

For the sake of clarity and accuracy, it is necessary to clearly establish the "correct" spelling of Argalus' family's surname at the very beginning of his story. The family surname was "Squier" not any of the alternatives that have been handed down such as "Squire" or "Squires". It appeared as such in the "History of New Haven" by Harold Farnsworth and Robert Rodgers and in the "History of Addison County, Vermont with Illustrations And Biographical Sketches of Some Of Its Prominent Men And Pioneers" edited by H.P. Smith. It also appeared as "Squier" in countless census and other public records. Therefore, the original spelling of the family's surname will be used in the text of this article. Other modified spellings will be used only in the Notes portion of the sketch.

Argalus Lovejoy Squier, son of Alvin Squier (1799-1889) and Sarah Hallock (1802-1885), came from a distinguished New Haven family.<sup>[1]</sup> His ancestor, Andrew "Squiar" was one of the town's original grantees. Many of Argalus' early family members, his father, uncles and brothers were all very active in town affairs, most holding town offices of one kind or another. His relatives took a great interest in social, religious and educational matters. A number of them were influential trend-setters in their communities, taking the lead in matters of importance and pushing frontiers of all kinds. The males in the family inherited their extraordinary height from the Andrew, who had five sons (including Alvin, Argalus' father), all standing above six feet in height. These towering figures would all sit together in the same pew at Sunday service in the Congregational Church of New Haven in 1852, making quite the impression on the other worshippers.<sup>[2]</sup>

Argalus L. Squier was born July 12, 1836 in New Haven, Vermont, the fifth and final son of Alvin and Sarah Squier.<sup>[3]</sup> Alvin first made his living as an allopathic physician, practicing his profession in Madrid, New York around 1821. Alvin married Sarah Hallock about 1822 while living and working in Madrid. Their first born child, Andrew George (1822-1903), arrived a year after the wedding. Andrew was the only sibling of Argalus who was born in Madrid, New York. Soon after Andrew's birth, Alvin decided to give up practicing medicine, returned to New Haven with his family in tow and went to being a farmer.<sup>[4]</sup> The next child born to the Squier family of New Haven was Lucius A (1826-1911). He was born in New Haven. In fact, all the rest of Argalus' siblings were born there: Charlotte B. (1832-1899; Hallock Edward (1833-1910); and Mary R. (1842-1868).<sup>[5]</sup> Alvin's career change was fortunate for a number of reasons and for a number of members in his extended family. By 1850 when Argalus was fourteen, his father had built the farm he owned into an impressive fortune worth \$11,000 (\$193,710 value in 2017 dollars). Obviously, Argalus grew up in an affluent household for small, rural Vermont. His childhood certainly would have lacked for nothing. Yet, at the same time, the home was not extravagant. There were no household servants or domestics. Alvin had one hired man - a twenty year old Irish immigrant - to assist him with the farm work. Alvin was no gentleman farmer by any means.<sup>[6]</sup> The fact that Alvin had achieved such a secure and comfortable life for himself and his family would prove most beneficial to his grandchildren later on when he became their guardian and mentor as well as their grandfather.

Aged fourteen in 1850, Argalus lived with his mother and father, Alvin and Sarah, and three of his five siblings: Charlotte B (19); Hallock Edward (16); and Mary (6) on the

