



THE BLAIR FAMILY MAGAZINE

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Featuring Blair Women

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Jane Mann Blair (1811-1897)
(Text page 7)

From the President's Desk

Dear Members:

Spring is finally here and I hope all of you are planning to attend our convention in Kentucky in June. Lethene Parks is working very hard to make this a very special convention. A workshop is being planned to help us with those family photos that include individuals we have not been able to identify. We will learn how to date photos by using different techniques. Attendees are urged to bring some original family photos to use for demonstrations. With the original, bring a color transparency of it – these can be made at most copy/mailling centers. This will allow for overhead viewing without damaging the originals.

All of us know how important our family photos are. My grandfather kept a box filled with them. And, of course, he told his daughter who was in each photo. Unfortunately, she was not interested in family history and promptly forgot everything he told her. Now I have the task of going back to identify the people. When they are identified, I write the names of the people in pencil on the back. I do hope someone will appreciate it someday.

The Blair Society has collected three albums of photographs. They were collected by Doris Turner Osten (#384) and placed in acid-free albums. They include photos taken in Ireland, Scotland, Australia,

New Zealand and, of course, all over the United States. An index was prepared by Doris. Additionally, Raymond Stoudt saved each photo in digital format and prepared an index for those as well. Members wishing copies may order them from Raymond at \$10.00 each.

On September 15, 1998, Doris and Marvin H. Kelley (#359) presented the photo albums to the Atlanta History Center located at 130 West Paces Ferry Road in northwest Atlanta. They have become a permanent addition to the Blair Archives already housed there. Our descendants may order copies at \$20.00 each.

Photographs are a wonderful way to tell the stories of our families. When a face can be provided for an individual, the stories mean so much more than just words, dates, names, and places. It helps our ancestors become alive once again. Let's all take the time now to make sure these precious memories are passed down. And most importantly, include one of yourself.

See you in June.

Nancy Schaffer



Left to right: Michael Rose, Visual Arts Archivist; Doris Turner Osten, former BSGR Archives Chair; Anne A. Salter, Director Library/Archives; Marvin Kelley, former BSGR Third Vice President.

BSGR On Line

by Blair Leatherwood

Well, here we are, spring again and I hope the weather's fine where you are!

This may be old news by the time you read this, but it's big enough to bear repeating: **THE LDS RECORDS ARE GOING ON LINE!**

Yes, that's right—the estimated three billion names (at last count) in the archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints will be available on the internet later this year. By the time you read this, the beta-testing should be done. The last information I had said that the records should be available to the public by the end of the summer. If Microsoft has anything to do with it, though, it'll probably be 2002. Keep your eyes and ears open—I'm sure we'll all know about it when it happens.

It appears that a number of services which were fee-based are starting to loosen up a bit. I think this is a very good thing, since most of our genealogy work has been based on the free trading of information, except for those things which just can't be gotten any other way (birth and death certificates, for example). I have nothing against for-profit operations, but I think the whole exchange of data is much easier when it's not being taken advantage of. I'm still not about to let Broderbund make money off of my research in their World Family Tree disks—I'm happy to give it away.

This segues, however, into a little round of applause for Family Tree Maker and their website (<http://www.familytreemaker.com>). They have combined their previously fee-based genealogy forums with those of Gen Forum (<http://www.genforum.com>) to provide this feature for all for free. You can find it at <http://www.genforum.familytreemaker.com>. This feature has a ton of surnames and localities, along with genealogy discussions about computers, software and just miscellaneous stuff. It's well worth checking out.

I'll close with my usual reminders to check out our very own website, <http://www.BlairSociety.org>—our new Webmaster John A. Blair is doing a fabulous job—along with Cyndi's List, the U.S. GenWeb project and Ancestry.com (my personal favorite of the moment). You can find links to them from just about anywhere. Happy hunting!

BSGR Web Page Update. The BSGR Web Site has undergone several changes since the Winter Edition of BFM. The home page has a slightly new look - separating the Members Only area to the right of the rest of the table of contents and providing an overview of what is available to members.

The Members Only area has also been updated and contains several new topics including:

- *a listing of libraries that receive the Magazine
- *a new form to request a query of the BSGR Ancestral Database
- *several new Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) documents :
 - The Blair Family Magazine (Fall & Winter 1998)*
 - The Annual Business Report*
 - The 1900 Kentucky Soundex*

All of these documents can be viewed or printed, on the web site, or downloaded and saved in .pdf format.

The membership directory and e-mail listing are now tied directly into the membership database to simplify updating these lists and improve the accuracy of the data. These lists as well as the Oldest Ancestor file can now be viewed in web page format or text files.

In the months to come we hope to expand the Members Only area even further to provide the kind of information the members want to see. If you have any comments or suggestions on the web site, either its design and layout, or content, you can e-mail the Web-Master, John Blair at jablair@mediaone.net or drop him a line at 12 Snow Road, Goffstown, NH 03045.

Featuring Blair Women . . .

" . . . unwritten, unrewarded, and almost unrecognized. . . "

This issue is dedicated to Blair women – the known and unknown helpmates who with their men pioneered past and present frontiers to build this country. As Clara Barton wrote: "From the storm lashed decks of the Mayflower...to the present hour; woman has stood like a rock for the welfare and the glory of the history of the country, and one might well add. . . unwritten, unrewarded, and almost unrecognized."¹ These wives, mothers, and sisters of Blair men for the most part are unknown to us; they had no public history. Writing about an eighteenth century New England midwife, an historian writes: "Outside her own diary [she] has no history. Although she considered herself 'the head of a family,' 'a full partner in the management of a household,' no independent record of her work survives. It is her husband's name, not hers, that appears in censuses, tax lists, and merchant accounts for her town. She is not listed in [her town's] poor relief records though we know [through her diaries] she relieved the poor, nor in the earliest records of the Augusta First Church, though she was a member.... Without the diary, even her name would be uncertain."²

Honored, surely, by their families, many Blair women are nonetheless unknown and undocumented, mentioned only incidentally in the records of the men and events in their lives. They have, however, been alongside the men on all American frontiers.

Israel Rupp in recording events on the frontiers of early Pennsylvania wrote:³ "March 29, 1757, the Indians made a breach at Rocky Springs, where one woman was killed and eleven taken prisoners" [p. 128] ... "April 23, 1757, John Martin and William Blair was killed, and Patrick McClelland wounded in the shoulder, who afterwards died of his wound, near Maxwell fort, Conococheague" ... "June 24, 1757 Alexander

¹ Elizabeth Brown Pryor, *Clara Barton: Professional Angel* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press), 1987.

² Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale. The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf), 1992, pages 343-344.

³ Israel Rupp, *History and Topography of Dauphen, Cumberland, Franklin, Bedford, Adams, Perry, Somerset, Cambria and Indiana counties.* (Lancaster City, Pennsylvania: Gilbert Hill), 1845.

Miller and two of his daughters taken from Conococheague; John Kennedy badly wounded, and Gerhart Pendergras' daughter killed at fort Littleton" ... "July 19, some men killed and taken, reaping near Shippensburg. These were reaping in Mr. Joseph Steenson's field. Those killed were Joseph Mitchell, James Mitchell, William Mitchell, John Finlay, Robert Steenson, Andrew Enslow, John Wiley, Allen Henderson and William Gibson. Those missing or carried off, were Jane Mc Common, Mary Minor, Janet Harper, and a son of John Finlay." [p. 129]

Rupp also gave us the poignant letter of Margaret Mitchell showing the destitution of a woman not killed or taken prisoner but left to survive on the frontier, no doubt with children to feed, her only resource the hope of the bounty for the scalp of the one indian killed at the time of the raid. She pleads "...One might think common humanity might induce the gentlemen to allow some small matter, on that occasion, as I lost my husband and son, which has so sensibly affected me in every respect, that I am rendered unable of providing the common necessaries of life...."⁴

Blair women served on more recent frontiers as well, imparting unique values in private and public spheres: mothers again coping when the men fought wars, or joining the fray themselves; lending support to social and political reform, acting as educators and professionals in spheres not open to their Blair ancestresses; adding their own bricks to the fabric of the emerging country to modern times.

