



TARRANT COUNTY TXGENWEB

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Archibald Franklin Leonard

(June 19, 1816-February 22, 1876)

Compiled by Seventh Grade LAMP Class, Smithfield Jr. High School
Michael E. Patterson and Trudie Byers, class teachers
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Archibald Franklin Leonard (1816-1876) was a pioneer and community leader who helped build and organize Tarrant County. As a citizen of the Republic of Texas, the Confederate States of America, and the United States, he was never afraid to move to the frontier and to work hard for his family. As a businessman, politician, churchman, and father, he set good examples for his neighbors and family to follow. Without men like Leonard to lead in settling new areas and starting new governments and businesses, Texas could not have grown to be the great state it is today.

A. F. Leonard was born on June 19, 1816¹ in Laurance Township, Clearfield County, Pennsylvania.² He was the third son of William and Barbara (Shaw) Leonard,³ and was probably named for his maternal grandfather, Archibald Shaw. Little is known about Mr. Leonard's early life except that he grew to maturity in Clearfield County.⁴

William Leonard, Archibald's father, was born about 1781 in Pennsylvania.⁵ He married Barbara Shaw and became a prosperous farmer.⁶ Barbara was born in County Derry, Ireland about 1795, and was the daughter of Archibald and Mary (Campbell) Shaw. The elder Shaws left Ireland and, after living in other parts of Pennsylvania, arrived in Clearfield County in 1810.⁷ Archibald Leonard's parents were living in Clearfield County as late as 1860.⁸

A. F. Leonard moved from Pennsylvania to Missouri as a young man. There he met Mary Ann Foster,⁹ a native of Alabama who had recently moved to Missouri with her parents.¹⁰ Mary Ann was born August 20, 1822,¹¹ the daughter of Ambrose Foster (1793-1848) and Susannah (Medlin) Foster (1796-1889). They were married on February 26, 1839.¹²

Mr. and Mrs. Leonard began their family while living in Missouri. Their first three children, Selete Caroline, Margaret Jane, and Mary Melissa "Mollie", were born in Platte County, Missouri. After their move to present-day Tarrant County, Texas, their daughters Barbara, Texana Bell, Martha "Mattie", and Josephine were born. The Leonards' son, Archibald F., Jr. Died in early childhood at an unknown date and place.¹³

Archibald F. Leonard made two major moves in his lifetime. He moved from Pennsylvania to Missouri in the 1830's.¹⁴ By 1840, he settled beside his wife's parents in Platte County, Missouri.¹⁵ In 1844, after he was well established and had a growing family, news reached Missouri that a peace treaty had been signed between the Indian tribes of North Texas and the white settlers near the Red River who were eager to move onto Indian lands. Believing that the upper Trinity watershed was open for white settlement, many of Leonard's neighbors emigrated to Texas.¹⁶ Among those who left were Ambrose and Susannah Foster. Pleased with what they found in Texas, some of the 1844 Missouri emigrants returned to their old home in 1845 and persuaded a second group of Platte Countians, including the Leonards, to move to Texas.¹⁷

The Leonards made the trip to Texas in an ox-drawn wagon.¹⁸ After months of traveling, they reached the Red River, north of Bonham, about November 1, 1845. Fifteen days later they crossed the Elm Fork of the Trinity River.¹⁹ On December 26, they arrived at present-day Grapevine and settled near the Fosters.²⁰ The area was then a part of Navarro County; later it was included in Tarrant County.

In the next few years, the 1844 and 1845 immigrants were joined by other related groups from the Platte County, Missouri area. Local historians today call those settlers "The Missouri Colonists."²¹ The area of Texas to which they moved was then being settled by a company of investors who called their settlement "Peters Colony." Both the Leonards and the Fosters were granted land certificates as Peters Colonists.²² In 1850, Mr. Leonard took title to nine hundred and sixty acres of land in present Grapevine.²³ Many of the present town's business and residential districts

are on land once owned by Leonard. A Texas Historical Marker honoring the Missouri Colony was dedicated near Grapevine in 1979.

