

## **The Christian Family History Part 5 – The Ship Cook**

Charles Henry's brother Thomas is the next child of Henry Christian and Anne Wilson. Thomas was born on July 7, 1872 in Anderdon and he later married Ethel Irene Dunn who was born on November 4, 1888 in Windsor and was the daughter of Robert L. Dunn and Nora Larter. Before we move forward, a bit more about Ethel Irene Dunn's father Robert and uncle James. The Dunn brothers, James and Robert, have a very significant history in Windsor. Robert L. Dunn was born in 1857 and later became a City Councillor for Windsor, being re-elected seven times, in 1893, 1894, 1895, 1897, 1898, 1902 and 1903. He was also the first Black Canadian to run for Mayor of Windsor in 1897 and was a president for The Central Citizens' Association which was Windsor's first Black Canadian civil rights organization and assisted persons of African descent in gaining employment in jobs where they were previously excluded.

Robert's older brother James L. Dunn was born in 1848 and he was the first Black Canadian City Councillor for Windsor in 1887 and was voted into office again the following year. He also became a school board trustee after he unsuccessfully sued the Windsor Board of Education in 1883, so that his daughter Jane could attend an integrated school. James and Robert also owned and operated the Dunn Paint and Varnish Company, later called the Standard Paint and Varnish Company. They are so important to the community that the City of Windsor proclaimed the week of February 21-27 as James and Robert Dunn week. Recently, there was also a successful vote to name a new school on Mercer Street in Windsor after James L. Dunn.

Ethel Irene Dunn, Robert Dunn's daughter, and Thomas Christian married on January 14, 1914 in Windsor. According to Thomas' obituary from April 1934, he "lived for some years on the South side of Texas Road, near the quarry, later moving to Amherstburg, and occupied a house on Sandwich Street." Irene Moore Davis adds that her great grandfather Thomas was

frequently assigned to work on a ship called “William E. Corry” where he worked as a cook. Irene also mentioned that her great grandfather often negotiated with the Windsor police to turn young Black men in trouble with the law over to him so that he could train them to be cooks and help them make something of their lives. According to Irene, Thomas was often away, sailing the Great Lakes.

Thomas and Ethel had two children: Thomas Leonard and Ethel Winifred. Thomas Leonard married Mildred Kinney and their children included Thomas Albert Christian and Kevin Dunn Christian. Ethel Winifred, who was mentioned at the beginning as the author of “The Christian Family Story,” married Abram Shreve and the couple had several children including: E. Andrea, Muriel Joanne, James Eric, Catherine Lucille and Claudia Maria. Ethel and Abram’s daughter E. Andrea married Fitz Moore and their daughter Irene Moore Davis has kindly shared information and photos for this family history. E. Andrea (Shreve) Moore has a very special connection to the Museum. She was a founding member of the Museum and established a training program for volunteers to conduct tours. She even used her own free time to lead tours at the Museum and hosted tours for many distinguished visitors including Charles Blockson. Her impact goes beyond her support of the Museum. From 1998 to 2001, she chaired the Underground Railroad Monument Committee of Windsor. Irene adds “Unveiled in October 2001, the International Monument to the Underground Railroad was an incredibly labour-intensive endeavour to which she [E. Andrea] gave a massive quantity of her remaining energy and life force.”

Throughout her time as a community builder, E. Andrea Moore took on several additional roles which included founding and serving as President of the Essex County Black Historical Research Society, acting as President of the Windsor and District Black Coalition,

being an advisor to the Sankofa News, lecturing on Black History and devoting 16 years as a member of the Hour A Day Study Club. For her service to the community, Moore was the recipient of the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal and was nominated for the Ontario Heritage Foundation's Heritage Community Recognition Award.

The last child of Henry Christian and Anne Wilson is Ada. She married Benjamin Vincent, the son of Ben Vincent and Mary Shelman (some records said Mary Denslow) on August 3, 1904 in Sandwich. According to several records Benjamin worked in a few different occupations including as a cook, a janitor, and a messenger for Paint Works.

Interestingly, in 1895 Ada was the President of a mixed-gender organization in Amherstburg called the Social-Literary Society. The *Amherstburg Echo* also lists Annie Smith, Ada's niece, as Vice President and later President. Men were also involved in this organization including George McCurdy, the Society Judge, and Delos R. Davis, who was the Honorary President. Other members of the Christian family were involved in this group including Ella Christian who filled the role of Honorary President.

Benjamin and Ada had four children: Benjamin Christian, Kenneth Lund, Lloyd Ivan, and Bernard Thomas. The birth record for Benjamin Christian Vincent says that he was born on June 14, 1906 in Windsor. Documents from the Museum's family history collection state that Benjamin married Eula Taylor and their children included Benjamin, Eleanor, and Carol. Benjamin's brother Kenneth Lund (Lund is the maiden name of Ann Wilson Christian's mother) was born on May 5, 1908 in Windsor. Kenneth and his wife Estelle had at least two children named Marilyn and Jeannie (m. Adriel Fenton). Kenneth's brother Lloyd Ivan was born on May 2, 1910 in Windsor, but no other information could be found for him. Lastly, Bernard Thomas was born on May 27, 1912 in Windsor and he married Velma Browning, the sister of J. Lyle

Browning who formerly acted as the President of the Museum's Board of Directors (See Browning Family History <https://amherstburgfreedom.org/family-histories/browning-family/> ).

Sadly, Thomas Vincent was killed in action during WWII.

**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 where we will celebrate another amazing family.**