

ANCESTORITIES

By WILLARD HEISS

William S. Wootton of Wootton desk fame was a birthright Quaker (that is, born of Quaker parents). Leonard Coombs has briefly sketched his ancestors in the Indiana Historical Society booklet, "The Family History of William S. Wootton."

Coombs found the paternal line somewhat shadowy. However, the maternal line is quite clear, and Wootton's mother descends from Pucketts and other Quaker worthies. A timely publication concerning the Wootton family has just been issued by the Wootton and Related Families Association, 1031 Harvey Street, Raleigh, N.C.

The book, "The Woottons of Surry County, North Carolina, 1735-1820," has more than 200 pages of text, notes and reproductions of documents, and is priced at \$25. It traces this particular Wootton family from Orange County, Va., to Granville/Bute County, N.C., in 1752, and on to Surry County, N.C., in the 1770s.

From their arrival in Surry, equal attention is given the Pucketts (the Quaker line). This study stops in 1820 with the migration to Indiana of Lewis and Martha (Puckett) Wootton, the parents of William S. Wootton.

Reference to the use of Quaker records was made in a previous

column. The importance of this religious group over other bodies lies in the fact that many of its records are published.

W.W. Hinshaw, a genealogical dilettante, developed great interest in Quaker records. A fortunate second marriage allowed him to follow this interest without restraint. During the 1930s he engaged unemployed teachers to extract information from monthly meeting records. He accumulated numerous extracts for hundreds of meetings. With the help of a crony, Thomas W. Marshall, these were edited for publication.

The first volume, issued in 1936, consisted of nearly 1,200 pages and dealt with meetings located in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee. The second volume contained the extracts of the records for the two oldest meetings in Pennsylvania and the two oldest meetings in New Jersey.

The third volume carried the meetings of New York City and Long Island. All the records known to exist for Ohio were included in volumes four and five. The Virginia records (many of which are lost) were published in the final volume, which appeared in 1950 after Hinshaw's death.

In 1962, the Indiana Historical

Society continued the series with the Indiana records. These extracts appeared in six volumes followed by an index. Records of 74 meetings established prior to 1875 were published.

After Hinshaw's death, the copied but unpublished material he had collected was deposited in the Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania. This collection is called the "William Wade Hinshaw Index to Quaker Meeting Records."

Included in this material are more Pennsylvania and New Jersey meeting records. Records of many meetings in these states were never copied by Hinshaw. The "Index to Quaker Meeting Records" also includes records of meetings in California, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri, Wisconsin, Illinois and Michigan.

A list of all the meeting records in this index will be found in an article by Frederick B. Tolles in "General Aids to Genealogical Research" (National Genealogical Society, 1962). This index was microfilmed by the LDS Genealogical Society. A typescript of the index was made by Fort Wayne and Allen County Library. Copies will be found at Newberry Library, Friends University Library in Wichita, Kan., and the Houston Public Library.

One of the glaring voids in Quaker research is the lack of a guide,

finding aid, or bibliography that could point to numerous useful publications. It seems worthwhile to pursue this matter.

A reference which should be used in conjunction with Hinshaw's Virginia volume is John Wayland's "Hopewell Friends History, 1734-1934." Additional detail is given by Wayland but, more importantly, all listings of the Ballenger family were accidentally omitted from Hinshaw. Ballenger is one of the few families that has Huguenot origins.

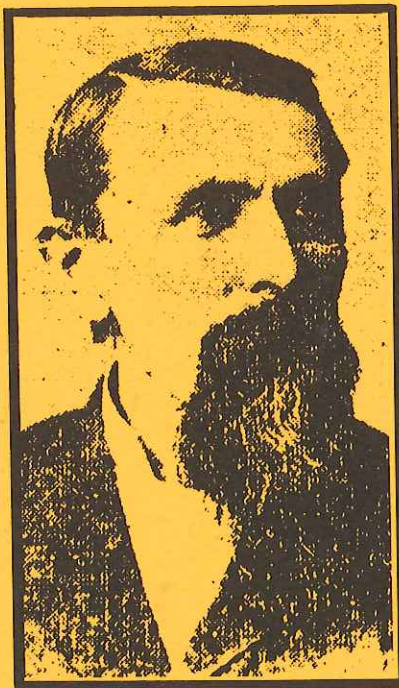
As many know, the early Hopewell records burned. To help fill this lack, Thomas H. Fawcett compiled a list of removals from meetings in Pennsylvania and New Jersey: "Quaker Migration from Pennsylvania and New Jersey to Hopewell Monthly Meeting, 1732-1759." This article is in the Bulletin of the Friends Historical Association, Vol. 27, No. 2 (1938).