Archibald and Mary Leonard were active members of the Baptist church in Tarrant County. On February 19, 1846, Mary became a charter member of Lonesome Dove Baptist Church.²⁴ It was the first church formed in present Tarrant County and still meets regularly.²⁵ Mr. Leonard joined the congregation in 1847.²⁶ The first Sunday School in the county was held in his home.²⁷ Mr. Leonard was often chosen as a delegate from his home church to meetings of both the Elm Fork Baptist Association (until 1855) and the West Fork Baptist Association (after 1855). He was clerk of the Association five times and served on its Missionary Board at least four years.²⁸ On October 12 and 13, 1855, Leonard became a charter member of the West Fork Baptist Association, a forerunner of today's Tarrant Baptist Association.²⁹ On August 30, 1856, after moving their membership from the Lonesome Dove Church, the Leonards helped organize the Centre Springs Baptist Church; it first met with ten members in their home along the West Fork of the Trinity River near Birdville.³⁰ In 1859, he helped establish an Association library and was named as a delegate to the State Baptist Convention. He served on the Sunday School Committee in 1861.³¹ On the fourth Saturday in August, 1864, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard and three of their daughters were among the charter members of the Fossil Creek Baptist Church in Birdville.³² The church changed its name, in 1917, to "Birdville Baptist Church" and continues to meet today.³³ From 1869 until 1873, he served on an Association Board to plan and build a Baptist College at Red Sulphur Springs in present-day Hurst, Texas.³⁴

A. F. Leonard was a merchant and community leader during his early years in Texas. In the summer of 1849, in partnership with Henry Clay Daggett (1820-1887), he established the first civilian store at Fort Worth. Their log store was built in a live oak grove northeast of the fort because military regulations forbade a civilian business within one mile of a military post. They sold supplies to the soldiers at the fort, to Indians, and to the few white settlers nearby.³⁵ When the post closed in 1853, Leonard sold his interest in the store and returned to the Grapevine area where he opened a mercantile business.³⁶ With his brother-in-law, Henry Suggs, Leonard laid out the town of Grapevine in 1855. During a discussion in Leonard's store about what to name the new town, one of Leonard's neighbors suggested the name "Grapevine."³⁷ By 1855, Leonard was renting the store to John W. Hughes. His Grapevine business interests were eventually bought by Mr. Dunn.³⁸

Mr. Leonard's strength of character and leadership were immediately noticed by his Texas neighbors. In 1849, the Texas Legislature created present-day Tarrant County from a portion of Navarro County.³⁹ In August 1850, when the first elections for county offices were held, A. F. Leonard defeated Mr. Barnham for the office of County Clerk.⁴⁰ The election was held in Leonard's and Daggett's store.⁴¹ On the same day, the town of Birdville was selected as the new county seat. A year later, the first District Court in Tarrant County was held in the same store. Birdville was the county seat during Leonard's term of office. It remained the county seat until 1856, when Fort Worth was chosen in an bitter election.⁴² Before a regular post office was established in Grapevine, Leonard served as unofficial postmaster for the community.⁴³ He again ran for public office in 1858 but was defeated.⁴⁴ The high point of his public service came in 1870-1871 when he, with B. S. Shelbourne, represented Tarrant, Ellis, and Collin Counties in the Twelfth Texas Legislature.⁴⁵ His daughter Selete kept house for him during his term of service.⁴⁶ In 1873, he served as Chairman of the Democratic Executive Committee of Birdville and was named a delegate to the Tarrant County Democratic Convention.⁴⁷ During the last years of his life, he also served as Master of the Birdville Grange.⁴⁸

During the middle-1850's, Leonard became interested in operating a mill on the Trinity River. About 1855, he petitioned the Texas Legislature for permission to dam the West Fork of the Trinity River and to erect a water powered grist mill east of Birdville.⁴⁹ In 1856, in partnership with three other men, he established Leonard's Mill.⁵⁰ A community settled around the mill. In 1860, Leonard's Mill was a public polling place.⁵¹ It was burned by abolitionists on July 8, 1860, but reopened by 1862. Leonard gradually became a majority owner of the business and sold the mill to H. B. Alverson in 1867.⁵² After passing through several hands, the mill became known as Randol Mill until it stopped operation in the 1920's.⁵³ A Texas Historical Marker was placed at the mill site in 1979.

