

William Henry Coleman (1864 - 1941)

William Henry Coleman was the oldest child of Calvert Malcolm Coleman and Sarah Elizabeth Westfall. Calvert and Sarah were married in the midst of the Civil War era – on Christmas Eve in 1863. Nine months later William was born on September 25, 1864.



His wife, Jessie, continued to live in Ferndale until her death at the age of 88, on March 11, 1975.

Jessie outlived her two children. George died on January 21, 1971. Prior to his death, George followed in his father's occupational footsteps, working for many years as a maintenance man for the Ferndale schools.

William was raised as a child on his family's farm in Van Buren Township, Michigan. But farm life was not for William. He left home at 16 and moved to Detroit. By 1890, William was working for the Detroit Urban Railway as a streetcar conductor. The 1900 Census shows his mother Sarah and his brother Roy renting a home with William in Detroit.

He eventually became a motorman for the Railway and worked as such for 20 years.

William married Jessie Croton in Royal Oak, Michigan, on November 10, 1909. The couple soon moved to Ferndale.

Their first child, George Croton Coleman, was born on March 18, 1911. Sarah Elizabeth Coleman, known as Sally, was born the following year.

After retiring from the Railway, William worked as a maintenance man for the Ferndale Board of Education.

William died in Ferndale on August 2, 1941. He is buried at Oakview Cemetery in Royal Oak, Michigan.

Sally died on April 10, 1968. She was married twice and had a child by her marriage to Richard Mason Barnett.

The name and whereabouts of that child is unknown to the Coleman family at this time.

Unfortunately, the children of Murray and Kay Coleman never met these Coleman relatives even though we lived in the same community throughout the 1960s.

Jessie, George, and Sally are buried along with William at Oakview Cemetery.



Traffic jam at Woodward Ave. and 9 Mile Rd. in 1922.