

The Pearl Family Part 3 – A Stone Mason

So far, we have discussed five children of Basil and Catherine Pearl: Rachel, Alfred, William, Caroline and Nancy. We will continue by discussing their remaining children: Hannah, Thomas P. and Joseph. Hannah was born circa 1847, while Thomas P. was born on May 27, 1853. The 1891 Census lists Thomas' occupation as "Stone Mason." On July 11, 1897, Thomas married Olive H. Butler-Milton who was born in March 1866 and was the daughter of Phillip Butler and Mary Kirtley-Butler. Olive is listed with Thomas, who is recorded as a farmer, in the 1901 Census, but sadly Thomas is listed as a widower in the 1911 Census. He then moved to Amherstburg, then to Detroit.

On May 13, 1938, the *Amherstburg Echo* printed a story called "Thomas Pearl Is Well Known Mason of Bygone Years." It says "Many things crumble and decay but when a man works with stone his handiwork usually is enduring. Thus Thomas Pearl, a member of the 'colored' race who moved the Amherstburg recently from Windsor, can still see here and in Detroit many buildings which he helped to construct while he worked at his trade as stone mason. One of these is the Wayne County building in Detroit; another is the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, Jefferson and Antoine, Detroit; the Art Loan building. These and many others he worked on while in the employ of the late Alexander Capoton, one of Detroit's best known building contractors, grandfather of Mrs. J.H. Sullivan of Amherstburg. Mr. Pearl also worked on a number of buildings in and near Amherstburg that are well known. The merry-go-round building at Bob Lo and other stone buildings there; the stone schoolhouse on the Pike Road; the Laramie house on North Street, Amherstburg. He learned his trade with Walker Brothers of Ann Arbor, Michigan having gone there in the year 1867. Born in Green County Pennsylvania in

1853, he came to Canada with his parents Basil and Catherine Pearl, when 13 years of age. They settled on a farm in Colchester North, near where the Gilgal cemetery is now located.”

The article continues by saying “After staying with the Walker Brothers for six years he went to Detroit and was with the Capotons for 16 years. Returning to Amherstburg district he worked here for some time and lived on the farm on the seventh concession of Colchester North, now owned by Eccles J. Gott of Amherstburg. He was married to Olive Butler of New Canaan, who predeceased him some years ago. He is the only survivor of his family and has been living retired for the past six years. Mr. Pearl was in his younger days a hearty supporter of the Liberal party and worked among his people at election time for the Grit candidates. He says he is glad to return to Amherstburg to spend the rest of his days.”

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.