The few women written about in this issue stand in the stead of those thousands unnamed or unrecognized who made up the Blair women who have contributed so much to the families of Blair. We salute them all.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to this special issue.

Editor

⁴ Shippensburg, October 25, 1757. Letter to Philadelphia Commissioner Richard Peters, Esq. from Margaret Mitchell, in Rupp, page 462

Legacies of the Blair Sisters of Tennessee

by Margaret Vance Webb, BSGR Mem. #015

Legacies of the Blair men of Tennessee, handed down through the generations have included land, cattle, slaves, kitchen furniture, bee hives, farm tools, clothing, guns, stills and mills, wills probated and wills protested. However, the daughters of **John Blair**, "a tanner of early Roane County, Tennessee," left pieces of a legacy of another kind.

Quilts and Coverlets. Their legacies are the patchwork quilts and woven coverlets made by these talented, neat-handed and dexterous sisters and are beautiful works of art, delicate but durable, having been carefully cared for by descendent **Mary Browning** of Kingston, Tennessee. She lives on the farm first settled by John Blair, "the tanner," grandson of **John Blair**, "the miller," of early Washington County, Tennessee.

More than meticulous stitching and cotton-batting, the quilts are a glimpse into the lives of their creators. Quilted with nimble fingers and thimble thumbs, the quilts and coverlets woven in Civil War yesterdays are winning awards today. Their "Rose of Sharon" quilt won "*best in the show*" in the Museum of Appalachia Quilt Show, and three of their quilts on "quilt day" were selected from over one thousand entries and traveled throughout Tennessee in the "**Quilts of Tennessee**" exhibition. They were described as "*windows of the past reflecting life as it was for the Blairs.*" Their "Baskets of Scraps," created from sewing scraps lined with hand-carded cotton grown on the farm was included in the exhibition.

The three daughters, **Mary Ann, Elizabeth Jane, and Susan Caroline "Sookie" Blair** never married. In the late 1800s they had a cottage industry and paying jobs at home weaving and sewing for others as well as for themselves, and were mercers, buying and reselling fabric shipped in by boat.

The Blair family at Barnardsville, in a lush agricultural valley south of Kingston in Roane County, Tennessee, were neither poor nor rich. John Blair, the father, farmed with the help of a few slaves and was a tanner making fine leather boots and shoes, saddles, horse collars, belts, leather book covers and soft leather gloves. His leather-seated buggy is still sheltered on his farm in one of the four or five remaining original buildings. John Blair, "the tanner," was the postmaster of Barnardsville, with the post office in his front room,

and he served as county Revenue Commissioner, collecting fees for school-teachers.

Daughter Elizabeth Jane Blair (1841-1920) helped her father outside with the sheep, cattle and horses, was adept with saw and hammer, once building a new privy out back for the family. Daughter Susan Caroline "Sookie" Blair (1846-1924) was a home-body, spending her time cooking, weaving, making rugs and sewing. Daughter Mary Ann Blair (1836-1910) was also a hard worker in the home. The sisters were educated at home.

In the *John Blair Estate Collection*, filmed for the Tennessee Archives, letters, pictures of the original sewing tools, fabric, and store receipts tell us about the joys and trials of the life of the sisters. Original accounts of Blair purchases including camphor, pills, tobacco, horse linament, spices, salt, window glass, shears, thread, a looking-glass, a scythe blade and a cane mill, acquaint us with the sisters' domestic, medical and farm life.

A cherished keep-sake is a letter Mary Ann received from a suitor in Alabama who offered his hand and heart: "*Madam, I would like to know if you could admire such an erring creature as myself and if you could be persuaded to leave the State of Tennessee...now if you think you can fill the bill...it would be agreeable to my will...Mark H. Talaferro.*"

Other letters and documents of the collection can be viewed on microfilm at the Tennessee State Library, Nashville, Tennessee.

The generation of the Blair sisters has passed; their artistic talent, sewing skills, hard work, and remembrances of their living and caring lives are, however, reflected in the records and artifacts they left – and in the legacy of their quilts and coverlets.

Reminder: If you buy books or CD's from AMAZON.COM, please order through the BSGR website as BSGR receives a rebate from these sales.

Rachel Blair Vance

by Margaret Vance Webb, BSGR Mem. #015

Rachel Blair Vance sat on the hard front plank-seat with her son William, as the wheels of their narrow covered-wagon rolled into Cumberland Gap, Kentucky from Jonesborough in East Tennessee, where the boundaries of Tennessee, Kentucky and Virginia meet. It was in 1858, and Rachel, no longer young, with daughter Hannah sitting in the wagon piled high with their meager possessions, and son Hugh Lawson White Vance on his horse bringing up the rear, was determined to get to "loway."

Rachel's inheritance from her father, John Blair, "a miller and pioneer of Washington County before it became a county of Tennessee," perhaps provided her with the means to buy the horses and wagon. She received no land from her father; her brothers had already laid claim to his Revolutionary War bounty land in Roane County, Tennessee, where they would become prosperous at Blair's Ferry on the Tennessee River at Loudon.

Nineteen years earlier, in 1839, Rachel Blair Vance had become a widow after a ten-year marriage to Hugh Vance, by whom she had six children. When she left Tennessee she left behind her daughter Lucinda, dead in the cholera epidemic at Jonesborough and probably buried in the trench-ditch-grave there with many other cholera victims; Rachel's son James had also died.

Grief? Land? Slavery? Why did Rachel Blair Vance at the twilight age of fifty-seven strike out on this trek? Had she simply inherited the adventurous gene from her grandmother Mary Dawson Blair who did not let a pregnancy keep her from sailing to America from Ireland years before with husband Huger Blair? Mary Dawson Blair's daughter — Rachel's aunt Jane — was born at sea on this voyage.

Rachel's brave father had ventured over the treacherous mountain barrier to settle in the wilderness of Watauga, which became Tennessee, where he married Hannah Caruthers, as his second wife. She was the mother of Rachel, and his twelfth child.

Rachel's courageous sister, Jean Blair Carmichael, after becoming the widow of Archibald Carmichael had stowed her possessions on a home-made raft and floated down the Mississippi, then traveled overland to Texas, where she died; her grave in the Cherokee Territory is marked with a D.A.R. emblem.

After William Carmichael died, his widow, another stout-hearted sister, Martha Blair Carmichael, set sail on the Tennessee River from East Tennessee to Missouri with some of her fourteen children. She died there.

Another sister, Betsy Blair, married Thomas Biddle, Jr. in Jonesborough, and had three sons: John, James and Hugh Biddle. After Thomas, Jr. died, Betsy journeyed to Rush County, Indiana with her sons. Here she married her second husband, McCormick Zion and moved to Decatur County, Iowa, where she died.

Home-body sister Polly Blair Tadlock and her twelve children decided to stay in Tennessee, as did John Blair Vance, Rachel's oldest son.

