

Chapter 1

Kirby Lonsdale Stokoes, 1788 -1897



Celebration on the occasion of the marriage of the Duke of York and Princess May on 6 July, 1893 with the band playing 'God Save the Queen' in Market Square. A.L. Simpson Photograph. At this time grandfather lived in this large house in Kirby Lonsdale. Flats were rented out in the two upper stories in the buildings on the left. Various shops were located on the ground level.

Tom recalls a few things about his grandfather's several properties: 'He had a big house on the banks of the River Lune. Then there was some place besides that they called 'the cottage.' The cottage had fifteen rooms. It was rather fancy. I don't know the whole story because they never told me. You can't ask any questions either, they would not tell you anything. They were like that in those days, 'little boys should be seen and not heard.'

'Grandfather had a big house in Kirby Lonsdale (*pictured.*) I don't know what happened to it unless his second wife got everything when he died. That is very likely.'

An article in the Westmoreland Gazette chronicles Tom's grandfather's life but mentions little about his family. Birth and Death certificates and other records indicate that he may have been apprenticed to a chemist before his marriage to Elizabeth Haugh in October, 1866. She was the daughter of Thomas Haugh, a grocer and Jane Proud, a woman of means from which Howe Mill came to the family. Grandfather found both success and tragedy after his move from Brampton to the village of Kirby Lonsdale. A daughter, named for her mother but called Lily, was born in 1871. Another son, William, arrived on May 24th, 1877.

Elizabeth died on June 27th, 1879 at the age of thirty; her husband was present at her death and must have been devastated. The entire community looked to him for medical help, comfort and support and hers was not an easy death. The doctor signing her death certificate wrote that Elizabeth had premature labor for seven days, that she suffered from uterine hemorrhage for fifteen days and was exhausted. She left three children: Thomas, age eleven, Lily nine and William, a year old baby.

Friends encouraged the bereaved widower to marry again and introduced him to Elizabeth Hardacre of Casterton, a spinster three years his senior. He was still in mourning but concerned for the welfare of his children. The couple wed in the Holy Trinity Chapel in Casterton on January 7, 1880 just six months after his first wife's death. Miss Hardacre was the daughter of William Hardacre, a shoemaker. A daughter Margaret was born to them on December 30, 1880. Evidently this marriage was difficult for young Thomas who was still mourning his mother. For when he found himself in similar circumstances upon the death of his young wife years later, he vowed never to marry again. He did not want his children being raised by a step mother.

Tragedy struck the family again on January 8, 1884. Six-year old William died of bronchitis after a near drowning accident in the River Lune. The grandfather succumbed to stomach cancer twelve years later. He died at 497 Market Square on December 30, 1896 attended by daughter Lily. The Stokoes lived in the back of the big house on Market Square which also served as a savings bank. It was open on Thursdays, which was market day, and every Saturday which allowed grandfather, the bank's actuary, time for his other pursuits. He also managed the drug store in the square and installed a cow bell above the door of his living quarters for people needing his help at night. When someone rang, no matter the hour, grandfather would answer, inquire as to the problem and then walk across the square to mix compounds needed by the sick and ailing.

Grandfather was so loved that when he died the community and those in surrounding areas purchased and erected a head stone in his honor. He was survived by his second wife and Margaret, their sixteen year old daughter. And by the children of his first wife, twenty year old Thomas and sister Lily. By that time Thomas had completed his studies in pharmacy and was working as a chemist in Manchester.

Article in the Westmorland Gazette, January 9, 1896

Kirby Lonsdale of late has had to mourn the loss of many old townspeople. Another has

been added to the list in the person of Mr. Thomas Stokoe. Mr. Stokoe came to Kirby Lonsdale upwards of 30 years ago to manage the business of the late Mr. Wm. Haythornthwaite, chemist and druggist.

When the family grew up Mr. Stokoe transferred his services to the business of Messrs. Townley, of Keswich and Kirby Lonsdale. Upon resigning this appointment Mr. Stokoe undertook many public duties in the town. He has been assistant overseer for many years, income tax collector, and since the resignation of Mr. Calsow, has been actuary at the savings bank. He had been in failing health for some time and succumbed on Wednesday last week. The funeral took place on Sunday and was largely attended being a prominent Rechabite. Members of the Underly Tent attended in large numbers.

The trustee of the bank, tradesmen and all classes met to pay their last tribute of respect to one whom they had long known. As the funeral cortege passed the church Mr. J. Taylforth played 'But the Lord is Mindful,' from the 'Elijah' and the funeral march. Appropriate hymns were sung and as the funder procession left the church 'The Dead March' rang out it's saddening chords. Deceased was a prominent Wesleyan. The service was read by Dr. Luwelyn Davis.



'In memory of Thomas Stokoe of this parish who died Dec. 30, 1896. Age 54 years. His stone is

erected by friends in Kirby Lonsdale and the neighborhood to record their affection of his rich character. His unswerving kindness towards the sick and suffering and his Christian endeavors to promote in all ways the welfare of others around him. 'I was sick and ye comforted me.'

Howe Mill

His grandson recalled, 'We had a small farm with the two houses there on the border of Scotland. My father was a Chemist or pharmacist.' That farm was leased out. The story is that an old aunt of his did not want him to have the farm. She and some other old bity sat in the house drinking Brandy. They mortgaged the place. As far as I can make out that is the way it was. When my father took it over he had to pay off the mortgage. The old woman did not want him to have it. She did not have any children of her own and he was in line to get it since he was the next of kin. When she died it went to my father.

