

The Matthews Family History Part 4 – The Pastor

Elisha's sister Martha married Simon Peter Leek. I was only able to find their obituaries. On March 23, 1923, the *Amherstburg Echo* printed "We regret to announce the death of Mrs. Simon Peter Leek, which occurred on Friday last after a lingering illness. Funeral services were held at Central Grove, Sunday afternoon by Rev. Mr. Johnson, pastor A.M.E. church with burial in the cemetery there. The pallbearers were Wm. Kersey, Albert Lewis, Arthur Coates, James Scott, Alex Carter and Thomas Graham." Simon Peter Leek's obituary also appeared in the *Amherstburg Echo* over two decades later, on March 7, 1946 which says "Simon Peter Leek, who has been a resident of Colchester south all of his life, passed away Monday morning at the East Windsor Hospital. He had been suffering from a foot ailment ... which developed into dry gangrene. He was born in Colchester South in 1869, the son of Isaac Leek and his wife Caroline Pearl. He was twice married, his first wife was Martha Jane Matthews who died 23 Years ago. His second wife ... Medora Myles, survives [as] does one sister Amanda J. [Jones] of Detroit ... Mr. Leek was quite the ? figure in this community and always drove fine horses in [which] he took great pride. Failing health compelled him to lead a very ? life during the past few years."

Martha's sister Ellen Saphronia was born on August 12, 1864 in Colchester South and at the age of 21, Ellen married William Grier (Grayer), the son of William and Eliza (Green) Grayer, on June 5, 1889 in Colchester. William and Ellen had eight children: Durward, Iva Geoa, Clarence, William Darwin, Mary Elizabeth, Alma Alzora, Loren, and Charles Roosevelt. Around 1903 William separated from Ellen and moved to Ann Arbor, Michigan. After finding work and a home in Ann Arbor, William moved his children into his house. In the next census for 1910, we see William and his children listed under the same household except for Durward who had possibly started his own family at that point. The 1910 Census also reveals that William Sr.

worked as a “wagon driver.” The 1920 Census lists William with a few of his children: Clarence, Darwin, Lorin, and Roosevelt (Charles) in addition to a lodger, a 52-year old woman named Alice Taylor who was a housekeeper.

Sadly, Ellen Matthews Grayer passed away on May 15, 1929 in Windsor. Several years before, William married again, the second time to Martha M. Robbins on June 1, 1922 in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Martha was born circa 1871 in Kent County (Ontario). As mentioned, William and Ellen had several children (Durward, Iva Geoae, Clarence, William Darwin, Mary Elizabeth, Alma Alzora, Loren, and Charles Roosevelt). There is information available for all their children, but some information is more limited than others. According to his birth record, Durward was born on January 25, 1891, while Iva was born on January 30, 1892. That is all the information that could be found on them, but there are more documents for their brother Clarence. He was born on May 23, 1893, unless you are looking at his draft registration card for WWI which says that he was born on May 23, 1894 in Harrow. This document also states that he was a machinist who worked for C.A. Sauer Co. Inc. in Ann Arbor. In his description, he is listed as medium height and build, with brown eyes and black hair. At the time he was single, but according to his May 1925 death record, he was married. Unfortunately, his death record does not list his wife’s name. There is also a bit more information available for Clarence’s brother, William Darwin.

William Darwin was born on September 20, 1895 in Colchester South, where his father William worked as a farmer. On February 20, 1922, William Darwin married Jennie Kathleen Gaines, the daughter of Frank Gaines and Sarah Dailey, in Ann Arbor, Michigan. William Darwin was 26, while Jennie was 18. Under occupation it lists “Garage” for William, while Jennie was “At Home.” William Darwin and Jennie had at least one child, Donald William

Grayer Sr. In his obituary, it says that Donald was born on December 10, 1924 in Ann Arbor and he later married Wanda M. Cooper in Adrian, Michigan. Donald worked as a bricklayer and was a member of the Bricklayer's Union. He also served in the United States Navy from 1942-1946 and was a member of the Elks and Lincoln Key Club.

The next child of William and Ellen Grayer to be discussed is Mary Elizabeth who was born on March 30, 1897. She later married Clarence Muirhead on October 8, 1919 in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Clarence was 27, while Mary Elizabeth was 22 at the time of their marriage and neither were previously married. Clarence was born circa 1892 in Lebanon, Tennessee, and was the son of Richard Muirhead and Julia Walker. Under occupation, Clarence is listed as an "Attendant" while Mary was "At Home." The following year, the 1920 Census for Ann Arbor lists Clarence as a labourer, while the 1930 Census for Ann Arbor lists his occupation as a "Porter," but for industry it says, "Barber Shop." The 1930 Census also lists Clarence and Mary's daughters: Safronia A. (age 9) and Doretta (age 7). Interesting, the 1940 Census lists Mary Muirhead as the head of the household and a cook at a fraternity house. It also lists her living with her two daughters Safronia and Doretta, but there is no mention of Clarence. Clarence and Mary separated considering Clarence went on to marry Sarah Alberta Wilson, who was previously married to William Donald Grayer in 1935. Sarah and William separated in 1939 and Sarah went on to marry Clarence Muirhead in 1953. Clarence and Sarah were together until Clarence's death in 1962.

