

In our final sojourn into the lives and deaths of the Willcox and Raymond families within the family plot, there are several generations to write about, mostly relating to Frances Gates Willcox Raymond. Ready? Try not to cross your eyes like I did.

Elizabeth Cass Gates was born in 1820 in Hawkbury, Ontario. She married James Ogden Gates in 1841 and went on to have a family. When James died at the age of 63, she moved to St. Joseph, Michigan to live with one of her daughters. She later moved to Indianapolis, Indiana to live with another daughter. After a visit to Montana to visit yet another daughter, Frances, she decided to live with Henry and Frances Raymond. She was a devout Methodist and lived out her life in Bedford with family. She was 84.

Next, we have Grandma Austin. That's what it says on her headstone. Matilda Parsons George married Lewis Bledsoe Austin on September 9, 1856 in Grayson, Virginia. Bledsoe had 9 children from a previous marriage. He and Matilda had four children together, one of which was Larrissa who married Michael McMahon. I covered them in a previous story. Anyway, the family owned a plantation but lost everything after the Civil War. Guess we know what side they were on. Actually, we do, as they lost two sons in 1861 to battles in the Civil War. Both were Confederate soldiers. They moved from Virginia to Radersburg, in 1872, traveling to Corrine, Utah and onto Radersburg, in a covered wagon. Her husband, known as Bledsoe Austin, owned a hotel and ranch in the Radersburg Crow Creek area. They later owned a hotel in Jefferson City, where Lewis is buried. In her later years, Matilda lived with her daughter, Lucy Victoria Austin Willcox in Centerville. She died 15 Jan 1894 at the age of 70 and was buried there and known simply as Grandma Austin. The mystery now is why she was living with her daughter and not her husband. Bledsoe died the same year she did and is buried in Jefferson City.

Take a breath, we're almost done.

Leslie Gates Willcox is the son of Daniel and Frances. He decided not join his stepfather, Henry Raymond in the ranching world and became a chef. He cooked at Pipestone and Butte and was known to be a very good chef. He married Lucy Victoria Austin in 1884 and had three children. Lucy passed away in 1895. He then married Lena McFadden for a while. I don't know what happened there but he married for the third time to Mary Jane Patten in Salt Lake City. He died at the age of 84 in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania and is buried with Lucy in Centerville.

And that covers it but also leaves more questions. Who built the family plot and when? As far as I can tell, there is no family living in or near our area, which makes me sad. Why was Leslie in Pennsylvania? I could go on but I already know I won't find the answers. Time to move on. My research sheet is full of arrows and scribbles. Another pioneer family who landed in our area a

long time ago that once again, left me with wonder and admiration for their determination to leave home and find a new home, totally different from anything they'd known.

Now that we've gotten some nice wet snow, I plan on spreading some wildflower seeds on the graves of those I've gotten cleaned up. Hoping to make it a wee bit prettier out there next spring. Still chopping out prickly pear cactus, the never-ending job. Until next time!