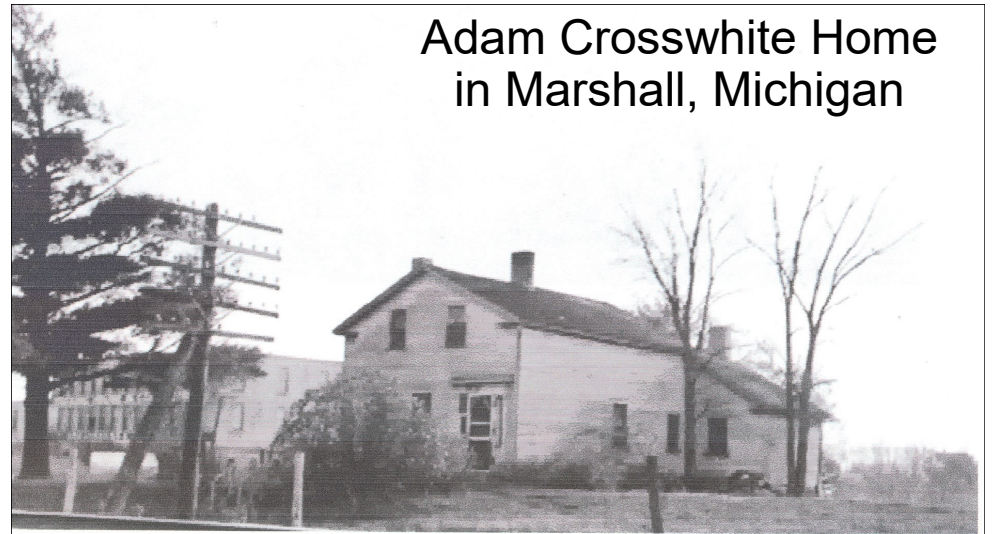


Adam and Sarah Crosswhite Family Album



Jessie Belle Graham
Descendant of
Adam & Sarah Crosswhite

**Crosswhite Graves
in Michigan**



Hello folks, pleased to meet you.

My, my my!

All you fine folks came here today to hear my story?

My my, my!

I bet you might have heard of my husband Adam. Lots written about him. The newspapers all wrote about Adam Crosswhite. Well, ain't that just like those newspapers to write their stories just like the man is the only one that counts. I'm here to tell you that that's old-fashioned thinking!! I mean this ain't the dark ages, we got to get with the times. I mean after all this is the 1860's!

My name is Sarah. You'll have to pardon the way I look today. Came here all the way from Canada West. We live in the Elgin Settlement, some of you might know it as "Buxton" - that's what 'most everybody calls it. Long way from here. I'm a little tired. Feel a little bit like I been rode hard and put away wet. But don't get me going on that.

Now what was I saying? Oh, yeah—the Elgin Settlement. That is a home for fugitive slaves. And that's just what me and my family are. You ought to see it—9000 acres . Over 1200 people from every which place. Our neighbours come from Virginia, the Carolinas, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Michigan, Missouri, Louisiana— You name it, we're from it. We lived in Michigan..... In a little town called Marshall Least we lived there for a while. Had our own home, me, my husband Adam, my boys John and Benjamin, and my girls Sarah and Francis. Michigan was fine, had a lot of good people here. We loved it, but my, didn't we leave quick! "Going to tell you about it.

Told you we lived in Michigan but that ain't exactly where we come from. We were from Carroll County, Kentucky. Worked for a man named Francis Giltner. Didn't call him boss, called him "Master", if you know what I mean. Stayed around that plantation for many a year. Heard about a railroad, the underground variety. Along about 1843, Adam and me and the 4 kids took a little trip on it through Kentucky, through Indiana, got off in Michigan. Found the little section in Marshall where 50 other Blacks lived—some of them were from Kentucky too. We worked until we made

enough money to put some money down on our own little cabin. Had another baby. Freedom felt good. Four years went by ... then...

One morning, just about daylight, January in 1847 it was, my husband Adam was outside at the back of the house, feeding the chickens. There was this loud BANGING at the door. Then the door broke in—right off the hinges. Well, in walks 2 people I knew from back in Kentucky. You know sometimes you get a nice surprise when you see some folks from back home that you ain't seen in a long time? Well, this wasn't nothing like that. The 2 men were Francis Troutman and David Giltner. Remember that Giltner name I told you about just a little bit ago? Master Giltner? Well, David was his son and Francis was his nephew.

Adam comes running around the house and demands to know why they broke the door in and what was it they wanted. They told him that they were here to take him to trial. Now Adam, he' kind of a funny guy sometimes. He said that he would go to trial but not at that time of the morning. Well, they didn't think that was quite so funny and told him that if they could have gotten a wagon they would take us any time they like, even if it was 2 in the morning.

