

## **The Gant Family History Part 2 – A Second Professor**

Interestingly, ‘Professor’ John Gant also had a brother who was also referred to as ‘Professor’. His name was ‘Professor’ Jesse Gant and he lived in Hamilton and also worked as a barber. On January 26, 1882, he married Julia Hewitt, the daughter of Edward and Emma Hewitt. This record also reveals the name of Jesse’s parents, David Edward and Roxanna Gant. Sadly, Jesse passed away on January 18, 1905 in Hamilton at the age of 54. Jesse and Julia had at least five children named Oscar John Edward, Jesse Robert, Harry Bunyan, Joseph Talmage and Lucinda. Oscar was born on April 5, 1883 in Hamilton. He later married Louise Leona Jennings, the daughter of Charles Jennings and Nancy Lucile Washington, on January 31, 1907 in Manhattan, New York. Louise may have passed away within the next ten years because the 1915 New York Census, Oscar’s Naturalization Record (1917) and Oscar’s WWI Draft Registration Card both list his wife as Alice. The 1915 New York Census lists Alice’s mother as Missouri Payne who is also recorded under their household.

Oscar’s brother Jesse Robert Gant was born on November 30, 1884 in Hamilton, but he sadly passed away at the age of 3 on December 19, 1887. Jesse’s brother Harry Bunyan Gant was born on November 12, 1886 in Hamilton, while Harry’s brother Joseph Talmage Gant was born on June 4, 1889. He passed away on May 15, 1939 in Queens, New York. His death record also reveals that he worked as a Clerk and his wife’s name was Adele. Joseph’s sister Lucinda was born in April 8, 1891 in Hamilton.

Thanks to the Marsh Collection, we have a copy of a letter written by Jesse Gant to his brother John which discusses his arrival home after visiting this area. In the letter, Jesse writes “Hamilton, July 21, 1886 – Dear Brother I arrived home all right Saturday afternoon. I got home on that ticket but not without some little trouble. Well I found them all well and glad to see me

between Julia, Oscar, Jesse and the dog. You could not hear your ears for about a half hour after I got in the house and just as things had got quieted won a little Rebecca came walking in and that settled it she wanted to know everything at once and as I did not feel much like talking. I promised her that I would tell her all about my visit next day which was Sunday so by this time every person in the community has an idea of what kind of a time I had during the short visit I made west. I will write you a long letter next time which will I hope prove of more interest to you. Ma Croford [Crawford] was very kind to me while I was in Amherstburg. The more I see of her the better I like her [.] The next time I come I will bring the whole family black and tan dog and all my love to your Papa. Kiss tippie and Mama for me and my angels guard guide Keep and Protect you all. I am as ever your loving brother, Prof. J. Gant. 186 James St. North, Hamilton, Ont. P.S. enclosed you will find my letter to the mornings and evenings Spectator concerning my visit.”

We have the Marsh Collection to thank again for providing the newspaper article that Jesse wrote and included with his letter to John from the *Hamilton Spectator*. The last few sentences of the article are illegible or cut off, but I was able to transcribe the majority of the article. It says “PROF. GANT TRAVELS – To the Editor: Having taken advantage of the cheapness of the grand Masonic excursion that was gotten up and left here for Detroit on the 13<sup>th</sup> inst. and having had such a pleasant time on my trip and during my stay in that city, I feel that it would not be out of place to say that there cannot be too much praise given the committee of management of the above mentioned excursion for the successful efforts they put forth to make it more than pleasant for the many car loads of pleasure seekers that went with them, and also the courtesy shown us by the people of Detroit. I for one had what they call an Aunt Dolly’s time. I stayed just a little over three days, but in that three days I had nine days pleasure. So you see I

made the best of my time. I met there a great many friends and acquaintances from different parts of the world in which I have been, also quite a number of old Hamilton boys who are looking and doing well. Some of them are working at their different trades and some of them have got to be professional sports but all seem to be getting along nicely. Many Hamilton friends of Mr. Dick Thompson, champion wrestler and ex-hotel keeper of this city, will learn with pleasure that he is now in Detroit keeping a first-class sample room and restaurant at No. 96 Jefferson avenue, and is the headquarters for all the sports. Also Mr. J. McCarthy, the famous left handed barber, that at one time was foreman at the late J.H. Bland's shop, Hughson street, has worked himself up by his gentlemanly deportment to become to be just as popular with the leading or better class of the people of Detroit as he was with our citizens, and thereby secured for himself the position of foreman of one of the finest tonsorial establishments west of New York, kept by George Alling, a gentleman in every sense of the word. Also I assure the patrons and guests of the Royal hotel of this city will be pleased to learn that Aron Adley of this city and once a bell boy of the Royal, is now head bell man in the Russell house, the leading hotel in Detroit. They say that all of their friends will see them here to take part in the first of August celebration. Before leaving for home I took a run down the river as far as Amherstburg to pay my brother a short visit, on that beautiful steamer, the City of Cleveland, that runs between Detroit and Cleveland. By the by, little Freddie Slaughter, late of Tuckett & Son, is nightwatchman on the steamer. He is looking and doing well, as his friends will be pleased to learn. I returned to Detroit on the fast steamer, the Saginaw, in time to take the train which brought me here at 2:10 p.m. And as I write I regret to say that I could not stay longer, and those of the citizens of Hamilton that did not take in that excursion missed the ... that was ever offered them."

**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 3.**