

History of the
ARMSTRONG FAMILY
from 980 to 1939 A.D.
and Genealogy of
DAVID ARMSTRONG
and
SARAH HARRIS ARMSTRONG
1746 - 1939



History Compiled By
THOMAS ELMER ARMSTRONG
(16) Pittsburgh, Pa.

Genealogy Compiled By
JUNE HANNA MOYER
(Mrs. I. O. Moyer)
Sharon, Pa.

PREFACE

The writing of this history was undertaken nearly ten years ago to satisfy a desire to know more about my own forebears and to be able to pass on to my children a knowledge which has been denied my own generation.

About sixty years ago David McCune, a grandson of David and Sarah Armstrong undertook to assemble information with the intention of writing a history of the family. He secured considerable material showing birth in each of the families of the ten children of David and Sarah.

His history was never completed and at his death in 1893 his records were turned over to a member of the 4th family.

The McCune record tells of David Armstrong at the age of 18 coming from Ireland and settling in Path Valley, Pa., and of his marriage to Sarah Harris; of their removal to Westmoreland Co. and subsequently to Butler Co., Pa.

From this information we worked backward which resulted in a better knowledge than was hoped for when the task was undertaken.

It was impossible to trace each line of our ancestors to the time when their family name was first applied to them. It was equally difficult to determine our exact race because of intermarriages, but it was possible to trace our main line almost 1000 years; we now know we sprang from a Danish King and we know why we bear the name Armstrong.

The history found in this volume was gleaned from many sources; much time was consumed in searching for and reading deeds and wills in court records of the following counties—Franklin, Adams, York, Cumberland, Huntingdon and Allegheny. Access was had to libraries in Pittsburgh and Chicago.

The compiler is indebted to Jas. L. Armstrong's book "Chronicle of the Armstrongs" and to Mrs. S. C. Horn of Berkley Springs, W. Va., to Mrs. L. S. Vowel (now deceased) of Washington, Pa., and to Mrs. Anna Armstrong of Washington, D. C., for information.

It is the hope of the compiler that you will be, not only interested, but profited, by the records and observations contained herein, and that you will agree with him in the belief that every citizen of this wonderful Country which our an-

cestors helped to found should know his ancestors. He should know from what race he sprang, where they lived before coming to America, when they came and where they settled.

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THE ORIGIN OF OUR FAMILY

Having traced our record to an early Danish King, we will want to know something of that race. I will quote from a Danish history by Saxo Grammaticus, Volume I, Introduction, Page 3:

“During the Viking Age (8th, 9th, and 10th centuries), we find the Scandinavians everywhere; they came in large swarms to France, England and to Spain. During the Crusades, they led the van of chivalry of Europe in rescuing the Holy Sepulcher; they passed the pillars of Hercules, devastated the classic fields of Greece and penetrated the walls of Constantinople; they ventured out on the surging main and discovered Iceland, Greenland 982) A.D., and North America (1002) A.D.”

“The Vikings (or Norsemen) were the first navigators to venture out of sight of land, and everywhere they scattered the seeds of liberty, independence and culture; they brought to France the germ of liberty that was planted in the soil of Normandy where the Normans adopted the French tongue and were the first to produce and spread abroad a vernacular literature, that germ of liberty which, brought to England, budded in the Magna Charta and Bill of Rights, and which, in the course of time, was carried in the Mayflower to America, where it developed full-blown flowers in our Declaration of Independence and the ripened fruit in the Constitution of the United States.”

In ancient times Denmark was not a kingdom, but a multitude of small provinces ruled by warlike chiefs who called themselves Kings. It was not until the 9th century that these little kingdoms were combined into one kingdom by a famous chieftain known by the Danes as “Gorm the Old.”

THE TEN LORDS OF MANGERTON

In the Genealogical table we have named the ten Lords of Mangerton, the Lord being the head man or leader of the family or clan, who lived in the castle called "Mangerton," situated in Liddesdale on the Liddal River in Scotland.

1st. Siward Beorn (1020-1055)
A Dane by birth or descent

2nd. Alexander Armstrong, called the Young Lord of Mangerton.

3rd. Name not known. (Probably Alexander. See "Chronicles," Page 101, Carnegie Library.)

