

Email from Norma Leigh Rudinsky October 19, 2003

The name Langford

I was glad to read the email from Barry Wood about the erroneous history book [I can't find the title right now] which says that Walker Langford was born in North Carolina. Instead, Barry believes that Walker was probably born in Pittsylvania, Virginia. Then Barry explains the error as follows:

" I consider the reference to Walker's supposed North Carolina birth to be a confused echo of the fact that the family's farm -- at the time -- in Pittsylvania county, Virginia -- was adjacent to the North Carolina line."

Barry's explanation of how the mix up could occur seems plausible, and it is certainly true that regional histories based upon family traditions which are a century or more old, can easily have errors.

I would like to suggest another possible error about the Langford family, which seems pretty general. It appears in the history book "The History of Clay County, Indiana," volume 2, by William Travers:

"[The family] comes of sturdy Scotch ancestry, [the earliest Langford] having emigrated with his wife from Scotland to this country, settling in North Caroline, where Walker Langford, the next in line of descent, was born. " (cited by Ida-Rose Langford Hall, p.65).

The possible error I'm writing about concerns the statement that the Langfords are of Scottish origin. I am not aware of any evidence to support Scottish ancestry.

The name "Langford" itself is given in numerous books as an English name, and the books on Scottish names do not include "Langford." "The Surnames of Scotland" by G. F. Black in 1946 does not have the names Langford or Lankford, and refers only to an archdeacon named John de Lancford, who was "probably an Englishman from one or other of the eight places named Langford in England" (p.414). P. H. Reaney's "A Dictionary of British Surnames" (London, 1958) refers to the name in Norfolk, Derby, Gloscestershire, Hereford, Mlddlesex, Salop, and Wiltshire.

The known Langfords I have come across, for example, were all in England, not Scotland. Burke's "General Armory" lists the coats of arms for Langfords in the English counties of Devon, Nottingham, county Bedford, Wiltshire and Berkshire, Cornwall, Somerset, Oxford, Derby, Nottingham, Salop, Leicester, London, and Northumberland. Two families were from Antrim and Londonderry in Northern Ireland, but they were late and also came from England.

It seems likely that William Travers (author of the history of Clay county above) may have been misled by the fact that the Langfords married into Scottish families, such as Kinkaid's and Wilsons. Also, many so-called "Scotch-Irish" immigrants came to

Kentucky after the Battle of the Boyne, so it may have seemed likely that the Langfords belonged among them. However, among the Scotch-Irish also arrived in Virginia the "Anglo-Irish," of which our ancestors may have been a part.

As we learn more about the earliest Langfords in pre-Revolutionary America, it may become possible to make the jump across the ocean. So we should not rule out the possibility that they may have been English, not Scottish.

Norma Leigh Rudinsky -- descendant of Isaac Fielding Langford