

Turner Family History Part 4 – “Prosperous Essex Farmer”

Now that I have shared everything I could find for James E. Turner, I'll move on to his sister Elizabeth Georgina (also spelt Jordina). She married Solomon Matthews, the son of Matthew and Emily Matthews, on August 22, 1869. Solomon's father Matthew was very respected in the community as is made clear in Matthew's obituary from the *Amherstburg Echo* on November 16, 1906. The article says “One of the oldest and best known colored residents in this township passed over the river peacefully, Sunday morning, full of years and good works, in the person of Matthew Matthews, sr. The deceased had set his compatriots a shining example in thrift and frugality all his life, and he became very highly respected. Coming to this township when a lad with his father, the late Edmund Matthews, from Virginia, they settled between the 2nd and 3rd concessions, on what is now known as the Matthews Settlement. Elisha Matthews occupied the original homestead. At the age of 22 the deceased was married to Alma Day, and fifteen children were born to them, seven yet living. They are Solomon, Matthew J., Elisha, Martha, (Mrs. S.P. Leek), Ellen (Mrs. Grayer), all of Colchester South; Alzora, of Detroit; and Alma, Mrs. (Rev.) W.H. Bazie, United States. Mr. Matthews early joined the Baptist church, and was licensed as a Baptist preacher. The funeral took place Tuesday, services being conducted by Rev. Bradby, of the First Baptist church, Windsor, and interment was in Central Grove cemetery. The pallbearers were W.H. Morgan, Anthony Banks, A. Bird, W. Hurst, A. Morgan and J. Hall.”

Georgina/Jordina's husband Solomon appears in the *Amherstburg Echo* on April 7, 1911 in an article titled “Prosperous Essex Farmer” which discusses Solomon and his sons success in farming. The article reports “In view of the discussions that have taken place recently in the Canadian Parliament regarding the immigration of colored people to Canada, the work of Solomon Matthews and his three sons, all well known residents of Colchester South township,

county of Essex, during the year 1910, is interesting. They farm 212[?] acres, 175 of which is under cultivation. On this they grew 1500 bushels of small grain, such as fall wheat, barley, oats and buckwheat, 3200 bushels of corn and a fair crop of hay. They let neither time nor land go to waste. George broke up 22 acres of his new farm, better known as the Stewart place. Forest planted 112 acres of tobacco, of which he received \$421. He also grew 2000 bushels of corn and 275 bushels of mangels. The two brothers are preparing to put in 14 acres of tobacco this season. The father sold one of the highest priced horses that ever left the township, a 2 year, 10 months colt for \$250 and has some more he expects to realize as much for. They keep strict account of everything sold so when they say they received \$2644.16 from April 1st, 1910, to March 28th, 1911, they can prove it by figures as follows: 55 hogs, \$1026.72; fall wheat, \$134.36; oats, \$26.46; apples, \$12.50; buckwheat, \$103.50; tobacco, \$514.37; 10 head of cattle, \$544; one horse, \$2.50; wood, \$7, & turkeys, \$25.25 – total, \$2644.16. George and Forest think if they had given their places a little more attention they could easily have made it \$3000. George doesn't take to farming as well as to railroading, and may jump his job before another season rolls round. This story shows what well directed industry and thrift can do in a township as highly favored as this one."

I was also able to find an obituary for both Solomon and Georgina/Jordina. Solomon passed away on April 22, 1924. On May 2, 1924, the *Essex Free Press* printed Solomon's obituary which says "Solomon Matthews, a pioneer of Colchester South, and one of the fathers of the Matthews settlement, 3rd concession, passed away on Tuesday night of last week, in his 79th year. Mr. Matthews was a son of the late Matthew Matthews, sr., and was born in the settlement where he died, being one of a family of twelve. Two brothers and three sisters survive him – Matthew J. and Elisha, well known farmers of Colchester South; Mrs. Grayer, of Windsor;

Mrs. Alzora Thomas, of Detroit, and Mrs. (Rev.) Brazie, of Illinois. He was married to Miss Georgina Turner, of Amherstburg, who bore him eleven children, all of whom are deceased except three sons and one daughter, who with the mother survive – James Walter, of the United States; Matthew George, of Toronto; Forest Francis, on the old homestead, and Mrs. Martha Edwards, of Chicago.” A separate obituary in the *Amherstburg Echo* from April 25, 1924 shares the same details but adds “Mr. Matthews was a sturdy, hard-working farmer, highly respected and progressive in his ideals.”