The Leonard family's life was greatly affected by the Civil War. On June 29, 1861, Archibald Leonard enlisted in J. R. Cummins' Company of the 20th Brigade of Texas State Troops, a Confederate state militia group; his nephew Levi Leonard was fourth sergeant of the company.⁵⁴ A. F. Leonard probably never saw active service. He remained at home during the War and helped to guard the families of absent Confederate soldiers. His mill was vital to the welfare of Tarrant and surrounding counties. Mrs. Leonard was an accomplished weaver and taught many of her neighbors the skill. They made clothing and other items for the soldiers and their families.⁵⁵ Two of Leonard's sons-in-law, Hiram Crowley and William L. Boyd, died in Confederate

service. A third, John A. Mugg, was severely wounded and died in 1868 from wounds he received in the southern service.⁵⁶ A fourth, Thomas Utley, was also in Confederate service.⁵⁷ William Leonard, Archibald's nephew, was killed in action in a Texas regiment.⁵⁸ At the end of the Civil War, Mr. Leonard lost slaves valued at \$3700.⁵⁹

Many Tarrant County communities consider Archibald Leonard to be one of their founders. During his life in Tarrant County, he lived at many sites. His first home was a log cabin about twelve feet by twelve feet with a hewn log floor. It stood on his headright in the Grapevine community. The Grapevine Cemetery occupies the site today.⁶⁰ During the time the Leonard and Daggett store operated, the family lived in a small log cabin originally built by John Little; it sat near the southeast corner of today's Pioneer's Rest Cemetery.⁶¹ In 1853, the Leonards returned to Grapevine where they lived until the summer of 1856.⁶² About August, 1856, they moved to the West Fork of the Trinity River east of Birdville, where they remained until they moved nearer the town of Birdville in 1861.⁶³ About 1866, Leonard moved again but probably only a short distance and still quite near Birdville.⁶⁴ A. F. Leonard's last home was a comfortable frame house southeast of the present intersection of Carson Street and Elliot-Reeder Road in the city limits of Fort Worth, south of Haltom City.⁶⁵

By the standards of the day, Leonard was considered a prosperous businessman and farmer. In 1860, on the eve of the Civil War, Leonard owned eight hundred and forty acres of land near the West Fork of the Trinity River. He owned a sizeable herd of cattle and horses as well. His slaves represented most of his wealth; they were freed at the end of the war.⁶⁶ He patiently set about regaining an estate for his family.⁶⁷

Archibald F. Leonard died at his home in Birdville on February 22, 1876, after a struggle with pulmonary consumption (tuberculosis). He was buried in Birdville Cemetery with honors by the Birdville Grange.⁶⁸ His widow, Mary Ann Leonard, lived until May 19, 1904, and was buried beside him.⁶⁹

Mr. Leonard had a significant positive influence on Tarrant County during its early years. Through his business activities, his church work, and his civil service, he showed himself a community leader. He opened and operated the first civilian store in Fort Worth. He and his family helped to found the first church in the county and two others as well. Two of the churches still meet. He helped the new county government by serving as its first County Clerk and later served nearby counties as

well in the Texas Legislature. He willingly gave his time, effort, skill, and even the lives of his family to his county and state. The Texas Sesquicentennial is an appropriate time to honor Archibald Franklin Leonard's life and accomplishments.



Detail from Fort Worth Mail-Telegram, Historical Edition,
May 14, 1896.

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[Signatures accompanied all names above.]

