

# HUGH WILSON

AND  
HIS FAMILY

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PREPARED BY  
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## FOREWORD

**T**hese brief sketches have been prepared, partly from personal recollections, partly from my mother's recollections, and partly from family records supplied me by other direct descendants of Hugh Wilson, senior.

They are very brief, and, no doubt, full of errors, but it is hoped that they will form a nucleus around which shall, eventually, be collected a much fuller history of the family. There surely must be some account of the birth place of both Hugh Wilson and of Rachel Reed to be found either among the Wilsons or among the Reeds.

The photographic original of the half-tone engraving used here was sent to my mother several years ago by Daniel McCune Donehoo. If any picture of Hugh Wilson could have been found it, too, would have had a place here.

My labor of love is ended, at least, for the present.

Very sincerely,

Kansas City, Mo.

John Wilson White.

August 1, 1918.



## BRIEF SKETCHES

Hugh Wilson was born in 1779, somewhere east of the Allegheny Mountains, possibly in Lancaster County, from whence many settlers of Western Pennsylvania came. But the place of his birth is not known, nor has anything about his youth been ascertained. In his twenty-eighth year, 1807, he married Rachel Reed, eldest daughter of Thomas Reed and Charity Newkirk,\* who was then in her twentieth year.

Hugh Wilson was married, and two of his children were born before he came over the mountains about 1811 into Western Pennsylvania. He settled on Chartiers creek, in Allegheny County near the Washington County line. He was a farmer, a typical patriarch, the father of nine children. He lost his life by the overturning of a load of hay at a bridge over Chartiers creek, while on his way to market at Pittsburgh, the accident occurring October 21, 1828, in the forty-ninth year of his age.

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\*Note—Charity Newkirk was born in 1755, and died in 1853. She is said to have been of German descent. Her husband, Thomas Reed, died in 1811, leaving at least two sons and two daughters, namely, Rachel, who married Hugh Wilson; a sister, name not learned, who married Joseph McLaughlin; Thomas Reed, the eldest, who moved to Kentucky; Henry Reed, who had a large family, namely: (a) Eliza (Vezey), b. about 1815; (b) Rebecca (McDonald), b. in 1817; (c) Margaret Mitchel, b. in 1818; (d) Thomas, and (e) William M., died young; (f) Dr. Harry Newkirk died at the age of 25; (g) Rev. Alexander M. Reed, b. April 20, 1827 was a Presbyterian minister at Steubenville, O., for many years; (h) John C. Reed was a farmer on Raccoon Creek; (i) Sarah B. Reed died at two years of age.

It is through the Reeds that we hope to be able to learn something of the youthful days of Hugh Wilson.

The sudden death of her husband placed all responsibility for, and care of, the nine children upon Rachel Reed Wilson. The children were then all at home, namely: Thomas, then twenty; Nancy, eighteen; William, sixteen; Henry, fourteen; Rebecca, twelve; Sarah, seven (or nine); Hugh, six; Rachel, four, and James, a posthumous child, born eight months after his father's death.

The mother was a woman of heroic character, and managed matters so well, she succeeded in keeping all the children at home, gave them a good education, and made a good living for them on the farm, with their own aid, until they were all married. The sons were all trained to useful trades, and the daughters to be good housekeepers, neat, clean and industrious. A friend of the family once said of her, that she was a woman with a man's head on her. She was kind-hearted, faithful, conscientious, religious, strict and firm. Many stories about her and her life on the old homestead have been told me, some by my mother and some by my grand-uncles, Henry and Hugh Wilson. Two or three of these I recall very distinctly, and will try to relate them.

When William and Henry were small boys before their father's death, they were playing one day in the yard, which they were told by their mother not to leave; but they finally ran off, I think, to a stream, and soiled their clothes. Their mother called them back, and as Henry came running up to the house, he saw quickly the signs of coming trouble, and as quickly sought to turn away wrath by saying, hurriedly, "Mother, I want to say my prayers." "Yes, you rascal," said his mother, "you want to be very good now, when you fear a whipping."