4th. Archibald Armstrong

5th. Thomas Armstrong
15th Century

1. Alexander Armstrong (6th Lord)
2. John Armstrong of Whithaugh
3. Ill Will Armstrong of Chingils
4. George Armstrong of Ailmure

6th. Alexander Armstrong

1. Thomas Armstrong (7th Lord)
2. John Armstrong of Gilnockie
3. Christopher Armstrong of Langholm
4. George Armstrong
5. Alexander
or Andro Armstrong
6. Robert Armstrong
7. William Armstrong

7th. Thomas Armstrong
Died 1548 or 49

1. Archibald Armstrong (8th Lord)
2. John Armstrong of Tinnisburn
3. Richard Armstrong of Dryup
4. Thomas Armstrong
5. Simon Armstrong of Tinnisburn

8th. Archibald Armstrong
1548 or 59-1558

1. Simon Armstrong (9th Lord)
2. Ninian Armstrong
3. Rowe Armstrong

9th. Simon Armstrong
1558-1583

1. Archibald Armstrong (10th Lord)
2. Ungle or
Hingle Armstrong
3. Simon Armstrong of Runchbach

10th. Archibald Armstrong
1583-1610

Archibald Armstrong, the tenth and last Lord of Mangerton, was proprietor at least as early as 1583 and remained as the Lord 'till 1610, when he and twenty-four of his followers were charged with plundering an enemy's property. They were ordered to appear before the Council but failed to do so.

Archibald was put to the horn and was expelled from his lordship.

THE ORIGIN OF THE NAME "ARMSTRONG"

Siward Beorn (The Fair or Fairbairn), first ancestor of the Armstrongs, descended from the Royal House of Denmark. His father was Earl Beorn (one historian says Earl Beorn was the only son of Hringo, King of Denmark or Upland). Siward came to Scotland in the 10th century (about 980 A. D.). He was of giant-like stature and because of his great strength was called "Strong Arm."

The great and wide spread family of Armstrongs derive their name from the following circumstances. An ancient King of Scotland had his horse killed under him in battle and was immediately remounted by Siward, his armor bearer. For this timely assistance the King amply rewarded him with lands on the Border; and to perpetuate the memory of so important a service, as well as the manner in which it was performed, for Siward took the King by the thigh and set him on the saddle, his Royal Master gave him the appellation of "Arm Strong" and assigned to him for crest an armed hand and arm, in the left hand a leg and foot in armor, couped at the thigh—all proper. This crest has been used for centuries by the Armstrongs.

Later Siward was given, by Edward the Confessor, who was made King in 1042 A. D., the earldom of Huntingdon, Westmoreland, Cumberland and Northumberland, which he governed in peace, subduing the King's enemies.

Siward Beorn was married three times; the name of his first wife is not known; his second wife was Alfedra, a daughter of Aldred, Earl of Northumberland; the third wife was Godgive, a widow. He had by his first wife a son, Osborne-Bulax, and a daughter name not known), who married King Duncan of Scotland, and they had two sons, Siward and Malcolm Kenmore.

Osborne-Bulax married a daughter of Leofric, Earl of Mercia, and his wife Godiva, the most beautiful as well as the most saintly woman of her day. They had two sons, Siward Beorn, called "the White," and Osborne "the Red." Our line comes down from Osborne-Bulax, the first wife's son.

Siward Beorn by his second wife had a son, Waltheof, who married Juditha, a niece of William the Conqueror, who was made King in 1066 (William I). Waltheof had a daughter, Mathilda, who married King David of Scotland (David I). Siward, King Duncan's son, and Osborne-Bulax were killed in the battle of Dunsinnane. 1054 A. D.

Macbeth, a powerful nobleman and nearly allied to the

Crown, not content with curbing King Duncan's authority, carried still further his ambition by putting his Sovereign to death and chased Malcolm Kenmore, his son and heir, into England. Siward Beorn, by Edward the Confessor's orders, embraced the protection of this distressed family, his daughter and grandson. Siward marched an army into Scotland, and having defeated and killed Macbeth, restored Malcolm to the throne.

