

The Smith Family History Part 3 – The Preacher

Now that I have discussed Henry, George, John, Joseph, James, and Sarah, I will continue with their siblings Clarence, Mary, Gertrude, Roman, Philo and Anna. Clarence married Sarah Monroe Smith, the daughter of Rosina Turner and William Monroe. There is a detailed write up for Clarence Smith in the *Amherstburg Echo* printed in the May 8, 1914 issue, following his death. 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 ? 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."

I was also able to find an obituary for Clarence's wife Sarah in the December 12, 1949 issue of *The Windsor Daily Star* which says "Mrs. Clarence E. Smith – Mrs. Sarah Munroe Smith, 889 Marentette avenue, died on Saturday at her residence after a long illness. Mrs. Smith was born in Amherstburg, and lived there before coming to Windsor 27 years ago. She was a member of the Missionary Society of First Baptist Church. She was the widow of Clarence E. Smith. She is survived by one son, Mortimer, and one daughter Blanche E., both at home. Funeral services will be held from the residence on Tuesday at 2 p.m. Rev. Mack Brown officiating. Burial will be in Rose Hill Cemetery, Amherstburg."

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.

Clarence's sister Mary E. Smith is the next child of Captain James A. Smith and Mary Ann Underwood. She married Samuel McDowell, the son of John and Mary McDowell, on May 10, 1882 in Amherstburg. Mary and Samuel had several children including James, Samuel Lyons, Roman Lafayette, Mary Gertrude, Benjamin Arthur, Frederick Robert, Ethel/Edith Eloise, Sherman, Lawrence. James was born on December 9, 1882 in Windsor, but sadly passed away the same day. Samuel Lyons was born on May 14, 1884 in Windsor, while his brother Roman Lafayette was born on January 4, 1886, also in Windsor. Roman married Anna Ward, daughter of James Dennis and Esther Crump, on June 19, 1924 in Detroit. She was born on August 18, 1880, in Colchester South. Her marriage record to Roman lists her as Anna Ward, but her maiden name is Dennis. This is because she was previously married to Virgil M. Ward, son of Virgil M. Ward and Mary E. Snowden. The couple married on October 25, 1905, in Detroit.

Roman's wife Anna is mentioned in *The Broder Cities' Star* on March 1, 1932 because of a concert presented by the Baptist Church in Amherstburg. The program included "an interesting paper on 'Woman's Place in the Federation of Churches' which was presented by Mrs. Roman McDowell. Roman also served in WWI based on an article from *The Border Cities' Star* which, on December 20, 1918, printed "Wreath of Flowers from Flanders Field - In the front room window of the home of Mrs. Mary McDowell, 131 Windsor avenue, hangs a Christmas wreath made of holly from France, in which are woven many flowers from the battlefields of Flanders. The wreath was sent to Mrs. McDowell by her son, Pte. R. McDowell, now overseas, and who, previous to his enlisting, was well known in Windsor." I believe that Pte. R. McDowell is Mary's son Roman and this is confirmed in his obituary. His obituary appeared in *The Windsor Star* on October 31, 1950 and says "Roman L. McDowell, 64, died yesterday at Receiving Hospital, Detroit, after a short illness. Mr. McDowell was born in Windsor and lived here all his life prior

to moving to Detroit 15 years ago. He was a member of the First Baptist Church, Windsor, and a veteran of World War I. Survivors are his wife, Mrs. Rose McDowell; two brothers, Arthur and Sherman McDowell, of Windsor; and one sister, Mrs. Eloise Taylor, of Windsor. Funeral service will be held at 11 a.m. on Thursday at the First Baptist Church, Windsor, with Rev. M. Brown officiating. Burial will be in Windsor Grove Cemetery. The body will be at the Bristol Funeral Home, Detroit, until the funeral service in Windsor.” In Roman’s obituary it mentions that his wife was named Rose. This is a shortform for Roseanna, also mentioned previously as Anna Ward. I can confirm that Rose and Anna are the same person because of Roman’s naturalization record which lists Rosanna as his wife, whom he married on June 19, 1924. This is the same date that he married Anna, confirming that they are the same person.

