

A Portrait of Families in WW1: Part 1

Nov 18th 2021

Cole Hepburn

Prof: Kathleen Moss

SOCI 4043A

Soilder: Wallace, Samuel E.
Rank: Private

Regimental number: 931927
 Next of Kin: Wallace, John W.
 Birth Country, Durham North Carolina, U.S.A
 Taken on Strength: Windsor Ontario, Canada

Step 1: Library and Archives

- Samuel E Wallace was born on September 16, 1892, in Durham North Carolina, U.S.A and grew up as a member of the Methodist church.
- Before enlisting in the forces, he was a Chauffeur, he enlisted on November 13 1916 at 24 years of age. He was a single man and listed his father John W. Wallace as his next of kin. Samuel E Wallace was living at 632 Antoine St Detroit, Michigan when he enlisted, his father was living at 498 Santz St Charleston, West Virginia.
- Samuel E Wallace was of African American descent as the whole 2nd Construction Battalion (Labour) was, he was described as physically fit and able to enlist. He was 5'5, 130 pounds, had brown eyes, black hair, and had a mole on his left cheek deemed an identifying feature if they found the body on the battel field.
- From these sheets it looks like the only person Wallace had in his life was his father, as his name was the only other name on the pay sheets and only kin listed.
- Samuel enlisted in Windsor Ontario, Canada and was given the rank of private. He stayed a private until the demobilization of his unit in London Ontario, Canada after fighting in France.

ORIGINAL 931627

ATTESTATION PAPER.
NO. 2-1043 FORM 111A, P. 1, C. 1, P. 1.

CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.

QUESTIONS TO BE PUT BEFORE ATTESTATION.
(ANSWERS)

1. What is your surname?	Wallace
1a. What are your Christian names?	Samuel Esmond
1b. What is your present address?	#632 Antoine St. Detroit, Mich. U.S.A.
2. In what Town, Township or Parish, and in what Country were you born?	Durham N. C. U.S.A.
3. What is the name of your next-of-kin?	John W. Wallace.
4. What is the address of your next-of-kin?	#498 Santz St. Charleston, West Va. U.S.A.
4a. What is the relationship of your next-of-kin?	Father.
5. What is the date of your birth?	Sept. 16th. 1892
6. What is your Trade or Calling?	Chauffeur.
7. Are you married?	No.
8. Are you willing to be vaccinated or re-vaccinated and inoculated?	Yes.
9. Do you now belong to the Active Militia?	No.
10. Have you ever served in any Military Force? <small>If so, state particulars of former service.</small>	No.
11. Do you understand the nature and terms of your engagement?	Yes.
12. Are you willing to be attested to serve in the CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE?	Yes.

This is to Certify that No. 931927 (Rank) PRIVATE

Name (in full) WALLACE, Samuel enlisted in the 2ND, CONSTRUCTION BATTALION C.O.M.F. CANADIAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE at WINDSOR ONTARIO on the THIRTEENTH day of NOVEMBER to 16.

HE served in FRANCE (WITH NO. 2, CONSTRUCTION BATTALION) and is now discharged from the service by reason of ON DEMOBILIZATION

THE DESCRIPTION OF THIS SOLDIER on the DATE below is as follows :-

Age	<u>26 YEARS</u>	Marks or Scars	
Height	<u>5' 5"</u>		
Complexion	<u>FAIR</u>		
Eyes	<u>BROWN</u>		<u>N I L</u>
Hair	<u>BLACK</u>		

Signature of Soldier *Samuel Wallace*
 Issuing Officer *J. G. ...*
 Date of Discharge FEB 21 1919
 No. 1 Discharge Book ...
 Appointment ...

Signed at LONDON, ONT. this TWENTY-FIRST day of FEBRUARY - 19 19
 in Military District No. (CAN)
 File Reference No. 1-20-10-400

N.B.—As no duplicate of this Certificate will be issued, any person finding same is requested to forward it in an unstamped envelope to the nearest office of the Canadian Expeditionary Force.

MEDICAL HISTORY SHEET.

Surname Wallace Christian Name Samuel

Examined (on 13th day of November 1916 at Windsor, Ont.) Approved by *[Signature]*

Birthplace (City or Town Durham, County North Carolina, U.S.A.) Rank Private

Apparent age 24 Date 20-11-16 Place Windsor

Trade or occupation Chauffeur M.O.

Height 5 Feet 1/2 Inches M.O.

Weight 130 Lbs. M.O.

Chest measurement (Minimum 35 inches M.O.
 Maximum expansion 36 inches M.O.)

Physical development Fit M.O.

Small-Pox Marks None M.O.

Vaccination Marks (Arm Right 1 Left 1) M.O.

When Vaccinated last Childhood M.O.

(a) Marks indicating congenital peculiarities or previous disease None M.O.

(b) Slight defects but not sufficient to cause rejection

Left eye 20/20 Right eye 20/20 M.O.

