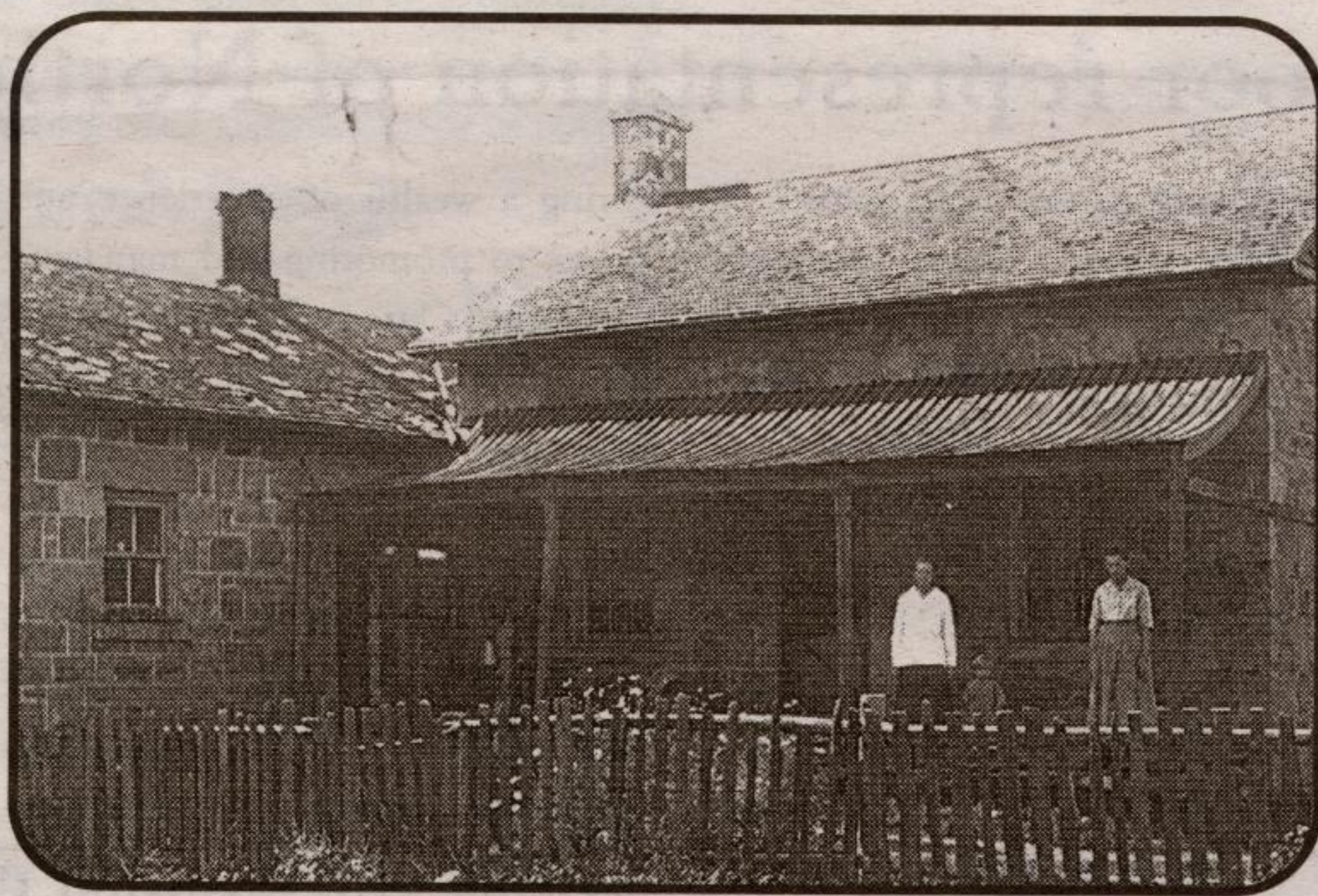


Shoebox



George Wilson Homestead

~ circa 1918 ~



George and Sarah Wilson

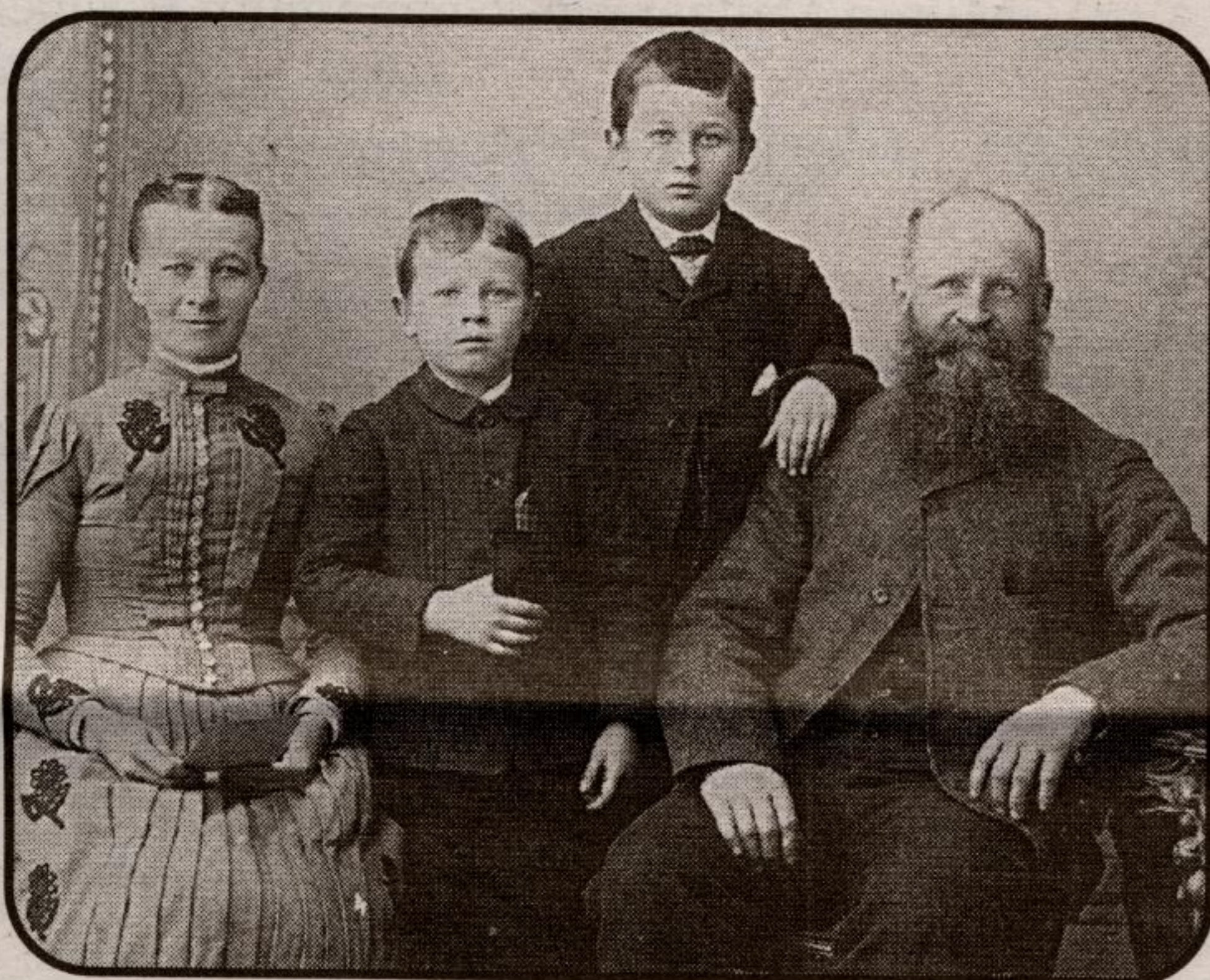
~ circa 1868 ~



David Wilson Family

~ circa 1926 ~

Couples, L. to R.- Alfred and Cassie, Elleda & Frank Hall, Tillie and Harlan, Evelyn & Elwood, Edith and Merwin and James & Laura Easterbrook. Fron centre - Emlyn & David Wilson.



