

The Buckner Family History Part 1 – Malden Folk

This month's family history highlights the Buckner family. The Museum's family history binder for the Buckner family lists three brothers: John, Burrell and Thomas. We'll begin with John Buckner. There was not a lot of information about John, but I did find an interesting article in the *Amherstburg Echo* from February 23, 1940 that discusses a history of the Black community in Essex County. The section titled "Malden Folk" says "In Malden were the names of the Belis; Moses Brandford Senior; Bush, Buckner, Foster, Leonard, Irons, Scott and Smith. There were two Buckners, Burrell and John, half-brothers. John Buckner was a mulatto reputed to be the son of a Governor of a southern state. He was the possessor of considerable capital and he was the owner of superior stock which he exhibited in Toronto in the early days of the Canadian National Exhibition. In after years he returned to the south. The farm he owned in Malden is now occupied by the Robidoux on the corner of the Fourth concession and Townline. A few years ago Mr. Robidoux one morning found a large excavation had been made in the night near the corner of his farm and signs indicated a chest of some sort had been removed. Neighborhood conjecture connected this with Bruckner [sic] as some thought he might have hidden part of his money before going to the South, and that his heirs had retrieved it."

This article may be connected to a note I found in the Museum's collection which says "Buckner sold to Malotts about 1870 and removed to Kansas. He died near St. Louis en route. His sons, all adults, continued. John Buckner came back in 1925. It was likely he who retrieved the treasure. Many years before 1925 two men, strangers from 'Port Huron' they said, inquired for the Buckner farm and told that there was treasure buried there."

Before moving on to discuss Burrell Buckner, a few comments about Thomas. I found a few documents for a Thomas J. Buckner. In the Museum's family history binder it says that

Thomas was at some point living in Topeka, Kansas and his children are listed as Susannah, Robert, Libby. The binder also says that Susannah was born on December 1, 1837 at Lucan and was married to Josiah G. Brown. Susannah and Josiah had a son named Fred Brown of Windsor. I found a marriage record for Frederick James Brown, listed as the son of Josiah Brown and Susana Bukner. Frederick married Martha Moody, the daughter of Joseph Thorton and Rathal Delay, on June 9, 1915 in Windsor. The Museum's family history binder also mentions that Susannah's brother Robert was a school teacher in Argentina and thanks to one of our social media followers, who shared a death record for Robert's son Robert, we have evidence of this. A death record for Robert Dean Buckner who died on December 20, 1921 also lists his father as Robert Jefferson Buckner. Both Robert Dean Buckner and Robert Jefferson Buckner are listed as having addresses in Cordoba, Argentina.

I couldn't find any information for Susannah and Robert's sibling Libby. I did find a listing for a Thomas J. Buckner in the 1851 Census, but could not find any documents to confirm his connection to John and Burrell Buckner. The 1851 Census record lists Thomas J. and his wife Elizabeth and their children Mary Jane, John, Susanna, Elizabeth, George and James. It also mentions that Thomas was born in Kentucky and was a farmer. Whether this Thomas J. is actually the brother of Burrell and John, I am not sure. The only link is that the Museum's records mention that Thomas had a daughter named Susannah and there is a Susanna listed in the 1851 Census. Also, is Libby (from the Museum's records) a shortform for the name Elizabeth in the 1851 Census. Again, I'm not sure. If this is the correct Thomas J., I was also able to find a marriage record for his daughter Mary who married Whitney Jackson, the son of William and Lucy Whiteny. They married on February 11, 1864 in Essex County.

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.