

The Clingman Family – Food for the Soul

-Lulu Clingman serves soul food to residents in Colchester. Read more below.

So far, we have only discussed one of Gabriel Jr. and Mary Ann Clingman's children: Esther. Next up is James Milton Clingman. Just like his sister, Esther, James also escaped enslavement with his parents via the UGRR in 1846. He later married Nancy Ann Hatfield on June 12, 1868 in Colchester. Nancy was born on September 22, 1858 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and was the daughter of Charles Hatfield and Mary Ann Conway. James and Nancy had 14 children: William (1866), Mercilla Ann or "Mercy" (1870-1918), James M. (1873-1912), Joseph (b. 1873), Ernest (1877), Charles (1877-1882), Amos Burt (b. 1880), Albert (1882-1893), Harvey Richardson (1884), Jessie (1886), John (1888-1925), George (1889), Francis (1890) and Laura (b. 1892).

There is a significant amount of information about Nancy and James' first child, William. He married twice: first to Matilda Ridout (daughter of the Reverend William Henry Ridout and Catherine Harris), and his second wife was Sarah Ferren (daughter of William Ferren and Jane Gerock). William and Sarah married on August 24, 1914, following Matilda's passing in 1913. In Matilda's obituary, the *Amherstburg Echo* states, "Mrs. Clingman was a Christian woman with many excellent traits of character, and was a member of the B.M.E. church, Harrow. She was a loving wife and affectionate mother (one who loved motherhood), good neighbor and kind friend. She was always willing to do her part to assist Christian or moral enterprises in any way she could until her health failed her sometime over a year ago ... Mrs. Clingman and family have the sympathy of the community."

Matilda Ridout and William Clingman had seven children: James, Jennie (1891), William Henry (1893), Ethel May (1896), Mina (1898), Matilda Josephine (1903) and Olive (1907).

James Ellis Clingman was born on May 4, 1887 in Colchester South and later married Lucretia “Lulu” Moore (Moore was her married name). Lulu made money by serving meals out of her house in the early 1950s and remained in business into the 1970s. She served soul food style meals and operated mostly on weekends during the summer months. Her husband James worked as a labourer on the McCormick farm in Colchester for over 50 years and was described as “an excellent worker who could ‘turn his hand’ to any farm job, in the field, about the yard, with livestock.”

Matilda and William’s next child, Ethel May Clingman, married Ernest Mulder, the son of Albert Mulder and Charlotte Delia Johns, on December 22, 1912. Their marriage record states that Ernest was born in Windsor, a bachelor and 27-years-old, while Ethel was born in Colchester South, a spinster and was 16. Their marriage record also has a small note stating that “I [Ernest Mulder] have had the consent of the mother personally that this should be made out,” meaning that the marriage should proceed, despite her young age.

Next is Mina Clingman who married Robert Kersey, who was born in December 1881. According to her November 1917 obituary, she was survived by Robert and three small children, but their names are not listed. Mina’s sister Matilda Josephine married the Reverend Emit Frye, son of Joseph Frye and Melinda Sims, on December 17, 1917. According to their marriage record Emit was 26 and born in Virginia, while Josephine was 16 and born in Colchester South. Neither were previously married.

Matilda Josephine’s sister Olive Clingman married Elwood Bow, the son of William Bowe and Mamie Hughes, on June 19, 1926. Their marriage record states that Edward was born in Detroit, 20-years-old and a labourer, while Olive was a domestic and 19-years-old.

What we publish is not a complete history of any family and is based on the documents that are available. We welcome photos and information to fill in the gaps. See you next week for part 4.