Two other Virginia publications should be noted, though they have lost some of their importance since Hinshaw's Vol. 6. Each contains records as well as other information of Cedar Creek and/or South River Monthly Meetings. They are: "Our Quaker Friends of Ye Olden Time" (1905, Lynchburg) and "A History of Lynchburg's Pioneer Quakers" by Brown (1936, Lynchburg).

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WOOTON FAMILY

*Inventor of
The Wooton Desk
William S. Wooton*



Family History Section
Indiana Historical Society

**THE FAMILY HISTORY
OF
WILLIAM S. WOOTON**

By

Leonard Coombs

Leonard Coombs, formerly on the staff of the Genealogy Division of the Indiana State Library, since January, 1981, is the printed works librarian for the Michigan Historical Collection, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Photographs by Frank Espich

Family History Section
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Indiana Historical Society, 315 West Ohio Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46202

PREFACE

For far too long we have remained uninformed about the life of William S. Wooton. Leonard Coombs has rendered the aficionados of the "Wooton desks" as well as others a singular service.

Quaker records have been in a format readily available to researchers for years. Coombs is to be commended for taking the time to sift out the Wooton information. We now have a sketch of Wooton that identifies him in time and in place.

With the facts that Coombs has established another researcher can move to the next plateau. Where and when was Wooton educated? What do the civil records in Richmond and Indianapolis show? Why did Wooton apparently leave a profitable desk business for life in the ministry? Was he caught up in the wave of Wesleyanism that swept through midwestern Quakerism in the 1870s and 1880s? These and many more questions need answers. Whoever finds these answers will be forever indebted to Leonard Coombs.

—Willard Heiss
Indianapolis, 1982

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WILLIAM S. WOOTON AND DOCIA STRATTON

Wooton's Patent Cabinet Secretary, a monumental office desk that became a kind of status symbol in the Victorian era, was invented and first manufactured by William S. Wooton¹, a Quaker minister and businessman who lived in Indianapolis and several other Indiana towns. The Smithsonian Institution has published a study of the development of the Wooton Desk Company and related firms² which provides an excellent account of the history of William S. Wooton's company and his desks, but gives only a short sketch of the life of the inventor. The Wooton Desk Owners Society has further information about the Wooton desks.³

Using the records of the Society of Friends and other genealogical resources, it is possible to fill many of the gaps in William S. Wooton's life and to speculate on his ancestry. The portrait derived from this exercise is of a man born into a large Quaker family, whose mother, wife, and several brothers were ministers, who worked as a pattern-maker and invented several kinds of desks, but who devoted much of his life to religion as a Quaker minister.

William S. Wooton was born in Preble County, Ohio, May 12, 1835.⁴ He was the eighth child (five more children followed) of Lewis Wooton and Martha Puckett,⁵ two Quakers who had moved to Indiana from North Carolina about 1819. A more complete picture of the lives and background of Lewis Wooton and Martha Puckett will be presented in the second part of this paper.