Thomas & Jane Wilson Family

~ circa 1880 ~

L. to R. - Jane, Albert, Bentley and Thomas.

George and Sarah Wilson were part of a steady stream of emigrants fleeing economically depressed northern England in the 1830s and 1840s who chose to settle in the still-heavily-forested but relatively fertile northern half of Nassagaweya Township. Their homeland in southern County Durham was in a deep agricultural recession with the coming of the Industrial Revolution. The area was pockmarked with the workings of dozens of coal mines reaping big profits for the owners but wages of the workers were a mere pittance and conditions in the mines were intolerable. Small children were forced to work long hours underground.

George is described as a labourer in the baptism records of his four eldest children in the parish of St. Helen Auckland, southwest of the city of Durham. It is thought he was a farm labourer, though many of his neighbours were miners.

He and his wife, the former Sarah Taylor, sailed for Canada with three sons, John, Robert and Thomas, and a daughter, Elizabeth, in 1843. They landed at Quebec City after a six-week trip on the stormy north Atlantic. From Quebec they were taken up the St. Lawrence River in open Durham boats, each propelled by a horse walking on a platform, below which the wheel turned "just as if hitched to a threshing machine," according to a family memoir. The boats were flat-bottomed to glide over rocks and shoals and traverse the violent rapids in the river.

The land records for Nassagaweya show that George acquired 100 acres in the east half of Lot 26, Concession 4, at what was to become the hamlet of Knatchbull from one, John Chapman, in 1849. The Crown deed to the property had been granted on March 11, 1825, to a soldier, Robert Laird, who sold it to Chapman in 1834. It was part of a 200-acre parcel which had been surveyed in 1804 and rejected as "undesirable" by the first prospective owner, John Thatcher, a United Empire Loyalist who testified before a justice of the peace the lots were "almost wholly composed of one great Cedar Swamp inasmuch as to render them quite unfit for cultivation." Nevertheless, George and Sarah, who were probably living on the lot between 1843 and 1849, persevered and began clearing the land and raising their young and growing family. A stone house, which still stands, was erected about 1876 by their son Thomas, the second of five generations of Wilsons to live on the farm.

Discouraged by a struggle to survive on the swampy, somewhat stony land, the family decided in the late 1850s to split up and head for greener pastures in Huron County. The second-oldest son Robert and his wife Sarah (Humphrey) led the way in 1857, settling on a farm near Lucknow in West Wawanosh Township. They were followed by George and Sarah, their eldest son John and a daughter Elizabeth (Mrs. Archibald Anderson) in 1861, and their youngest son David in 1875. They were joined on the trek north by several of Sarah's Taylor siblings who had arrived in Nassagaweya Township from North Yorkshire in the early 1830s.

Whether from homesickness or a desire to be back among relatives and old friends, most of the family returned to Nassagaweya within the next 11 years. The exception was Elizabeth and her husband Archibald Anderson who stayed to farm the rest of their lives in West Wawanosh, and the eldest son John who disappeared from the area between 1881 and 1891 and has only recently been "rediscovered." Kim Brooks, a descendant looking for her roots on the Internet, found her great-great-grandfather John had moved to the Algoma District of Northern Ontario to pioneer in the rocky wilderness near the village of Thessalon about 1888. He is buried there.