The wagon seat must have become harder and harder for Rachel as the little wagon jostled over Boone's Wilderness Road through Blue Grass country, over plains and prairies before Rachel's family reached their destination. Rachel's second son, William Vance found land in Decatur County, Iowa Territory, and at age thirty married Ellen Aiken, who was 15. Their five sons were born in Iowa, but William's Vance-Blair spirit led him to Oregon, before settling in Kansas.

Rachel's youngest son, Hugh Lawson White Vance married Emeline Noftsgar and they also moved from Iowa to trailblaze in Comanche County, Kansas, where a "soddy" was their first home.

Rachel's daughter Hannah Eliza married Henry Stanley, an early initiatory of Iowa Territory who spent his first years grubbing out his eighty acres of wild land while living in a box house thirty miles from his nearest neighbor. He soon added a pleasant two-story house on his land to which he brought his bride. A Stanley descendant remembers seeing Rachel's photo, posed with her old-style bonnet on her head, in an oval wooden frame with convex glass, but when no one wanted it, it was thrown out.

Rachel Blair Vance lived out her last years with the Stanleys and their nine children. At her death in 1871, this strong and brave woman was buried in the Stanley burial plot, Row 14, Oak Hill Cemetery, Decatur County, Iowa (earlier called Funktown graveyard), two thousand miles from her native Tennessee.

Mary Blair Stewart - Loyal Sister

(From an article by Mrs. E. B. Wall in the *Blair Magazine*, November 1927)

Samuel Blair, of Ballyvallyough, a leader in the Hearts o' Steel Rebellion in Ireland, 1770, .. was captured and condemned to death, but escaped through the cleverness of his twin sister, Mary (Blair) Stewart. The Hearts o' Steel Rebellion, it may be said, was an uprising of the Irish tenantry to protest against the unjust taxation imposed upon them in the time of George II, and its spirit was largely the inspiration of the American Revolution, a few years later. These patriots were unsuccessful; many were put to death; some, as shown herein, escaped to the New World. Many of them too served, Scotch Irish Patriots, in the land of their adoption.

The story of the escape of Samuel Blair is one of the most charming of all those we have found. Samuel and Mary, ...were twins. Mary had just borne her first child when the news was brought to her of the capture and condemnation of her brother. She rose from her bed, dressed, and mounted her horse, riding for her farewell visit with this best-loved brother. She was permitted but a short visit with him, but when she left the prison she was weeping so heart-brokenly that it was with difficulty she could mount her horse and ride away.

The execution was set for some two or three days later. When the victim was led onto the scaffold, and before the noose could be adjusted, he stepped forward and threw open his coat, and, says the fascinating old record, "there were fair white breasts dripping with suck." One soldier, whose quick perception must always thrill us, cried instantly aloud: "We've been fooled! We've been fooled! It's a woman!"

The brief visit of farewell had, of course, been spent in the exchange of clothing, and Samuel had ridden away—with full speed, as we may imagine, when once out of sight of the prison—and taken passage in a vessel happily ready to sail to the New World. Mary, runs the tale, was taken before the King, and there she told her story. The monarch "bowed his head and the tears ran heavy over his cheeks as he bade her go her way, back to her babe. And, said he as he watched her going, "Would to God that some one loved me so."

Samuel, of necessity, left without farewells—other than to Mary. No chance was there even for a farewell to the sweetheart who, we feel, should have joined him later. He arrived in Philadelphia; later settled in Central

Pennsylvania on the shores of the Susquehanna. About 1798 he removed to Crawford County, Pennsylvania in the north-western part of the state, where he died, it is said, in 1820. He married a young widow, Mrs. Ann Young, and left a number of children. His grave is believed to be in Mount Blair Cemetery near Meadville, Pennsylvania. . . .

Just before the World War [I], a descendant...of Mary Blair Stewart, had been located in County Armagh, Miss Rosanna Stewart. She sent a tracing of a Coat-of-Arms on a Blair gravestone—the Saltire with nine Mascles—in Raloo Churchyard. One letter came during the war, then all trace was lost. In this she told of one brother killed in battle; one a prisoner in Saxony; another sent home unfit for further service, his mind gone, and requiring the care given a baby. And, stated the letter, with no hint of complaining, the last and youngest brother was "training, so as to be ready for service as soon as he was old enough to go." Then, silence engulfed Rosanna—descendant of Mary, twin of Samuel.

Morgan Rajcevic sent the following from Stan Willis at the University of Aberdeen who is writing a thesis on the "Hearts of Steel" movement: "...I have found information that corroborates the 'Renegade Samuel Blair'" story. It is taken from *The Oakboys, the Hearts of Steel, the Volunteers, and the United Irishmen of Larne and Neighborhood*, Miscellaneous manuscript book, D/2095/18, p. 1-24. From it I was able to ascertain that Samuel was a tenant of Viscount Dungannon.

"Historians have maintained that Dungannon's lands saw little unrest. However, the letting out of his lands around Raloo—including the village of Ballyvalloh—did not cause immediate unrest when it occurred on 29 September 1769. On 3 October 1771, the Steelboys nailed a threatening notice to the Maypole at Ballycarry. Like many, it promised that houses, mills, lime kilns and the like would be burned. In response, a reward was offered. Sometime in late 1771 a John Agnew 'dropped a dime' on his compatriots. The manuscript tells it best:

"John Agnew was one of a band who had given information to the governor of Carrick Castle, and his fellow members who met in a little house, now occupied by John Harvey, on the left hand side of the road at the top of the hill just past Ballyuckard Crossing,

cast lots as to who should 'dispatch'[sic] him. The job fell to one of their leaders, Sam Blair of Ballyrallough who cut Agnew's throat and put the body in a quarryhole at the foot of Toby's Brae.

"A reward of 100 pounds was offered for Blair's arrest. He was captured and at Carrickfergus gaol where his twin sister arrived on horseback some days after and was allowed to visit the prisoner for half an hour. They exchanged clothes and Blair emerged in female dress apparently in great distress and weeping and mounted the horse and rode off. When the time for execution arrived the prisoner was taken to the gallows, where on baring her chest the prison governor called out that the prisoner was a woman. She then

confessed and said that her brother was already on the ocean waves, and in due time he arrived in Philadelphia."

Note: Samuel and Mary's ancestors are: Parents: Daniel Blair (1720-1808) and Margaret McCullough; Grandparents: Samuel Blair (1667-1729) and Martha Campbell Lyle; Great grandparents: Daniel Blair (1634-1704) and Ganet Drummond; Great, great grandparents: Brice Blair (1600-?) and Esther Peden.

Among BSGR members directly descended from Samuel are: Gene Bicksler (#707), Patricia Cate (#693), Dr. Jane Dawson (#769), and Morgan Blair Rajcevich (#679).

My Great-Great Grandmother, Jane Mann Blair (1811-1897)

Researched and Written by Ruby Blair Orwig

I find the nineteenth century fascinating. The old two-story log home which originally belonged to my great-great-great grandfather, "scalped John C. Blair, was given to his only son, John C. Blair, Jr., in 1828 when he married Jane Mann. There were slave cabins back of the house. The big log house was heated by burning wood in the fireplaces which were about twelve feet wide and in the big kitchen there was a heavy iron bar which would swing in and out of the fireplace on which to hang pots to cook the food. Meals were eaten in the large kitchen from a dining table eighteen feet long with long hand-hewn benches made of poplar trees on each side. Wooden pins driven into holes cut in these slabs made the legs for the benches.

As cotton was raised on the farm, Jane helped card by hand to remove the seeds and with a spinning wheel, twist the cotton into threads. The thread was then woven on a loom into coarse cloth from which their clothing was made. Wool was also spun for clothing. Dye was made from berries and bark right on the farm. Hides of deer and other animals were used to make shoes, hunting jackets and pants.