William and Henry were fond of playing "make-believe," when boys, and sometimes carried their sport to a laughable extreme, as in the following case of "Playing Doctor":

The boys had found an old pair of saddle-bags, which just suited them, for a doctor on horse-back always used to carry medicine that way. For their pharmacopia



they got some of their mother's home-made remedies in her absence, and, of course, without her consent. An old horse that was running in the pasture was caught and pressed into service as the doctor's nag. William was to be the patient, Henry the doctor, and some third boy was the nurse. Henry threw the saddle-bags across the horse, climbed on and rode off leisurely across the field, and then assuming that he had gotten an urgent call, he came galloping back over the field, jumped off his horse, seized his saddle-bags, entered the house where the moaning patient (?) lay, looked at his tongue, felt his pulse, and prescribed for him—a walnut pill. He waited to see that the pill was actually swallowed. He would then repeat his ride and call and prescribe—another walnut pill. It was not long before the pretended moans of the patient became real ones, and by the time his mother arrived home, William was vomiting and purging, and was deathly sick.

Rachel Reed Wilson always made it a custom to ask a blessing at the meal time. Once, late in life, there were several of her nephews at the table, together with some of her own boys, Alexander M. Reed being one of the nephews, a theological student at the time. He supposed that the duty of asking the blessing would devolve upon him, and accordingly, closed his eyes and bowed his head. Both began at the same instant, both caught the sound of the other's voice, both stopped and both looked up. Both looked confused, but all the others maintained the silence of the tomb, looking mournfully at their plates. As mother Wilson was a little deaf, she concluded that she had heard nothing, and, after a pause, began again. They both began again, and the strain upon the boys became too great. They broke out into unrestrained laughter, though it was like committing high treason to show any emotion whatever on such an occasion.

Rachel Reed Wilson, the good old mother-in-Israel, lived to see all her children happily married, also, most of her grandchildren, and long enough to take upon her knees some of her great-grandchildren. She died September 2, 1858, in her seventy-first year.

One characteristic of the Wilson family is shown in their neatness of dress, a trait most conspicuous in William and James. But, where there was less regard for appearance, as in Henry, there was a keener appreciation of humor, with a fondness for practical joking. Hugh combined both characteristics, having a regard for neatness, and having a high appreciation of the humorous, without the fondness for playing practical jokes. Of the sisters, Agnes and Rebecca seem to have been more like Hugh, and are said to have resembled each other very much.

Of the parents, Hugh and Rachel Reed Wilson, judging by the hereditary traits manifested in their offspring, one must have been jovial, with the kindest emotions in the ascendant, the other, severe, practical, exact and exacting, or a tendency that way. Possibly the father, Hugh, was jovially inclined, and Rachel Reed was the stricter and more exacting character. But both were undoubtedly good Christians, and all the family, eventually, came into some of the evangelical churches, the church of their forefathers being Presbyterian, in which most of their descendants are still to be found as members.

### FAMILY SUMMARY

Hugh Wilson married about 1807 Rachel Reed.

b. in 1779,

b. in 1787,

d. Oct. 21, 1828.

d. Sept. 2 or 3, 1858.

Children:

1. Thomas, b. in 1808,
2. Nancy (Agnes), b. 1810,
3. William W., b. 1812,
4. Henry Reed, b. 1814,
5. Rebecca, b. 1816,
6. Sarah, b. 1821-1819\*,
7. Hugh, Jr., b. 1825-1822\*,
8. Rachel Jane, b. 1827-1824\*,
9. James, b. 1829.

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\*Note—The first dates are given on the authority of Henry Wilson, who revised this record in 1897. The second dates are given from written records, furnished by Mrs. Bessie Wilson of Burgettstown, Pa., in 1917.

