

### **The Bush Family History Part 3 – US Calvary**

Martha and Luther Bush had at least two sons named William Henry and Luther Jr., along with an adopted daughter named Grace. The first time that Grace appears on the Census with Luther and Martha Bush is 1891 and she is five years old. The following Census for 1901 shows that Martha passed away by this point. According to Martha's obituary from *The Amherstburg Echo* on June 17, 1898, "Last Sunday morning, June 12<sup>th</sup>, Mrs. Luther Bush died at her residence, Sandwich street, aged 51 years and 8 months. She had been sick for five weeks with inflammatory rheumatism, which afterwards developed into kidney trouble. The deceased's maiden name was Martha Kirtley, and she was the daughter of Bert D. Kirtley, of Lawrenceburg, Indiana. She settled in Amherstburg in 1856, and after a residence of six years was married to Luther Bush, who survives her. To this ... couple were born two children, both sons – Luther, who was burned to death at the age of 19 years on the destruction of the ill-fated steamer Lake Breeze, Nov. 27<sup>th</sup>, 1878 off Leamington, and William H., Fort street. Besides these, an adopted daughter, Grace, 13 years of age, resides at home. A sister, Mrs. Philip Butler, lives at New Canaan, and a brother, George Kirtley, in Detroit. Two nieces, Mrs. Chas. I. Michelland, Mrs. Thomas Pearl, and a nephew, Gordon C. Butler, live in Colchester North. Mrs. Bush was a consistent Christian, a woman of large charities, and one always ready to assist in sickness or time of trouble. She was a member of the A.M.E. church here for the passed 33 years, from which place the funeral services were conducted on Tuesday afternoon by the pastor, Rev. W.F. Townsend, internment taking place in Rose Hill cemetery. The following were pallbearers: - Wm. Brantford, Wm. Monroe, James Dodson, Joseph Bell, John Wesley and Thomas Harris. To Mr. Bush and his family goes out the sympathy of a large circle of mourning friends."

The 1901 Census which does not list Martha, also does not list Grace as living with Luther. This might cause one to question what happened to her, but Luther's obituary (still) lists her as his adopted daughter, even if she is not listed under his household on the Census.

According to *The Amherstburg Echo* which printed Luther's obituary on May 17, 1901, "It is with regret we chronicle the death of Luther Bush which occurred at the residence, corner of Sandwich and Fort streets, Friday last. Mr. Bush who was 66 years of age had been sick for some time and his death was not unexpected. The deceased was born in Boone county, Kentucky, and came to Amherstburg in 1851. In 1857 he married Miss Martha Kirtley and the result of the union was two sons, Wm H., of Amherstburg, steward, on the Sir Oastalia; Luther jr. who died many years ago. In 1898 Mr. Bush sustained an irreparable loss in the death of his wife. The deceased was ? to his friends and was seldom heard to speak disparagingly of anyone. Beside his son, an adopted daughter, Miss Grace, and many friends mourn his loss. The funeral was held on Saturday, service being conducted in the A.M.E. church by Rev. R.J. Hatchett, after which interment was made in Rose Hill cemetery. The pallbearers were John Wesley, Jas. Dodson, Wm. E. Thompson, Wm. Brantford, Simuel McDowell and Wm. H. Brantford."

Sadly, I could not find any documents that tell us what happened to Grace after the passing of her adopted parents. The only further information I could find for her pre-dates Martha and Luther's passing. An article from *The Amherstburg Echo*, on January 11, 1895 mentions Grace's participation in an A.M.E Sunday School event. The article says "The New Year's tree and entertainment given by the A.M.E. Sunday school on New Year's night was well attended, the church being crowded. Several choruses were sung by the choir, and recitations were given by Bertha Wesley, Annie Wesley, Forrest Wesley, May Alexander, John Alexander, Arthur Alexander, Ettie Pierce, Charlotte Pierce, Eddie Green, Esther Green, Leroy McCurdy,

Carrie Brantford, Josie Lewis, Grace Bush, Elwood Artis, Roman Simpson, Louise Gaines, Frank Gaines, Edith Thompson, and F.H.A. Davis. One of the most pleasing numbers of the programme was the duet by little Miss Mabel and Master Georgie McCurdy. Miss Almeida Johnson sang 'O Fond Dove' very acceptably, and was encored again and again. D.R. Davis gave a short appropriate address, and a duet by Miss Johnson and Miss Bertha Wesley closed the programme. Proceeds \$7.25." On February 8, 1895, in *The Amherstburg Echo*, Grace is also listed as attending the King Street School.

The next child of Luther and Martha Bush is William Henry Bush. He married Gertrude Smith, the daughter of Captain James A. Smith and Mary Anne Underwood, which was announced in *The Amherstburg Echo* and said "At Sandusky, Sergeant William H. Bush, to Miss Gertie H., third daughter of Capt. J.A. Smith, all of Amherstburg." *The Echo* also mentions William served a second time stating "William H. Brush, eldest son of Luther Bush, of Amherstburg, has returned home after five years service in the U.S. cavalry." I was able to find a military record for William Henry Bush which recorded that he was a Private in Troop C9, US Cavalry. This record also says that William was born on May 18, 1857, enlisted on June 11, 1878 and was discharged on June 10, 1883. It also mentions the date of his passing, March 3, 1937, which is confirmed on William's death record.

