

### **What's in a Name – Johnson Family – Part 3**

Following Cassandra, the next Johnson child, James Peter, was born in 1867 and married Alzora Graham who was born in roughly 1873 and was the daughter of (William) Henry Graham, a farmer, and Ruthia/Ruth Green. (William) Henry was born in Kentucky to Henri and Amanda Graham, while Ruth was born in Colchester to Joseph and Eliza Green. (William) Henry and Ruth married in Colchester. According to the 1891 Census for Colchester, in addition to Alzora, Henry and Ruth had at least three sons and another daughter: Henry, Thomas, Alvin and Francis. Each are listed as being born in Ontario, with the exception of Alzora's father, Henry, who was born in the US.

Alzora and James Peter had three children: Marcellus Harold (b. March 11, 1906-2006), Viola Beatrice (b. November 27, 1907) and Fred (1915-April 19, 2018). Sadly, Fred was born the same year that his grandfather passed away at the age of 90. Fred's grandfather, James Sr., was described as someone who always met "his friends with that quiet smile that meant so much for behind that smile was that glowing vital spiritual influence called Christianity. It dominated his whole life and it was this vital glowing thing that gave him such a grip on the hearts and minds and souls of the people he met." James Johnson Sr. was also described as having a keen sense of humour "that enabled him to meet trials and the uneven places of life with calm confidence." Although James Johnson Sr. passed away the year Fred was born, as those close to Fred knew, his grandfather lived on in the amazing stories that Fred told. Fred was a farmer on the family farm and, at the age of 72, Fred married his true love, Ivy Belle Brown (Burnette), in 1972. Fred often reflected on the "good old days" including an article in the *Amherstburg Echo* called "Recollections of an earlier time in Colchester South." In this article, Fred recalled "If someone was short of money to pay the mortgage, other men would come over and hold a

‘chopping bee’, chopping enough wood to sell to cover the money needed. Lunch would be brought out to the bush, and if there weren’t enough plates to go around, large wood chips, would be used for plates. After supper, dances would be held ‘after the church people went home.’” What a storyteller.

Fred’s older brother Marcellus married Giovanna Brooks, the daughter of Earl Chester Brooks and Amanda Leona Anderson Brooks. Marcellus operated a farm, but also Johnson Auto Wreckers in Harrow which was in business until the 1990s. Marcellus’ sister Viola “Wren” helped manage the Johnson family farm and loved to play the piano at the Central Grove African Methodist Episcopal Church in Colchester South. She was also the treasurer of an organization named after her aunt, the Hattie Johnson Missionary Society.

James Sr. and Mary had several more children including Georgia and Mary, who were twins born on March 9, 1869. Sadly, Georgia passed away at the age of 13, in 1882, while Mary married Thomas Brydges. Their younger sister, Louise Jane, was born on January 14, 1871, while Bertha Modesta was born on August 6, 1876 in Colchester. The *Amherstburg Echo* also records some of Bertha’s organizational activities with Amherstburg-based youth groups such as the Buisy Gleanors [sic] which met every Friday and the Frederic [sic] Douglass Self Improvement Club which met every Tuesday. During a masquerade concert hosted by the Buisy Gleanors, which was an organization from the First Baptist Church, Bertha Johnson is listed as giving two solos. Wouldn’t it be great to hear her sing? **There’s still one part left of the Johnson family history. See you next week!**