Siward (the Arm Strong) did not die in battle. As he felt his end approaching, he said to his attendant, "Lift me up that I may die on my feet like a soldier and not crouching like a cow. Dress me with my coat of mail, and cover my head with my helmet. Put my shield on my left arm and my battle ax in my right hand, that I may die under arms." Ingulph places his death in the year 1056. He was buried in the cloister of St. Mary, which he built without the walls of the city (York).

THE ARMSTRONGS ON THE BORDER

The term "The Border," as also "Debatable Lands," is employed in historical as well as popular phraseology to signify a common frontier of England and Scotland. The present boundary is marked by an irregular line extending from the mouth of the Tweed River on the East to Solway Firth on the West. The Debatable Lands consisted of the present English Counties of Northumberland, Cumberland, and perhaps a portion of Westmoreland on the South, and the Scottish Counties of Berwick, Roxburgh, and Dumfries on the North.

The scene of our early history is laid in the Border Lands. The name "Armstrong" was used in this territory in the eleventh century, probably 1020, when we first hear of Siward, the Arm Strong, Earl of Northumberland, first of the name and ancestor of the renowned Border family of Armstrongs. He was one of those stalwart figures which will never pass away from the pages of history nor yet tradition. He was a man of great physical strength and prowess, wit and wisdom, and loftiness of character; he was undoubtedly a Christian, for he built the Minster of York. He was the last of the great Anglo-Danish Jarls (a Danish or Norse chieftain or headman below the King) and disdained that his royal blood should descend to any mean sphere. He acquired honor in England by his successful conduct of the only foreign enterprise undertaken during the reign of Edward, the Confessor (1042-1066).

The great Border ancestor of the Armstrongs was the Duke of Northumberland, his emblem a sword. One of his distinguishing achievements, famous in history, is that of encountering his enemy with a tree which he had grasped by the trunk. This legend is strongly indicated by the carvings in Eskdale and Liddesdale, Scotland, and also by the monuments in Fermanaugh, Ireland, it is called the Terwinney Version.

He who has intelligently viewed the stones of Ettleton, which was not the first burial-ground of the Armstrongs, will feel convinced that they wanted to pass on to following generations certain well known genealogical facts prevalent upon the Border in their time. These stone records have reached us.

The history that has been handed down, not because of careful preservation but because it is too vigorous to die, has a wonderful charm and interest. It is not from exact history that we may look for the most genuine spirit of the past, but from the storytellers, ancient carvings, old laws and poems, ballads and letters. From these we are able to obtain a far more varied and interesting account of the society of a past age, of our ancestors of the Border, than we can ever hope to derive from the pages of professional historians.

The Liddesdale Armstrong folk used an exceedingly simple and striking method of effecting this object. They studied and executed the science of expressive symbolism. Knowing this, it becomes our duty to accept of these relics, not only as relics but as records to be utilized, which was assuredly their intention.

Many of these stone pictures have been lost or destroyed, but by studying those we have we find they depict the deeds of Siward of Northumberland, which established his descendants upon the Border and gave them their name. The Siward legends are the Armstrong legends. The name "Siward of the Strong Arm" was the name implied by our Crest, the arm and hand holding a sword or tree or leg and foot.

The old Armstrong carvings of the Border and of Fermanaugh not only prove the genuineness of the legends recited within this century, but tell more. For example, without the monumental hieroglyphics of Liddesdale we only had tradition to tell us that the father of John of Gilnockie was Alexander, the sixth Lord of Mangerton, but it was good tradition. We know that the chiefs of Mangerton were buried in Ettleton and that they were honored with large and curious tombstones. Tradition also told us that Thomas, John's elder brother, was the seventh Lord and the oldest of seven brothers.

In searching for stone records of this great chief, Alexander, who was addressed as squire by the King, we find the following hieroglyphics upon one of the tombstones in Etleton, Scotland:

On the face of the stone is a carving representing a tree with six long branches; on the reverse side a sword.

The six long branches stand for six Lords of Mangerton. Alexander, being the sixth, is designated by AA and M. On the opposite side of the stone is the symbol of "The Sword" of Alexander Armstrong, and of Mangerton. Mangerton was a castle standing on the southwest bank of the River Liddal, Scotland, twenty miles northeast of Carlisle, England.

Sir Bulwer Lytton, a distinguished writer of the 19th century, took special interest in the stories of the Armstrongs. It is easy to see at whom he pointed when writing of the Earl of Northumberland as Siward of the Strong Arm in his novel "Harold."

