

ALMY CONNECTION TO LITTLE WOMEN

Kenneth J. Almy (1408-6612-12) sent me a photocopy of a page from a book about Louisa May Alcott, author of *Little Women*. The book states that the publisher apparently had doubts about publishing the book so he decided to take into consultation the only real experts on the story, young ladies themselves. The first to see the manuscript was his niece, Lily Almy, who lived at Longwood. She galloped through it and rendered a verdict so breathless with enthusiasm that her uncle paused and thought again. He showed it to a number of other young girls and all loved it. Needless to say, *Little Women* was published.

I do not know the identity of Lily Almy. I would appreciate that information if anyone knows it. I thought it interesting that the first person to read the manuscript of *Little Women* was an Almy.

NUMBER 1407-504 DARWIN ALMY

Darwin Almy was born in Tiverton, Rhode Island, 28 February 1848, the son of Isaac Cook and Alice (Bateman) Almy. Darwin attended the local schools and at the age of 16 he gave up school and began work on the home farm, remaining there until his father died.

Darwin then became involved in the menhaden (fish) oil business, and was the master for 4 years of a steamer engaged in that line of work. At the age of 26 he left this business and began the manufacturing of jewelry in Providence in partnership with Edwin A. Baker. However, after two years he returned to the fishing business and remained at it until age 31 when he entered the employ of the Herreshoff Manufacturing Company, of Bristol, becoming foreman of the boiler or engineering department, which he ran for eleven years.

In the Spring of 1890, Darwin patented the Almy Water Tube Boiler, which he had started manufacturing on 1 September 1889. He formed the corporation known as the Almy Water Tube Boiler Company. The company was very successful and employed about 35 men.

On 25 May 1875, Darwin married Clara Abby Cook, the daughter of William L. and Abby Cook. Their children were: (1) Walter Smith Almy, born 4 August 1876, who was Treasurer of the Boiler Company, (2) Charles Frederick Herbert Almy, born 10 January 1879, who was Secretary of the Boiler Company, and (3) Clara M. Almy, born 7 March 1886. Clara Abby Cook Almy died 4 April 1887 at the age of 32. Darwin married second, Miss Jeannette Spence, daughter of David D. Spence. She died 5 February 1915. Darwin married third, on 7 December 1915, Ella J. Wilbur, age 58, daughter of Benjamin B. Wilbur. Darwin died on 9 March 1916.

Darwin, though a Republican, was never active in politics. He belonged to the Providence Association of Mechanical Engineers; Rhode Island Automobile Club; Rhode Island Yacht Club; Bristol Yacht Club; New York Yacht Club; American Society of Mechanical Engineers; Engineers Club of New York; American Society of Naval Engineers; and the Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers.

Darwin Almy's line is Isaac Cook⁶, Cook⁵, John⁴, Job³, Job², William¹.

LUCRETIA ALMY (1239-2127-62) LOCATED

In the October 1982 Newsletter (No. 32), page 4, in the article on Azalea Almy's death, I stated that Azalea had a half sister, Lucretia Almy Lyman, and that attempts to locate her had been unsuccessful. Well, it seems that Kenneth Fuller (1239-2127-361) continued searching for her, and using investigative techniques, finally located her.

Kenneth Fuller furnished Lucretia with my name and address and she wrote to me. Subsequently, Lucretia and I have exchanged information on her ancestry. In one of her letters she wrote the following about her father Charles who was a prison guard at San Quentin for many years.

"My father, Charles, was quite a hunter and often brought home game. When he was seventeen, he ran away to sea. While serving on a whaler out of San Francisco, he became separated from his ship, in a heavy fog. He drifted for seventeen days on the China Sea. He and his companions were picked up by another ship and landed in China. My father signed on another sailing ship for the return voyage home.

"My father stood over six feet tall and weighed over two hundred pounds. In spite of his size, he was a gentle man. He was always fair in everything he did. Even the convicts, at San Quentin, liked and respected him. Once my father had a crew of convicts on a two story building to repair the roof. The day was hot and the tar for the roof reeked. My father was overcome by the heat and the fumes. The roof was quite steep and my father started to slide off the roof. (Convicts were forbidden to touch a guard.) But in spite of rules, one convict grabbed my father, as he slid by. Immediately, a guard in a nearby tower, leveled his rifle on the convict and called for him to release my father. The convict raised one arm and called for help. The guard sent several guards to investigate. It was discovered that my father had fainted and he was taken to the prison infirmary. If the convict had let my father go, as ordered, my father would have fallen two stories and landed on cement. He, no doubt, would have been killed. For his heroic act, the warden permitted my father to bring a cigar to the warden, which he let the convict smoke in his office. Small payment for such a deed, but it was more than normally permitted."