George Wilson
b. 1799, d. 1880



Wilson Family Tree

Sarah Taylor
b. 1806, d. 1870

John Wilson
b. 1833, d. 1912

m. Elizabeth ?
Elizabeth Wilson
b. 1835, d. 1912
m. Archibald Anderson
Robert Wilson
b. 1837, d. 1927
m. Sarah Humphrey
Thomas Wilson
b. 1841, d. 1922
m. Jane Taylor
Mary Ann Wilson
b. 1848, d. 1868

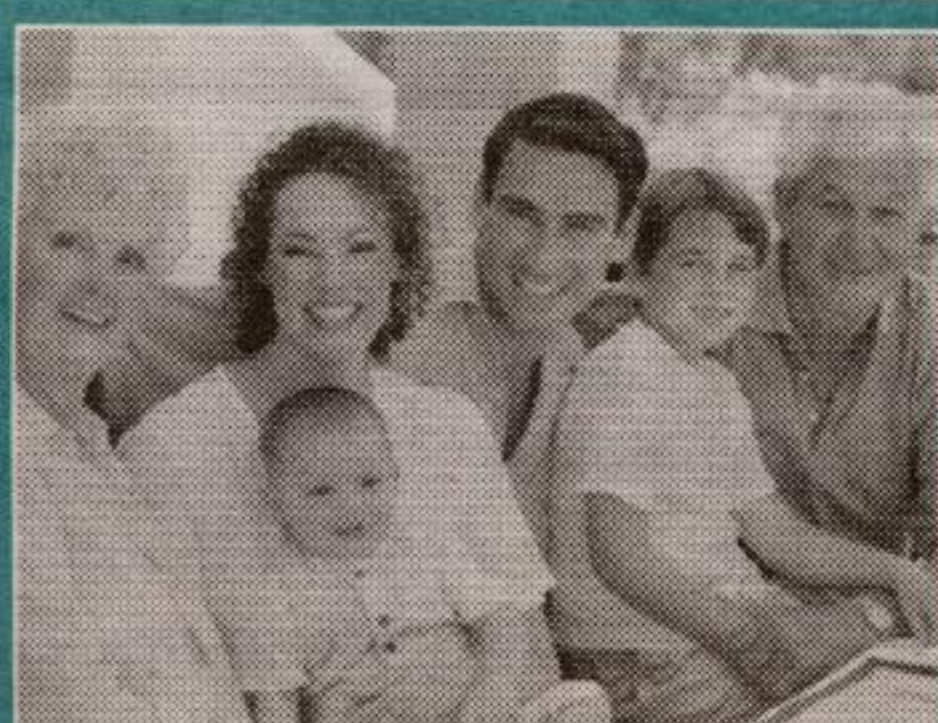
m. Wallace Dent
David Wilson
b. 1850, d. 1929
m. Emlyn Norrish

b. 1857, d. 1947

Elwood Wilson
b. 1875, d. 1900

m. Evelyn
Laura Wilson
b. 1879, d. 1900
m. James
Alfred Wilson
b. 1882, d. 1900
m. Cassie
Merwin Wilson
b. 1888, d. 1900
m. Edith
b. 1894, d. 1900

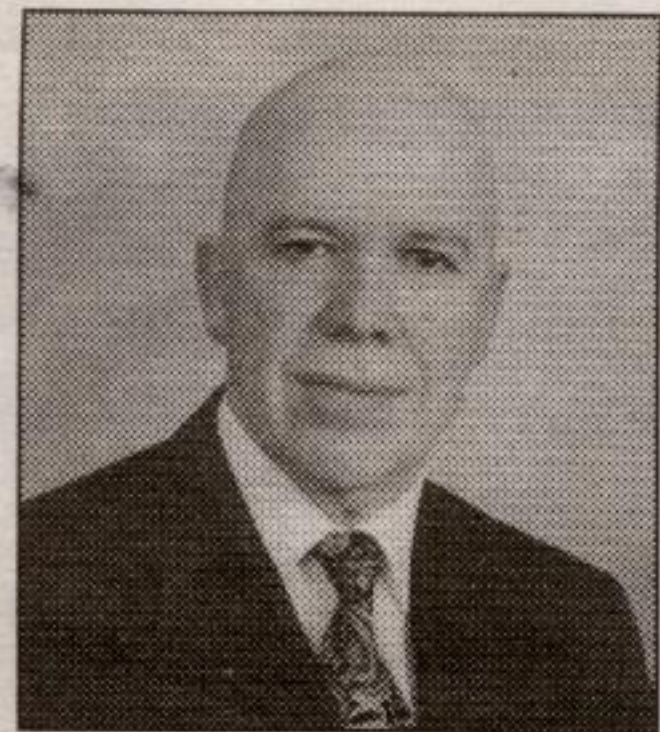
Harlan Wilson
b. 1894, d. 1900
m. 1. Tillie
m. 2. Jean
Elleda Wilson
b. 1896, d. 1900
m. Frank



