

FREE NORTHERN BORN BLACKS WORKING IN WILTON, 1860s-1940

Winnie Branch, b. ca. 1888 in New York, and a resident of New York. Living and working in household of Dorothea Reichert in Wilton in 1940. (FC 1940-2b)

CAREY FAMILY

Eugene L. Carey, b. July 16, 1896 in Wilton to Robert and Mary. (TCVR 5-54)

Mary E. Plumstead, born in Modernica, New York. Mother of Eugene L. and possibly married to Robert. (TCVR 5-54)

Robert Carey, born in New Milford. Father of Eugene L. and possibly married to Mary. He was a laborer (TCVR 5-54)

Mary Cop, b. ca. 1912 in New York, and a resident of New York. Living and working in the household of Paul Boyston in Wilton in 1940. (FC 1940-9b)

George E. Englehart, b. June 1892 at Greens Farms in Westport. (FC 1900, 240; NYM) His father was German and his mother was African American. George lived with his parents in Westport in 1900 (FC 1900, 240). In 1910, he is listed twice: on both the Wilton and Westport census forms. (FC 1910, 5a; FC 1910, 27a) On the Wilton form, he was living and working in the household of Harry R. Jackson as a laborer. He was also listed there as literate. On the Westport form, he was living with his father Michael (b. 1863, Germany) and his mother Julia A. Hunter (b. 1855, CT, d. before 1917). George had a younger sister, Ruth C. (b. 1895) and a niece Evelyn M. (b. 1907). Michael was a superintendent of a private estate. Another of Michael's mixed-race children in the household was Mary Craw (b. 1889). She worked in a toy factory. The family lived on Beachside Avenue, where they rented their home.

Margaret Francisco, b. ca. 1847 in New Jersey, living with and working for James W. Pinkney in Wilton in 1860. (FC 1860-50)

Albert Freeman, on the 1850 census as a 17 year old living in the household of Dr. David Willard, near St. Matthew's Episcopal Church. (FC 1850, 220) Presumably he was employed by Willard. The next door neighbors were Harvey and Harriet Squires and family, also African American.

Virginia Gordon, b. ca. 1900 in Massachusetts, and a resident of Chicago, Illinois. Living and working in household of Helen C. Platt in Wilton in 1940. Also working in Platt's household was Daniel O. Osborne. (FC 1940-7a)

Alfred Green, b. 1879 in New York, living and working in the household of William H. Finch in Wilton in 1900. (FC 1900-9)

GROVES FAMILY

Anna Gaul Groves, born Ridgefield, married John Groves of New Haven, lived in Wilton. (TCVR 5-54)

John Groves, born in New Haven, married Anna Gaul of Ridgefield, lived in Wilton. He was a joiner by trade. (TCVR 5-54)

Unknown, b. January 27, 1896 in Wilton to John and Anna. (TCVR 5-54)

Helena Lee, b. ca. 1919 in New York, and a resident of Norwalk. She was living and working in the household of Louis Gelden in Wilton in 1940. (FC 1940-3a)

Susan Marsh, she is on the 1860 census as a 12 year old girl living and working as a servant in the household of the widow Lucretia Middlebrook at 226 Ridgefield Road. Susan was born in New York State. (FC 1860-40)

Sherman Roberts, b. ca. 1843 in New York, fought in the Civil War. He enlisted as a substitute for an unknown draftee (presumably a Wilton man) at Bridgeport on August 28, 1863. (NARA 46289254, 1424) He does not appear to have lived in Wilton, or to have had any other connection with this town besides serving as a substitute for a Wilton resident (and no doubt being paid to do so, besides receiving the \$600 bounty offered by the State for enlisting). Sherman served first in Company A, 30th Colored Infantry (Connecticut), and after May 18, 1864, in Company B, 31st Colored Infantry (New York). The 31st regiment participated in the Overland Campaign from the Rapidan to the James River, Virginia, in May and June, 1864. As part of the Overland Campaign, Sherman's regiment guarded trains of the Army of the Potomac through the Wilderness region. He was hospitalized for unknown reasons just 17 miles from Wilderness at Fredericksburg, Virginia, on May 25, 1864 and died close to a year later at L'Overture Hospital in Alexandria, Virginia, sometime before April 20, 1865. (NARA 46301811, 1823) The cause of his death is unknown, but it seems possible that he was injured while on duty guarding trains through Wilderness. (NARA 46289254, 1424)

