

William Perry Bruce  
Pioneer of 1852  
compiled by Diane Wright  
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William Perry Bruce    Caroline Adelia (O'Neal) Bruce

William Perry Bruce and his wife, Caroline Adelia O'Neal came to Oregon in 1852.

William Perry Bruce

b. 25 Apr 1825 Knox County, Indiana

d. 17 Nov 1888 Waitsburg, Walla Walla County, Washington

buried Waitsburg Cemetery, Waitsburg, Walla Walla County, Washington

m. 10 Feb 1850 Knox County, Indiana

Caroline Adelia O'Neal

b. 18 Jan 1830

d. 07 Jan 1892 Waitsburg, Walla Walla County, Washington

buried Waitsburg Cemetery, Waitsburg, Walla Walla County, Washington

1860 Federal Census, Eugene, Lane County, Oregon, June 26, 1860, W.P. Bruce, 34, farmer, \$2600 \$800, IN; Caroline A., 29, housewife, IN; John H., 10, IN; Mary E., 6, OR; James W., 4, OR; Elizabeth I., 2, OR

1870: Waitsburg, Walla Walla County, Washington, July 26, 1870, W.P. Bruce, 45, farmer, \$8000 \$1000, IN; Caroline, 40, keeping house, IN; Wm, 14, OR; Isadore, 12, OR

1880, Waitsburg, Walla Walla County, Washington, June 7, 1880; William H. Griffin, 39, hotel keeper, wife and boarders including Perry William Bruce, 86, money lender, IN IN IN, Caroline Bruce, 81, boarder, IN IN IN

Children of William Bruce and Caroline O'Neal:

**1. John Hamilton Bruce**

b. c1851 Indiana

d. 1898, Vancouver, Washington

m. 1<sup>st</sup> Sarah F. (divorced 1873)

m. 2<sup>nd</sup>. 22 Mar 1881 Walla Walla County, Washington

Maggie Hartman

Children of John Hamilton Bruce and Sarah

1. Lulu Bruce, b. 1870

**2. Mary Ellen Bruce**

b. 06 Feb 1854 Lane County, Oregon

d. 13 Aug 1921 Waitsburg, Walla Walla County, Washington

m. 1<sup>st</sup>, 1869 Walla Walla County, Washington

Henry James Abbey

b. June 8, 1835

d. Aug 19, 1897, Waitsburg, Walla Walla County, Washington

m. 2<sup>nd</sup>, Horace Murphy

b. 1854

d. 1910

Children of Mary Ellen Bruce and Henry James Abbey

1. Adelia Abbey. b. 1869, d. 1869
2. Perry Henry Abbey. b. 1874, d. 1950. Married Theora Alice Fine.
3. Freddie Abbey, b. 1875, d. 1875
4. Lillian May Abbey, b. 1876, d 1888
5. William Oscar Abbey, b. 1880, d. 1938. Married Adda "Addie" Sanders.
6. Caroline Mada Abbey, b. 1882, d. 1906. Married Lawson Loundagin.
7. Charles Bruce Abbey, b. 1886, d. 1944. Married Jennie Mae Kinder.
8. Henry James Abby, died at 3 yrs of age.

### **3. James William Bruce**

b. 1856 Lane County, Oregon

d. 06 Sep 1915 Waitsburg, Walla Walla County, Washington

buried Waitsburg Cemetery, Waitsburg, Walla Walla County, Washington

m. 1<sup>st</sup> 14 Aug 1874 Walla Walla County, Washington

Charlotte (Lottie) M. Sowards (divorce 1879)

m. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lorinda Harmon

b. Oct 23, 1864

d. Oct 8, 1939

Children of James William Bruce and Charlotte (Lottie) Sowards

1. Carrie B. Bruce, b. 1876.

Children of James William Bruce and Lorinda A. Harmon

2. William Emory Bruce, b. 1886, d. 1947. Married Clara B. Weatherford.

3. Zula Ellen Bruce, b. 1888, d. 1954. Married 1<sup>st</sup> Charles H. Burkhart

4. Hobart O. Bruce, b. 1895, d. 1947. Married Ethel Free.

5. Ivan Mills Bruce, b. 1902, d. 1994. Married Florence M. Packwood.

### **4. Isadora Elizabeth Bruce**

b. 14 May 1858 Eugene, Lane County, Oregon

d. 18 Jan 1920 Spokane, Spokane County, Washington

Buried in Spokane, Washington

m. 05 Sep 1874 Walla Walla County, Washington

Edward Louis Powell

b. 12 Aug 1851, Portsmouth, Ohio

d. 12 Sep 1933, San Jose California

Buried in Spokane, Washington

Children of Isadore E. Bruce and Edward L. Powell

1. Freddie Powel, b. 1875, d. 1875

2. Percy P. Powell, b. 1876, d. 1958. Married Mabel L. Hogan

3. Edward Bruce Powell, b. 1878, d. 1960. Married 1<sup>st</sup> Capitola Townsend. Married 2<sup>nd</sup> Ruth Hinckley.

