

From Adam to Sarah

My great-grandmother, Sarah Ann Gregory Hales, was born in Burns, Allegany, New York. Her grandfather, Moses Gregory, along with his younger brother Jeremiah and three others, were the first settlers of Burns. "The first settlement was made in the northwestern part of the town, on Canaseraga Creek, in 1805 by Moses and Jeremiah Gregory, John Gaddis and Samuel Rodman."¹ This area was heavily timbered with pine, oak, and hemlock, and each acre had to be cleared before it could be farmed. Life was difficult and providing food and shelter often meant unusual sacrifice, but the people worked to improve their situation and make a home for their families. "The first religious service conducted in the town was held in the home of Moses Gregory in 1806, by one Robert Parker, a Methodist exhorter. The first two graves dug in the town were for twin brothers, Jeremiah and Samuel Gregory, both killed by falling trees, the first on April 4, 1812, the second on September 17, 1812."² The town was still new when Sarah Ann Gregory was born on January 26, 1823 the daughter of William and Electa Ann Fellows Gregory. Sarah Ann Gregory married George Hales on November 30, 1843 and is mentioned earlier in this book.

William Gregory, the son of Moses, was born on October 22, 1795 and married Electa Ann Fellows on December 26, 1821 at Burns. Electa Ann was the daughter of John Fellows and Maribee Sogg of Dutchess County.

Another granddaughter, Jane Gregory Stevenson, wrote a sketch of the Gregory heritage.

“My Grandfather Gregory was born and raised in Scotland. He, with two brothers, came to America a few years before the War of the Revolution. Their names were Moses, my grandfather, Jeremiah, and Stephen. They settled and married somewhere in Connecticut. When the war broke out, he like many others, thought it a great crime to rebel against the king, but never took up arms on either side.

“When the war was over, he with others was banished to Newfoundland, at St. Johns, and there my father, Peter Gregory was born, August 18th, 1789. After the limit of banishment was over, my grandfather and family returned to the United States and settled in the state of New York. He lived to see his mistake and raised his boys to be true, loyal citizens to the new government. They all voted the Whig ticket. He lived and held on true to his faith in his Savior to the day of his death, which occurred in January, 1822. My Grandmother Gregory died about the same time, only three days difference in their deaths. I do not know much of her history.”³

The Gregory family had lived in New England for several years with traces of them in St. Johns, Newfoundland, Connecticut and New York. Near the town of New Fairfield, Connecticut lived one Samuel Gregory. This Samuel Gregory and his wife Sarah, the daughter of Ralph Keeler are reported to be the parents of Moses and Jeremiah Gregory. In the details of Moses Gregory is this note:

“He and his brother Jeremiah are said to be sons of a Samuel Gregory; they lived in or near New

Fairfield; names in their families are the same as those of known descendants of Samuel Gregory, but in conflict are circumstantial traditions of a Scotch descent. A manuscript of descendants of Moses and Jeremiah Gregory, compiled by Dr. Myron S. Gregory of Oklahoma City is in the New York Public Library. Dr. Gregory believed in the Scotch descent.”⁴

If the father of Moses Gregory was indeed Samuel as claimed in the note above, then the ancestor that crossed the ocean to America was Henry Gregory.

Henry Gregory was the father of a family that, in the 1630s migrated from Nottingham, England to New England. Henry's grandfather had gone to Nottinghamshire from Lancashire, in which for about 200 years Henry's forebearers had owned an estate named Highhurst.⁵

The earliest Gregory ancestor in England that I am aware of was Adam Gregory of Highhurst. Highhurst was located in the county of Lancashire about ten miles west of Manchester in the small township of Tyldesley. He married a daughter of the manoral family of Adam Ormeston of Ormeston (now Urmston), which is about four miles southwest of Manchester. This family of the early 1300s appears in the pedigrees approved by William Flower, one of Queen Elizabeth's Heralds, who in 1567 made his official visitation to Lancashire.⁶

From this Adam Gregory descends William Gregory who married Dorothy Parre of Kempnough. However, 200 years separate them and several Gregory generations are missing from the visitation pedigree made in 1567. The very scholarly work of Grant Gregory, cited in the footnote, is used to provide clues

to the most likely missing generations on the pedigree as follows.⁷

Hugh Gregory was most likely the son of Adam. Hugh was a feudal subordinate of the Tyldesley family and owed it military service, or its equivalent in cash. He was a freeholder and presumably a yeoman farmer. He is mentioned in 1341 in a document that grants Tyldesley manor to Roger and Robert de Hulton.

