

“among the early settlers of Amherstburg” - The Thomas Family – Part 1

This month we will be connecting the dots in the Thomas family tree, beginning with Maria/Mariah Buckner and George Thomas. George was born in Covington, Kentucky in 1843, while there are several possibilities for where Maria was born: her son George Alexander's death certificate lists her as being born in Evansville, Indiana, and her marriage record states that she was born in Kentucky, while her obituary in the *Amherstburg Echo* states that she was born in Malden and lived there her whole life, except for the few years that she lived in Battle Creek, Michigan, following the passage of her husband, George in May 1922. Her obituary also states that she had three brothers: William, Elliott and David Buckner. According to George and Maria's marriage record from the Wesleyan Methodist Church, George and Maria were married on July 25, 1861. George's father's name is not mentioned in this record, but his mother's name was Clarissa Thomas. Maria's parents were Berrel and Eliza Buckner. In a booklet describing the Fifteenth Annual Thomas Family Reunion, it states that “Members of our family have achieved prominence in many fields of endeavor and we are scattered through twelve states in the U.S.A. and the Province of Ontario, Canada ... We are a family traditionally motivated to the highest ideas of Christian living and citizenship, and wherever we live, members of the family have played and continue to assume leading roles in the religious, civic, and political life of their communities.” This booklet also says that “George and Mariah Thomas were among the early settlers of Amherstburg, Ontario and were the parents of four sons and one daughter – indeed, a lovely family.” These five children were George Alexander, Philip, Daniel, Robert W. and Mary Almede.

George Alexander Thomas was born in Amherstburg on May 28, 1864 and is listed as a cook in his 1945 death certificate and an Affidavit for License to Marry. He retired in 1935.

George Alexander married Frances Jones on December 21, 1896 in Detroit, Michigan, although he is listed under his middle name, "Alexander." His death certificate also lists a second marriage to Lydia Lott. George Alexander and Lydia had several children: Juanita Vivian, Robert S., George Leslie, Lydia Opal and Harry N. Juanita Vivian was born on January 6, 1899, and later married Charles W. Mason, a chauffeur and son of Charles E. Mason and Florence Smith, in 1938 in Cuyahoga, Ohio. Robert S. was born on September 30, 1901 and later married a woman named Dorothea. George Leslie was born on October 1, 1903, and in September 1925, married Helen M. Anderson, who was born in Jacksonville, Florida and was the daughter of Henry and Maude (Smith) Anderson. In their marriage record, George Leslie is also listed as a musician. Lydia Opal who was born on March 27, 1906, sadly died on March 3, 1940. Her death certificate states that she was a "recreation teacher" and the wife of Harold Gaines. Finally, Harry N. was born on May 17, 1908 in Lorain, Ohio, and according to his death certificate he worked for the U.S. Postal Service. He also married a woman named Anne. **Stay tuned for next week.**