

Brantford Family History Part 1 – A Bob-Lo Connection

On display in the Amherstburg Freedom Museum's permanent gallery is a very special photograph that we have shared online many times. It is a photo of Moses Brantford **Jr.** leading an Emancipation Day parade down Dalhousie Street in Amherstburg. Because of Moses' connection to Emancipation Day, which is less than a month away, we thought it appropriate to focus on him and other members of the Brantford family for this month's family history. To do this, we will highlight the line of Moses Brantford **Sr.** and his descendants.

In the Museum's collection is found a note about Moses Brantford Sr. stating that he was among the early settlers of Malden and Amherstburg, and "a defender of the town in the Rebellion of 1837-38." According to the 1881 Census, he was born circa 1813 in the US and his death record also states that he passed away on December 30, 1885. On January 8, 1886, the *Amherstburg Echo* wrote "The funeral of the late Moses Brantford took place on New Year's Day afternoon. Rev. Mr. Scott conducted the funeral services in the Baptist Church, which was filled by a large audience." He must have been a very well respected person to have brought together such a large group.

Moses Brantford Sr. married a woman named Maria, but some documents list her as Eliza. There is only one document that lists a last name for Maria and that is in Moses Brantford Jr.'s death record which lists his mother's name as Maria Goodrich. Moses and Maria had at least six children: Moses Jr., Frances, William, George, Martha and Claressa. We will begin with Moses Brantford Jr.

Moses Brantford Jr. was born circa 1854. He was a member of the Masonic Lodge and was known as a splendid singer. As mentioned, Moses is most known because of a photograph of him as the grand marshal of an 1894 Emancipation Day Parade. In the photograph Moses is on a

horse, leading the Emancipation day parade down Dalhousie Street in Amherstburg. The procession started at Navy Yard Park, previously the Waterworks lot, to Caldwell's Grove. There were almost one thousand participants who enjoyed food and entertainment from the Harrow Brass Band (Detroit) that year.

Moses Jr. married Clarissa (Clara) B. Hawkins, who was the daughter of James and Sarah Hawkins of Anderdon. Within the Museum's family history binders is the Hawkins' family tree which lists James Hawkins' (1805-1880) children (including Clarissa): Vincent, Julia (Saunders) and John who married Lusina Virginia Lewis. According to their marriage record, Moses Jr. and Clara wed on December 24, 1889 in Amherstburg and that Moses was a widower. Under Moses' profession it says "General Business." Moses Jr. and Clara had at least one child, a son named Homer. Sadly, Moses Jr. passed away at the age of 53, on May 24, 1912.

Clara's obituary, printed in the *Amherstburg Echo* on September 6, 1935, says "Mrs. Brantford was an old and very highly respected resident of this town, and it is a remarkable fact to report that she was one of the first women workers in the Bob-Lo café when the island first opened as a summer picnic ground and her services there extended over a period of 34 years. She was in the employ of the Company until the Island closed two years ago, but was unable to return this year on account of failing health. She had been around as usual until Thursday night when she was taken by a stroke and lingered until Saturday night, though unconscious. Mrs. Brantford's maiden name was Clara Hawkins. She was a daughter of James and Sarah Hawkins and was born on the third concession of Anderdon, 80 years ago. There she was married to Moses Brantford, of Amherstburg. A short time afterwards they went to Jackson, Mich., to live where they remained for a few years and then returned to Anderdon township, where Mr. Brantford took charge of his father-in-law's place. Forty years ago they came to Amherstburg.

They had one son, Homer, well remembered in town as an amateur boxer. He died two years ago. Mr. Brantford has been dead for about 25 years. Mrs. Brantford was greatly interested in the work of the First Baptist Church and was president of the Ladies Sewing Circle for over 30 years. Besides the above, she is survived by a brother, Vincent Hawkins, of Windsor, and a sister, Mrs. Julia Saunders, St. Arnaud Street, Amherstburg. Other members of the Hawkins family family [sic] who are deceased were Susie, John and Jesse, who are remembered by the older residents of the town. Mrs. Brantford had been living during the summer with her sister, Mrs. Saunders, and the Convention ladies used her home on George Street in which to do the cooking for the convention recently held here. After that, she returned to her own home intending to stay there during the winter.” Clarissa sounds like a very impressive woman.

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.