

William Hilton, Jr. (1840 – 1923)
Susan Maria Johns (1857 – 1938)

William Jr. and his sister Sarah Frances were baptized together on 1st June 1842 at the Anglican Parish of St. Thomas's Church in Belleville, Hastings County, Ontario. They lived with their elder brother Richard and their parents, William Hilton, Sr. and Sarah Catharine Maria Johns, in Rawdon Township, south of Marmora. Five more children were born to William and Maria. In 1860 the Hilton family moved to Duoro Township in Peterborough County - an area with a predominant Irish population. William Sr. had emigrated to Upper Canada from Ireland, possibly with a brother Richard, about 1832¹.

About 1860 William Jr. went to Marmora to live with his uncle, Solomon Johns. It may be that Solomon, then about 59 years old, asked William to help him with his farm work. He remained in Marmora for the remainder of his life. William is listed in the Hastings County Directory of 1869-70 as living at that time, on one of Solomon's properties, next to his cousins at Bartholomew Carley Johns homestead in North Marmora. However, Solomon sold that particular property in 1875. On the 1881 census William is noted as being a laborer, then residing with Solomon on what was known as the David Johns Homestead, two miles north of Marmora village. That year William bought one of Solomon's three adjoining lots that comprised the homestead there.

According to the 1881 census a Susan Maria Johns was also living at the residence of Solomon Johns in that time period. Susan had been born in Marmora about 1854, and was raised there by her aunt and uncle, Ann Mooney and James Campbell². She was the natural daughter of Susan Mooney, Ann's sister, and a man identified in the Campbell family records as Solomon Johns. Susan's mother evidently died soon after she was born. Although we have not positively identified her father, we believe that he was a member of the Johns family descending from Lieutenant Solomon Johns, U.E. Although it is possible that Solomon, the son of David and Sarah Johns, was Susan's father, it doesn't seem probable. A more likely prospect is the unnamed son born in 1818 to Solomon Johns Jr. (second son of Lieutenant Solomon Johns) and Maria Finkle³. We are not aware of his given name, but it could be that he was Solomon Johns, 3rd. His mother Maria died the year he was born; his father later remarried and moved to the United States. We have not found any trace of their son. Thus, the genealogical identity of the father of Susan Maria Johns may remain unknown.

Solomon Johns, uncle of William Hilton, Jr., died intestate in 1884. A legal action arose regarding the disposition of his property. Nancy Hawley, Solomon's sister, felt that he should have provided for Susan. The Judge of the Surrogate Court of Hastings County ordered that Solomon's land was to be sold, and the proceeds divided among his next of kin. Thus, on 4th September 1886 William Hilton Jr., being the highest bidder, purchased from the Estate of Solomon Johns, Lots 10 and 11 in the 5th Concession and the west half of Lot 10 in the 6th Concession, for the price of \$5,300.00. He immediately sold Lot 11 to Frank Brown (husband of his cousin Nancy Johns) but retained the rest of the property, on which he lived and successfully farmed for many years.

Sometime between 1885 and 1891 William Hilton Jr. and Susan Maria Johns were married. It may be that William married Susan so that he could provide for her, since Solomon had not done so. He was of the Anglican faith; she was a devout Roman Catholic. We have found no record of their marriage, although it should have been registered. If Susan was a daughter of Solomon, then she and William would have been first cousins - neither church would likely have sanctioned a marriage between them. The couple continued to live at the home of the late Solomon Johns. There they kept boarders, a farm hand, and a servant to perform domestic chores.

¹ An 1832 "Emigrants Handbook For Arrivals at Quebec" indicates an influx of emigrants from the United Kingdom

² Census of Marmora Township, 1861, 1871

³ "Death Notices of Ontario", William D. Reid

On 1st August 1895 a son was born to William and Susan Hilton, named William. Unfortunately, the baby died at the tender age of 6 months, and there were no more children. If the 1849 birth date on her gravestone is correct, Susan bore her first and only child at the age of 46 – a somewhat unlikely circumstance. From the data given on four censuses we conclude that she was probably born about 1857.

