

### **The Day Family History Part 3 – Clearing the Land**

Now that I have discussed Alma Day and her family, I will finish by discussing the last child of Edmund and Diannah Day, Samuel Profit. He married Sarah Hunt, the daughter of Joshua Hunt and Rebecca Jane Davis. I was able to identify fifteen of their children which includes Charles, Lavina, Gordon, Georgia, John, Fanny, Clarence, Adella, William, Wiley, Alvin, Gus, Belle, Samuel Judson, Sarah Isabel, and Burnie. Before discussing their children, I will share a few more details about Sarah and Samuel. According to Sarah's death announcement from *The Amherstburg Echo* on March 10, 1893, "In Detroit, on Wednesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, Sarah Jane, wife of Mr. Samuel Day, of Colchester South, aged 89? Years. The funeral took place on Friday, to the A.M.E. church, Harrow, thence to Central Grove."

The Amherstburg Freedom Museum's family history collection includes a note that Samuel Day was born in February 1840 in Salem, Ohio. A lengthy writeup about Samuel appeared in *The Amherstburg Echo* on April 3, 1931 titled "A Colored Pioneer." It says "The Echo in casting about for the oldest people in the 'Banana Belt' ran across the trail of Samuel Day who lives at the home of his daughter Mrs. Wiliam Curran, Fifth Concession, and who was ninety years of age on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February. Mr. Day jokingly remarked that he was a 'Valentine.' He was born at Salem, Ohio, but was never in slavery and came to Colchester with his mother when he was but nine years of age, settling on the Fourth Concession which was all bush and practically no roads at that time. 'I cut many a stick of wood,' said he, 'In that neighborhood in order to make a clearing for our cabin.' His mother died there some years ago. His brothers and sisters were Joseph and Mrs. Matthew Matthews Sr., who are both dead. Mr. Day took as his first wife, Sarah Hunt of this township, and they had a real old-fashioned family consisting of fifteen

children, three daughters and four sons are still living, John of the 7<sup>th</sup> concession, Colchester North; Gordon, Mrs. William Taylor and Mrs. John McDowell of Detroit; Wiley of Ypsilanti, Mrs. William Curran, mentioned above, and Bernie Day of Harrow. His second wife who was a local woman, lives in Sandusky. Mr. Day in spite of his years has excellent health and can read without glasses. In order to keep him employed, his daughter often gives him sewing to do and he can thread a needle with the naked eye. His memory is not as good as it was, but even at that he can carry on a connected conversation and as soon as he is reminded of certain things can go right along and tell the whole story. Mr. Day is practically the last of his generation of early colored settlement in this township.”

Samuel Day lived into his 90s as is mentioned in an article from *The Amherstburg Echo* from February 1932 which says “Samuel Day Colchester South, celebrated his 91<sup>st</sup> birthday on Valentine’s Day at his 5<sup>th</sup> concession home. He is enjoyed good health and reads without the use of glasses.” Sadly, Samuel passed away the same year in November 1932, as was reported in *The Amherstburg Echo*. His obituary says “Samuel Day Passes – Samuel Day, 92, passed away at his home, 5<sup>th</sup> concession of Colchester South on Tuesday, following a short illness. Born at Salem, Ohio, in February 1840, Mr. Day was never in slavery. He came to Colchester with his mother when he was but nine years of age, settling on the fourth concession, which was all bush. There were practically no roads at that time. Mr. Day helped clear the land for a site on which to built [sic] their log cabin, where his mother died some years later. His brothers and sisters were Joseph and Mrs. Matthews, Sr., who are both dead. Mr. Day took as his first wife Sarah Hunt of Colchester South and they had a family of fifteen children. Three daughters and four sons are still living. John of the seventh concession, Colchester North; Gordon, Mrs. George M. Tayler and Mrs. Adeller McDowell of Detroit, Wiley of Ypsilanti; Mrs. Bella Curran and Bernard Day

of Harrow. His second wife, a local woman, lives in Sandusky. Mr. Day had more than a fair share of good health up until a short while ago. He is one of the last of the early colored settlement in Colchester South. Funeral services were held on Thursday afternoon in Central Grove Church, followed by interment in Central Grove cemetery. Rev. Bird of Windsor, conducted the service.”

As mentioned, Samuel and Sarah’s children include Charles, Lavina, Gordon, Georgia, Helena, John, Fanny, Clarence, Adella, William, Wiley, Alvin, Gus, Belle, Samuel Judson, Sarah Isabel, and Burnie. I was not able to find information for Lavina, Fanny, and Alvin, but found documents for the remaining children.