## THE CHILDREN OF HUGH AND RACHEL REED WILSON

1. **Thomas Wilson** was born October 21, 1808, somewhere "east of the mountains." That fact would imply that his father and mother were married before moving to Allegheny County, and that the Reeds and Wilsons had probably lived in the same neighborhood east of the mountains, had climbed the mountains at or near the same time, and had settled in the same neighborhood in Allegheny County. About 1830, he married Mary Elliott, who was born in 1810, and died July 25, 1879. Thomas Wilson was accidentally killed by a railroad engine at the crossing near McDonald's station, where he had been delivering a load of wool. His body was hurled high in the air and fell on the pilot, in front of the drive wheel. His death occurred June 17, 1871, at the age of sixty-three.

The family consisted of nine children, three sons and six daughters, namely:

Jane, Reed, Mary, Elliott, Matilda, Rebecca, Agnes, William and Alice.

All these and their families will be found in the genealogy following.

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2. **Nancy, or Agnes Wilson**, was born May 18, 1810, "east of the mountains." On February 4, 1830, she was married to James Lindsey, who was born in Ireland in 1800, but came to America in 1816, together with his father, brothers and sisters. At the time of his marriage, he was living on the Walker place, near Noblestown.

Mrs. Vezey, a cousin of Agnes Wilson's, once sent word to Rachel Lindsey, that she (Mrs. V.), was at the wedding of Agnes Wilson, that all the young people rode horseback and went on the gallop; that if a girl had no horse to ride, she mounted behind her escort, and that horse would carry "double"; that "liquor" was often served at the marriage-feast, and a bottle in the pocket was sometimes carried by a guest.

Agnes Wilson was just twenty when she was married, tall, graceful and beautiful, with strength of character, and an amiable disposition. The span of her married life was only thirteen years, within which time she bore five children, namely:

Jane, or Jean, Richeson,\* named for James Lindsey's mother; Rachel Reed, named for Agnes's mother; Thomas, named for James Lindsey's brother; Katherine Watson, named for James's sister; and Hugh Wilson, named for Agnes's father. The first three were born on the Walker place, the last two, on the Glenn place, to which the family had moved in the spring of 1836, soon after the birth of Thomas Lindsey.

The Glenn place lay still nearer Noblestown than the Walker place did. The family lived on this place till the spring of 1843. Here Katherine Watson was born September 22, 1838, and Hugh Wilson on March 3, 1842. Soon after his birth, his mother, Agnes Lindsey, had an attack of pneumonia, followed by a lingering cough and a decline.

The lease of the place expired about March 1, 1843, and the Glens wanted possession. James Lindsey, accordingly, leased the Ed McDonald farm, on the Candor road, three miles from the Walker place, but inclement weather had delayed his moving. It was cold and snowy, but finally, on April 12, the patient, on a feather bed, was placed on a sled, covered up well, and drawn carefully to her new home. One week later she died, April 19, 1843, a victim of the "white plague," at the youthful age of thirty-three. No picture of her has been preserved, so far as I know, and her features can only be recalled through family resemblances. Her sister Rebecca is said to have resembled her, and Jane R. Lindsey, the oldest of her children, is said to have resembled her in a very striking manner. "Just like her mother," was common expression among the relatives, referring to the daughter.

6. **Sarah Wilson**, though not the next in order of the children of Hugh and Rachel Reed Wilson, to preserve the unity of the history of the Lindsey family, will

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\*Note—The grandmother died in Ireland in 1809.

come next. She was born on May 21, 1819, and in 1846 was married to James Lindsey. She also, like her sister Agnes, had five children, namely: "William, James Henry, Ross Wilson, Anne Melissa and Hugh Emmet. Willie was born on the Ed McDonald place, where Sarah was married; the other children were born in Ohio, to which state the family moved in the spring of 1849.