very successful farm in New Haven. All of the children attended school when in session. The fact that neither Hallock nor Argalus, sixteen and fourteen respectively, worked on the farm alongside their father and his single hired hand, is one more indicator of the social/economic status enjoyed by the Squier family. By 1858, Argalus, then about twenty-two, found a love interest and married. She was Ellen (Eleanor) M. Ferris (abt.1840-circa1862-64) from Wisconsin. They were married in Milton, Wisconsin on May 6, 1856 by a Protestant minister named M. Montaque. Argalus had been living and working in Milton as a "depot master" previous to marrying Ellen.<sup>[7]</sup> The newlyweds continued to live in Wisconsin for the next three years. After the birth of their first born son, Charles D. Squier on March 2, 1859 in Leeds, Wisconsin, the family moved to New Haven where they settled in with Alvin and Sarah and his brother, Hallcok Edward (1833-1910) and his wife, Elizabeth Skinner, on the old homestead farm in New Haven. In 1860, there were three separate Squier families living in the same household. It was a fortuitous set of circumstances that Alvin was doing so well at farming that he could afford to support his two sons and their families as well as himself and Sarah. The farm was very prosperous in 1860. Alvin's value was determined to be \$16,000 - a sum today that would be around \$281,760).<sup>[9]</sup>

There was no telling where Argalus might have ended up or what kind of life he might have had if the American Civil War had not come along. Being from a family that was independent, resourceful and loyal to one another, imbued with a sense of duty and discipline, Argalus could not resist the patriotic call to arms that erupted throughout the nation after Fort Sumter and, particlarlay, after the disastrous First Battle of Bull Run. Despite the fact that he was a new husband and the father of one child under three years of age with his wife pregnant for the second child, Argalus enlisted in the Union Army as a Third Sergeant in Company A of the Sixth Vermont Infantry. The five feet ten and one half inch volunteer stood before the recruiter in New Haven and signed his name to the paper. He was twenty-six, which is probably why he was enlisted at the rank of sergeant rather than private, and had a dark complexion and dark hair which went well with his grey eyes.<sup>[10]</sup> The handsome young farmer, husband and father, who was described by some who knew him as "bright, able, running over with fun", was trading his secure and comfortable life for the dangerous and ruthless existence of a soldier in Mr. Lincoln's Army.<sup>[11]</sup>

The Sixth Vermont Regiment was raised from volunteers in all parts of the State within two weeks from the time Secretary of War Stanton contacted Vermont's Governor Erastus Fairbanks following the debacle of First Bull Run in July of 1861. Within thirty-three days of its formation and acceptance into the service of the United States Army, the Sixth was enroute to its first duty station in Washington, D.C. It was immediately sent to Camp Griffin near Lewinsville, Virginia where it joined the Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth regiments to form the First Vermont Brigade - the "Old Vermont Brigade". During the winter cantonment at Camp Griffin, the Sixth suffered terribly from diseases. There were 278 cases of typhoid fever, 330 of measles, 90 of diphtheria and 180 of mumps. Being used to clean air, isolation, eating wholesome and plentiful food and getting robust exercise doing their chores, the Vermonters were decimated by the cramped contact with urban carriers of diseases they had no immunity to, subjected to a monotonous meals ill

prepared and infrequently supplied, exposed to the elements and exhaustive duties and surrounded by sickness caused by the lack of reasonable sanitation in the camps perpetuated by the careless and torpid behavior of indifferent camp mates. The mortality among the vulnerable Vermonters was great, amounting to more than 50 deaths. Without any natural immunities to their infectious companions and considering the exposure and poor diet they were subjected to, the results in the ranks of the Vermonters was very similar to that which occurred among the native Americans of this country after their initial contact with white Europeans in the early settlement period of our history.

The Vermonters were glad to break their first winter camp on March 10, 1862 to take part in the Peninsula Campaign. It suffered severe losses at Savage Station along with other Vermont Brigade units. The Regiment did its share of fighting during the Maryland Campaign and served an active role at Fredericksburg. It went into winter camp in 1862 at White Oak Church. When it broke camp in the spring of 1863, it joined in the Chancellorville movement. There, and at Gettysburg and Funkstown, the Sixth distinguished itself in combat. After being a part of the Mine Run Campaign of 1863, the Regiment went into winter quarters at Brandy Station, Virginia. In the Wilderness Campaign of 1864, the Sixth was subjected to arduous and tragic work, suffering terrible losses. It was part of the famous assault at Spotsylvania and was repeatedly in action at Cold Harbor. Soon after arriving at Petersburg, the Sixth Corps, of which the Vermont Brigade was a part, was ordered to the defenses of Washington. They rejoined the Army of the Potomac in December of 1864 for the remainder of the Petersburg siege. In October, 1864, the original members not re-enlisted were mustered-out. After Lee's surrender at Appomattox, the rest of the Regiment was mustered-out on June 19, 1865.

