

## **Hugh Richard Williams - 1821-1900 - Welsh Immigrant**

In an article on Hugh R. Williams published in the History of Blue Earth County (pg. 756), Hugh R. Williams was born in Carmarthenshire, Wales, about 1827 to Richard and Kitty Jones Williams. He had one brother, William, who was two years younger. The father, Richard, died when Hugh was about four years old. His mother, Kitty, died when he was about six. The two boys were raised by relatives. According to the family, the people Hugh R. and William were living with owned a pub or inn. One day the two boys were in the cellar fighting and tipped over a barrel of beer or ale. Frightened, they ran away and came to America.

Hugh R. Williams was originally a farmer in Waukesha, Wisconsin. The first official record found thus far is a Declaration of Intention to become a citizen of the United States No # 1333 filed in the Circuit Court of Waukesha County, Wisconsin. Apparently he filed this document on the 4th day of November, 1851. It claims he was born in Wales in 1821 and immigrated to the US on or about the month of May, 1850. The next document filed after that was by a Gabriel Williams also of Wales, who was born in 1811. Could this be a relation to Hugh R. Williams?

The 1850 census records for Delafield Township, Waukesha, Wisconsin list Hugh and Margaret Williams. They probably married in Wisconsin in 1850. Hugh R. became naturalized and they had daughter, Catherine. Shortly afterwards they started charting their course for Butternut Valley late in the fall of 1855. The second child, Richard Williams was born on April 1, 1855. The family are as follows: Hugh R., wife Margaret, children: Richard, Catherine, Elizabeth, Mary, Ellen, Hugh, Jeanette, Willie, Margaret E. and Thomas.

According to the Lake Crystal newspaper dated September 12, the family (Margaret and Hugh R. daughter Catherine, and son Richard) left to go to southern Minnesota in November of 1855. The following is part of the Lake Crystal article with revisions thrown in. Apparently they had yoke and oxen and one cow when they settled on the farm owned by George Wagner. They lived there for about three months before they moved to a 160 acre farm southwest of the village of Cambria, Minnesota, which they acquired by preemption paying two and one-half dollars per acre. Here they built a log house. Their son Richard Williams later bought this farm in 1881.

Like other pioneers of those early days, the family lived on johnny cakes and prairie chickens. The chickens were so abundant they could be caught in traps. Passenger pigeons and partridges were also included in the menu.

Below a large spring, just below the Williams farm, a tribe of Indians lived in a village each winter. Richard Williams played with the Indian children until the uprising occurred when he was seven years old. Prior to the outbreak of 1862, the Indians brought wild ducks and geese to the Williams family and traded them for bread.

Hugh R. Williams joined the Butternut Valley guard to protect the settlers from the invading Indians. During the outbreak, the family took refuge in South Bend. In their absence, the Indians took one horse and a colt.

Mrs. Margaret Williams died in 1867, cause of death unknown. Later that year, their daughter, Catherine, married William Salisbury Hughes of Butternut Valley. Hugh R. Williams signed their marriage certificate as a witness. Hugh R. Williams married again on May 19, 1869 in Cambria, Minnesota, to Ruth Rees, whose father was a minister named Joseph Rees. They moved west in 1881 and lived in Coalville, Utah, long enough to have one child and then settled in Lewisville, Idaho. Hugh R. Williams died on August 6, 1900 and his second wife Ruth died in 1925.