

INTRODUCTION TO WALLACE of FAILFORD COAT OF ARMS

by Cecilia L. Fabos-Becker, 10 August, 2014



This coat of arms, awarded to Sir William Wallace of Failford in 1660, came to me through my late mother, Wilma Maie Wallace-Fabos (1922-1987), his descendant. William's younger son Samuel, emigrated 1724 - 1726, and died either at sea, or just before leaving Ireland or just after arriving in Pennsylvania, or Maryland. Samuel's children soon afterward went to Virginia, between 1739 -1742. My mother was born American and technically, after two hundred and thirty years, when she employed a service to find her paternal coat of arms, she, like any other American, was no longer armorial. This coat of arms was for her emigrant ancestor and his father—who had actually earned his knighthood and the coat of arms. However, life has a strange twist, occasionally. My mother married my father, a dual national Hungarian American whose father was titled, a count to be exact. Fabos is not the original family name; just what my paternal grandfather adopted when he was sent into exile in 1906. Grandfather knew that tyrants don't last forever, and he wanted my father to marry someone who met the old criteria for 16 quarterings within so many generations, as per HUNGARIAN custom. Well, Hungarian custom doesn't just pass on titles to the oldest male, but to all children, males and females of a titled person. So, he hired two lawyers and an investigator to look into my late mother's family and personal background. He'd already broken up engagements and such for his two older children, one more unsuitable would be match would have been no greater problem to end. One of the lawyers was the late A.B. Kipperman of Cleveland, Ohio and it was he who told me the "other half of the story," with a surprising amount that repeated what my own mother knew, because, you see, my father was also being investigated.

My late mother, in World War II, was in the Stillwell command, and at the end of the war was in Naval Intelligence. She'd also been in China. China was a sensitive subject for some time to come and my mother's record was partly classified. She'd also been promoted toward the end to Yeoman 1st class, and was a functioning petty officer helping to supply the Chinese in their fight against the Japanese, and just been offered a full course at OCS with additional promotion. She could have been a career officer in Naval Intelligence. Needless to say, when she decided to marry, her superiors took an interest in knowing who she intended to marry.

The two investigators—the one hired by my late paternal grandfather, and the one used by the U.S. Navy actually crossed paths and compared notes. You see, grandfather and his oldest son, who was not eligible to enlist, with their very detailed knowledge of Hungary had been helping the U.S. State Department and the OSS. My father, determined to prove he was just as good an American as anyone else, had enlisted—while recovering from a broken arm after being attacked for being a Hungarian—in the U.S. Marine Corps, and served in the 5th Amphibious Corps, and later the 6th, in the Signal Corps, within the Service Battalion, and was in the Japanese Islands campaigns at Saipan, Iwo Jima and Okinawa, among a group of deadly places. He'd been wounded at least twice, and briefly was a POW on Okinawa. He had been a radar and radio technician, a photographer for the war—and served with the Code Talkers. HIS record was also classified for years.

Apparently the State Department and Defense Department weren't always in perfect communication with one another, but the investigators knew one another and reported back to their respective superiors that the marriage looked ok to them. If nothing else, the couple would protect one another and keep each other's secrets.

Well, my paternal grandfather didn't always share everything with his wife—who had wanted a nice Hungarian aristocratic female, or a European equivalent, for her baby boy's wife, and not an "unknown, American, whose parents were nobodies."

Add this to the fact my late mother had been the fifth child and third daughter of her parents, and not wanted by her mother, who had actually not wanted any of her three daughters. She was what we now call, "male oriented" and had a serious Electra complex. She doted on her oldest son because he so greatly resembled her dear "papa." She had manipulated her husband into eloping with her and then dominated him. The marriage did not improve with time, but soured into the worst kind of vinegar. They were divorced when my mother was not quite 10 years old and she was not allowed to see her father, or know anything of his family, by her spiteful mother.

Wilma, my late mother, spent a large part of her life proving to herself and the rest of the world that she was a worthwhile human being, worthy of respect. She also believed her father had been very wronged. She was right, but it took awhile to figure this out. Her father was William Thomas Wallace (1880-1945) the third son of a family of 10 children, eight of whom survived to adulthood and married. His father had the oldest son of an oldest son and the family had once held some prominence in northwest Missouri. They were also distantly related to the First Lady, Bess Wallace Truman at the time my mother was at the end of her Naval Service, and in Naval Intelligence. In fact, her parents had been married in Independence, Missouri and a reception held there for them to “wrap the elopement up in clean linen” with every Wallace within a hundred miles being invited, according to her own late mother. She was not pleased that her husband’s family overwhelmed the event while most of her own snubbed it—actually snubbed her.

