

Elnathan S. and Almira (Wakeman) Weeden

Chapter 3 of Weeden Families

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Introduction

Elnathan S. Weeden was the father of Burr Miller Weeden, who married Susanne Bowman Hayes. They are the subjects of Chapter 2. In the present chapter, we look at Elnathan's hazardous service in the Civil War, his marriage, his career as an attorney specializing in government pensions, and the final years of his life in California real estate development. After his death in Oroville, CA, we conclude with his wife's ill-fated remarriage, and her death.

Elnathan's wife's Wakeman ancestors can be traced back to 1640, when John Wakeman arrived from England and settled in what is now Connecticut. In contrast, Elnathan's Weeden ancestors could not be traced beyond his father.

Birth

Elnathan S. Weeden was born Jul 10, 1841 in Quincy, Adams Co, IL, to John W. and Maria (Satterly) Weeden. John was born in New York about 1792. Elnathan had a sister Maria born about 1832 and a brother John born about 1834, both in NY. Nothing else is known about his parents and siblings.

The Civil War

Elnathan served for four years in in the Union Army in the Civil War. His Civil War pension file provides a glimpse of his service:

1861 On Aug 8 in Aurora, IL, Elnathan enlists in Company B, of the 36th Regiment, Illinois Infantry. He was then 20 years old and a student.

1862 In November, near Triune, Tennessee, in a skirmish with Rebel Calvary, Elnathan was shot through the left hand by a revolver ball, permanently injuring the hand.

1863 Elnathan was taken prisoner at Stones River Tennessee on Jan 1, 1863. He was held prisoner for 3 months

1863 On July 31, 1863 Elnathan was transferred to Company B, 5th Veteran's Reserve Corps.

1864 On July 16, 1864 he was discharged to accept a commission as 2nd Lieutenant in Company C, 68th U.S. Colored Troops. The regiments of colored troops had white officers—the end of segregation was many years

in the future.

1865 He was promoted to 1st Lieutenant in August.

1866 On February 5, he was mustered out at Camp Parapet, GA, as 1st Lt. Company H, 68th U. S. Colored Troops.

On return to civilian life, Elnathan became a lawyer, practicing in Chicago, IL. His specialty was filing claims for government pensions. To obtain a Civil War pension, it was necessary to hire an attorney and prove that you were unable to earn a living by manual labor, and that this was caused by service in the Civil War. It did not matter if the applicant was earning a living by means other than manual labor.

Elnathan applied for and received his own Civil War pension, acting as his own attorney. The following quotation from his statements in his pension file shows the dangers that he faced during the war, and displays his skills as a claim writer:

Was taken prisoner at Stone's River Jan 1, 1863—While a prisoner for 3 mos. contracted bronchitis & scurvy—Upon exchange was transferred to Vet. Res. Corps—then promoted to 1st Lieut of 68 U.S. Col. Inf—at Alexandria, LA, June '65 contracted malarial fever—& chron [chronic] diarrhea—was unconscious for 2 weeks—On recovery found he had piles—Apr 9, 1865, while leading a charge at Blakely Ala. he was knocked insensible by concussion of shell—when he recovered he was vomiting and bleeding from wound—he was dazed dizzy—deaf and partially blind for several days—He is still subject to vertigo—insomnia—nervous depression & confusion of ideas—also severe occipital pains—Is a claim agent by occupation—was a lawyer—was so nervous had to give it up—never used liquor nor tobacco—never had any venereal disease—In Nov 1862 near Triune Tennessee in a skirmish with Rebel Cavalry was shot through the left hand by a revolver ball permanently crippling the hand—cannot stand exposure to sun's heat—Has had several attacks of temporary unconsciousness but mentally good.

There was a tendency for pension applicants to exaggerate their medical problems and blame all of them on their military service. On the other hand, the dangers of disease and malnutrition were even greater than the dangers of combat. Three-fifths of the deaths for Union troops during the Civil War were from disease and malnutrition!

The government mandated medical examinations showed that Elnathan did have health problems. Nevertheless, he apparently had a successful career as a Chicago attorney specializing in government pension claims.

Marriage

On April 3, 1867, Elnathan married **Almira Wakeman**, the daughter of Thaddeus Burr and Sarah (Bennett) Wakeman. She was born November 23, 1849 in Illinois. The wedding took place at her parents' home in Harvard, McHenry Co, Illinois.

Children

1. Rev. Burr Miller Weeden was born January 20, 1870 in Evanston, IL. He married Susan Hayes Feb 3, 1903. Burr became a noted Episcopal minister, whose career ended tragically when his Church was destroyed by the great San Francisco earthquake. He died the following year at age 37. He is the subject of Chapter 2, Burr and Susanne (Hayes) Weeden.