By 1843, Jane Mann had given birth to seven children. At the same time she was trying to keep a two-story log home in the woods running smoothly. She made their own soap. All winter the wood ashes from the fireplaces were poured into a hopper which had been made from long boards split from oak logs. In the spring, water was poured over the ashes in the hopper and it drained through and carried the lye eventually to a pot. Jane would have saved all the fat from cooking, and

this was boiled with the lye until all was dissolved and free of grease. This made a year's supply of soap.

My father said John Jr. worked himself to death. He died of pneumonia 12 January 1845 at age 36. Jane had then the task of raising seven children alone. In addition, John Jr.'s personal estate (everything) was inventoried according to law. A woman owned nothing. Jane had to buy back everything she needed to furnish her household, her spinning wheel, bureau, bed, sorrel mule, wagon, plows, cupboard, bedding, cattle, horses, hogs, cows, and many, many other things.

In 1866 Jane's oldest son was robbed and shot. His horse was at the gate the next morning. Jane and one of her sons hitched a horse to the buggy and found him by following Robert's horse to the spot where he was lay. In 1877, Jane's granddaughter, Nancy Jane Blair was fording Sugg's Creek during a heavy rain storm. The next morning her horse was at the gate. They found her down stream with her dress snagged on a stump.

Jane Mann Blair lived fifty-four years after her husband's death. In her life time she had her share of hardships and sorrows. She was most certainly a lovely Tennessee lady.

Sources: (1) John C. Blair, Jr.'s inventory of personal estate, Davidson Co., Court House, Tennessee, Book 13 p.246-247, recorded 25 Aug., 1854; (2) John C. Blair family Bible; (3) 1850 U.S. Census; (4) Court Division of Land, Seven children of Deceased John C. Blair, Jr. and dower Jane Mann Blair. Record Book F - 1853-1856, Davidson Co., Tennessee, p. 440; a \$20 gold piece found in a leather pouch in one of the logs of the house in the 1980's, "Scalped" John's inheritance from his father, Maj. Thos. Blair, who died in 1825.

Hannah Millikan Blair, Quaker Revolutionary Patriot*

Hannah Millikan Blair, a Quaker, was nonetheless a Revolutionary Patriot. In spite of the duties of a wife and mother (a baby was born nearly every year during the war years) she yet managed to help soldiers with food, supplies and other assistance that was in keeping with her Quaker religious beliefs. Common with other Quakers, there were no slaves in the Blair household. Besides birthing and caring for her children, she had farm chores, sewing and mending, washing, cooking, cleaning to accomplish. It is notable that the various guises she used when hiding Patriot soldiers were sewing up a featherbed, shucking corn, and visiting an ailing neighbor. Idleness was immoral among the women of her era, and energy certainly a must. A biographer describes her:

"She carried food and medicines regularly to soldiers hiding in the woods from Tory raiders; she mended their clothes, carried messages for them, and occasionally hid them. She was credited with saving the lives of two men when she hid them in a corn crib and continued shucking corn while the Tories searched. On another occasion she ripped the corner of a feather bed tick and pushed a visiting patriot inside with the feathers. She threw the covers back so [they] could see clearly under the bed, sat down, and began mending the torn ticking, saying, 'Thee may search as thee pleases.'

"After a skirmish at Dixon's Mill in 1779 she learned that several soldiers were hiding in the countryside and took provisions to them. As she was returning, she was taken by Tories who demanded to know where the men were hiding. Insisting that she had only taken food to a sick neighbor ten or so miles away, she was released without revealing the hiding place. Tories, however, eventually burned the Blair house and barn and the family was forced to watch as all their possessions were consumed in the flames."

That Hannah and Enos should assist patriots is not so surprising. Enos became a Quaker only on his marriage to Hannah; his brother James was a soldier in the Revolutionary Army, and other members of his extended family also served on the side of the Americans. Hannah was given a certificate of appreciation for her efforts, and a small government pension for her service.

Hannah was born in Chester, Pennsylvania 14 January 1756 to William and Jane (White) Millikan. The family shortly thereafter moved to Deep River, in North Caro-

lina. William was born about 1720, possibly in northern Ireland, and appeared on the tax lists of Chester County, Pennsylvania in 1739. By 1759 he was out of Pennsylvania and probably in the area of North Carolina which became Randolph County in 1779. He was the first Register of Deeds of Randolph County. His marriage to Jane White, possibly the daughter of Alexander White of Chester County, took place about 1741. Hannah is said to be the sixth of their seven children.

Hannah married Enos Blair at the Guilford County home of John Rich, 10 May 1775. Enos is the son of Colbert and Sarah (Morgan) Blair who left Pennsylvania, lived in Amherst and Augusta Counties, Virginia by 1761, and by 1780 had settled in Burke County, North Carolina with a land grant dated 9 November 1784. They had four sons: Enos, Colbert, James and John.

Enos and Hannah had thirteen children: Jesse (1776), Jane (1777) Sarah (1778), Enos (1780), Hannah (1782, lived 8 days), Abner (1784), Solomon (1785), Martha, (1787), Hannah (1790), Josiah (1792) Ruth (1794) Nathan (1797) and John (1800). They were known as the "Twelve Tribes."

Hannah died 14 January 1852 and is buried beside her husband in the cemetery of the Springfield Monthly Meeting (Friends) in Guilford County, North Carolina. Their large and faithful progeny of Friends are scattered across the country and many remain in North Central North Carolina to this day.

The certificate of appreciation and government pension mentioned by several biographers as having been awarded to Hannah for her contribution to the Revolution have not been located. If anyone has copies of either of these, please get in touch with Gene Blair or the editor.

*Taken from Paula S. Jordan, in *The Dictionary of North Carolina Biographies*, Vol. I (A-C). Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, p. 171, and "History of the Blair Family," Coordinated by Judith Mower Goodman, Pub. Springfield Memorial Association, 1969. This material was sent by Janet B. Kirkman (BSGR Mem. #508) and Frederick "Gene" Blair (BSGR Mem. #353).

The High Point, North Carolina Blairs - A Family of Educators

Enos and Hannah Millikan Blair's progeny included the Blair family of High Point, North Carolina, a family devoted to education. Their youngest son, John's sixth child, Solomon Isaac Blair, born 11 February 1827, married Abigail Hunt on 9 September 1858. The Blair homeplace in High Point was originally the home of Abigail's father, Samuel Hunt, son of Rev. Nathan Hunt, who was one of the founders of New Garden Boarding School which later became Guilford College. Abigail and S.I., as he was known, moved permanently into the homeplace to look after her father when her mother died in 1760, the year of John's birth. However, although they lived elsewhere, Abigail went back to her parent's home at High Point to have her children. All of them: William Allen, John J., Samuel Hunt, born in 1862 who lived only seven weeks, twins Ada and Emma, twins David and Martha, and Elva, were born there. They were also birthright members of the Springfield meeting of Friends.

S.I. Blair and Abigail Hunt were both educated at the New Garden School, S.I. was one of the early teachers at this Quaker institution, and they both taught school in the Springfield community. Following their example, each of their seven children taught at one time or another in the North Carolina schools.

William Allen (1859-1948) founded and operated an academy of high school grades in High Point for several years before the city system was established. He later was a banker in Winston-Salem, and Superintendent of Schools in that city.

John Jay (1860-1948), a graduate of Haverford College in Pennsylvania, was for years Superintendent of Schools in Wilmington, and later served as State inspector of school buildings for North Carolina. He married Mary Eleanor Fries of Winston Salem.

