

COCK FAMILY

Cock, or Cocke, is not an unusual name in Cornwall, and appears in widespread parishes. My particular forebears of that name were listed in the 1851 English census, living on an eighty acre property called Newey at Altarnun near Launceston (Cornwall):

Robert Cock, 55
Catherine, or Kitty, (Phillips) 47

Harriet 23; already married to Richard Oats and living in Gawler, South Australia; later moved to Goffrey's Creek in the Bendigo District. *Gaffney's*

Robert Peter 20

Edwin - died in infancy; *buried 25th Aug. 1833.*

Edwin 17 - my grandfather;

Catherine 15, Mary 13

Matilda 11

Frederick 9

Louisa 7

Hugh Phillips 4

They appear to have moved North to the Launceston area following the 1848 harvest. Previously they had lived in the Parish of St Keverne at a farm called Lesneague or Lesnege, which was part of a large estate Lanarth, formerly owned by the Sandys family who had acquired wealth from mining.

Robert Cock's family really considered St Keverne as their home. It is a large parish, embracing some of the wildest parts of the Cornish coast. It was the scene of many spectacular shipwrecks, being so close to the treacherous Manacle Rocks where the currents are strong and difficult.

The old parish church is picturesque and redolent with history. The site has been a place of Christian worship since 600AD. It is thought that the pink and green granite of the pillars was probably ferried over from Brittany; it certainly is not local.

In 1770 the tower of the church was struck by lightning during morning service; a vivid description exists in a letter, of which I have a copy, from a curate at the time.

Outside the lych-gate is a tablet commemorating two Cornish martyrs, Michael Joseph the Smith, and Thomas Flamank who led a march to London in protest to taxes imposed by Henry the seventh for war against Scotland. In June 1497 they were sadly defeated and the leaders hung, drawn, and quartered at Tyburn.

The name Cock first appeared in the tithe books of St Keverne parish when the widow of Robert Cock (1716-1753) moved from Constantine, a neighbouring parish, with her son Peter, just a lad. She had the helpfully distinctive name of Radigund or Rhadegond (née Nichols). She and her son farmed Lesneague, or Lesnege, and some other small farms. Peter became an overseer and responsible for the collection of tithes for Turn Traboe, a division of the parish.

Peter married twice:

Ann Rogers on 2.12.80; died 3.5.'91 after childbirth.

Of their five or six children, two daughters only appear to have survived:

Jane, born October 1783 m Richard Roskruege 1893?

Elizabeth, born September 1786 m John Smith
1807

Their son, John Smith, migrated to Australia in 1836. He was later to become a Member of the Legislative Assembly, and lived at Llanarth in Bathurst, NSW. His contribution to the merino industry is described in Quench not the Spirit by Bertha Mac.Smith, wife of his grandson.

Mary Mundy in 1795 (1772-1836)

Robert* born 15 April 1796; migrated to Australia

Alice, 6 July 1797

Harriet, 8 March 1799

Sophia, 4 October 1803

Richard, 23 September 1806 d. December 1806

Peter, 9 October 1808

Tracing back from Robert and Radigund Cock are two previous generations of Robert, and then Thomas Cocke m Mary Pearse November 1640. They are described as gentlemen and yeomen.

In the St Keverne churchyard I found the headstone of Peter Cock:

Beneath this stone
are deposited the remains of
PETER COCK
formerly reputable yeoman of this parish
who died 3rd December 1826, aged 75 years
Also ANN (ROGERS) his wife
and also three of their children who
died in their infancy

There was an elaborately carved verse, much eroded and attacked by moss and lichen, but I managed to decipher it. The engraver's name and the date, 1841, are at the bottom right hand corner. I assume it was erected on the fiftieth anniversary of Ann's death.

Peter Cock's second wife, Mary Mundy, is buried elsewhere.

I have not yet discovered the precise time that Robert Cock and Catherine (Phillips) migrated, their arrival, the name of the ship they travelled on, or the ports of departure and arrival. A letter dated July 1855 from John Smith of Gamboola and later Llanarth, Bathurst, refers to the previous January and indicates that Robert had been through a period of difficulty. Financial assistance was offered until the family found their feet again. Elizabeth, the mother of John, later the Honourable John Smith, was Robert Cock's half-sister.

