

Letter From the Editors:

In this issue we will complete the second part to the two articles we introduced in our December 2013 issue: Will Armfield - Pioneer Pastor and The Founding of Jamestown. You may want to go back and reread these interesting pieces of history now that you have the whole story. Thank you again Nancy Hartley for your submission of Will Armfield. We have also included information on a resource we received from Betty Reynolds of the Marion Public Library in Marion, IN for Civil War veteran, John J Armfield (c1829-1865). Connie & Joyce

Will Armfield : Pioneer Pastor

By Constance L. Fisher, 1921-1990

-Part 2-

Life was hard for the wife of a circuit rider in the 1890's. Ella and her brothers and sisters had grown up in the Moravian community of Winston Salem, North Carolina, and while they were not wealthy (Her father was a miller.), the children knew the comforts and securities of a genteel, middle class family. Will had asked 19-year-old Ella to wait for him when he left to secure his homestead and three years later, she became his bride. There were no comforts on the frontier. The family lived in a log cabin: one large room with a fireplace in one end where much of the cooking was done. In addition, there was a lean-to cook house with an old stove and a root cellar a little way from the house. At night the children climbed a ladder to the loft where there was a sheepskin rug and pallets for beds. Ella bore her share of the load cheerfully, but it was difficult to stay alone, (Sometimes Will was gone for two weeks at a time.), coping with the household tasks and the children's needs and emergencies. The rabies arrived regularly: John was born and then Ruth. They were always born at home and one of the older children ran to get the midwife, then take care of the younger children during the birth process. When it was over, Ella was up in a few days, again shouldering her responsibilities as wife and mother. She never complained but moved stoically through the days and months and years of her life meeting the needs of others. Walter and Weldon recalled numerous instances of her quiet courage and calm ability to deal with any eventuality. They remembered the day she came out of the root cellar to find a rattlesnake coiled in the doorway, blocking her exit. Silently, she edged by him., inch by inch until she was free, then ran to get a hoe to kill him. One night when Ella and the children were alone, there was a heavy thud on the roof. (The children, sleeping in the loft thought it sounded like a team of horses!) No one did much sleeping that night as the snarling and scratching went on :for hours. The next morning, they found the tracks of a large mountain lion outside the cabin. They lived, surrounded by Indians - the Nez Perce and Umatillas. Often she would look up to find the face of a hungry Indian staring through the window. He was usually invited in for a plate of prairie chicken or blue grouse stew.

\$430 a year was not much on which to raise a growing family. Sometimes Will would be given a little money by someone, but the family almost never saw it. He was generous to a fault and would usually give it away to someone he thought needed it more. This man, who never made more than \$1800 a year, even in later years, never worried about money:

he was a strict tither and usually gave more to his church than his parishioners.

Ella always kept a vegetable garden and a few chickens. In the summer, the children picked wild strawberries and huckleberries, from which she made jam. Several times a year Will would bring fruit from Asotin and salmon from the Grande Ronde. (When they were running, it was possible to spear them with a pitchfork.) The fruit was canned and the salmon salted down to feed the family during the winter. Sometimes a parishioner would bring in half a hog or some potatoes.

The children had few clothes, shoes were always a problem. Occasionally, the "Missionary Barrel" (a collection of used clothing sent by the wealthier ladies of the church to the ministers' families on the frontier) would make the rounds. There would be shoes (not always a proper fit) and mittens and coats for the cold weather. Walter remembers once wearing a velvet coat. One December, Will was especially short on cash and the children were anticipating a bleak Christmas with no presents. The day before Christmas, a missionary barrel arrived. Tiny Ruth and her four older brothers gathered around as it yielded its treasures. There were coats and pants and shoes for boys, but as they reached almost to the bottom of the barrel, Ella sighed, "I guess they forgot to put anything in here for little girls." Ruth was heartbroken and about to cry, when her mother found at the very bottom a little white stocking cap embroidered in pink flowers. Years later, she remembered it as the most precious gift she ever received. Ella found that clothing herself and her husband presented problems, also. On rare occasions she would get some material at the general store and one of the ladies of the church who had a sewing machine would make it for her. One of their parishioners, an English lady, once noticed how shabby Will looked and bought him a pulpit suit. The children remembered their mother looking stylish, in spite of the sparsity of her wardrobe. She always wore big hats with lots of flowers.

Social functions were simple, but they involved the whole community. There were oyster suppers in the winter and ice cream socials in the summer. Sometimes there were Camp Meetings near Walla Walla and whole families would go, pitching their tents, eating together, and enjoying the preaching, singing, and testifying. Chautauquas were held at Spirit Lake, Idaho, which brought the cultural advantages through fine arts: lectures, musicians, dramatists. Will met William Jennings Bryan at one of these gatherings. And there was the Wild West Show, with Buffalo Bill and his extravaganza of riders, Indians, and animals.

