

Artis Family Part 1 – From North Carolina to Colchester

Did you know a branch of the Artis family originated in North Carolina and later settled in Colchester? Read more below.

Last month we highlighted the Harris family and among those mentioned was Tempia Marinda “Tempy May” Artis, the mother of Sadie Allen (wife of David Leonze Harris) and wife of Arthur Allen. With this edition of the family history series we are going to look at the members of the Artis family. We will begin with Charles and Jane Artis who had at least four children: Elijah (1814), Lewis (born circa 1811-1816), Henrietta (1817) and Matthew (1818). A branch of the Artis family who later settled in Colchester, originated in the Lost Creek area near Goldsboro, North Carolina, but escaped oppressive conditions and travelled to a Quaker community in Parke County, Indiana. According to Milo Johnson, a land deed dated 1848 indicates that Lewis Artis, the son of Charles and Jane Artis, and other members of the family bought land for a Church and school there. This settlement was known as the Bassette-Lewis Settlement, but it was sadly subject to continuous raids by bounty hunters. This, along with the enforcement of oppressive laws, caused the Artis families to relocate in 1860.

As mentioned, Lewis was part of the Artis family relocation to Indiana, later to Colchester. After coming to Canada, Lewis and his wife Henrietta established a farm on South Malden Road and they had at least two children: Henrietta (1858) and George (1862).

Following Henrietta’s passing, Lewis Artis married Catherine Pearl-Read-Smith, in 1880, who was the daughter of John and Catherine Smith. In the May 21, 1897 edition of the *Amherstburg Echo*, it talks about the wedding of someone close to Lewis and Catherine. It says, “On Sunday of last week a very pretty event occurred at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Lewis

Artis, it being the marriage of their adopted daughter to Isaac Chavis, son of John Chavis of New Canaan.” According to the marriage record for Isaac Chavis, son of John and Mary Chavis, the unnamed bride from the article is actually a woman named Mary Ann North, who was 21, a widow and living in Colchester North. Under “name of parents” it lists Lewis and Catherine Artis, but the 1891 Census lists Mary A. North and her husband, Edwin North, as living with Lewis and Catherine as lodgers which is indicated by an “L” where it asks relationship to head of household. This helps to confirm, as mentioned in the *Echo*, that Mary is their adopted daughter. At the time, Mary Ann was 19 years old, while Edwin, a minister, was 29. It seems that after Edwin North passed away, Lewis and Catherine took in Mary Ann until she married Isaac Chavis.

Lewis’ older brother Elijah Artis came to Colchester in roughly 1839 and his thoughts are recorded in Benjamin Drew’s book, *A Northside View of Slavery*. In it he says “I have twenty-five acres of land, bought and paid for, -- about eight acres cleared. I am often hired out, and never refuse to work where I can get my pay, and have often worked when I got no pay. The colored people are industrious, and if any say they are not willing to work, it is a lie, and I’ll say so, and sign my name to it. I suffered from mean, oppressive laws in my native State, Ohio, or I would not have been in this country. I have lived here fourteen years.”

Elijah married Cynthia Crosby in Ohio and their children included E. Matthew (born in Ohio, 1837), Susana (Ohio, 1839), Christina (born in Colchester, 1849), Elijah Jr. (Elia - Colchester, 1856), and Richard (Colchester, 1860). The 1881 Census also lists an Eli and Sintha Artis with their daughter Christina and two little girls, likely Christina’s daughters, Harriett (10) and Annie (5). The 1891 Census does not list Eli, but Sintha with Christa (Christina), Harriet E, and Alice A. (likely Annie from the 1881 census). Their son Elijah Jr. married Catherine Jackson

in 1872 and they lived in the Pleasant Valley Settlement where he was a farmer, later moving to Pontiac, Michigan where he became a barber. Following Catherine's passing in 1903, Elijah Jr. married Angeline Smith-Bailey on January 10, 1910 in Windsor. Angeline was the daughter of Charles and Catherine Bailey. Elijah married a third time to Isabella Johnson-Harris in 1915, after Angeline passed away.

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 2.