The total number of members in the Sixth amounted to 1,681. Of that number, one hundred eighty-nine were killed in action or died of wounds; one hundred eighty-nine died of disease; twenty died while in Confederate prisons; and two died accidentally.<sup>[12]</sup>

Poor Argalus, the young man with so much promise, so intelligent, gay and happy, with a young wife and two infant sons at home never lasted through the first winter at Camp Griffin. He had not been a soldier for three months when he became one of those 278 cases of typhoid fever that wracked the Vermonters of the Sixth. Unfortunately, he was one of the fifty deaths that winter too. He died December 14, 1861 in the Regimental Hospital in Camp Griffin, Virginia of typhoid fever.<sup>[13]</sup> He lingered with his illness long enough for his father to reach his side before he died, so at least he did not die alone like many of his comrades-in-arms did. All of Argalus' effects were turned over to Alvin by Lieutenant R.A. Bird, Commanding Company A. He had in his possession: 1 over coat; 1 fatigue coat; 1 woolen blanket; 1 rubber blanket; 1 canteen; and 1 haversack. He had been paid \$9.62 up to November 1, 1861. He had only \$6 on him in cash. Since Argalus had only been in uniform less than three months, his union suit of blue was still new. It had cost the Government \$29.47.<sup>[14]</sup> And, since everyone knew enough about how certain diseases were spread by contact with infected persons and personal articles like clothing, no one else wanted any of his effects. It was reasonable to assume that Alvin brought his son's body back to New Haven for burial in his blue uniform and wrapped in his blankets. Argalus was interred in the family plot in Evergreen Cemetery in New Haven, Vermont.

Right after Argalus enlisted in September, 1861, Ellen, his wife, left New Haven to return to Wisconsin where she hailed from. Along with her, she took her two sons, Charles D. and Freddie Ovet. Charles had been born in Wisconsin in March of 1859. Freddie (Frederick) had been born in New Haven in June of 1861. When Alvin brought Argalus' body home for burial, she and the two boys returned to Vermont for the funeral. After her husband had been buried (either in the Fall of 1861 or the Spring of 1862), Ellen went back to Wisconsin, but she only returned with her youngest child, Freddie, leaving Charles D. with his grandfather, Alvin. In honor of her husband, Ellen had changed the name of her oldest son from Charles D. Squier to Argalus Lovejoy Squier.<sup>[15]</sup> This was the "official" name the boy went by for the rest of his life. Why Ellen decided to split the two brothers up was never explained. Perhaps, as a widow, she felt she could not adequately provide for both boys as well as herself. The infant Freddie could be breast fed, but the toddler Argalus Jr. needed more than just milk from any source. Emotionally and financially, Ellen may just have been overwhelmed. Lucky for all of them, her father-in-law, Alvin, was in a much better position to support another family member. As a wealthy farmer in New Haven, he could easily afford to take in another household member, and, the child after all was his grandson. It was not only the morally correct thing to do, but also a loving gesture in memory of a lost son.

