

Black Kentucky Pioneers:

John Campbell (1872-1908)

CAMPBELL GRAVESTONE - Daviess County, KY

By Jerry Long, Owensboro, KY

In the woods behind the St. Lawrence Church is a solitary gravestone. Standing erect in 1990 the monument had the following inscription:

John Campbell killed by lightning June 8, 1908

In the Tuesday, 9 June 1908 issue of the Owensboro Messenger (p5) the following article appeared:

BY LIGHTENING
NEGRO FARMER WAS KILLED AT ST. LAWRENCE
Four Year Old Child Was Seriously
Injured—House Was Considerably Damaged.

John Campbell, colored, a farmer living two and one half miles south of St. Lawrence, was struck by lightning and instantly killed, early Monday afternoon and his four year old child was seriously injured. His wife was in the same room but was uninjured, with the exception of receiving a severe shock.

Campbell and his wife and child were seated in the dining room of his home when the lightning struck the chimney and entered the room through the flue. The house was considerably damaged. Campbell was a well known negro in that section and was a prosperous farmer.

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At Whitesville on 7 January 1892 John Campbell married Julia Stone (Daviess County, KY Black Marriage Book G-p192). John and his wife were enumerated in the Knottsville Precinct in the 1900 Daviess County, KY census (p323, #98). They were listed eight households from the Catholic priest at the St. Lawrence Church. John Campbell was recorded as being born in KY in February 1872, married 7 years, one child then deceased had been born to him & his wife. John may have been the son of Frank & Sarah Campbell and grandson of Winnie or Minnie Campbell, who were all living together in the Knottsville area at the time of the 1870 Daviess County, KY census (p153)

Julia Campbell, widow of John, was living in Whitesville, when the 1910 census of Daviess County, KY was taken (p145). She was listed as being a hotel cook, was 41 years old, and four children had been born to her but only one was then living. Living with her was a

daughter, Carrie J. Campbell, 6 years old. Mrs. Julia Campbell married Grant R. Hazelwood (1869-1932) at Whitesville on 29 September 1913 (Daviness County, KY Marriage Book J-p286).

The Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer of 12 April 1956 reported that Julia C. Hazelwood, age 87, died April 11, at her home in Owensboro. She was born in Hancock County, KY on 18 February 1869 and was buried at Elmwood Cemetery in Owensboro. Her obituary listed her survivors as: a daughter, Mrs. Carrie Norris of Evansville, IN, a foster son William Campbell of Cleveland, Ohio, and one grandchild. Carrie Jane Campbell, daughter of John Campbell & Julia Stone, was born 24 March 1904 Knottsville, KY; married Jesse Ross Norris (1897-1959) in Owensboro on 27 January 1923 (Daviness County, KY Marriage Book 48-p91), on her marriage it was recorded that she was 18, born Daviness County, KY, & resided at Whitesville. Carrie Norris died 9 October 1975 Evansville, IN, where she was buried in the Oak Hill Cemetery. Carrie was survived by a daughter, Shirley Whitfield, and two grandchildren.

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Addenda: John Campbell is listed as age 10 in the home of his grandmother, Winnie Campbell (83, born VA), in the 1880 census of Daviness County, KY (Knottsville Precinct). His parents, Colson Franklin ('Frank') & Jane Sarah Campbell are listed in the 1870 census of Daviness County, KY. His father died 22 November 1875 (age 43) and his mother on 26 November 1875 (age 29); they were buried in the Higdon Farm Cemetery, about four miles east of Knottsville in the Indiana Hill Road. John's grandmother, Winnie A. Campbell, died 8 March 1896, and was also buried on the Higdon farm. John Campbell had siblings – Winnie, Elizabeth, Sarah and Franklin. See Gordon Family Tree on Ancestry.com)

Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 12 June 1908, p5

STRUCK BY LIGHTNING

Was John Campbell, a Colored Farmer Near St. Lawrence, and Instantly Killed.

John Campbell, a colored farmer, living near St. Lawrence, was struck by lightning and instantly killed during the electric storm of Monday afternoon. Campbell and an adopted son, aged 13 years were standing by an open fireplace when the bolt of lightning came down the chimney striking him on the head and passing down his back, killing him instantly. The boy was knocked into the fireplace, but was taken out unhurt. Campbell's wife who was seated near a window in the room was unhurt, save for a slight shock. The house was not damaged at all.

Coroner Grausz went out to the home of Campbell Tuesday and held an inquest at which the verdict was rendered that the deceased came to his death by being struck by a bolt of lightning.