

**ARMSTRONG, DORA JANE (MRS.  
JOHN HENRY CLARK)**

April 24, 1968

Mrs. C. D. Richardson, Jr.  
"O" Canterbury Road  
Richmond, Virginia 23221

Dear Mrs. Richardson:

There are no pictures nor a life sketch of DORA JANE ARMSTRONG in our files but I hope the following will be useful to the Dora Armstrong Circle of the Reveille Methodist Church.

Born August 17, 1898, Collierstown, Virginia  
Died June 24, 1963, Collierstown, Virginia

Attended Ferrum Training School - graduated 1918; Randolph-Macon half a session but left there for Johns Hopkins Hospital School of Nursing from which she graduated in the spring of 1923.

Following graduation from Johns Hopkins she spent a year at Ferrum Training School and another at a hospital in Lynchburg, Virginia. At some time before her appointment as a missionary she was a charge nurse on an obstetrical ward at Johns Hopkins.

Miss Armstrong was well thought of as can be seen from the following comment of Miss Lillian E. Mahood, who had known her as a teacher, friend and counselor:

".....I have the highest regard for both her christian life and work. Her unselfishness, conscientious regard for duty, untiring energy, sympathy and cheerful disposition especially qualify her for missionary work. She likes responsibility. I believe that she will faithfully perform any work that she may undertake."

In March of 1925 Miss Armstrong was commissioned in Tulsa, Oklahoma and sailed for the Congo in June.

Her first term was spent at the Mary Long Hospital at Wembo Nyama (1925-28). Though Miss Armstrong returned to the States in a weakened condition from malaria as soon as she was given the go ahead she began full time study at Johns Hopkins Hospital and it was during this 18 month period that she developed, with the aid of Drs. McCollum and Whittle, a formula for peanut milk.

Miss Armstrong returned to Congo from 1931-35 and again 36-38, to serve at the Mary Long Hospital. From 1938-39 Miss Armstrong served in the Lodja District doing Public Health work. After 16 years of service Miss Armstrong resigned on October 1, 1941.

Following her resignation Miss Armstrong was employed as secretary for the southeastern area of The American Mission to Lepers, Inc., and stationed in Atlanta, Georgia.

Her interest in Methodist missions had not waned for she wrote in early 1942 that she was preparing a cook book based on native foods of the Congo.

From this point on our records are sketchy. There is evidence that between 1947 and 1957 Miss Armstrong returned to Baltimore and Lynchburg and was married to a Mr. John Henry Clark.

In March 1960 there is a note that Mrs. Clark was very ill with cancer. In September she completed a book which she called "Congo Trails". In this small volume of 100 pages Mrs. Clark tells her story of "the pioneer days". Later that same month she was hospitalized at Johns Hopkins for her third cancer operation.

In 1963 Mrs. Clark wrote asking help in aiding a friend prepare a will/leaving gifts to the American Leprosy Mission and the Methodist Church - her two loves.

In September 1963 a letter was received from Mrs. Sheffey, a friend of Mrs. Armstrong's, enclosing an obituary.

In part the letter said:

"She was one of the most active, effective, radiant, Christians whom I have ever known. The U.S. is full of her friends, and I am sure that they would want to know that heaven is a happier place because she is there -- and that her suffering is over.

"Dora had her first operation for cancer about 7 years ago; almost five years later the second operation and since then two other operations. During all this time she gave her all to the little Methodist Church in Collierstown. It was her generosity, energy, and enthusiasm that kept the church going. She organized dinners, festivals, 'The Lord's Acre', sold cards, vanilla, candy, homemade aprons and each fall she and the other members made huge iron pots of the most delicious apple butter I have ever eaten. All these things were sold to raise money to keep the church open, pay the minister and give to the needs of Methodism -- all this was necessary because this beautiful little church had only about 25 active members. Unless they could pay their share of expenses and upkeep, they were told that their church would be closed. During the last few months Dora was unable to drag herself from bed to attend church as previously but by telephone, mail, friends and family God's work moved forward under her direction.

"For her funeral the whole countryside must have stopped work to pay her tribute. The church was crowded, all standing room was taken, and as many people stood outside in the sweltering heat. The Rev. Snead conducted a most impressive service ...I remember the closing

'Dora Jane was Christ-like; she healed the sick and the afflicted, visited the shut-ins, ministered to the poor and needy, opened her arms and her home to all children, she was always about her Father's business, and even in death she gave sight to the blind'. (Dora willed her eyes to an eye bank).