In the 1960's and 1970's Mom became interested in her father’s Wallace family and went to a couple of Scottish events. She determined to learn more about them and figure where in the greater clan the family fit. She asked and encouraged me to help her. I found her last living uncle whom she vaguely remembered hearing about but did not know anything about, including where he lived. I put them in touch with one another. It turned out, that her uncle, Grover Cleveland Wallace, had known Opal McDonald, and had helped her help George Selden Wallace when he was finishing his book on the Wallaces: the Descendants of Peter Wallace and Martha Woods. The two of them put together much of the Missouri-Iowa descendants of the Anderson County, Tennessee Wallaces for his book.

Shortly before Grover died he helped my mother to get her line finally identified. He extracted just the direct line back to Peter Wallace and Martha Woods and whom George Selden Wallace thought was their parents, and the sisters and brothers of Peter that George had. He made a mimeographed copy of about seven generations so my mother could send this, rather than the whole book, to a company she’d decided upon to do a review and identify the line. She had talked with several persons and found an organization, that while it did the usual generic coats of arms for people wanting such things, also for an extra fee, did more thorough research. After a couple short letters and a long distance phone call to England, they agreed upon a fee for a bit over \$150 U.S. for which this company would review the mimeographed pages back to the point of emigration that Grover prepared for my late mother to send them. They had told her they were familiar with the George Selden Wallace book and did have some regard for it. At least one other person from the line had contacted them and they done research work for that person.

So, about 1976-78 my mother decided on a “Christmas Present” to herself, and eventually, to me: the identity of her BRANCH of the Wallaces and a drawing of the coat of arms and verification letter that was whatever her last armorial ancestor had.

The two pages are all that is left of a four or five page summary letter that she received during Christmas time, while my husband and I were visiting. It arrived as my husband and I were getting packed and otherwise ready to take a flight back to our home in Minneapolis. I didn’t have much time to read and make notes from the letter (we didn’t have a photocopier in the house at that time) and we were also trying to take photographs with an old “Tower” brand 35mm camera of some old family photographs at the same time that my late father had not brought down from the upper garage storage area until the last day. I did read the letter and had an “aha” moment. I was familiar with the George Selden Wallace book and I knew he had stated, without substantiation, that the emigrant ancestor was Peter Wallace Sr., married to Elizabeth Woods. Well, it wasn’t. The letter clearly stated that while there was enough there to identify the line, George had erred in the identity of the father of Peter Wallace who married Martha Woods. The names of the brothers and sisters of Peter who married Martha lined up with a particular family and that was how they had known who Peter and his siblings’ real father was. Well, being in a hurry, I wrote down that it was not Peter Sr., but didn’t write down the name, but thought I remembered it well enough. I did scribble down who the father of the emigrant and at least four sons was: Sir William Wallace, knight, gentleman who had been born in Scotland and lived in Ulster (Northern Ireland) after his knighting.

In 1987, my late mother died of ovarian cancer. In her last months, she had tried to maintain financial and other records as she always had, but was on several medications including some very heavy pain killers. She could sound authoritative and lucid but her mind actually was wandering some days. After she died, my late father and I found she had left rather a mess of her files. Things were misfiled; some had duplicates, not always both filed in the same files, and apparently at times she realized she was making duplicates and pitched out pages or entire files which she thought she’d duplicated. When he gave me the file folder I’d seen before, he and I both realized most of the contents were missing. What is shown here is the last of that file. It shows with whom she’d contracted the service of reviewing and verifying the extract summary of her line

that her late uncle had taken from the George Selden Wallace book on the Wallace, and the description of the very particular coat of arms of her line—and all the Wallaces who descend from the sisters and brothers of Peter Wallace, as well. There was also a black and white line drawing that someone at the research center had hand colored.

Some years later I did some research to find the Sir William Wallace who was awarded this particular coat of arms. There was only one, and I do mean, only one, Sir William Wallace, knight gentleman who was in Ulster at the time of the father of Samuel Wallace and his three or four brothers, and grandfather of all the Wallaces who arrived in Augusta County, Virginia between 1739-1742. He was Sir William Wallace, knight gentleman who lived and died in County Down. He died in 1718, and left a will, though that will is not on-line.

He was connected to the Wallaces who lived at Newry—and there was a Peter Wallace—but, since he was an adult in 1660, he was the uncle or a first cousin once removed of the emigrant brothers, not the father of my mother's 7th great grandfather, Peter Wallace who married Martha Woods. The Wallaces owned at least two quays at Newry and were engaged in a combination of activities; farming, trade and shipping. The story that the father of Peter Wallace who married Martha and his siblings having been a merchant sea-captain, may well end up being true, but that's not absolutely proved yet.

