

### **The Hall Family History Part 3 – An Abandoned Cemetery Uncovered**

Now that we have discussed Elmer and his family, we can continue with the rest of his siblings Harold, John, Mabel, Nellie, David, and Cecil. According to Harold's death notice, he was single and worked as a labourer at the time of his death on October 23, 1917 in Colchester. You may recall, the period of 1916-1917 was a particularly hard time for the Hall family because several members of the family passed away during this time. A brief writeup for Harold appeared in the *Amherstburg Echo* on November 2, 1917 and says "Harold Hall, the 17-year-old son of Jesse Hall, died on Tuesday of last week following a lengthy attack of consumption. His death is the fourth in that family during the past year, all from the same wasting disease."

Harold's brother John was born on September 18, 1896 in Colchester North and married a woman named Rose. John also appeared in an article from the *Windsor Star* on July 18, 1974 to discuss the New Canaan cemetery. The article says "The clearing of an abandoned cemetery a mile west of here has uncovered an early settlement of escaped slaves in the Gesto-New Canaan area. As seven members of S.W.E.E.P. (Students Working in Environmental Enhancement Programs) clear away the brush and weeds they are finding tombstones dating back to 1884. Less than half of the two acres has been used for burial. It was given to the blacks for their burial grounds by Lew Artis. Many of the markers are gone; destroyed by vandals and the graves have sunk below ground level.

The article continues with "Only one descendant of the settlers, John Hall, still lives in the community in the home that his family built 60 years ago when he was 17. Mr. Hall said the settlement was mainly in the New Canaan area, a short distance west of Gesto. His forefathers referred to their new home as 'the happy land of Canaan.' Names like Richard, Columbus, Roman, and Thomas Hall; Joseph Scott; Samuel C. Hagerston; George Washington Bush;

Nathaniel and Solomon Leatherman came to Mr. Hall's mind as he recalled friends and neighbors who were buried in the little cemetery. The family of D.R. Davis, a successful criminal lawyer, once lived in the community and one of the tombstones carry the Davis' name. Many of the settlers came to this area before the civil war; some escaped from the United States as early as 1833, according to Mr. Hall. 'As others came they helped them get started after they got here.'"

The article concludes, "After the end of the Civil War in the U.S. a few hundred came to the small community. 'My father told me that my grandfather escaped during the war. They went five days without food as they travelled from Atlanta, Georgia, to the coast of New Orleans crossing rivers on rafts they made.' The African Methodist Episcopal Church that once was the focal point of the settlers in Canaan has been gone for more than 20 years. The young people have scattered; most of them to the cities. Farming was the 'way of life' and at one time they owned most of the land in the area. Mr. Hall took up masonry 40 years ago but now lives quietly on the homestead."

John William Hall passed away on July 15, 1979 in Windsor. His obituary from the *Windsor Star* shares details of his life and says "John William, 82 years, July 15, 1979 at Metropolitan General Hospital. Late residence Gesto. Member of The Masonic Order Lincoln Lodge No. 8 and the Nazary A.M.E. Church, Amherstburg; dear husband of Rose (deceased May 1970). Dear uncle of Louis and Mitchell Hall, Dayle Martin, of Windsor; John Hall, of Detroit; Mrs. Raymond (Cleo) Lee, of Windsor; Mrs. Geraldine Joshua, of Detroit; and Mrs. Harold (Eleanor) Green, of Windsor; 9 step-grandchildren, and a host of great-nieces and nephews also survive. Friends may call at the James H. Sutton Funeral Home, 401 Sandwich St., S., Amherstburg. Funeral services Wed. July 1, 1979 at Nazary A.M.E. Church at 1 p.m. Rev. L.O.

Jenkins officiating. Interment Rose Hill Cemetery. Masonic Services Tues. at 8 p.m. under the auspices of Lincoln Lodge No. 8.”

As mentioned in John’s obituary, his wife Rose passed away in May 1970. I was able to find her obituary in the *Windsor Star* which was printed on May 14, 1970. It says “HALL – Rose, 75 years, May 13, 1970, at her residence, Gesto Side Road, Colchester North Township. Beloved wife of John W. Dear mother of Mrs. Lawrence (Beechum) Willson, Amherstburg. Nine grandchildren survive. Resting at the James H. Sutton Funeral Home, Sandwich and Gore Streets, Amherstburg, until 11 a.m. Friday, May 15, thence to the AME Church until time of service at 1 p.m. Rev. Lloyd Jenkins officiating. Interment Rose Hill Cemetery.” Rose’s family also printed a message of thanks in the *Windsor Star* which says “The family of the late Rose Hall, wish to express their sincere thanks to relatives, friends, and neighbors for their expressions of sympathy, floral tributes and many acts of kindness during their bereavement. Special thanks to Reverend L.O. Jenkins, pallbearers and the James H. Sutton Funeral Home.”

In Rose’s obituary, it mentions her daughter Mrs. Lawrence Wilson. Her full name appears in her obituary which was printed in the *Amherstburg Echo* on December 15, 1976 which says “Mrs. Lawrence (Wauneeta) Wilson died at her home on Park St. Amherstburg, Saturday in her 56<sup>th</sup> year. Her husband survives. She was step-daughter of John Hall, Gesto, mother of Lawrence, Windsor; Mrs. Jerry (Lois) Johnson, Amherstburg; Kirby, Terry, Rita, Connie, Judy, Teresa and Celia at home. 2 grandchildren. The funeral was Tuesday in Nazrey A.M.E. Church. Interment Rose Hill Cemetery.”

John Hall’s sister Mabel, just like several of her siblings, passed at a young age due to tuberculosis. She passed on April 29, 1916 in Colchester at the age of 14. Mabel’s sister Nellie Levern was born on January 22, 1904 in New Canaan. A Petition for Naturalization for Nellie

Hall shares that she was not married and did not have any children at the time she declared her intention to become a US citizen on October 16, 1939. This record also reveals that Nellie worked as a domestic and was 38 years old at the time. Sadly, only a few years later on August 4, 1944, Nellie's obituary appeared in the *Amherstburg Echo* which printed "Miss Nellie Hall Passes. – Miss Nellie Hall, of 2104 Lawley avenue, Detroit, died Sunday night in Hotel Dieu Hospital, Windsor, after suffering a stroke earlier in the afternoon while attending the Emancipation Day celebration held at Jackson Park, Windsor. Deceased was born at New Canaan 40 years ago and is survived by three brothers, James, of Detroit; John, of Gesto, and Elmer, of Sandwich West Township. Funeral services were held from the B.M.E. Church, Windsor, on Wednesday afternoon, and interment was in New Canaan cemetery." Neither the Petition for Naturalization or her obituary mention her having any children or being married.

Nellie's brother David was born on February 28, 1906 in Colchester, but sadly passed the same day, while the last child of Jesse and Mary Hall, Cecil, was born on April 5, 1907 and passed away only three days later, on April 8, 1907.

**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 4.**