[Signatures: D. Murray, D. Murray, D. Murray]

Step 3: Canadian Census

- All attempts to locate Samuel Wallace were unsuccessful.

- b) Many Samuel Wallaces were found (28) but none matched the age of this soldier who would have been 19 in 1911, nor his birth years matched the soldiers either, and none of the other Wallaces had the same hometown as the soldier.
- c) This could be due to the fact he was not born in Canada but was born in Durham N.C, U.S.A
- d) Samuel Wallace could not be investigated further as it was hard to gain access to the American census without paying for some sort of membership.

Step 4: Circumstances of Death

- a) Wallace was not found in the death registers or Canadian Virtual War Memorial, his service files state that he was discharged in London Ontario, Canada after the demobilization of his unit on February 21, 1919.
- b) This could be due to the fact that he may have returned home to the U.S.A as address left on the discharge sheet was 498 Sents St Charleston, West Virginia. This was his father's address who he might have gone to be with after the war as this is who was listed as Wallace's next kin.
- c) There was a casualty form for active service but I could not read the writing on it so I could not get the details it is hard to tell if he was just injured or did die in battle.
- d) No death certificate was found in service forms.

Step 5: Historical Newspapers

- a) No information on Wallace could be found from the Carleton Library, ProQuest Canadian News Articles, Factiva, or Google News Papers.
- b) All research was unsuccessful, there were many broad results but nothing specific upon Samuel Wallace, one reason this happened could be due to the fact he did not win any awards which would give him media attention.
- c) Could also be a form of racism from the Canadian media as his battalion was all African American men
- d) Narrowing the search by refining the dates between 1900-1920 and looking for just newspapers as that was the main form of media back then nothing was found.
- e) Some articles on the 2nd Construction Battalion were found but nothing specify on Samuel Wallace or his family.

Step 6: Ancestry searches and other data bases

<https://www.ancestry.ca/discoveryui-content/view/62505999:7602>

- a) After having little success gathering information on this soldier, I decided to search Samuel Wallace on Ancestry.ca which led me to the U.S.A census it was found he was the oldest out of four children, having a younger sister named Mable Wallace who was born in 1894, a younger brother named Eugene Wallace born in 1885, and another younger brother named Fredrick Wallace born in 1898.
- b) He had his father John Wallace but also had a mother named Mattie Wallace who must have passed away or left their family before he went to war as he said he had no mother on his enlistment forms.
- c) It is important to note he must not have been close with his siblings as they were never listed as his kin on his enlistment forms unless they passed away or left with the mother.
- d) Wallace's birth date remains the same as the one on attestation paper.

- e) Wallace was born in Durham N.C, U.S.A in 1892, and looks like the family moved to Charleston West Virginia, U.S.A after he was born as the rest of the siblings were born in West Virginia and the father continued to live there.
- f) There is still little information on Samuel Wallace as the next lead on Ancestry used his war documents which have already been reviewed and accounted for and the American census which has been looked at.
- g) Also, important to note no death dates are given for anyone from the Wallace household.
- h) It also looks like they are all American citizens born and raised as the parents were both born in North Carolina John Wallace in 1871 and Mattie Wallace in 1874.

Household Members	Age	Relationship
John Wallace	29	Head
Mattie E Wallace	25	Wife
Samuel Wallace	7	Son
Mable Wallace	5	Daughter
Eugene Wallace	4	Son
Frederick Wallace	1	Son



Step 7: Reflection

When reflecting upon the research conducted on Samuel Wallace it was clear to me that his history in terms of both family and war lacks information. This makes me curious if it is a form of racism as it was an all-black battalion. The question is would this be the same for a battalion of white men. Ancestry.ca told me the most about Wallace and his home life, it filled in details in which the war documents left out such as him having three siblings and made it clear to me that he is most likely an American citizen. It also showed me how he moved at a young age from N.C. to W.V. as I was able to connect the dots between where him and his siblings were born, it also makes more sense why he would go back to West Virginia after the war as he may have more than just his father there but his whole family. It does make me curious on why only his father was written as his kin and none of his other family members were. I do wish that I could have got a hold of some newspaper articles on Samuel Wallace to give me a better picture of who this man was, even a picture would be nice. I am left with the question of what happened to him, and his family and no death dates were given from all the information gathered.

In terms of recommendations to the teachers and future students researching primary evidence on soldiers from World War One I would like to suggest is to look at the soldier's story you are researching with an open mind, I found that not all the information told the full story, the researcher has to be able to connect the dots and fill in the blanks with the information given to put together a story. I would also suggest looking at Ancestry.ca first as it probably has the most information on the person being researched and gives some background knowledge to the researched when looking at less detailed sources. In saying this the OCDSB should have one big account, so students do not need to find a credit card to sign up to the website. I would also like to recommend zooming in and rereading the war documents as some words can be hard to decipher as they are in old cursive writing. Possible classes should be given to students on how to conduct research over these search engines may be help full.