As early as 1846, James Lindsey began putting his money into the farm at Cumberland, Ohio. Around Cumberland was quite a settlement of Pennsylvanians from his vicinity. One of these, James M'Mahan, sold him the farm on time payments. He leased the Ohio farm to another friend, Adam Roy. In the spring of 1849, the Ohio farm was finally paid for, and he prepared to move out.

The lease on the McDonald place expired on March 1, and he set that day for departure. It snowed all day Saturday and Sabbath day, but early on Monday morning, in spite of the snow that was still falling lightly, the family started on their long journey. Henry Wilson and Andy Crooks accompanied the Lindseys to Washington, Pa., where the National pike, a macadamized road, was to be taken as far as to Cambridge, Ohio. William Savage, another friend and neighbor, drove through to Ohio with a load for the Lindseys. The whole party, together with other friends who were moving out at the same time, stayed all night at a hotel in Washington, which was so crowded that the Lindseys and their friends could get but one large room for the party of ten persons. But beds were made down on the floor, and the women slept at one end of the room, while the men slept at the other end. To entertain the company during the evening, Henry Wilson preached them a typical Methodist sermon, though his audience was orthodox Scotch Presbyterians.

The next morning, March 2, 1849, (my mother's, Jane R. Lindsey's, eighteenth birthday anniversary), Henry Wilson and "Andy" Crooks returned to their homes, and the Lindsey party started westward, James Lindsey with a four horse team and a load of household goods, while Mr. Savage brought the family, consisting of Sarah, the wife, and the three children, Jane, Rachel,

and Thomas, Willie having died soon after birth, and Katherine W. in 1848. At Wheeling they crossed the Ohio river by ferry boat. At Cambridge they were met by friends from Cumberland with teams to assist them the rest of the road, which was not macadamized, but generally deep mud at that time of the year.

It was a bright warm day in the Cumberland valley, when the Lindseys reached there, March 5, 1849. As they drove through the village, they saw girls and women wearing pink calico dresses, while the women of the Lindsey party still wore their flannel dresses that were so comfortable five days before, when they were leaving their old home. Adam Roy vacated the Lindsey house and farm the day of their arrival, leaving a fire on the hearth for them, and corn in the crib for their teams; in fact, there were two cribs of corn that had been grown on the Lindsey place. It was a time for rejoicing! Twenty-five years of tenantry farming were past. They entered their new home with all omens propitious for success and happiness!

The Cumberland valleys are not wide, but noted for their beauty and fertility. The Lindsey place was located one mile south of the village, on the South Fork of Buffalo Creek, which flowed through it from south to north. A little branch flowed down from the hills on the west, and united with the South Fork in the northern part of the farm. Their "new home" was an old log house that stood in this smaller valley, near the side of the road. The logs were weather-boarded over, and a deep porch ran part way across the east side. North of the house was a well of pure cold water, with a tall sweep leaning over it, and a "moss-covered bucket hung in the well." In this old house James Henry and Ross Wilson Lindsey were born.

About five years after coming to the place, James Lindsey built a new house on the knoll that formed the dividing point between the two valleys. It was a two story, frame house, well built, and painted white. It faced to the north, overlooked both valleys, and the country far beyond. It might well have been named "Mount Pisgah," as, from there could have been viewed

"the land flowing with milk and honey." In this new house was born Anna Melissa, in 1856, and Hugh Emmet, in 1860.

On May 18, 1865, Sarah Wilson died, and on September 27, of the same year, James Lindsey also passed away. She was tall, slender, dignified, with a long, serious face, of a rather severe type. Her eyes and hair were dark. She was neat, economical, systematic, and a good housekeeper. It will be remembered that all of Rachel Reed Wilson's girls were trained to be good housekeepers.

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3. **William Wilson** was born May 7, 1812, in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. On April 8, 1836, he married Jane Smith. He died February 5, 1874, at Paris, Pa. His death was accidental. He fell from the hay-mow, and dislocated his neck.

