

“among the early settlers of Amherstburg” - The Thomas Family – Part 3

George and Maria's third son, Daniel Wallace Thomas was a mariner and on December 27, 1893 in Amherstburg, he married Anna Permelia Stevens, the daughter of M.J. and Mary Stevens. According to the 1910 Census they had three children: Viola (or Viva), Granville and Burrel/Burl. Granville was born on December 6, 1895, while Viola (or Viva) was born the year before on December 27, 1894, and later worked as a housewife and married Edwin Gray Cowan. Daniel and Anna's third child, Burrel (Burl) Buckner Thomas, was born on January 18, 1898 and later married Helen L. Divelle, who was born in South Carolina and the daughter of George Divelle and a mother with the last name Cummings. They married on June 27, 1923 in Detroit, Michigan. By 1920, the census for Ashtabula, Ohio, states that Daniel was no longer a mariner, but now a machinist in a factory. It also lists Granville and Burl still living at home at this point (before their marriages) and the census lists Granville working as an “oiler” at a steel mill, while Burl worked as a chauffeur for a private family. Interestingly, in the 1910 Census, the Thomas family is listed as “white,” but in the next Census for 1920, they are listed as “mulatto.” It is certainly possible that the census taker assumed that the family was white if they had a lighter complexion or the family may have passed for white during that time considering the racial climate.

George and Maria's fourth son was Robert W. Thomas and he was a cook. On December 20, 1901, he married Lulu Adams in Amherstburg at the age of 22; Lulu was 23 and her parents are listed as William Adams and Laura Holton. Lulu was also active in the community, joining several organizations in Amherstburg. As a young girl, she was a member of the Buisy [sic] Glenors which was an educational group for young people. She was also a member of the Frederic [sic] Douglass Self-Improvement Club, which focused on education and etiquette, in

addition to joining the Oxford Club which hosted socials and other entertainment at the A.M.E. Church. Robert and Lulu had three daughters and one son: Roberta, who married a musician, Harold W. Coleman (son of Stephen and Mamie Duger Coleman), in July 1926; Fern (Georges); Lola, who married Elmer Hamlin and on the 1940 census for Lorain, Ohio, is listed as a maid at Oberlin College. Their last child, Orville was born on February 2, 1911 and is listed as an undertaker's assistant in the 1940 Ohio census and he married a woman named Ethel. **See you next week for another installment of the Thomas Family History.**