There was an old woolen mill there too. It was built in 1824. It was a couple a hundred yards from the house. The people who lived in the work house (the poor house) used to work in the woolen mill. Every morning they all left their portage bowls alongside the stream. My old great uncle employed all the poor people to work in his mill.

It wasn't built by modern standards. Later on, all the big woolen mills in Yorkshire bought all the wool, the factories and so on. Howe Mill just went out of business. Then my old great uncle died. The heirs sold all the machinery and just let the looms sit there. I used to see two or three owls sitting on the looms in the ruins.

I used to go up there and visit when I was a boy. Every summer I went up and stayed for a month. There was no three months summer holidays or anything like that in England. You got just four weeks in the summer. I used to go to the farm and then I would return to school in August. School was eleven months a year. Children started at five and left at about age fourteen. In those days they would chase you out to work at fourteen or fifteen. There were no colleges or much in the way of higher education in England in those days.

As for religion many people claim to be members of the Church of England, even if they did not attend regularly. My father never said one word about religion to me. Never said anything about religion at all. Never. My sister tells me he used to go to church wearing a top hat. I don't remember that. She said he went with my grandfather and grandmother. He wore a bowler hat in my day.

My father had two sisters. One died when she was nearly eighty. The other died when she was almost ninety. None of them married. They were old maids. My father was the only one who got married. I had a brother who drowned in the River Lune. He was about seven at the time. That was about 1870.

Tom believes his earliest ancestors came to England from Denmark as the English refer to that country as 'the Isle of Sticks.' Stokoe means 'man from the Isle of sticks.' One early census

record lists a Stokoe who arrived in England with William the Conqueror in 1066. The Stokoe name is very common in northern England. There are many of that surname found in the cities of Corbridge and in Hexham, a city built on the ruins of an old Roman town.

Five Generations of Thomas Stokoes

1. Joseph Stokoe, wife Elizabeth - herdsman, blacksmith, journeyman, 1788-1858.
2. *Thomas Stokoe, wife Julia Bell – laborer, groom, gentleman's servant, 1817 - ?.
3. Thomas Stokoe, and wife Elizabeth Haugh of Kirby Lonsdale - the chemist, druggist, and bank actuary, 1843 – 1896.
4. Thomas Stokoe, wife Ana Anne Dunn – the Manchester chemist. 1867 – 1942.
5. Tom Stokoe, wife Isabella Crichton – worked in New Zealand's civil service, was a soldier in World War 11, a planter in Samoa and a laborer in Hawaii. 1910 – 1994.
6. Thomas Alexander Stokoe, wife Diane Johnson Belov – a school teacher, 1940 -

Joseph Stokoe was born in 1788 in Billingham. Children include Joseph, born Oct 8, 1815, (low gate horseman); *Thomas, born Oct. 12, 1817 (laborer) and Elizabeth, born June 30, 1820. Census records indicate that Joseph was a farm laborer, herdsman, blacksmith and journeyman. He died at age seventy and was buried on October 20, 1858 in Billingham, England.



*Thomas Stokoe married Julia Bell and evidently worked his way up the social ladder to become a gentleman's servant since he was listed as a stable groom on his son's birth certificate.

Julia's father was a herdsman who likely owned a farm. Their son was born on July 16, 1843 at 284 Bullbank in Hexham. He became a chemist and moved his wife and young son to Kirby Lonsdale. *His funeral was held in the church pictured and was buried in the adjacent cemetery.*

Earlier Stokoes were probably yeomen or farmers in Northern England. Yeoman in old writings were men who owned their estate no matter how small, or held them in a special tenure. A great number of people owned, without question, the land upon which their forefathers had squatted when England was a non-man's land. Others were serfs—sold with the soil. In some counties service to the local lord was fixed and not arbitrary. Yeoman in the northern districts were not tenants of the land and were not expected to make payment to the landlord unless a definite and known contract existed. When a tenant farmer died, his holding automatically became the property of his widow or eldest son or daughter. Such families were freeholders who customarily held title under a tenure particular to the western marshes. Lakes and rivers played an important role in the lives of the early Stokoe ancestors.

How Lovely flows the Lune

How lovely flows the Lune
Since time untold;
By gorge and belside farm and field and wood.
By shile-bed and boulders hewn
And smoothed and gentled by the
Water flood.

Proud, peaceful Lune!
You gathering stream serene
Throws back the azure of the summer sky
And flecked with gold and silver sheen.
Delights and dazzles the beholder's eye.

Oh, ever changing Lune
Where clouds build up above the Barbon fells,
And winter's floods come fiercely foaming down,
How grandly then your muted music swells
In strong crescendo born past Kirby Town

Flow on, fair Lune,
In high, unending quest;
Untold, all striving stilled, forever fire,
You find, in fealty to the sovereign sea,
Your rich fulfillment, your eternal rest.



Market Square in 1868 when grandfather first arrived to manage the chemist shop on left in the square.

Tom's father (1867-1942) spent his youth in the big house at the end of Market Square with brother William and sister Lily. William almost drowned in the River Lune when he was six. He died a few days later likely as a result of this mishap.

Kirby Lonsdale is a small but neat market town. It is pleasantly situated on the west bank of the river Lune, 15 miles NNE of Lancaster, 11 miles S by W of Sedbergh, 12 miles SE of Kendal and 245 miles NNW of London. Lying near the village of Lancashire, it is within a few miles of Yorkshire on west bank of the River Lune.