

The Harris Family Part 2 – Irish Roots

-Did you know that there are Irish roots in the Harris family. Read more below.

The second child of Jeremiah and Elizabeth Harris is James who was born circa 1839 and went on to marry Mary Anne Pearl (born November 29, 1840) in roughly 1866. Mary Anne Pearl was the daughter of Bozzle 'Basil' Pearl (born circa 1814) and Catherine Smith (born circa 1816). Bozzle and Catherine had at least nine children: Rachel, Alfred, Mary Anne, William, Caroline, Nancy, Hannah, Thomas P. and Joseph. We were able to find a few details for each child, beginning with Rachel.

Rachel was born circa 1835, married William Fowler and had eight children: Elias, Salathiel, Leroy, Albert, William, Mary J., Walter and Sylvester. Rachel's brother, Alfred, was born circa 1837, married a woman named Miranda and had three children: Mary E., John D., and George W.

Rachel and Alfred's brother, William, was born circa 1843 and married Alice McCurdy, while the next child of Bozzle and Catherine Pearl, Caroline, was born circa 1844, married Isaac Leek (born 1841) and had eight children: Simon Peter, Mary Elizabeth, William, Amanda, Nancy, Susie, Clara, and Minnie. Simon Peter married Marthie Jane Matthews but married a second time to Medora Myles. Mary Elizabeth Leek married John Mulder and had four children: Charles, Harvey, Lucille and Viola. There wasn't any available information on Caroline's next child, William, but Caroline's daughter Amanda married George Jones. Amanda's sister, Nancy, was born circa 1883 and married into the Adams family. Susie Leek, Caroline's next child, married Arthur Coates. Clara Leek was born circa 1884 and Minnie Leek was born circa 1886 and married William Shoffner but married a second time to John Dickerson. Minnie and William

had four children: Katherine (born 24 January 1936 and married Walter Williams), Theodore (born circa 1909), Marguerite (born April 1907) and Evelyn (1918).

Caroline's sister Nancy, the next child of Catherine and Bozzle Pearl, was born circa 1886 and married Gilbert Lambert Green. Nancy and Gilbert had six children: Arthur, Joseph, Rosie, Frederick, Georgia and John. Arthur was born circa 1869 and married Nellie McCurdy. Arthur and Nellie had 5 children: Chauncey, Jessie, Bessie, Wavy and Olive. Nancy's next child, Joseph was born on October 2, 1873, married Verlita Medesta Wilson (born January 31, 1900) and the couple had one son, Joseph Green, who was born circa 1927. Nancy's third child, Rosie was born June 20, 1877, while Frederick 'Freddie' Green was born on May 15, 1879 and married Sarah Bibb (born circa 1884). Frederick and Sarah had three children: Ruth, Dorthy and Frederick Jr. No further information could be found on Nancy's remaining children, Georgia and John.

We've discussed several siblings (Rachel, Alfred, William, Caroline and Nancy) of Mary Anne Pearl (daughter of Bozzle and Catherine Pearl) who married James Harris, but there is also information on three more of her siblings: Hannah, Thomas P. and Joseph. Hannah was born circa 1847, while Thomas P. was born on May 27, 1853. Thomas married Olive H. Butler (born March 1866) on July 11, 1897.

An interview from May 20, 1938, found in the Museum's collection, shares further information on Thomas. It says "Many things crumble and decay but when a man works with stone his handiwork usually is enduring. Thus Thomas Pearl, a member of the colored race who moved the Amherstburg recently from Windsor, can still see here and in Detroit many buildings which he helped to construct while he worked at his trade as stone mason. One of these is the Wayne County building in Detroit; another is the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, Jeferson [sic]

and Antoine, Detroit; the Art Loan building. These and many others he worked on while in the employ of the late Alexander Capoton, one of Detroit's best known building contractors, grandfather of Mrs. J.H. Sullivan of Amherstburg. Mr. Pearl also worked on a number of buildings in and near Amherstburg that are well known. The merry-go-round building at Bob Lo and other stone buildings there; the stone schoolhouse on the Pike Road; the Laramie house on North Street, Amherstburg. He learned his trade with Walker Brothers of Ann Arbor, Michigan having gone there in the year 1867. Born in Green County Pennsylvania in 1853, he came to Canada with his parents Basil and Catherine Pearl, when 13 years of age. They settled on a farm in Colchester North, near where the Gilgal cemetery is now located."

The interview continues by saying "After staying with the Walker Brothers for six years he went to Detroit and was with the Capotons for 16 years. Returning to Amherstburg district he worked here for some time and lived on the farm on the seventh concession of Colchester North, now owned by Eccles J. Gott of Amherstburg. He was married to Olive Butler of New Canaan, who predeceased him some years ago. He is the only survivor of his family and has been living retired for the past six years. Mr. Pearl was in his younger days a hearty supporter of the Liberal party and worked among his people at election time for the Grit candidates. He says he is glad to return to Amherstburg to spend the rest of his days."

The last sibling of Mary Anne Pearl is Joseph who married Charlotte Fowler. Their children include: Nora Pearl who married Clinton Elmer Wright in 1900; Orrin Pearl who married Ellen; Josephine Pearl, who married George M. Bell (Josephine's second husband was Willie Jones); Mandie Pearl (1886); Maude Pearl (born August 1886) who married Edgar G. Mifflin; Florine Flossie Pearl (born June 1888) who married William James Wright and had 5 children: Donald L, Donald Morrelle, William Waldo, Vivian Roxanna and Ruth E. Did you

know that Flossie wrote records of people's birth in her recipe book? In addition to the children already list, Joseph and Charlotte's children include Cecilia Pearl (b. June 1890), Joseph Jr. Pearl (born March 20, 1894) and Dorman Pearl (born November 1901) who married Helen Ruth Johns.

Now that we have discussed the details of Mary Anne Pearl's family, we can share more information on her. Interestingly, the 1871 Census lists James Harris as "African" while Mary Anne (Pearl) Harris is listed as "Irish." Also listed are some of their children: Mary C., Jeremiah and Caroline. James was a farmer, but the Harris family also had a brick making business. Did you know that James Harris made the bricks for a local builder, James Atkinson, who used the bricks to build the first Malden (Amherstburg) Town Hall?

James and Mary Anne later moved their family to Michigan around 1879. They are listed in the 1880 United States Census, but the spelling of their last name appears as "Harice." The 1880 Census lists them as living in Augusta, Washtenaw, Michigan, and also gives us an updated list of James and Mary Anne's children: Jeremiah, Caroline, Mary, James William, and David Harris.

James passed away on July 2, 1884, in Ypsilanti, Michigan, and several years later, Mary Anne moved back to Amherstburg and married Otto/Ortho Taylor in 1887 in Michigan, then married Robert East (son of William East) in 1908 in Colchester.

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.