
Whitmel Proctor

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The Periodic Newsletter on Family History and Genealogy of
Whitmel Proctor (1829-1884) and Elizabeth Williams Proctor (1838-1895)

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Laura Brown's Origins Finally Unearthed

Whitmel Proctor's son John William Proctor (see article at right) married **Laura Brown** in 1885 when they were both 22 years old. Two of their children, John R. Whitman and Henry, survived infancy. Laura died after having been married for only eight and a half years, at the young age of 31. Her death on 23 August 1893 came less than two weeks after she gave birth to Jessie Proctor on 10 August. Jessie also did not survive, dying on 20 September at less than six weeks old.

Because of Laura's death so young and her having been married for such a short time, I knew almost no information about her until recently. Now, however, I have found references to her parents and siblings.

Laura's parents were **Bythal G. Brown** (abt.1828-bef.1900) and **Catherina Moore Brown** (1826-1907). They were married on 31 August 1847, when Bythal was age 19 and Catherina was 21.

In 1850, Bythal was listed as an overseer in Edgecombe County, and military records indicate he enlisted in Company F of the 3rd Regiment, North Carolina Artillery, fighting for the CSA in the Civil War. He was promoted from private to full corporal on 16 November 1861, and later to full sergeant on 20 January 1862.

Bythal is listed in the 1880 Census, but Catherina is shown as a widow in the 1900 Census, by which we deduce that Bythal died sometime between 1880 and 1900. According to information gathered from (but not documented in) another family's tree research, Catherina died in 1907.

Laura's siblings were as follows: **Lempra (Ellen?)** (abt.1849-?), **Pernetta** (abt. 1853-?), **Victoria** (abt.1859-?), **Lafayette** (abt.1867-?), **William Henry** (21 November 1868-11 February 1913), and **Mary Alice** (2 February 1871-21 July 1950).

Aside from Laura, we know more about the descendants of her brother William Henry than about the other siblings. He and his wife **Pattie A. Turner** had six children. His fifth child was **Linda Bell Brown** (1897-1968), whose grandson George R. Sumerlin Jr. (my third cousin) lives, like me, in Cary, NC.

John William Proctor, His Several Wives, and his Large Family

John William Proctor (1862-1928), Henry's father, was married at least four times, and he had at least 10 children who survived infancy. Given the paucity of records, piecing the puzzle together hasn't proved easy.

Laura Brown (see article upper left) is believed to have been his first wife, as they were both aged 22 when they were married 13 January 1887. They had two children to survive, **John R. Whitman "Whit" Proctor** (1886-1948) and **Henry Proctor** (1889-1968).

Henry and his wife Mary Hinton Proctor had four children: **Mattie Ruth "Sister"** (b.1914), **Grover Belmont** (1918-1982), **Henry W.** (1920-2003), and **Doris Marie** (1926-2006).

John R. "Whit" and his wife Salemah Christine Williams, had five children: **Pennie Laura** (1909-2002), **Leslie Lee** (1913-1973), **Evelyn Gray** (1917-1987), **Theodore Dallas** (1922-2002), and **James William "J.W."**

After Laura's death in 1893, John William married a woman whose tombstone (see article at bottom left) calls her **Georgiana Summerlin**. She died in 1898. They apparently had no children.

John William's next wife appears to have been **Lucille "Lula" Taylor**, who may be the "Cathelina L." referred to in the article at left. They had one child, **Rufus Stephen** (1898-1972).

Finally, John William married **Dora Mae Joyner** (1886-1945), with whom he had five children: **Elizabeth** (1905-2000), **George Luther** (1908-1972), **James Perry** (1911-1962), **Maggie Mae** (b.1916), and **Charles Russell** (1920-1982). John William and Dora Mae are buried in the Upper Town Creek Primitive Baptist Cemetery, Elm City, Wilson County, NC.

Where are Laura and Jessie Buried?

According to cemetery research done by Jeff Taylor, both Laura Brown Proctor and her infant son Jessie (see article above) are buried in what has come to be known as the Whitmel Proctor Cemetery. Here is Jeff's report:

"This small, abandoned cemetery is located halfway between Rocky Mount and Pinetops, NC, on Faith Baptist Church Road, approximately 1.6 miles off of Highway 43. It sits in a thickly wooded area about 150 yds. off of Faith Baptist Church Road (left side). Tommy Colbert, James Harrell and Jeff Taylor surveyed this cemetery on April 11, 2001. There are 7 marked graves at this time; stones are very readable."

Here are the seven Proctors buried there:

Whitmel Proctor (1829-12 May 1884).

Elizabeth [Williams] Proctor (1838-15 June 1895), wife of Whitmel.

Laura [Brown] Proctor (3 March 1862 -23 August 1893), John William Proctor's wife.

Mattie Proctor (15 September 1887-October 1888), John William & Laura's second child.

Jessie Proctor (10 August 1893-20 September 1893), John William & Laura's fourth child.

Joe Anner Proctor (1876-March 1898), wife of John William Proctor.

Cathelina L. Proctor (25 January 1880-10 July 1902), wife of John William Proctor.

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