The children thrived, not realizing they were poor. Each one looked after the one younger and when the twins arrived, Walter was assigned to Harry and Weldon to Henry. The system didn't always work, however, and one day Walter and Weldon both fell into the river. They were rescued from the swift current by the school teacher, who just happened to be passing, and the boys remained for three days in the house, with plenty of time to contemplate their sore bottoms inflicted by the old Indian quirt which hung in the pantry for just such occasions. The children were assigned their duties in regard to the church. It was Weldon's job to sit back of the organ and operate the pump. Sometimes, when the weather was warm he would fall asleep and receive a kick in the ribs from the organist as the sound died away. All the children adored their father and looked forward to his homecomings to hear the stories of his latest adventures.

Will's life was certainly not lacking in adventure and excitement. The western frontier around the turn of the century was in reality very much like today's media image of it. Liquor was flowing freely and the Saturday night dance was often the theatre for violence and murder, for hardly a week went by without a shooting or a stabbing. In all this, the frontier church had taken a vow to slay the "Barleycorn" dragon. When "Local Option" (each

county's right to vote on whether or not it wanted saloons) came up for a vote, Will campaigned vigorously for its approval. This angered the owner of a brewery and he vowed to get even with this upstart preacher. Some of his men tried to bribe Weldon, who was carrying a sign for "Local Option" to dump it in the creek, but Weldon, knowing his father, could not be persuaded. Because of these activities and because they did not want to see "respectability" creep in upon their towns, the cowboys kept a constant stream of harassment directed toward the frontier preachers. Several of Will's predecessors had been tarred and feathered and ridden 'out of town on a rail. Will was a husky 200 pounds, so the annoyances began lightly with tricks such as tying his stirrups to the horn of his saddle. All this he took with good humor. One thing he would not allow was the disruption of a church service. One night, as he was preaching, five or six cowboys clomped in, their spurs rattling on the boards of the schoolhouse floor, and seated themselves, grinning, in the front row. Will stopped preaching, looked directly into their faces, and said, "I'll ask you young men to lead us in a short season of silence." Not a sound was heard, Will finished his sermon, and the guests sat placidly through the rest of the service. During the alter call, he used to wander through the congregation singing and stopping here and there to grasp someone's hand or offer words of assurance. Months later he was told by one cowboy that if he had stopped in front of him, he would have shot him. His confrontations with the Indians of the area were usually friendly and without incident. Often stopped by a red man asking, "Where you go?" Will would hold up his bible and be allowed to pass. He carried no weapon but a hickory stick and his passport was the Word of God. Through all of the irritations and dangers he moved with grace, humor, and a firm conviction all things were possible through his God. He was truly one with his people, knowing their feelings, sorrowing in their afflictions, and celebrating their joys. One day as he was baptizing several people in the local pond (Immersion was a characteristic of the frontier church, no matter what the denomination.), into the middle of the proceedings came a little dog, thrown by some giggling youngsters from the tree above. Everyone laughed, including the preacher. He picked up the frightened puppy and started it paddling toward the shore, then went on with the service as if nothing had happened. He always enjoyed staying with his parishioners. One of his most humorous accounts of these visits went something like this: "I stayed all day with the Knights and all night with the Days; ate lunch with the Crows and dinner with the Buzzards." It was true, he really did. Will's ministry of song was as truly a part of his message as his preaching. As far as anyone knew, he had received no formal training, but had spent a good part of his boyhood singing spirituals with the black children in their meeting houses in North Carolina. Before they could talk his children and later, his grandchildren were sitting on his lap humming the tunes of "Steal Away", "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot", and "All God's Chillun Got Shoes". Invited for dinner at the homes of his parishioners, he would sing "Put the Cookies on the Lower Shelf" and "The Preacher and the Bear" to the children who gathered round whenever he came. As soon as they were old enough, he organized three of his sons and himself into a male quartet to sing for meetings. His clear tenor voice started every service; he needed no accompaniment, he just sang and before the congregation knew it, they were singing, too.