4. Gerda Powell, b. 1881, d. 1929. Married James Rigsby.

5. Wayne Taylor Powell, b. 1883, d. 1967. Married Clara E. McMurray.

6. Glenn Burgan Powell, b. 1885, d. 1955. Married Marguerite Newman.

## **5. Edward L. Bruce**

b. c1861

d. 05 Sep 1863, (drown), Waitsburg, Walla Walla County, Washington

buried Waitsburg Cemetery, Waitsburg, Walla Walla County, Washington

**Copied from the website: <http://www.waitsburghistoricalociety.org/index.html>**

William Perry and Caroline Bruce were among the early settlers who moved to this area when Waitsburg was not yet a town and was still largely unsettled. Abraham Lincoln was the President of the United States and was greatly concerned about the raging Civil War between the northern and southern states.

At this time in American history, thousands of people were migrating west in search of better places to live and raise their families.

Perry, as Mr. Bruce was called, and Caroline left their home in Indiana and traveled first to Oregon before heading to Washington Territory in 1861 with their five children. Their oldest child, John, was ten years old. Mary Ellen was six, James was five, Isadora was three, and Edward was just a small baby. Perry's brother already lived here and had built a cabin on Coppei Creek, not too far from here. The Bruce family lived with him that first winter. It was an especially hard winter with deep snow and severe cold.

The next year, 1862, they bought a large piece of land, a homestead claim, which is where the city of Waitsburg was later begun. They built a log house close to what is now West Third and Main Street at the north end of the block.

When their little boy, Edward, was about two years old he wandered down the hill behind their house to play and accidentally drowned in the deep spring located there. His mother was heartbroken and wanted him buried on the far hill that she could see from her front porch. The hill became our city cemetery and he was the first to be buried there.

Mr. Bruce, Perry, became a successful merchant, business man and farmer. He also raised horses. He operated a general store with E. L. Powell, who would later become his youngest daughter, Isadora's husband. The store still exists, and is now called Waitsburg Hardware and Mercantile.

Mr. Perry led the effort to expand the railroad to connect our area with other cities. He also helped begin the Walla Walla newspaper and was very active in the community and schools.

Perry and Caroline built a "Victorian" home in 1883 which was a popular ornate style in the 1800s. It allowed for a grand life style with many rooms and ornate furnishings. Even the wooden post of the staircase was hand carved and shipped "around the Horn" of South America. By 1883, the children were already grown and raising their own families when their parents built the "showpiece of the town." Perry enjoyed living in the grand home for five years before he

died at the young age of 63. The home was built in an era when there was no indoor plumbing or electricity. The toilet was an outhouse. Baths were taken once a week in the kitchen. The water was brought into the house and then heated on the stove. Since there was no electricity, candles were used as well as lamps that hung down from the ceiling that were filled with kerosene. These chandeliers had many crystal prisms to reflect the light after the wicks were lit.



Caroline Bruce was kept very busy maintaining the household but was also very active in her church. She frequently held ice cream socials in her front yard. The ice cream was hand-churned, made with fresh cream and strawberries or fruit that was in season.

As a grandmother, Caroline loved having her grandchildren visit and always had a supply of white peppermint candy for them. She lived in the beautiful house until 1892.

The Bruces' eldest daughter, Mary Ellen, and members of her family lived in the home the next thirty years after Perry and Caroline passed away. Mary Ellen and her husband, Henry Abbey, had four children. One of her great-great grandsons still lives in Waitsburg and grows wheat. His name is Bruce Abbey. In the upstairs hall is a Bruce family tree, and several people on the diagram have visited the museum.

The above information is based on research by Sandy Headrick.

### **William Perry Bruce's Obituary in the Waitsburg Times, November 23, 1888**

William Perry Bruce was born in Knox County, Indiana, May 21, 1825 and died in Waitsburg, W.T. Nov. 17, 1888. He was the second child in a family of seven. Three died young. The eldest, Charles, lives in Kansas, and the youngest, Mrs. Axie Parker lives in Lincoln County, W.T. James lives near Waitsburg. He grew up to manhood in the same state where he was born. In 1850 he was united in marriage to Miss Caroline Adelia O'Neal who has been by his side as a faithful helpmate for these 38 years and still survives him to mourn his loss.