JOHN ALMY -- SOO CANAL ENGINEER

Mrs. Emma B. Almy (1232-1272-43W) sent me an article from the Grand Rapids Press, dated August 29, 1982, about "The Mighty Soo Canal." The article refers to a John Almy. Following are excerpts from that article.

"The late 1830s brought copper fever to the Lake Superior district, statehood to Michigan, and an abortive attempt to bypass the St. Mary's rapids. In the summer of 1837, an engineer named John Almy arrived at the Sault to look the situation over. Two years earlier he'd designed the canal and lock around the falls of the Grand River in lower Michigan, a project about a mile in length with a drop of three feet."

"For the Sault project, Almy proposed three locks, each 100 feet long and 32 feet wide, with a basin for ships to pass between each pair of locks. Almy estimated the cost at \$112,544. The state Legislature appropriated \$25,000 to begin the canal, named Almy chief engineer and contracted with a Buffalo firm to start construction in the spring of 1839."

"The project never got off the ground. John Almy had designed the canal to run through the millrace for an army sawmill at Fort Brady, which sat beside the river. When Almy and his construction workers arrived at the site, they were run off by federal troops."

"Michigan then turned to the federal government for help, but ran into stiff opposition from Congress. Two of America's foremost statesmen were strongly against the project. Daniel Webster declared he would 'never vote one penny to bring the bleak, barren, rocky, and uninhabitable shores of California one step nearer Boston,' while Kentucky's Henry Clay called the project 'a work beyond the remotest settlement in the United States, if not the moon.'"

"Finally in 1852, after years of on-and-off debate, Congress passed an act that gave Michigan a 400-foot right of way through Fort Brady and granted the state 750,000 acres of federal land to pay for the construction of a canal."

I don't know what happened to John Almy, but he apparently was not around in 1852 when the canal got the go-ahead. Further, I do not know the identity of this John Almy. If any of you reading this know his identity or further information about him, I would appreciate the information.

NUMBER 1408-6524-1 LEMUEL CANFIELD ALMY

Rev. L. Wesley Almy (1408-6524-11) has written an 11 page family history which covers the information he has gathered on his Almy grandparents and parents. Following are excerpts from what Wes wrote concerning his father, Lemuel Canfield Almy.

"I was told he worked as a mechanic in Aurora, Illinois, for the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad shop in the late 1880s. His wages were quoted as \$9.00 a week, and the weekday hours then were around 10 to 12 hours. There lived in Aurora at that time one James Thomson, a barber, and his family. He was a Scotsman by origin who had migrated to the States from Canada. There were two sons and six daughters in the family, one of whom was Jessie (b. Sept 25, 1870) in nearby Mendota, Illinois. By 1890 she was a school teacher in the early grades. There were five unmarried sisters at home at that time. Lemuel Almy, the mechanic from La Salle County, looked with favor on Jessie. He asked the privilege of coming to the Thomson home 'a-courtin' on Wednesdays. He was told, in substance, that on Wednesday evenings the Thomson family went to church, and he would be expected to attend with them! Evidently he did, with some success, for on February 18, 1892 Lemuel and Jessie were married. It was reported to me that the several sisters bemoaned the fact that their sister 'married a greasy mechanic'. Probably a bit of jealousy?"

"Their first child, born in Aurora, was a son, myself, named Lemuel Wesley Almy. The 'Lemuel' never stuck. I was always called Wesley. When I was very young, about a year old, my parents moved to Chicago, where my father was first employed by the Northwestern Railroad, again as a mechanic. Later on he transferred to the Chicago Elevated Railway Company, at the Throop Street Shop. We lived north of Lake Street and Garfield Park, on the West Side. I remember as a young lad being taken in the winter by my father to Garfield Park to see the horse races on a mile-long straightaway on ice. The horses pulled light sleds or cutters. They wore metal cleats, and when they sped by, the ice flew in all directions. I watched through the legs of the grown-ups!"

The above is only a small part of what Wes wrote about his father. I wish I had the space for the entire history.

In my opinion, each one of us should write, like Wes has done, the history of ourselves, our parents, and grandparents. There is so much to the family history between the two dates for birth and death. Unless someone takes the time, this information is lost forever. I urge each of you to record this information for the future generations. And do it before it is too late.

GERALD R. ALMY (1232-1213-1511)

Gerald R. Almy, of Arlington, Virginia, died of cancer on Friday, 22 October 1982, at the Shenandoah Memorial Hospital in Woodstock, Virginia. Gerald had moved from Arlington earlier in the year to be near his son, who lives in Woodstock. Gerald was born 14 December 1918 in Marshall, Michigan, the son of Avery M. and Anna (Reyer) Almy. Gerald married Maria Islefsdottir in Iceland on 27 May 1944. They had four children: Barbara, Carol, Karen, and Gerald.

