

Leaving Europe for America

I have often wondered what it was like to leave Europe for America when my ancestors left, most of them in the 1800s. In those days it took weeks to sail, on a crowded ship, it was likely often cold and miserable, especially when there were storms. If you have never experienced sea sickness, it is truly awful, as if there is no real up, or you cannot tell which direction it is, and you feel nauseous, and may often vomit too. Many died during such a trip.

So, no chance of going back to visit the land and family you left behind. You would leave knowing you might never see any of them again. You could write letters, but it could take weeks for them to even hear from you, let alone how long until you might hear from them. How could you know what struggles and challenges you might face? Would life be wonderful in America? Was life really that awful in Europe? Why did each one leave? What impelled them to undertake this arduous journey which was one way only?

I do know the struggles a few of my ancestors went through before they finally were reunited with some of their family years later in America. I will also tell what I know about the Clegg family which moved to Georgia, who are my husband Frederick's family.

The first story begins with George Wright. He was born in Ireland in 1807, worked as a carpenter, and married Ellen Tweedy. He was known for being honest and hardworking. They had four children until she died. She might have died in childbirth, that was fairly common then, or for some other reason. He needed a mother for his four children, and found a lady named Rebecca Hazley. They were happy and had four more children, moving to Dundee, Scotland by 1840, until only six weeks after her last child was born, she was sickening, and called her sister Deborah Ann to her bedside. She gave rings, and other jewelry to her sister and asked her to care for what were now 8 children, including the last which was named for Deborah, and made her also promise to marry her husband George after she was gone.

Deborah faithfully cared for the 8 children, and a year later she did marry George Wright. One of the step sons, William born in 1831, from the first wife, said she was really a wonderful step mother to all these children. George continued his trade as a carpenter, with Deborah keeping a shop, and she also worked as a midwife during this time. The older children worked helping out with the family finances too, for example, William worked as a bookkeeper for a large Glasgow factory. However, there was a high emphasis on education for the children, if they had day work, they went to night school. Deborah had four children of her own. The oldest she named Rebecca after her sister, the next to the last child was Jane Theodora, who was my great grandmother, and the great great grandmother of all the grandchildren of Earl and Della Crockett. The family was introduced to a new religion called Mormonism in about 1845, and decided they believed in its teachings and joined it. This was to have an immense impact on their future lives, which they likely had no inkling of then. They also moved to Busby, Scotland at about this time.

On Monday morning, September 16, 1854, George fell prey to the dreaded disease of cholera which was sweeping the area. He was taken home by friends, but died that night! This, as you can imagine, was really difficult for Deborah, who was pregnant with her fifth child. That son was born three months after his father died, on Christmas Day.

Deborah's stepson, William, was a great help to her, he was now 24, and her faith in God, was also a comfort to her during this period. However, a year later, William married Maria Brown, also from Ireland, and they were very desirous of going to America to be with other Latter Day Saints, as the Mormons called themselves. Imagine, the wretch this was to those left in Europe to see them leave, even though there were all kinds of promises of sending money to help the rest of the family emigrate too, as soon as there was enough.

William and Maria left their home and loved ones and traveled by rail to Liverpool, England, where they set sail for America on 21 Mar 1856 with a company of Saints. They sailed for 6 weeks before they landed in Boston, Mass. In May they went to Iowa by rail and then crossed the plains with a handcart company. That means that they had carts to push or pull for carrying belongings and food, but they, themselves had to walk. They lived in Salt Lake City, Utah until 1858 when Johnson's Army came and at this time they moved to Provo, Utah. They moved to Franklin, Idaho, 14 April 1860, and were among the first pioneers to arrive there. It was the first town in Idaho Territory to be settled.

Now the trip to America became the overriding goal for Deborah and her own children. Many of them worked at printworks and in the textile mills in the area.

It was likely the boys who worked for printers. The whole century saw a massive expansion of the printed word. The diversity and volume of printed matter was increasing substantially: from instructional works to crime novels and Gothic tales; all kinds of magazines; to educational books, to cookery books. These works were reaching a wider audience than ever before, all across the social scale. This became possible with technological improvements in printing and in paper production. Then also there were new distribution networks with improved roads and, crucially, the advent of the railway. The rising literacy rates, particularly among the middle and working classes, created a new mass market for printed material making for a ready reading audience.