He was but little above medium height, but carried himself so erect that he looked tall. He was neat in dress, and cared for his personal appearance. As some one said, "He might wade through mud, but not a particle would stick to his shoes." He reminded one of "the Brahmin caste of New England," that Oliver Wendell Holmes has immortalized. He had that affection for his kin that is a characteristic of the family in general.

His family consisted of seven children, five sons and two daughters. Their names are, Alexander, Hugh, William F., John S., Rowena, Rachel Jane, and James Buchanan. See the genealogy for further records.

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4. **Henry Reed Wilson** was born July 2, 1814. At eighteen, he began teaching school, at which he continued three years. He then sold clocks, for fourteen years, the old Seth Thomas clock. He also sold marble, mowers and reapers, the whole period of his salesmanship covering at least thirty-five years. In the meantime, on May 18, 1852, he married Sarah Caldwell, daughter of Samuel Caldwell of Jefferson County, Ohio. She was an unusually talented women, well read, a fluent

talker, with a low-pitched, pleasant voice. She was a "Disciple," strong in the faith and patient, and her faith and patience were finally rewarded by seeing her husband forsake his wild ways and come into the church. She died February 2, 1912, in her eighty-ninth year. Henry was wild from his childhood up, but noted for his keen wit and humor, which he often manifested in playing practical jokes. He settled on Meig's Creek, Morgan County, Ohio, to which place he and his young wife came soon after they were married, arriving July, 1852. In a letter, his youngest daughter says: "Father and mother came to Morgan County shortly after they were married. \* \* \* They were married at mother's home, on a farm near Knoxville, Jefferson County, Ohio. Father had come to Ohio in '51, and bought the farm, and made his first payment in gold and greenbacks. The second payment was made with money he made from the sale of his wool. He had 3,650 pounds, and got \$1.00 per pound. The country was well settled up, and considerable land cleared."

His older brother, William, came out from Pennsylvania, occasionally, to visit him, once about 1870. As usual, he was well dressed. He had a shoulder cape, with red lining, and wore eye-glasses with a cord attachment. Henry loved his brother with the same affection that he had had for him when they were boys at home, playing doctor and patient. But the temptation to have some fun grew in proportion to the opportunity. He wished to show William the little town a mile or so down the valley, and put him on "Old Colonel," an ex-racehorse that had not forgotten his tactics of the race track, one of which was to let no other horse pass him on the run. The two old men rode off together as happy as boys going to a circus. Henry told Herschel, his son, privately, to delay his start for a time; then, to come with whoop on the run, as if in a race. Herschel did so, and Old Colonel, hearing him approach, pricked up his ears, took a look; then took the bit in his teeth and shot off down the road. The harder William pulled, the lower the old racehorse lowered his head, and the faster he ran. Then William's tall hat danced off his head, his eye-



glasses flew off and dangled on the cord, and lastly, his cape began to slip off his shoulders; he caught one corner of it in his teeth, and still held to the reins, while the cape flashed red and black alternately, as it waved like a pennant from the masthead. When Old Colonel could run no further William dismounted, so angry that he wished for a pistol to end the horse's life right there. He refused to mount him again, so Herschel traded mounts with him; and what he said to Henry will not bear repetition. His wrath, however, was soon over and forgotten.

Henry Wilson died March 3, 1900, in his eighty-sixth year. He was a good sized man, a little above the average, and well proportioned. He had dark eyes and hair. His hair and eye-brows were shaggy, as I recall him. He was careless in dress, a good talker, and an easy, charming entertainer.

His children are Flora C., Herschel B., and Laura, whose further record is found in the genealogy.

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5. **Rebecca Wilson** was born in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, October 25, 1816, just one hundred years ago this present writing. She was married September 15, 1836, to William Donehoo, who was born August 1, 1812, also in Allegheny County, from which he removed, with his wife, in the same year they were married, to Cross Creek Village, Washington County, Pennsylvania. He was a cabinet maker and an undertaker. In the year 1860 he was appointed census taker by the United States Government for the northern part of Washington County. He died May 10, 1864.

