

## Ancestor Profile – Cpl. John Wesley Lance

John Wesley Lance was a nephew of my Civil War ancestor, Finas Euen Lance. While his uncle Finas did not enter the service until the very end of 1864, young John enlisted at his first opportunity. On November 12, 1861, he was 19 years old when he became a Private with *Company B, 58<sup>th</sup> Indiana Volunteer Infantry* at Princeton in Gibson County, Indiana.

In 1862, the 58<sup>th</sup> Indiana, as part of the *Army of the Ohio*, saw action at several major battles, including: Shiloh, Corinth, Perryville, and Stone's River. The regiment was then transferred to the *Army of the Cumberland* in January 1863. Soon came Chickamauga - September 1863 - where John was severely wounded in the left arm. He spent a few months in a hospital at Madison, Indiana to recuperate.

John Wesley Lance then reenlisted as a veteran in February 1864 and rejoined his old regiment in East Tennessee. The 58<sup>th</sup> Indiana had been assigned to duty in charge of the Pontoon Trains of General Sherman's *Atlanta Campaign*. The Battle of Resaca was just around the corner – in May 1864.



**Cpl. John Wesley Lance**

During the battles and skirmishes that occurred during General Sherman's *March to the Sea* and the *Campaign of the Carolinas*, which ended in April 1865, John managed to come through unscathed. However, he did go home on furlough in both January and March 1865. There is no mention in his records if his furloughs were related to his nagging arm wound.

During the *Campaign of the Carolinas*, the 12<sup>th</sup> Indiana Infantry (in which his uncle Private Finas Lance was now serving), was also attached to Sherman's army. One can only speculate whether young John Wesley Lance, the battle-scarred veteran, ever came into contact with his green, and much older uncle during the campaign.

In May 1865, both regiments participated in the Grand Review in Washington, DC. In June, 1865, the 58th Indiana was moved to Louisville, Kentucky for muster-out processing. John was promoted to Corporal on July 25, 1865 and simultaneously discharged. He returned to his home in Gibson County, Indiana where, as a civilian, he continued to suffer from his arm wound – and would do so for the rest of his life.

In 1867, John Wesley Lance married Martha Witherspoon and became the father of 4 children. In May 1869, John's war wound was examined by a surgeon who certified that John "was wounded in the left arm just below the shoulder. The ball had passed under his humerus [sic], entered his body, and passed out below the scapula in his back." In the doctor's opinion, the ball injured the posterior portion of John's lung and was the cause of considerable pain over that region. There was also some atrophy of his left arm found which left it ¼ incapacitated. The surgeon deemed John's disability to probably be permanent.

John Lance filed for an invalid military pension in July 1869 and in April 1870, he was granted a \$2 per month pension – retroactive to his time of discharge (July 1865). John remarried in March 1878 to America Jane Hargrove and he became the father of several more children.

After John Wesley Lance passed away in September 1892 at age 49, his widow America Jane (Hargrove) Lance, then began a long struggle to obtain a military pension to support their dependent children. The court eventually took her 3 youngest children – due to her inability to support them - and placed them in foster care. America Jane remarried in 1897, but that marriage was short-lived – ending by divorce a couple years later.

To support herself, America Jane needed her former husband's service pension. However, she had much difficulty proving that John Wesley Lance's death was caused by his military service. She was summoned forth to give testimony describing John's last sickness. Her rather graphic testimony was recorded and included in John's military pension file. It gives a good example of what prospective pensioners had to endure to obtain pension benefits.

America Jane (Hargrove/Lance) Maxfield was 40 years old and living in Vincennes, Knox County, Indiana on February 7, 1899 when she appeared before a Special Examiner of the Pension Office in Vincennes. She affirmed that she was the wife of John Edward Maxfield, and formerly the widow of John W. Lance.

## Ancestor Profile – Cpl. John Wesley Lance *(continued)*

*"I am the mother of three living children. I had two killed last summer. One by a switch engine and one got drowned, aged 19 and 18. Joseph Clark Lance was 19 when killed by the engine May 12, 1898, John W. was drowned at the age of 18 years on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of June 1898. Oscar P. now living, was born on the day that Giteau [sic] was hanged. Oday E. was born May 13, 1886, and is living. Howard B. was born Oct. 10, 1888, and is living."*

*"We lived in Gibson Co., Ind. when my husband, John W. Lance died. My husband had owned the farm up to about 8 years before he died. He lived on that farm 25 years and I lived there two years after his death. My husband's father, [who has] died, lived next to us – Ollie L. Lance."*

*"Mr. Lance was taken sick on Saturday evening and he died on Monday evening following. Dr. James Patten was there when [he] died. Dr. Wm. Strickland was in attendance but was not there at death. Dr. Patten had been our family physician and had attended [my husband] during a former spell of bleeding about 4 years before his death. Dr. Dan Revis had treated him thro [sic] a spell about 10 years ago, when Dr. Patten was absent in Kentucky."*

*[Examiner's Question: "What were these bleeding spells?"]*

*"He passed blood through the rectum and he also vomited blood. The blood that he vomited was dark colored and clotted. The blood that passed his rectum was also dark colored. It would pass with his stool. He never passed blood except with movement of bowels. He has coughed blood up ever since we were married."*

