

## The Smith Family History Part 4 – The Cavalry

Now that I have discussed Mary Elizabeth Smith McDowell, I'll move on to discuss her sister Gertrude Henrietta Smith. Gertrude married William H. Bush, the son of Luther Bush and Martha Kirtley, which was announced in *The Amherstburg Echo* and said "At Sandusky, Sergeant William H. Bush, to Miss Gertie H., third daughter of Capt. J.A. Smith, all of Amherstburg." *The Echo* also mentions William's service a second time stating "William H. Brush, eldest son of Luther Bush, of Amherstburg, has returned home after five years service in the U.S. cavalry." I was able to find a military record for William Henry Bush which recorded that he was a Private in Troop C9, US Cavalry. This record also says that William was born on May 18, 1857, enlisted on June 11, 1878 and was discharged on June 10, 1883. It also mentions the date of his passing, March 3, 1937, which is confirmed on William's death record.

William's obituary shares more information and says "Death of W.H. Bush – Following an illness of seven weeks, the death occurred of William Henry Bush, Wednesday, March 3, at his home on Sandwich Street, Amherstburg. Deceased was one of the well known and highly respected members of the colored community and his death is deeply regretted by his large circle of friends. Mr. Bush was born in Amherstburg, the son of Luther and Martha Bush, and resided here until a young man, when he joined the United States Cavalry to fight in the Indian wars. He enlisted June 11, 1878, and served until the year 1883 when he received his honorable discharge. The first year he was in the army he was promoted to the rank of sergeant and won for himself a distinguished record for bravery in battle. In 1890 he was married to Gertrude Smith of Amherstburg, daughter of the late Capt. James Smith and the former Mary Underwood. Deceased was best known for his lengthy career as a marine chef. He sailed the lakes for 15 years, retiring only nine years ago. The last boat on which he sailed was the Homer D. Williams.

Since his retirement he has devoted most of his time to his chief hobby, the cultivation [sic] of flowers, and his lawn and flower beds showed more than anything else the love of the beauties of nature which he possessed. Surviving him are his wife and one cousin, Mrs. Clara Mitchell of Ann Arbor, Mich. One brother predeceased him. The funeral service will be held this Friday afternoon at his late residence with the Rev. Penny of Windsor, and Rev. I.H. Edwards of Amherstburg, officiating. Interment will take place in Rose Hill cemetery.”

It was only a few years later that Gertrude’s passing was reported in *The Amherstburg Echo* on April 27, 1944 which reported “Death of Old Resident – Mrs. Gertrude H. Bush, widow of William H. Bush, passed away at her home on Sandwich Street, Friday, April 21. She was born in Amherstburg, October 18, 1869, the daughter of the late Captain James Smith and Mary Ann Underwood and was educated in the public schools here. About the year 1888 she and William H. Bush were married. There were no children born to this union. Mrs. Bush had been a member of the First Baptist Church for more than sixty years and was an interested member of the Ladies Sewing Circle and the Ladies Missionary Society. She was the last of the Smith family and is survived by numerous nieces and nephews. The funeral service was held at the First Baptist Church Monday afternoon at two o’clock. The officiating clergymen were Rev. I.H. Edwards, pastor; Rev. Bradby, Second Baptist Church, Detroit; Rev. Banks and Rev. Henry Talbot, all old friends of the deceased. The hymns were sung by the choir and during the service Mrs. Ralph McCurdy sang a solo. Burial was in Rose Hill Cemetery with four nephews acting as pallbearers, Roman McDowell, Philo Foster, John Foster and Dr. J.R. Lee. The out-of-town relatives attending funeral were Dr. and Mrs. J.R. Lee and Mrs. J.E. Murrell of Cleveland; Mrs. Chas. L. Jones of Toronto; Mrs. Louis Taylor and son Louis Jr. of Windsor; Mr. and Mrs. Philo

Foster of Geneva, Ohio; Roman McDowell and Mrs. James Benson of Detroit and many others from the surrounding district.”

Gertrude’s brother Roman is the next child of James A. Smith and Mary Anne Underwood. He married Alice Christian, the daughter of Henry and Ann Christian, on May 18, 1889 in Amherstburg. Just a few years later, on April 6, 1894, *The Amherstburg Echo* wrote “J.H. Wright and Roman F. Smith left on Wednesday afternoon for Cleveland to take their positions as head stewards on the Wawatam and Mesaba.”

According to Alice’s obituary from August 3, 1944 in *The Amherstburg Echo* she formerly lived in Anderdon and Amherstburg but passed away in Cleveland, Ohio. It also lists her surviving children which includes five daughters: Mrs. Marion Brodess, Mrs. Hazel Hickman, Mrs. Manola Langrum, Mrs. Vivian Parker of Cleveland and Mrs. Anne Benson of Detroit.” In addition to her daughters, Alice also had sons named Wilfred (m. Billie), and Roman Jr. According to Wilfred’s death record, he died on January 4, 1943 in Cleveland, Ohio at the age of 47. He was born September 27, 1895 in Amherstburg and worked as a caterer. His spouse’s name is listed as Wilma, but he was divorced.

