

December 3, 1952

Dr. Roy Cook,  
Board of Pharmacy,  
Charleston, West Va.

Dear Dr. Cook:

I have communicated with Dr. Douglas Southall Freeman concerning a research matter and he has suggested I communicate with you.

Although a newspaperman, I am on the Fort Simcoe Restoration committee. I have completed a manuscript, now being scanned by the publishers, dealing with "Drummers and Dreamers," the story of the Priest Rapids or Dreamer Indians of the Columbia River prior to and after the Yakima Indian War of 1855.

This has led me on the trail of forts and the soldiers and I have considerable material about the men who manned them and served in early days, later being called into service for the Confederacy or the Union forces.

The State Parks Commission has approved and made preliminary allocations for restoration of old Fort Simcoe, built in 1856 and where many Virginians were stationed. We are now busily engaged digging up information about those men. I am interested in pertinent information about principal characters, titles and authors of books that may contain more information about them, sources where pictures may be procured and addresses of living descendants.

Considerable mystery hides the burial place of some of these men.

I realize it is no small request, but anything you can do will be highly appreciated by all of us and will be a contribution toward perpetuating the memory of these men in the rapidly growing far west.

Fort Simcoe was built under orders of Gen. George Wright by Maj. Robert Selden Garnett, later Gen. Garnett who was killed in the battle of Carlock's (?) Ford. There seems to be two Gen. Garnetts. There is vague rumors of stories that he was perhaps buried at Champlain(?) his body being sent home on a special train. Do you know where he is buried? addresses of any relatives who might have pictures of him or his wife.

His bride of a year, a Baltimore, Md., girl and baby, died at Fort Simcoe in 1857 or 1858 when he was approaching the fort, coming home from an Indian campaign. Nothing is known of their burial. There are stories they were buried at the fort, that they were sent back home for burial, etc. but nothing definite or conclusive. I would especially like to obtain a picture of her.

After her death Gen. Garnett may have resigned, gone to Europe for a while or something like that. I have nothing definite or of historical proof.

A subsequent commanding officer at Fort Simcoe was James J. Archer of Richmond. He was a captain here and later became



Gen. James J. Archer of the Confederacy. I have considerable information about him from the Baltimore Library, but nothing about his place of burial, or death, etc. He was a brother of a Robert Archer who was perhaps a Major. General. Both were captured, I deduce from letters he wrote to his mother and to his sister, Nannie Archer at Baltimore. Then I believe he was released and he may have been killed in the Battle of Atlanta.

I need pictures of Gen. Archer and especially of his family, which I presume could only be obtained through some descendant. His letters are of the highest quality and what with other information on Northwest Forts would permit something under the general title of "Bugles on the River," the life of these men at the isolated Forts and their subsequent service to their beloved home.

I have been amazed by how the men left here and climbed to great heights for the Confederacy or Union. Pickett was a close friend of Gen. Archer and was stationed at the coast or Steilacoom (fort) then. Grant was a lieutenant at Fort Vancouver. When Archer resigned he turned over his command at a fort in Oregon to a Lt. Sheridan.

There were many others stationed at Fort Simcoe, the Dalles, not far distant on the Columbia River, Colville, to the North or Vancouver, some distance away. The commandant's house at Fort Simcoe, which is still standing, resembles a Southern mansion and later I shall send you some small pictures of it.

Here are some of the other names appearing on the military roll there. Some I know to be noted men in later life:

Joseph B. Brown (Surgeon) Dickenson Woodruff, capt., 9th infantry; Francis L. Bowman, capt. (he became demoted at Simcoe, broke away from the surgeon and escort en route back to The Dalles and was lost in the hills. His body was later found. It was returned somewhere, maybe to the south.

There were other names: Harvey Douglas, 2nd Lt., Charles A. Reynolds, 2nd Lt.; Henry M. Black, 1st Lt., John W. Frazer, 1st Lt. George W. Carr, (Lt. and close friend of James J. Archer)

John C. Howard, Jesse K. Allen (killed during an Indian campaign, buried at Fort Simcoe and body later removed; Frances E. Patterson), William Meyers, James B. S. Alexander, Anthony Heger, (also spelled Hager on the rolls) Elisha E. Camp, David McKibbin, Henry M. Judah. The Frazer was also sometimes spelled Fraser.

I will be most happy to pay for any typescript material or photo negatives of any of these men, their families or their burial place. And, I will be happy to send you reports on our progress and if you wish or can specify, more complete information about their service in the Northwest.

Sincerely

Click Relander

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