Roman’s sister Mary Gertrude McDowell was born on September 2, 1887 in Windsor. Her death record states that she passed on December 13, 1907 in Windsor at the age of 20. She is also listed as single. I could not find an obituary for Mary Gertrude. Gertrude’s brother Benjamin Arthur McDowell was born on July 15, 1889. His brother Frederick Robert was born on June 14, 1891, but sadly passed away the following month on July 22, 1891.

Ethel Eloise McDowell is the next child of Samuel McDowell and Mary Elizabeth Smith. She was born on June 21, 1892 in Windsor. According to her marriage record, she married Louis Franklin Taylor, the son of Frank Taylor and Doshea Wilson, on October 23, 1920. Ethel sadly passed away on July 22, 1984 as was reported in *The Windsor Star* on July 25th. Her obituary says “TAYLOR – Eloise Ethel, 96 years, July 22, 1984 at Beacon Hill Lodge, formerly of Windsor Ave. Predeceased by her husband Louis Taylor (1957). Dear mother of Louis (a former member of the National Parole Board) Willowdale. Two grandchildren also survive. Resting at the Anderson Funeral Home, 895 Ouellette Ave. from 7pm Tuesday. Will rest at the First Baptist

Church, (Mercer at Tuscorora St.) from 12 noon Wednesday, July 25, until 1 pm, time of Service. Rev. Mack Brown officiating. Interment Windsor Grove Cemetery.”

Ethel’s brother Sherman was born on February 12, 1896. He married Ida Mae Brooks, daughter of Daniel Brooks and Eliza Lewis, on May 31, 1924 in Windsor. On January 9, 1964 *The Windsor Star* reported that Sherman McDowell passed away. His obituary says “Hotel Figure Dies at 67 – Sherman Smith (Chief) McDowell, 67, former head porter at the Prince Edward Hotel, died Wednesday at IODE Memorial Hospital. He lived at 1093 Windsor Ave. ‘Chief’ as he was called by his fellow workers and hotel guests, was employed by the hotel for approximately 32 years. During his years as head porter of the downtown hotel, Mr. McDowell’s main job was setting up travellers’ display rooms. He worked at his job until he became ill in September 1960. During the First World War, he served overseas with the 18th Battalion, CEF. Surviving are his wife, Ida Marie; a brother Arthur, of Windsor; a sister, Mrs. Eloise Taylor, also of Windsor, and three nieces.”

I could not find a birth record for Sherman’s brother Samuel Lawrence, but he is referenced a few times in the press. On October 2, 1908, *The Amherstburg Echo* printed “Lawrence McDowell, one of Windsor’s best known colored men and a graduate of the Collegiate Institute, left on Monday for Richmond, Va., where he will continue his studies for this ministry.” He is mentioned again on June 3, 1910 when *The Amherstburg Echo* reported “Samuel Lawrence McDowell, son of Mr. and Mrs. S.L. McDowell, Windsor avenue, Windsor, formerly of Amherstburg, has sent word to his parents that he has passed his final examination in theology at the Virginia Union University at Richmond, Virginia, where he has been studying for the past three or four years. At the graduating exercises Mr. McDowell was literally showered with presents from fellow students and the professors. He was popular with his different classes

and the teachers. In all his examinations he passed with honors, and during the past year was frequently called on to teach the class in theology in the temporary absence of the professors. Mr. McDowell immediately after being graduated left for Toronto, Ont., where he becomes pastor of the University Avenue Baptist church, a large and influential congregation. Mr. McDowell was a bright student while at the Windsor Collegiate Institute and his friends predicted he would shine in his college course.”

