

Certificate of Marriage



This is to Certify, that Mr. *Nicholas Stilwell*  
of the Township of *Middleton* in the County of  
*Norfolk* and Province of Canada, and Miss *Sarah*  
*Ann Ford* of the Township of  
*Middleton* in the County of *Norfolk*  
and Province aforesaid, were duly and legally Married by me,  
Rev. R. B. *Smith* Pastor of the Regular Baptist Church  
in *Bayham* C.W., on the *Fifth* day of  
*January* in the year of our Lord one thousand eight  
hundred and *Sixty Eight* by virtue of a Special License,  
and the authority vested in me by the Laws of the Province of Canada.

As Witness my hand the day and year hereinbefore written.

Witness:

*William Stilwell*  
*W. Curdy*

*R. B. Smith*  
Baptist Minister.





STILWELLS OF MIDDLETON, BAYHAM

(The following interesting account of the history of the Stilwell family of Middleton and Bayham was submitted by Ayrest L. Stilwell of Eden, Ontario)

When George Stilwell of Middleton was called home on Thursday, March 4th, 1954, at the age of 83, the last grandson of that hardy pioneer, David Stilwell, was removed from our midst. However, three sisters of George and granddaughters of the above mentioned David are still living.

They are: Mrs. Henry Ball (Sarah) of Aylmer; Mrs. George Clark (Adeline) of Ingersoll and Mrs. Edgar Zavitz (Rachel) also of Aylmer.

The late George Stilwell spent practically all his life and his father Isaac 77 years, on the farm that the grandfather, David, carved from the dense hardwood forests of Middleton when he came to Upper Canada from New Brunswick nearly 120 years ago. This farm is situated on the Goshen Road about half a mile east of the town-line between the townships of Middleton and Bayham.

The Stilwells of Middleton and Bayham are descendants of a certain soldier, Lieutenant Nicholas Stilwell, who came to America from England in the year 1683 and settled first in Virginia, when he was second in command of the Virginian Army in their war with the Indians. He later removed to Manhattan Island where he became one of the leaders of the Dutch Army under Governor General Peter Stuyvescent.

In 1778, during the American Revolution, John Stilwell, a great-great-grandson of the above mentioned Nicholas Stilwell, remained loyal to Britain and was ordered to appear before the Rebel Council. This he refused to do, but finally was forced to flee to the mountains, being pursued by the notorious Sons of Liberty.

After some weeks, he escaped and in 1783 with his wife and family he arrived at St. John, New Brunswick in a ship called Aurora. For three years he lived in a crude camp near the present city of St. John, New Brunswick, at the mouth of the St. John River. He then moved up the river to Cumberland Bay Point on Grand Lake, where he died in 1823. While in New Brunswick, he married a second and third time. By his second wife, Sarah Ciblar or Kiblar, he had six children, the eldest of whom was David, born in 1790. This David later became the pioneer forefather of the Stilwells of Middleton and Bayham.

In 1836 David Stilwell, having become dissatisfied with conditions in New Brunswick, and having heard of the wonderful prospects in Upper Canada, decided to try his luck in this new land. With his wife, who was formerly Rebecca Ellsworth, and nine of this eleven children he started out by boat on the long trip to Upper Canada. After many weeks of hardships and disappointments, during which time his wife Rebecca, passed away, he finally landed at, or near, Port Burwell. Here the remains of his loved one were laid to rest but later were removed to the Ridge Road cemetery near Eden.



Stilwells of Middleton, Bayham continued

With his nine children, the eldest being William, 19 years of age, and the youngest being Jane, aged 2, David made his way northward along a trail through the bush, now Highway 19. He finally took up land on the Goshen Road, being one of the first, if not the first, to settle on this road. Here he spent the remainder of his life clearing the land of its virgin forest and caring for the family of nine which he brought with him from New Brunswick. The names of the children who came with their father David to Ontario, in order of their ages, were as follows: William, David, Israel, John, Isaac, Naomi, Benjamin, Sarah, and Jane. The two who remained in New Brunswick were Nicholas and Martha, the eldest members of the family.