Mary's sister Alma Alzora Madeline Grayer was born circa 1898-1900. On June 3, 1922 she married Roosevelt Crutcher who was the son of William Crutcher and Gertrude Meek. Neither were previously married, and the ceremony took place in Flint, Michigan. Interestingly, Alma Alzora Grayer is listed on her marriage record as "Anastasia Madeline Grayer," the

daughter of William Grayer and Ellen Matthews. "Anastasia" was 23, while Roosevelt was 20. There is less information on Alma's brothers Loren Joseph who was born on July 6, 1900 and Charles Roosevelt who was born circa 1902.

Ellen's sister Alzora is the next child of Matthew Matthews and Alma Day. She married William H. Thomas, the son of Robert A. Thomas and America Gauderson, on August 21, 1918 in Windsor. At the time Alzora was a cook and William was a porter and also a widower.

There is more information for Alzora's sister Alma who was born on May 12, 1870 in Colchester. She married the Reverend William Harold Bazie, the son of Isaac Bazie and Christina Brown, on August 12, 1903 in Colchester South. William was a pastor of Central Grove A.M.E. Church as was reported by *The Evening Record* when he left Central Grove and moved to Normal, Illinois in November 1903. The 1910 Census lists William and Alma living in Danville, Illinois, while the 1920 Census for Adams, Illinois lists William and Alma, along with William's daughter Hortense. The 1930 Census for Springfield, Illinois lists William and Alma along with William's daughters Maud C. Johnson and Hortense Bazie. An obituary from the *Daily Illinois State Journal* includes an obituary for Maude Bazie Johnson who passed on November 18, 1948 in Springfield, Illinois. It also says that she was born in Chatham and was married to the Reverend E.R. Johnson. Also mentioned are Hortense Bazie Holman and her daughter Alfreda.

I was also able to find a death record for Rev. William H. Bazie and Alma Diana Bazie. William passed away on February 25, 1935 in Springfield, Illinois. At the time of his passing, he was still working as a Minister of the A.M.E. Church. This record also says that he was born on January 24, 1861 in Ohio. Alma passed away just over two years later, on June 7, 1937 in Springfield, Illinois.

The last child of Matthew Matthews and Alma Day is Celistia. She married Henry Harris. Their children include John M., Maud E., George A., Jessie, Elma (Elmore), Ramond, Wellington, and Florin. Sadly, Celistia passed away on May 19, 1906 in Colchester at the age of 50. Following Celistia's death, Henry married a second time to Mary Powell, the daughter of Nathan Powell and Martha Seymoure, on June 12, 1907 in Harrow.

As mentioned, Henry and Celistia had several children. John Harris married Jennie C. Moore, the daughter of D.A. Moore and Susie C. Fleming, on October 9, 1905 in Grand Rapids, Michigan; John is listed as a cook while Jennie was a dressmaker. I also found the birth record for one of their children, Wilfred Delos Harris, who was born on January 19, 1909 in Windsor.

John's brother George Albert Harris was born on November 29, 1886 in Harrow. His Registration of Birth states that he was a Sailor. George Albert married Georgia Hockley, the daughter of George Hockley and Dora Dorsey, on July 10, 1911 in Council Bluffs, Pottawattamie County, Iowa. George's sister Jessie married twice. Her first marriage was to a man with the last name White. Her second marriage was to Frederick Sherman, the son of Charles Sherman and Ruth Shafer, on December 24, 1915 in Sandwich Town. Jessie is listed as a widow on the marriage record. Jessie's brother Elmore/Elmer Lincoln Harris was born on February 17, 1891. A WWI Draft Registration for Elmore lists him as living in St. Paul, Minnesota with a pregnant wife, although her name is not listed. He is also listed as a waiter for Nor. Pac. Ry (North Pacific Railway). Elmer's gravestone states that he was born in 1891 and passed in 1959.

Elmer's brother Raymond was born on February 20, 1894 in Colchester. The only other document I could find for Raymond was a Border Crossing from April 22, 1911. It says that Raymond was 18 years old and a Porter. Raymond's brother Wellington was born on December

22, 1895. A WWI Draft Registration for Wellington states that he was a cook for C.R. Railroad. Wellington's sister Florin/Flossie Gertrude Harris was born on December 27, 1898 and passed away the following year on April 15, 1889 in Colchester.

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 5.