The Birdville Independent School District's LAMP classes are composed of gifted-and-talented students who take part in accelerated studies in language arts and social studies. Mike Patterson and Trudie Byers are the class teachers. The class is held at Smithfield Jr. High School, 8400 Main Street, Smithfield, Texas, 76180.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Birdville Cemetery, gravestone inscriptions.
2 "Taxable Inhabitants of Laurance Township, Clearfield County, Pennsylvania, February 21, 1814," in Lewis Cass Aldrich, ed., History of Clearfield County, Pennsylvania... (Syracuse, N. Y.: D. Mason and Co., 1887), p. 591. United States, Federal Census, Laurance Township, Clearfield County, Pennsylvania, 1820, p. 308. Stemmons, John, ed., Pennsylvania in 1800 (Salt Lake City, Utah: private printing, 1972), p. ii-iii.

There is a persistent family tradition among the Leonard family that A. F. Leonard was born in Lycoming County, Pennsylvania. Clearfield County was formed in 1804 from parts of Huntingdon County (formed 1787) and Lycoming County (formed 1795).

- 3 United States, Federal Census; Clearfield County, Pennsylvania: 1820, Laurance Township, p. 308; 1830, Laurance Township, p. 238; 1840, Girard Township, p. 309; 1850, Goshen Township, p. 320. Aldrich, History of Clearfield County, Pennsylvania... p. 63.

Archibald F. Leonard's parentage was proven by locating the family of his brother, Abraham Leonard, in the 1850 Pennsylvania schedules. Abraham, who lived in Tarrant County before the Civil War, was known to have two sons, Levi and William. Both sons appear with him in the 1850 Clearfield County, Pennsylvania census. Abraham's family is enumerated on the same page of the census with William and Barbara Leonard's family. A reference in Aldrich, History of Clearfield County, p. 548, proves this William Leonard to be the father of Abraham and Archibald: "William Ross improved land about a mile below the mouth of Trout Run. This place was formerly owned or occupied by William Leonard, father of Abraham Leonard."

- 4 Clearfield County, Pennsylvania census, 1820-1830.

- 5 *ibid.*, 1850.

- 6 Commemorative Biographical Record of Central Pennsylvania, Including ...[Clearfield County]... (Chicago, Ill.: J. H. Beers Co., 1898), p. 632. Aldrich, History of Clearfield County, p. 549. William Henry Egle, comp., "Warrantees of Land in the Several Counties of the State of Pennsylvania, 1730-1898," in

- Pennsylvania Archives (3rd series) (Harrisburg, Pa.: William Stanley Ray, State Printer, 1898), p. 414.
- 7 Commemorative Biographical Record, p. 632.
- 8 Clearfield County, Pennsylvania census, Goshen Township, p.317.
- 9 Fort Worth Democrat, Fort Worth, Texas, Saturday, March 4, 1876, [hereafter referred to as Obituary].
- 10 Pearl Foster O'Donnell, Trek to Texas (Fort Worth, Texas: Branch-Smith, Inc., 1966), p. 46.
- 11 Birdville Cemetery, gravestone inscriptions.
- 12 Mary Daggett Lake (1880-1955), "A. F. Leonard, Pioneer, Arrived in County 81 Years Ago Today," Fort Worth Star-Telegram and Sunday Record, Sunday, December 26, 1926, [hereafter referred to as "A. F. Leonard, Pioneer..."]. O'Donnell, Trek to Texas, p. 46. Lonesome Dove Cemetery, gravestone inscriptions.
- The marriage date is recorded in the 1926 newspaper article, written from an interview with Leonard's daughter Texana Popplewell, as February 26. Mrs. O'Donnell's work records the marriage date as February 29. This must be incorrect since 1839 was not a leap year.
- 13 Tarrant County, Texas census; 1850, p. 92; 1870 precinct 3, p. 44. O'Donnell, Trek to Texas, pp. 46-49.
- 14 "A. F. Leonard, Pioneer..."
- 15 Platte County, Missouri census, 1840, p. 138.
- 16 Rupert N. Richardson, Texas: The Lone Star State (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), pp. 117-118.
- 17 Duane Gage, "The Missouri Colony," manuscript application for Texas Historical Marker, 1979, original at Texas Historical Commission, Austin, Texas.

