

## **John Elliot Williams (1892-1958)**

When John (Jack) Elliot Williams was born on March 26, 1892, at 16 Inle St., Paisley, Renfrewshire, Scotland, his father, Andrew, was 33 and his mother, Jane Elliot, was 30. Andrew was listed on his son's birth registration as an Iron Riveter.



Andrew James Williams  
and Jane Elliot Williams



In 1901 the family was living at 27 Glen St. in Paisley. His father Andrew is listed as a Boilermaker, probably working on the railroad as that was his prior metal working experience in Crewe, England where he worked for the L&NW Railway.

About 1906 the family moved to Belfast Ireland where John's youngest brother Andrew was born in April of that year. It is suspected that the family moved to Ireland to work at the Harland & Wolff shipyard which was constructing the Titanic at that time. Their home on Humber Street was close to the front gates of the shipyard. There is a suggestion that the family may have moved to Canada and then returned between 1901 and 1906 but no proof has been found. A 1907 immigration record shows a 15 year old John Williams (grocer) arriving in Halifax from Belfast destined for Brockville. At that time, sister Martha (Williams) Cassells was living in Osgoode Ontario, not far from Brockville, so this makes it a good probability that this is our John. John does not appear with the rest of his family in Belfast in the 1911 Irish census.

In November 1915 when Jack enlisted in the Canadian Army, his occupation was cheesemaker. The Morewood Ontario cheese factory where he worked was owned by Oliver Martin. There is an extensive connection here between the Martin family and the Williams'. Jack's sister Martha and brother Robert both worked for Oliver for various periods. Alva Jay Martin, Oliver's son, joined the army in 1916 and the family lore has it that Jack brought Jay to the family home in Belfast during leave, where he was rather taken by Jack's sister Annie. After the war, the two were married in Edmonton (Dec 1919).

## WWI Military Record

John enlisted as a Gunner (Private) in the Canadian Field Artillery (CFA) in Ottawa 26 November, 1915, at the age of 21. His Regimental Number was 305593 and his official records are held in the Canadian Archives in Ottawa under that number. He listed his home as Morewood, Ontario and his trade as cheese-maker. For next of kin on his Attestation papers John listed his father Andrew at 24 Humber St, Belfast Ireland. His pay records show that his cheques were originally sent to his brother Robert in Morewood, Ontario (later scratched out and Ormond inserted). Later they were sent to his mother in Belfast. After a period of basic training in Canada (presumably in Valcartier, Quebec) John's unit, the 32nd battery, arrived in England 14 February, 1916. This unit was part of the 9th Brigade, which along with the 8th, 10th and 11th brigades formed the 3rd Divisional Artillery. The unit was stationed for a time at Bramshott Camp followed by further training at Milford. They arrived at the port of Harvre, France on 14 July, 13 days after the battle of the Somme. John was wounded by gunfire on 10 August, 1918 and had been gassed at some point. After he recovered from his wound he was to be hospitalized with influenza in October and with pneumonia in November. John soon returned to Canada on the R.M.S. Carmania, arriving in Halifax 30 Dec 1918 and was discharged 20 Jan 1919 at Ottawa. His discharge papers list him as 5' 3" tall, 135 lbs, blue eyes, light hair, with a distinguishing mark of a "6 inch scar G.S.W. left buttock Aug 10 1918, France". (GSW = gun shot wound). Upon discharge John indicated that he was going to Chesterville to be a farmer.

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Jack returned to Canada after the war and lived with his sister Annie for a period and then moved around the West doing construction. The 1921 Census shows Jack and Wilda in Calgary, he a carpenter and she a waitress and married (??). The early 1920's found them in Oregon where they had a son, Robert Elliott, in 1923. Jack married Wilda Josephine Cudney, daughter of Peter Cudney and Claissa Railsback, on July 25, 1925, in Clark, Washington. They owned a dairy farm there but lost it in the financial crash of 1929. They moved back to Canada and bought a farm in Czar Alberta where they had three more children;  
Jack Wilkerson – Dec 16/1930 - at home Czar Alta  
Richard James - Oct 30/1932 – at home Czar Alta  
Martha Katherine - July 26/1934 - hospital in Provost Alberta

The Czar farm was not successful and was sold in 1942, the year son Bud joined the Air Force. Bud's Attestation papers show the family in Czar in the spring of the year. The family moved to Jasper Place in Edmonton at that time.



The Czar farm in 1942, picture by John Elliott Williams (son of Jack's brother Robert )  
Cathy standing on the porch.



Cathy, Richard and Jack Williams - 1942

Jack and Wilda moved to a farm 6 miles from the town of Rochester, Alberta from Jasper Place, Edmonton in the spring of 1944 (per letter to Dept of National Defence). Bud was lost in action in Jan 1944 on an air raid into Greece from an airbase in Africa. Jack was too ill to work the farm however so that fell to the family. Jack and Wilda moved to Surrey BC in 1952.

Jack died on March 11, 1958, in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, at the age of 65.

