

Turner Family History Part 2 – The Marine Chef

Now that I have discussed Julia, I will move on to share information about her brother William Henry. He married at least two times. His first marriage was to Rebecca White who died at the young age of 30 on December 14, 1876. Her obituary from December 22, 1876 appeared in the *Amherstburg Echo* and says “In this town, on Thursday, December 14th, Rebecca W., beloved wife of Mr. Wm. H. Turner, aged 31 years and 9 months. Deceased was born in Frankfort, Ky., in 1844, removed to Stratford in 1856; was married in Goderich in 1863. She has resided here ever since and was much respected by all her neighbors. Her father, Mr. Jackson White, resides in Detroit, and her funeral which took place from there on Sunday afternoon, was largely attended.”

William’s second marriage was to Ruth A. Fields on October 23, 1881 in Amherstburg. Ruth was the daughter of Henry and Jane Fields. Ruth and William had at least one son named Clarence Horatio Turner who was born on November 17, 1882 in Amherstburg. This record also shares that William was a Grocer. According to the 1900 Census for Lucas, Ohio, William and Ruth moved to Ohio where William worked as a Boarding House Keeper. William’s death record states that he died on February 14, 1905 in Toledo, Ohio. This record lists William as Grocer who was born on October 23, 1831. On March 3, 1905 the *Essex Free Press* reported “Henry Turner, a brother of James Turner, of New Canaan, died in Toledo, O., on Feb. 14th, aged 75 years.” According to Find A Grave, Ruth Anna Turner was born in September 1847 in Toledo, Ohio, and passed on September 27, 1912, also in Toledo.

William’s sister Rosena/Rosina is the next child of Henry Turner and Rosena Cox. The 1881 Census lists Rosina with her husband William Monroe along with their children Sarah, William, James, George, Edward, and John. Rosina and William also had another daughter named Julia who died in infancy. Sadly, Rosina passed away on February 23, 1920 in

Amherstburg. According to her obituary from the *Essex Free Press* from March 5, 1920 “Mrs. Wm. Monroe, an aged colored resident of Amherstburg, passed away Monday of last week. Miss Monroe’s maiden name was Miss Rosina Turner and she was born in Amherstburg 79 years ago. Of the family, one brother, James ... of New Canaan, and a sister Mrs. Gordina Matthews, of Sandwich ... She was married to the late William Monroe, well-known marine chef. They had a family of five sons and two daughters – James and Edward, Milwaukee; William, of Ashtabula, and Mrs. Clarence Smith, of Amherstburg. George and John are dead and Julia died in infancy.”

As mentioned in Rosina’s obituary, William predeceased her. On November 17, 1916, the *Essex Free Press* reported that “The death occurred at the residence, in Amherstburg, last week, of William Monroe, one of the best known colored cooks of the old school in that district. He was 84 years of age. Mr. Monroe was born in the state of Kentucky in 1832, and came to Amherstburg when but 17 years of age. For many years he followed the Great Lakes as a marine steward, and was, in that capacity, on some of the best known boats running from Buffalo to the head of the Great Lakes. Mr. Monroe died at the home which he occupied when he first came to Amherstburg. He was highly respected as a citizen of the town and was a Justice of the Peace and a deacon in the First Baptist church, with which he had been connected for many years. His wife, who survives him was Miss Rosina Turner, of Amherstburg. To them were born six children of whom the following are living: Sarah, Mrs. Clarence Smith of Amherstburg; William of Buffalo; Joseph, of the Str. Rogers; George, of Cleveland, and Edward of Milwaukee.”

I was able to find information for several of their children including Edward, George, William H., James, and Sarah. Edward Monroe married Mary Pick, the daughter of William Pagirt and Catherine Good, on November 16, 1896 in Superior, Douglass, Wisconsin. This record reveals that Mary was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Edward worked as a cook.

Edward's brother William H. was married to Mayme. He was born on July 25, 1859 in Amherstburg and died on August 9, 1934 in Ashtabula, Ohio. William's brother James E. Monroe was born on August 28, 1860 and died November 14, 1921 in Cleveland, Ohio. He married a woman named Elizabeth and worked as a Marine Steward. James' brother George Monroe was born on August 1, 1863 in Amherstburg and passed on June 1, 1919 in Cleveland where he worked as a barber.

Their sister Sarah Monroe Smith married Clarence Smith, son of James and Mary Smith. I was not able to find an obituary for Sarah, but there is a detailed write up for her husband Clarence Smith in the *Amherstburg Echo* printed in the May 8, 1914 issue. It says "Clarence Smith, one of the best known marine chefs sailing from the port, passed away in the Marine Hospital, Buffalo, Monday afternoon. News of his death came with a shock to the town for it was not generally known marine chefs sailing from the boat, the John J. Barlum, two weeks ago, he was in a very weakened condition. He had suffered considerably during the winter with stomach trouble, but partly recovered and when spring came, he received a telegram from the owners of the Barlum asking him to merely superintend the work of fitting[?] out so decided to leave. The work however, overtaxed his strength and he was taken off at Buffalo, and removed to the Marine hospital a week ago Monday. Mrs. Smith was called there to see him on Thursday, returning Sunday, as the hospital authorities declared he was too weak to be moved. The body arrived home Wednesday evening, and funeral services took place yesterday (Thursday) afternoon, being conducted in the First Baptist church, of which deceased was a deacon and devoted member for thirty years. Lovely floral offerings covered the casket, chief among which were those from John. J. Barlum, the A.F.&A. M., O.E.S., and Ladies' Sewing Circle. Mr. Smith was a native of Amherstburg, his parents being the late Mr. and Mrs. James Smith. Of the family

three sisters and five brothers are living – Mary, Gertie, Annie, John, Joseph, James, Roman and Philo. From his youth he took up the vocation of marine steward and spent a useful life following the lakes and had charge of the steward department of many of the largest freight steamers that run from one end of the Great Lakes to the other, and at the time of taking to his death bed when he was removed from the boat to the Marine hospital in Buffalo, he held the position of head steward on the steamer John J. Barlum the flagship of the Portal Steamship Co., of Detroit, Mich. Mr. Smith's activity in church and lodge were recognized as very valuable among the fraternity. He was married to Sarah Monroe, daughter of William and Rosine Monroe, of Amherstburg, and leaves to mourn his loss his beloved wife Sarah Smith, and two children, Blanche and Mortimer. Mr. Smith was personally known to nearly everyone in town. He possessed a good education and worked strenuously to improve the schools. His industry and thrift are evidenced in the beautiful home they occupy corner Gore and Bathurst streets. He spent two sessions in Toronto at the Legislature during the life of Hon. W.D. Balfour, and became the personal messenger in the House of the late Hon. A.S. Hardy, Premier of Ontario.”

According to Clarence's obituary, he and Sarah had two children: Mortimer and Blanche. Mortimer C. Smith was born on August 14, 1892 in Amherstburg and according to his Naturalization Papers from 1948, he was single with no children, and worked as a Janitor. Blanche Smith's birth record states that she was born on March 20, 1888 in Amherstburg

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.