It was the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, and the textile industry was in the forefront of this in England. In fact, most of this was in Northern England especially in the County of Lancashire where the Clegg family originated. My husband's ancestors, John Clegg, and his son Anthony worked in Oldham,



Lancashire, and when Anthony married Caroline Chadderton, his father-in-law was also in the trade. We don't know what the Wrights did exactly in textile mills, but we do know what the Cleggs and Frederick Chadderton did at the factories. Anthony was a weaver, this meant he was in charge of several weaving machines in a room which was often very noisy. His father-in-law was a carder, in charge of carding machines, while John Clegg was an Overlooker, this was much like a supervisor or manager who oversaw much of the whole operation. More about these Cleggs later, especially Anthony. No, not your ancestors but a family with an interesting history which is easier to research these days with the internet and familysearch.org which is a free service of the LDS Church, for people to research and share info about ancestors.

Another job some of the Wright daughters had was very special, they were able to serve as maids to the Queen. What queen? Who was Queen of Scotland? Actually, the only queen in the whole of England

and Scotland at the time was Queen Victoria. So, they might have worked for her when she visited Scotland, which she loved. She had nine children until her husband Prince Albert died in 1861, that devastated her and she avoided public appearances after that. However, she was generous to her maids and often gave them gloves, hats or dresses she had won only once. (The image shows Queen Victoria in 1860.) Little by little, the Wright family saved up money to leave for America. However, there were still family members they would be leaving behind, as they prepared to leave in 1868, and that was all their half brothers and sisters.

Deborah Ann and her own 5 children, Rebecca, George, Margaret, Jane, and Joseph left their home on 24 June 1868 with a company of 457 Mormons on the ship The Constitution. They arrived in New York in August and continued by rail to Benton, Nebraska where, on the 24th of August 1868, they began the trek across the plains with Captain John Gillespie's Ox Team Co. The baggage was carried in wagons, but the immigrants walked most of the way. They arrived in Salt Lake, 15 September 1868. The family at once moved to Franklin, Idaho, so that they might be with William again, for it had been almost 12 years since he had left for America. They were soon able to find work and build their home. Deborah continued her practice as a midwife and did much good as there were no doctors in this small town. Within a few years, her children were all married and settled near Franklin. (At left, is the photo taken of Deborah which now hangs in a small history museum in Franklin, Idaho.)



My own great grandmother Jane Theodora was only sixteen when she married John Biggs, less than four months after they arrived. He was much older than her, 21 years, but they were very happy together raising twelve children, a lovely garden and orchard. Their sixth child, Margaret was my mother's mother, and I was named after her. She lived close by after her marriage so my mother, Della, knew her grandmother Jane well, and could imitate her grandmother's Scottish brogue which she taught to me.

Some of the step children of Deborah did also finally make their way to America, and were undoubtedly received with much joy and celebrations with their relatives in Idaho. These all must have been wonderful reunions.

John Biggs, born in 1831, had an interesting life himself before meeting Jane. He had become a Mormon at 18, but could not convert his first wife, nor would she move with him to America, they therefore divorced. (This photo of John Biggs hangs at the museum in Franklin, Idaho).

He arrived in New York in May of 1861, then traveled to Hannibal, Missouri in a cattle car, followed by a boat trip to St. Joseph, Missouri. From there he traveled to Nauvoo, Illinois leaving there in August of 1861. He worked as a teamster, and arriving in Salt Lake Valley October 25, 1861. What was a teamster's life like? They were considered the roughest of the rough, often walking the oxen rather than riding. They were called bullwhackers and described as "Young half-savage men, who looked as if they had not washed themselves or clothes since leaving the Missouri River." If he was as rough as this, he had likely clean himself up by 1862 when he went to Franklin, Idaho to live. Here he met Martha Robinson and married her. They had no children but



adopted a boy. This marriage did not work out either so they were divorced, however John supported the boy until he was grown.

After he married Jane Theodora Wright in early 1869, he later married Jane Ramsbottom in 1870. It may be a bit hard for us to understand polygamy as it existed in the Mormon Church in the latter part of the nineteenth century. If a man who was already married but showed evidence of being able to financially support another wife, he might be approached by the bishop of his local congregation to suggest a specific woman who was single or widowed and was in an unhappy situation financially, or otherwise appeared to need the help of a man in her life. The man could say no, and he likely did check with his first wife, but he possibly considered it his duty to accept this calling. I had a few ancestors during this time period but most of them had no more than two wives, or were part of such unions, and as far as I know, the wives never lived in the same house, and sometimes not even in the same town. John and Jane Ramsbottom had seven children and it might tell you something about the relationship between the two wives that the first daughter of Jane Ramsbottom was named Jane Therdora, not quite Theodora but close.

