



Report Number: JR0014
GMP Ancestor: n/a
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Related Codes: GMP-214, GMP-215, GMP-218

Purpose: To present research on Thomas and Mary Wilson

Discussion:

Living next door to Bazile Ford (GMP-215) in New Orleans in 1870 were Thomas Wilson, age 42, born in Maryland, and Marie Wilson, age 40, born in Maryland.¹ Basil Ford was also the informant on the death certificate for Thomas Wilson in 1874. Wilson's death certificate indicates that he was a native of the District of Columbia, and died in New Orleans 28 October 1874.² In 1880, Bazile Ford's daughter, Sarah Ford, age 12, was living in Mary Wilson's household and identified as "godchild."³ Based on these three close connections between the GU272 Ford family and the Wilson family, Thomas and Mary were researched in order to determine whether or not they could have been part of the GU272.

The Freedmen's Bureau ca. 1866 register of workers lists a Thomas Wilson, age 55, and Maria, age 40. Former owner and present employer of both were listed as Capt. H. Rantiford, Iberville Parish.⁴ Henry Rantiford purchased a plantation in Iberville Parish from Michael Moore in 1853. There were only a handful of slaves. One was Tom, but a bit older than Thomas Wilson. There was no Maria among them. Michael Moore had purchased the plantation from John Navy in 1848, who purchased it from Alvarez Fisk. No evidence of Maria being on this plantation was found.

The New Orleans City Directories were searched for Thomas Wilson and Mary Wilson. The following entries were the most likely candidates. A Thomas W. Wilson living at 147 Josephine was ruled out as he appeared in the directory several years after Thomas Wilson died in 1874.

1866-68 - not identifiable

1869 - Thomas Wilson, colored, laborer, res. c. St. Denis & Fourth

1870 - Thomas Wilson (col'd) lab. r. St. Denis, ne. cor. 4th

1871 - Thomas Wilson (col'd), cooper, r. Rampart, cor. 4th

1872 - not found

1873 - Mary Wilson, wid. Thomas, r. ss. Miro, bet. Customhouse and Bienville

1874-79 not identifiable

1880 - Mary Wilson, wid. Thomas, r. 265? Gravier

The 1900 New Orleans census lists Mary Wilson, born June 1832, occupation laundress, born Maryland, living at 2828 Dryades. Three roomers, Celestine Hunter, Annie Wyley, and Reuben Mungle, were in her household.⁵

In 1910, Mary Wilson, age 76, a widow and a pensioner, was living alone at 1927 Toledano. Once again, she was living next door to Basil Ford. She had given birth to no children.⁶

Pension records for U.S. military service were searched and the closest match found was a pension for a Joseph and Mary Wilson. This pension was examined and found not to be a match to Thomas and Mary Wilson.⁷

The following are entries identifiable as likely being Mary Wilson in the New Orleans City Directories from 1899-1917:

1910 - Mrs. Mary Wilson, r. 1927 Toledano
1911 - Mrs. Mary Wilson, r. 1927 Toledano
1914 - Mrs. Mary Wilson, r. 1927 Toledano
1914 - Robert Wilson, foreman, r. 2214 Toledano
1915 - Mrs. Mary Wilson, r. 2214 Toledano
1916 - Mrs. Mary Wilson, r. 2429 Toledano

Mary Wilson, a widow, died at the age of 78 on 23 September 1917 at Lafon Home in New Orleans. Her nativity was not indicated on her death certificate.⁸

Even though census records indicated that Mary Wilson had not given birth to any children, a number of New Orleans civil death records for children named Wilson were searched to see if the parents of any were Thomas and Mary. None were found.

Conclusion:

No good candidates among the GU272 exist for Thomas Wilson. The most likely candidate for Mary Wilson is Elizabeth Brown (GMP-218), half sister of Bazile Ford, who is believed to have died between 1845-1851, as she disappears from Chatham Plantation records. It is possible that she could have been sold to Michael Moore, Captain Henry Rantiford, or some other slave holder, however, no record of such a sale could be found. No known descendants of Thomas and Maria Wilson could be found for DNA testing.

Endnotes:

1. 1870 U.S. census, Orleans Parish, Louisiana, pop. sched., Ward 11, p. 568A (stamped), family #315, citing National Archives microfilm publication M593.
2. Orleans Deaths, 1874, vol. 62, p. 211, Louisiana State Archives, Baton Rouge, La.

3. 1880 U.S. census, Orleans Parish, Louisiana, pop. sched., Enumeration District 79, p. 172B (stamped), family #329, citing National Archives microfilm publication T9.
4. Ca. 1866 Registers of Black Persons, Records of the Field Offices for the State of Louisiana, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1863-1872, National Archives microfilm publication M1905.
5. 1900 U.S. census, Orleans Parish, Louisiana, pop. sched., Ward 11, Enumeration District 114, p. 206B-207A (stamped), family #457, citing National Archives microfilm publication T623.
6. 1910 U.S. census, Orleans Parish, Louisiana, pop. sched., Ward 11, Enumeration District 186, p. 221A (stamped), family #384, citing National Archives microfilm publication T624.
7. Application #598,231, Case Files of Approved Pension Applications, 1861-1934; Civil War and Later Pension Files; Record Group 15: Records of the Department of Veterans Affairs; National Archives, Washington, D.C.
8. Orleans Deaths, 1917, vol. 170, p. 216, Louisiana State Archives, Baton Rouge, La.