Peanut milk was prepared by extracting the oil from the peanut, drying out the residue which formed flakes. When these flakes were dissolved in water they made a liquid of milky consistency, pleasantly nutty flavor and - best of all - having the nutritive value of whole cow's milk. Miss Armstrong invented the process by which the flakes were formed.

Please excuse the typing but I do want to get this off as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

*Emily C. Martinez*

Emily C. Martinez  
secretary - Africa I office

/em

"O" Canterbury Road  
Richmond, Virginia 23221  
April 22, 1968

National Division Methodist Board of Missions  
475 Riverside Drive  
New York, New York 10027

Gentlemen:

I am trying to find information on Dora Armstrong. I believe that she died some years ago. Therefore our local office has no information on her. One of the circles in the Woman's Society of Reville Methodist Church is named for her, and they are interested in background material.

I believe she served in the Congo. We need this information to use in a program on April 30. I am aware that this is very short notice, but we would appreciate any help you could give us.

Yours very truly,

*Mrs. C. D. Richardson, Jr.*

Mrs. C. D. Richardson, Jr.

RECEIVED BY	
C. Melvin Blake	
(DATE)	
APR 24 1968	
TO	REFERRED
BY	ANSWERED
APR 25 1968	
BY	PASSED TO FILE
BY	FILED

ASHTON A. ALMAND	
TO	REFERRED
APR 24 1968	
BY	ANSWERED
BY	PASSED TO FILE
BY	FILED

Armstrong, Dora Jane R.N.  
ADDRESS OF RELATIVES

BIRTH Aug. 17, 1898  
SAILED [Resigned] Oct. 1, 1941  
DEATH 6/24/1953  
BRANCH W.M.C.  
BIRTHPLACE Collinsville, Va. W. (see over)  
FURLOUGHS July 1928 - June 1931  
Aug. 1935 - Nov. 1936

FIELDS OF LABOR

Central Congo Conf.  
Mary Loug Hospital, Okmulgee  
Tulsa, Okla  
1925-28; 1931-35; 1936-38  
Lodja District 1938-39  
(Public Health)

BIOGRAPHY

Commissioned Mar. 1925  
Tulsa, Okla  
Sailed June 1925  
Resigned Oct. 1, 1941

EDUCATION

Johns Hopkins Hospital  
School of Nursing 1923 R.N.  
Dearett College, fall 1924  
Johns Hopkins 18 months  
1929-31 working on  
peanut milk formula.

OBITUARY

WDCS, Exec. Com. Min. 11/41,  
p. 151, resignation accepted.

This card to be placed in the file - not to be filed in the vault - per D. Woodruff  
with D. Ernst - Sept. 12, 1962.

Another former missionary, Dora Jane Armstrong-Clark, R.N., died recently at her home near Lexington, Va. She served as a missionary nurse in the Central Congo Methodist Mission for almost 20 years.

After resigning from her Congo work she accepted a position with the American Leprosy Mission as secretary of the southern area where she was located in Dallas for several years. She returned to her home in Virginia where she continued her work as a nurse in the Lexington hospital.

Dora Jane Armstrong-Clark  
March 1968



October 2, 1963

Mrs. Charles F.H. Sheffey  
3908 Handy Street  
Lynchburg, 5, Virginia

Dear Mrs. Sheffey:

Thank you for your good letter of September 26th telling of the life and the contribution you, as a friend of Dora Armstrong Clark, have known, and have felt.

It is commendable to realize and remember this fine missionary and the spirit she manifested throughout her life's work.

I am sure what you say is quite true.

Thank you for sending the newspaper clipping enclosed in plastic. We are enclosing this now.

With every good wish and appreciation for the tribute you have given of Dora Armstrong Clark's life.

Sincerely yours,

Ruth Lawrence  
Executive Secretary  
Africa, Europe

WHL:hr  
enc. clipping

(Dora Jane Armstrong Clark died June 24 1963)

Ruth Lawrence  
Rec'd SEP 30 1963  
sent 10/9/63

Ms. Walter P. M. Shelton  
3758 Kanby St.

Lynchburg, Virginia  
September 28, 1963

Miss Ruth Lawrence  
475 Riverside Drive  
New York, N.Y.

Dec 1963

Dear Miss Lawrence,  
Since I have seen no  
notice of Dora Armstrong Clark's  
death in any of our church liter-  
ature, I've finally concluded that  
the family failed to notify our  
church staff. So I'm enclosing  
a newspaper clipping for your  
information. Please return it.  
We live about sixty-five  
miles from Colliertown, so we  
have kept in touch with Dora  
through the last weeks, visiting  
her once or a few times, twice  
a week. In fact, my husband &  
I took her to Hopkins two weeks  
before her death.