In 1871, Brigham Young, who was the leader of the Mormon Church at that time, ordered a shipment of some machinery for a steam powered saw mill from the East Coast. It had to be shipped up the Missouri River to Montana then brought to Franklin, Idaho by ox team. It was set up in Maple Creek Canyon (close to Franklin); John Biggs ran the saw mill for many years. The mill sawed 300,000 feet of lumber for the ZCMI Store, a major store in Salt Lake City. Lumber was also supplied to the Union Pacific Railroad for railroad ties, but unfortunately too late for the railroad across from California to meet outside Salt Lake with the golden spike in 1869.

John and his sons operated a large farm about two miles from Franklin, here he raised many cattle, milk cows, horses, sheep, turkeys, and chickens. He grew sugar cane, wheat, hay and had a large fruit orchard. He also did truck gardening supplying many people with vegetables, and fruits of all varieties. People came for miles around to share the beauty of his farm and to get starts of plants and seeds which he was proud to share.



As John and his wives grew older he built homes in Franklin for both of his wives. He spent most of the late years of his life with Jane Theodora. The farm was turned over to his sons. John was always a busy man until he died at ninety-two years of age in 1924. His mother-in-law, Deborah Ann Wright died of a stroke in 1881, at the age of 63. While her daughter, Jane Theodora Wright Biggs lived to be 79 dying in 1931. (Jane Theodora is in the photo left.)

Did the love of education continue in these later generations? My grandmother, Margaret married George Comish, who had a farm within walking distance of the Biggs farm. However, when it was time for the oldest children to go to school, maybe around 1905, Margaret and George decided to move the two miles to Franklin to make it easy for the children to attend school there. To make this possible, George and his sons had to drive all the horses and cows every morning the two miles to the pastureland on the farm, and home again every night for 30 years. Neither Margaret nor George attended school very long, but they knew how much they wanted it for their children. Later, my mother, Della, would marry Earl Crockett, she would help support him through college and graduate school so he could become a professor of Economics at the University of Colorado,

then Academic Vice President, and Acting President at Brigham Young University, and they certainly encouraged their children in learning, three of which received degrees beyond the usual four years of college. Their oldest daughter Marian Brereton did not get an advanced degree, that would have been rather unusual for a female in the 1940's, but she did work at the Library of Congress for a while in Washington, D.C. and she was quite a scholar of genealogy back long before the LDS Church had such complete records. Therefore, she traveled as frequently as she could in New England to locate old church records, and visit grave yards to obtain more information about our ancestors. She was a foot soldier for genealogical research. So, yes, these Crocketts and their children and grandchildren have valued education highly.

So what about those Cleggs? How did they get to this country, when and why?

Why is going to be only guesses on our part. It may well be that Anthony and his father looked at the new world as a rich land of opportunity for a young man already gaining experience in the cotton production industry. Much was happening with the Industrial Revolution in America too by 1848, when Anthony and his wife Caroline (Chadderton) set sail for New York. They had been married in 1843 when he was 22. Now he was 28 and probably ready for a new challenge. Was it hard to leave? They would never see any parents or siblings or other family members ever again, as far as we know.

What Anthony might have envisioned was the chance to some day own his own company, a goal which might have been much harder in Oldham, England where he grew up.

See the biography below of him which gives us most of what we know about his life in America:

CLEGG, A.