*"He would not cough all the time, but would take cold and cough. The first time that he vomited blood was when Howard was just 2 weeks old [Oct. 1888]. My husband had been at a funeral and when he came home he said he felt sick and vomited blood and then lay down; he vomited more blood and then fainted before we got the doctor (Dr. Patten). I never knew him to raise blood except by vomiting. He has come in and said, 'I have spit up more blood today than at any time before'. [He] was very slender and was slender ever since I knew him."*

*"I've seen my husband taking salt from his hand, but I never knew what he took it for. He kept these bleeding spells from me whenever he could. Dr. Revis treated him for ulcerated bowels. Dr. Blair from Princeton was called in with Dr. Revis. I know they talked of taking the ulcers off; but they didn't."*

*"At the time he was last taken down, he had gone to Oakland in a buggy alone. He wasn't well when he left home that day. Three of his children were all down with the typhoid fever at that time. [He] went to town to get things. It was the 10th day of September. When he came in from the barn, he said he felt bad and I asked him if he felt as though he was going to raise more blood and he said yes. I went to the kitchen and when I heard him coughing, I came in and found him at the end of the hall on the steps [and] that he had cast up considerable blood and in a few minutes, he raised still more blood. Dr. Strickland was there in about 20 minutes and [my husband] raised more or less blood all during that night and the next day and continued to bleed at intervals until his death."*

*"I was so worried I don't remember what the doctor did for him. If he called for or gave [my husband] salt, I did not know it, or don't now remember it. He sweat from weakness while bleeding; he had had night sweats before; but I am not sure whether he had them at the last or not. His death was very easy. He didn't have a steady cough, only when he would take cold. He said he had spit up blood ever since he had been wounded. He said it came from his wounds. Dr. Patten said after John's death that the bullet had killed him at last."*

*["My husband] never used any patent medicines. I don't know what kind of medicine the doctors gave. The last medicine that he took was a very dark looking medicine which was given in whiskey. I think there were 11 drops of the medicine to a table spoonful of whiskey. That was just during his last sickness. He told me that he passed blood in his stool just after he felt sick that evening and before the bleeding from his mouth commenced. He told me that he felt so bad on his way home that he was afraid that he would fall out of his buggy."*

*[Examiners Question: "How long before his death did he have a running off of the bowels?"]*

## Ancestor Profile – Cpl. John Wesley Lance *(continued)*

*“He had that chronic diarrhea all that Fall. He got up or tried to get up on Monday evening just before his death and I think exertion was what hurried his death. The doctor had told me do not let him turn over, but to keep him as quiet as possible and perhaps the bleeding would not commence again. I sat at his side from Sunday evening till Monday evening with my hands on his arms to keep him from trying to get up or turn over. On Monday evening, he insisted upon my going out to the dining room and eating something and I finally consented to go if his son Olley, since deceased – by former marriage, promised me that he would not allow him to turn over. I was only out a short time when they called me and told me he was dying. He had tried to arise from the bed and it started the blood flowing again. When I came in he was then throwing up blood. He would get awful sick and it seemed when he would throw it up it would ease him. After his death when they were dressing him, and turning him over, the blood ran from his mouth.”*

*“His bowels moved after he took his bed on Saturday. I know of the one movement but I am not sure of more than one. The stool was blackish looking. I don’t know if it had the appearance of physic. Tom Harper and Walis Farmer, I think, laid him out and dressed him. I know Thomas Harper shaved him. They were soldiers together.”*

*“No sir: [my husband] had no other sickness. He complained of a pain in his left side like pleurisy. He would have that occasionally. He was wounded through the left arm passing through the arm, entered the side and came out under the shoulder blade. He never had pneumonia that I knew of nor any fevers.”*

*“[My husband] complained of severe pain in his side, down at the bottom of his ribs and blistered it many times with mustard and sometimes with turpentine. He complained of that pain ever since I married him. He never seen a well day after I married him in 1878; but always complained of that pain at intervals. He complained of aching in his arms and side and walked the floor and cried.”*

*“No, the wound never broke out at the scar; but there would be a kind of an irritation out up above, below and around*

*the scar occasionally. The irritation was in the form of pimples with white surfaces. He never used any medicine on that. It was all located below the shoulder blades.”*

*“I think his father died of typhoid fever and old age about two years after John died. I lived on the place until the old man died. [My husband’s] daughter, Ellen, died of the typhoid fever too, in 1895 in the Fall. There was a good deal of typhoid fever all around there; but John had no fevers. We lived right below the cemetery and Dr. Strickland said he thought the location had something to do with his death.”*

Here ends this brief profile of John Wesley Lance – farmer, soldier, veteran. His early life as the son of a small-time farmer before the Civil War was modest, mundane, and ordinary. His time in the army was, no doubt, exciting, violent, dangerous, and physically exhausting. He marched countless miles and somehow managed to defy an early death while participating in numerous major battles. After the war, John tried to return to a normal life as a farmer, husband, and father. Life was difficult for him and his family. Money was short and typhoid fever was prevalent. In addition, he was handicapped and usually in pain due to his war wound – dying before his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. John Wesley Lance was a true Patriot and a family hero.

America Jane (Hargrove/Lance) Maxfield continued living as a divorcee in Vincennes, Indiana. She boarded with her married son, Howard Lance and family. Her military pension claim file does not indicate whether she was successful with obtaining her pension allowance. She passed away at midnight at Howard’s home on January 14, 1930 at age 70.

*...Respectfully submitted by Brother Michael Lance*