- 18 "A. F. Leonard, Pioneer..."
- 19 John Allen Freeman (1821-1919), "Recollections of Early Days in Texas," in J. B. Link, ed., Texas Historical and Biographical Magazine (Austin, Texas: 1892), Vol. II, reproduced in O'Donnell, Trek to Texas, pp. 15-16.
- 20 "A. F. Leonard, Pioneer..."
- 21 Gage, "The Missouri Colony."
- 22 Seymour V. Connor, The Peters Colony of Texas, (Austin, Texas: Texas State Historical Association, 1959), pp. 252, 212.
- 23 Tarrant County, Texas, Tax Records, Master Map Books, map #2126-468, northeast quadrant. Tarrant County, Texas, Deed Records, abstracts of pre-1876 records in possession of Tarrant County Historical Commission.
- 24 "Lonesome Dove Baptist Church, Minutes, February 1846-June 1875 and Church History," microfilm of original records at Ft. Worth Public Library, Genealogical Division.
- 25 *ibid.*
- 26 *ibid.*
- 27 James Tracy Morehead (1809-1897), interviewed in Historical Edition, Fort Worth Mail-Telegram, May 14, 1896, original in possession of Tarrant County Historical Commission.
- 28 "Minutes of the Second Annual Meeting of the Elm Fork Association of United Baptists, begun and held with the Rowlett's Creek Church, Collin County, Texas, on Friday before the second Saturday in October; 1850..." and subsequent Minutes of the Elm Fork Association, 1851-1855. "Minutes of the West Fork Association of United Baptists together with the Minutes of the Convention of organizing the West Fork Baptist Association, Held with the Church at Birdville, Tarrant County, Texas, October 12th and 13th, 1855..." and subsequent Minutes of the West Fork Association, 1856-1876. Originals and/or typescripts at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Ft. Worth, Texas.

- 29 West Fork Baptist Association "Minutes," 1855.
- 30 John Allen Freeman (1821-1919), unreferenced letter written from his California home to Texas, excerpted in O'Donnell, Trek to Texas, p. 136.
- 31 West Fork Baptist Association "Minutes," 1859, 1861.
- 32 Zack A. Stroud, Historian, Birdville Baptist Church, letter to Pearl F. O'Donnell, 1964. Copy of letter in possession of Tarrant County Historical Commission.
- 33 "Birdville Baptist Church," Fort Worth Star-Telegram, unreferenced newspaper clipping, 1955, reprinted in Thelma Ray, The History of Birdville (Fort Worth, Texas: private printing, 1965), p. 17.
- 34 West Fork Baptist Association "Minutes," 1869-1873 inclusive. Tarrant County Deeds, Vol. M, p. 142.
- 35 Charles J. Swasey and W. M. Melton, Directory of the City of Fort Worth for the Year 1877 (Fort Worth, Texas: Daily Democrat, 1877), p. 6. Oliver Knight, Fort Worth: Outpost on the Trinity (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1951), p. 18. Walter P. Webb, ed., The Handbook of Texas [two volumes] (Austin, Texas: Texas State Historical Association, 1952), Vol. 1, p. 708. Julia Kathryn Garrett, Fort Worth: A Frontier Triumph (Austin, Texas: Encino Press, 1972), pp. 90, 93, 103. Fort Worth Writer's Project, Research Data, Fort Worth and Tarrant County, Texas (Fort Worth, Texas: Fort Worth Public Library Unit, 1941), Vol. 1, p. 111.
- 36 "A. F. Leonard, Pioneer..."
- 37 James Tracy Morehead interview in Historical Edition, Fort Worth Mail-Telegram, 1896.
- 38 Charles H. Young, "Naming of Grapevine," Grapevine Historical Society, Grapevine Area History (Dallas, Texas: Taylor Publishing Co., 1979), p. 491.
- 39 Webb, ed., The Handbook of Texas, Vol. 1, p. 708.