That year at the SF Caledonian Club Gathering and Games, I had some help from a visiting Scottish gentleman who was an expert in understanding the coat of arms, and how it actually described the bearer in very particular ways. The two vertical halves says the house of the bearer was one house from the main one. The Lion Rampant with a fleur-de-lis in the dexter (right) paw says this was a legitimate son of the second house and that he was a third son of that house. Sir William Wallace, knight gentleman who lived in County Down, was exactly that: the third son of the laird of Failford, the principal cadet house to the Wallace Barons of Craigie. His oldest brother actually became baron later in their lives. This probably explains the curious change of appellation to Peter Wallace in the colonial records. When he first arrived in Virginia, he was described as "yeoman, farmer," but in later records he is recorded as "gentleman," which was used to denote the grandson of a knight; "esquire" being used to describe the son of knight. From the wills of himself and his sons; his sons had silver buckles on their belt and shoes—something that only gentlemen and the wealthy were generally socially allowed. His sons, all but the very youngest, were officers in the Revolution and his oldest, Samuel was a Colonel, and had been an officer, previously, in the French and Indian War. Under the English and their colonial system, only gentlemen and above were allowed to be officers. The same was true of Peter's brothers and many of their sons.

The identity of Sir William Wallace and his house is further confirmed in Paterson/Patterson's History of Ayrshire in which he stated that the records of Ayrshire showed that ALL of the Wallaces who settled in Ireland had ultimately come to Ireland from the House of Failford, which had not much land, but had developed shipping interests since late in the 15th century to sustain itself. This is the second coat of arms for this house within about 100 years. The earlier one is for Failford itself, and does not have an indicator for a younger son on it.

The motto is fitting for the cadet house of a smaller clan: Spe et Industria, or roughly Hope and Work (for that hope). The light-to-moderate blue field on the left half (as one is looking at it) partition of the coat of arms also indicates a connection to, and service to the king who issued the knighthood, involving the sea. The earlier coat of arms also has a similar blue half. This further ties the coat of arms to Failford—the well known sea-faring merchant house even in Paterson's day. I hope to some day learn the particular services rendered to two kings that earned the two bearers their related coats of arms. I have some theories but they are, for the moment, still theories—plausible, though they've been considered.

Now my late mother could have her very own coat of arms made—had my late father not wanted to forget family history altogether, especially his own. She could have had a divided coat of arms with one half the Wallace of Failford arms of her ancestor and the other of her husband's Hungarian family, as legitimate American born Hungarian countess. We laughed about the idea and decided to have another glass of wine and forget it the last time we talked about this, about three months before we learned my mother had cancer and it was terminal. I think we did the right thing. It was one of the few good laughs that were left to us.

The page below is the one remaining written page of the letter sent to my mother, the rest having been accidentally been discarded when she was on heavy pain killers while dying of cancer.

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To avoid duplication of insignia, a body of Heralds was appointed to visit all districts to enter details in their Registers, and to grant new Coats of Arms to those of the ruling class who wished to be "distinguished from all and singular."

The official Heralds (In England incorporated as The College of Arms), developed rules of blazonry, and a code governing the inheritance of coats of arms. These rules vary from country to country; in Britain there is the rigid view that Arms are similar to a Title, descending to the eldest son; while in some other countries House Arms are regarded as being common to all those related or descended from the original grantee.

bear, until direct male descent from the grantee or bearer has been properly established to the satisfaction of the appropriate Office of Arms.

We have carried out comprehensive searches for the description of a coat of arms associated with your surname or one to which it is etymologically related. We are happy to send you our report.

What we report to you is obtained by research in the most authoritative printed and manuscript sources available BUT no authority to bear and use a coat of arms according to the Law of Arms is implied by the supply of a blazon or an illustration of arms. No one may claim proprietorship of any Armorial Bearings, even if they were granted to one's fore-

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Origin of name:

WALLACE: This surname means either "welshman" (Anglo-French waleis, walais) or "a Briton from the Kingdom of Strathclyde". An early recorded example of this surname is from Norfolk in 1166 when a Robert Waliscus is mentioned.

Blazon:

Per pale azure and gules a lion rampant argent holding in his dexter paw a fleur-de-lis or.

Crest:

A horse shoe sable.

Motto:

SPE ET INDUSTRIA.

Source of reference: B.G.A.1067a
Search Done in 1969.