d. 1883)

m. **Eliza** (b. ? - d. ?)

(Children of Israel Jr. and Eliza)

Henry Williams (b. 1837–d. ?)

Mary Williams (b. 1839–d. ?)

Milton Williams (b. 1842–d. 1865)

Almira Williams (b. 1838–d.?)

m. **Harriet Almira** (b. 1838–?)

m. **Sarah Boardman Fisher Adams** (b. 1831–1885)

Rev. Francis Williams (b. 1814–d. 1896)

m. **Mahala R. Badger** (b. 1821–d. 1901)

(Children of Francis and Mahala)

Edward F. Williams (b. 1845–d. 1869)

Charles H. Williams (b. 1848–d. 1874)

Mary E. Williams (b. 1851–d. ?)

Lavina Williams (b. 1816–d. 1876)

m. **John Fowle, Jr.** (b. 1818–d. 1855)

(Children of Lavina and John Fowle Jr.)

Mary Lavina Fowle (b.1841–d. ?)

Royal J. Fowle January (b.1845–d. 1845)

Royal A. Fowle (b. 1846–d. 1864)

Israel W. Fowle (b. 1850–d.1936)

Harriet Fowle (b. 1854–d.)

Royal Joy Williams (b. 1818–d. 1886)

m. **Lucretia Smith Warren** (b. 1824–d. 1907)

(Children of Royal and Lucretia)

Edward F. Williams (b. 1847–d.?)

m. **Marie R. Bernhardt** (b 1866–d. 1901)

(Children of Edward and Marie)

June Williams (b. 1891–d. 1897)

Webster W. Williams (b. 1892–d.1958)

Frank E. Williams (b. 1894–d. 1940)

Helen Dorothy Williams (b. 1899–d.?)

George Williams (b. 1848–d. 1924)

Ellen Williams (b. 1855–d. 1869)

Harley Williams (b. 1861–d. 1910)

m. **Matilda Piggins** (b. 1864–d. 1940)

(Children of Harley and Matilda)

Harley R. Williams (b. 1887–d. 1965)

Ellen (Nattie) Williams (b. 1894–d. 1994)

Lucretia Matilda Williams (b. 1897–d.?)

Austin Jackson Williams (b. 1820–d. 1845)

m. **Eliza Knight** (1822. ?—d. ?)

(Child of Austin and Eliza)

Austin K. Williams (b. 1845–d. 1846)

Hannah Leach Williams (b. 1822–d. 1850)

m. **Robert E. Russell** (b. 1811–d. 1888)

(Children of Hannah and Robert)

Francis William Russell (b. 1839 - d. 1909)

Robert E. Russell Jr. (b. 1845–d. 1863)

Lavina A. Russell (b. 1847–d.?)

Fordyce Williams (b. 1824–d. 1825 age 7 months)

Fordyce Williams (b. 1828–d. ?)

Festus Allen Williams (b. 1833–d. 1908)

m. **Albertine Lucy Stevens** (b. 1838–d. 1927)

(Children of Festus and Albertine)

Fordyce Williams (b.1856–d.?)

Flora W. Williams (b. 1858–d.?)

Helen W. Williams (b. 1874–d. 1972)

m. **William C. Dean** (b. 1868–d. 1942)

b. - born d. - died m. - married

Israel and Lavina Joy Williams, and their sons Moses and Austin are buried in East Delavan Union Cemetery.

Royal and Lucretia Williams and their children George, Ellen, and Harley are buried in Walworth Cemetery.

Festus and Albertine Williams and daughter Helen are buried in Spring Grove Cemetery, Delavan.

Three of the grandsons of Israel and Lavina Williams served in the Union Army during the Civil War. Robert E. Russell Jr. died in the service and Royal A. Fowle died in the service.

Two of the Williams great grandchildren, Webster Wanamaker Williams and Frank E. Williams, are known to have served in the Army during World War I.

¹ There are additional descendents of Israel Williams. Those listed were born and or raised in the area of Williams Bay.

Calvary Community Church Nears Its 100th Year



Highlights of the Church's history

- 1891 The church began as the Free Evangelical Lutheran Church on the corner of Geneva and Williams Streets in Williams Bay, with services conducted in Swedish.
- 1921 The church reorganized as the Free Mission Church. The building was enlarged and dedicated in July - The church numbers its years from this event.
- 1922 The name of the church was changed to Gospel Tabernacle. Soon, services would be conducted in English, with Swedish services held only on Sunday afternoons.
- 1961 The church name was

changed to Calvary Community Church.

- 1971 The church voted to relocate to a larger site, selecting a five-acre tract of land at the corner of Highway 50 and Harris Road.
- 1973 With great procession, the church relocated to the new site in July.
- 1985 Ground was broken for a 25,000 sq. ft., 2-story education and gym addition.
- 2015 A major renovation of the now more than 40-year-old structure was completed.



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