

## The Pearl Family – Basil, Bozzle, Bazil or Bassel

For this month's family history, we will be discussing the Pearl family which can trace its history back to Green County, Pennsylvania (formerly part of Washington County). According to the book *The Mystery of New Canaan*, a possible reason why the Pearl family left Pennsylvania was because of legislation against intermarriages, which was previously a common practice there. Because the Pearl family was racially 'mixed', it made it unsafe for them to remain, so they left.

We begin the Pearl family history with Basil Pearl whose first and last names have several spellings. Basil is at times spelt Bozzle, Bazil and Bassel, while Pearl is sometimes spelt Perrel. Basil Pearl Sr.'s son Basil Pearl Jr. was born circa 1814. Basil Pearl Jr. married Catherine Smith-Hilton who was born circa 1816 and was the daughter of John and Catherine Smith. Bozzle and Catherine's children include Henry, 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.

Henry Pearl married Jane Fowler, while Rachel who 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.

The next child of Basil Pearl and Catherine Smith is Mary Anne Pearl. She was born November 29, 1840 and in roughly 1866 married James Harris (born circa 1839), the son of Jeremiah and Elizabeth Harris. Interestingly, the 1871 Census lists James Harris as "African" while Mary Anne (Pearl) Harris is listed as "Irish" which is not an uncommon occurrence in the

Pearl family: Ireland is listed as the place of origin for several members in census records. 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. Jeremiah married Emma Leona Ward, the daughter of Nathan Ward and Lilly Smith on August 20, 1898 in Ypsilanti, Michigan. Emma and Jeremiah had eight children: Charles Franklin, David Leonze, Ernest, Chester, Sylvere, Fitzgerald 'Jerry', Howard and Betty June.

Jeremiah's sister, Caroline Melinda was born circa 1868 and later married Albert White on December 6, 1888. Following Albert's passing, Caroline married John Franklin Chavis in April of 1891 and lived on a farm on Lot 13 on South Malden Road in New Canaan. The couple had the following children: William Chavis (1892), Frederick Edward (born in 1894 and married Laura E. Woodson), David (1897), Ida Belle (born in 1900 and married Forrest Grayer) and Phoebe Ann (1906). John Franklin Chavis also had children from a previous marriage. He first married Dinah Scott and his 2<sup>nd</sup> wife was Phoebe Milton with whom he had the following children: Isaac Thomas, Cortny, John Miley, Daisy May and Eva A.

Caroline's sister, Mary Helen Harris was born circa 1872 and later married Walter Brooks. The couple had several children including: Harry Oley Brooks (born March 1891),

Sarah (born 1895 and married Harry Baylis), Earl Brooks (born May 1896 and married Leona Anderson) and Oliver Brooks.

**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.**