At that time, his eldest son, Robert Peter, appears to have gone to the Victorian goldfields to spend several months with his sister Harriet Oats, taking the youngest brother Hugh Phillips Cock with him. Edwin (21), later my grandfather, had the responsibility of assisting his ageing parents at St Mary's.

It would appear that they lived in the St Mary's area for about fourteen years before moving to Bathurst, then Neville, called Nol Swamp or Mt Macquarie; and later to Wellington in about 1890.

My mother, Ethel Annie Cock, born at Neville in 1883, was the youngest daughter and eleventh of thirteen children.

There were floods on the Hawkesbury River in June 1852, June 1855, November 1856. 1857-9 brought serious drought; floods in 1860 in April, July, and November; and again in 1864. 1867 was the highest flood on record and caused great destruction of property on the Nepean and Hawkesbury basins. It would have covered the highest spot in the town of Richmond.

During those troublesome years, four members of the Cock family were married at St Mary's according to Wesleyan rites by the Rev Richard Amos, an erstwhile missionary in Sierra Leone and Tonga. It was his custom to present the young couples with a family Bible:

Mary Cock and Joseph Hill 26 November 1860

Robert Peter Cock and Sophia Starr 5 August 1862

Edwin* Cock and Susannah Stephens 30 September 1863

Matilda Cock and William Charker 5 January 1864

The two daughters were married from Fleurs where Robert Cock and his family lived at the time. Edwin and Susannah were married at the home of her sister Mary Mullis, or Mullice and her husband Jonathan who had been at St Mary's since 1850. A brother, Joseph Stephens had come there in his teens in 1846.

They all brought with them enthusiasm and devotion, stemming from the preaching of John Wesley and the Methodist revival. No doubt they participated in the establishment of the Wesleyan Church at St Mary's in 1861.

A letter in my possession dated January 30th 1868 is headed South Creek, a name well known at St Mary's. It is from Robert Cock, Senior, to his son Edwin, about the time they were planning to move to Bathurst. Edwin's fourth son was born at Mt Pleasant where 3,200 acres had been granted to Major-General Stewart years earlier, by Governor Darling; it was now run by his widow or his son: the letter refers to Mrs Stewart. Edwin was probably a property overseer and earned fifty pounds a year plus housing.

That letter refers to Robert's younger son, Fred, driving a van carrying potatoes, three tons of sugar in casks, and fourteen or fifteen hundredweight of weatherboard. Because of the heavy rain, and the bad state of the roads, his progress was slow and he had to reload at Barry's.

Crops he mentions planting are: turnips, pumpkin and barley; and that half a year's rent was five pounds. Names he mentions are: Mr Yorke, and Mrs Whately who may have been his landlady.

I have managed to find out some facts about Fleurs, but not who was owner in the 1860s. The old people seemed to be leaving a house without bars or locks and were worried about security. Edwin and Susannah had gone ahead by waggon with their young family.

In the Methodist section of the general cemetery at Emu Plains near St Paul's Anglican Church is grave 2073 where is interred the youngest child of Robert and Catherine, Hugh Phillips Cock, who was epileptic:

Formerly of Cornwall
England
Born April 25 th 1846
Died May 13th 1865

It is a very short grave with H.P.C on the footstone and the inscription:

Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou
knowest not what the day may bring forth

The only members of the family to remain in the district were Matilda and William Charker whose rather elaborate memorial is in the churchyard of St Mary Magdalene's : row J3502:

Matilda died in 1924
William died in 1929

They had a number of children. Eveline was the eldest, and Ethel, the youngest daughter married into the Turner family who were concerned with the timber business. Both visited my parents' home at Manly in the early 1930s. Eve at that time had remarried Tom Bowman and they lived at Harbord. Her sister, Ethel Turner lived at North Sydney.

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Children of Robert Cock
and Catherine (Kitty) Phillips

Harriet	b 1828 m 1848	Richard Oats, in Cornwall
Robert Peter	b 1830 m 1862	Sophia Starr
Edwin Edwin <u>1111</u>	b 1831 b 1833 m 1863	died in infancy <i>burial 25th Aug. 1833.</i> Susannah Stephens
Catherine	b 1835 (3 rd Dec) m 1855	Henry Oats, brother of Richard
Mary	b 1838 m 1860	Joseph Hill
Mathilda	b 1841 (?) m 1864	William Charker
Frederick	b 1842	unmarried
Louisa	b 1844	?
Hugh Phillips	b 1846 d 1865	aged 19 years