The descendants of Siward bore the arm and hand holding an oak tree or sword. Both these emblems have descended to us in our armorial bearings.

As already indicated, the Armstrongs occupied lands on the Border. The Scottish Border was divided into three districts called East, Middle, and the West March. In the Middle was the lordship of Liddesdale. The whole district was ruled by an officer appointed by the Crown, called a Warden, whose powers were very extensive.

Liddesdale, the valley in which the Armstrongs lived, was the most southern portion of Roxburyshire and was drained by the Rivers Liddal and Hermitage. New Castleton is the town nearest the ruins of Mangerton, their castle.

Of the castle of Mangerton, there exists today, 1900, only the lower part of the tower and fortalice, some twelve feet high, and long mounds covering the foundation of the outer walls. It is on the southern bank of the Liddal near Castleton and was the home of the head of the family, Lord Mangerton, for centuries.

Mangerton was lost to the Armstrongs for a part of the 16th century, but about 1541 they regained the old home and continued in possession 'till 1610, when Archibald, the tenth Lord of Mangerton, was denounced rebel to Scotland and was put to the horn. He was expelled from his lordship. (One writer says he was executed.)

The location for the fortress of Mangerton was given to

Siward by King Malcolm II of Scotland, probably as early as 1030, and he was thus the first Lord of Mangerton.

The Armstrongs at a very early period possessed a great part of Liddesdale and of the Debatable Lands, Much of the country belonging to them was in dispute as to nationality and was claimed territory by both kingdoms. The consequence was that they were protected by neither nation for any great length of time and were a sort of folk by themselves. The Anglo-Danish descendants of this locality were different in character from the Celtic clans. Liddesdale was sometimes called the "Armstrong Country."

They had little reason to regard the inland Scots as their fellow subjects, or to respect the power of the Crown, which they would willingly have done had they been encouraged to do so. The King of Scotland frequently resigned them by express compact to England, whence they came. Hence, we find them with the Scotch part time and then with the English.

The inhabitants of Liddesdale, comprehending the martial clans of Armstrongs, Elliots, and many others, were apt, on an emergency, to assume the Red Cross and, for the time being, become English.

The feudal system, which formed the principal groundwork of ancient law, both civil and criminal, had in the Border a comparative imperfect influence. The inhabitants were divided into clans who acknowledged no supremacy, saving that of the chief, captain, or head of their name, who might often be a person entirely different from the feudal superior.

In their method of warfare, it was the custom to leave the frontier at night-time in troops, going through impossible places and through many by-paths. In the day-time they refreshed their horses and recruited their own strength in hiding places prepared beforehand until the approach of night, when they advanced to the place of destination. Having seized their booty from the enemy, they, in the same manner, returned by night through circuitous by-ways to their own habitations.

The feuds of the Borderers were terrible affairs; with them blood could only expiate blood, and until vengeance had been taken, they believed that the spirit of their murdered kinsman would never rest in peace. These feuds, although not confined to the Border Country, were more common in that district than in any other portion of the Kingdom and were the cause of endless trouble and bloodshed.

To their praise it may be said that, having once pledged their faith, even to an enemy, they were very strict in observing it, inasmuch as they thought nothing could be more heinous than violated fidelity.

It is generally supposed that the Borderers were not an industrious people, but this is an erroneous impression. The Armstrongs of Liddesdale and Eskdale, when not in predatory warfare, had their cattle and mills to attend and granaries which contained "their gude red wheat," often used in exchange for livestock.

They lived mainly on flesh, milk, boiled barley, fish, and game. The dress of their leader was little different from his kinsman. They wore leather coats called "jaks" to which steel plates were attached, "stiel bonnets" and "splents" (a sort of steel leggins). They carried swords and spears of VI ell length (an ell equals 24.7 inches). They also, in times of war, wore crosses, either St. Andrews or St. George, to denote their nationality, and handkerchiefs rolled about the arms or letters and monograms embroidered on their caps or gloves, by which mark of distinction they were recognized by their friends.

In an old copy of the ballad of "John Armstrong's Last Good Night" is the following description of the dress of Armstrongs in times of peace.