She was one of the most active, effective, radiant Christians whom I have ever known. The U.S. is full of her friends. I'm sure that they would want to know that heaven is a happier place because she is there - and that her suffering is over.

Dora had her first operation for cancer about seven years ago; almost five years later, the second operation; and since then two other operations. During all this time she gave her all to the little Methodist Church in Colliertown. It was her generosity, energy, and enthusiasm that kept the church going. She organized dinners, festivals, sold cards, vanilla, candy, home-made aprons and each fall she and the other members made huge iron pots of the most delicious apple butter. We were eaten. All these things were sold to raise

money to keep the church open,  
pay the minister & give to the  
needs of Methodism - all this  
was necessary because this  
beautiful little church had only  
about twenty-five active members,  
& unless they could pay their  
share of expenses & upkeep, they  
were told that their church  
would be closed. During the  
last few months Nora was unable  
to drag herself from bed to attend  
church as previously, but by  
telephone, mail, friends &  
family God's work moved forward  
under her direction.

For her funeral, the whole  
countryside must have stopped  
work to pay her tribute. The  
church was crowded, all standing <sup>more</sup>  
room was taken, and as many  
people stood outside in the  
sweltering heat. The Rev. Smith  
conducted a most impressive  
service, & when I had a copy  
of the tribute he paid Nora, to

send you. I remember in closing  
he said, "Dora Jane was Christ-like.  
she healed the sick ~~and~~ the afflicted,  
visited the shut-ins, ministered to  
the poor & needy, opened her arms  
and her home to all children, <sup>she</sup> was  
always about her Father's business,  
and even in death she gave sight  
to the blind". (Dora willed her eyes  
to an eye-bank)

I didn't intend to write all  
this. I had only thought to send  
the clipping ~~in~~ brief details.  
But I was carried away - I  
miss her so - she was my  
friend

Sincerely,

Joy Burch Sheffey

Mrs Charles P. M. Sheffey  
3908 Handy Street  
Lynchburg 5, Virginia

*11/11*

*Re: Dora (Clark)*

Dear Ruth:

*ms.*

You have asked me now and then about the state of health of Dora Jane Armstrong Clark. Well, she is still alive, but her days are probably not long. I am told that she has committed herself to the Bethesda Cancer Research hospital, Bethesda, Maryland, and her papers are all in and her name on the list, to be received when the next opening comes up. The nature of that hospitalization, I understand, is that she gives herself for any experimentation they may wish to make in the battle to find the cure. This is the sort of thing that a nurse would do, and very much the sort of thing that Dora Jane would do.

Unfortunately, for some time following April 1, she went into a mental lapse also. She seems to be much better now--her last letter to me, this week, seems to be back to normal. But she knew what happened to her, and it appears from what they tell her that she did some very strange things, things very shocking until they learned her state and knew to sympathize, not condemn.

She still has some of the book "Congo Trails" on hand, since her health and mental state have kept her from pursuing the matter of their sale. If you feel that you could use some more of them, she would be glad to sell them to you for \$1.50, which is practically printing cost, instead of the \$2.50 you were generous to pay for the 80 copies you bought. Please let me know if you feel that you could use some more, and I will see that they are sent to you. When she goes off to Bethesda, what copies are not disposed of will be left on her husband's hands, and naturally we want to make the number left with him as small as possible, since it is supposed that she will never return home again.

I have noticed in line of duty that the Library Service of the Woman's Division has on hand to be mailed out to their list some books on the subject of the Congo. Are you familiar with this? Do you think they might be interested in adding this "book-on-the-beginnings" to their Africa list? If so, they could have them for the same \$1.50.

Sincerely yours,

## Feeding Peanuts to Babies

Found Successful in Belgian Congo Through Creation of Synthetic Milk Product.

Feeding peanuts to babies would be regarded by most people as the height of dietetic imprudence—but Dora Jane Armstrong, until two months ago a missionary in the Belgian Congo, fed synthetic milk created out of specially processed peanut pulp to undernourished native children who were brought into her little hospital, and watched them grow into happy, lively creatures.

The formula for this life-giving drink, which she developed with the collaboration of a nutrition specialist in Johns Hopkins Hospital, will never be commercialized. It will be made available to doctors as a free gift to all children who need it, according to Miss Armstrong, who has just returned to America to join the staff of the American Mission to Lepers. At their thirty-fourth annual meeting today and tomorrow at Broadway Tabernacle, 211 West 56th street, she will tell some of her African experiences.