Will and his family remained in the highlands of Washington and Oregon for several years, building churches in Paradise, Flora, Dixie, Dayton, and Athena. Still the Methodist Conference delayed his ordination into full membership. With a perseverance and doggedness that characterized his whole ministry and his life, he exclaimed, "I'll show them that preachers are made by God Almighty and not by the Methodist Conferences!" In 1904, he was asked to come to Spokane, Washington to be Financial Secretary for the

Deaconess Hospital, which was then housed in an old frame home, called the Mariah Beard Deaconess Hospital. He spent two years raising money to build the first brick building, then went on to establish the Pension Fund for Ministers, traveling over all of the state of Washington. Finally, on September 8, 1907, he was ordained an Elder and accepted into full membership in the Columbia River Conference of the Methodist Church. As City Missionary for Spokane, he built six new churches: Manito, Metzger, Hays Park, Grace, Minnehaha, and Wesley.

It was in Spokane that the last two children were born to the family of Will and Ella: Esther and Frank. It was here, also that their son, Duke, was killed at the age of 21 in an accident with a runaway team of horses. It was the greatest sorrow of their lives. In 1914, his three eldest sons went to France. (World War I) and though his heart was breaking, he had a picture taken of himself and the three in uniform, using it as a poster to illustrate his campaign to earn money for Liberty Bonds. His letters to them were optimistic, encouraging, loving. To his great joy and relief, they were all returned to him.

In 1924, he was elected to General Conference and traveled to Springfield, Massachusetts with Ella, making a visit to Winston Salem, North Carolina on the way home. It was here that he suffered a stroke and his health was never good after that. He died on Thanksgiving Day, 1925.

At his death, the Spokesman Review of Spokane stated: "The Reverend Mr. Armfield was probably known to more members of the Methodist faith than any man in the Columbia River Conference. For the last 30 years his entire life was devoted to church work and he was personally known to congregations from points in eastern Oregon to the British Columbia line."

His oldest son, Walter, characterized his life in this way: "I believe my Father was the most selfless man I ever knew. And he lived the Christianity that he professed. He would ride his horse 10-15 miles in a snowstorm to see someone who was ill or in trouble. It was little wonder that at his death we received expressions of sympathy from all over the northwest."

Constance L. Fisher

John Fisher, son of Constance L Fisher wrote that Will Armfield fathered nine children, the oldest of which was William (Walter) Armfield, his mother's father. In our previous newsletter we mentioned Constance was Will's daughter, but actually one generation later. She sat for hours interviewing her father Walter and his brother Weldon to acquire the information to write about her grandfather. surfchiro5@gmail.com

The Founding of Jamestown

By Mary Mendenhall Hobbs

Guilford Genealogist, Vol X, No 3, Spring 1983, Number 21

- Part 2 -

Another point upon which I am quite sure Mrs. Tilden was misinformed is the priority of Carolina Friends in liberating their slaves. I am sure that they were not the first to set their slaves at liberty. All this matter needs careful research and would yield a rich store to our county history. For while I do not believe them to have been the first to act, I do not think that their Manumission society organized by Charles Osborn and the impetus it gave to Benjamin Lundy, set the tide toward the freedom of the negro. I heartily wish that all who are interested in our county history might read carefully the book, "Southern Quakers and

Slavery," written by Dr. Stephen B. Weeks, formerly of Trinity College. It is extremely well written and most scientifically accurate. He searched the records and gives the facts and is a very impartial chronicler. This matter is treated on page 235 and following. Naturally the Quakers were out of sympathy with many of their fellow citizens, but it is astonishing to know how many high minded, patriotic men of all denominations were in hearty accord with the effort.

The thing which cuts me to the heart, however, is her statement that the Mendenhalls favored the king. I can't stand that unless I am convinced of its truth beyond question. We have been Quakers since ever Quakers were, and cannot fight, at least to kill; but I never heard a hint that we loved King George. At the time of Cornwallis' march through Guilford our mill was pressed into service and everything we had to eat taken by the British, who at last drove off Grandmother Judith Gardner's last cow and left her with a house full of children and nothing to feed them. She marched up the hill to the officers' tent and demanded her cow, telling the situation, and led back the cow. The Nantucket people suffered greatly from the British. So I hope that they and we were patriots, if we could not fight. However, if there is history, authentic fact, known to others that we were Tories, all I can say is that they did not hand down that trait to us. I'll stand (by) it if I must; for even if it hurts "there is nothing so royal as truth."

I may be allowed to add that the people formerly did not, and I suppose could not, understand the position of the Quakers, and called them Tories. Dr. Weeks has a paragraph which does somewhat relieve my mind which I will quote in conclusion.

"Friends (Quakers) were not spared when their states were invaded. Between the requisitions of the Americans and the theft and robberies of the British and Tories there was small chance for them to escape serious damage.