David Hunt (1868-1944) also educated at Haverford, taught in the local schools for a time. He later was Commissioner of Internal Revenue under Presidents Harding, Coolidge and Hoover. David was the only other child of this family to marry: to Mrs. Adelaide Cannon Douglas.

David's twin, **Martha E. (1868-1947)**, attended New Garden Friends Boarding School, now Guilford College, and taught many years in the High Point schools and in the Springfield Friends community.

Elva Jane (1870-1956) attended schools in High Point and Winston-Salem and Greensboro College for Women. She taught for some time in Oxford, but returned home to look after her mother and Aunt Lizzie (Tomlinson) Starbuck, and run the home. She was, as were her siblings, an active member of Springfield Friends meeting. Except for her brief teaching career in Oxford, she lived all her life in the Blair homeplace where she was born.

Twins **Emma and Ada**, born 1864 began their teaching careers in 1888, just after they had returned from West Town Boarding School in Pennsylvania, and taught continuously for 54 years.

Miss Emma, who taught one year in Greensboro, four years in Alabama, and was an assistant in botany at the State Normal school, Greensboro for two years, also taught for two years in a Springfield public school before taking up teaching in the High Point schools for the next 44 years. After teaching eleven years in the primary department, she became principal of an elementary school, and when a new school was erected in 1921, it was named in her honor; she was its principal until her retirement in 1942.

Twin **Ada** first taught in Randolph county, near Trinity for two years, then following one year in Reidsville, taught thirteen years as a teacher in the English and college preparatory department in the Goldsboro schools. After coming back to High Point and teaching for three years in the graded schools, she became principal of a school which, like her sister's, was named in her honor.

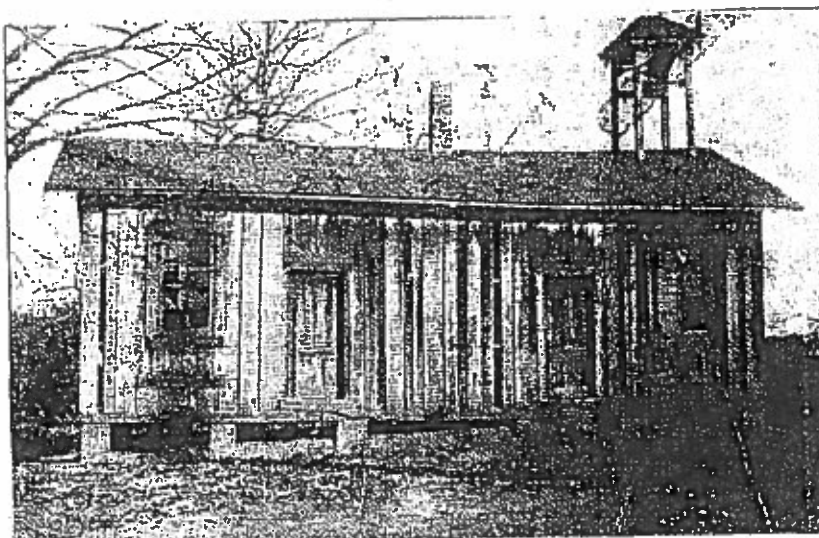
These sisters both retired in June 1942. At their retirement ceremony the speaker said, "On North Carolina's honor roll, your names are written high and indelibly. The name of Blair has been made distinctive in public school circles in the state through [your] activities... and also the activities of your five other brothers and sisters. [Your record] is an inspiration to North Carolina. We have spent a lot of money building monuments to soldiers and statesmen. Some day I hope to build monuments to those who have held before our eyes the light that guides."

Sources: "History of the Blair Family," by Judith Mower Goodman, Coordinator, Springfield Memorial Association, 1969; news clippings from *High Point Enterprise* and the *Greensboro Daily News* contributed to Frederick "Gene" Blair (Mem. #353) by Evelyn Blair Winslow, Archdale, N.C., third great granddaughter of Enos and Hannah.

High Point Schools

From Janet Kirkman (Mem. #508)*

Over the years, the High Point schools educated thousands of African-Americans, many of whom became local and national leaders. Hannah Millikan Blair's grandson, Solomon Blair, led in this effort. He taught Christianity and the 3Rs to African-Americans in the two-room building from 1867 to 1891. Quoting from an article in the *News and Record*, High Point, North Carolina, 27 February 1994: *Part of High Point's history, before the beginning of school integration, is the story of William Penn High School, which educated young*



African-American men and women from 1923 until its closing in 1968. The school grew out of Solomon Blair's two-room school—which stood on what is now North Centennial Street from 1867 to 1891—and the subsequent High Point Normal and Industrial Institute, which was established by Quakers from New York state. (The Quakers donated the school to the city of High Point in 1923 to become part of the city school system. To honor the Quakers, the city renamed the school after a well-known Quaker, William Penn.) With such a long and proud tradition, William Penn took academic excellence and vocational training as its mission and created honored traditions of its own. Among its alumni are national luminaries as well as local leaders.

Dr. Eleanor M. Hiestand-Moore

By Edward P. Blair, BSGR Mem. #002

No study of prominent Blair women would be complete without including a profile of Dr. Eleanor M. Hiestand-Moore, whose contributions to Blair genealogy served as the inspiration for the formation of the original Blair Society for Genealogical Research. She was in many ways a woman ahead of her time, studying medicine when very few women were allowed to do so. She was also a journalist, editor, teacher and genealogist.

Eleanor Moore Gill was born on 20 October 1859 in Allegheny City, Pennsylvania to S. B. Wylie and Ann Eliza Blair Gill. When sixteen years of age she was sent to Vassar College. She married, at eighteen, John Howard Hiestand in Philadelphia. He, being in poor health, lived but a few years after their marriage. In 1892 she married again, to William Chestnut Moore, in Woodbury, New Jersey. Eleanor studied medicine at the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania, receiving her medical degree in 1899, and she studied chemistry at Bryn Mawr College.

She served for two years as assistant editor of the *Medical Register* and contributed articles to *Godey's Lady's Book* and other leading women's magazines of that time. She taught five years at the Women's Medi-

cal College, and was an assistant to Dr. Henry Leffman in Philadelphia. A very personable woman, she possessed a keen and analytical mind, and obtained much gratification in intellectual pursuits. She died in Philadelphia on 29 November 1923.

In later life she became keenly interested in genealogy, with an emphasis on the Blair family. Her list of correspondents was extensive, and the data which she thus accumulated became the nucleus for further research by her correspondents. In 1922 she helped form the "Society for the Preservation of the Old Blair Homestead," which sought to restore the John Blair house in Williamsburg, Virginia. On 19 January 1925 a group of Dr. Hiestand-Moore's correspondents met at the Masonic Temple in Erie, Pennsylvania to form the Blair Society for Genealogical Research, to preserve, study and disseminate the information she had collected, and to continue the work interrupted by her untimely death. Her files were donated to the new Blair Society by her brother, Harry Blair Gill, a prominent Philadelphia attorney, and charter member of the Society.

Sources: *Woman's Who's Who of America, 1914-1915*, John William Leonard, editor; *The Blair Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 4, May 1927, John Elmer Reed, Editor.

The Late Emma Helen Blair, 1851-1911

On account of the death of the editor whilst this work¹ was in course of publication, we reprint below extracts from the two leading newspapers of her home city.²

In the death of Emma Helen Blair at the Madison Sanitarium at 6:53 o'clock yesterday morning [September 25], Madison and the state lost one of the most remarkable women that Wisconsin has produced.

