

After exhausting most of the Kentucky records that were on film at the Genealogical Library in Salt Lake City, I wondered if any of the descendants of Fielding's brothers and sisters might have in their possession an old family bible, or other family records which might shed further illumination on the progenitors of Walker Lankford. Fielding was the only one who joined the Mormon migration west. Perhaps some of the descendants (his brothers and sisters) might still be living in Clay City, Indiana. I sent for a telephone book for the Clay City area. Enumerated were several Lankford and Coopridge names. In 1958 I sent similar letters to some of these names. Several weeks passed without a response to my letters, and then one day I received a letter from Irene Lankford of Indianapolis, Indiana. She wrote that a relative had referred my letter to her father and he had given it to her. A long and fruitful correspondence resulted. Irene is a school teacher in Indianapolis and proved to be very interested in helping me solve our mutual problems. She was a descendant of Harvey, youngest son of Walker and Mary Lankford.

Irene soon became as interested as I was in finding just what information was available in the family regarding the antecedents of Walker Lankford and his wife, Mary. However, far from clarifying the picture, a discrepancy in regards to the maiden name of Walker's wife soon appeared. The marriage of Walker to MARY WARREN, September 1800, had been assumed to be that of our progenitor. Irene's family thought the name of Walker's wife was MARY WILLIAMS. She sent as evidence for their belief the following biography of James F. Lankford, which appeared on pages 98 to 100 in The History of Clay County, Indiana, Volume II, by William Travis.

JAMES F. (FRANKLIN) LANKFORD

"Among the valued and highly esteemed residents of Harrison Township there is no one better known in its history than the gentleman whose name appears at the head of this sketch. He has the distinction of being a veteran of the Civil War, and ex-sheriff of Clay County; and an important factor in advancing the material interests of this part of the state as a general merchant at Middlebury, carrying on an extensive business. A native of this township, he was born 8 July 1845, a son of Harvey Lankford. On the paternal side he comes of sturdy Scotch ancestry, his great-grandfather having emigrated with his wife from Scotland to this country, settling in North Carolina, where Walker Lankford, the next in line of descent, was born.

"Left an orphan at an early age, Walker Langford was bound out to a wood worker, from whom he learned the trade of a carpenter and cabinet maker. In 1818, during the trouble with the Seminole Indians in Florida, he enlisted as a soldier, and served under that gallant hero, General Andrew Jackson. While in the army he formed the acquaintance of a charming Southern girl, POLLY WILLIAMS, the daughter of an ALABAMA planter and slave owner. This daughter, whom he subsequently married, inherited from her father eleven slaves. Mr. and Mrs. Walker Lankford afterwards removed to Kentucky, taking with them six of these slaves, having freed five of them. In 1832 they made another removal, coming to Clay County and locating in Harrison

The following biography of Henry Coopridner is found in History of Clay County, Indiana, pp 520-1, by William Travis:

"Henry Coopridner was born in the territory of Indiana, in Harrison County, December 15, 1815, and was reared amid pioneer scenes. Wild animals of all kinds were then very plentiful, including bears, deer, wolves and foxes, and his work as a boy was to watch the live-stock and guard the grain, as these animals were destructive to both, but were easily scared away when he rang the bell which he carried with him. On arriving at manhood, he purchased a tract of land in Harrison Township, a part of which is now included in Clay City, and in the midst of the timber he put up a house hastily constructed of poles, covering them with boards rived by hand, and building a stick and earth chimney. Before the huge fireplace his wife did all of her cooking, making corn-meal bread, using a good deal of hominy on the table, while venison and wild turkey furnished the meat for the family. She used, also, to card, spin, and weave all the material from which she fashioned the garments for her entire family, and all of the bed clothing and towels used in the household. After a few years the humble log cabin was replaced by a house made of hewed logs, and that in turn gave place to a substantial frame house, built in colonial style, which even at this day, is one of the best farm houses in Clay County. On the farm which he redeemed from the wilderness, he spent the remaining years of his life, passing away February 16, 1893."

Several of Henry and Melinda's sons served in the Civil War.

One wonders to what extent the brothers and sisters of Fielding Lankford were exposed to the same gospel message that converted Fielding Lankford to the Mormon Church. Perhaps he was the only one who heard the message which the missionaries brought to the community in which Fielding lived. It seems that some of these families stayed in Indiana, and some of the children of Fielding's brothers and sisters emigrated to Missouri, and to Iowa and to Kansas. By now they are probably distributed throughout the United States. We would certainly invite correspondence from anyone descended from these nine brothers and sisters of Fielding. It may still be very possible that some of the descendants of Mary Warren and Walker Lankford have in their possession records which might help us unravel the mysteries of the progenitors of these two worthy pioneer parents.

This brings us to the end of the report of our "SEARCH", but the "Search" itself goes on. We invite you to join in this "Search" for your progenitors. You might be the one to add the next name to the pedigree chart or to remove the question marks still remaining.