

"An Early History of Winfield"

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By Jay A. Graybeal

Compiling the histories of our smaller communities in Carroll can be challenging. The writer was particularly happy to rediscover a newspaper article entitled, "How Winfield was Named" written by Ira N. Barnes of Freedom which gives some early history of the community. His narrative was published in the January 11, 1924 issue of the Westminster Democratic Advocate:

"Aquilla Pickett, familiarly known as 'Squire Pickett,' built a log dwelling at the intersection of the Liberty and Sam's Creek roads.

In a few years other buildings, including a store and blacksmith shop clustered around. The hamlet was then named Winfield in honor of the illustrious General Winfield Scott, who was at that time at the height of his brilliant military career in our war with Mexico. Among the other original settlers of Winfield may be mentioned Captain William Pickett, who during the Civil War, served in the capacity of detective for the purpose of returning deserting Northern soldiers back to the service. Upon one occasion the Captain, in company with a deserter, was driving through a dense clump of pines a short distance north of Winfield. The soldier who was somewhat under the influence of whiskey, suddenly gave a hurrah for 'Honest Abe', leaped from the vehicle into the fine thicket and was never more seen by his captor.

Prominent among present residents of Winfield may be included Aubrey J. Stem. Charles R. Pickett, C. M. Waltz, Robert Franklin, Dr. E. D. Cronk, Marquis D. Lafayette, Pickett and Jimmie Franklin, the village blacksmith.

Beneath high heaven's canopy the village smith stands.

The smith, a mighty man is he, with large and sinewy hands.

And the muscles of his brawny arms are strong as iron hands.

Children coming from the village school peep in the might door.

They love to watch the sparks that fly like chaff from

a threshing floor.

Winfield contains two large well stocked stores, a blacksmith shop, a nice garage, a commodious public hall, a doctor's office and an undertaker's establishment.

You can both live and die in Winfield if you have the price.

For about forty years subsequent to the close of the Sectional War, at least, nine-tenths of the voters of the village were strenuously Republicans. It was dangerous for a Democrat to express his political opinion at the corner grocery. At the present time political sentiment is nearly equally divided between the two parties. This fact conclusively demonstrates that Winfield has advanced politically as well as socially and financially.

A few hundred yards south of Winfield, near the Woodbine road, is located Ebenezer Church, which has one of the largest and oldest cemeteries in the district of Franklin. This is the Third Ebenezer that has been erected in this locality. The first Ebenezer was situated about one-half a mile west of the preset site. It was a primitive log building constructed in the very early part of the nineteenth century by the

pioneers of what is now Franklin district. Ebenezer number two stood a few yards south of the present church. It was an ordinary weatherboarded building, erected a few years prior to the Civil War, by Rezin Barnes and son, two carpenters of the neighborhood. They are both interred in the adjoining cemetery. The present Ebenezer, a modern up-to-date edifice is comparatively speaking a new church. The entrance is amply sheltered by an imposing portico supported upon pleasing columns of Corinthian architectural design.

'Here I'll raise mine Ebenezer, hither by thy help I come.
And I hope by Thy good pleasure, safely to arrive at home.'

In Ebenezer cemetery propose the mortal remains of Noah and Cecil Pickett, who scarified their young lives in the Sectional War for the preservation of the Union. Cecilus Pickett was killed during the first battle in which he took an active part.

Pickett Post G. A. R. of Winfield was so called in commemoration of those two brave boys.

Davis N. McQuary, John R. Fossett, Samuel Kennell and William A. Gibson, now nearly a centenarian are the only members of Pickett Post upon the terrestrial side of the 'Deep Dark Valley.'

Down in the Valley they're going.
Down beneath the Cypress shade;
Sad though we be, fondly will we
Cherish the name of the dead."

A sequel to the above story might be entitled, "How Winfield was Misnamed." In 1963, the State Roads Commission placed a new sign and angered a local resident who wrote a letter to the editor:

"A Misnomer

I wish to protest a vile injustice done to our fair village. For as long as our oldest inhabitant can remember this ancient village was named Winfield. Now the State Roads Commission on their new sign has renamed it "Windfield," a misnomer if there ever was one. We only have gentle breezes here which on rare occasions move a 3-inch snow into 8-foot drifts.

If they don't get that 'D' out of our name we will call on every L.B.J. in Washington or even the United Nations for justice. We always had a vague suspicion that the State Roads Commission didn't know what they were doing, but charitably and erroneously gave them credit for knowing where they were.

Oliver M. Gardner."

Photo caption: The surviving members of the Pickett Post, Grand Army of the Republic in Winfield posed in the late nineteenth century. The post was named for two Civil War fatal casualties and the community was named for veteran, Gen. Winfield Scott of Mexican War fame. Historical Society of Carroll County collection.