

Looking to the Future – Kersey Family – Part 1

Bertha Kersey had the philosophy of “look to the future,” which speaks to the many generations that followed her and other members of the Kersey family. The Kersey family’s roots in Essex County go back to Alexander and Amanda Kersey who arrived in Colchester circa the 1850s. This month we will be looking at the future generations that followed them.

The Reverend Alexander Kersey was born in Indiana, prior to the Civil War. He married Amanda Watters who was born in Terre Haute, Indiana in 1828 and was the daughter of James and Amanda Watters. Alexander and Amanda came to Colchester in the 1850s and took up farming. They had four children: William, Mary, Rebekah and Isaiah. An article called “Notes of Interest” describing Alexander Kersey mentions that he travelled to the Maritime Provinces in “middle life, where he labored in the interest of his church. He served as itinerant minister and financial agent and Presiding Elder for over 20 years. He was a man widely known both in the United States and Canada. He also travelled through Europe in the interest of his church as a financial agent, at which time he lectured before large audiences. He was the choice of the Nova Scotia conference two or three times to represent it at the General Conference, in which capacity he served them honorable.” He spent quite a bit of time in the Maritime Provinces and it was in St. John, New Brunswick that he passed on February 15, 1908, leaving behind his family who were still in Essex County. Sadly, his wife Amanda passed away a few years later on August 18, 1912 and was described as “one of the oldest residents of the township, in her 84th year.”

As mentioned, Alexander and Amanda had four children: William, Mary, Rebekah and Isaiah. William Sr. was born in 1852 in Terre Haute, Indiana and came to Colchester with his parents at a young age. There is substantial documentation on William Sr., particularly in the *Amherstburg Echo*, including a write up which states “There are 21 barns and as many or more

houses in the Colchester district that were constructed under the skillful workmanship of William Kersey, Sr., who was at one time one of the best-known carpenters in the district. Maybe he was so adept at this work because he learned to manipulate saw and hammer almost as soon as he could walk. Whatever the reason he learned his trade well and now as one of the oldest residents in the township of Colchester South he can look back on a successful and unblemished career.”

William Sr. was also a devoted member and trustee of the Central Grove Church in Harrow and was very active in a gathering at the church called Decoration Day, which involved members of the congregation cleaning up the Central Grove cemetery. Participants were requested to bring spades, shovels, ferns and flower seeds to beautify the property. Following the clean up bee, participants enjoyed a social which included a concert. On the committee was Superintendent of the Sunday School, A. Mulder, Treasurer, Walter Banks and Assistant Superintendent, William Kersey Sr., who just a few years later became Superintendent and manager of the clean ups. The *Amherstburg Echo* reported on these clean up bees from 1926 to at least 1933, meaning that this was an annual event for several years. William Sr.’s son, William Jr. (discussed in Part 2) also participated on this committee and was the Secretary. **There’s still more to learn about**

William Sr. and his family. Stay tuned for more next week.