The idea which resulted in "peanut milk" originally came from an industrial missionary at the Methodist Mission in Wembo Nyama, Africa. The principle is the same as that used in the making of the nourishing soy can pulp, used in China. The oil

first extracted from the peanuts, and the residue, prepared by a technique which Miss Armstrong invented, is made into small dry pills. When dissolved in water these make a liquid of milky consistency, pleasantly nutty flavor and—best of all—the nutritive equivalent of real cow's milk. That, for a country like Africa where cows do not flourish, is a priceless boon. For powdered cows' milk from America is expensive and hard to get.

### In the Jungle.

Her share in the development of peanut milk is only one of the things which Miss Armstrong, a Virginia girl, has done since she first went out to Africa seventeen years ago for the Board of Methodist Missions.

With the station doctor away on emergency calls Miss Armstrong has been often called on to face the direst emergencies. She has ridden fifty miles at top speed on a bicycle over humpy back-country roads to a confinement case in a tiny settlement where the people were terrorized by a huge python snake.

While she was attending the young mother she heard a great



Dora Jane Armstrong, "Mamma" to thousands of African lepers.

disturbance going on. Later she learned that the python had glided into a nearby goat pen, killed three goats and swallowed one of them. Thus distended with dinner, the python tried to escape but found he was too large to get through the small opening by which he had come in. He had trapped himself and amid great excitement the natives killed and skinned him just as the new born baby was arriving a short distance away.

So Miss Armstrong came to know intimately the people of the Batula tribe as they came in asking to be helped with every kind of tribulation.

It is the crowding in filthy huts, the poor and restricted diet and the ignorance of hygienic precautions that have made many of these fine, stalwart people a prey to leprosy, the scourge which the American Mission to Lepers has been fighting ever since it was founded in 1906.

Many little African children

will become lepers because they associate freely with leper adults—whereas by proper care and segregation in adequately equipped colonies, they could grow up perfectly sound and healthy," Miss Armstrong said. "That is why I have come back to America to work—not because I love Africa less, but because I want to tell Americans about Africa's crying need for more enlightenment, more hospitals, more doctors and more leper colonies."

She hopes to raise funds for several leper colonies in the Belgian Congo during her stay in the United States, she said. Leprosy is curable through the researches of modern scientific knowledge. Miss Armstrong has not forgotten what happened the morning she left the little village of Lodja to return to the United States. The last thing she heard was the rich native voices calling after her.

"Come back to us, mamma," they cried "Come back and bring us medicine!"

October, 1924.

Candidate for Foreign Missionary Work (Africa)  
Virginia Conference

CONFIDENTIAL SUMMARY  
For  
Miss Dora J. Armstrong

Address: Permanent: Lexington, Va. RFD 2, Box 25.  
Present: Clifton Forge, Va., 624 Brussels St.

Place and Date of Birth: Collinstown, Va., Aug. 17, 1898 - 26 yrs. of age

Health: Good: We have no late medical certificate

Education: Graduated from Ferrum Training School in 1913; attended Randolph-Macon half a session, leaving there to begin her nurse training in Johns-Hopkins; graduated from Johns Hopkins in spring of 1923.

Experience: Taught one year at Ferrum Training School; had one year in a hospital at Lynchburg; has had charge of the Obstetrical Ward in Johns Hopkins Hospital for past year; has had nearly four years' work in hospitals.

Testimonials: Miss Lillian B. Mahood, Lynchburg, Va., writes: "I have known Dora most all of her life as teacher, friend and counselor. I have the highest regard for both her christian life and work. Her unselfishness, conscientious regard for duty, untiring energy, sympathy and cheerful disposition, especially qualify her for missionary work. She likes responsibility. I believe that she will faithfully perform any work that she may undertake."

Faculty Estimate of Scarritt College: She would be a splendid nurse anywhere, but she is not competent to be a religious leader because she has had no experience. She should have two years at Scarritt. She will faithfully perform any work she may undertake. She is earnest, conscientious and has religious experience. Prof. Patton says no finer girl ever left Ferrum school.



November 1940

ARMSTRONG, DORA JANE, R.N  
(Africa)

Date and Place of Birth: August 17, 1898, Collinstown, Virginia

Conference: Virginia Conference

Supported by: Missionary Society, Memorial Church, Lynchburg, Va.

Relatives: S. M. Armstrong, Box 75, Lexington, Va.