George W. Robinson, b. December 29, 1844 in Greenwich, Conn. (or ca. 1842 in Port Chester, New York) and a hostler (or possibly a hatter) by trade. (RG73 2694; NARA 57060319, 1517, 1519) George was 5 feet 9 inches tall, and he could read and write. (RG73 2694) He enlisted for service in the Civil War at Bridgeport or Norwalk in January 1864 (his military records are inconsistent). (NARA 57060319, 1519) It is possible he was a substitute for a drafted Wilton resident. He served in Company D, 29th Colored Infantry (Connecticut). After about a year of service, attained the rank of Corporal. On March 19, 1864, George and his regiment were transported by ship to Annapolis, Maryland, after being addressed by the governor of Connecticut and Frederick Douglass. From April through July, they were in Beaufort, South Carolina. In early August, they were ordered to Bermuda Hundred, Virginia, as part of the siege

on Petersburg and Richmond. In mid-August, they participated in the Second Battle of Deep Bottom at Strawberry Plains. From late August to late September, they were in the trenches around Petersburg. Next, they fought in the Battle of Chaffin's Farm and New Market Heights at Fort Harrison. In mid-October, they fought in the Battle of Darbytown Road. In late October, they fought in the Battle of Fair Oaks and Darbytown Road. After months in the trenches around Richmond, the 29th was first to fight their way into the city on April 3, 1865. After the war, George settled in New Haven, with his new wife Madeline (she was from North Carolina), and their infant son Samuel. George's occupation was chair maker. (FC 1870, 168) In 1880, George was still working with chairs, and Madeline was a launderess, but Samuel seems to have died. (FC 1880, 46) In 1900, he and Madeline were still in New Haven, living on Winter Street. George was then an expressman, meaning someone responsible for packing and overseeing railway cargo. The couple rented their home and were both listed as literate. (FC 1900, 12b) By 1910, George was a widower living in Darien in Fitch's Home for Soldiers. (FC 1910, 1b) He died at Fitch's Home on February 21, 1926 and is buried in the institute's cemetery (now called the Veterans' Cemetery) in Darien. (FG)

SCOFIELD FAMILY

Helen Scofield, b. ca. 1903, mixed race daughter of Anne Scofield, a white woman, and Smith, a Black man. Her very existence was taken as proof that her parents, and particularly her mother, were immoral and unfit. In 1913, Helen and her sister Lillian lived with their mother, Smith, and two small Black children, in a small home (described in the papers as a "shack") next to the train tracks and a little north of Dewey Street in Bridgeport. Anne's husband, Gilbert L. Scofield, worked in Wilton as a farm laborer, and was living there at the time of a trial that was held to determine the children's fate. At the trial, Anne declared "I love all my children alike." She promised to leave the West End (a middle class neighborhood) have nothing more to do with Smith, and pleaded to keep her children. The judge pronounced: "I think you have set a very bad example to your children . . . and I have no assurance that you will keep your promise. I do not think your children should be allowed to live with you and grow up to a realization of what you have done. You seem to lack the moral responsibility which a mother should have to properly rear children and there is no other course left to me but to order their committal to the county home." (BEF 12-30-1913) Both Helen and her sister Lillian are listed on the 1910 census living in Fairfield with Anne and Gilbert. (FC 1910, 28) It is possible that Gilbert was unaware the children were not his at that point, as both children were blonde. (BEF 12-30-1913) Despite the trial and Gilbert's apparent reservations, the family had reunited and was living in Fairfield again in 1920. (FC 1920, 20a)

Lillian Scofield, b. ca. 1906, mixed race daughter of Anne Scofield, a white woman, and Smith, a Black man. (BEF 12-30-1913) See the entry for Helen Scofield for additional detail.

Smith, father of Helen and Lillian, his mixed race daughters with Anne Scofield, a white woman. He was a resident of Bridgeport. (BEF 12-30-1913)

Ellen Smith, b. ca. 1837 in New York. Lived with and worked for William H. Taylor in Wilton in 1850. (FC 1850-229)

Minnie Smith, b. ca. 1904 in Pennsylvania, and a resident of Manhattan, New York. Living and working in household of John H. Jennings in Wilton in 1940. (FC 1940-6b)

Thomasine Williamston, b. ca. 1917 in New York, and a resident of New York. Living and working in household of Roman Chelmsky in Wilton as a maid in 1940. (FC 1940-7b)