On January 30, 1862, even before leaving Vermont to return to Wisconsin, Ellen began the process of applying for a widow's pension. Her first attempt was made under the old act of Congress dated back in 1836.<sup>[16]</sup> It was not clear from the public records if her application in January was ever granted or not. If it wasn't, then that could have been another factor in her decision to leave one of her sons with Alvin in New Haven while taking the infant son back to Wisconsin with her. Any how, on July 14, 1862 Congress, in the middle of its civil war with itself, passed an updated version of the legislation providing for the welfare of widows and orphans. Ellen, probably desperate for any assistance she could get, re-applied for an increase in pension benefits under the new act of Congress and as a resident of Wisconsin - not Vermont. Her application was dated September 1, 1862. From the records, it appeared that her benefit was the usual \$8 per month for herself and \$2 per month for each minor child of the handsome young soldier from Company A of the Sixth Vermont. It was a bit unclear whether Argalus actually received his \$2 per month support money since his mother was living in Magnolia, Rock County, Wisconsin and he was living in New Haven, Vermont.<sup>[17]</sup> The pension payments were retroactive to the date of Sergeant Argalus' death on December 14, 1861.<sup>[18]</sup> The payments for support of the minor children, Argalus Jr. and Freddie, would continue until each reached the age of sixteen (1875 for Argalus Jr., 1877 for Freddie).<sup>[19]</sup>

Now Ellen had some breathing room in her struggle to survive. A little money was coming in on a regular basis, enough for her to get by on and care for her infant son. But as often happens in this earthly life, just when things began looking up, another tragedy struck. During February, 1864, Ellen came down with the fever and died of it on March 1, 1864 in Jonesville, Wisconsin. It was the day before Argalus' fifth birthday!<sup>[20]</sup> After Ellen's death, her father, William P. Ferris, became the legal guardian of young Freddie Ovet Squier. His legal status as guardian of Freddie was short-lived. By November 23,

1864, he relinquished his appointment as Freddie's guardian to Alvin Squier of Vermont. Now, Alvin was the legal caretaker of both boys and they were united again, living under the same roof. Alvin could now guard and guide both of his grandsons as they grew into men.<sup>[21]</sup> Considering the fact that Alvin was a man of considerable wealth in 1866, he did not have to have aide from the Government in order to properly provide for the welfare of the two boys. Yet he did apply for support in the name of at least one of them; Argalus. Commencing July 25, 1866, "\$8 per month plus \$2 per month for each minor child until June 28, 1877 was payable to Alvin "Squire".<sup>[22]</sup>

Argalus Jr. remained in the household of his grandfather until Alvin died in 1889. Freddie did not show up as a member of Alvin's household in the 1880 Federal Census. He would have been nineteen then. Argalus was listed a member of Alvin's household in 1880. In addition, that year's census also listed Charlotte B. Wheeler living in the same house. She was Alvin's forty-nine year old daughter.<sup>[23]</sup> Apparently her life as a married woman had been turned inside out too and she was forced to go back home to live with her parents. At twenty-one, Argalus Jr. was still single. He undoubtedly felt a certain degree of loyalty and attachment to his grandfather who had, practically from his birth in Wisconsin, which Alvin attended, through his teens was the only father-figure Argalus Jr. had known. When Alvin became very sick in 1881, Argalus returned to New Haven from Chicago, where he had been studying medicine, to be with his ailing grandfather.<sup>[24]</sup> Such was not the case for Freddie who, while only briefly, had had another male figure in his life in the form of William P. Ferris, his mother's father. Freddie's whereabouts was unknown at the time of Alvin's death.

In 1900, at the age of forty-one, Argalus was a boarder living with a Stephen Nutting and his niece, Claribell Sherman, in New Haven. Argalus Jr. was still single and earned a living as a wagon repairer in town. He lived with another family besides the Nuttings in the same rented house.<sup>[25]</sup> His repair shop was located in Nuttings' blacksmith shop.<sup>[26]</sup> Argalus continued residing in New Haven until the turn of the century. He had upgraded his career from handyman to farmer when he moved to Hastings, Florida. Throughout the 1910s and into the early 1920s, he farmed in Hastings.<sup>[27]</sup> Around March of 1924, local New Haven newspapers reported that "A new hotel, the Pommedeterre has recently been opened in Hastings, Florida, by the owner and manager, Argalus L. Squire, a former resident here."<sup>[28]</sup> Sometime after moving to Florida, exactly when was not determined, Argalus Jr. finally got married. The only thing known about her was that her name was Dora D. Shortly after he opened the hotel, Argalus Lovejoy Squier, Jr. passed away from heart disease at the age of sixty-six. He was buried in Oak Hill Cemetery, Hastings, St. Johns County, Florida.<sup>[29]</sup>

