

### The Stephens Family History Part 3 – Family Connections

Now that I have discussed William and Ezekiel Stevens and their family members, I will move on to discuss their brother Joseph. He married Mary McCurdy, the daughter of Nasa McCurdy and Parmelia Baylis. Their children included Joseph, James, Mary, and Annie. The 1871 Census lists Joseph and Mary with Joseph, James and Mary, but the 1881 Census lists Mary and her children (James, Mary and Annie) living with Mary's parents Nasa and Parmelia McCurdy. Mary is listed as a dressmaker and married, but her husband Joseph is not listed. Sadly, a few years after the 1881 Census Joseph passed away on December 22, 1886 in Amherstburg. A very brief obituary appeared in *The Amherstburg Echo* on December 24<sup>th</sup> saying "Joseph Stevens who has been confined to his bed for some time through consumption, died, Wednesday. The funeral will take place today (Friday) from the late residence, King street."

Following Joseph Stevens' passing, Mary married a second time to Isaiah McKenny (sometimes spelt McKinney). *The Amherstburg Echo* reported their union on November 10, 1893, writing "McKinney-Stevens – At the residence of the officiating clergyman, Amherstburg, by Rev. J.A. Holt on Wednesday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Isaiah McKenny, to Mrs. Mary Stevens, both of Amherstburg." Isaiah and Mary are mentioned again in *The Echo* several years later on March 12, 1912. The article talks about a birthday party, reporting "Answering a timid knock on the door Wednesday evening after eight o'clock, Isaiah McKenny, of Simcoe street, was confronted by a number of friends, who had come as a surprise to Mrs. McKenny on their anniversary of her birthday. After an address read by Mrs. James Kirtley, a shower of cards and presentation of gifts by Mrs. Clarence Smith, the entire party sat down to a well filled table of delicacies. Toasts, recitations and games followed, and after a few short pleasant hours they left for their homes, each feeling a joy in visit, and leaving Mr. McKenny the uncrowned king of the checkboard."

Sadly, just a few years later *The Essex Free Press* reported Mary's passing. Her obituary says "Mrs. L. McKenney – Mrs. Isaiah McKenney, an old resident of Amherstburg, died on Tuesday of last week, at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Dan Thomas, Conneaut, Ohio, where she had gone a month ago to be with Mr. McKenney to [avoid] the winter. The remains were brought to Amherstburg, and the funeral took place Wednesday afternoon. Mrs. McKenney's maiden name was Mary McCurdy, and she was born at Union Town, Pennsylvania, 69 years ago. She came to Amherstburg when a young girl, and was first married there to Joseph Stephens, and to them the following family were born: Joseph, of Cleveland; Mrs. Mary Munroe, of Ashtabula; James, of Chicago, and Annie, Mrs. Dan Thomas, of Conneaut. Mr. Stephens died over a quarter century ago, and she was afterwards married to Mr. McKenney. Their union was childless. She is also survived by a brother, Geo. McCurdy, of Conneaut, and a sister, Mrs. James Turner, of New Canaan. Mr. and Mrs. McKenny usually spent the winter in Conneaut, and went there just a month ago Tuesday."

Just a few years later, Isaiah was reunited with Mary when he passed away on October 31, 1918. *The Border Cities Star* reported "Isiah M'Kenny, Amherstburg is Laid to Rest – Was One of Oldest and Most Respected of Residents – Amherstburg, Nov. 5. – In the death of Isaiah McKenny Amherstburg lost one of its oldest and most respected colored residents. Mr. McKenny had been in poor health for some time. Three years ago while visiting in Conneaut, Ohio, Mrs. McKenny was stricken, and since then Mr. McKenny has made his home at short intervals in Conneaut, but always retained his Amherstburg residence, corner Brock and Simcoe streets. He was an ardent supporter of the B.M.E. church. In politics he was a Liberal and an influential worker. He lived retired for the past few years, but prior to his retirement was a steamboat steward. He farmed in Colchester North for some time. The funeral which was to have

been held from the B.M.E. church on Sunday afternoon, was through order of the M.H.O. held from the house, which was owing to his large circle of friends too small. Interment was made in Rose Hill cemetery.”

