

Research into the history of Henry Chandler Williamson

11-26-13 – Linda Williamson, great-grand-daughter

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Goal: to track down the origins of Henry Chandler Williamson, of Georgia

His name: Henry Chandler Williamson, usually written "Henry C" and sometimes written "H.C." or just "Henry" Williamson. The first time I ran into his middle name written out as "Chandler" is in his death records.

[Note that his son, my grandfather, frequently signed his name as "H.C. Williamson Jr," even though his middle name was Clyde.]

Civil War paperwork (both confederate and Union) says he was from "Laurence" or "Laurens", GA. He was not literate at the time, and the copies I have were written by a copyist later anyway, so I am assuming that they meant Laurens County.

Born: about 1846, in GA (listed anywhere between 1845 and 1849 in census and other records; 1846 is the most common). In later census records, he records his birth month as July. In almost every census record, he states that both of his parents were born in GA. (For the last two, he just said "U.S.")

Death: 3-25-1920, WA (Seattle)

Henry Chandler Williamson left GA part way through the Civil War, and appears to have never returned. He seems to have already been living without family as a young teen, prior to entering the war.

Wife: Sarah "Alma" Bremer, b. July 1858, Neb. m. 1875

Children: Lena/Lenna, b. 1878, Henry Clyde, b. 1885, Clarence, b. 1892. All three born in Washington/WA Territory.

List of Records found:

1850 federal census: no record found

Laurens Co

1860 federal census: possible match, teenage Henry Williamson (age 15, from GA) living with Winniford Fugua and her son, Henry C Fugua, in Laurens County. Winniford is listed as the Head of the household. I tried to follow Winniford forward and back, and found no obvious relationship to Henry. (My thought had been that maybe she was his widowed sister, but I haven't found any evidence to support this theory.)

1862 - Civil War enlistment, Confederate side

Enlisted in Company G, Georgia 49th Infantry Regiment on 16 May 1862, Augusta GA. He was 15 or 16 years old. (I note that confederate conscription had begun in April, 1862.)

First pay card says "Bounty and Commutation due."

After several months of being absent due to illness/hospitalization earlier in 1863, he was shown "Absent without Leave" starting June 18, 1863. As of June, 1864, he was "dropped from the roll" for having taken the Oath of Allegiance to the U.S. Lists of POWs shows "H Williams, 49th, Company G, GA" captured on July 3, 1863*, at Green Castle, transferred to Fort Delaware on October 22, and then to the POW camp at Point Lookout, MD. Later lists of POWs show all of the exact same information but spell

his name correctly. He was on a list of prisoners released January 21-30, 1864, upon taking the Oath of allegiance to the US and joining the Union forces. His Oath of Allegiance is dated January 26, 1864. [One earlier form says he was "exchanged" from Point Lookout on Feb 13, 1865 – this is the same form that misspells his name as "Williams," so that one may reference a different soldier]

Above information from the Roster of Confederate Soldiers of Georgia 1861-1865, and from files found on Fold3

1864 – Civil War Enlistment, Union side

Henry C Williamson

Enlistment Date January 26, 1864

Age 18 (enlistment papers state that men must be 18 to enlist without parental permission)

Described as 5'6" tall, having "black hair, black eyes, and a dark complexion."

Company D, 1st US Volunteer Infantry

Enlisted January 26, 1864, Point Lookout, MD

Mustered in May 1, 1864 Norfolk, VA

Mustered out November 27, 1865, in MO

Information found on Ancestry and through files on Fold3

Company and Regiment matches that provided on his pension application and in the Veterans Schedule of 1890

1870 Census (possible match)

Henry Williamson, age 23, from GA, both parents from GA

Living as a farm laborer with the Silas and Mary Pierce family, Lewis, Holt, MO (As Henry mustered out in MO in 1865, this seems reasonable – I don't find any census records that seem close anywhere else in the U.S.). I have not found any relationship with the Pierce family other than employee.

1875 Western States Marriage Records Index

Marriage ID#276665

HC Williamson, age 26 and Sarah "Bruner", age 17

Both Living in Jackson, CA

Marriage October 3, 1875

Amador County, California

Volume B, page 83

1876 Registered to vote in Jackson, Amador County, CA, age 27

(Amador County was the center of the California Gold Rush in the Sierra Nevadas – it seems likely that the young couple ventured there (possibly eloping?) to seek their fortune.)

1880 Census

Can't find any of them, anywhere in the U.S!

Henry C, H.C., or Henry, Williamson or even Williams

Wife "Sarah" or "Alma"

Married 1875

Daughter Lena (she would be 2)

1889 WA State and Territorial Census

HC Williamson, age 43, listed as married, a Barber, from GA, currently living in Pullman, WA