

Darnell, William Nelson ^[1]

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by [William S. Powell](#) ^[2], 1986

27 Oct. 1830–30 Oct. 1915

William Nelson Darnell, missionary, was born in [Wilkes County](#) ^[3], probably the son of Peter Darnell, Esq., the only one of that name in the county at the time of the 1830 census. In 1834 he moved to Indiana where he attended local schools and Bedford Academy in Lawrence County. Following apprenticeship to a carpenter, he moved to Minnesota in 1854 and fought in regional [Indian](#) ^[4] wars. Early in the [Civil War](#) ^[5] he enlisted in the Seventh Regiment, Minnesota Volunteers. He received several changes in assignment but eventually was named a captain in the Sixty-fifth Regiment, U.S. Colored Troops. After the war he lived in Mississippi for a time and in 1867 was a missionary for the [Methodist](#) ^[6] church among the freedmen. The following year he was in Missouri, also as a missionary among blacks. By 1875 he was living in Greene County, Ind.

In addition to his work as a missionary, from time to time Darnell was a schoolteacher and a farmer. He was a Methodist and a Republican. In Indiana he was a Greene County councilman for four years and represented the county in the General Assembly of 1889. He was an unsuccessful candidate for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. After the Civil War he was active in the Grand Army of the Republic. In 1855 he married Mary Adams and they were the parents of four children. He died in Greene County, Ind.

References:

Biographical Directory of the Indiana General Assembly(1980).

Additional Resources:

*Biographical Memoirs of Greene County, Ind: With Reminiscences of Pioneer Days, Volume 2*B.F. Bowen, 1908.

[http://books.google.com/books?](http://books.google.com/books?id=VRQVAAAAAYAAJ&dq=william+nelson+darnell&source=gb_s&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false)

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Authors:

[Powell, William S.](#) ^[10]

Origin - location:

[Wilkes County](#) ^[11]

From:

[Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press.](#)^[12]

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