There have been born to them five children – three sons and two daughters. One of the sons died when but 2 years old. Of the other two sons, John Hamilton lives in Oregon and James William lives near Waitsburg. The two daughters, Mrs. Mary Ellen Abbey and Mrs. Elizabeth Isodora Powell reside here at Waitsburg and were with their father much of his last illness.

In 1850 soon after his marriage, he moved to Marshall County, Ill. In 1852 he crossed the plains and settled in Marion County, Ore. With his brother James had preceded him. He did not remain in Marion County but settled in Polk County in the same state, where he remained for a number of years and then moved to Lane County. During all this time he was engaged in farming.

In the fall of 1861 he moved to Washington Territory again following his brother James who had come to this county in the spring before. The two brothers and their families spent the winter of 1861-62 in the same house on the Coppei (Creek) just east of the present residence of Lewis Cox. In the following spring, he bought the claim where George W. Loundagin now lives and spent the summer there. In the fall of 1862 he sold this claim to Mr. Loundagin and bought the claim of Isaac Levens on which now stands most of the town of Watisburg, and here has made his home ever since. In the winter of 1862-3 he broke the virgin sod of his claim and made his farm on the land where now are the homes and businesses of this city.

After cultivating his land for a few years, he gave up farming and engaged in the mercantile business for one year with the late W.N. Smith. Then he engaged in the same line of business with Warren Witcher and then E.L. Powell. After being in partnership with Mr. Powell for 2 or 3 years, he quit the mercantile business and since then he has devoted his time to looking after his property, loaning money, etc.

Something like 19 years ago he had an attack of paralysis. He spent much time and money seeking relief and was to a considerable extent successful. Six years ago he had a second attack from which he partially recovered. The third and fatal attack came on the morning of Nov. 4, 1888. For thirteen days his naturally strong and robust constitution struggled with the disease but

the end came at 1 o'clock a.m. on the morning of Nov. 17 when the spirit was set free and is at rest.

In the winter of 1844 he attended a series of meetings held by Elder Fields and John A. Noys. He became impressed with the feeling that this life should be devoted to preparing for the next. He was led to put his trust in Christ as the Savior of sinners and was baptized soon after. He united with the Christian Church and has been a faithful member ever since. He was one of the charter members of the Christian Church in Waitsburg and when the present house was built he contributed \$700. He has always been ready to give of his means to support the work of the church. He was a regular attendant at the services of the church, rarely ever missing even a prayer meeting. While he never had much to say, he showed by his presence and even his very looks that he was interested in the service of Christ. We shall miss him in his accustomed place.

He was a prominent factor in Waitsburg from its beginning. He has been a liberal giver to the public enterprises of the town such as the cemetery and the academy. He was a familiar object on our streets and he will be greatly missed.

He served one term as county commissioner. Otherwise his path lay in the walks of private life. A good quiet noble Christian citizen has fallen and we may well weep and drop a tear over the earth that covers his mortal body. To many of us "He is not lost but gone away."

#### **Article in Waitsburg Times about Caroline A. Bruce, Jan 8, 1892:**

About midnight on Tuesday night Mrs. W. P. Bruce received a severe and without a doubt a fatal paralytic shock affecting her entire system. W. B. Parker who occupies part of Mrs. Bruce's large residence on Main Street heard Mrs. Bruce calling for help. He hastened to her door and asked admittance but she was too far gone to open the door. The door was forced open and Mrs. Bruce was found in an unconscious condition and her body badly drawn. She was completely paralyzed and notwithstanding all that has been done since, remained in that condition and with no possible hope of recovery. In fact, she in all probability, is numbered with the great majority as this paper reaches our readers, for when we went to press last night she was breathing very hard and it seemed that each breath would be her last. How sad! She was a noble and good woman, whom we all loved. She would be 62 years old the 18<sup>th</sup> of this month.

#### **Article in Waitsburg Times about Caroline A. Bruce Jan 15, 1892:**

As we predicted in last week's Times, Mrs. W. P. Bruce did not regain consciousness. She died at 7 minutes to 12 o'clock midnight on Thursday night, last, Jan 7, at the age of 61 years, 11 months, and 20 days.

The death of Mrs. Bruce removes from our midst one of our earliest settlers. She was a devoted Christian woman, a friend of all and especially to the poor and distressed. While though her

death was sudden, it did not find her unprepared. She was prepared to live---she was prepared to die. She has done to her reward at God's right hand, to enter an eternal home prepared for those who love and serve the Lord. Her remains were laid to rest in the silent city of the dead on Sunday afternoon.