"I concede also to the same Roger and Robert the rents, services and homage which Hugh Gregorie owes for the lands and tenements which he holds of me in the same vill of Tyldeslegh."⁸

The Fourteenth was a rough century, especially in Lancashire. In 1360/1 Hugh was in the Assize court charged with wounding Adam, son of Richard the Nayler at Cheydock. Perhaps there had been a feud, or Hugh had collect a bill with cudgel or sword, after the fashion of the day.⁹

Hugh was the father of Robert Gregory.

Because of the difficulty and expense in transferring ownership of land in England in the Middle ages, there arose fictitious methods of passing titles; as for instance the *fine and recovery* in which the purchaser brought suit, pretending already to own the land, and the seller allowed the case to go by default.

Robert Gregory married Katherine, daughter of Thurston de Tyldesley (son of Richard) of the younger branch of that family, but founder of the more distinguished line. They married prior to or in 1354/5. Her father gave her twenty marks (a large sum for that day) as a marriage portion as well as thirty-five acres in Tyldesley with three houses. Lancashire acres were larger than our acres. Thurston retained for his life the

use of the realty, but by the fiction of a twelve-year lease provided that his son-in-law was to perform the feudal services. This Thurston had married Margaret, daughter of Jorden de Worsley, and thus became master of Wardley Hall in Worsley, the township east of Tyldesley.

During the Easter week of 1376 Robert Gregory went to court with his attorney, Thomas de Tyldesley, who was probably his brother-in-law and later became sergeant-at-law, or attorney, for King Henry IV. Through a fictitious suit Robert acquired ten Astley acres and a house.

William Gregory, son of Robert, was a bailiff of the Hundred, or *Wapentake*, of West Derby. He held the Hundred Court, aided the sheriff and collected taxes. His father-in-law, Robert de Moston of Chester, and Cecily, his mother-in-law, had given him all of their lands in Urmston in 1402. He is referred to as an Urmston Landowner along with Thomas Hyde in the Harleian manuscripts. However, William Gregory fell from his lofty position.

William Gregory died in prison at the castle of Lancaster in 1434. He was in arrears on his payment of a fine of £82-14-2. As William Gregory of Leghe, yeoman, he had been indicted in 1424/5. The next year he was called of Tyldesley when remanded to the custody of the sheriff for not paying the fine. Year after year he could not or would not pay the heavy fine and remained in prison. Since his side of the story was not found we shall never know how he earned his fate.¹⁰

His son, William Gregory the younger, married Maude Hyde, daughter of Thomas Hyde, in 1422 or 1423. This Thomas Hyde was the owner of the estates of Robert of Urmston, Moyne of Birched, James of Hulme of Barson, and John of Worsley. The marriage

portion was £521, a sizeable amount. This was the second time that a marriage occurred between a Gregory and a bride from Urmston manor.¹¹

Some confusion exists here as to whether there was another William Gregory or whether William Gregory the younger married a second time. At any rate, William Gregory the younger or William Gregory, son of William Gregory the younger, married Joan Spakeman. Then there was another William Gregory.¹²

Now we have reached the William Gregory identified on the visitation pedigree. This William married Dorothy Parre of Kempnough, Lancashire. He was a well known land owner and served as a juror in 1503. This family had at least three sons: John, Hugh, and another John. In those Catholic days brothers sometimes were named for St. John the Baptist and St. John the Apostle. However, we are most interested in the second son, Hugh.¹³

Hugh Gregory married Mary and had a son Thomas. Thomas Gregory, son of Hugh and Mary, lived in the town of Over Broughton, earlier called Broughton Sulney, but now Upper Broughton in Nottinghamshire. The wife of Thomas Gregory was Dorothy Beeston.¹⁴

John Gregory, son of Thomas and Dorothy Gregory, married Alice, who may have been a Baylye. He is called of Broughton Sulney. This family had seven children including Henry Gregory who crossed the ocean and established the Gregory name in the new world.¹⁵

Henry Gregory probably was born between 1590 and 1595. He was referred to as *Henricus Gregorie, cordweyner, gone into Newe England* (in the English records, A cordwainer is a shoemaker). Henry located his family in Springfield, Massachusetts at first, but later moved into Connecticut to be near his family as

they left home. His son, John, was in New Haven Colony.¹⁶

John Gregory was a shoe manufacturer, tanner and sealer of leather. He lived in the Yorkshire quarter of New Haven, which was northerly from where the old Yale buildings are now. There he had a cottage and six acres. His wife's name was Sarah.