Over a decade later, *The Border Cities' Star* reported “Dr. M'Dowell To Talk Sunday – Former Windsor Man Will Conduct Services In Church Here – Dr. S. Lawrence McDowell, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Brownsville, Tenn., will preach at the evening service in First Baptist Church, Windsor, Sunday. Dr. McDowell is a speaker of wide experience, having been stationed in several churches in the north as well as the south. He was formerly pastor of the University Avenue Baptist Church at Toronto. One Tuesday night at 8 o'clock Dr. McDowell will lecture on 'The Negro Facing the Future.' The meeting will be open to the general public. Dr. McDowell is a former Windsor man, being the oldest son of Mrs. Mary McDowell, 511 Windsor avenue. The morning service in the First Baptist Church will be conducted by the pastor, Rev. H.L. Talbot. His subject will be 'The Three Survivors.'” It was also reported on January 26, 1950 in *The Amherstburg Echo* that “Rev. S. Lawrence McDowell, a former moderator of the Amherstburg convention of the B.M.E. Church died Monday at Nashville, Tennessee, after a lengthy illness.”

Now that I've discussed the children of Mary Elizabeth and Samuel McDowell, I'll end this section with a few more details about Mary and Samuel. On November 4, 1910 *The Amherstburg Echo* printed Samuel's obituary which says “The funeral of the late Samuel McDowell, whose death notice appeared in the last issue, took place Saturday afternoon to

Windsor Grove cemetery and was largely attended by friends and relatives from this town. Mr. McDowell was a son of the late John McDowell, and was born in Anderdon fifty-five years ago. He was one of a large family, only one of whom is now living, Benjamin, of Toledo. He moved to Amherstburg as a young man and was here married to Mary Smith, daughter of the late Capt. James A. Smith. Mrs. McDowell is sister of Mrs. W.H. Bush and Clarence Smith, of this town; Roman Smith, of Cleveland, and J.L. Smith, of Marquette, Mich. Mr. and Mrs. McDowell moved to Windsor some 28 years ago, and became not only one of the best know chefs on the great lakes, but was one of the most highly respected citizens of Windsor. He had charge of the kitchen on the big steel steamer Amasa Stone, for years, and often catered to John D. Rockefeller, J. Pierpont Morgan, and other well known financiers on trips up the lakes. He was compelled to give up his position a short time ago owing to heart trouble, and this caused his death. Besides his widow, he leaves the following family: Rev. Lawrence, pastor University Baptist church, Toronto; Arthur B., clerk, Windsor postoffice; Roman, a mariner and Ella Louise, at home.”

Over a decade later, Mary’s obituary was printed in *The Amherstburg Echo* which said “Amherstburg homes were saddened by the death in Windsor, Sunday evening, of Mrs. Mary Elizabeth McDowell, widow of the late Samuel McDowell, of that city. She had been a patient sufferer for more than two years. Funeral services were held at the family home, 511 Windsor avenue, Wednesday afternoon, to the First Baptist there, followed by burial in Windsor Grove cemetery. Mrs. McDowell came from one of Amherstburg’s old families. Her maiden name was Mary Elizabeth Smith, and she was a daughter of the late Capt. James A. Smith, who is well remembered in Amherstburg. She was married here about 39 years ago to Mr. McDowell, and they spent all their married life in the Border Cities. Surviving her is the following family: Rev.

Lawrence McDowell, of Durham, N.C.; Roman of Detroit; Arthur, mail carrier, of Windsor; Mrs. Lewis Taylor, of Detroit, and Sherman, at home. Besides she leaves the following brothers and sisters: John Smith, of Lorain; Joseph, of Marquette; Philo, of Waynesboro, Pa; Mrs. Wm. H. Bush, of Amherstburg, and Mrs. H. Weeden, of Louisville, Ky., to all of whom sincere sympathy is extended.”

The Border Cities' Star also printed an obituary for Mary which shares further details. It says “Mrs. M. M'Dowell – Resident of Windsor for 42 Years Passes; Amherstburg Native – Mrs. Mary McDowell, 511 Windsor avenue, died Sunday at her residence. She was an old resident of Windsor, having lived here for 42 years, coming here from Amherstburg, her birthplace. The late Mrs. McDowell was active in church work, and was a member of the Board of Management of the Home of the Friendless. Surviving her are one daughter, Mrs. Louis Taylor, of Windsor, and four sons, Rev. Lawrence McDowell, of Durham, N.C., Arthur, Sherman and Roman, all of Windsor. Funeral services will be held at the First Baptist church, Wednesday, at 2 p.m. Interment will be made in Windsor Grove cemetery.”

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.