2. John Vincent Weeden was born Sep 27, 1884. He died in May 1943 in New Orleans LA. His World War I draft registration card contains a doctor's statement that he had impaired hearing. Circa 1918, he married **Ruth** (Maiden name unknown) who was born about 1897 in Louisiana. In the 1920 census, they were living in New Orleans, LA, and had a daughter Ruth, 8 months old. John was in the retail grocery business. Nothing more can be found until the New Orleans death index reports a John Vincent Weeden who died in May of 1943 at the age of 59.

3. Agnes Almira Weeden (an adopted daughter) was born April 11, 1895, to Elnathan and Almira Weeden's son Burr Miller Weeden and his first wife Mary Alice Bidwell. Mary died January 17, 1897. Burr was unable to care for his infant daughter alone, and she was adopted and raised by Elnathan and Almira. Agnes was living in Cook County, Illinois in late 1913 when, following her 18th birthday, she received an inheritance that had been held in trust for her by her adopted mother Almira Weeden. Agnes then vanishes from known records.

The last years

Elnathan Weeden moved to Butte County, California in 1894 and spent several years there, but returned to the Chicago area. In late 1911, Elnathan returned to Butte Co, California, living in Oroville. There, Elnathan was known for business purposes as "Colonel Weeden", although his final rank in the Union forces was actually First Lieutenant. He was an active member of the Oroville Chamber of Commerce, and was an officer of the California Development Co., one of the major real estate firms in the County. His business associates included A. H. Davis, V. B. Howe, and E. R. Erickson.

Elnathan's new career came to an abrupt end when he died in Oroville at the age of 70 on May 6, 1912.

Elnathan's widow Almira then married Elnathan's business associate Ernest R. Erickson on Oct 1, 1912 at San Rafael, CA. The marriage did not turn out well. Erickson was convicted of a felony. Almira returned to Cook Co, IL, where she obtained a divorce Mar 5, 1918. Almira was living with her son John Vincent Weeden when she died in Maurepas, Livingston Parish, LA. She was buried there at "Whitehall".

The Wakeman Ancestors

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to present a detailed account of the Wakeman ancestors. "The Wakeman Genealogy 1630-1859", by Robert P. Wakeman, published in 1900, provides this information. It was compiled from a rather thorough study of early records, plus information obtained by letter from living relatives.

The first of the Wakemans in America was **John Wakeman**. He was born about 1598-1599 in Bewdley, Worcestershire, England. On Jan 28, 1628-9, he married **Elizabeth Hopkins** at Bewdley. He came to America in the Spring of 1640, settling in the New Haven Colony (now part of the state of Connecticut). He died at Hartford, CT, in 1661. Elizabeth died in New Haven CT in 1658.

The Weeden Ancestors

We are unable to trace the Weeden Line any further back than Elnathan's parents.

Sources

Wakeman Genealogy: Robert P. Wakeman, "Wakeman Genealogy 1630-1890", the author 1900.

Elnathan's Pension Application File: Revolutionary War invalid pension application 967137, Elnathan S. Weeden, filed Dec 1, 1890, in MI.

Almira's Pension Application: File: Revolutionary War widow's pension application 856549, filed Aug 6 1912 in CA.

Elnathan Weeden: Birth date and parents' names from a notarized copy of a Family Bible record in his pension file. Military service from his pension file. Death date from his pension file, from Almira's pension file, and from his obituaries in the *Oroville*

Daily Register May 6, 1912, and May 7, 1912. There he is called "Colonel Weeden". The obituaries also describe his involvement with the California Development Co. His burial place is from a bill submitted to the estate by the Oroville Cemetery. The will and probate of Elnathan Weeden is Butte County, CA case file #2292.
Almira Weeden: Birth date from "Wakeman Genealogy 1630-1890", cited above". Same birth date in her widow's pension application. The year is consistent with her age in the 1850 and 1860 census; the month agrees with the 1900 census. She states in her pension application that she has always spelled her name Almira,

but that it appears in her birth record as Elmira (it is also spelled Elmira in the Wakeman Genealogy). Her marriage to Elnathan and her second marriage is from her widow's pension file, as is the felony conviction and her divorce from her second husband. Almira's death date and place is from her Pension file.

Census: The family of Elnathan and Almira Weeden appears in the census as follows:

1870 IL, McHenry Co, Harvard, p. 239, family of E. S. Weeden.

1880 IL, Cook Co, ED158, p 83C, family of Nathan [sic] Weeden.

1900 IL, Cook Co, Evanston, p 50B, family of Elnathan L. [sic] Weeden.

Son: John Vincent Weeden: Named as a son in the probate file of Elnathan Weeden. His birth date is from his WW I draft registration card. His death date is not known. He appears in the census with wife Ruth in 1920, LA, New Orleans, ED157, p 10B.

Agnes Weeden: Although Agnes is found living with the family of Elnathan and Almira Weeden in the 1900 and 1910 census, she is identified in Elnathan's probate file as a granddaughter. The only granddaughter of Elnathan and Almira was the Agnes Weeden, who was the child of their son Burr Miller Weeden and his first wife, who died during the infancy of their daughter. For full information on the birth of Agnes Weeden, see Chapter 2, Burr and Susanne Weeden.