

The Buckner Family History Part 3 – Men’s Sunday Club

Now that I have discussed Mariah, it’s time to move on to the next child of Eliza and George Burrell Buckner, James who also went by Jim. He married Marion (also listed as Marium) Chavier on December 6, 1876 in Battle Creek, Michigan. The 1900 Census for Battle Creek, Michigan lists James as a carpenter. His death record states that he was born circa 1844 in Kentucky and died March 22, 1920 in Battle Creek, Calhoun, Michigan. His obituary says “James P. [T.] Buckner, widely known citizen, is dead – Universally liked, He was one of the Few Left who knew Battle Creek As Tiny Village. – James P. Buckner, known by all the older generation and most of the younger in Battle Creek, as ‘Jim,’ a man who was universally liked, who always had a good word for everybody, and who was in many ways a useful citizen during his long life, died last evening at 6:40 at his home, 185 Kalamazoo street, at the age of 76. Mr. Buckner had lived in Battle Creek since boyhood. For more than 50 years he had been a class leader in the A.M.E. church, which he joined in his young manhood, and in work of which he always took an earnest interest. For a number of years he was one of the trustees of the church. He was also one of the oldest members of the Strouther lodge No. 3. A.F. and A.M., and one of the charter members of the Eastern Star lodge, Adah chapter, No. 6. Mr. Buckner was known by everybody who went on the river, where he had the only boat livery, which he ran for more than 40 years: and many of the notables who visited the Sanitarium had established a real camaraderie with him. He was a frequent visitor to the city hall, and his smile and cheery word were familiar to police headquarters and at a number of the older stores around town. Among other things he was looked upon by the older men of the city as a good deal of an oracle on questions of the weather. He is survived by his wife, one sister and three brothers. And there will be many in Battle Creek who will share the sadness of the family in the thought that they will see ‘Jim’ no

more. The funeral services will be held on Thursday at 2 o'clock at the A.M.E. church, the Rev. C.E. Allen officiating. Burial will be at Oak Hill."

James' wife Marion/Marium's death record states that she was born in October 1844 in Indiana and passed away on January 6, 1929 in Battle Creek, Michigan. She is also listed as widowed. It also states that she was the daughter of John Henry Ellis and Susan Bundy. This means that she married twice because she is listed as Marion Chavier, not Ellis, on her marriage record to James. A Pension Record for Stephen Chavis (or Chavier) confirms this. On his pension record it lists Marium Chavis Buckner as Stephen Chavis' widow.

Next is James' brother George Buckner. According to his death record, he died on July 10, 1901 in Battle Creek, Michigan at the age of 55. His death record also states that he was born circa 1846 in Kentucky, was single and a cook. Sadly, he died of consumption.

George's sister Mary was, according to *Find a Grave*, born on April 7, 1850 in Indiana and died on March 26, 1897 in Grand Rapids, Michigan but I could not find any documents to support this. Mary married James C. Craig who was a barber. Sadly, he passed away on December 1, 1902 at the age of 56. I was able to find documents for several of their children including Linia/Linna, Myrtle, Elsie/Eliza, and Grace.

Linia was born on September 27, 1870 in Branch, Michigan. She married George M. Crisup, the son of John A. Crisup and Ellen Steele, on July 6, 1892 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. George M. Crisup was born on April 25, 1884 in Chicago, Illinois. I came across an article from March 25, 1891 in the *Inter Ocean* which wrote about George Crisup and his graduating class from dentistry school. It says "The Inter Ocean – Chicago – March 25, 1891 – "Newly Fledged Dentists – Ninety-four well-behaved but oddly-attired young dental graduates received their diplomas at the Columbia Theater yesterday afternoon. It was the ninth annual commencement

of the Chicago College of Dental Surgery, a department of the Lake Forest University. The stage was a veritable hot-house, hundreds of bouquets, baskets and floral designs, tributes from friends of the graduates covering its front. The ceremony was opened by an invocation by W.C. Roberts, D.D., LL.D., after which Dr. A.W. Harlan read the annual report. Then came the conferring of degrees. The faculty of the college occupied seats on the stage, the graduating class being seated in the front rows of the auditorium. Both faculty and class were attired in long black robes and Oxford caps. Dean Truman W. Brophy presented the parchments to the class. George Elmer Hawkins delivered the class valedictory, which was a masterly effort, delivered in a firm, well modulated tone, and evidenced none of the shaky, nervous feelings so common to 'first efforts.' The doctorate address was delivered by Dr. Calvin S. Case, and the commencement address by Dr. W.C. Roberts. Orchestral selections by Freiberg's Orchestra were rendered during the exercises. The full class of '91 is appended: ... Crisup, George M. ... At the Leland Hotel last evening occurred the ninth annual banquet of the Chicago College of Dental Surgery to the graduating class. The immense dining-room was completely filled with the members of the faculty, the graduating class and some of their friends, one large table was stretched across the north end of the room, while the remainder of the room was given over to smaller tables each accommodating eight gentlemen. The dinner was an elaborate affair, with seven courses. It took two hours or so to clear the table of its bounties. After that came the speeches, many of which were exceedingly interesting and amusing, especially so to those who could appreciate to the full the many personalities in which every orator indulged. Dr. T. W. Brophy was the toast-master. The toasts of the evening were: 'The Men of the House,' Dr. D.M. Gallie, class of '91; 'Class History,' Dr. C.H. Robinson, class of '91; 'Juniors Yesterday, Seniors Today,' Mr. T.J. Boariand, class of '92; 'The Dental Profession and College Degrees,' Professor James A.

Swasey; 'The Legal Professions,' W.S. Elliot; 'The University and the College,' President W.C. Roberts; 'The Press,' Edward Freiburger, and 'The Faculty,' Professor C.B. Gibson."

