

[Willson,<sup>1</sup> Tirzah Marie Harvey

Mrs. Tirzah M. Wilson [Willson], one of the oldest residents of Northern New York died Monday morning at her home in Leroy street. Mrs. Wilson was 103 years of age. Despite her advanced years, she retained possession of all her faculties up to a few months ago with the exception of her sight. Recently her unusual vitality had begun noticeably to fail and her death was not unexpected. The funeral will be Wednesday afternoon at the Universalist church and interment will be at Bayside.

Mrs. Wilson's maiden name was Tirzah Marie Harvey and she was born October 28, 1818, the daughter of Joseph and Hannah Sykes Harvey, in a log cabin in a clearing near what is now the village of Crary Mills. Her early life was spent there and following her marriage to the late Leander Wilson, when she was twenty three years old, she moved to the farm on the South Canton road now occupied by G. H. Sackett. Mr. and Mrs. Wilson moved to Potsdam in 1855 and built the brick residence now owned by G. W. F. Smith. Mr. Wilson extended Leroy street north to the May Road. Since that time, she has resided in Potsdam.

Mrs. Wilson is survived only by one daughter, Mrs. Ellen Whitmore, 75 years of age, who has cared for her for many years. Mrs. Whitmore is the only surviving member of a family of five. Mrs. Wilson, however, is survived by several grandchildren, great grandchildren, and great, great grandchildren.

Mrs. Wilson's parents came from Vermont following the old turnpike from Lake Champlain to Pierrepont. Striking north from the hills of Pierrepont and the Paradise Valley of Irving Bacheller's "Eben Holden," they, with one or two other families, came to the brook which passes through Crary Mills and near this point, cut from the forest the trees, and hewed the logs to form their homes.

Ten years before, Benjamin Raymond and his settlers had founded Potsdam for the Clarkson family but there was no bridge across the Racket [Raquette] then and no road south from the settlement of Potsdam to Crary Mills. The nearest mill was at Ogdensburg. Mrs. Wilson's father went there to have his grist ground. She remembered well one winter's night when it was two in the morning before he returned from the St. Lawrence River. Her mother and small brothers had spent some trying hours, for wolves had gathered about the cabin and grown bold enough to thrust their steaming muzzles against the frosted panes of the windows. Mrs. Harvey kept a roaring fire in the [?] fireplace and had plenty of hot water ready should the animals attempt an entrance, which fortunately they did not. Mrs. Wilson well remembered the occurrence and could give a graphic account of it.

She recalled the blazing of a trail from Crary Mills to Potsdam and remembered how one night a horseman became lost in the forest and her

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father and one or two neighbors, roused by his shouts and the shots from his gun, turned out and brought him safely to the clearing.

Mrs. Wilson also was wont to describe an Indian village in the vicinity of Crary Mills on the brook above their home. She visited it with her parents as a little girl and watched the Indians hulling corn and cooking over their stone oven. They were members of the St. Regis tribe and their gaudy blankets and head dress of the braves made quite an impression on her.

When Mrs. Wilson moved to Potsdam, the large sandstone residence built by David Clarkson was about the only house in Leroy street. It's [sic] gates were near where the Baptist church now stands. The property was commonly known as the Mansion House. The east side of the street was a pasture and a rail fence served to mark its boundaries. This, however, did not serve to keep the cattle in and it was common practice to pasture them in the roadway.

In the course of the past few years and particularly since her one hundredth birthday, in [1818], Mrs. Wilson's yearly anniversaries have been more or less an event with the townspeople and she has been the recipient of a large number of gifts and many have called in the course of her birthday each year to pay her their respects.

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