They could see that we had no intention of going along, so they came up with the strangest proposal. They said that they would just take the children and leave me and Adam alone. Well, what do you think of that....

Adam said that he would rather die than have either of the children taken and ordered them all out of the house! By then there were 5 of them; the deputy sheriff and a couple of other men. Four of them went outside, but young Master Giltner stayed. He stayed, and he sat down, and he cried, and cried! Said to me, if only I would give up the children, they would let me and Adam be. Fancy that!

I told him that they had already taken the best years of my life at their service and that I intended to keep my children to take care of me in my old days.

Somehow, the news was starting to spread around Marshall. People started to come to our aid. There were some prominent white men and a lot of colored. Some of them threw

off their coats when they saw one of the slave catchers draw his pistol out of his pocket and put it back in again. Adam said, "don't have no fighting" we will catch him and take the pistols away from him. Adam though that the white people helped to prevent bloodshed because the colored people were determined that they would do whatever it took to keep us from being sent back to slavery. There were lots of shouts and talking about tarring and feathering.

Adam started getting bolder and told those men that he was going to see what the law would do to them for breaking into our house. Hee, hee. Adam is going to turn the tables on them. And wouldn't you know, it worked. The deputy sheriff who had come to help arrest us, instead arrested the slave catchers for assault, battery and housebreaking!

While they were on trial the next 2 days, some kind folks smuggled us out of Marshall on a cart and got us on a train to Detroit. By the way, that slave-catcher got a \$100 fine. Well fancy that!

We ended up in Canada West in a town called Chatham. It was a young and growing town. Lots of other Black folks there—almost one third of the town. Safe at last. Queen Victoria's land that we used to hear stories about when we were bac in slavery. We knew that the government there wouldn't send us back. But we kept hearing stories about some of the people that had come to help us when we were back in Marshall. Some of them had been arrested for doing what they knew whas right. Well, we had to do what we knew was right.

One day we get word to come to see the Commissioner, Mr. Alexander McLean, Esquire in Chatham to answer some questions. When me and Adam went he showed us this letter that said it was from the president of the United States, and the Circuit Court for the district of Michigan. The letter commanded him to set a place and time to interrogate us. At least that is what Mr. Alexander McLean said that it said—me and Adam never had a chance to learn to read and write. He said that we had to put our hands on the Bible and answer the questions about what happened back in Marshall. He wanted to know who helped us what everybody did. The least we could do was to try to help the people , both white and black that had took a stand

for us. We swore our oaths and told Mr. Alexander McLean what we knew. At least we told him most of what we knew. At least we told him some of what we knew. You know your memory gets kind of unreliable a year later when you try to remember who all was there to help. He wrote it down and we both made our mark with an X.

Well, to make a long story short, old Master Giltner sued some of those good folks that helped us by preventing him from getting his property back. The jury ruled that Master Giltner was to be paid \$4500 for the value of his slaves... that's us. Since all that happened, they passed a new Fugitive Slave Law in 1850. That sure did change things for Blacks in the United States. Heck, after that thousands came to Canada—even lots that had been free for years—even some that had never been slaves. Lots of folks say that that law got passed partly because of all of that attention that we got in Marshall.

My, my, my, we done talked long enough, I got to get traveling back home. You folks get moving along too. Keep your eyes on the look-out: that's my advise to you. There are strange rumblings going on—I can feel it in my bones. Keep on the look-out!

Adam and Sarah Crosswhite Statistics

Name : Adam Crosswhite

Date Born: 1805

Died: 1878

Siblings: unknown

Occupation: Carpenter, Farmer

In: Carroll County, Kentucky

In: Marshall, Michigan

Religion: Methodist

Came to Buxton Settlement: 1850

Residence In Buxton: 8th Concession

Married:

In:

Wife: Sarah Crosswhite

Date Born: 1806

Died : unknown

Siblings: unknown

Occupation: Homemaker

Children: John, Benjamin, Sarah, and
Frances (all born in the US)

In: Carroll County, Kentucky

In: Michigan

Religion: Methodist

Came to Buxton Settlement: 1850

Residence In Buxton: 8th Concession

**** The family came to Canada in 1847 and settled in Chatham. They came to Buxton in 1850, after the settlement was started. They remained in Buxton until after the Civil War. Two of their young children died shortly after the Civil War, probably of the typhus epidemic which went through Buxton, brought home by one of the returning soldiers. The family returned to Michigan to live by 1870.*

CROSSWHITE

Provided by Buxton National Historic Site & Museum

ADAM 1805
TO
SARAH 1806