Miss Blair was born at Menasha, Wisconsin, September 12, 1851. From 1869 to 1871 she attended high school at Westfield, Massachusetts. In 1871 she returned to Wisconsin and entered Ripon College, graduating in 1874. For two years she taught in public schools and then went to Milwaukee, where she spent nearly twenty years, chiefly engaged in journalistic work.

During the last few years of her residence in Milwaukee Miss Blair was the chief assistant for the Associated Charities, and thereby she gained an intimate knowledge of social and economic conditions. The interest she had developed in these matters led to her entering the State University in 1892, where during the following two years she took post graduate work in history, economics, and sociology. She later became a member of the library staff of the State Historical Society and assisted in the production of an annotated catalogue of the Society's famous collection of bound newspaper files, some 15,000 in number.

In 1894 Miss Blair began a most important work which introduced her to the favorable notice of many historical experts throughout the country. In that year she resigned from the library staff and began work as chief assistant to Dr. R. G. Thwaites in the editing and annotating of the famous *Jesuit Relations*, a stupendous historical undertaking in seventy-three volumes. After she completed her work on the *Jesuit Relations* she assisted in the editing of the well-known journal of Father Louis Hennepin and of the famous original journals of the Lewis and Clark expedition. In 1903 she began the editing of the long series of historical documents entitled, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, a work which appeared in fifty-five volumes. Her collaborator in this great undertaking was Dr. James A. Robertson, at present government librarian of the Philippines Library at Manila.

¹ From the Dedication of Nicholas Perrot's celebrated Memoir on the habits and customs of the American Indians.

² One was the *Madison Democrat*, 26 September 1911.

Miss Blair's final work, completed just previous to her last fatal illness, was the translation from the French, greatly enriched with her own historical notes, of Nicolas Perrot's celebrated Memoir on the habits and customs of the American Indians. His book has heretofore appeared only in French, and Miss Blair's translation will be a welcome contribution to the literature of western history. Nothing grieved her more in her final illness than the fear that she would not live to see the book in print on which she had spent so much time and thought.

Miss Blair became by dint of native ability and years of preparatory toil one of the most expert historical editors in this country. She had acquired a complete mastery of the French and Spanish languages. Her literary style was incisive, her historical judgment clear and accurate, and her knowledge of the details of typography quite unusual. In recognition of these qualities Ripon College and the State University honored her with degrees.

Despite her erudition Miss Blair was a woman of most modest demeanor and apparently quite unaware of the distinction into which her productions had brought her. Socially she was of a most charming disposition, kindly and sympathetic toward others, and ever ready to lend a helping hand. She was known and esteemed by a considerable body of fellow workers in the field of American History.

...Miss Blair is survived by her mother, now an octogenarian, and...also by her brother, T. D. Blair, who is a Menasha printer, and whose presence at her last illness was solace to the dying woman.

Genealogy note: Emma Helen Blair was the daughter of William (born 1819) and Lucy Bartlett Blair, of Bangor, Maine. William was the son of William Blair (born 1781 in Blandford, Massachusetts, died 1851 Westfield) and Emily Wells (daughter of Col. Isaac Welles of Ellington, Connecticut). This William's father was Capt. Asa Blair (born 1755, died 1831, SAR Marker in the Old Cemetery, Blandford), who married Mehitable Cannon/Carnahan (born 1760, died 1849, the daughter of Capt. William and Mary Clark Carnahan. Asa parents were Robert Blair, Jr. (born 1720, died 1801, SAR Marker Old Cemetery, Blandford) and Hannah Thompson (d. 1803 in Blandford). Robert was a son of Robert Blair (born 1683 Ireland, died 1774 Worcester, Massachusetts) and Isabella Rankin (1683-1765).

Article sent by Nancy Knox Schaffer (BSGR Mem. #493).

Emily Jane Newell Blair - Suffragist, Feminist, Politician, Writer

by Margo Jerrard*

BLAIR, Emily Jane Newell, January 9, 1877-August 3, 1951. Suffragist, feminist, Democratic party official, writer.

In 1910 Emily Newell Blair was a "contented" Missouri wife and mother; by 1924 she was vice president of the Democratic National Committee, its only woman national officer. Born in Joplin, Missouri, she was the oldest daughter of James Patton and Anna Cynthia (Gray) Newell. After graduating from high school in Carthage, Missouri in 1894 she enrolled at the Woman's College of Baltimore (later Goucher College). Her father, a Civil War veteran, was a successful mortgage broker, but when he died there was not enough money for her to continue her education. Needed at home to help bring up and educate her younger brother and three sisters, she returned after one year in college. She attended classes at the University of Missouri but did not graduate, and she taught school.

On December 24, 1900, Emily Newell married Harry Wallace Blair, a law student. He established a law practice in Carthage and they became the parents of a daughter, Harriet, and a son, Newell. She kept house, did some civic work and, because her husband was interested in politics, worked for candidates for county office. Although she enjoyed her husband and children she wanted to do something in addition, to move out "of the narrow confines into a larger sphere."

In 1909 Emily Newell Blair sold her first short story to a national magazine. Over the next few years her writing was published in *Cosmopolitan*, *Harper's Magazine*, *Woman's Home Companion*, and other magazines. With the money she earned she hired help for the house and children to free herself to write.

Around 1910, when the woman suffrage campaign was revived, Blair began her active career in politics. She saw the law that prevented women from voting as denying civil rights as well. A woman had "no property rights, no parental rights, practically no economic freedom, since professions, trades and business were closed to her," she later recalled (*Missouri Hist. Rev.*, April 1920). Determined to gain political power for women, she joined the Missouri Equal Suffrage Association, and in 1914 became press and publicity chairman and the first editor of the *Missouri Woman*, a monthly suffrage publication. A diminutive woman, Blair's gentle manner concealed a cool analytical mind and a strong will. She used her charm to win over the

Missouri Press, which to a large extent backed her cause. She also persuaded both the state Parent-Teachers Association and the Federation of Women's Clubs to endorse the *Missouri Woman* as their official organ, thus securing broad support.

Blair rose to national prominence during World War I. When the war broke out she became vice chairman of the Missouri Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense, a preparedness agency. Her work was so effective that she was appointed to the executive committee of the council's national Woman's Committee. Based in Washington, and chaired by suffrage leader Anna Howard Shaw, the committee was charged with providing "a direct and organized channel through which the government could convey to women its requests and directions for war work." Blair, who was in charge of news and publicity, learned about women's problems throughout the country and about the workings of national politics.

With her husband, who had served overseas during the war, Emily Newell Blair returned to Joplin in 1919. Her official history of the Woman's Committee, which appeared in 1920, emphasized the potential for political power among organized women and the role women could play in government when they had the vote. After the passage of the nineteenth amendment, Blair helped found the League of Women Voters in 1920 but then rejected it, feeling that nonpartisanship was not an effective use of the vote. Neither did she join the more militantly feminist National Woman's party. Blair believed there were only two ways for women to get political power: by holding office and by becoming effective in political organizations. She joined the Democrats and began to work for the party. In 1920 the Democratic party added one committeewoman from each state, doubling its National Committee. These women were appointed, not elected, however, and they had no voting power. Blair worked with others to put pressure on the party, and in 1921 women were elected to the National Committee and had the same votes as the men. Elected that year to represent Missouri, Emily Blair was soon chosen by the committee as national vice chairman with particular responsibility for organizing women voters and for women's activities. She worked hard: in the next two years she made 200 speeches in twenty-two states, organized more than 2,000 Democratic Women's Clubs, and built up regional training programs for women party workers. She was reelected to the Democratic National Committee in

1924 and chosen first vice president. Serving until 1928, she prepared a history of the Democratic party, an organization primer, and many leaflets. Blair also helped to found the Woman's National Democratic Club, serving as its secretary from 1922 to 1926 and as its president in 1928.