Charles Day married Cora M. Bourne on June 3, 1900 in Detroit. He passed away on February 9, 1925 in Ann Arbor, Michigan. His death record also states that he was born on August 24, 1863. Cora passed away on January 30, 1942 in Detroit. Her death record also shares her date of birth: August 7, 1873 in Wayne, Illinois.

Charles’ brother Gordon married Alzora Dennis, the daughter of John Dennis on January 15, 1891 in Detroit. He married a second time to Ethel Lewis, the daughter of John Lewis and ? Smith, on September 14, 1898 in Salem, Michigan. According to *The Evening Record* (September 30, 1898) “Gordon Day and his wife of Salem, Mich., spent their honeymoon at the residence of his father, Samuel Day, of this place.” I found a third marriage record for Gordon which states that his third marriage was to Mary Merchant, the daughter of Samuel Mitchell and Belle Stewart, on February 23, 1921 in Franklinton, Columbus, Ohio. This record also mentions that Mary’s first husband was Ed Merchant. Gordon’s marriage record also states that he was born on July 5, 1871 (some records say 1870) in Harrow, he worked as a Brick Mason, and was married twice before. Mary’s date of birth is August 2, 1882 in Winchester, Kentucky. An

interesting detail about Gordon is that he played guitar. According to the December 28, 1894 issue of *The Amherstburg Echo* “There was a large gathering at the Gilgal school house on Wednesday evening of last week. Wm. Kersey was chairman; Fred H.A. Davis gave an interesting address on ‘Civil Rights and Social Privileges of the Colored People,’ and Gordon Day gave several guitar solos. Others contributed to the entertainment which was also a financial success.” Gordon passed away on July 27, 1939 in Detroit at the age of 69.

Gordon’s sister Georgia married George Tyler who was from Michigan. The only document I could find for Georgia was her death record which states she passed on June 20, 1933 in Detroit at the age of 65, she was born on August 25, 1868 in Harrow, and she was widowed. Georgia’s sister Helena was born in April 1871 in Colchester.

Helena’s brother John is next. He married Mira A. Mitchell, the daughter of Charles Mitchell and Clara Butler, on February 19, 1919 in New Canaan. A year later *The Amherstburg Echo* shared that “Mr. and Mrs. John Day, of Colchester North, celebrated the anniversary of their wedding on February 19<sup>th</sup> at the home of her mother. Mrs. Charles Mitchell. Lunch was served and a pleasant evening was spent in music and games.” John and Mira are mentioned a few more times in *The Echo*. On May 30, 1924, an article shared “We are pleased to say that Chas. I. Mitchell is greatly improved in health – Mr. and Mrs. Charles I. Mitchell, sons Fremont and Charles jr., daughters, Clara and Mary, motored from their home in Ann Arbor, Mich., to visit their daughter, Mrs. John Day, Colchester North. The day was spent in music and singing and after an enjoyable lunch they returned to their home.” A year later, on September 25, 1925, *The Echo* printed “Miss Clara J. Mitchell spent her holidays with her sister, Mrs. John Day, and has returned to resume her studies at the U. of M., Ann Arbor.”

Another article from May 6, 1927 shared “Mrs. John Day spent Sunday with her mother in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Miss Clara Mitchell, of Ann Arbor, not in Detroit teaching a class of forty(?). Much credit is due Mr. and Mrs. Charles Mitchell for the pains they took in educating each and every one of their children.” The last article I found is from September 7, 1928 and says “Mr. and Mrs. Charles I. Mitchell and Mrs. John Day motored through Eastern Canada. On the way they stopped in London, Woodstock, Brantford, Sarnia, Hamilton, and then went on to Niagara Falls, viewing the illuminated Falls at night which is a wonderful sight. They returned home on Sunday, August 25<sup>th</sup>, very much pleased with Eastern Canada.”

The 1931 Census lists John and Mira with their children John, George, Ivan and Darle (Darrel). Sadly, Norbert Darrel Day passed away on December 3, 1930 at eight months.

John’s brother Clarence sadly passed away at a young age which was reported in *The Amherstburg Echo* on February 12, 1892. The death notice says “In Colchester South, on Wednesday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, Clarence, fourth son of Mrs. Samuel Day, aged about 16 years.”