Consecrated: Tulsa, Oklahoma, March, 1925

Went to Field: June 1925

Furloughs: July 1928 to June 1931 (Extended to study peanut milk formula.)  
August 1935 to November 1936

Education: 1918 Ferrum Training School  
1923 Johns Hopkins, R.N.  
1924, Fall Quarter, Scarritt College, Nashville, Tenn  
withdrew before completing work due to illness of mother.  
1935 Jan. to Mar., Lexington, Va.  
1929-31 eighteen months course, Johns Hopkins

Appointments: 1925-28 Wembo Nyama, Mary Long Hospital  
1931-35 Wembo Nyama " " "  
1938-39 Lodja

*Resigned Oct. 1, 1941*  
*Am. M. to Lepore*

APPLICATION

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The Woman's Missionary Council

of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South

# Personal Questions to Be Answered by the Applicant

(Give Definite and Complete Answers)

1. Full name ..... *Dora Jane Armstrong* .....
2. Address ..... *Route 2 Box 25, Lexington, Va. (some address)* .....
3. Place and date of birth ..... *Collinstown, Va. Aug. 11, 1898* .....
4. Name of parent or nearest relative. *B. M. Armstrong father* .....
5. Name of institutions in which you were educated and date of graduation ..... *1918* .....
- ..... *Ferrum Training School* .....
- .....
  - (a) Courses of study in high school and college ..... *Regular home prep course* .....
  - (b) Number of terms spent in each course ..... *(Required for graduation)* .....
6. What languages besides English have you studied? ..... *None* .....
- .....
  - (a) Time of study in each .....
  - (b) Do you acquire languages easily? ..... *No* .....
7. What musical instruments do you play? ..... *None* .....
- .....
  - (a) Do you sing? ..... *No* .....
  - (b) Can you lead in singing? ..... *No* .....
8. Have you had business training, and in what line? ..... *No* .....
- .....
9. Are you a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South? ..... *Yes* .....
- .....
  - (a) Where do you hold your membership? ..... *Collinstown, Va. E. Church* .....
  - (b) When and where did you unite with the Church? ..... *1913, ...* .....
  - (c) Do you give regular service in your Church? .....
  - (d) Are you in full sympathy with its doctrines? ..... *Yes* .....
  - (e) Name your Conference. .... *Lexington* .....
10. Have you any views which would prevent your cordial co-operation with the missionaries with whom you work?  
..... *None* .....
11. Have you had any experience in bringing others to Christ? ..... *Yes* .....
12. How long have you desired to become a foreign missionary? ..... *Since 1915* .....
- .....
  - (a) Do you propose to make it your life work? ..... *Yes* .....
  - (b) Have you a preference as to field of work? ..... *I prefer Africa* .....

1 My heart has been set toward Africa & the  
career I feel that he need a greater than  
(c) State preference and give reason... (I like my negro sisters & brothers)

- (d) Are you willing to go where the Board sends you? ... yes, any where
- 13. Have you been married? ... no
- (a) If so, is your husband living? ... no
- (b) Have you been divorced? ... no
- (c) Are you engaged to be married? ... no
- (d) Would you consider your obligation to the Board so binding as to delay an engagement for marriage? ... no
- 14. Are you in debt? ... no
- 15. Is any one dependent upon you for care or support? ... no
- 16. Have you applied to any other board or society? ... no
- (a) When and what board? ... no
- 17. Have you considered the trial of separation from your relatives, and have you decided to remain steadfast in your purpose to become a foreign missionary even if they should oppose you? ... yes
- 18. Do you realize that privations, hardships, and loneliness are the experience of a foreign missionary, and do you seek appointment with a determination to meet them with courage for Christ's sake? ... yes
- 19. If you should resign within five years for reasons not approved by the Board, do you promise to refund the outfit and traveling expenses given you by the Board? ... yes
- 20. Have you read the regulations for missionaries of this Board, and do you promise to abide by them? ... yes
- 21. Send names and addresses of five persons of whom inquiry may be made for further information concerning you.
  - (a) Your pastor ... J. C. ...
  - (b) A woman well acquainted with you and well known in your Church. ... Miss ...
  - (c) An instructor in an institution in which you studied ...
  - (d) A member of the school board ...
  - (e) If in business, the employer for whom you have worked ...

Date ... 1, 1892 ... Signed ...

Photographs from this  
file have not been  
included but are  
available upon request.  
For more information  
please contact  
[research@gcah.org](mailto:research@gcah.org)