"But see we must go before the King,
Lord, we will go most gallantly.
Ye shall every one have a velvet coat
Laid down with golden laces three.
"And every one shall have a scarlet cloak
Laid down with silver laces five,
With your golden belts about your necks
With hats and feathers all alike."
(See collection of old ballads printed in 1723.)

They took much pleasure in their own music and poetry, which they composed upon the exploits of their ancestors or upon their own strategems in war and their artful defenses.

The language of the Liddesdale folk contained much of the old genuine Saxon, with an intermixture from the northern nations, as Danish and Norse, and some, though a small portion, from the Celtic.

Some rude monuments, memorials of ancient valor, occur upon the Border, such as the Cross of Milnholm on the banks of the Liddal, erected in memory of a chief of the Armstrongs, Alexander, the second Lord of Mangerton, murdered treacherously by Lord Soulis while feasting in Hermitage castle.

It was the custom to commemorate by sculptured devices the great deeds of valor of their ancestors. Among the most important of these are the Whithaugh shield, the Mangerton shield, the Milnholm cross, the monuments in Eittleton, and the

stone built into Gilnockie Bridge, and the door-stone of Gilnockie castle.

As to their religion, the learning which existed in the Middle Ages (476-1500 A. D.) glimmered a dim and dying flame in the lonely chapel upon the Kirkhill side; and even in the sixteenth century, when its beam became more widely diffused, they were far from penetrating the recesses of the Border Mountains. In the dales of Esk, Ewer and Liddal, there were no churchmen for the ordinary celebration of the rites of the church. A monk from Melrose visited the secluded region once a year to solemnize marriages and baptisms. It appears that the Armstrongs of the Border were of the Roman Catholic faith until about 1600. It is said that non-conforming Presbyterian preachers were the first who brought this wavering generation to a sense of the benefits of religion. (Border Antiquities)"

"Their morality was of a singular kind. Plundering, by which they subsisted, they accounted lawful and honorable. Ever liable to lose their whole substance by an incursion of the English on a sudden breach of truce, they cared little to waste time in cultivating crops to be reaped by foes. Their cattle were, therefore, their chief property, and these were nightly exposed to the Southern Borderers, as rapacious and active as themselves. They had the belief that all property is common by the law of nature and is, therefore, liable to be appropriated by them in their necessity, but that murder and other injuries are prohibited by Divine Law, except in the case of revenge for murder of one of their own family. Besides, they thought the art of plundering so very lawful that they never said over their prayers more fervently, or had more recurrence to the beads of their rosaries, than when they had an expedition, as they frequently did, of forty or fifty miles for the sake of booty."

"In 1525 we first read of Jonnie Armstrong, founder of the branch known as Gilnockie. He was a brother of Thomas, the seventh Lord of Mangerton. He must have moved from Liddesdale early in the century, where close to the Esk River at a place called the Hollows he erected the castle of Gilnockie Hall, still standing in a fair state of preservation." (Chronicles of the Armstrongs.)

In about 1530 John Armstrong of Gilnockie and all his retinue of fifty men were treacherously hanged on growing trees on the little sandy plateau near the old chapel of Caerlanrig, now used as a schoolhouse, about ten miles from Hawick. A tablet was erected on the spot in 1897. (This is in the County of Roxburgh, Scotland.)

In 1603, when James VI of Scotland became James I of England, it became evident to the Armstrongs, after having clung to their home for centuries with unyielding tenacity, even against Royal armies and famine, never despairing nor failing to avenge, often in the wrong, standing by each other, respecting their aged with great devotion, revering the dead with undying memorials, that they were passing away, but not without a struggle. The remnant of the clan, led by Archibald, the Tenth and last Lord of Mangerton, at the head of two hundred or more horsemen, entered England with the objective of producing a war between the countries to prevent the union of the Crowns.

James VI was then at Berwick Scotland, on his journey to the new capital and sent a large force under Sir William Selby to bring the depredators to order.

This raid, the last of any note occurring in the history of the Border, was avenged when most of the strongholds upon the Liddal were razed to the foundation. Archibald the younger was taken to Carlisle and was put to the horn on July 23, 1610. It is said that he fled into England.