Elizabeth Georgina Turner Matthews passed away on March 5, 1928. Her obituary appeared in the *Amherstburg Echo* on March 9, 1928 and says “The death occurred in Colchester South on Monday night of a lifelong resident of Essex County in the person of Mrs. Jordina Matthews, aged 85 years, relict of the late Elisha (Solomon) Matthews. Her maiden name was Jordina Tenor (Turner), and she was born in Amherstburg. After her marriage she with her husband took up their home in Colchester South. She is survived by one daughter, Martha, Mrs. E.W. Edwards, of LeGrange, Illinois; and three sons, George, of Toronto; Walter, of Washington, D.C.; and Forest, of Colchester South. The funeral will take place from the home at one o’clock on Friday to Central Grove Church, where services will be conducted. Burial will take place in Central Grove cemetery.”

Solomon and Georgina/Jordina’s children include James, Mary, Matthew George, Forest Francis, Florence, Sophia, Martha, Lorinda, Jordina, Lucinda, Walter, and Rena. I was able to find documents for Matthew George, Forest, Martha, Lorinda, Jordina, Lucinda, Walter and Rena. Matthew George Matthews was born on March 5, 1878 in Colchester. He moved to Toronto and worked as a railway dining car chef and also wrote the book *Wit, Wisdom and Philosophy: The World As I See It* which was published in 1927. On page 2 Matthews shares that

he “served as a soldier in the past great war, to help maintain and protect our honour of democracy, served until my health failed to allow me to continue any longer, and upon August 30th, 1918, I received my honourable discharge with the red letter monogram, conduct very, very good. I have always loved my King and Country, and still go strongly on his great Christ like love for law and order.”

His obituary shares a few more details of his life. On January 3, 1946, the *Amherstburg Echo* wrote “George Matthews Dies – Funeral services were held Monday afternoon from the J.H. Madill & Son Funeral Home, Harrow, for George Matthews, aged 67. Mr. Matthews died in East Windsor Hospital on Christmas Day. He had been ill for some months. He was born in Colchester South the son of the late Solomon Matthews. Surviving are a sister, Mrs. Edwards of Chicago and Forrest of Harrow. The late Mr. Matthews worked on the Canadian National Railways as a cook for many years and was well known by the travelling public.” Not mentioned in his obituary is his adopted daughter Sylvia. On his headstone is printed “Dear father of Sylvia.”

I could not find an explanation for how Matthew George Matthews became Sylvia’s adopted parent, but following his death the *Windsor Daily Star* shared on at least two occasions a ‘Notice of Application for Guardianship’ first from a man named Wellington Harris of Toronto on March 6, 1948 and second from Henry D. Taylor of Windsor on May 22, 1948. Mentioned in the Application is Sylvia’s full name which was Sylvia Mae King.

Matthew George’s brother Forest T. Matthews married Coressa Myessa Armstrong, the daughter of Thomas Armstrong and Emma Artis, on April 29, 1914 in Harrow. Coressa and Forest had at least three children: Charlotte Lorinda (1915), Margaret Lucinda (1917) and Mackenzie F. Matthews (1918). Margaret Lucinda passed away on July 25, 1921 at the age of 4

in Colchester. Her date of birth is September 14, 1917. Mackenzie Matthews' obituary appeared in the *Windsor Star* on July 26, 1982 and says "MATTHEWS – MacKenzie, 64 years, July 25, 1982. Late of Harrow. Beloved husband of Flossie. Dear father of Richard, Sheldon, Rosita, Rhonda, Harrow; William, Dale, Joyce Wood, Shirley (Mrs. James Vedder) and Martha, Toronto; Edward, Kevin, Gail, Windsor; and Max, Edmonton. Predeceased by Ezel (1970). Dear son of Mrs. Madessa Matthews, Harrow. 15 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren. Dear brother of Martha (Mrs. Kenneth Grayer), Harrow; Charlotte (Mrs. Maurice Carter), Roseville, Mich; Priscilla (Mrs. Warden Taylor), Combermere, Ont." I could not find an obituary for Forest Matthews or his wife Coressa but *Find A Grave* does mention that Forest died in 1957.

