

## Esther Banks Log Cabin Grand Opening May 24, 2014

Esther Malawice Banks was of a woman of mixed descent who was reported to be the child of one of Canada's most beloved military heroes and African royalty.

According to family lore, the Banks and Mulder families of Essex County are descendants of Major General Sir Isaac Brock and his cook Almania (Amy/Albemy) Malawice, who was a princess from Ghana, West Africa. There is documentation of Amy accompanying Brock on the high seas from England, to the Caribbean Islands and ultimately to Canada. These two reportedly had a daughter named Esther. She was born in Amherstburg, Ontario on June 14th, 1812 at the Searl Hotel where her mother worked as the cook. General Brock was present in Amherstburg at the time of Esther's birth and sent a bottle of wine to the birthing room. Brock also presented Amy with a christening gown for the baby girl. Esther was fair skinned with blue eyes and blond hair.

The War of 1812 began a few weeks after Esther's birth. Tragically, Brock was killed at Queenston Heights shortly thereafter on October 13th, 1812, never officially claiming Esther.

Princess Almania married a man with the last name of Fields who raised Esther as his own. The family lived in Amherstburg then moved to Michigan, U.S.A when Esther was nine. She later moved back to Amherstburg.

Esther first married William McCoy and they had a daughter called Almany named after her maternal grandmother, Almania. Almany married Joseph Mulder.

Esther then married Erving Banks and had 5 more children - Anthony, Canada's first Black Constable, Erving (Irving Jr.), Thomas, Martha and John. The family settled in Colchester living just outside of Harrow on Walker Road between the third and fourth concessions.

Esther was a tall well-built woman. She was said to have a fearsome temper and a sharp tongue. She wouldn't hesitate to express her displeasure to Shopkeepers if she didn't get what she had asked for indicating she was raised to think well of herself by her regal mother .

Esther Malawice Banks died on February 2nd, 1899. Her remains are buried at the Central Grove Church Cemetery located on Walker Road.

It would be wonderful to think a dashing Military idol and a beautiful regal Princess fell in love with each other.

Sadly, Esther Malawice Banks lived in an era when Blackness denied her family the right to claim legitimacy. Either no documents exist to prove the families' claim or the documentation has been lost in the mists of time. The light of truth must be shed upon this account; Esther's extraordinary story must be told!

Please join us at the Grand Opening ceremonies at Heritage Village, Arner Town line, Essex on Saturday, May 24th, 2014 at 1pm and tour Esther Malawice Banks Log Cabin.

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