Rebecca Wilson-Donehoo, it will be remembered, resembled Agnes Wilson-Lindsey very much.

Her grandson, Rev. George McCune Donehoo, states, in a letter, "I recollect hearing my grandmother and her sister, Rachel Wilson-Ackleson, exchanging reminiscences; they spoke often of their good old mother and the theological student attempting to ask the blessing at the same time. In their version of it, one of her

boys finally shouted, 'Go it, Granny, I'll bet on you!' as though viewing a race."

Rebecca Donehoo died March 21, 1899, in her eighty-third year. She was the mother of four children, namely: Hugh Wilson and Agnes Jane Eliza, the oldest and youngest of her children, both died young; Daniel McCune, and Henry Wilson Donehoo. Their records will be found in the genealogy.

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6. **Sarah Wilson** was the sixth child of Hugh and Rachel Reed-Wilson, but her biography has already been given with the Lindsey family.

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7. **Hugh Wilson** was the seventh child and fourth son of Hugh Wilson, senior. He was born April 2, 1822, on the old homestead in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. In his youth he served his term of apprenticeship with a tailor, then settled in New Wilmington, Pa., where he followed his trade through life. In a letter from his son, Charles Edwin Wilson says, "I remember my father as a very indulgent parent, who lived only for his children, yet, for all that, we never could take advantage of him, as he was stern and exacting for everything that was right. His ideals in religion and morality were of the highest, and after reading of the religious side of my grandmother's life, I now know where he got his profound faith in his Creator. \* \* \* I remember him telling that when his mother signed the articles that bound him out as an apprentice to learn the tailor's trade, that she cried, and that he wondered why, not knowing the trials and hardships of an apprentice in those days, but he soon found out."

A daughter, Zipporah B. Wilson-Davidson, also says, "I wish I could paint him for you as he stands in my memory: In appearance, a man that always attracted attention; in manner, gentlemanly, suave, and polite; a kind-hearted, thoughtful husband; with his sons, he was a companion, full of fun, but not a joker."

In 1849, he married Mary Ann Brown, who was born February 20, 1822. He made at least one trip to Ohio, to visit his brothers, Henry and James; also the Lindseys and other kin. That was the only time the present writer ever saw him. He stopped with us a few days near New Concord, Ohio, sometime in the '60s, entertained us with stories and anecdotes, mostly about his relatives, left his photograph, which my mother had framed, and which is still in our family; but he never came back again. His letters, however, came frequently, and kept interest in him alive and active. His letters to the kinfolk were in those days what the letters of Daniel McCune Donehoo have been to the kinfolk the past ten or twelve years.

Hugh Wilson died June 24, 1891. His wife survived him over seventeen years, passing away October 29, 1908. They had a family of seven children, five of whom survived their parents. Their names are Henry Reed, William Ramsey, Zipporah Brown, Bessie Jane, George Hamilton, Charles Edwin and Hugh Doran Wilson. See their further records in the genealogy.

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8. **Rachel Jane Wilson** was the youngest daughter of Hugh and Rachel Reed-Wilson, and was born December 2, 1824. She was married to James Ackelson, of Florence, Pa., in 1868. She was left a widow about twenty years before her own death, which occurred about 1903. She had no children.

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9. **James Wilson** was born June 16, 1829, eight months after his father's death. In April, 1859, he married Matilda Spooner of the vicinity of Cumberland, Ohio. He was a wagon maker by trade, and settled in Cumberland, where he died in July, 1878, leaving no children.

He was a quiet, dignified man, neat and careful in his dress, intelligent and cheerful, but his smile was grave. He was not inclined to much humor.

The last four sketches are very brief—not from indifference, but for want of information. It is hoped that those who know the subjects of all these sketches better will furnish information that will make a new edition not only easy to prepare, but also imperative.