Also found was a marriage record for Charles Smith, listed as the son of Alice Christian. This marriage record states that Charles Smith married Katherine Winters, the daughter of Joseph Winters and Grace Jacobs, on March 4, 1918 in Cuyahoga County, Ohio. At the time, Charles worked as a clerk.

There was no other available information for Alice’s daughter Marion Brodess (also spelt Broadus) other than her being listed as one years old on the 1891 Census with her parents Roman and Alice. There are more details to share about her remaining siblings Hazel, Manola, Victoria, Anne, Wilfred and Roman. Hazel married Harry Hickman and the couple had a daughter named

Alice who married Cleve Brooks. In the *Plain Dealer* Hazel is also listed as Hazel H. Green, meaning that she married more than once.

Hazel's sister Manola was born on January 4, 1897 in Amherstburg and in the 1901 Census she is listed as living with her grandmother Anne Christian, in addition to Anne's children Ellen, Ada, and Thomas. Manola's obituary states that her married name was Langrum and further research reveals that her husband's name was Dr. Edgar L. Langrum, the son of John E. Langrum and Mary Nash. At the time of Edgar's passing on November 25, 1944, he was living in Los Angeles. His death record also states that he was a WWI veteran born on May 12, 1898 and was born in Crockett, Texas.

The next child of Alice Kelly and Roman Smith is Vivian. She married Augustus Parker who became a Chief Justice and even appeared in *JET* magazine. In the 1940 US Census, Vivian and Augustus are listed with their son Augustus Jr. In her obituary from December 1988, Vivian Smith Parker is listed as living in Cleveland, Ohio.

Vivian's sister Anne married James Benson on October 12, 1936 in Steuben, Indiana. According to their marriage record Anne was born on July 23, 1906 in Cleveland, Ohio and worked as a teacher, while James was born on June 16, 1900 in Bessemer, Alabama and was the son of James Benson and Mary Mason (some records say Mary Owens). Alice's husband James worked as a Druggist at the time. This record also reveals that Alice's father Roman worked as a Steward, while James Benson Sr. was a Contractor.

Going back to their father Roman Smith, he passed away on August 13, 1920 in Ashtabula, Ohio. This record also shares that he was a cook on a lake steamer for Pittsburgh S.S. Co. I could not find an obituary for Roman.

Next is Roman's brother Philo. On April 1, 1881, *The Amherstburg Echo* mentions his participation in the debate "That the gun is more useful to a community than the dog" as part of activities with The Amherstburg Literary Society. Philo Smith and George Monroe took the affirmative side and Jos. Green and John Monroe the negative. It was written that "The boys all did well in this, their first debate, discussing the question in a manner which would have been creditable to older persons. The judges decided in favour of the gun."

Philo married Laura Alice Grinage/Grinaje, the daughter of William and Elizabeth Grinage, on March 28, 1895 in Amherstburg. An extensive writeup appeared in *The Amherstburg Echo* on April 20, 1934, following Philo's passing. His obituary says "Burg Native Dies in Pennsylvania City – Many old residents attended the funeral Thursday of last week and accompanied the remains to Rose Hill cemetery, of Philo Smith, who died the Monday before at Waynesburg, Pennsylvania. Mr. Smith, it will be remembered, was a son of the late Captain James Smith and his wife Mary A. Underwood, the family home being at the corner of King and Simcoe Streets, Amherstburg. His remains were brought to Windsor in charge of his brother-in-law, H.C. Weeden, barrister, and the funeral took place from the home of the late Mrs. Mary E. McDowell, 511 Windsor Avenue. Rev. Edwards officiating. Burial was in Rose Hill cemetery, Amherstburg, by the side of his parents as was his dying wish. The pallbearers were four nephews, B. A. McDowell, Roman McDowell, Shermon McDowell, of Windsor, and Roman Smith, of Cleveland. The Democrat Messenger, published at Waynesburg, Green County, Pennsylvania, has this to say of the deceased, under the heading, "Death Takes Retired Lake Ship Steward: Philo Smith, aged 63, one of the most prominent and highly respected colored residents of Waynesburg, died at five o'clock yesterday morning, April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1934, in the Greene County Memorial hospital. Death was due to a complication of ailments. Mr. Smith was a native of

Canada, having been born in Amherstburg, Ontario, but had been a resident of Waynesburg for about 25 years. He was a retired ship steward, having been employed by the Pittsburgh Steel Company on freighters plying the Great Lakes for several years. His father, Captain James Smith, was employed on Great Lakes steamers for a period of 50 years, and his grandfather Underwood was connected with the famous 'Underground Railroad' which helped southern slaves escape to the north. His mother was Mary Smith who has been dead several years. His wife, Alice Grinage Smith, died September 10, 1933. He is survived by two sisters, Mrs. H.C. Weeden, of Louisville, Ky., and Mrs. Gertrude Bush, of Amherstburg, Canada. Funeral services will be held Tuesday evening at seven o'clock at the Hoge & Garrison funeral home. East High Street, with Rev. G.B. Duff, pastor of the Bethel A.M.E. Church, in charge. The body will be shipped Wednesday morning to Ontario, Canada, for interment."

**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.**