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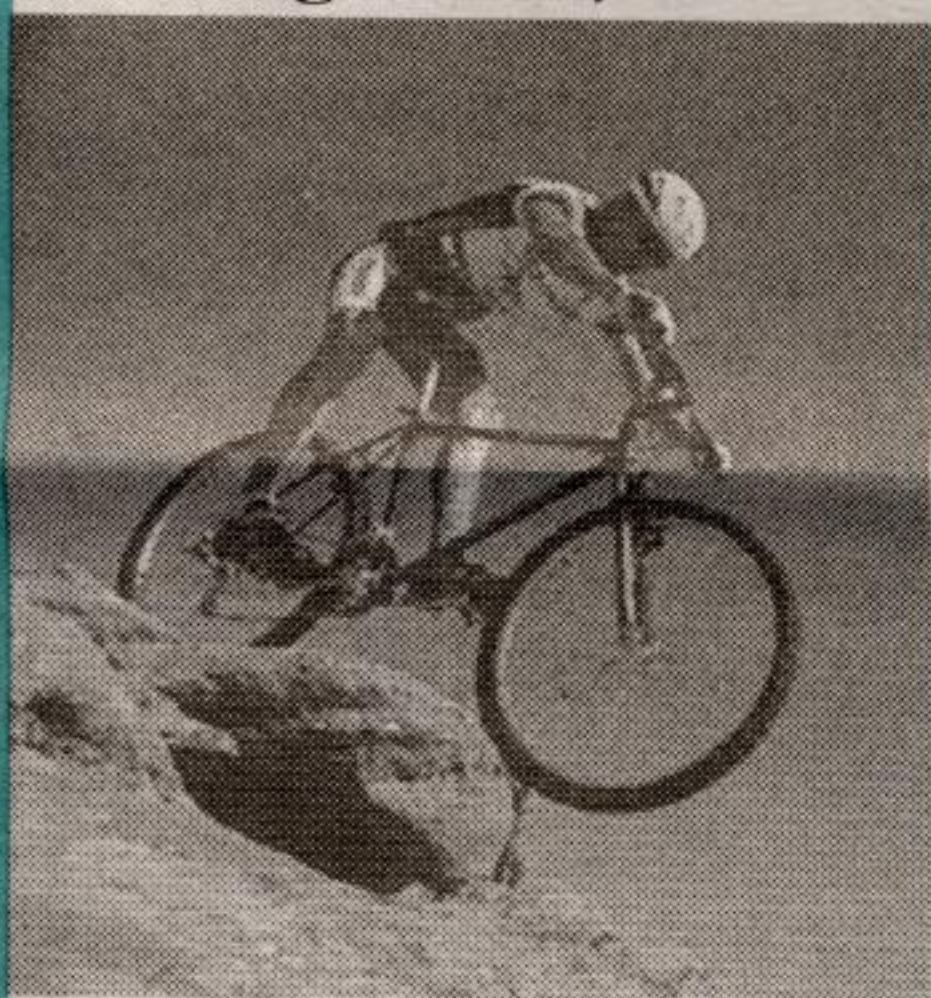
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