When James VI became King of England, it was of the first importance that the Armstrongs, Grahams, Littles, Elliots and many other families be quelled, lest their incursions upon his Kingdom should make him unpopular with the English. He therefore appointed three men to survey the "Debatable Lands" with a view of placing them under large and responsible landholders. The name of the "Border" was prohibited, and the name "Middle Shires" was substituted. A commission sat twenty years to inquire into titles of landowners. It was found that during the many wars of the district, a great many houses had been burned and title-deeds had been destroyed. This afforded a splendid opportunity for those in favor at Court to increase their possessions when they really had no claim.

The Armstrongs, Johnstons, and a few others were despoiled. Their slowness in throwing off Romanism and accepting Protestantism also contributed to their loss.

On the Border we find many other families whose names are familiar to us, as follows: Carlisles, Nixons, Maxwells, Kirkpatricks, Scotts, Bells, Glendennings, Hendersons and Thompsons. The history of these families no doubt is much the same as the history of the Armstrongs. We know that some of them joined with the Armstrong clan in their raids.

THE ARMSTRONGS IN IRELAND

When James I, a Scotch Presbyterian, became King of England in 1603, the Irish Earls of Tyrone and Tyroconnell conspired against his government, fled from Ireland, were outlawed, and their estates, consisting of about 500,000 acres, were confiscated by the Crown. King James divided this land into small tracts and leased it to persons from his own country because they were Protestants, on the sole condition that they should cross over into Ireland within four years and locate upon it.

A second insurrection soon gave occasion for another forfeiture, and nearly six counties in the Province of Ulster were confiscated. The purpose was to root out all the Irish who were Catholic and were hostile to the government and constantly plotting against it. The Protestants at once gained the ascendancy and have maintained it to this day.

The Scotch were Saxon in blood, and Protestant in religion. The Irish were Celtic in blood, and Catholic in religion. These were elements that would not readily coalesce; hence the races are as distinct in Ireland today as they were when the Scotch first crossed over there 300 years ago.

Prior to this time (1603), Archie Armstrong of Stubholm, a youth (1586-1672), was caught and taken before James VI, who was holding a justice aire at Jedburg. Condemned to die, Archie pleaded his youth and pardonable lack of education. Said he, "I have but recently heard of the Bible, and am desirous, for my soul's sake, of reading through the precious volume. Would your Majesty's grace be pleased to respite me until I have done this?" King James could not withstand such a petition and easily acceded, whereupon Archie rejoined with a smile, "Then de'il tak me an I ever read a word o't as long as my een are open." Something in the lad's character pleased the King, so he took him along with him, and Archie remained at Court as King's Jester for thirty-two years; he died in 1672, and, strange to say, was buried on April 1st, "All Fools Day."

Extracts from Terwinnie Records (1650)

Thomas Armstrong, the fifth Lord of Mangerton, in the fifteenth century represented the trunk of the family. He had four sons, of whom the oldest was Alexander, the sixth Lord of Mangerton, who had seven sons, of whom the oldest was Thomas, the seventh Lord of Mangerton. John of Gilnockie was the second of these seven sons, and it is from him that all the Armstrongs residing in Ireland during the seventeenth century descended as follows:

John of Gilnockie.
Christopher of Langholm.
William of Gilnockie, called Christie's Will,
who died in battle in the army of Charles I.

In about 1650 Edward from the Border, son of Christie's Will, went to Brookboro, Fermanaugh, to a place near Ederney in the same county and took possession of an estate then called Terre Whinny, which had been granted either to him or his father for military service. He did not remain there long. Afterward, his grandson Edward, son of James of Brookboro, settled there. He married a dark-eyed lass of great beauty, with a wealth of rich black hair. She was called a princess at that time, being the daughter of the great house of Maguire, which down to the close of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, 1603, bore rule in Fermanaugh.

Until this time, the Armstrongs carried the blue eyes and fair hair of the Norse race, and they were called such names as Fair Jonnie or Fair Billie, but after this, we have Black Armstrongs and White Armstrongs.

Terwinney, which means "The Land of the Cow," is a beautiful valley surrounded by ten hills, not far from Lough Erne.

