



An American Family History

The Wiltse Family of Leeds County, Ontario

Leeds County, Ontario, Canada was first surveyed in 1792 in preparation for the United Empire Loyalists settlers. In 1850, Leeds County merged with Grenville to create the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville.



Wilsey, Willsey, Wiltse, Wiltsie

John Wiltse was born on March 31, 1748 in Dutchess County, New York.,

He married Anna Cary. She was the daughter of David Cary and Ann Cornell.

Ruth Wiltse (1772, married Thomas How),
Solomon Wiltse (1773),
Cornelius Wiltse (1775, married **Patience Mott**),
Rhoda Wiltse (1780, married **James Brown**),
Sarah Wiltse (1783, married **Oliver Brown**),
Mary Wiltse (1785, married Wing Walker), and
Anne Wiltse (1788, married Lemule Cornell).

His second wife was Mary Conley.

John Wiltse, Jr. (1778, married Mary Wiltse),
Elizabeth Wiltse (1790, married Richard Jacqua),
Catherine Wiltse (1792, married **Samuel Slack**),
Phoebe Wiltse (1794, married Thomas How),
Abigail Wiltse (1796),
Henry Wiltse (1799),
Mathilda Wiltse (1801, married John Robinson).

John, Sr. died on July 26, 1801.

John, Jr. and Solomon were assessed in **Yonge Township in 1805**.

The first European settlements in **Ontario** were after the American Revolution when 5,000 loyalists left the new United States.



Dutchess County, New York patriots forced colonists loyal to the British government to flee north into what became Ontario.

Benoni Wiltse was born on July 2, 1758 in Dutchess County, New York. His parents were Jeremiah and Mary Smith Wiltse.

He married Rachel Marks. Their children may have included:

Benoni Wiltse, Jr. (1777, married **Mary Slack**),
Joseph Wiltse (1782),
Susannah Wiltse (1782, married John Wiltse, Jr.),

United Empire Loyalists were Americans who remained loyal to King George III and the British Empire. They moved to Canada after the American Revolution.



Elizabeth Wiltse (1784, married [John Conley](#)),
James Wiltse (1786, married Christina Coleman).
Rachel Wiltse (1789),
Comfort Martin Wiltse (1790, married Hester Coleman),
Mary Wiltse (1790, married [Daniel Brown](#)), and
Hannah Wiltse (1792, married Samuel Kelsay).

During the American Revolution, he remained loyal to the Crown.

In 1784 the family moved to Canada.

In 1784 Benoni appeared on the provisioning list for disbanded troops as a member of the Loyal Rangers. He was mustered in Augusta. James was listed as a refugee.

Benoni, Sr. and Jr., Joseph, and James were assessed in [Yonge Township in 1805](#).

Cornelius Wiltse was born October 17, 1775 in New York. He was the son of John Wiltse and Anna Cary.

He married [Patience Mott](#).

Cornelius and Patience's children included:
Reuben Wiltse (1800, married Nancy Brown),
Jesse Wiltse (1804).

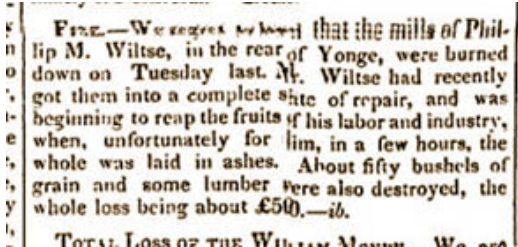
Cornelius was assessed in [Yonge Township in 1805](#).

John Wiltse, Jr. was born December 01, 1778. He was the son of John Wiltse and Anna Cary.

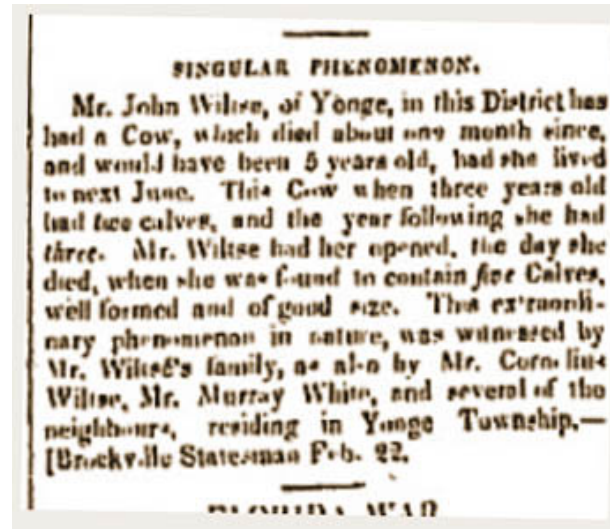
He married Susannah Wiltse. Susannah was born April 17, 1782 in Hopewell, Dutchess County, New York.

John and Susannah's children probably included:

Elizabeth Wiltse (1798, married William White),
David Wiltse (1801, married Thankful Smith),
Nancy Wiltse (1803, married John White), and
Anna Wiltse (1807, married Jacob Palmer).