Another really interesting article about George Crisup appeared in *The Chicago Chronicle* on January 10, 1897 and discusses George's involvement in a club. It says "ORGANIZE A SUNDAY CLUB – Colored Men of Chicago Unite to Study Social Problems. Many Leaders of the Race Meet Weekly to Improve Themselves. Lectures Delivered on Interesting Topics by Prominent Educators and Ministers. Objects of the Association and Its Programme for the Month. – The 'Men's Sunday club' is the latest addition to the varying aspects of life among Chicago's colored population. It meets every Sunday afternoon in the lecture-room of the African Methodist Episcopal Bethel church, at the corner of Thirtieth and Dearborn streets, and has a membership of nearly 450. It was organized about six weeks ago and met with immediate favor. Alderman John Maynard Harlan has addressed the club on the subject of better municipal government, and last Sunday afternoon Professor Norman Taylor of the university settlement spoke on the art of living and working together. The programme for this month includes the names of Judge Hanecy, who will speak next Sunday afternoon on 'The Dignity of the Law,' and Dr. P.S. Henson, who will speak the following Sunday on 'The Future of the Republic.' Dr. Elmer E. Barr, a member of the county medical board, is the president, Louis B. Anderson is the secretary and Samuel J. Evans is the treasurer of the club. Many of the best-known colored men in the city are among the members, among whom might be mentioned Rev. R.C. Ransome, the pastor of the Bethel church; W.H.A. Moore, S. Laing Williams, Dr. A.M. Curtis, Rev. John E. Ford of the Bethesda church, George W. Lytle, Dr. A. R. Abbott, M.L. Benson, Dr. George M. Crisup, Dr. A. Wilberforce Williams, William H. Ward, Ferdinand L.

Barnett, Rev. A.H. Lealtad, rector of the St. Thomas' Protestant Episcopal church; Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Adelbert Roberts, Dr. George C. Hall and others.”

This article continues with “OBJECTS OF THE CLUB – The club is the beginning of the idea to establish like organizations in every city throughout the union. Rev. R.C. Ransome is the father of the plan. The chief aim is to take up the study of sociological questions as they may relate to life among the colored people in the United States. The idea is not a new one among the advanced thinkers of the colored men, but this is the first time it has been put into practical operation. The appointment of Professor W.E.B. DuBois, a colored man, as assistant in sociology at the University of Pennsylvania has given a fresh impetus, however, to the movement among these people and they are now putting forth practical efforts to become well informed on the question of their sociological relation to the rest of the American population. To all appearances the putting into practical operation of the determination has worked wonders among them and has already brought results which are more than gratifying to the projectors of the club. A striking instance of the interest which has been awakened among all classes of colored men was afforded by the meeting on last Sunday. Professor Norman Taylor at the beginning of his address invited the club to ask him questions on the subject discussed. The learned speaker was almost taken off his feet by the rapid fire of the inquirers, and while he held his own the incident showed that his auditors had come to the meeting loaded with the topic he had chosen for the subject of his address.”

The article also shares that “Statistics of all sorts are being gathered for the purpose of study. The committee in charge of this branch of the work has begun with the army and will follow their investigations in that direction with a study of the labor question and the part the colored laborer is playing in that field. The influence of city life on the colored people is to be

investigated, together with the opportunities it offers for varied employment. Crime and its immediate relation to the life of these people is to be another topic for discussion and investigation and to this end a close study is to be made of life in the 'levee' district. In fact, if the plan of the club is only partially carried out the chief spirits of the organization feel they will go a long way toward solving the vexed race question."

The article concludes by writing "IS GREATLY ENCOURAGED – Rev. Mr. Ransome, the father of the movement, expressed himself a few days ago as being very much encouraged with the success which has come to his efforts to create a general interest in the plan and scope of the Sunday club. 'I see great things in the Sunday club,' he said. 'The interest which it has awakened in its short life is the most remarkable that has come under my observation of the life among my people. We have a similar organization in the city of Cleveland, where I came from to take charge of this church. We met with some success there, and I thought it would be a good idea to start the work in Chicago. From what has been accomplished here I am quite sure it will spread throughout the country. For my own part I have been very much interested in the questions which affect the social and moral condition of my people and stand ever ready to take a part in any movement which seeks to improve it. We have an advisory committee that has charge of the several branches of the work and it has interested many of the best men in our community in the club. I might mention that Dr. Henson spread a deal of general information among the people that will presumably do much good. I have great faith in the future of my race.' A large number of prominent colored men were seen and they all expressed their satisfaction with the club and voted it a great success. A few expressed the hope that a workingmen's club would grow out of the present movement."

According to George's obituary which appeared in the newspaper *The Black Dispatch* on October 27, 1961 "One of the Nation's Oldest Shriners Dies in Chicago – CHICAGO – (ANP) – One of the oldest known active Shriners in the nation died last week in the Harmon Nursing Home here in Chicago. He was George M. Crisup, deputy imperial auditor of the Shriners. A native of Chicago, he was born April 23, 1861. Funeral rites and fraternal services were held jointly in the Grace Memorial Chapel. Interment was in Restvale cemetery. King David Lodge No. 100 was in charge of the services. There are no known living relatives."

According to the 1900 Census for Chicago, Illinois, Linna and George Crisup had a daughter named Corene. Also listed on this census are their nephew Alfred McGarry, George's brother Herbert Crisup and grandmother Maria Steele. Corene's birth record states that she was born on December 26, 1893 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. I also found her marriage record which states that she married Wendell C. Phillips, the son of John Phillips and Bertha Goodwin, on October 19, 1918 in Muskegon, Michigan.

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.