

The Growing Grayer Family – Part 2

William Joseph Jr. was born in Colchester circa 1863 and on June 5, 1889, he married Ellen Saphronia Matthews, the daughter of Alma Day and Mathew Matthews, who was a minister, businessman and farmer known for establishing the Matthews Settlement in Colchester South. According to his 1906 death record, Mathew Matthews was born into slavery on March 11, 1822. The Matthews Settlement began when Mathew Matthews first purchased land in 1819. Its location is approximately five miles northwest of Harrow, Colchester South Township. It stretched from the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Concessions at the Drummond Road intersections and the area north and south of Concession #2 from Drummond Side Road to Smith Side Road. It was approximately five square miles of space. Matthews also played an instrumental role in building the settlement's first church and school. In fact, the first church was built on his property in 1819, while the school was built near the church a few years later, in 1825. Mathew's daughter Ellen was born on August 12, 1864 in Colchester South and at the age of 21, Ellen married William who was a 26-year old farmer. Neither had been married before. William and Ellen had eight children: Durward, Iva Geoa, Clarence, William Darwin, Mary Elizabeth, Alma Alzora, Loren, and Charles Roosevelt.

Around 1903 William separated from Ellen and moved to Ann Arbor, Michigan. After finding work and a home in Ann Arbor, William moved his children into his house. In the next census for 1910, we see William and his children listed under the same household except for Durward who had possibly started his own family at that point. The 1910 Census also reveals that William Sr. worked as a "wagon driver." The 1920 Census lists William with a few of his children: Clarence, Darwin, Lorin, and Roosevelt (Charles) in addition to a lodger, a 52-year old woman named Alice Taylor who was a housekeeper.

Sadly, Ellen Matthews Grayer passed away on May 15, 1929 in Windsor. Several years before, William married again, the second time to Martha M. Robbins on June 1, 1922 in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Martha was born circa 1871 in Kent County (Ontario). As mentioned, William and Ellen had several children (Durward, Iva Geoa, Clarence, William Darwin, Mary Elizabeth, Alma Alzora, Loren, and Charles Roosevelt). There is information available for all their children, but some information is more limited than others. According to his birth record, Durward was born on January 25, 1891, while Iva was born on January 30, 1892. That is all the information that could be found on them, but there are more documents for their brother Clarence. He was born on May 23, 1893, unless you are looking at his draft registration card for WWI which says that he was born on May 23, 1894 in Harrow. This document also states that he was a machinist who worked for C.A. Sauer Co. Inc. in Ann Arbor. In his description, he is listed as medium height and build, with brown eyes and black hair. At the time he was single, but according to his May 1925 death record, he was married. Unfortunately, his death record does not list his wife's name. There is also a bit more information available for Clarence's brother, William Darwin.

William Darwin was born on September 20, 1895 in Colchester South, where his father William worked as a farmer. On February 20, 1922, William Darwin married Jennie Kathleen Gaines, the daughter of Frank Gaines and Sarah Dailey, in Ann Arbor, Michigan. William Darwin was 26, while Jennie was 18. Under occupation it lists "Garage" for William, while Jennie was "At Home." William Darwin and Jennie had at least one child, Donald William Grayer Sr. In his obituary, it says that Donald was born on December 10, 1924 in Ann Arbor and he later married Wanda M. Cooper in Adrian, Michigan. Donald worked as a bricklayer and was

a member of the Bricklayer's Union. He also served in the United States Navy from 1942-1946 and was a member of the Elks and Lincoln Key Club.

The next child of William and Ellen Grayer to be discussed is Mary Elizabeth who was born on March 30, 1897. She later married Clarence Muirhead on October 8, 1919 in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Clarence was 27, while Mary Elizabeth was 22 at the time of their marriage and neither were previously married. Clarence was born circa 1892 in Lebanon, Tennessee, and was the son of Richard Muirhead and Julia Walker. Under occupation, Clarence is listed as an "Attendant" while Mary was "At Home." The following year, the 1920 Census for Ann Arbor lists Clarence as a labourer, while the 1930 Census for Ann Arbor lists his occupation as a "Porter," but for industry it says, "Barber Shop." The 1930 Census also lists Clarence and Mary's daughters: Safronia A. (age 9) and Doretta (age 7). Interesting, the 1940 Census lists Mary Muirhead as the head of the household and a cook at a fraternity house. It also lists her living with her two daughters Safronia and Doretta, but there is no mention of Clarence. Clarence and Mary separated considering Clarence went on to marry Sarah Alberta Wilson, who was previously married to William Donald Grayer in 1935. Sarah and William separated in 1939 and Sarah went on to marry Clarence Muirhead in 1953. Clarence and Sarah were together until Clarence's death in 1962.

Mary's sister Alma Alzora Madeline Grayer was born circa 1898-1900. On June 3, 1922 she married Roosevelt Crutcher who was the son of William Crutcher and Gertrude Meek. Neither were previously married, and the ceremony took place in Flint, Michigan. Interestingly, Alma Alzora Grayer is listed on her marriage record as "Anastasia Madeline Grayer," the daughter of William Grayer and Ellen Matthews. Did she go by a different name or did the record taker make a mistake? "Anastasia" was 23, while Roosevelt was 20. There is less

information on Alma's brothers Loren Joseph who was born on July 6, 1900 and Charles Roosevelt who was born circa 1902.

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 3.