FAMILY RECOLLECTIONS
by
Mrs. O. M. Adams – 1882

Transcribed and annotated by Jouett Taylor Prisley

Transcriber’s Note: Elizabeth Anne Sheffield Fall (younger sister of Rev. Philip Slater Fall) was born 1806 in England to James Slater Fall and his wife, Catherine Barratt. She was the fifth child, third daughter, of the ten children who came with their parents to America in 1817 to settle in Kentucky. Her 11th birthday was en route in the land journey. She married Orleans M. Adams and lived in Alton IL. He was for a time mayor of Alton and was in castor oil and shipping businesses. They had seven children. He died in 1860 and she in 1883.

The earliest recollections I have are of my father, living at Battersea, a town on the River Thames, England. It was a beautiful cottage with a large garden with lawns, shrubbery in front of the house, a high stone wall with two large iron gates, one at each end, from which a carriage road formed a half circle, past the front, coming in at one gate, going out at the other.

At the back of the house were lawns, flowers, shrubbery, a summer house covered with vines that were fragrant jasmines, honeysuckle etc. Tea was often served there. Beyond was a large mound covered with grass; on the top was a mountain ash, with a Gothic seat which afforded a view. Below it was a large fish pond on which was kept a boat to sail in, where Father often took us.

On one occasion Father took Mother to have a sail. She had Brother George in her arms, who was an infant, and on going to step in the boat it was moved and she slipped in over her head. Father jumped in after her and brought them both up dripping wet. It caused her such a fright she would never go on again.

While we lived there, Father, being connected with the Stock Exchange, went to London every day to attend to business, accompanied by a Newfoundland dog. On returning home one night, he was attacked by three robbers who demanded his money. The dog flew at the throat of one, then at another, and finally all ran after Father. Pistols were fired at them. He got safely home. The dog was a great pet and when he died, was buried on the top of the mound under the ash.

While we lived there, Father came to America to settle a large land claim for some noblemen in England. Brother Philip and William came with him. He put them in school in Philadelphia while he was attending to business.

He was so pleased with this country he left them at school and went back for his family, intending to come right back with them.

In the meantime the War of 1812 was declared. He could not return then as he was connected with the army, but he sold his commission as soon after as he could with that in view.

A gentleman who was in business and came over with them, as soon as that occurred, obtained passports for the lads, put them on the packet bound for Liverpool, kept all the valuables and money left in his care, except enough to pay their passage, stayed in America himself. When

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1 Note that the word “cottage” in English life did not necessarily mean “small.”

2 Actually, the “Honourable Artillery Company,” which bears further identification. He is not listed in any general army records of the era.
they arrived in Liverpool, met a friend of Father’s who sent them home to Father, who thought they were in America until they reached his home.

After the war, and the country became settled, 1817 he made ready and brought ten children over again. The eleventh was born ten days after landing in this country, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, May 10th. That was brother John.

After the birth and Mother had recovered, Father hired some wagons to take his family and much valuable property across the Allegheny Mountains to Pittsburgh. There were no railroads or stages then. The journey was a tedious one, but we reached there safely, stayed there some time to rest and made arrangements to go down the Ohio River in flat boats, for want of steamboats. The journey took us six weeks.

We children enjoyed it very much. Every night when the boats were tied up we would go on shore and see all we could, as everything was new. We would fish for minnows to bait for large fish, which Father and brothers enjoyed catching. We would visit the orchards where apples were ripe.

In due time we reached Louisville, Kentucky. Stayed there awhile and proceeded on our journey to Adair County – Columbia – where our uncle lived. He was a physician named [John Toms] Slater, who had a large practice and had urged Father to bring his family to this country.

Before we reached there, Mother was taken sick, traveling in wagons and nursing a young babe, she was attacked with bilious fever, being worn out with the fatigue.