Sometime later, Martha, with her husband William MacGregor, also moved to Ontario and for a time they lived on the Goshen Road in a house built by her two brothers William and Isaac just west of where her father had settled. Later they moved to the Plank Road, now Highway No. 19, where they were in charge of a toll-gate between Eden and Straffordville. They had no children. The other brother, Nicholas, who was a sea-captain, remained in New Brunswick at, or near, St. John, where he died in 1876.

David Stilwell, Sr., ultimately married a second time, the Widow Vincent. In the meantime, as his sons and daughters grew to manhood and womanhood, they married the sons and daughters of other pioneers in the district, and the majority of them took up land, and settled within a radius of a few miles of each other.

William Stilwell married Christianna Ostrander and developed the farm immediately west of his father David's. Their children were Nicholas, Elsie, Rebecca, Sarah, Andrew, Henry, Olive, Elwin and Emmer.

David Stilwell, Jr., developed a farm west of Eden. He married Helen Lloyd. Their children were Mary Anne, David William, Sarah and Anne Eliza.

Israel Stilwell married Sarah Ostrander, a cousin of his brother William's wife, Christianna. He spent some time keeping a hotel situated on Highway 19 just north of the Wabash Railway station. He spent the remainder of his life in or near Eden. Their children were Selkirk and Lewis.

John Stilwell developed the farm just east of his father David's where he spent the rest of his life. He married Mary Buchner, a member of another pioneer family which settled within half a mile west of the Stilwells. Their children were David, James and Amy Jane.

Isaac Stilwell spent 77 of his 88 years on the farm settled by his father. He was 11 years old when he came to Ontario. He married Jemima Baker. Their children were Anne Jane, Sarah Rebecca, Adeline, Della, Rachel and George who passed away on March 4, 1954.

Naomi Stilwell married John Buchner, a brother of Mary Buchner, wife of John Stilwell. They lived most of their life on a farm in Bayham at the western end of the Goshen Road. They finally retired to Tillsonburg. Their children were Pamella, George, Henry, Sarah, Israel and Jane.

Benjamin Stilwell married Eleanor Vincent, the daughter of his father David's second wife, the Widow Vincent. Their children were Alma, Melvin, Sarah, Maria, Percy, Matty, and Alberta. Benjamin settled on a farm situated on Highway No. 19 a mile north of Eden.

Sarah Stilwell married Henry Carter, and yielding to the lure of the west, moved to the western states. They had one son, Ira, who is quite likely deceased.





Isaac Stilwell's daughter  
Mrs. Annie Jones  
kept Eden Post Office  
for a number of years  
where Harold Chrysler  
now lives.



Stilwells of Middleton, Bayham continued

Jane Stilwell, the youngest child in David's family, married Harvey Caswell, who settled on a farm just west of Eden. They had one son, Ira Caswell, who lived all his life on this farm.

All these first and second generation descendants of David and Rebecca Stilwell, the sons, daughters, grandsons, granddaughters, their wives or husbands, with the exception of the surviving three granddaughters, mentioned in the first paragraph above, have passed on to their eternal home. There are many people living in Middleton and Bayham who can trace their ancestry back to these early pioneers and, hence back to the first Stilwell in this part of the country, David Stilwell, Sr. As one would naturally expect, a great many others have been lured to the West, the South and the North.

When those early pioneers arrived in this part of the country they were faced with the task of building a log cabin of some kind. They had to cut down and burn the trees, dig out the stumps with spades and shovels, and not bulldozers such as we have now. The men had to have strong backs and strong minds in order to gradually clear their land acre by acre.

In the course of time stumping machines made their appearance. Their farm implements were crude affairs, indeed. They used a scythe instead of a mower; a cradle in place of a binder. They used a hand rake to rake their hay and grain. Their chief source of power was a yoke of oxen whose names were probably Buck and Bright. A flail was used to thresh the grain and when they wanted some flour they would place a bag of wheat on their shoulder and start off to the nearest grist-mill, 10 or 15 miles away.

