

Kirtley Family Part 1 – Henry’s line

While researching the Kirtley family for this month’s highlighted family history, I came across a wealth of information for a few branches of this family, including Henry Kirtley (who married Esther Clingman), Moses Kirtley (who married Elizabeth) and Mildred/Mary Kirtley (married Phillip Butler). Because there was substantial information on each of these branches, each will be highlighted this month. We will begin with Henry Kirtley’s line. Henry Kirtley was born in 1832 and was one of eighteen children born into slavery in Boone County, Kentucky. In 1850, Henry came to Canada and settled in Colchester Township. It was there that he married Esther Ann Clingman who was the daughter of Gabriel Clingman and Mary Ann Atkins. According to Milo Johnson’s book *New Canaan, Freedom Land*, “most Freedom Seekers were establishing plots of land on Gore Road and operating small garden farms. Henry and Esther worked on their parcel of land, Lot 16 on Gore Road and to supplement their income worked as laborers, employed on other local, large farms.” In the 1891 Census, Henry is listed as a widower, meaning that Esther passed away within the ten years since the last census in 1881. In that (1881) Census it lists Henry (last name spelt Curtley) with his wife Hester (Esther) and some of their children: George, Hiram, Lewis, William, Lucy, Ida, Charles and Judson.

Henry and Esther had twelve children: Lucinda (1860), George Andrew (1861), James (1863), Hiram (1866), Lewis (1867), William (1869), Ida (1873), Charles (1875), Judson (1877), Lucy Ann (1878), Henry (1881) and Harry (1883). Lucinda Kirtley married David Brown, a farmer and son of Theodore and Nancy A. Brown, on September 27, 1878. Lucinda’s brother George Andrew Kirtley married Emiline/Millie Ann Brooks (daughter of John and Fanny Brooks) on December 3, 1885 in Colchester. The couple had two children: James LeRoy (June 1889) and John Harley (September 1890). George was a farmer in Colchester, until moving to

Detroit in 1892 when he became a teamster for the Geneva Baking Company of Detroit. Sadly, George passed away after a team of horses he was driving panicked and he fell off the horse, breaking his leg. He died of septic shock due to the severity of the break.

George's brother James Kirtley married Emily Melissa Robinson, daughter of Paddy and Eliza Robinson, on April 28, 1879 in Colchester. The 1881 Census lists James and Melissa Curtley (Kirtley) with their 9-month-old son, Walter. The next census for 1891 lists James and his children Walter and Matilda, but James is listed as a widower. James' son Walter became a farmer and later married Nina Miller, the daughter of Elmer Miller and Emily Taylor. They married on February 10, 1904 in Saxville (Colchester). Also available was a birth record for James Harland Curtley who is listed as the son of James Madderson Curtley (Kirtley) and Emily M. Robinson and was born on June 3, 1886 in Colchester. After James' first wife Melissa's passing at the age of 29, James married Janny Pettifoot, the daughter of Charles and Sarah Pettifoot, on September 18, 1887.

James' brother Lewis married Isabelle Grant and they resided in Detroit. Also found was another marriage record for Lewis, but this time to Emily Leach who was the daughter of Anderson Leach and Mary Ann Day. According to their marriage record, Lewis was a sailor and they married on February 4, 1891 in Windsor. Lewis' brother William sadly passed away at age 27 in March of 1895. William is listed as a labourer.

The next Kirtley child, Ida, married Edward Love on February 28, 1906 in Windsor. Edward, a barber, was born in Georgia and was the son of Oliver and Mary Love. Ida's death record from May 27, 1933 in Walkerville, lists her as a housewife. Ida's brother Charles Kirtley lived with his grandparents Gabriel and Mary Ann Clingman and assisted in the operation of Gabriel's garden farm. This information is found in the 1891 Census which lists Charles as living

with Gabriel, whose occupation is listed as “Market Gardener.” At the time Charles was 15, while Gabriel was 73 and Mary Ann was 72, meaning that Charles would have likely helped them a great deal.

Next is Judson Kirtley, who worked as a Porter and married B. Plummer who was the daughter of George Plummer and S. Chambers. Judson and B. were married on January 1, 1907 in Windsor. B. Plummer was born in Ohio and Roman Catholic.

Lucy Ann Kirtley’s birth record lists her as Lucy Ann Mary Jane Kirtley and her date of birth was August 29, 1870. On April 22, 1901, she married Albert Chambers, a labourer and the son of John Chambers and Christina Morissa. The couple lived in Windsor. There was no information available for Harry Kirtley, but Henry Kirtley became a sailor and worked on steamships out of Detroit.

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.