Reviewing the results of ten years of suffrage in a 1930 interview Blair concluded that women had accomplished little with the vote; they had neither solidarity nor power and, in fact, had slipped backwards. She wondered if it had been a mistake to join men in existing parties, and noted that her acceptance of the argument that women must work along party lines had led to nothing more than individual recognition for herself. She had not been able to create a position of power for other women. A "new feminism" was needed, Blair believed, to urge women to run for public office and to support them when they did.

Blair continued her writing career, focusing on books and the home as well as on feminist topics. She was associate editor of *Good Housekeeping* magazine from 1925 to 1933, and published a book on decorating, *The Creation of a Home*, in 1930. A novel, *A Woman of Courage*, appeared the following year. In 1933, when the Democrats regained the presidency, Blair returned with her husband to Washington where she was appointed to the Consumers' Advisory Board under the National Industrial Recovery Act, serving as its chairman in 1935. She then turned again to free-lance writing, but published little. Her last public office was a 1942 War Department appointment as chief of the women's interests section in the department's bureau of public relations. In 1944 Emily Blair suffered a stroke which incapacitated her; she died in Alexandria, Virginia, seven years later.

[There are a few letters in the Sue Shelton White Papers and some clippings in the Woman's Rights Coll., both at the Schlesinger Library, Radcliff College. Blair's writings also include *The Woman's Committee, U.S. Council of Nat. Defense: An Interpretative Report* (1920); *Letters of a Contented Wife* (1931); "Are Women a Failure in Politics?" *Harper's Magazine*, Oct. 1925, pp. 523-522, and two articles in *The Women's Journal*, "Why I Am Discouraged about Women in Politics," Jan. 1931, pp. 20-22, and "Putting Women into Politics," March 1931, pp. 14-15, 29. She wrote an introduction to the history of suffrage activity in Missouri in the *Missouri Hist. Rev.*, April-July 1920, which also contains an article by Mary Semple Scott, "The Missouri Woman," on Blair's suffrage work. An interview with Blair by Mary Carroll, "Wanted—A New Feminism," appeared in *Independent Woman*, Dec. 1930, pp. 499 and 544. For information on her life and activities see Ernestine Evans, "Women in the Washington Scene," *Century Mag.*, Aug. 1923, pp. 507-517;

Anne Hard, "Emily Blair 'Politician,'" *Woman Citizen*, April 1926, pp. 15-16; and a profile in *Missouri Hist. Rev.*, Fall 1968. The entry in *Dict. Am. Biog.*, Supp. Five, is particularly useful. Obituaries appeared in the *N. Y. Times* and *Washington Post*, Aug. 4, 1951; death record provided by VA. Dept. of Health.]

Genealogy note: Harry Wallace Blair is the son of John Blair, born 28 April 1834, Carrollton, Carroll County, Ohio, who married in Muncie, Delaware County, Indiana Mary Jane Pittenger, born 1841. He descends from William and Mary Hanna Blair of York County, Pennsylvania. BSGR Mem. #140 Katherine D. Blair Salant descends from Harry and Emily.

*From *Notable American Women The Modern Period. A Biographical Dictionary*, edited by Barbara Sicherman, and Carol Hurd Green, Copyright 1984 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College. Reprinted by permission of Harvard University Press.

Book Review

Wartime Washington, the Civil War letters of Elizabeth Blair Lee, Edited by Virginia Jeans Laas (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1991)

Elizabeth Blair was born 20 June 1818 in Frankfort, Kentucky, the only daughter of Francis Preston Blair and Elizabeth Gist. She and her three brothers, Frances Preston Jr. (Gen. Frank), Montgomery, and James Blair were raised very much a part of the pre-civil war southern aristocracy and in a very political atmosphere. Elizabeth married Samuel Phillips Lee in 1843 against the wishes of both her father and brother Montgomery, and eventually lived in the Lee side of the Blair/Lee House in Washington, D. C. (Montgomery in the Blair side).

Elizabeth wrote 930 letters to her husband, Lt. Phil Lee who as a naval officer was away from home most of the war. During that time Elizabeth and son Blair Lee lived with her parents at Silver Spring, Maryland or in the city. The editor has chosen to publish 368 letters.

Elizabeth was a force in the local social/political scene in Washington and spent countless hours lobbying for the promotion of her husband to full Admiral (her brother Montgomery worked against this). She was on the board and later was Directress of the Washington Orphan's Asylum, and a founder of the D.A.R. Her letters are a study of family illnesses, family and political feuds, attitudes towards slavery, and the generals conducting the war. One only wishes all the letters had been published. Charlotte Blair Stewart (Mem. #022).

Priscilla Blair of Clermont County, Ohio

Sent by Eileen Blair, BSGR Mem. #269

Western Christian Advocate, 11th July 1834. Mrs. Priscilla, consort of Alexander Blair, Esq. and daughter of Samuel and Ruth Scull, was born in Gloucester County, state of New Jersey. She emigrated to the state of Ohio, in company with her family, in 1806. Sought and found the pardoning love of God, and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church, at Bethel meeting-house, in Clermont County, Ohio, in 1807, of which she lived a faithful member until her death, which took place in Batavia, the 17th inst. Age 65 years and 4 months. During several of her last years she was much afflicted with a pulmonary affection. For the two last, she has been generally confined to her room, and principally to her bed, during which time I visited her frequently, and always found her tranquil in mind and waiting for her change. A few days before her decease, I visited, and found her more ill than usual, and looking for her departure. While we sang, *On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand and Cast a Wistful Eye*, she raised her emaciated hands and exclaimed, "Sweet Heaven! I shall soon be there," and rejoiced audibly, while her strength would permit, and whispered, "Glory! Glory!" The day before she departed I visited her for the last time, and found her extremely feeble. As she had just been conversing with my colleague (Rev. F. A. Timmons), to whom she said, "O how hard it must be to die without a hope of heaven, but how pleasant it is to die with the love of Christ in the soul." On Wednesday morning, she died in great peace.

Will of Jean Blair, 1784*

Sent by Nedra Brill, BSGR Mem. #489

1784, March 9. Blair, Jean, of Piscataway, Middlesex Co., widow; To the English Presbyterian Church of Bound Brook, £50, which house stands in Bridgewater, Somerset Co. Slave, Tom, to have his freedom, and a lot of land at Rariton Landing. Negro, Harry, to be in the service of Mary Covenhoven, wife of Joseph, of Somerset Co., for 2-years and then be free. Brother, Benjamin Field, my homestead and rest of estate. Executors—brothers, Michael Field, Benjamin Field, and Jeremiah Field (son of John). Witnesses—Ishmael Shippey, Hannah Platt, Elias V. Court. Proved Jan. 22, 1785. 1784, Dec. 28. Inventory, £356.14.9, made by William Letson and William Horn. Lib. 27, p. 230.

*New Jersey Colonial Documents, Calendar of Wills—1781-1785, pages 46-47.

Death of a Pioneer Mother

Sent by Leithra Trefren, BSGR Mem. #230

The Urbana Citizen & Gazette, Champaign County, Ohio, 7 February 1884. Mrs. Mary Thomas, widow of Col. John Thomas, died at her residence in Salem Township on the 29th day of January 1884. Born in Washington County, Pennsylvania, January 26, 1800, she survived her 84th birthday but two days.