Clarence’s sister Adella was born on February 20, 1877 in Colchester. She married John Henry McDowell, who was previously married to Lucretia Highwarden, the daughter of William Highwarden, on July 20, 1903 in Detroit. John and Lucretia had a son named Feardon who was born on November 29, 1913 in Detroit. Feardon passed away on February 12, 1935 in Detroit at the age of 21.

John McDowell was the son of Samuel/Simuel McDowell and Emma Rudd. He married Adella Day on November 22, 1918 in Lucas, Ohio. Their marriage record shares that John Henry McDowell was born on March 24, 1882 (some records say 1885) in Amherstburg. Adella’s death

record states that she passed away on June 2, 1949 in Detroit at the age of 70. She is listed as widowed.

Adella's brothers Wiley and William were twins, born on December 9, 1878 in Colchester North. I did not find any further information for William, but Wiley married Francis Dennis Hill, the daughter of William and Winefred, on October 1, 1913 in Detroit. This record shares that Wiley worked as a Barber and that Francis was married once before. Wiley passed away on June 6, 1932 in Ypsilanti at the age of 53. His death record lists Wiley as widowed. William and Wiley's brother Gus was born on May 11, 1881. His death record states that he died September 28, 1928 in Detroit at the age of 47. He is listed as single.

Gus' sister Belle is the next child of Samuel Day and Sarah Hunt. Belle married William Ira Curran, the son of Charles Henry Curran and Elizabeth Green, on April 21, 1908 in Detroit. William was born on August 23, 1873 in Colchester. William passed away on September 21, 1934 in Essex County. A death notice appeared in *The Amherstburg Echo* on September 28, 1934 which says "Currans – At the home of Burney Day, Colchester South, Saturday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1934, William Currans, aged 59 years." I found two obituaries for William Curran. The first comes from *The Border Cities Star* on September 22, 1934. It says "William Curran, life-long resident of Colchester South Township, died at his home on the 5<sup>th</sup> Concession, yesterday, following a lengthy illness. He was 58 years of age. Mr. Curran was born in Colchester South and farmed in that district all his life. He is survived by his widow, Belle, and one brother, Jesse Curran. Funeral services will be held at the home at 1 o'clock tomorrow afternoon. Interment will be in Central Grove Church Cemetery."

The second obituary is from *The Amherstburg Echo* and was printed on September 28, 1934. It says "Well Known Resident Dies – William Currans, descendant of one of the best

known colored settlers of Colchester township, passed away at the home of his brother-in-law, Burney Day, Friday, in the 59<sup>th</sup> year of his age. He had been going down for a year with dropsy and heart trouble. The funeral Sunday afternoon was attended by a large number of mourning friends and relatives. Services were conducted in Central Grove Church by Rev. Frye and Rev. Talbert followed by burial in the cemetery there. The pallbearers were: Albert Mulder, Thomas Scott, Walter Brooks, Arthur Talbot, William Talbot and Joseph Carter. Mr. Curran was born on the Curran homestead, 2<sup>nd</sup> concession (now Provincial highway 18), son of the late Charles Curran and his wife Elizabeth Green. She was a sister of Mrs. James Taylor, sr., Mrs. Eliza Grayer and Mrs. Ruth Graham. Of four children, one survives. Jesse Curran, on the homestead. His marriage to Belle Day, daughter of the late Samuel Day, was childless. They lived with her brother, Burney, and she also has brothers Gordon Day, John Day, and a sister, Mrs. John McDowell, of Detroit, to all of whom sincere sympathy is extended.”

Belle Day Curran passed away many years later which was reported in the *Windsor Star* on November 21, 1961. The obituary says “CURRAN – Johanna Belle, November 20, 1961, aged 78 years. Widow of the late William Curran. Resting at J.H. Madhill Funeral Chapel, Harrow, until Wednesday, Nov. 22 when the remains will be taken to Central Grove Church where funeral services will be conducted at 2 p.m. Rev. Isaac Kindred officiating. Interment Central Grove Cemetery.”

Belle’s brother Samuel Judson Day was born on July 21, 1886 in Colchester South. *The Amherstburg Echo* reported his passing on August 16, 1895 and the article says “DAY – In Colchester South, on Tuesday, August 13<sup>th</sup>, Samuel Judson, son of Samuel Day, aged 9 years.” Samuel Judson’s sister Sarah Isabel Day married William G. Bird, the son of Alfred Bird and Katie Bennett, on June 3, 1885 in Corning, Adams, Iowa.

**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.**