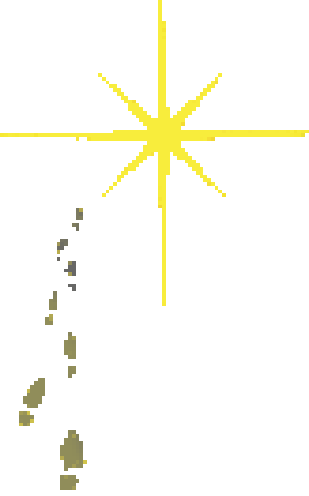


# *William and Serena Rhue Family Album*



**Serena "Jane" Rhue**



**Hattie Rhue Hatchett**

*Daughter of  
William & Jane Rhue*

*Hattie Rhue married Millard Hatchett  
while teaching in Kentucky.  
They later returned and lived out their lives in the  
village of North Buxton.*



Mmm! Mmm! Mmm! Memories of the old home!

*Just twelve children in our family!  
My! What work for feeble hands  
For a dozen little children  
Calls for dozens of demands;  
But it seemed their greatest pleasure,  
As they laboured hard each day  
Those dear, blest, beloved parents  
Sleeping now beneath the clay.*

My Daddy was born a slave on a plantation in Maryland. He belonged to the Miles family. Daddy and Mama didn't talk about their days in slavery very much. Those were not good memories. One day Daddy decided to run away, and he made his way to Marshall Michigan. He never did tell us children where he met our Mama, but he did say that he met her along the way. Daddy said he was one of the lucky ones. He had help in making his way to freedom. His conductor was Harriet Tubman herself. Daddy said she didn't tolerate any nonsense from the fugitives she helped. He said they had to follow her directions and do as they were told. They didn't mind taking directions from Harriet Tubman, because she had helped so many to escape and had never lost any of her passengers on the Underground Railroad. Besides there was a big reward on her head, so she didn't allow any of her passengers to take foolish chances.

Mama and Daddy didn't come all the way to Canada. They felt that they were safe enough in Michigan, so they settled down there in Marshall Michigan. In slavery Daddy was known as William, but when he settled in Michigan and married Mama, he changed his name to Rhue. He became William Isaac Rhue and Mama was Serena Jane Rhue, but they went by William and Jane. Mama and Daddy said they felt safe in Michigan. Then in 1850 I think it was, they passed that law that made it unsafe to stay there. They called it the Fugitive Slave Law. Slave catchers could just nab anybody, and the judge was paid more to decide you were a runaway, than if he decided you were legally free. And on top of that we wouldn't even be allowed to speak up for ourselves.

Mama and Daddy got so they never stopped worrying- oh! Not just about themselves- but they had four little ones– my brothers Robert and Samuel and my sisters Sarah and Angeline, and they said they couldn't even imagine having to see one of their children sent into slavery. Why Daddy said he believed they both would have chosen to die first!

So they crossed over into Canada. Daddy said he heard about the Buxton Settlement and decided to go there. When he got to Buxton he decided to buy some land out on the plains of Raleigh just outside the settlement on the sixth concession.

*They were 'mong the early settlers  
When the land was bush and bogs  
When you had hard work to travel  
Climbing fence and walking logs,  
When your devious pathway led you  
Miles and miles from off your course  
When the oxen team was surer  
Than the spanking team of horse.*

*When great ice-fields lay before you  
Off your foot– steps breaking through  
Thus they laboured for their loved ones  
Did dear Jane and William Rhue  
Going forth to sell and purchase  
In young Chatham town so fair  
Getting something that was useful  
For each tender loving care.*

We surely did live out in the bush. One day a bear tried to get into our house. Mama sent all of us younguns' upstairs while she and Daddy stood by the door with the axe ready to do battle if they had to. That bear finally went around to the back of the house, and then he tried to get in the window. The window was high up off the ground, so he finally just gave up and went on his way.

We were about 6 miles from the center of the settlement where the Mission school and church, and Mr. King's home were, but Daddy would take me up there every week to take piano lessons from Mrs. King. I only got to take those lessons for about three months and then Mrs. King had one of her spells, but I loved the piano and I continued learning even after Mrs. King was unable to help me. I love music and poetry, and I hope that one day I will be able to write some music of my own.

We go to one of the Baptist Churches in the settlement. There are Methodist and Presbyterian Churches too, but Mama says we have the best music at the Baptist Church. I hope I can start a choir there one day.

There are several schools in the settlement and nearby. I went to the one on the fifth concession—S.S. #4, but we call it the Shreve school. That's because it was started by George and Elizabeth Shreve, and all their children go there, too. There are sixteen of us Rhue children now. My brother Thomas bought a Melodeon from our neighbour, Mr. Thackeray, and every night we gather round the fireplace and sing.

*We hold morn and evening service  
Those are happy moments all  
When the family is assembled  
Round the fireside—great and small*

*And we send our voices ringing  
Up to God , in prayer and praise  
Many prayers go up before Him  
In this home of happy days.*

People who are passing by often pull their horse and buggy right off the road to listen to our family sing. They say we have beautiful voices and make a fine choir. Old Mr. Shorts stops and starts talking about the days when he escaped from slavery. He always wants us to sing “Thus far the Lord has brought me up”, and we sing it for him every time he asks.

The war is over now and slavery has ended for good. A lot of our neighbours have gone back to the south to find the people they left behind in slavery when they escaped. Some of them are coming back, but lots of them have sold their land, and plan to live in the south again. A lot of people who got a good education here are going to the south to help those former slaves who didn't get the education or opportunities that we had. I'm all finished school now and I am planning to go soon to Kentucky to teach the former slaves there. Even though there is no longer slavery there, still I'm a little scared. Wish me luck, and keep me in your prayers.

## William Isaac and Serena Jane Rhue Statistics

**Name :** William Isaac Rhue  
**Date Born:** 1801  
**Died:** 1887  
**Siblings:** unknown  
**Occupation:** Rope Spinner, Farmer

**In:** Eastern Shore, Maryland  
**In:** Raleigh Township  
**Religion:** Baptist  
**Came to Buxton Settlement:** 1854  
**Residence In Buxton:** 6th Concession

**Married:** unknown date

**In:** unknown place

**Wife:** Serena Jane  
**Date Born:** 1827  
**Died :** 1903  
**Siblings:** unknown  
**Occupation:** Homemaker  
**Children:** Thomas, Kezekiah, Cassius, Kitoria, Angeline, Emily, Mary, George, Jospeline, Serena, Samuel, Alexander, Sarah, and Miles (first 6 born in the US)

**In:** Licking River, Kentucky  
**In:** Raleigh Township  
**Religion:** Baptist  
**Came to Buxton Settlement:** 1854  
**Residence In Buxton:** 6th Concession

*\*\*\* Their daughter Harriet became a teacher (Music). She wrote music and poetry. She wrote a song called "The Sacred Spot", that was adopted as the marching hymn for Canadian Soldiers in World War 1.*

# RHUE

WILLIAM ISAAC  
1806—1887

SERENA JANE LEWIS

*Provided by Buxton National Historic Site & Museum*

