

Typing needs improvement

July 11, 197

Dear Anna:

Your last letter is over two months old but as I told Clementine in a letter to her, I just can not help the delays. My dear ~~wife~~ wife of 62 years has had some very bad days and while I have some help in the daytime during the week. It seems to me the night shift is the most demanding. She is beginning to sleep better and I am thankful for this. There is no cure for Parkinsons and it just gets worse from day to day. Our son Joe lives about two blocks from us and he is a great help every evening when he gets home.

I believe I told you my nephew Jim Pyatt had been helping to decipher some of the material you have sent and with what little we know we are putting together more than we have in years. Our daughter in Washington is starting to assist and with all the information on file there, she should be of help. We appreciate your keeping us advised on many facets of the Purdons. I believe my grandmother Carpenter could be related to the Mayor of Tracy. There seems to be a number of Fultz or Fults family members still around.

The Railroad did a good article which is enclosed on my wonderful Grandad. But I was surprised that they never mentioned Martha or members of the family. I want to trace information on Joel when we wind up with the Purdoms

A copy of the material Jim has worked up is also enclosed. He told me that you assured him he would 'get letters on my great grandfather and this pleased HIM VERY MUCH. He has a good sense of humor and will handle his replies correctly.

It is getting late and I better get to bed. Have a few tomato plants and I was outside til dark watering them. You know where we live we get less than 6 inches of rain per year. We are in what they call high desert and a few miles from the mountains. Our elevation is over 4,000 ft. but the mountains rise to 10,000.

Thank you again for your interest. It appears we are distant relatives.

Sincerely and Best wishes,
Jack Carpenter

Uncle Jack:

May 27, 1997

After studying the latest information from Mrs. GoForth, and putting that together with information we already had, I am willing to formulate this sequence in the family of our grandmother, Martha (Mattie) Purdon Carpenter.

Grandma Carpenter's mother was Lydia Fults Purdon. Her maternal grandfather was Daniel Fults. Your great-grandmother, Lydia Purdon, was ^{born} in 1825 (Jan. 27) and died April 16, 1877. She is buried in the Altamont cemetery. Your father, William Henry Carpenter, was born Aug. 30, 1877, just four months after his grandmother's death. So, he never knew his grandmother Purdon. Nor did any of the other Carpenter children, since your dad was the first-born.

Grandma Carpenter's father was Wilson Purdon. His first name is shown as "Wilson" on the 1860 census report. It is shown as "William" on the 1850 census report. We know from the reported age that they were one and the same. The excerpt from the Family History Book uses the name "Wilson" Purdon. I am betting that his name

was Wilson William Purdom or William Wilson Purdom.

He was born in North Carolina in 1818. His father (your great-great grandfather) was Elisha Purdom who immigrated from England around 1800. He was born in 1774 and died in 1828. He had married a Nancy Hopkins (1775-1836). Elisha and Nancy Hopkins Purdom had two sons, Wilson Purdom (our ancestor) and John Wiley Purdom.

John Wiley Purdom was the father of William Howard Purdom who is written up in the Family History Book. The John Purdom who rode with Quantrill's Raiders was apparently a nephew to my great-great grandfather, Wilson Purdom.

The mystery of when, how, and under what circumstances Wilson Purdom died remains unsolved.

It is most interesting to learn that Grandma Carpenter's paternal grandmother was murdered by slaves near Winchester in 1836.

The Purdon story becomes more and more interesting as I we fit the pieces together.

One other thing we have learned, and that has to do with Grandma Carpenter's ethnic background. It now comes to light that the Purdons came from England — not Germany — as my ~~now~~ ^{known} thought. Your brother Bill, used to say that his grandmother was stern and indemonstrative because she was Prussian! Now, the Fults side of the family may have been German, but the Purdons came from England!

Jim

I have no objection if you wish to send a copy of this to Mrs Goforth.



JOEL CARPENTER
Retired Engineer
Huntsville Division

Mr. Joel Carpenter is 72 years of age, having been born in Whitfield County, Georgia, November 11, 1852, and is one of the few old time railroaders surviving on the Huntsville Division.

His railroad career began with the Tennessee Coal & Iron Co., on the present Tracy City Branch, in the year of 1879. After having been an eyewitness to a fatal accident to a brakeman, who was killed while attempting to swing between the cars, he immediately applied to the conductor in charge of the train, a Mr. Colyar, for the ill-fated job, which was given him. After braking a short while, he was given a job firing, and later, running an engine, which occupation he followed with the T. C. & I. Co., until December 16th, 1886.

At this time, he took employment with the N., C. & St. L. Railway in the capacity of engineer, on the Tracy City Branch, running a work train during the reconstruction of this Branch. Mr. Carpenter was then transferred to Elora, Tenn., as combination engineer-conductor, in charge of work train, during the construction of the present Huntsville Branch, from Elora, Tenn., to Huntsville, Ala., under the supervision of Chief Engineer Hunter McDonald and Superintendent G. D. Hicks.

While Mr. Carpenter's discipline record is clear, his career has been marred by many accidents and narrow escapes, a few of which are given below, although the dates are not available: the engine "John H. Enman," No. 7, struck a broken rail on the Tracy City Branch, and turned upside down; later, while running an engine on the Columbia Branch, a small negro boy placed spikes on the rail, causing his engine to turn turtle. This accident happened near Petersburg, Tenn. His last accident was in Gin Hollow, near Brighton Station, Tenn., on the Marble Quarry spur. His engine ran away, turning over off a bluff at the quarries. In all

of these accidents, he was injured more or less seriously. His last accident was a decisive factor in his application for pension.

Mr. Carpenter's injuries cause him some suffering at the present time, and while incapacitated for railroad work, he is still able to look after his little home at Decherd, Tenn., attending to his garden, poultry, etc. He is a Christian man, attends religious services regularly, and has a most excellent standing in his community. His friends are numbered by the hundreds, all of whom speak of "Uncle Joe" in the highest of terms.

After 43 years of continuous railroading and an enviable record, he was retired on a pension effective November 1st, 1922. Thirty-six years of this service was spent with the N., C. & St. L. Railway as engineer, in both freight and passenger services.

Children of
Joel & Mattha
Wm. H. 1877-1914
my dad
Freddie 1880-1882
Clyde 1882-1938
MAMIE 1884-1885
Mattie 1884-1899
Ruby 1885-1967
James Cullen
Jan 9, 1888-
mead 20, 1931
Joel 1892-1913
-Dec

August 9
Jan 1890 - 1913
to Feb 19, 1968
one still
born child

Ruby's husband
was Dr. Turney
His father was
Pete Turney
governor &
member of the
representatives
Gus' husband
was preacher
College President
of Kentucky
wasland & later
Bishop in Ky.
Clyde was a
school teacher
as was his
wife Ida Mae
Dad was ce
railroader in
Chattanooga
father's
Cullen was very
talented but I got him with mustard gas.
He was married to Bessie Nicholson of Nursery family in Decherd,

Granddad looked
all over Decherd
for this piece so
I could have
one to bring
home. He got
this one from
Mr. Laster.

I have ridden the engine
in the Decherd P. T. area
with my granddad. He used
to take great pride in
marching all the grandchildren
to church I've took up the
entire front row.
The last time I visited
him I was between 12
& 14 yrs of age. I had a
36 Palm Beach suit given
to me by my brother &
a sailor straw hat.
He marched me all over
the business section introducing
me as his "Cake Eater" grandson.
I can still hear his laugh
and those thousand smiles of
his friends faces.

1852-1924
1852-1924