

**Wilson Thomas Biography**

Wilson Thomas was born into slavery in 1834 in Christian County, Kentucky on Ike Thomas’s farm. At some point before the Civil War started, Wilson started living with Lucy Garrett. Both of them stated later that they were never married. In October 1864, the 5 foot 2 ½ inch, copper skinned, 30-year old black haired and eyed man left slavery and joined Company B, 9th U.S. Colored Heavy Artillery (USCHA). He was mustered into the unit on October 2, 1864 and received a $300 bounty for enlisting.

Company B, 9th USCHA left Clarksville and from December 31, 1864 through June 1865 the unit was stationed in Nashville where they worked on fortifications. In August 1865, the 9th USCHA was broken up and the men were transferred to other units. On August 11, 1865, Wilson was transferred to Company I, 15th USCT. At the time he joined the unit, it was stationed at Sulpher Fork Bridge, Tennessee. In September they moved to Springfield and remained until November 1864 when they were transferred to Nashville in response to Hood’s attack on that city. In January 1865, the unit returned to Springfield. In May 1865 they returned to Nashville and remained until they were mustered out of the Army.

Wilson had some bills that followed him when he transferred to the 15th USCT. He was charged 25 cents for ordinance and owed H.H. Pugh, the sutler of the 9th USCHA $23 which was noted on his July/August 1865 muster roll. His military record noted that he was absent sick in hospital since August 12, 1865 for chronic diarrhea. The November/December 1865 muster roll notes that he was paid $100 on his $300 bounty. He returned to duty on March 27, 1866 and mustered out of the army in Nashville on April 7, 1866.

After leaving the army, Wilson returned to Kentucky and lived in the Longview area of Christian County working as a farm laborer. He returned to Lucy and the 1870 census shows them living and working on Robert Garnett’s farm. The census shows him as having a personal estate of $200 which may have been the rest of his $300 bounty. Either in 1878 or 1879, Lucy left Wilson. In a deposition she admitted that they weren’t getting along. She married a man named George Vaughn and the two of them continued to live and work on the Garnett farm as did Wilson.

On December 23, 1882, Wilson married a widow named Victory Green. They were living on adjoining farms when they met. The 1880 census shows Victory, age 40, living with her children by her first husband Bob Green near Pembroke, Kentucky. They had six children: William, 21; Sally, 15; Henry, 13; Ruben, 11; Martha, 9; Lizzie, 4; Bobbie, 11 months. Bob Green had also been in the war due to his owner taking Bob with him when he joined the Confederate Army. Bob Green died in 1878.

Wilson and Victory moved to Montgomery County in 1884. They were living and working on Duke Smith’s farm near the state line. Their post office was in Kennedy, Kentucky. On February 14, 1887, Wilson applied for an invalid pension. He stated that he was engaged in wheeling a wheelbarrow of dirt onto a breastwork in 1865, and while going up the plank, he fell and the wheelbarrow fell on top of him and hurt his side resulting in a rupture of the right side. It started as a small knot but increased in size over time fully developing after he was discharged. At the point he made the application it had spread to his other side as well. On advice, he purchased a truss to “keep his parts in place”. As part of the application, he was examined by a surgeon who verified that Wilson had a double hernia. He was granted a pension on November 25, 1895 for $8 a month. Unfortunately, this was a little late, Wilson Thomas died in his home at 102 South Spring Street of paralysis on November 10, 1895. He had been paralyzed for a year before he did and was treated by R.G. Martin, a black doctor.

After Wilson died, Victory moved in with her children from her first marriage. She worked for them and they supported her. The 1900 census shows Victory, age 56, living at 18 Sullivan Alley with her mother Matilda Moore, age 86, and her children Ruben, age 31; Lizzie, age 23; Bobbie, age 19; Victoria, age 6; and Sally, age 9. Victory applied for a widow’s pension on November 25, 1895. That it was granted is apparent because on August 5, 1911, she applied for a new certificate. She had lost the original.

The last census Victory appears in is the 1910 census. She is living at 218 Kellogg Street with her mother who was now 104 years old and two of her children: Sally now 19 and Victoria age 15. Also living with her is a grandson, Stanley Martin, age 9.

On November 24, 1915, an entry was made in Victory Thomas’s widow’s pension that she was dead. There is no death certificate and no one requested reimbursement for her burial expenses. Currently, no obituary has been found so exactly when she died and where she is buried is unknown.