While William Wooton was a child, his family moved quite often — moving back and forth between Preble County, Ohio, and Randolph County, Indiana, several times between 1835 and 1849, before finally settling in Grant County, Indiana, in 1849.⁶ William's father died in 1850, and his mother remarried two years after that.⁷

Sometime before 1858, William Wooton moved out on his own. In that year he and his older brother Abijah were listed as members



of the Poplar Run Monthly Meeting of Friends in Randolph County, Indiana, while their mother was still living in Grant County.⁸ In the summer of 1858, William and Abijah moved to Wayne County, Indiana, and became members of the New Garden Monthly Meeting.⁹

In the 1860 census William Wooton was found living in Richmond, Indiana, at a boardinghouse run by Joseph P. Stratton, his future father-in-law. William was employed as a patternmaker¹⁰ Also living in the boardinghouse was Theodocia Stratton, who married William Wooton in Richmond on May 8, 1862.¹¹ The Stratton family ancestry has been documented in published genealogies,¹² so only Theodocia's immediate ancestry will be traced here.

Theodocia Stratton was born December 17, 1839, in Wayne County, Indiana, the sixth child (fourth surviving child) of Joseph Parmer Stratton and Martha W. Jefferis.¹³ Both Joseph Parmer Stratton and Martha W. Jefferis were members of the Hicksite group of Quakers and had joined that group when Quakers in Indiana and Ohio split in the late 1820s.¹⁴ They were married July 1, 1830, in the Goshen Meeting House in Wayne County, Indiana.¹⁵ They lived in Wayne County for the rest of their lives — near Richmond, Indiana, until 1846, near Dublin from 1846 until 1859, and then in Richmond until their deaths.¹⁶ Joseph Parmer Stratton died October 14, 1878 and Martha Stratton died September 25, 1901. Both were buried in Earlham Cemetery in Richmond, Indiana.¹⁷

The Stratton and Jefferis families were both Quaker families who moved to Indiana from Eastern states. The Jefferis family moved from Bradford Monthly Meeting, in Pennsylvania, to Whitewater Monthly Meeting, in Wayne County, Indiana, in the summer of 1824.¹⁸ The Strattons moved from South River Monthly Meeting, in Campbell County, Virginia, to Center Monthly Meeting, in Clinton County, Ohio, in the winter of 1810-1811, and Joseph Parmer Stratton moved on to Wayne County, Indiana, Whitewater Monthly Meeting, in the summer of 1826.¹⁹

After their marriage in 1862, William S. Wooton and Theodocia Stratton apparently remained in Richmond for only a few years. In the fall of 1865 William became a member of the Honey Creek Monthly Meeting in Howard County, Indiana,²⁰ where he stayed until the summer of 1867, when he became a member of the Whitewater Monthly Meeting in Richmond.²¹ Jackson Morrow's *History of Howard County*²² states that William S. Wooton was one of the original members of the Kokomo, Indiana, Monthly Meeting organized in 1865, but he was apparently a member only before the meeting was set off from Honey Creek Monthly Meeting in the fall of 1867.²³



It was after William returned to Richmond that his wife, Theodocia (usually abbreviated Docia), joined the Whitewater Monthly Meeting in the summer of 1869, leaving her parents' Hicksite group for her husband's Orthodox group.²⁴

William and Docia Wooton moved quite often, ranging widely across the United States. They moved from Richmond to Indianapolis in 1869 or 1870. (Although they are found in the 1870 census of Indianapolis, they did not change their membership from the Whitewater Monthly Meeting to the Indianapolis Meeting until the spring of 1872.)²⁵ In the spring of 1880 the family moved to Danville, Indiana.²⁶ William was the head of the Mountain Home Colony of Friends, in Lawrence County, Alabama, in 1885.²⁷ From Danville, the Wootons moved in 1888 to Glens Falls, New York,²⁸ then in the spring of 1891 to Des Moines, Iowa,²⁹ in the fall of 1892 to Chicago, where they were successively members of the Chicago and Blue Island Monthly Meetings,³⁰ then to Vermilion County, Illinois, in the winter of 1894.³¹ A year later, in the spring of 1895, the Wootons moved to Anderson, Indiana, where they became members first of Fairmount Monthly Meeting, then of the newly organized Anderson Monthly Meeting.³² In the minutes of the Indiana Yearly Meeting for 1897, William S. Wooton and Docia Wooton are listed as residing in Denver, Colorado.³³

The abstracts of the records of the Anderson Monthly Meeting, collected by Hinshaw, state that the Wooton family was received from Lawrence Monthly Meeting in Kansas in the fall of 1897.³⁴ Unless we assume that the family moved more than once between Indiana and Kansas, we must take this for an error and assume that they moved to Kansas in 1894, since no mention of them in Indiana is found after that date.

