

A West Point Wedding in 1887

From the West Point Star, June 16, 1887¹

A town enthused from centre to circumference; a crowd hurrying to the Disciples church²; a church beautifully decorated and adorned with flowers of every color and variety! What does it mean? A marriage. A marriage of one of our best known citizens to one of our most popular and esteemed young ladies. The marriage of our honorable representative in the Legislature, Hon. A. W. Eastwood³ to Miss Wilma Henley⁴, daughter of the late Dr. S. S. Henley⁵. The time was yesterday evening at half-past 4 o'clock. The place was the Disciples Church in West Point.

We have never seen more interest in a marriage in West Point, a church more tastily [*sic*] and beautifully decorated or a larger crowd in attendance.

At half-past 4 o'clock sharp, the bridal party entered the church, the following gentlemen acting as ushers: W. A. Hughes, Harry Colly, W. T. Lipscomb, Geo. T. Garrett, J. E. Bland⁶, Straughan Henley⁷, Harry Williams and Willie S. Eastwood⁸. The bride entered leaning upon the arm of her brother, Thos. B. Henley Esq.⁹ and the groom

¹ The clipping from which this transcript is preserved was presented to West Point Christian Church in the late 1940s by Charles Harvey Denmead, Jr. (1891–1956), son-in-law of Andrew Willis and Wilma Henley Eastwood. His wife was Lucille Eastwood Denmead (December 21, 1892–1947). Both are buried in Sunny Slope Cemetery, West Point, where her tombstone incorrectly gives her date of birth as 1893.

² West Point Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) was established in 1884, and its first house of worship was dedicated April 30, 1887, at the southwest corner of Lee and Eighth streets. This wedding may have been the first solemnized in that almost new church building. Sixteen years to the day after its dedication, the church's meeting house was destroyed by fire, along with numerous other structures in the town.

³ Andrew Willis Eastwood, son of William and Susan Eastwood, was born in Gloucester County in 1839. He served in Company D, 53rd Virginia Infantry, and the 5th Virginia Cavalry during the War Between the States. At the time of his 1887 marriage he was King William County's representative in the state legislature, a position he held for eight years. In 1893 he was elected mayor of West Point, an office he held until 1910. Re-elected as mayor in 1912, he died in office on January 23, 1913. He is buried in Sunny Slope Cemetery, West Point. Eastwood's first wife was Bettie Ann Mill, born to James and Edulia Gregory Mill on May 11, 1839. She had married Eastwood October 12, 1858 and died June 12, 1884.

⁴ Wilma Henley (1852–December 15, 1942) was the daughter of Dr. Samuel Straughan and Robinette Pendleton Henley. She is buried in Sunny Slope Cemetery, West Point.

⁵ Dr. Samuel Straughan Henley (June 14, 1819–January 4, 1885) was born in Essex County, where his father, the Rev. Thomas Meekins Henley, became one of the ministers expelled from the Dover Baptist Association for his favorable reception of the views of the Rev. Alexander Campbell. His mother was the clergyman's second wife, Elizabeth Temple. Samuel was educated at the College of William and Mary and the Richmond Medical College. He married Robinette Pendleton on October 22, 1840, and lived at Claymont in King and Queen County, where he also served as an elder in the Smyrna Christian Church. Shortly before his death he moved his medical practice to West Point, where he was one of the individuals instrumental in the establishment of a Disciples congregation there. He and his wife are buried in unmarked graves in the Henley family cemetery at Hillsborough in King and Queen County.

⁶ James Edward Bland (June 18, 1861–May 8, 1936) is buried in Sunny Slope Cemetery, West Point.

⁷ Probably Luther Straughan Henley (October 18, 1866–December 24, 1946), nephew of the bride. He married Bertha Starr (March 10, 1872–January 14, 1951). Both are buried in Sunny Slope Cemetery, West Point.

⁸ William Sutherland Eastwood (August 28, 1868–1928), son of the groom, married Arlette Bowden (1875–1933) on June 25, 1896. They are buried in Sunny Slope Cemetery, West Point.

⁹ Thomas Baylor Henley (January 27, 1842–October 27, 1905), brother of the bride, was editor of the *West Point Star* and probably authored the article. He married Fannie Lee Roy Dew at Smyrna Christian Church on October 24, 1865. He and his wife are buried in Sunny Slope Cemetery, West Point.

was accompanied by his daughter, Mrs. A. J. Crane¹⁰. The bride and the groom were met at the altar, where they stood under a marriage bell of flowers and evergreen, by Rev. John Brandt¹¹, who in a graceful and impressive ceremony, made them husband and wife.

After receiving the congratulations of their many friends they left on the 5:15 train for Richmond on their bridal tour. They will spend several weeks in [the] Shenandoah Valley, and then return to their home in West Point.

The bridal presents were numerous and handsome.

The very best wishes of the STAR and of a host of friends attend this happy couple. May their boat glide very smoothly over the sea of life, and bring them at last into the eternal Haven of rest.

Transcribed and annotated by William A. Palmer, Jr.

¹⁰ Edulia Willis Eastwood (b. September 16, 1861), daughter of the groom, married A. J. Crane of Bath County on March 9, 1882.

¹¹ John Lincoln Brandt was born in October 26, 1860, in Somerset, Perry County, Ohio, the son of Isaac and Elizabeth Lufbury (or Loafberry) Brandt. He began teaching school at the age of 17 and by his early twenties had become a Methodist circuit rider. Attracted to the Disciples of Christ, he served numerous churches of that denomination, remaining in West Point only one year. He died in Los Angeles, California, on March 27, 1946.