The next child of Georgina/Jordina and Solomon Matthews is Martha, but the only information I could find for her is that she married E.W. Edwards. Martha's sister Lorinda was born on April 6, 1873 in Colchester. The *Evening Record* printed a brief obituary for Lorinda on May 22, 1909 which says "On Monday, May 17th Miss Lorinda, daughter of Solomon Matthews, of the 3rd Con., died aged 36 years, consumption causing her death. The funeral was held on Wednesday, service being conducted at the B.M.E. church, Harrow, by Rev. Peter Brooks and interment at Central Grove cemetery."

Lorinda's sister Jordina married James Talbert/Talbot, the son of William H. Talbert and Mary Elizabeth Hyder, on January 1, 1906 in Windsor. According to Jordina's death record, she passed on March 1, 1920 at the age of 34 in Colchester. According to her obituary from March 5, 1920, printed in the *Amherstburg Echo*, "The sudden death of Mrs. James Talbot Monday cast a gloom over the community, and her death was doubly sad from the fact that her infant daughter died at birth. Mrs. Talbot was Georgina Matthews, daughter of Solomon Matthews and is

survived by her husband and seven children. The funeral services were held at Central Grove Wednesday afternoon with burial there.”

Jordina’s husband James Lionel Talbert passed away many years later on July 27, 1951 in Detroit. According to Jordina’s obituary, she and James had seven children. I could find information for three of their children: Douglas Warner, Mary, and Solomon Lionel. Douglas was born on November 8, 1907 in Colchester. The *Amherstburg Echo* printed his obituary on April 26, 1951 which says “Douglas Talbot, 48, a former resident of Colchester South died at ? on Monday. He was born in Colchester South the son of the late James Talbot and lived in the township until six months ago. He is survived by his wife. Funeral services were held in the J.H. Madill Funeral Chapel Tuesday afternoon followed by interment in Central Grove Cemetery.”

Douglas’ sister Mary sadly passed away on the same day she was born, March 1, 1920. According to his ‘Delayed Registration’ Solomon Lionel Talbert, was born on January 20, 1906 in Colchester South. When he signed the form on October 13, 1967, he was living in Brooklyn, New York.

The next child of Georgina/Jordina and Solomon Matthews is Lucinda. I found her obituary printed in the *Amherstburg Echo* on May 21, 1909 which says “Solomon Matthews’ daughter, Lucinda, died on Sunday at her home, 4th concession, of hemorrhage of the lungs. The funeral took place Tuesday to the B.M.E. church, Harrow, where Rev. Peter Brookes preached a touching sermon and followed by a large number of mourning relatives and friends the remains were taken to Central Grove for interment, the pallbearers being Forest, George and Walter, brothers, and James Talbot, William Talbot and Elisha Matthews. Besides her father, she leaves sisters, Mrs. James Talbot, Colchester South; Martha, in Michigan; brothers Forest, at home; George and Walter, cooks on the G.T.R. Much sympathy is extended the bereaved family.”

References for the last two children (Walter and Rena) of Georgina/Jordina and Solomon Matthews are brief. The *Evening Record* mentions James Walter Matthews winning two legal cases in the January 27, 1917 edition. Walter's sister Rena is mentioned in the *Amherstburg Echo* on May 29, 1896 which says "Miss Rena Matthews, who has been visiting in this township at her father's, Solomon Matthews', has returned to the City of the Straits."

I will end the Turner family history by discussing Louisa Turner. She married Anderson Vinney, the son of Levi and Martha Vinney, on August 7, 1872 in Amherstburg. Louisa passed away on July 24, 1878 in Amherstburg at the age of 30. It appears that Louisa and Anderson had a son named Walter because he is among the other family members who filed a claim for Julia Turner's estate when she passed in 1900. Walter Vinney is listed as Julia's nephew along with Julia's brothers James and William, Julia's sisters Rosina Monroe and Jordina Matthews, and Julia's niece Estella Thomas.

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 where we will celebrate another amazing family.