- 40 "What the Lone Cabin in the Wilderness Has Grown to in Half a Century," and "Tarrant County," in Historical Edition, Fort Worth Mail-Telegram, May 14, 1896.
- 41 *ibid.*, also James Tracy Morehead interview in same source. Tarrant County Historical Society, Historical Marker in Traders Oak Park" N. Samuels Avenue, Ft. Worth, Texas.
- 42 Webb, ed., The Handbook of Texas, Vol. 1, p. 708.
- 43 Zebulon Jenkins (1854-1932), "Early Days in Grapevine," The Grapevine Sun, June 5, 1924.
- 44 Archibald F. Leonard (1816-1876), and others, "Statement of Position of persons running for county office in Tarrant County in August 1858," original dated July 19, 1858, in possession of Mrs. H. H. Terrill, Grapevine, Texas.
- 45 Knight, Ft. Worth: Outpost on the Trinity, p. 262.
- 46 Cynthia Liddon Sterling (b. 1840), Family History, unprinted manuscript prepared by Mrs. Sterling about 1915 and typed by Julia Cowden about 1961. Copy at Fort Worth Public Library, Genealogy Division.
- 47 Fort Worth Weekly Democrat, August 2, 1873, p. 2.
- 48 Obituary, March 4, 1876.
- 49 Archibald F. Leonard (1816-1876), Petition to State of Texas, undated and unreferenced, probably late 1855. Photocopy in possession of Mrs. Nan T. Samuels, Ft. Worth, Texas. H. P. N. Gammel, Laws of Texas, (Austin, Texas: Gammel Book Company, 1898), Vol. IV, p. 400.
- 50 *ibid.*, also David Dunnett, "Randol Mill," unpublished manuscript application to for Texas Historical Marker, 1979, original at Texas Historical Commission, Austin, Texas.
- 51 "Three Cheers for Fort Worth," Dallas Herald, April 18, 1860, p. 1.

- 52 *ibid.*, also Tarrant County Deeds, Vol. 0, pp. 355-356.
- 53 Dunnett, "Randol Mill."
- 54 "Muster Roll of West Fork Guards, J. R. Cummins, Capt., Filed and Recorded the 30th day of July 1861 in Book H, Page 165 [Tarrant County Deeds]. G. Nance, Clk." Confederate muster roll, original at Texas State Archives, Austin, Texas.
- 55 "A. F. Leonard, Pioneer..." "Muster Roll of Capt. William Quayle's Company, Col. W. B. Sims' Regiment," Confederate muster roll, original at Texas State Archives, Austin, Texas.
- 56 O'Donnell, Trek to Texas, pp.46-49.
- 57 "Muster Roll of Capt. A. C. Nethery's Company, Gillmore Guards, 20th Brigade Texas Militia," Confederate muster roll, original at Texas State Archives, Austin, Texas. "Muster Roll of Capt. J. C. Terrell's Company F, Waller's Battalion, Walker's Division," Confederate muster roll reproduced in Garrett, Ft. Worth: A Frontier Triumph, pp. 363-364.
- 58 "A. F. Leonard, Pioneer..."
- 59 Tarrant County, Texas, Property Tax Records, 1860, originals at Texas State Archives, Austin, Texas. Obituary, March 4, 1876.
- 60 L. A. Foster (b. 1872), interview in 1965 quoted in O'Donnell, Trek to Texas, p. 134 "A. F. Leonard, Pioneer..."
- 61 "What the Lone Cabin...Century," in Historical Edition, Fort Worth Mail-Telegram, May 14, 1896.
- 62 "A. F. Leonard, Pioneer..." "Lonesome Dove Minutes..."
- 63 John Allen Freeman letter. "A. F. Leonard, Pioneer..."
- 64 Tarrant County, Texas, "A List of Registered Voters of Tarrant County, Texas for the Year 1867," reprinted in Fort Worth Genealogical Society, Footprints, Vol. 13, No.3 (November 1970) and subsequent issues, Vol. 13, No. 4, p. 131.

- 65 Tarrant County Deeds, Vol. K, p. 207. Tarrant County, Texas, Probate Records, File #13, Probate File of Archibald F. Leonard.
- 66 Tarrant County Texas Property Tax Records, 1860.
- 67 Leonard Probate File. Obituary, March 4, 1876.
- 68 *ibid.*
- 69 Birdville Cemetery, gravestone inscriptions.