

Family History

The Iredale's of Greensborough

The eldest of eight children to George Iredale and Sarah Hirst, James Iredale was born on 22nd January 1823 at Golcar; a small town situated about 3 km west of Huddersfield in the Dales district of Yorkshire, in England. James had a younger brother, John and six sisters, Alice, Ann, Mary, Emma, Betty and Sarah Ann, all of whom were born at Cliffe End, which is on the western outskirts of Huddersfield.

The Family, who were Baptists, worshipped at the Salendine Nook Meeting House, which still stands on what is now the corner of Laund and Moor Hi roads in Salendine Nook. George, in his position as a Cloth-dresser, whose task it was to cut the cloth after it had been in the fulling mill, would have earned a comfortable living, as it was one of the better paid jobs within the Woollen Industry. So it is not surprising that most of the children followed their Father into the industry as weavers.

Following the failed Luddite movement of 1812, when Cloth-dressers or Croppers, as they were commonly known, tried to oppose the introduction of shearing frames, history tells us that their numbers within the industry declined rapidly and that By the 1820's there were very few left. However, I doubt this to be fact as "*Cloth-dresser*" was still commonly given as an occupation, in Census data, for several decades beyond this period.

On the 14th May 1843, aged 21, James married Margaret Sunderland, also aged 21, at the Parish Church in Kirkheaton, which is on the opposite side of Huddersfield. At the time of their marriage, both James and Margaret were residing in Lepton. James' occupation was that of a Cordwainer, that is someone who makes shoes and other articles from fine, soft leather, so obviously did not enter the woollen industry like the majority of his siblings. We are, at this stage, unable to find any reference to an apprenticeship that he might have undertaken.

Within two years or so, James and Margaret had moved back to the west of Huddersfield as, on 24th Dec 1845, their eldest son, George, was born at Quarmbly Cliffs. David, their second son, was born on 12th May 1848, at Longwood, followed by Thomas on 14th June 1850, at Dean Head, Scammonden. At some point after the birth of David in 1848, where James gave his occupation as "Cordwainer", he became a "Farmer" as declared on the record of Thomas' Birth in 1850.

It is worthy of note that thirty odd years later while acting as informant on his father's Death certificate, George made mention of yet another sibling; under the heading of Issue, "eldest deceased" was written before his own name. No record can be found of this child.

The 1851 Census finds James and Margaret living at Croft House, near Scammonden. James is a Farmer on 16 acres, which was quite a reasonable sized property for that, very hilly, part of Yorkshire, where most farms, around that time, were only 3 to 4 acres in size. Today, unfortunately, Croft House is no more than a pile of rubble; the original dwelling having long since fallen into ruin; the farm swallowed up, as were neighbouring farms, to form the larger

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enterprises of the present day. On the 30th March, the night of the census, eldest son, George, was staying with his paternal grandparents at the "Back of Firs" Cottages in Longwood.

Only David, aged 2 and Thomas, 9 months, are with their parents at Croft House. James and Margaret's youngest child, Sarah, was born on 29th May 1852, at which time James gave his occupation as once again being, "Cordwainer". Whether James' time as a Farmer was short lived or whether he simply maintained both occupations is unknown.

Thomas, it would appear, may have died in childhood as no further reference can be found of him.

On the 7th October 1853, barely 16 months after his daughter Sarah's birth, James Iredale boarded the "South Carolina", in Liverpool and set sail for the Colonies; arriving in Melbourne on 30th January 1854.

Nothing is known of James during his first years in the Colonies, until two years after his arrival in Melbourne, when we find him living in Collingwood. On 29th January 1856, aged 32, he entered into, what can only be considered to be a bigamous marriage, when at St Peter's Church in Melbourne, he declared himself a Bachelor and married Emma Gilding.

Emma had arrived in the Colonies aboard the "Oithona" which docked in Portland on 30th January 1855, out of Plymouth in England. The ship's passenger list indicates that she was to be engaged by a Mrs Helpman of Portland for a period of one year at a payment of 18 pounds. This leaves a rather constricting time frame and begs some intriguing questions. When did she meet James Iredale? It was only 12 months after her arrival that she married him. Did James happen to go to Portland and possibly meet her there? Perhaps he knew Emma prior to their both coming to Australia? Although this is unlikely, as she lived in Devon and they would have had little opportunity to meet in England.

