

The Conway Family Part 5 – The Mystery of George Conway/Brooks

On June 24, 1938, the *Amherstburg Echo* printed a detailed account of George Conway's life in his obituary. The article says "No colored man in Amherstburg was better known than George Conway, and it was with much sorrow that word was received of his death Thursday noon of last week. He had been failing for a year or more, due to weight of years, and three weeks before the end he became very ill and did not rally. He was in his 76th year. The funeral took place Sunday afternoon from the residence, King Street, to the B.M.E. Church, where services were conducted by Rev. Henderson, assisted by Rev. Jackson, and burial was in Rose Hill cemetery. He was born in Colchester South, son of George Conway and Catherine Hatfield. His father died when he was young and afterwards his mother married a Mr. Corsey, and later passed away in Indiana. George was the last of a family, which comprised two sisters and one brother. Susan, Mrs. Bruce, died in Chicago; Thomas in Indiana, and Martha died when young. Mr. Conway was raised in Colchester South and afterwards came to Anderdon to live with his grandfather, Isaac Brooks, which resulted in his being called Brooks at times. He later settled in Amherstburg, where 45 years ago he married Pearl Thurman, who survives him with the following family of thirteen, one having died at three years of age: Lionel, Wilber (Willie), Mary and Mona, at home; Norman, Brooklyn, N.Y.; Jimmy, Cleveland; Catherine, Mrs. Stanford Dillard, Cleveland; Ruth, Mrs. Nathan Trimm, Detroit; Lester, Thelma, Bertha, Winnifred and Marjorie, all at home. Mr. Conway worked for some time on the street railway, and for the McGee Coal., the Pioneer Distillers and as a laborer in town. He was a man of strong opinions, an ardent Conservative, and a member of Lincoln Masonic Lodge, and the Knights Templar. The funeral which was under the auspices of Lincoln Lodge, F.&A.M., Amherstburg, was held in the B.M.E. Church, on Sunday afternoon, with Dr. T.M. Henderson officiating. A large number of

friends and relatives attended the service to pay their final tribute of respect to the deceased. During the service Mrs. Ralph McCurdy sang very sweetly, "God Will Take Care Of You." The pall-bearers who bore the remains to their last resting place in Rose Hill cemetery were brother Masons, Peter Brooker, Roy Banks, Frank Artis, David Woodson, David Freedman and John Hall."

There is a bit of a mystery behind George Conway because he is sometimes referred to as George Brooks. In his obituary it states that his grandfather was Isaac Brooks, but whether this Isaac Brooks is the same person as Savina Pearl's father is unclear. Something else to think about is whether Isaac Brooks was a blood relative or if the term grandfather was just used as a descriptor for care giver. George could have been adopted and was possibly raised in the same household as Savina Pearl Brooks or he could have been adopted by another Brooks family, which is also possible. Additionally, the 1901 Census lists Mary Brooks under the same household as George, but her relationship is listed in the 1901 Census as "step-mother." Because this Isaac and Mary have the same names as Savina's parents, the use of grandfather and step-mother to describe their relationship confuses things even further. For anyone researching the Conway family just be aware that George was not always listed as a Conway.

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.