Her parents, Jacob and Martha Johnson came to this county in 1804, settling first on Kings Creek near where the Ludlow Road crosses the north branch, the next year they removed to the lands bought of the Indians at Mingo Village, where Mr. Alfred Johnson now lives. Her father's family were among the early settlers of the county, and she, being the oldest of the children, was familiar with all the trials, pleasures and diversified incidents of pioneer life; she remembered well the terror created among the settlers when Hull's Army was surrendered to the British, and the fear that the infant settlements would be overrun by the murderous savages on the heels of the event. The family on occasions like this sought safety at the block house, at Taylor's Mill, where Kingston now stands, whilst the riflemen went out to guard the outpost on the fronts.

In early life the deceased was married to Robert Blair, and with him shortly after removed to the new settlements on White River, in the State of Indiana. Here settlers were few, and Indians were plenty, who were then beginning to move farther west. They were friendly, but in some of their drunken frolics they made threats that greatly disturbed the peace of the whites. This was about 1820, and ten years later her husband died, and with two children, she returned to her father's home. She was subsequently married to John Thomas, also a pioneer, and came to the farm where she spent the remainder of her life—a period of more than half a century—surviving her late husband upward of thirty years.

By her first husband she reared two sons who have for many years been prominent residents of Hancock County, Illinois; she also leaves two sons of the last husband, I. B. and F. M. Thomas, with whom her home was to the close of her days. She was a sister to Hiram, Nelson and Alfred Johnson, ...of Wayne Township in this county. ...interred in the family burying grounds nearby her late home.

Abstracted by Pat Stickley for Champaign County Genealogical Society, Summer 1994.

Caroline Pease Blair, Wife, Mother, Poet

By Joseph C. Blair (BSGR Mem. #787)



Caroline Pamela Pease, born 8 May, 1816 to Philo and Polly Orton Pease, who lived in Castle Creek, New York. Married to Asa Edson Blair, she had eight children. It was from her children's lives and deaths that she drew much of the material of her writing.

Caroline's "Woodland" home, atop a mountain crest, overlooked the beauty of the town in a valley of Upstate New York. From this home she watched through the change of the seasons: her children playing while the autumn leaves turned or frolicking in the winter's crisp snow. The winter must have brought a special time in her household. With the trees bare, she could easily see the glow of the church in the valley below. And in spring, new life began.

As a mother she cared for her children, giving each of them tender, loving care in a warm, loving family. Even with her scenic home and growing family, however, tragedy intervened, taking the precious life of her sixth child, Adelaide Blair, who had been on earth only seven months. Down the mountainside toward the valley, could be seen the cemetery where her child was to be laid to rest. The funeral procession could be seen moving slowly from the church up toward her home to come to the cemetery. The pain of her child's death became life again through her poetry.

Writing mostly in her sunny and airy room under the pen name of "Waif Woodland," Caroline drew upon her experiences in life as well as her surroundings. She became a regularly published poet writing for such magazines and newspapers as the *Binghamton Republican* of New York, and the *Ladies' Repository* of Cincinnati, Ohio. Her daughter Mary, speaking about her mother's poems, wrote that she "in the most painstaking way had prepared, thought out and perfected them so, that as far as I know, not one was ever rejected." Eventually, according to her daughter, she became stricken with rheumatic gout. This affected her knees and finger joints. Though she would suffer with this disease for more than ten years, she persisted in her writing by making use of a writing tablet. Made of metal, it held the paper in place while she wrote.

On August 10, 1869, she passed away at the age of 53 from pulmonary tuberculosis, with which she had suffered for many years. Her youngest child, Minnie Blanche Blair, was nine years old. It was after many years had passed that her husband and children decided to publish her poetry. *The Silver Cup and Other Poems*, by C. P. Blair, is a collection of poems written by her own hand over the years. They dedicated it to her memory.

Her legacy, however, also lived on through her children. Mary Jane Blair, her firstborn, became the first woman graduate of the Buffalo Medical College. Morris Pease Blair, her next child, was a veteran of the Civil War. Two other children, Arthur Edson and Lewis Pease Blair became successful physicians and surgeons. And her

last born, Minnie Blanche Blair, became a writer. In 1918 and 1922, Minnie published book and revision of "Blair Genealogy."

The following poem is one of many from *The Silver Cup*.

In the Ship

Far out upon the Galilee
Of human life we ride,
With sun and storm alternately
Beating upon the tide.

White Memory speaks in touching tones
Of other, earlier years,
Repeating tales of cherished love
That dim our sight with tears

To-day she points her finger back
Upon the water blue,
Where eddy currents curled around
One of our little crew!

And I remember how that night,
- 'Twas cold, and dark, and late -
The master of our little craft
And I his trembling mate;

Bowed low with agony - as Death
With visage grim and dread,
Upon our darling's little face
His ghostly shadow spread;

Felt a subduing influence steal
Upon our chastened will
And heard above the dashing spray
A whispered - "Peace, be still!"

Then as we saw the happy smile
Which bathed our dead child's lip,
We hushed our murmurings and knew
That Christ was in the ship.

Since then the searching winds of life
Our silken sails have torn,
And much of blighting wear and tear
Our little bark has born.

But wind, nor wave, nor life, nor death
Our peace can overwhelm,
While the assurance still is given
That He is at the Helm.

A Wife's Letter-Mrs. Blair to Col. Varick*

Allow me to surprize you, my good Col. Varick, by thus unexpectedly introducing myself to you, in ye epistolary way. I would first thank you, for ye particular and pleasing manner, in which you have mentioned myself, and ye chosen friend of my heart, in your letter to Mrs. Elmendorph, and assure you, that our best wishes attend you at all times, and wherever you go, and that you have no friends more sincerely interested in your happiness than ye inhabitants of ye cave.

But this is only by way of introduction; my principal inducement to trouble you with this scrawl is to make a request, in which my whole soul is deeply interested, and from my own experience of your willingness to oblige—from ye many civilities I received during our short acquaintance, I flatter myself, you will do all in your power,— all that circumstances will admit of o gratify me in this particular. I must inform you that my dear Mr. Blair set off for camp 2 days ago and that he has been for sometime past exceedingly indisposed, and his complaints of a very uncommon and alarming nature. I must refer you to him for particulars. 'Tis probable, God grant it may, that ye ride and change of air may recover his health, but 'tis also possible, and my apprehensive heart fears ye worst—'tis possible that his complaints may be increased, and he may find himself worse, when he arrived at camp. I am distressed at ye thought of his being ill entirely among strangers—which will probably be ye case—therefore my request to you, sir, is that you will immediately enquire for, and endeavor to find him out, and that you will make his situation as comfortable as possible and indulge him with your company as frequently as your time, and distance from him, will admit of—as his complaints have a natural tendency to cause depression of spirits, and a universal languor—ye conversation of a cheerful friend will be absolutely necessary for him—and he is so much averse to giving trouble to any person living, that I know he will suffer greatly before he will ask any one to serve him. I must impose still further on your good nature by requesting, and that importunately, that if he should be so ill – which I pray heaven forbid – that my attendance on him may be necessary, and if 'tis in your power to command ye time, that you will either come for me, or contrive some means of my being conducted there in ye most speedy way.

I will not make ye least apology for ye freedom I have taken on this occasion—I have so much confidence in ye sincerity of your professions—and so high an opinion of the benevolence of your heart—that I feel satisfied you will be happy in serving me on this most interesting occasion, which will forever oblige,

*Your very sincere friend, and
Affectionate friend,
Susan Blair*

From ye Cave August 26

Endorsed Raritan., from Mrs. Blair Recd Sept. 12, 1779.

*From *The Historical Magazine*, Vol. IX, May 1865, page 150.

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