

The Divorce of Rosa H. (Bridinger) Mills

Richmond M. Mills and Rosa H. Bridinger were married on 11 Jan 1877 in Williams County, Ohio. (Marriage V4 p45). This was a lengthy case, which started in December 1884 and became final in June 1889.

Richmond Mills stated for the court that Rosa was willfully absent for over five years. She lived in Lansing, Michigan. They had a mutual agreement five years ago to the division of their property. He listed their children as - William age 12 on March 19, 1889, Martha H. age 10 on February 15, 1889, and Mary A. age 8 in December 1889. He wanted custody of the children. A newspaper notice appeared on June 6, 1889. A divorce was granted whereby he has custody of the children, a visitation schedule was set, and Richmond paid court costs.

Richmond, born March 27, 1834 in New York, was the son of Minor and Hannah/Martha Wood Mills.

Richmond and Rosa Mills had the following children: William G. (March 19, 1876 - July 5, 1913), John Keenan (b March 19, 1877), Martha H. (b February 7, 1879), and Mary Ann (b December 14, 1880). Note that on William Mills' tombstone inscription in Maple Grove Cemetery, Edgerton, his birth date was 1876, making him conceived before the marriage or the son of another.

From the 1870 Richland Township, Defiance County, Ohio federal census p164A the Bridinger family was enumerated as George Bridinger 41 Wurtemberg, Hannah 37 Saxony, Rosa 9 OH, Matilda 7 OH, Henry 4 OH, and David 1 OH. Rosa's parents were George and Hanna Richard Bridinger. According to the 1880 Ferris, Montcalm County, Michigan federal census, Rosa was living with her mother and siblings; her father had died sometime between 1870-1880. Note that Rosa was listed twice in the 1880 federal census - once with her husband in Ohio and once with her mother in Michigan.

The court initially continued the case but Richmond charged Rosa with being willfully absent for five years plus he wished custody of the children. A legal notice appeared in the *Bryan Press*. A divorce was granted, but on June

11, 1888 a criminal action was brought against Richmond and Caroline Stirtz for cohabiting in adultery. The defendants claimed that they were not guilty. The *Edgerton Earth*, November 5, 1915, p5, reported Richmond's demise on November 2, 1915. The Maple Grove Cemetery showed burials for Richmond M. Mills (1834-1915), his son William, and his sister Lois N Mills, who was incorrectly identified in the cemetery records as Richmond's wife.

Rose Bridinger Mills married George O. Spaulding in Charlotte, Eaton County, Michigan on June 15, 1889. According to their marriage license she was born in 1862 in New York; George was born in New York in 1854; his parents were John and Maria Jackson Spaulding.

References: Richmond M. Mills v Rosa H. Bridinger Mills (Journal 12 p430 - 22 Dec 1884; Journal 14 p352 - 11 June 1888; Journal 15 p69 - July 1889; Roll 47 case number 2085 - 4 June 1889