Ephraim Arnold

(1771 - 1833)

-by Kim Ray

YE OLDEN TYME.

EPHRAIM ARNOLD

Ephraim Arnold was born in Maryland, Sept. 5, 1771, of English parentage; was the eldest of a family of five children, three sisters and a brother Thomas. . . He married Mary Eleanor Redmond, August 20, 1795, at Ellicott's Mills, Md., and being of Quaker ancestry, he brought up his children in that faith, but having married one of the "world's people" he could not continue to fellowship with that church. . . In 1796 the young couple went to Pennsylvania to what is now Washington, D. C. While there he erected a large merchant or "flouring mill. This was probably located on what was then called the estate of Arnolds, owned by three wealthy Statesmen. The ruins of this mill are still standing, though fast crumbling to decay. The mill part of the property now belongs to the District of Columbia, and is part of so called Rock Creek park, consisting of several hundred acres, where the government has located the famous Zoological Garden, usually called the "Zoo Park."

Their oldest child, Evan, was born Sept. 9, 1796 and two years later they emigrated to Paoli's settlement, in Kentucky. In the year 1800, he removed with his wife and two children to Clark county, Ind., having purchased land from Gen. George Rogers Clark, who held a large grant in southern Indiana. . . He erected at once a very substantial two stories and a basement stone residence, facing Pleasant Run, on the south. On the north side of the house still is a large stone bearing the initials "G. R. C." and the figures "1800," the year in which the house was built. It is still standing and in tolerably good repair, being used as a granary. It is about eight miles from Jeffersonville, and about the same distance from Charleston, Ind. During the crowded times when Indians threatened destruction of life and property, the neighborhood here around Pond's settlement, within its solid walls. This was probably the one at the time of the "Pigeon Roost massacre," Sept. 3, 1812.

Ephraim Arnold was a very resolute, enterprising business man, and while in Clark county built mills in several localities. One of these was in Louisville, Ky., for a man named Potter, who afterwards associated himself with a partner, under the firm name of "Potter & Hughes." Another mill was built in Jackson county, Indiana, which was the first mill in that county and Mr. Arnold lived there for several years. After what was called the "New Purchase," to west further north, to Johnson county, and built a cable on Empress land, near Blue river in the "Hurricane." This was a strip of land probably one fourth of a mile in with, and several miles in length, wherein such a tract of that heavily timbered country was left standing. All were uprooted, shattered and piled upon each other in inconceivable confusion by the breaking power of some terrible storm. The cabin was built near where Hillsboro now stands, and the hurricane made a ruin of Jackson and Bartholomew counties and perhaps others. At the land sale Ephraim Arnold declined not to purchase land in that locality because it was for more than he thought it was worth, so he bought fractions of land on both sides of the east fork of White river, locally called "Drift wood," about four miles north-east of Columbus. The river at this point runs almost directly north and south, and in the shallowly began work on a mill dam and cabins for his workmen. In the year 1820, he built the first grist mill ever erected in Bartholomew Co. Prior to the creation settlers were obliged to go twenty miles to Jackson Co. with their grists, and when out of flour or meal often used "hominy" instead of bread.

The road to the Jackson Co. mill was wild and lonely, leading through heavy timber almost all the way. Thus forests with their dense undergrowth were the home of wild animals, and still more dangerous . . . [illegible] . . . with black hair, fine eyes and fair smooth complexion. His features were rather prominent for his countenance was pleasant, he was merry and jovial in disposition and cared in all the surrounding . . . [illegible] . . . though quick tempered, he was very fond of his home, his children and friends, and was a liberal and charitable to those in affliction and distress.

[illegible] . . . Louisa Rollins . . . [illegible] . . . Rogers, Kansas—was a lawyer, too, after the pattern. The late Gen. W. Arnold, for twenty years a practicing attorney and justice of the peace in Columbus, Ind., and his brother, Thomas Hinkston, a preacher and J. P. in South Dakota, are also grandsons. But it is a curious fact that at the close of the century which has passed since the marriage of Mary Redmond and Ephraim Arnold only seven persons remain to perpetuate the name. There are three grandsons, three great-grandsons and one great-great-grandson.

LAURA FAWCETT ARNOLD.

Dec. 27, 1896.

Ephraim's biography is credited to his granddaughter-in-law, Laura Fawcett Arnold, in her 1896 newsletter column, Ye Olden Tyme. I have paraphrased her wonderful, but lengthy article.

Ephraim Arnold was born 5 Sep 1771 in Maryland, the oldest of 5 children born to his Quaker parents. He married Mary Eleanor Redmond 20 Aug 1795 at Ellcott's Mills, MD. Since she was not a Quaker, he was no longer allowed fellowship with that church.

They moved to what is now Washington, DC in 1796, where Ephraim built a large flouring mill. They moved to Pond's Settlement in KY about 1798, then to Clark Co, IN in 1800, where he purchased land from Gen. George Rogers Clark. It was here he built a substantial 2 story stone residence with a basement, where most of their children were born.

THE OLD STONE HOUSE CLARK COUNTY, IND.

Photographed July, 1896

In 1800, Ephraim built the Old Stone House, his residence in Clark Co, IN, where most of his children were born. Laura Arnold wrote another article about this home, including the photo from 1896.

Ephraim was a volunteer under Gen. William Henry Harrison and was seriously wounded in the thigh in the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811.

Ephraim built several Mills in locations such as Louiville, KY; Jackson Co, Johnson Co, and Bartholomew Co,IN. He built the first grist mill in Bartholomew Co in 1820. Eventually, he built a saw mill and grist mill on either side of the Driftwood River, which were called "Arnold's Mills".

He was a Judge in Bartholomew Co., and died 19 Feb 1833 in Bartholomew Co, IN. His wife died 4 years later, 22 Mar 1837. Both are buried in Carter's Cemetery.

They had 10 children: Evan, Ben Franklin, William, Ephraim, Jr, Sarah, Elizabeth, Nancy, Louisa, and 2 children who died young.