A letter received from Mrs. L. S. Vowell of Washington, Pa., in 1934 contains some valuable and confirming information. Mrs. Vowell is a direct descendant of General John Armstrong. I quote as follows:

"When abroad in 1921, I visited many of the places mentioned in both Scotland and Ireland. In Scotland I took a train to New Castleton and saw what is left of old Mangerton Castle. I also have a fine picture of the castle before it was torn down to allow a railroad to be built.

"Then we went to Milnholm Cross and the old cemetery where so many Armstrongs are buried. From there to Ettleton and Liddesdale; then to the Castle of Gilnockie on the bank of the Esk. This was in good condition, now owned by the Duke Buccleugh.

"When in Ireland I visited and spent several days in Enniskillen, and from there took a car out about nine miles to Brookboro and Agavea, an old church built by the Armstrongs and where many of them are buried. The last of the name, Margaret Armstrong, died and was buried in the same grave yard with her ancestors about two weeks before my visit, but the grave had not been sealed, so I saw the casket. One nephew, by the name of Buchanan, was still living in Brookboro."

THE ARMSTRONGS COME TO AMERICA

The local and intimate history of the early settlers of our country is shrouded in a mystery which, to us of the 20th century, seems almost impossible of solution, but, from traditions and a few meager records, we have been able to lift the curtain that obscures the past enough, at least, to reveal some of the dangers, hardships and privations which confronted our own people, who were among the very early settlers in Pennsylvania. No attempt will be made to write of the Armstrongs who were pioneers in the New England or South Atlantic States, who were also our people; this record, rather, will be confined to the Armstrongs who settled in Pennsylvania.

Charles II, King of England, had granted a large tract of land in America to Admiral Sir Wm. Penn for services rendered and in consideration of sundry debts due him, but he died before he could take possession. William, his son, was a student at Oxford at this time, and under the preaching of the distinguished Thomas Loe, a Quaker, imbibed religious sentiments of the Friends, and seemed for some time to care little about the promised grant which the King had made to his father. He therefore did not urgently press his claim upon the Crown 'till at last, finding all whose sentiments he had imbibed were everywhere in England oppressed by spiritual courts, he resolved to put himself at the head of as many as would go with him and remove to this country.

The enlightened founder of Pennsylvania was governed in his intercourse with the Indians, whom he found in possession of the territory, "by immutable principles of justice which everywhere, and for all purposes, must be regarded as fundamental, if human exertions are to be crowned with noble and permanent results." This spirit may have been engendered by the several acts of the English government under Charles I and Charles II, such as the Test Act, the Oxford Act, the Corporation Act and the Covenant, which were severe on non-conformists, resulting in imprisonment and death of six or eight thousand persons. (One writer places the number at sixty thousand.)

The first settlement in Pennsylvania was made at Philadelphia in about 1682, after which date the influx of immigrants was constantly on the increase and pushed farther into the interior of the province toward the valley of the Susquehanna. Among these settlers we find our own family, who, because they, too, were non-conformists, were anxious to establish homes where they could enjoy political and religious freedom.

This whole valley was occupied by two tribes of Indians, the Delawares and the Iroquois, or six nations, from whom Penn refused to take possession without first having a treaty and then paying the price agreed upon, for he took the position that the Indian had a prior right which should be recognized. These treaties were always kept, and the Indian and the white man lived in peace and as good neighbors for many years, or 'till the time the French stirred up the Indians to attack the English in their effort to wrest the country from them. Then followed a period of bloody massacres when many whites were slaughtered in the most cruel manner. Other families and sometimes whole communities, leaving behind all their possessions, were forced to flee across the line into Maryland, some of whom returned after the difficulties had been settled, while others remained.

Among those to meet death at the hands of the Indians was John Armstrong, a trader, and two of his companions, James Smith and Woodward Arnold, early in April, 1744.

In February, 1756, Indians from Shamokin came into the valley and took the wife of James Armstrong and two children, together with several other prisoners.

In 1780 the Indians came suddenly upon Andrew Armstrong and took him prisoner with his oldest child and Nancy Bundy. His wife, who was encephalic, concealed herself under the bed and escaped.

The same year a Mrs. Durham, fleeing from an Indian, fell wounded by a shot from his gun. The Indian scalped her, but in his haste neglected to strike her down. She survived the scalping, was picked up by the men from the fort, and lived near Warrior's Run until about 1840.