William's obituary shares more information and says "Death of W.H. Bush – Following an illness of seven weeks, the death occurred of William Henry Bush, Wednesday, March 3, at his home on Sandwich Street, Amherstburg. Deceased was one of the well known and highly respected members of the colored community and his death is deeply regretted by his large circle of friends. Mr. Bush was born in Amherstburg, the son of Luther and Martha Bush, and resided here until a young man, when he joined the United States Cavalry to fight in the Indian wars. He

enlisted June 11, 1878, and served until the year 1883 when he received his honorable discharge. The first year he was in the army he was promoted to the rank of sergeant and won for himself a distinguished record for bravery in battle. In 1890 he was married to Gertrude Smith of Amherstburg, daughter of the late Capt. James Smith and the former Mary Underwood. Deceased was best known for his lengthy career as a marine chef. He sailed the lakes for 15 years, retiring only nine years ago. The last boat on which he sailed was the Homer D. Williams. Since his retirement he has devoted most of his time to his chief hobby, the cultivation [sic] of flowers, and his lawn and flower beds showed more than anything else the love of the beauties of nature which he possessed. Surviving him are his wife and one cousin, Mrs. Clara Mitchell of Ann Arbor, Mich. One brother predeceased him. The funeral service will be held this Friday afternoon at his late residence with the Rev. Penny of Windsor, and Rev. I.H. Edwards of Amherstburg, officiating. Interment will take place in Rose Hill cemetery.”

It was only a few years later that Gertrude’s passing was reported in *The Amherstburg Echo* on April 27, 1944 which reported “Death of Old Resident – Mrs. Gertrude H. Bush, widow of William H. Bush, passed away at her home on Sandwich Street, Friday, April 21. She was born in Amherstburg, October 18, 1869, the daughter of the late Captain James Smith and Mary Ann Underwood and was educated in the public schools here. About the year 1888 she and William H. Bush were married. There were no children born to this union. Mrs. Bush had been a member of the First Baptist Church for more than sixty years and was an interested member of the Ladies Sewing Circle and the Ladies Missionary Society. She was the last of the Smith family and is survived by numerous nieces and nephews. The funeral service was held at the First Baptist Church Monday afternoon at two o’clock. The officiating clergymen were Rev. I.H. Edwards, pastor; Rev. Bradby, Second Baptist Church, Detroit; Rev. Banks and Rev. Henry

Talbot, all old friends of the deceased. The hymns were sung by the choir and during the service Mrs. Ralph McCurdy sang a solo. Burial was in Rose Hill Cemetery with four nephews acting as pallbearers, Roman McDowell, Philo Foster, John Foster and Dr. J.R. Lee. The out-of-town relatives attending funeral were Dr. and Mrs. J.R. Lee and Mrs. J.E. Murrell of Cleveland; Mrs. Chas. L. Jones of Toronto; Mrs. Louis Taylor and son Louis Jr. of Windsor; Mr. and Mrs. Philo Foster of Geneva, Ohio; Roman McDowell and Mrs. James Benson of Detroit and many others from the surrounding district.”

Although Gertrude and William did not have any children, there is an interesting article about their grandnephew Robert C. Jones. On September 10, 1942, *The Amherstburg Echo* reported “Robert C. Jones, grandnephew of Mrs. William Bush, Sandwich Street, a radio operator in the Merchant Marine, is home in Toronto after having had many exciting and harrowing adventures on the Atlantic and the Caribbean in his two year’s service. Jones graduated from East York Collegiate, Toronto in 1933. He took a radio operator’s course with the Canadian Marconi Company obtaining a second-class radio operator’s license. He is going to write for his first-class license soon, and if he obtains it, he wants ‘some active job in the war effort.’ His marriage to his English fiancé appears elsewhere in this edition.”

I also found a marriage announcement for Robert C. Jones which was shared on September 10, 1942 in *The Amherstburg Echo*. It stated “Jones-Webster – In Woodbine Heights Baptist Church, Toronto, Saturday, September 5, 1942, Miss Winnifred Webster, daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. William Webster, Liverpool, England, to Mr. Robert C. Jones, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles L. Jones of Toronto, formerly of Amherstburg.”

William’s brother Luther Jr. sadly met a tragic end as was reported in *The Amherstburg Echo* on November 30, 1928. It was reported that “The Steamer, ‘Lake Breeze’ was burned to the

water's edge at the Leamington Dock and Luther Bush, Jr., son of Luther Bush, of Amherstburg, aged nineteen, was burned to death. Capt. J. Laframboise was sole owner of the boat.”

**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.**