

## Simpson Family History (Levi Simpson's Line) Part 1 – Service in the Upper Canada Rebellion

While researching this month's family, I came across substantial information for two branches of the Simpson family. As a result, the Simpson family history will be spread throughout February and March. During the month of February, the line of Levi Simpson will be highlighted, while March will celebrate the line of James Simpson who is the ancestor of Museum founder, Melvin 'Mac' Simpson.

Levi Simpson Sr. was born in Kentucky. According to our records, his mother was enslaved, while his father was white. He married Elizabeth Hutchinson who was born in Manchester, England. According to the Museum's family history collection, Elizabeth's siblings included Ruth, Mary and Ann, in addition to three other sisters who are not named but the surnames of their husbands are: McGruder, Taylor and Grayer. Elizabeth's brothers include Charles and John.

Within the Museum's collection is a payroll of Captain Caldwell's Company which served during the Upper Canada Rebellion. On this list is Levi Simpson. According to Irene Moore Davis' article "Canadian Black Settlements in the Detroit River Region", found in the book *A Fluid Frontier: Slavery, Resistance and the Underground Railroad in the Detroit River Borderland*, "In December 1837, during the 1837-38 Mackenzie Rebellion, the Reverend Josiah Henson's company of black volunteers attached to the Essex Militia was part of the group that captured the rebel schooner *Anne* and made prisoners of its crew ... Josiah Henson's unit defended Fort Malden [in Amherstburg] from Christmas 1837 to May 1838, and another company of 123 black volunteers, Captain Caldwell's Coloured Corps, was subsequently stationed there for two months. The black volunteers showed such bravery that Lieutenant

Governor Sir Francis Bond Head commented on their service in his remarks to the legislature of Upper Canada in March 1838.”

Levi and Elizabeth’s children include Levi Jr., Mary Ann, William H., George, Elizabeth Victoria, Susanna, Nancy, Amy, Eliza, and Mahala. First we’ll discuss Levi Simpson Jr. Records from the Museum’s collection indicate that he was born circa February 1828 in Michigan, and his first wife was born in Ohio but is not named. They had six children: Sarah, Charles, Martha J., Ellen, Levi III, Simon, and Peter. The 1871 Census for Colchester lists Levi as a widower living with his children and his brother George. The children listed are Sarah, Ozias (which could be Charles), Martha J. and Ellen. Levi married a second time in 1884 to a woman named Elizabeth who was born in Canada. She and Levi did not have any children.

Levi’s sister Mary Ann is next. She married twice. Her first marriage was to Daniel Johnston and the second was to Stephen Taylor. Mary Ann and Daniel’s children included Eliza and George. Eliza Jane Monroe’s death record lists her parents as Mary Ann Simpson and Daniel Johnston and she passed away on November 20, 1923 in Windsor at the age of 64. Her obituary from November 23, 1923 adds that she was the wife of James P. Monroe and the mother of three daughters Mrs. Ada Watson, Mrs. Laura Peterson, Mrs. Hazel Jasper, and three sons, Arthur, Clarence and John. The birth records for these and additional children were also available. Edith May Munroe was born on June 18, 1881 in Essex, while James Arthur Munroe was born on October 3, 1882 in Windsor. Their sibling Frederick was born on April 1, 1885 in Windsor, while Laura Bell Monroe was born on July 4, 1897 in Windsor and later married Charles Peterson, the son of Frederick Peterson and Louise Derrick. The couple married on November 23, 1921 in Windsor. Laura’s sister Ada Rebecca (Edith Jane) Monroe was born on December 15, 1888 in Windsor, and she married James N. Watson, son of John N. and Maggie Watson.

Ada and James married on March 29, 1911 in Windsor. The next child of Eliza Jane Johnson Monroe is Hazel Elizabeth who was born on April 6, 1889 in Windsor and her brother Clarence was born on January 10, 1895 in Windsor. This record lists Clarence's father James as an engineer. The last available birth record for Eliza Jane Johnston Monroe's children is for John Henry who was born on January 14, 1901 in Windsor.

Eliza was not the only child of Mary Ann Simpson and Daniel Johnston. They also had a son named George. According to his marriage record, he married Jane White, the daughter of George Thompson and Eliza Ford. They married in Colchester on December 12, 1906. At the time, both George and Jane were widow(er)s, but their former spouses' names are not listed.

As mentioned, Mary Ann's second husband was Stephen Taylor. The Museum's collection lists their children as Frank, Elizabeth, Henry, John and Charles, but documents for a few other children were also found. No information was available for Frank, Henry or Charles, but a marriage record for Gilbert Taylor was. He married Sarah Nelson, the daughter of John Nelson and Harriet Mulder, on May 11, 1911 in Windsor. According to the marriage record for Gilbert's brother John Taylor, he married Gertrude Franklin on March 26, 1901 in Detroit. John's sister, Mary Elizabeth, according to her marriage record, married Milton Coates, the son of Milton and Fanny Coates, on August 22, 1891 in Colchester. The 1901 Census lists Milton Coates and his wife Marie E. (Mary Elizabeth) and their daughter Rosa A. The 1911 Census includes Milton, Mary and Rosa Brice, along with Rosa's daughter Vera. Also listed is Milton's mother Fannie Coates.

Mary Ann (Simpson) Johnston Taylor's death record states that she was born on July 4, 1833 and that she was a widowed housewife who passed on September 20, 1912 in Colchester South. Her obituary shares further details and states that she "passed away on Friday last in the

87<sup>th</sup> year of her age, and was interred in Central Grove cemetery on Monday afternoon services having first been conducted in Central Grove church. Deceased was one of the oldest natives of this township. Her maiden name was Mary Ann Simpson, and she was a daughter of the late Levi Simpson. She had three brothers, all of whom are dead and five sisters, of whom the following are living: Mrs. George Thomas, of Windsor, and Mrs. Lizzie Davis, of Chatham. The other sisters were Mrs. Anthony Bank, Mrs. Amy Perry and Mrs. Eliza Lewis. She married Stephen Taylor, who predeceased her some years. Their family consisted of the following members: Henry and Gilbert, of the Union depot, Detroit; John, a lake cook, whose home is at Puce; Francis, of the Wabash, Detroit; Elizabeth, Mrs. Milton Coates, of Colchester South; Eliza, Mrs. Morace, and Mrs. Nancy Thomas of Windsor.”

**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.**