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John Elliott Williams Obituary  
Vancouver Sun Thursday 13 March 1958

WILLIAMS – In Shaghessey Hospital March 11, 1958

John Elliot Williams of 1837 W. 3rd Ave aged 65 years.  
Deceased served as a gunner in the R.C.A. World War I  
And leaves his wife: 2 sons, Jack of Regina, Sask., Richard  
of Milo Alberta and daughter Mrs. John Gandy of Vancouver;  
9 grandchildren; brother Andrew James of Vancouver.  
Funeral Services in Nunn and Thompsons Chapel March 14th at  
11 am. Rev George Turpin DD officiating. Internment Field of  
Honor, Forest Lawn Cemetery.

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## Jack Williams Notes from Elmer Provost (abt 2004)

Jack came over from England after the war and was staying with Annie (Williams) Martin and Alva Jay Martin (Phyllis' parents) after they were married Dec.27/1919 here in Edmonton.

I understand that Jack worked on hotel construction in Edmonton and I believe also in Calgary and Banff. When Annie and Jay and their son Alva moved to Calgary in 1921 or 1922 they lost track of Jack.

He was "rediscovered" by his youngest brother Andrew who found that he was farming with his wife Wilda and four children near the town of Metiskow in eastern Alberta. Phyl and her folks visited Jack and Wilda at this farm sometime in the mid thirties.

The next time we heard about them they were on a farm out of Rochester, Alberta -north of Edmonton. Phyl and I and her parents visited them at this new location-I believe it was the summer of 1947. It was around this time I understand that Alva Jay Martin and his friend in the Canadian Legion arranged for Jack to get a full Veteran's Disability Pension. Jack was badly wounded in the Great War.

Shortly after this they moved to Vancouver/Burnaby area. Jim and Kate Heazlett visited them in Vancouver when they visited Canada in 1948. Phyl and I and our family visited them in 1956. Jack was in poor health then from chronic bronchitis. That's the last contact that Phyl and I had with Jack and Wilda.

Their youngest son Richard visited us a few times and their other son Jack W. Williams and wife Elsie kept in touch with Annie and Alva Jay. Jack W. worked as a school maintenance man in Bruno, Sask. I have not been able to locate him

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A 2018 note from Martha Katherine Williams to Loretta (Williams) Polischuk ,

*Dear Lorrie*

*Here is a resume of our history as best I can remember. Hope it is what you want. It is accurate as best I can remember & what I was told.*

*Mum*

*Born Dec 2/1899 to [Peter Wilkerson] Cudney & Clarissa Alizene [Railsback]. Can't remember her Dad's first name. Born in Montana & family moved to Alberta about 1910 - Near Horsehaven. Settle on a homestead there. Mum went back to USA sometime in her mid teens & worked as a waitress in logging camps & restaurants all around Washington & Oregon. Married John Elliott Williams around 1922 but don't know whether that was in USA or Canada. They had 4 children*

*Robert Elliot Born Mar 2/1923 in Oregon*

*Jack Wilkerson – Born Dec 16/1930 Czar Alta*

*Richard James Born Oct 30/1932 Czar Alta*

*Martha Katherine Born July 26/1934 Provost Alberta*

*Mum and Dad owned a dairy farm somewhere in Oregon in the late 1920's, but lost everything in the crash of 1929. They had just deposited the money from their cream sales in the bank. The next day the bank closed out & their money went with it. They came back to Canada & lived around Calgary for some time. Dad worked as a carpenter & joiner. They bought a farm around Czar Alberta & moved there about 1930. Jack & Richard were born on that farm via midwife. I was born in hospital in*

*Provost & Mum had a very difficult pregnancy with me. See – I was a troublemaker even before I got here!*

### *Mum's Family History*

*Her grandparents came across the country from overseas via covered wagon. Her grandfather was a Dutch immigrant – last name Railsback. That's about all I know about them. Mums siblings were, Loretta, Ann, Martha, Edna, Estelle, Dwight & Edmond. Edna married a Catholic boy who died young. She then joined a convent & Mum never heard from her again.*

### *Dad's Family History*

*Dad was born in Paisley Scotland. He came over to Canada as a small child & I think his Dad got into the Creamery business in Ontario where he grew up. Dad's siblings were, Katherine, Ann, Elizabeth, Martha, Andrew, David & Robert.*

*They went back to Ireland sometime. Don't know when but Uncle David was shot to death in a hunting accident in Ireland & Andrew I think was born there, Andrew at any rate thought he was Irish & the rest of the kids thought they were Scotch. Andrew was youngest & spoke with an Irish accent. Ann may have been Dad's twin sister. She married Jay Martin and lived in Calgary – had 3 children  
Alva killed over Italy around 1942-3  
Arnold – he made it home  
& a girl – can't remember her name.*

*Andrew lived in Southern Alberta – moved to Lulu Island BC don't know dates.  
Andrew & Midge (wife) had three kids,  
Reginald  
Ronald – died age 32 of a brain aneurism  
Beverly*

*The farm Mum and Dad bought was a real disaster area. A dust bowl they moved there in 1929 & left in 1942 & never once got a crop. They were dried out most of the time but Dad took the hail insurance money one year to buy seed & that year they got hailed out.*