Columbus, Georgia A. CLEGG, president of the Clegg Manufacturing Company, Columbus, Ga., was born in Lancastershire, England, November 18, 1821, and is a son of John and Ann (Ogden) Clegg. John Clegg was born in 1794 and was a cotton manufacturer. His son, whose name appears at the head of this sketch, came to the United States in 1848, landed in New York city March 11, went thence to Philadelphia, where he remained two years working at cotton manufacturing, which trade he had learned before leaving his native country. From Philadelphia he went to Harper's Ferry, Va., where he passed two years, when he moved to Winchester, Tenn., and a year later removed to Sparta, Tenn., thence going to Tuscaloosa, Ala., and Mobile in the same State. April 2, 1855, he settled in Columbus, Ga., where he was employed in the old "Eagle" factory, which, ten years later, was burned. In 1872 he went into the manufacturing of cotton goods on his own account, and in 1882 erected the Clegg Manufacturing Company building. He has been the president of the company ever since, with his son, John F. Clegg, as secretary and treasurer. The company employs eighty hands and manufactures the celebrated Mitcheline bed-spreads, cotton checks, gingham, stripe and cottonades. In 1843 Mr. Clegg married Miss Caroline, daughter of Frederick Chadderton, and of the eight children born to this union there are two living, viz.: John F. and Sarah V. Mrs. Caroline Clegg died in 1857, a member of the Episcopal Church. In 1860 Mr. Clegg married Miss Mary, daughter of Philip and Nancy Long. This marriage has been blessed with three children—Anthony, Bertha and Willie. Mr. Clegg is a member of the Episcopal, and his wife of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In politics he is an Independent. *[Biographical Souvenir of Georgia and Florida by FA Battey & Co., 1889-Transcribed by LA Bauer]*

A possibly interesting side note of this history. The Eagle factory where Anthony worked was not burned in some random fire, it was part of the deliberate destruction at the end of the Civil War of several of the Confederacy's commercial centers. The Battle of Columbus, Georgia took place on April 16, 1865, and that was when the Eagle Factory was destroyed. The Union Army likely did not know ahead of time that this particular factory made Confederate uniforms, and since communications were so poor General Wilson, who was in command also was not aware that General Lee had already surrendered to General Grant on April 9 at Appomattox, nor that on April 14, President Abraham Lincoln had been fatally shot. It was however, one of the last battles of the Civil War.

However, if Anthony moved to America with the dream of one day owning his own textile mill, he achieved that dream beginning in 1872, and with a whole new building in 1882. He lived until 1889 when he was 68.

The following was written about the same time as the above biography about Clegg Manufacturing and Anthony Clegg. Please note that the original publication was apparently uploaded using early text recognition software which made guesses when it found characters it could not easily decipher. So we too have to make guesses in these cases of what word was actually intended. The Company and Mr.

, -The reporter's veins always thrill with pleasure when he begins to write about the institutions and industries which make Columbus what she is. He loves to linger over them caressingly, and finally, to bring them into prominence before the people, well knowing that the highest terms of praise he can bestow, is no more than they merit. Just now our attention is turned to Clegg's Manufacturing Company, an extended notice of which appears elsewhere in these pages. While this factory is comparatively a small one, there is none in the South that is in a healthier condition, or which manufactures a better quality of goods. In fact, the product of their looms is a marvel of beauty and excellence, and the demand for them is so great that it is impossible, with the present capacity, to keep it supplied. So bright is the outlook for the future of the mills that capitalists are eager in their overtures to form a joint stock company, knowing that their money could not be more judiciously invested.

Mr. Clegg is one of the best mill men in the South. One has only to go through the establishment and examine the fruits of its looms to find this out. He has had many years' experience in the manufacturing business, and is a live, progressive man, who keeps fully abreast with the times. The mills are equipped with all the latest and most approved improvements in machinery. The factory building itself is new and attractive in appearance, and is very desirably located near the depot, on Second avenue.

Among the products of the mills are the magnificent Micheline bedspreads, which are in such huge demand just now. Eight looms are constantly engaged in the exclusive manufacture of these goods, which are turned out in every conceivable variety. They have four looms which make exclusively rare and fancy designs in Turkish towels.

Clegg were likely impressive, but the author is more flowery in his speech than one would expect today even of a publication hoping to entice investors and new businesses and families to consider Columbus, Georgia, which appears to have been the purpose.

While, John Frederick Clegg, Anthony's son, worked in his father's company of Clegg Manufacturing Co., the grandson, John Frederick Clegg, Jr. became a lawyer in Atlanta, Georgia. That grandson married Earline Gaines. They had two sons: John William and Owen Frederick, who was my husband's father. The Cleggs have continued to value hard work and education just as your family has. Many of them also have advanced degrees.

We all still value education very highly, and we are proud of our ancestors who came to America all those years ago, and often had many struggles in their lives. It is a good reminder when we have difficult times that we come from strong intelligent people, and we too can accomplish important things.

Margaret R. Crockett
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