British Whig
December 9, 1834



Chronicle & Gazette
February 26, 1840



from *History of Leeds and Grenville, Ontario*

Colonel Benoni Wiltse arrived in the spring of 1792 (this assertion is disputed.) Soon after Mr. Wiltse's arrival, his two brothers, James and Jeremiah, and a half brother, John arrived, and, in consequence, the Settlement became known as Wiltse Town. Benoni Wiltse, who settled on lot No. n, in the 8th concession, where there was a small supply of water, built the first grist and saw mill, Paul Glassford superintending the work.

from *The Rear of Leeds & Lansdowne: the making of community on the Gananoque River frontier, 1796-1996*


The roots of anti-administration or Reform sentiment in the countryside around Farmersville were deep. **Benoni Wiltse**, patriarch of a prominent local Loyalist family, as early as 1808 was vexed at not being appointed a top militia officer, and complained about those "who faced us as Enemies through the late Revolution [being] placed to command and sit as judges."

Despite being a lieutenant-colonel in the second regiment of Leeds militia, Wiltse's poor example to the young men in the Farmersville vicinity during the War of 1812 landed him in a court-martial, and as late as 1815 he was still imprisoned at Brockville.

Rather than chastening Wiltse, the court martial and imprisonment were viewed by his neighbours in the Farmersville vicinity as unfair treatment by a provincial administration and a local Tory elite whose own privileged position was attributed to unwholesome family connections rather than personal merit.

The anti- administration views of local American-origin inhabitants were confirmed as they beheld individuals such as Nathan Hicock, despite faithfully discharging his duty during the war, being refused a promotion in the militia, because he had attended Robert Gourlay's county convention. The Alien Bill and the heavy influx of ultra-Conservative Wexford Protestants in the 1820s only exacerbated the call by local American-origin settlers for political reform.

During the American Revolution a **Tory** or **Loyalist** was used in for those who remained loyal to the British Crown.



from *A Genealogical and Psychological Memoir of Philippe Maton Wiltsee and his Descendants*

.....Having exeperienced mistreatment and the resulting hardship of contact with the Bennington Mob. Jeremiah's sons by his second wife, could not espouse the cause that the Mob supported subject to conciliatory proposals from the British officers, and as a consequence, gave their support and sympathy to the Loyalists.

Determined to take the part of those oppressed to the despoilers of their father's home, and not feeling safe at Nobletown, Benoni in his nineteenth year and James in his thirteenth, sought personal safety by joining the Loyalist forces.

It was only necessary to cross the Hudson River, to receive safe conduct to the Loyalist organization, and receive friendly treatment.

In October, 1777, orders were issued by the Committee of Safety at Albany, to remove every Tory or disaffected person to Connecticut. The Tories flocked to the British for protection. Benoni Wiltsee and James, crossed the Hudson River at Esopus, and followed the war path constructed by the Indians and Tories to near the head waters of the Schoharie River, and followed the stream to Schoharie.

They took the oath of fidelity to the crown, and joined the forces of Capt. George Mann. Each one was given a scarlet cap to wear, as visible manifestation of his loyalty to his sovereign. They were mustered, and paraded and drilled daily uptil Mann's forces were dispersed by Capt Woodbrake and his cavelry [sic]...

The descendants of Benoni and James are not communicative in relation to the part they took in these aff'airs. They talked to their descendants of Cherry Valley, and told of having lived at Bethlehem 12 miles from Albany, N. Y. and of having gone from there, in 1783, to St. Johns, Canada, and thence to Leeds Co., Canada by boat.

Benoni acted as a spy for the British. If he and James were at the massacre of Cherry Valley, November 18, 1778, they belonged to a detail from Edward Jessup's forces, and engaged in all of his military enterprises. They, probably, received commissions as officers of his Rangers, November 12, 1781. ...

My father, Joseph Wiltse," says John Wiltse' of Leeds County, Canada,

A **militia** is a military unit composed of citizens who are called up in time of need.



Connecticut's first European settlers were Dutch.



was born April 17, 1892. I have heard him say that he was from 12 miles west of Albany, New York. When he was 10 months old, they moved to Canada, about half way between Brockville and Prescott, on the bank of the river St. Lawrence. When he was ten years old, they moved about 15 miles west onto Lot No. 13, in Eighth Concession of Yonge, which lot I still own.

Benoni Wiltse emigrated from the United States to Canada in 1784," says Mrs. Charles Wiltse. "He crossed the St. Lawrence river below where Brockville now stands, built himself a shanty for his family; and, when the British Government granted him his lands, he built himself a log house and commenced a settlement as did his brother James, and his half brother, John's, sons who soon arrived and followed them there. Their father, John Wiltse, Sr., emigrated in 1793, and lived a few years, and died of cancer of the face. The settlement they made was about 12 or 15 miles west of the St. Lawrence river, on land granted to Wiltses by the British Government. The settlement was called Wiltsetown at first, then Farmersville; but it is now called Athens. Only two Wiltse families now [1901] remain. The rest have sold out and moved to other lands.

H O M E	Colonial Maryland	Colonial New England	Colonial Virginia & North Carolina	Colonial Virginia & West Virginia	Quakers & Mennonites	New Jersey Baptists	
German Lutherans	Ontario Settlers	Ohio Pioneers	Watagua Settlement	Pennsylvania Pioneers	Iowa Farmers	Californians	Jewish Immigrants

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