As soon as the war was over Friends accepted the results. But they had never been blindly obedient to despotism. They had steadily resisted it in England; they did the same in America. Believing as they do in the common brotherhood of man, they have been of necessity Democratic and have been found in every question on the side which sought to elevate the lower classes. They were, then, logically and historically on the side of the colonists in the question at issue. They differed from them in regard to the method that should be employed to attain the end."

Page 185

Guilford College, March 15

John J Armfield (c1829-1865)

John was conscripted as a Confederate soldier and served as a Private in Company C, 30th NC Regiment when he was captured by the Federalists. John was given the choice of taking the oath of allegiance or going to prison, He chose the later and died in prison. His occupation in 1860 census was given as a gunsmith. His wife Lydia did not remarry following his death. Abstracts of letters John wrote home during the Civil War can be found at the NC Archives in Raleigh. Betty Reynolds, Marion Public Library, Marion, IN. sent us copies of these letters. Thank you Betty

John J. Armfield Letters

Title:	John J. Armfield Letters
Years:	1864-1865, 1937
Call Number:	PC.286
Location:	3B
MARS Id:	796 (Group)
Genres / Forms:	Letters
Quantity:	18 Item(s)
Scope / Contents:	Excerpts from letters of Armfield, Co. C, 30th Regt. NCT, to wife in Guilford Co., written from New Market and Petersburg, Va., about miseries of picket duty and camp life, provisions, desertions, hopes for peace.

Comments & Contributions

From Susan Newman: "Thanks so much for all the research and especially the newsletters!!! I recently submitted an article about my Kansas roots of ancestors as pioneers in the Kansas Territory in a Kansas DAR publication. I referenced Sarah Armfield Speck, (father was Julian Armfield). I think Armfield readers would find her story during "Bleeding Kansas" an interesting one. In the work "The Iddings and Their Forebears", 2nd edition, page 189 - 190 is Sarah's story as written by Remsburg and published in his scrapbook. It was written sometime after 1904. There are also other accounts of Hannah Iddings and Julian Armfield's dating and marriage. I believe that account was in the Atchison Globe newspaper as a bio. on Hannah." newman_susan@sbcglobal.net

One of our long time readers Dave Dowell was featured in the Saturday, February 15, 2014 issue of "The Tennessean". The title of the piece written by Tony Gonzalez is DNA TESTS DIG UP FAMILY ROOTS. Dave discusses DNA and his discovery of a relative he had no prior knowledge of. He was quoted regarding DNA; "It's all coming together to give us tools we couldn't even have dreamed of three or four years ago."

<http://www.tennessean.com/story/news/local/2014/02/15/dna-testing-used-to-dig-up-family-roots/5499539>

Among Dave's many accomplishments, he is the co-author of NextGen Genealogy: Making the DNA Connection, projected Summer, 2014; Author of Crash Course in Genealogy, 2011, from Libraries Unlimited; Co-author of Libraries in the Information Age, An Introduction and Career Guide, 2nd edition, Libraries Unlimited, 2009; Administrator of the Dowell Surname & the Smothers Surname DNA Projects @ FTDNA

Follow "Dr D Digs Up Ancestors" <http://blog.ddowell.com>

Researching Adams, Breske, Cashatt, Christie, Deutscher, Dowell, Grove, Hauck, Katzel, Larson, McLaren, Moore, Muza, Paepke, Pierce, Sanner, Smith, Smithey, Taylor and related families. Maybe one day he will take on an Armfield DNA project at one of the sites. David descends from Jacob and Mary (Armfield) Brown through their son Moses. We sure could use his expertise! InfoDoc@DDowell.com

The 45th Annual Southern California Genealogy Jamboree will be held Friday through Sunday, June 6 through 8, 2014, at the Los Angeles Marriott Burbank in Burbank, California. The theme is "Golden Memories: Discovering Your Family's History." Conference

chair is Paula Hinkle, great grand-daughter of Civil War Berdan's Sharpshooter, Wesley Armfield. See the Jamboree website for all the details; <http://www.genealogyjamboree.com>

Family History and DNA: Genetic Genealogy in 2014 will be held Thursday, June 5, 2014, in conjunction with the Southern California Genealogy Jamboree. The conference will be held at the Los Angeles Marriott Burbank Airport, 2500 Hollywood Way, Burbank, CA.

