

The Paul Family

By Erin Brubacher for Heritage Mississauga

Two other servants who eventually came to live with the Silverthorns of Cherry Hill were Lettie and Fanny Paul. Fanny, or “Old Fan” as she came to be known arrived to live with the Silverthorns sometime in the 1860’s.¹ According to Hicks, there is record of her trying to get married at Dixie Union Church, but they wouldn’t marry them because she was black.² She was never married, however at some point she was left with an illegitimate daughter, Lettie Paul. These two women worked and lived at the Silverthorn’s house until the death of Fanny, and the marriage of Lettie. Legend has it that she was famous for her salt raising biscuits and the recipe died with her. It seems that they were loved by the community. One only needs to read the newspaper clipping of Lettie’s wedding to know this is true.

“On Wednesday September 15th at 5 o’clock at the pretty little church of St. John was a day to be long remember by those whose happy lot of fell to be there. It was the marriage of Ms. Lettie Paul, (coloured) to Mr. Wm. Hutchinson (coloured) of Toronto. The bride was attired in a red cashmere dress, tan shoes and hose, drab hat and a smiling countenance. The groom wore a black suit, dude pants, open vest, Prince Albert coat, knock-about hat, red tie and piccadilly shoes. The knot was tied by the Rev. Ralph Hinds. The church was crowded to the doors. There were people from all parts of the section, some came them a distance of five miles to pay their respect to one of our esteemed citizens. After the knot was securely tied, and the newly married were proceeding to the residence of the bride’s guardian, at Cherry Hill, they were literally covered with showers of rice and good wishes. Arriving at the house, they were seated to a very sumptuous spread of all the delicacies of the season, after which they were escorted to the C.P.R. depot by a number of friends. At the station there were nearly one hundred people to wish them bon voyage and much joy as they stepped on the express to spend their honeymoon in Toronto, Oakville and other inland towns, after which they will return and take up house keeping in Mr. Robt. Pallett’s villa on the Middle Road, east of Corn Dille Valley.”³

The Silverthorns are her “guardian” in this depiction, not her employer or her boss. It seems that she was a greatly respected member of the community, not simply a servant of one of the prominent families. As the census data shows, she lived with them since she was a small child, was maybe even born there, and was a member of the family.

¹ Kathleen Hicks, “The Life and Times of the Silverthorns of Cherry Hill” 230.

² Ibid

³ Wedding Announcement, *The Brampton Conservator*, 20 Sept 1894, page 1, column 3. Indexed by Beettam, Margaret -- [Oakville, Ont.] : Halton/Peel Branch O.G.S., c1989, Period of Coverage: 18 Oct 1876- 26 Dec 1889. Referenced at the Region of Peel Archives, Brampton, Ontario.