Some wove their own cloth; made their own boots and shoes, and most of them spun their own wool. Every woman knew how to knit and usually had plenty of it to do, when she wasn't helping out-doors, making or mending clothes, churning the butter or baking bread. They had no mail delivery, no telephones, automobiles, radios, television and other luxuries which as we have to-day, but they did have a courage and a determination to surmount the difficulties with which they were faced and were always ready to lend a helping hand to any neighbor who had sickness in his family or was in need of any of the necessities of life.

This is the brief history of the early pioneer Stilwells. Their's is a story of hardship, of achievement and failure, of hope and despair, of joy and sorrow. Their's is a story of dreams which were realized because they had a faith in the land of their choice, a faith in their fellow-men and, what is vastly more important, a faith in their God.



MR. & MRS. ELWIN STILWELL.

Mr. William Elwin Stilwell was born July 28, 1859, on a farm in the Twp. of Middleton, near Eden. He was one of nine children of the late Mr. & Mrs. William Stilwell, who was nee- Christianna Ostrander. If not the first settlers on the Goshen Road, at least they were among the early, early settlers there.

Mrs. Elwin Stilwell was also a descendant of a U.E. Loyalist family. She was Miss Calista Cornwall, also of Middleton Twp. and lived nearer Courtland.

Their family also were nine children viz; Lula (Mrs. Wilson Kennedy) Emmer, (Mrs. Chas. McKoy,) Pearl, (Mrs. Ellis Irwin), Henry, Nicholas, Ayerst, Waldron, Olive and Raymond. Olive is Mrs. Wm. McKoy.

Mr. Stilwell was a man very highly respected. He is remembered as Choir leader for many years as well as other offices in the local Baptist Church. He was a Public School Trustee and Auditor of Middleton Twp. books. He was both credited and qualified for all positions which he filled as well as operating the farm on which he was born and lived all his life. He was married at the age of 21.



# Change of Time.

COMPOSED BY SARAH M. O'NEIL, DAUGHTER  
OF WM. STILLWELL.

I sit me down to muse awhile,  
On happy days of yore,  
When I, a girl, with parents lived,  
On Canada's loved shore.

Just seven years ago, to-day,  
Since I became a bride,  
And left my home, with husband dear,  
In Michigan to abide.

Not long before a bright-eyed boy  
Into our home did steal ;  
The joy and pride of our forest home,  
Was Elwin James William O'Neil.

Not quite two years had passed away,  
When a little, merry girl  
Came next to brighten up our home,  
We call her Olive Pearl.

And now another little boy—  
Carl Harper is his name—  
A father's care, a mother's love,  
Our little one doth claim.

Although by family ties I'm bound,  
With strangers here to stay,  
How oft my mind still wanders back,  
To childhood's happy days.

Across the road, upon the ridge,  
Where we in all our childish glee  
Would romp and roam from place to place,  
Or sit beneath the old oak tree.

The much-loved church and Sabbath school  
Where we our voices raised  
Up to the throne of God above,  
With mingled love and praise.

But time has changed our dear old home,  
Where we in childhood played ;  
Our parents' steps, once light and free,  
Are tottering now with age.

The old frame house where we were born  
(Although a brick one is in its place),  
The joys and sorrows there we passed,  
Time from our minds can ne'er erase.

Fourteen long years have passed away,  
Since Henry left this earthly sphere ;  
His form lies mouldering in the tomb,  
Yet still we hold his memory dear.

Oh, how we miss his cheerful voice,  
No mortal tongue could tell ;  
His merry laugh, his little jests,  
We loved to hear so well.

Again we're called to say farewell,  
Death came with resistless hand ;  
We could not, dare not, bid him stay—  
He took the eldest of our band.

No more we'll see his much-loved face,  
With us on earth to roam ;  
He's joined the blood-washed throng above,  
The Saviour called him home.

'Tis hard to bear the solemn truth ;  
Their spirits home have fled ;  
They no more here with us shall meet ;  
They're numbered with the dead.

Oh, parents, brothers, sisters dear,  
Weep not for those who've gone before ;  
Soon we must leave this weary life,  
To join them on the heavenly shore.

Acacia, January 1st, 1883.