Family lines & Queries

We recently received another member to our newsletter family, **Joseph Henry Armfield** the 3rd. His 3X great grandfather was Joseph B Armfield. If his great grandfather had not been named George Will, he would have been the 7th Joseph in a row. His son is Joseph Henry the IV. G. Will Armfield was a long time and well known resident of Greensboro, NC. He formed a partnership with S.S. Brown and for years operated "Brown and Armfield Dry Goods Store." Some time later that partnership was abolished and he then opened a store under his own name on South Elm St. However, since G. Will was a staunch Republican, many citizens of Greensboro began to boycott his store. So in 1892, G. Will left the merchandising business and became an architect and builder. Together with his son, Joseph H Armfield, they built over 50 homes and buildings in and around Greensboro. Joe sent several stories, some typed from the original newspaper articles. We will be using them in future newsletters. Thank you so much Joe and glad to have you aboard. joewbt@icloud.com

Avis Armfield Solie is a descendant of John Armfield (her 2X great grandfather) son of Isaac "Ike" and Margaret "Peggy" Armfield. John (1840-1920) married Elizabeth Matilda Hoar (1847-1932). Their son Howard Rdell (1875-1951) married Philinda C Andrews (1873-1925). Avis' line comes down through Howard and Philinda's son Arthur Howard & Nellie Armfield to Howard Rdell her father who is still living and June Ekdahl. Avis has offered to contribute a family story for our newsletter. We look forward to receiving it.

Avis asked if anyone has information on John's brother Thomas Cranor Armfield (1837-1911) and Mary Catherine Short (c1854-1883) and their children. In the Fontanelle Cemetery in Adair County, IA is a headstone dated 1872 with the names of their five children: Charles, Edward, Jenny, Alice and Cora. Did these children all die at the same time and of what? Mary and Thomas married 24 Oct 1869 so the children died sometime between then and 1872 (stone date). avissolie@gmail.com

Gone But Not Forgotten

George Solie (1991-2013) son of Avis Armfield and Peter George Solie died suddenly while doing missionary work in Salt Lake City on 23 Jan 2013. His obituary and picture can be accessed at <http://brucefuneralhome.com> George is one more reason to care about those who've gone before us. He was the grandson of Howard and June Armfield of Janesville, WI.



June H. Armfield (1924-2014) of Janesville, WI passed on 04 Mar 2014 at Huntington Place in Janesville. She was born on 07 Feb 1924 in Chicago, the daughter of Einar and Hilfred (Danielson) Ekdahl. June attended North Park College, Chicago, IL, and was employed for a time at the Shriners Crippled Children's Hospital in Chicago. June married Howard R. Armfield on Jan. 22,

1946, in Chicago. They have resided in the Janesville area, for many years and lived at Emerald Grove for over 30 years. June was employed as a ward clerk at Rock Haven Nursing Home for over 20 years prior to retiring. She was a long-time member of Emerald Grove Congregational Church UUC. Surviving are her husband of 68 years, Howard Armfield; four children: Betsy (Dennis) Lauer, Douglas (Debra) Armfield, Avis (Peter) Solie, Sandy (Bob) Galica; 10 grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her parents; two sons, Daniel David and Steven Armfield; as well as her brother, David Ekdahl.

These obituaries were submitted by Avis Armfield Solie. avissolie@gmail.com

Odds & Ends

Marriage Bonds. This description of a marriage bond comes from Genealogy.org. "When planning to marry, the prospective groom took out a bond from the clerk of the court in the county where the bride had her usual residence as surety that there was no legal obstacle to the proposed marriage...Most of the bonds contain the following information: groom's name, bride's name, date of bond, bondsmen, witnesses."

The following article comes from "NEWS", the Guilford County Genealogical Society newsletter, May 2014, Guilford County Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 4713, Greensboro, NC 27404-4713, www.rootsweb.com/~ncgcgs

REMARKABLE NEW DATABASE by Larry W. Cates

"On April 24th, Ancestry.com released "U.S., Quaker Meeting Records, 1681-1994" as a new database offering. It is available both in Ancestry Library Edition and through individual subscription. This compendium is not just an index or a reproduction of William Wade Hinshaw's remarkable series of books (though these, too, are available on Ancestry). It contains actual, indexed images of original meeting minutes and papers covering numerous states. Over 5.6 million images are available, including material from Earlham, Haverford, Swarthmore, and Guilford colleges. Ancestry claims that this database encompasses some three quarters of all American Quaker records still in existence. What a bonanza for all of us who have Quaker ancestry! Already, I have located some brief notices of certificates issued to ancestors which I had never seen recorded in Hinshaw."

Copies of all Armfield Newsletters are available at www.armfieldnewsletter.com

Copyright © 2014 Armfield Newsletter, Joyce Agerton (gigi@seark.net) and Connie Stenhjem. All rights reserved. We respectfully request that the authors be cited if any portion of this newsletter is reproduced in whole or in part in any form or medium for any purpose.

You may unsubscribe by contacting Connie Stenhjem at cstenhjem@gmail.com