From this time 'till after the Revolutionary War, the settlers were in constant dread of attacks from marauding Indians who frequently burned their homes, destroyed their crops, drove off their stock or carried away their wives and children. The following incident, which occurred in 1763, will give some idea of the dangers surrounding these early settlers. It is quoted at length from authentic sources.

"Mr. Porter, residing in Sinking Valley now Huntingdon County), having gone to mill, left Mrs. Porter alone. While in this situation, she espied an Indian coming toward the house. Mr. Porter, being a militia captain, had a sword and rifle in the house. His wife, with great intrepidity, took the sword, and having set the door about half open, waited behind it until the Indian entered, when she split his head with the sword. Another entered and met the same fate; the third,

seeing the fate of his companions, did not attempt to enter. She then took the gun and went upstairs with the expectation of having an opportunity of shooting him from thence, as there were port holes for the purpose; but he came in and followed her upstairs, where she shot him dead. Then she came down and fled with all possible haste, and met her husband coming. They immediately rode to a place of security. The next morning a party of men went to the place of action, and found that there had been other Indians there, who had burned the house and barn."

We might recount other acts fully as harrowing to prove the bravery of these early settlers, and also to depict the dangers surrounding them. That they possessed all the qualities necessary for the founding of a new republic cannot be gainsaid. As for the privations they suffered we can best describe them by recounting the blessings we of the present generation enjoy, such as comfortable houses with glass windows, cook stoves with plenty of cooking utensils, electric lights, the telegraph and telephone, radio, books and papers, various forms of rapid transportation and many others, all of which were not enjoyed by our forebears.

These pioneers were Protestants and came to Pennsylvania from many parts of Europe. Each nationality exerted its peculiar influence on our early history. If you were to ask what, in the past, were the mighty forces employed in laying the foundation of our republic, vitalizing its genius, and surmounting its imposing structure with the glory of American ideas, we would reply by quoting the words of a brilliant summary by Blair, the historian, who says there were four. "1st, the Puritan, which was pure; 2nd, the Huguenot and Waldensee, which was sturdy; 3rd, the Quaker, which was devout, passive; 4th, the Scotch-Irish, which was belligerent and God-fearing. While the German lived in the fertile valleys, growing rich, the Scotch-Irish dwelt upon the poorest hills, producing brains. While the Quaker loved freedom, he hated strife. These four are the bedrock of American society. They all came with their Bibles and here is the genius of our strength. One believes in prudence and preaching; another in perseverance and plowing; another in peace and persuasion; the Scotch-Irish in pluck and power. They all believed in prayer and Providence."

We may well be proud of the part our ancestors played in the founding of our state and nation. To quote the words of a favorite columnist of a Pittsburgh paper:

"Pride in ancestry is one of the most stimulating incentives I know to decent living. What better example than

the proud knowledge that we have sprung from the makers of America, that somewhere sprinkled in the soil in the hills of our native state or in the plains of the great west country is the dust that was animated by a common ancestor."

THOMAS ARMSTRONG IN PATH VALLEY, PENNA.

We now come to our immediate ancestor, Thomas Armstrong, who, in 1764, with his wife Iasbella (surname not known) and at least two sons, William and David, came from Donegal County, Ireland and settled in Path Valley, Cumberland, now Franklin County, Pennsylvania. There he became the owner of considerable land situated on the west branch of Conococheauge Creek about eight miles above Fort Loudon on Pennsylvania Highway No. 75. (See foot note.)

Thomas Armstrong evidently was a descendant of Thomas Armstrong, the fifth Lord of Mangerton, who was the ancestor of the Armstrongs of the north of Ireland. He had lived in Donegal County, which joins Fermanaugh County, from whence John and Edward Armstrong emigrated in 1736 and settled in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, very near to Path Valley. We believe this, together with the similarity of family names running through the records, to be very conclusive circumstantial evidence. John Armstrong here mentioned was a Major General in the Revolutionary War.

Thomas Armstrong died intestate about 1797, and William, his oldest son, and Joseph Armstrong settled the estate. (See Records in Chambersburg, Franklin County, Pa.)

The writer visited this farm in August, 1933, and again in October, 1938, and also consulted records in the Chambersburg Court House which disclose that the land had been purchased from Noah Abraham and is now in the name of James J. Hill.