As mentioned, Mary McCurdy and Joseph Stevens had several children including Joseph, James, Mary, and Annie. Joseph N. Stevens (a cook) married Theresa Nall, the daughter of Ellen Foster and Alfred Nall, circa 1890. Theresa was born on January 29, 1868 in Amherstburg. The 1900 Cuyahoga, Ohio census lists three of Joseph and Theresa’s children: May, Ellen/Ella and Chestor. The 1920 Ohio Census includes an addition to the family. Among those living with Joseph, Theresa and Ella is Ella’s husband Roscoe Brown, all under the same roof. Roscoe, a steward on a steamship, was born in Atlanta, Georgia in roughly 1891 to William Brown and Amelia Williams, and he married Ella on September 23, 1915 in Portage, Ohio. An additional piece of information about Ella. I was able to find a birth record for Maud Ellen Stevens, who was born on November 11, 1892 in Amherstburg. This may be Ella’s birth record, as her name appears differently in separate documents listing her as Ellen, Ella, and Etta. I also found a death record for Etta (should say Ella) Brown who died on January 13, 1930 in Cleveland, Ohio.

Ella’s sister May married Paul H. Berry, son of George Berry and Lucinda Powell, on May 15, 1917 in Cuyahogo, Ohio. I could not find information for their brother Chester. Joseph Stevens, father of Ella, May and Chester, passed away on May 31, 1923 in Cleveland, Ohio. His death record also says that he was born on November 2, 1864 in Amherstburg.

Joseph’s brother James, the next child of Joseph and Mary Stevens, married Amanda Hawkins, the daughter of Washington Hawkins and Eva Thompson (see Hawkins Family history <https://amherstburgfreedom.org/hawkins-family/> ), on August 24, 1898 in Detroit. I was only able to find information for one of their children, a marriage record for their son William Alonzo

Stevens who married Marion Nowak, the daughter of Martin Nowak and Rose Urbanski, on November 27, 1918 in Windsor. At the time, William was a salesman and Marion was a checker.

James' sister Mary (also listed as Mayme), married William Monroe who was born on July 25, 1859 in Amherstburg and was the son of William Monroe and Rosena Turner. I found a death record for Mayme Elizabeth Monroe which states that she passed away on July 6, 1936 in Ashtabula, Ohio. It also says that she was born on May 17, 1869 in Amherstburg and was widowed. Her husband William passed away on August 9, 1934, also in Ashtabula, Ohio. The 1910 Ashtabula Census records William and Mary along with their children Lillie and Wilbur. I found the marriage records for both children. Wilbur S. Monroe married Rachel L. Andrews, daughter of James L. Lyons and Harriet Baptist, on November 12, 1950 in Ashtabula, Ohio. Lillian Rosena Monroe married Charles Herbert Greene, the son of Thos. E. Green and Elizabeth Thornton, on June 27, 1911 in Ohio. According to their marriage record, Lillian was born on July 25, 1888 in Amherstburg, while Charles was born on July 1, 1877 in Boston.

The last child of Joseph Stevens and Mary McCurdy is Annie Permelia Stevens. She married Daniel Wallace Thomas, the son of George and Maria Thomas, on December 27, 1893 in Amherstburg. *The Amherstburg Echo* reported their union on December 29, 1893, writing "On Wednesday evening Rev. L. Pierce united in marriage Daniel Thomas and Miss Annie Stevens. The ceremony took place at the residence of the bride's step father, Isaiah McKenny, on Simcoe street, in the presence of about 20 of the immediate relatives of the couple. George Thomas acted as groomsman and Miss Ada Christian was bridesmaid. After the nuptial knot was tied, all sat down to a wedding supper, after which the young couple were driven to the residence on Sandwich street which the groom had rented. THE ECHO joins their many friends in extending congratulations."

According to the 1910 Census they had three children: Viola (or Viva), Granville and Burrel/Burl. Granville was born on December 6, 1895, while Viola (or Viva) was born the year before on December 27, 1894, and later was a housewife and married Edwin Gray Cowan. Daniel and Anna's third child, Burrel (Burl) Buckner Thomas, was born on January 18, 1898 and later married Helen L. Divelle, who was born in South Carolina and the daughter of George Divelle and a mother with the last name Cummings. They married on June 27, 1923 in Detroit, Michigan. By 1920, the census for Ashtabula, Ohio, states that Daniel was no longer a mariner, but now a machinist in a factory. It also lists Granville and Burl still living at home at this point (before their marriages) and the census lists Granville working as an "oiler" at a steel mill, while Burl worked as a chauffeur for a private family." Sadly Annie Stevens Thomas passed away on June 15, 1939 in Cleveland. I could not find an obituary for her.

**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.**