As soon as we reached our cousin’s, Fenelon Willson, she went to bed. A physician was sent for but his skill availed nothing. She never rose from that bed, but died after three weeks’ illness. Left eleven children, the youngest three months old, the oldest nineteen. Father in the meantime was taken sick and when Mother died, was not able to leave his bed. His disease was jaundice.

Mother was buried in a cemetery of a Baptist church, the pastor named Hedgins, in Adair County, Kentucky. He afterwards baptized Brother Philip.³

As soon as Father was able to travel we started in wagons to go to Logan County and reached Stephen Trabue’s in a few days. Father was sick all the way. He died at his [Trabue’s] house. He is buried in his family graveyard, 100 miles from Mother, Logan County, Kentucky. Before he died he had bought 400 acres⁴ of land and engaged the building of a house, which Brother Philip had to have finished, and when done all eleven of us went home to live together.

Oh! how desolate we were without our parents, all children. Not one knew how to sweep a room, but by hiring a servant and the advice of two old ladies managed to live.

After a year or two Brother Philip, who was better fitted for a teacher than farmer, left us in the care of Brother William, and took a school, brother William remaining to open a farm with George and James to help him, who were only lads. We lived on that farm seven years, then Brother Philip married and took all the youngest to live with him and go to school in Louisville, where he was teaching.

Before this he had begun to preach, having been converted some time before, as well as Brother William, Sister Catherine, Mary and myself, during a revival of religion that occurred after Father’s death in that neighborhood. They all became Baptists, though our parents were Episcopalians.

³ Philip had been baptized in England, Anglican style (christened) in 1801, but in America was beginning to show inclination toward fundamental, evangelical faith, which grew, under his associated leadership into a new denomination, Disciples of Christ.

⁴ Actually, 198-1/2 acres
From Louisville he moved to Nashville, Tennessee, having been called to take charge of the Baptist Church there. There he lived many years as pastor. He also established a female school called Eclectic Institute. It was largely patronized, but his health failing, obliged him to change his residence to Frankfort, Kentucky, where he bought a farm and lived and educated hundreds of girls in that part of the country. He is now 84 years old and with the wife of his youth still lives there. Nancy Bacon, her maiden name, [Anne Apperson Bacon] She is now a helpless cripple owing to a severe fall, has been confined to her bed one and a half years, waiting patiently to be called home, after an exceptionally useful life. God bless her.

Our father was an officer in the British service. He sold his commission and brought eleven children to America, from England to Kentucky, where both parents died and left us orphans among strangers.

I am the fifth child and became the adopted daughter of Dr. B. F. and Eliza Edwards, with whom I lived nine years. I then married Mr. O. M. Adams, a gentleman from New York, at my Brother Philip’s, Frankfort, Kentucky.

My first housekeeping was in St. Louis, where we lived through the year the cholera was so bad in ‘36, I think. I lost my cook with it, one of the best of servants.

The next year we moved to Woodburn, where my oldest daughter, Kate, was born, and Mr. Adams manufactured castor oil, until in an unfortunate hour the mill was reduced to ashes with all its contents. There our first born was buried - Philip Fall, his name.

That brought us to Upper Alton where we lived while my husband was bookkeeper for John Hogan, then a merchant in the lower part of the town.

While we lived there the Lovejoy raid occurred, and though not present at the murder, witnessed the excitement. He purchased property in Middletown, built a home on it, we removed there and lived there until 1860, when he died leaving me the care of four children, three daughters and one son, besides a large fortune.

It is now 1882, the fortune has disappeared through bad management. My two daughters are married, one is dead. My son, George, has no family. I am near 75 years old. Judge Baker is my son-in-law, also Mr. J. L. Bird of St. Louis.

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When my father left England he expected at the death of a maiden aunt, Anna Maria Slater, to fall heir to part of a large fortune, left by an uncle, but was deprived of it by other claimants, not being there at her death.

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5 She makes no mention of Philip’s greatest work, being one of the founders of Disciples of Christ Church. That will be touched on in his bio in the Taylor lineage.