We believe that William and Susan Hilton were the couple who took Alice Johns, eldest daughter of Bartholomew Carley Johns, Jr., to live with them about 1899 when her father became very ill with tuberculosis. Having no children of their own, they were delighted to have Alice be a part of their lives. But, she missed her own family, and returned home after a year. While she was there, Alice viewed the military sword of her great-great-grandfather, Lieutenant Solomon Johns. Perhaps it had been kept in this house since the death of David Johns; the current location of the sword is unknown.

A news item published in the Marmora Herald on 8th February 1917 stated “Mr. Hilton, of Trenton, is visiting his brother, Mr. Wm. Hilton this week”. William’s brother from Trenton was Alfred Frederick Hilton. Their brother Richard, a merchant, had also lived in Trenton until his death in 1910. Their sister Emma Maria Hilton, who did not marry, resided at Richard’s residence, and according to the 1881 census their father, William, Sr., by then a widower, was also living with them at that time.

Details of the lives of Susan and William Hilton Jr. are told in their obituaries.

WM. HILTON (Marmora Herald, 22 November, 1923)

“The subject of this sketch was born in the Township of Rawdon, March 15th 1840, being in his 84th year at the time of his death. He was the second of a family of eight children of William and Catherine Maria Johns Hilton. When about 18 years old he went to live with his uncle, the late Solomon Johns, on the old David Johns homestead near this village. On the death of Solomon Johns in 1884 he bought the larger part of that homestead. A man of good physique and great energy he made a success of his farming operations. While carrying on his farming he found time to serve his Township as Reeve and Councillor respectively for many years. Also to act as President of the Marmora Cheese Company. An ardent rifleman, a member of the Dominion Rifle Association he was twice selected on the Wimbledon and Bisley teams sent to England to compete in the Empire matches.

Six years ago his advancing years necessitated giving up farming when he moved into the village and has since resided on Forsyth St. He was an Anglican in religion, and a member of the Masonic Fraternity.

He leaves a widow but no children, an only child having died in infancy. He also leaves a sister, Miss Emma of Trenton, and two brothers, Alfred F. of Trenton and Edmund of Vancouver.

The late Wm. Hilton was widely known throughout the district, a man of sterling qualities, he was held in the highest esteem by his neighbors and friends.”

MRS. SUSAN MARIA HILTON (Marmora Herald, 27 January 1938)

“After a long period of ill health Mrs. Susan Maria Hilton, widow of the late William Hilton, passed away at her home on Forsythe Street south last Friday evening, aged 89 years. She was born in Marmora township and had spent all her life in this vicinity. For years Mr. and Mrs. Hilton resided on a farm a couple of miles north of the village and were widely known and highly esteemed. About 24 years ago they purchased the residence of the late Fred Caldwell and moved to Marmora village, where Mrs. Hilton had resided ever since. Her husband predeceased her in 1914. Only one child was born to them and he died in infancy. Since the death of her husband her niece, Mrs. Ella

William Hilton, Jr. and Susan Maria Johns

(3)

Lawlor, had resided with her. Her nephew, Mr. Campbell and wife, and the Misses Campbell, two nieces, all from Mich. attended the funeral.

The late Mrs. Hilton was a devout member of Sacred Heart Church and was one of its oldest members. Even though suffering from ill health she attended Mass whenever possible.

The funeral was held on Monday morning Requiem Mass being sung by Rev. Father J. J. Keeley in Sacred Heart Church and interment took place in Sacred Heart cemetery. The pallbearers were Messrs. Peter Quinn, Alex. Quinn, John J. Connors, Daniel Shannon, J. E. Dunlay and Bert Crawford. The funeral service was conducted on Friday morning, Nov. 16th, at 10:30 in St. Paul's Anglican church by the Rector, the Rev. P. G. Watson. Interment in Marmora cemetery."



WILLIAM HILTON
MCH. 15, 1840—NOV. 13, 1923

WM. M. E., HIS SON
AUG. 1, 1895 - FEB. 5, 1896



Gravestone of Susan Maria Johns Hilton
Sacred Heart Cemetery, Marmora, Ontario
(Birth year may be incorrect)