Little trace of Freddie could be found until 1900. He was then living in Bradley Township Campbell Hill Village, Jackson, Illinois. He was single and boarded with another family.<sup>[30]</sup> He was listed as a "tinner" - someone who works with tin (tinsmith). In 1910, he was found in Knoxville, Illinois where he rented a home. He was forty-nine and was described as a "sheet metal worker".<sup>[31]</sup> Freddie lived to the ripe old age of eighty-one. When he died on October 25, 1942, he was living on East Main, Knoxville, Illinois.<sup>[32]</sup> He was buried in the Knoxville Cemetery where he lies today.

## NOTES

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2. History of the Town of New Haven. "History of Addison County, Vermont, With Illustrations And Biographical Sketches of Some Of Its Prominent Men And Pioneers", edited by H.P. Smith, Syracuse, New York, D. Mason & Co. Publishers, 1886.
3. www.ancestry.com, Vermont, Vital Records, 1720-1908 for Argalus L. Squier; Ibid., Hallock Branch Export 2015 Family Tree for Alvin Squier.
4. Ibid., Hallock Branch Export 2015 Family Tree for Alvin Squier.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., 1850 U.S. Federal Census for Alvin Squires.
7. www.fold3.com, Widow's Pension papers, p. 10, image 297549330.
8. Ibid., Records of Veterans' Administration for Frederick O. Squires, p. 25, image 297549364.
9. www.ancestry.com, 1860 U.S. Federal Census for Argales Squiers.
10. www.fold3.com, Compiled Service Records Of Union Soldiers Who Served in Organizations From The State Of Vermont, p. 2, image 311511860. Herein-after referred to as Compiled Service Records.
11. www.newspapers.com, Rutland Weekly Herald, Thu., July 7, 1870. From a letter written by Rev. Samuel W. Boardman, Argalus' former teacher at Castleton Seminary for an alumni dinner.
12. Vermont in the Civil War/Units/1st Brigade/Sixth VT Infantry/History.
13. www.fold3.com, Compiled Service Records, p. 9, image 311511875.
14. Ibid., Compiled Service Records, p. 11, image 311511880.
15. Ibid., Widow's Pension papers, p. 4, image 297549318; Ibid., p. 25, image 297549364; Ibid., p. 18, image 297549357.
16. Ibid., p. 45, image 297549414.
17. Ibid., p. 47, image 297549424.
18. Ibid., p. 34, image 297549384.
19. Ibid., p. 22, image 297549360.
20. Ibid., p. 44, image 297549412.
21. Ibid., p. 31, image 297549378.
22. Ibid., p. 26, image 297549366.
23. www.ancestry.com, 1880 U.S. Federal Census for Argalus Squier.
24. www.newspapers.com, Addison County Journal, Fri., Aug 12, 1881.
25. www.familysearch.org, 1900 U.S. Federal Census for Fred Squires.
26. www.newspapers.com, Middlebury Register, Fri., Apr 13, 1900.
27. www.ancestry.com, 1910 & 1920 U.S. Federal Censuses for Geo L. Squire & Gaigle Squire.
28. www.newspapers.com, Middlebury Register, Fri., Mar 28, 1924.
29. www.familysearch.org, Florida Deaths, 1877-1939 for Argayles Lovejoy Squires.
30. www.familysearch.org, 1900 U.S. Federal Census for Fred Squires.

31. Ibid., 1910 U.S. Federal Census for Frederick C. Squires.
32. Ibid., Illinois Deaths and Stillbirths, 1916-1947 for Frederick O. Squires.