*Dad was gassed and wounded in the 1<sup>st</sup> World War. His lungs were nearly destroyed. He spent most winters in the hospital in Edmonton. Mum's Bud (Robert Elliott) ran the farm at Czar til we left in about 1941. We stayed there 'till Bud was killed in 2<sup>nd</sup> War Jan 11/44. We were in Jasper Place – suburb of Edmonton from 1941-44 or 5 when we bought a farm outside of Rochester 6 miles. Stayed there til 1952. Mum, Jack, Richard, & I ran it as by now Dad was really ill all of the time. Dad and Mum moved to Surrey BC in 1952.*

*Both farms were horse drawn equipment, no power or amenities, lots of hard work. Dad died in Vancouver in 1958 from his lung condition. He was then on 100% disability from the army. He never got a pension til 1939 when he got \$13.00 a month to keep Mum & four kids.*

*Mum died in March of 1980-81 of gangrene in both feet. She was a slight little person & should never have been subjected to so much heavy work & on her feet all the time. She just wasn't built for it but she lacked in stature she more than made up for in courage & determination.*

*Hope this is what you wanted to know. I am enclosing a copy of a letter to Dad from the King of England thanking him for his service. Also enclosing a copy for Rob if he is interested.*

*P.S. Thank you so much for the info you sent on Dad. It clarifies a lot of things for me,  
Love Aunt Cathy.*

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The page below is from the book  
Echoes along the Ribstone  
Published in 1978 by;  
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## THE JACK WILLIAMS FAMILY

Wilda Josie Cudney was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. P. Cudney and sister of Ed, Dick and Mrs. Fred Whitcomb.

Jack Williams was a returned soldier, seriously wounded by shrapnel which troubled him all his life. He was a red haired Scotsman, his conversation was colorful to the extreme, with a fine sense of humor.

He married Josie Cudney in 1921. They moved to Calgary where Jack got a job and Josie worked in a restaurant. Their son Bob was born in Calgary. Later they moved back to Jack's farm at Czar where Jack Jr. and Richard and later a little girl Cathy was born.

Jack was a slight little man, short and slim. What he lacked in size he made up for in picturesque speech. His brother-in-law, Fred Whitcomb was a deep-voiced, big, burley man with his shirt always open, showing a hairy chest.



*Jack & Josie & Bobbie Williams*

They were haying together at the meadow a mile from the house when a storm came up. They jumped on their horses and hit for home, hanging onto the harness the horses went at high speed. The rain and hail started. Whit as they called him was hanging onto the hames with his thumbs on top of the ball of the hame. A hail stone hit Whit on the thumb. When they got off the horses Jack

looked up at him and saw tears in his eyes. Jack said, "You're not such a big hairy-chested-bastard now, are you?"

When Cathy was born and Josie in hospital with her, Jack had to look after the boys, Bobby, Jack Jr. and Richard. Mrs. Whitcomb, Josie's sister came to see how they were doing, and asked if he needed any cooking done. Jack said, "No thanks. I cooked a great big kettle of beans and gave each of the kids a shovel, took their pants off and turned them loose."

There was no school at Horsehaven when Josie arrived in Canada and she went to school at Smith's house and later attended school at Horsehaven for one year.

The oldest son, Bobby Williams enlisted when he was seventeen in the Second War. He served overseas in the Air Force. Just before the war was over he was reported missing and presumed dead. The family never heard otherwise.

Jack and Josie moved to the west coast about 1942. Jack died there and Josie still lives at Surrey, B.C. (1977). Her daughter Cathy lives nearby, Richard lives in Alberta and Jack Jr. lives at Bruno, Saskatchewan.

## RILEY BENSON

by Gladys Almborg

Riley Benson was one of the pioneers of the Sather district. He came from Washington where he had been a guide for big game hunters.

Riley was a tall handsome man with sparkling brown eyes and a black mustache. He always wore a wide brimmed hat something like the Mounties wore.

He lived in a four roomed house with a stained glass window in the livingroom, facing the road and Benson's Lake beyond. Pincherries and chokecherries grew around the lake.

One day news travelled through the district, "Riley Benson and the cook at Czar Hotel left on the train and when they came back they were married!"

Mrs. Benson had two children from a former marriage, Joe, the oldest, and Agnes. They were among the first pupils of Sather School, Agnes in grade one and Joe a bit more advanced.

Mrs. Benson was a hard working woman who always had a good garden. She planted a Caragana hedge to enclose it. Neighbors were always welcome at the Benson home and were sure to be treated to sumptuous meals. Some children tasted their first cream puffs while visiting at Benson's.

Two children were born to this marriage, Margaret and Roy.

Mr. Benson was a progressive farmer but the drought and depression forced them to leave. They first moved only a few miles west, but it was just as dry there so they finally moved to Cherhill, Alberta.

Joe served in World War II, and it is believed he was married and had a family at this time. He then married for the second time, and was killed Oct., 1976, at Salmon

Created by Dave Williams – Mar 2023  
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