The Wooton family is listed in Lawrence, Kansas, in both the 1900 census and in the 1900-1901 Lawrence city directory.³⁵ From Lawrence the Wootons moved in the summer of 1901 to Wichita, Kansas, to Friends University Monthly Meeting.³⁶ The minutes of the Mid-America Yearly Meeting list William and Docia Wooton's residence as Wichita for 1903 and 1904, and as Denver for 1905 and later years.³⁷

William S. Wooton died in Denver, Colorado, August 26, 1907, and Docia Wooton died in Denver, November 28, 1908.³⁸

Apparently William S. Wooton began his adult life as a woodworker, and only became a minister after becoming a successful businessman and inventor. In both the 1860 and 1870 censuses, William's occupation is shown as patternmaker.³⁹ He had no real or personal property



in 1860, but by 1870 he owned \$3,000 of real estate and \$500 in personal property. In the 1859 and 1868 directories of Wayne County William Wooton is also listed as a patternmaker.⁴⁰

While living in Indianapolis during the 1870s, William S. Wooton was involved in the manufacture of his Wooton desks, and Indianapolis city directories document his work. In the directories for 1871-72 through 1874 William S. Wooton & Co. is listed as an enterprise of William S. Wooton and Richard L. Talbot.⁴¹ In 1874 the Wooton Desk Co. was incorporated⁴² and directories for 1875 through 1879 show this new name.⁴³ William S. Wooton is listed as superintendent of the company in 1875 and vice-president in 1876 and 1877. After that year the directories do not show any connection between Wooton and the company bearing his name, but the 1879 directory lists his occupation as "manufacturer school and office desks."

It was during this same period that William S. Wooton's religious career assumed a greater importance. The 1873 city directory lists him as the superintendent of the Indianapolis YMCA,⁴⁴ and in 1874 he was recorded as a minister in the Indianapolis Monthly Meeting of Friends.⁴⁵ The 1880 census, taken after the Wootons moved to Danville, Indiana, shows William's occupation as minister,⁴⁶ and in fact William S. Wooton was one of the first ministers in the Danville Friends Church, organized in 1874.⁴⁷ After this point, all records found show William's occupation as minister. He was a representative at the Friends' yearly meeting several times, was the superintendent of the yearly meeting once, and held evangelistic services.⁴⁸

While the Wootons lived in Danville, Indiana, Docia's name first appears as a minister. In 1884, 1895, and 1896 she was a representative at the Friends' yearly meeting.⁴⁹ She was listed as a minister when the family left Danville in 1889.⁵⁰ While the family lived in Anderson, Indiana, Docia was assistant clerk of the Anderson Monthly Meeting.⁵¹ Docia was listed in the Mid-America Yearly Meeting records as a minister until 1908, the year of her death.⁵²

William and Docia Wooton had eight children, but only three survived childhood. The first child, Weldon, was born in Kokomo, Indiana, in 1863, and died there less than a year later.⁵³ Two daughters, Mary Luella and Emily, were born and died in Indianapolis in the 1870s.⁵⁴ Two sons, Lewis Joseph and William C., were born in Indianapolis and died in Danville, Indiana, in the 1880s.⁵⁵ Only Elmer Otis, born in 1866, Martha W., born in 1868, and Bertha, born in 1876, survived to adulthood. Elmer moved to Clinton County, Ohio, in 1899, where he left the Society of Friends.⁵⁶ Martha was with the family when they moved to Glens Falls, New York, in 1889, but was



not listed with them in the Des Moines Quaker records when the family arrived there in 1891.⁵⁷ Bertha lived with her parents at least until 1900.⁵⁸ She is found in the Whittier Monthly Meeting records, in California, in 1930, unmarried.⁵⁹

