

Lum Woodruff, an early Meteorologist in Michigan and Texas

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The present fragmentary note on an early meteorologist in Texas is published in the hope that further information of Mr. Woodruff may be forthcoming. Fourteen years ago (*Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, 45, 284, 1942) I published a very brief note on Woodruff in the vain hope that the historians of Texas might be able to clear up the obscurities of his life; I hope that the present note, which goes to meteorologists and historians of science, may meet with a better fate. At least I shall have put on record what are the known facts regarding Mr. Lum Woodruff.

Mr. Woodruff was a Smithsonian meteorological observer at Lockhart, Caldwell County, Texas (1869-70, 1872), and published in the *Rural New Yorker* (22, 80, 160, 208, 1870; and 23, 176, 1871) reports on the weather of the seasons of 1870 and 1871 at that station. About 1882 he moved to southern Bexar County, and published (*American Meteorological Journal*, 2, 190-93, 1885) a paper on "Weather of Bexar County, Texas"; and later a second paper, "Brief weather review of station 20 miles s.s.e. of San Antonio, Texas" [16½ miles S of San Antonio, on the San Antonio River, in the SE corner of Bexar County] (*ibid.*, 4, 137-44, 1887). In the first paper he described the first recorded rainfall of 12 inches in 12 hours [6S1882] at his station; he also reported in a general way the weather from September, 1882 through the year 1883, and specifically the weather from January, 1884 to the first of June, 1885. These data are of much interest.

In his second paper, Woodruff reported the weather from June, 1885 to 28 June, 1887. Here (p. 144) he identified himself with the "Lum Woodruff," Smithsonian observer at Ann Arbor, Michigan (*post*) in 1855. In *American Meteorological Journal*, v. 8, p. 126, 1891, in a paper entitled "Some Western Gulf weather," Woodruff described the weather at Gallinas, northern Atascosa County [doubtfully, present Leming, 6 or 7 miles north of Pleasanton] for the month of April, 1891.

From 1852 to 1856 (or '7?) Woodruff kept meteorological

records at a station $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles east of Ann Arbor, Michigan. He was Smithsonian observer there from 1854 to 1856, while Alexander Winchell was observer at the University from 1854 to 1857. Woodruff was a barometer manufacturer at Ann Arbor in 1860. Deed records of Washtenaw County show the first grantee deed to "Lum Woodruff" given 10 December, 1856; his last grantor deed (with Cora Woodruff) was recorded 17 March, 1869. He may have come to Texas in 1869.

So much for the activities of Lum Woodruff in meteorology in Michigan and Texas. It remains but to give what little is known of his parentage and early life. He was born in central New York (Ithaca) in 1833 (his age is given as 16 years in the 1850 census records of Washtenaw County, Michigan), the son of Timothy and Hannah Woodruff (both natives of New Jersey, who married about 1823, and shortly thereafter moved to Tompkins County, central New York). Lum was the second living child in the family in 1850; a sister 10 years older having been the only other child of their parents in the census records. The parental farm in Michigan was $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles east of Ann Arbor. Lum bought property in Ann Arbor in 1856, and on 16 July, 1868 (then living a few miles south of Ann Arbor, in Pittsfield Township), married Cora A. Jones, whose name is signed to his last grantor deed (1869) in Washtenaw County.

The Ann Arbor City Directory for 1860 lists "L. Woodruff & Co., barometer manufacturers" on Fourth Street [Forest Avenue, between Ann and Charlotte streets], with residence on Washtenaw Avenue; and his name similarly occurs in the *Michigan State Gazetteer* for 1860, but at no later date. Evidently the business was not a large one, nor could it have been successful. Woodruff had no connection, it appears, with the University of Michigan, either as a member of the faculty or as student. That he was on friendly terms with members of the university faculty (especially with Winchell and the young Mark W. Harrington) may be surmised from the fact that the University library-copy of the Smithsonian *Annual Report* for 1850 bears his autograph, "Lum Woodruff, Ann Arbor, Michigan, June 1852."

The county records of Caldwell and Atascosa counties, Texas, have no records of land-holdings of Lum Woodruff

in those counties; in Bexar County his holding is described as "160 acres, 16½ miles south of San Antonio, on the San Antonio River." It was a part of an original grant to one Manuel Escalero [or Escarina?—hardly legible] in the southeast corner of Bexar County. During his residence there, as a single man, Woodruff was host for some months to an invalid, Edward A. Hills of Springfield, Vt. (in 1889 a banker at Humboldt, in western Iowa), with whom he had financial transactions disastrous to Hills. In spite of it all, Hills to the end of his days (he died in 1932) looked back to his association with Woodruff with much pleasure, and regarded him as "a very good friend." Woodruff (*vide* Hills) "was more interested in science than in anything else, so farming did not pay. ... He did not have good luck, and his letters revealed his disappointment, and finally they ceased."

Woodruff was a precocious youth; he was but 18 years old when he began to keep meteorological records; was elected a member of the A.A.A.S. in 1853 (when but 19 years old); and was a barometer manufacturer at twenty-six. But in that, as in all other known businesses to which he put his hand, he failed of success. He was a man of considerable promise, sacrificed to the conditions of his time and place.

At one time, perhaps in the long interval between his known Lockhart and Bexar County residences (1872; 1882), Woodruff lived "for many months" on the Amazon River in Brazil. There he was occupied in some capacity with a mill (*American Meteorological Journal*, 5, 509-10, 1888). Of his movements after 1891 I have no information. What was the full form of his praenomen I cannot say; the names Lum-bard, Lumby, Lumley, Lummus, Lumpkin, and Lumsden occur to me as possibilities.

Note

AN OBSCURE PUBLICATION ON TEXAS GEOLOGY AND NATURAL HISTORY—Sixteen years ago, while working in the library of the U.S. Geological Survey in Washington, I encountered their rare, perhaps unique, file of the "*Geological and Scientific Bulletin*. Published by the Texas State Geological and Scientific Association" of Houston. Of this association (incorporated 1884) perhaps the leading light was Edwin Theodore Dumble (1852-1927), who became State Geologist of Texas in late September, 1888, and left office early in 1895. Dumble was the early secretary of the association. Only one volume of the *Bulletin* appeared, dating from ?May, 1888 to April, 1889. It is complete in the