Later John Gregory owned land and residences in New Haven and Norwalk, Connecticut as well as his father's town of Stratford, Connecticut. While in Norwalk he held office almost continuously. In his force of character he seems to have resembled more his Uncle William than his father. He was voted constable, townsman and selectman. He was also a deputy for the Colonial court (legislature) at Hartford.¹⁷

John Gregory took a leading part in the movement that resulted in the founding of Newark, New Jersey and intended to live there. The project was that of his former neighbors of the New Haven Colony, who disliked being ruled from Hartford. In 1666 Robert Treat and John Gregory selected the site of Newark, New Jersey. It was settled by families from New Haven, Milford, Guilford and Branford, Connecticut.¹⁸

Jachin Gregory, the son of John, was born in New England probably between 1640 and 1642. He was a fence viewer, overseer of pounds, and a deputy. He was made a freeman in 1667. His father gave him lands of the same value as those given to his brothers and he also purchased property fourteen miles north of Norwalk in the northerly part of Redding. His wife's name was Mary.¹⁹

Thomas Gregory, the son of Jachin, was born on the seventeenth of January in 1672/3. He lived a short life of forty years and died in 1712. He married Elizabeth Ketcham, the daughter of Joseph and Mercy Lindall

Ketcham. He lived in Norwalk, Connecticut on a four acre home lot on Dry Hill which was bounded on the west by Town Highway, on the east by the road to the hill and on the south by the home lot of Thomas Benedict, Sr. He was surveyor of highways in 1707 and lyster (assessor) in 1709. One of his sons was Samuel Gregory.²⁰

Samuel Gregory was born on March 22, 1704/5. He married Sarah Keeler, the daughter of Ralph Keeler III. Samuel and his wife, Sarah, joined the Wilton Church in 1732/3 and the New Fairfield First Church in 1758. In 1760 Samuel Gregory had a fortieth interest in Queensberry Patent, in Dutchess County, New York. Of interest here is that another ancestor, Maribee Sogg, also was from this Dutchess County, New York area. He lived in the part of North Fairfield called Sherman township when he died in 1786. Among his sons are Moses and Jeremiah Gregory.²¹

The Henry Gregory who moved to the new world was now five generations in the past. Throughout the years the name Gregory was pronounced with the 'e' more like a short 'i' or Grigory. Is it any wonder why Moses and Jeremiah Gregory believed that their ancestors came from Scotland? At least they were called "Scotchmen" when they settled in western New York.

It is not known whether Moses and Jeremiah Gregory came to the new world directly from Scotland as their granddaughter, Jane Gregory Stevenson, believed. Were those stories she remembered about her grandfather true? Perhaps she was right, perhaps not. The compiler of the *Ancestors and Decendants of Henry Gregory*, Grant Gregory, believed that they descended from Henry Gregory. He has done a very detailed, well documented work that gives some

credibility to his theory. Yet one would think that knowledge about a grandfather would be above suspicion. Therefore, I have given a brief accounting of both stories.

1. Kenyon Stevenson, *History of the William Carroll Family*. (York, Pennsylvania: York 1929), p. 85.

2. Ibid., p. 23.

3. Ibid., p. 25.

4. Grant Gregory, *Ancestors and Descendants of Henry Gregory*, (Provincetown, Mass.: 1938), p. 84.

5. Ibid., p. 7.

6. Ibid., p. 7.

7. Ibid., p. 11.

8. Ibid., p. 11.

9. Ibid., p. 12.

10. Ibid., p. 13.

11. Ibid., p. 14, 15.

12. Ibid., p. 15.

13. Ibid., p. 16.

14. Ibid., p. 20.

15. Ibid., p. 21.
16. Ibid., p. 22, 23.
17. Ibid., p. 44, 45.
18. Ibid., p. 46.
19. Ibid., p. 55.
20. Ibid., p. 69.
21. Ibid., p. 83.