In 1858, a further two years on, James owned the General Store in Main Street, Greensborough, when it became the Town's Post Office. It is unknown at this stage whether James actually built the Store or purchased it after its completion.

By 1864, he had completed construction of the Farmers Arms Hotel, on the corner of Hailes street, opposite the General Store. Apparently he was initially unable to get his Publicans Licence due to the Marble Hall Hotel having been granted one in the early 1850's. This seems strange as I would have expected most towns to support more than one Hotel in those days. The Farmer's Arms however was able to obtain a special licence to sell Beer. In reality, the Hotel's primary function was to service the needs of those travelling between Melbourne and the Gold Fields.

Although James travelled to Australia as an *Un-assisted* Passenger, he does not appear to have come from a wealthy lifestyle in Yorkshire. So the question arises as to when and how James came into sufficient money to obtain the General Store in Greensborough as well as procure the several parcels of land that he owned in both Greensborough and Diamond Creek.

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In the meantime, half a world away, the 1861 British Census recorded James' Yorkshire family. Now living in the "Lower Houses" of Quarmby Cliff, his wife, Margaret, aged 40, was working as a "Burler"; a lowly paid and tedious occupation that involved the removal of burs, knots and extraneous matter from wool or the surface of woollen cloth. At this point she is the Head of the house and still considered herself to be "*Married*".

Living with her were, sons George, aged 15 and David, aged 13, both Cloth-dressers. Her brother Edwin Sunderland is also staying with them on the night, although it is not known if this was a permanent arrangement. Youngest daughter, Sarah, now aged 9, is with her maternal grandmother, Margaret Sunderland (snr) in Quarmby, on the night of the 7th April.

On 2nd April 1871, the Census of that year once again finds Margaret, living in the Lower Houses of Quarmby Cliff, now aged 49, she is still working as a Burler, son George, aged 25 and daughter Sarah, aged 18, are still with her. Notably though, although James is alive and well in Greensborough, Margaret has now declared herself to be a "*Widow*".

We can only wonder what circumstances initially prompted James Iredale in 1854, to leave his wife of nine years and five children, to forge a new life in Australia. Their relationship over the ensuing 17 years will likely never be known. However, it would appear that word of his marriage to Emma Gilding may have finally reached his wife, Margaret.

On the 2nd November 1872, the "Essex" sailed from Liverpool, bound for Melbourne and George Iredale left his Mother in England to follow his Father to the Colonies. Eighteen months later, his Mother passed away.

Margaret Iredale, (nee Sunderland) is buried in the graveyard, on the wooded hillside across the road from St Mark's Church in Longwood. An inscription on her headstone possibly gives an element of insight into her life, it reads;

This languishing head is at rest

It's thinking and aching are o'er

This quiet immovable breast

Is heav'd by affliction no more.

It would appear far more than mere coincidence that George Iredale came to reside alongside his Father. Obviously he knew of his father's whereabouts, however, his feelings towards him are not known. For whatever his reasons, George settled in Greensborough after his arrival in Melbourne on, 26th January 1873.

A little over four years after George's arrival, Emma Gilding passed away on the 4th April 1877 and is buried in the Greensborough Cemetery on Hailes street. James was not alone for very

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long as, on the 12th December of that same year he married Harriet Stock (nee Waller), herself a widow from a previous marriage to James Stock, who had died in 1874. There are no recorded issue from either of James' two marriages in Australia.

George operated as a carrier between Melbourne and the towns Surrounding Greensborough. On the 4th April 1878, at St Peter's in Melbourne, aged twenty three, he married Anna Maria Gilding, who was the nineteen year old niece of Emma Gilding.

James Iredale, "Publican, Storekeeper and Farmer", as stated on his Death certificate, died on the 15th August 1885, from Chronic Nephritis, he was buried with Emma in the Greensborough Cemetery. His estate subsequently being divided equally between his wife Harriet and his son, George. Curiously, when acting as informant on his father's Death Certificate, George did not recognise his father's marriage to Emma, adding store to the fact that he believed it was bigamous. It was here that George also made the reference to an "*eldest son*" being deceased, giving rise to the possibility that the child may have died at birth; surely if it had been named, he would have given due recognition to his elder brother.

George was to become the Patriarch of all the Iredale families in the area. His marriage of forty-three years to Anna Maria Gilding produced twelve children.