During World War II, Gerald served in Iceland. He remained in the Army Reserve and retired in 1978 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. After the war he worked for General Motors in Michigan and graduated from the General Motors Institute. He moved to the Washington, D.C. area in 1951 and went to work for the Central Intelligence Agency. In 1959, he joined the Federal Aviation Administration and remained there until he retired in 1974. In 1963, he earned a master's degree in business administration at George Washington University in the District of Columbia.

I met Gerald for the first time in 1971 when we both found ourselves assigned (Gerald by the Federal Aviation Administration and I by the General Accounting Office) to work with the Congressional Commission, headed by the Honorable Ancher Nelson, Representative from Minnesota, on the Organization of the Government of the District of Columbia (referred to as the Little Hoover Commission). Gerald was assigned to the task force on Housing and Community Development and I to the task force on Procurement and Supply Management. We both found it amusing (and confusing, at first) to have two Almys assigned to a relatively small Congressional Commission.

Gerald R. Almy is survived by his wife Maria and their three children: Karen Stovall, Barbara Wenger, and Gerald A. Almy. The later is a free-lance writer of many hunting and fishing articles and the author of the book for fly fishermen, *Tying and Fishing Terrestrials*. (See Newsletter No. 16 (October 1978), page 4.)

Gerald R. Almy will be greatly missed by his family and many friends.

ALMY COAT-OF-ARMS CRYSTAL GOBLETS

Gene H. Almy (1407-1C73-41) of Texas, wrote me in February about an offer he received from Sears, Roebuck & Co. for lead crystal goblets engraved with "Almy" and the family coat-of-arms. The offer consisted of a free sample goblet and subsequent goblets at \$18.95 each plus \$2.35 for postage. The overall engraved design is common to all families with a helmet and scroll work at the top and a shield at the bottom. Between is a wide ribbon for the family name to be inscribed. The shield part has the coat-of-arms "that has been researched for your family name." Gene wrote "I am somewhat skeptical that they will actually provide the coat-of-arms that we recognize as our own but since the offer is subject to our approval, I'm willing to try it. I will let you know if the goblet is suitable for all the Almys."

A month later Gene wrote and informed me that the design on the goblet that they sent was not as fancy as the ones pictured in the brochure and that inside the shield they "had a very small tower and the 2 crossed keys inside." The overall size of the design was small. Gene wrote that he was disappointed with the design, and had sent the goblet back to Sears. The Arms description was from Crozier's General Armory by W. A. Crozier.

We thank Gene for passing along his experience and observations concerning this offer.

KENNETH J. ALMY ACCEPTS JOHN GLENN PAPERS

Mrs. Culler (Frances Almy, 1232-1218-411) sent me an article from a January 1983 edition of the Cleveland Plain Dealer about Senator John Glenn, Democrat of Ohio, filing papers with the Federal Election Commission saying he is running for president of the United States.

The article, with Washington, D.C. dateline, stated that the three TV cameras there to record the event made Kenneth J. Almy, 24, a Federal Election Commission clerk, a bit nervous. But the article went on to say that Kenneth performed his job flawlessly. Kenneth J. Almy (1408-6612-124) is the son of Kenneth and Marjorie (Turner) Almy.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Since the last Newsletter, I have received contributions from the following cousins to help defray the printing and mailing costs of the Newsletter.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Almy Number</u>	<u>Residence</u>
Gordon Connelly	1222-3763-243	Maryland
Donald S. Mathison	1232-4151-382	Massachusetts
Lee (Almy) Harris	1233-3252-431	South Carolina
Hazel V. Almy	1233-4655-11W	South Carolina
Hulda (Almy) Freda	1233-4668-11	North Dakota
Ruth Almy	1233-5143-224	Florida
Kenneth G. Fuller	1239-2127-361	California
Lucretia (Almy) Lyman	1239-2127-62	California
Raymond Almy	1252-9532-741	New York
Frank Knowlton	1252-9773-32	Florida
William A. Knowlton	1252-9773-34	Virginia
Philip W. Almy	1407-1532-1	Rhode Island
Lois B. Almy	1407-1532-3	Rhode Island
Gene H. Almy	1407-1C73-41	Texas
Christopher R. Almy	1408-3398-321	New York
Katherine Cheatum	Unknown	New Jersey

Many thanks to the above for their assistance. It is greatly appreciated.

Here's wishing you all a great Spring Season.

Love and Blessings,
Your cousin (1408-3312-112)

Merwin

Merwin F. Almy
7703 Elgar Street
Springfield, VA 22151