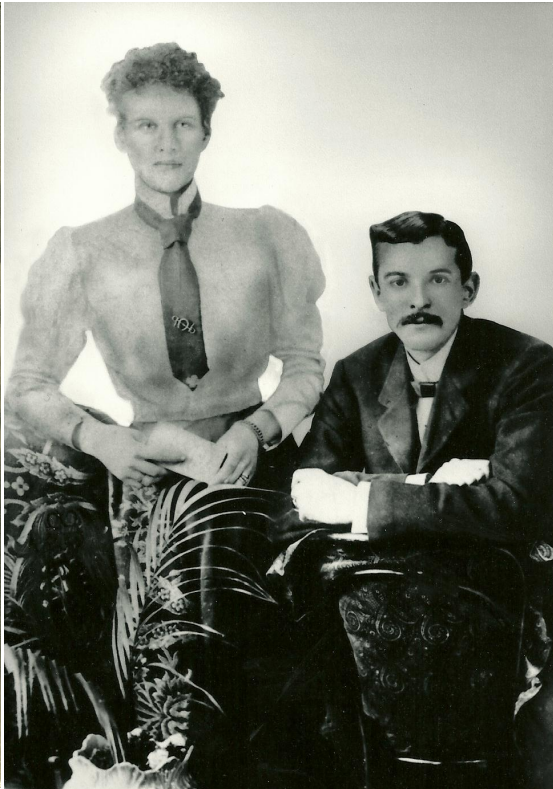


Chapter 2

Manchester Stokoes, 1910 - 1994



Tom about age 5



Parents Ada Anne and Thomas

‘I was born on June 24, 1910 in Manchester, the third child and only son of Thomas Stokoe and Ada Anne Dunn of Hazel Grove. My mother was the daughter of Edwin Dunn, a Stockport bus proprietor, who for twenty years owned the horse drawn buses that ran between Stockport and Hazel Grove districts. Later he transformed a system of horse buses to electric cars creating the Hazel Grove Tramways System which became Stockport’s most popular tramway. Colonel von Dunlop declared it to be ‘the finest track in England.’

‘My parents married the year after grandfather died. My father was twenty-seven. My mother sixteen at the time. They began their married life in a two story brick townhouse at Derby Grove #3 in Manchester. Dad worked for a big company as a chemist. He was there mixing bottles and things. My mother taught school before her marriage. They had two daughters and then my mother died of milk fever when I was three months old. She was just three days short of her 33rd birthday. My father would not consider getting married again. He was raised by a stepmother and did not want his children in that situation.’

Tom recalls that his father was ‘a bit mean; or somewhat of a penny pincher.’ He had inherited Howe Mill in Cumberland, a former railway station and a home with farm land. He

also had two or three other houses; but he chose to raise his family in a rented two story brick row house in Manchester on #13 Berry Grove. 'He got the place at a discount because a man and his wife had committed suicide there. His father liked to visit a neighbor down the street who had been a hangman for the crown.

Tom attended Alma Park Central School from age four through twelve. 'I passed an examination and went on to the Central School. It was a bit better. There were no colleges or much in the way of higher education. Children did not decide what vocation they would go into or what kind of work they would do. They did not decide anything. They were turned out like a herd of cattle. They had to take whatever they could find in a hard and unsympathetic world. That's the way it was in those days.'

Older sister Lily attended a course of lectures and demonstrations held on First Aid to the injured under the rules of the British Empire during World War 1. She qualified with the War Office and enrolled as a member of a voluntary Aid detachment on July 18, 1914. *Lily stands 4th from the left in row #3 from the bottom.*



Bessy and Tom both went to work at age sixteen. Bessy worked in a factory. Tom was sent to live with Aunt Lily Hilfilker, his mother's sister in Switzerland where he was employed by Richardson, Tee and Rycoft, in a textile company. He operated a weaving machine for eighteen months and learned to speak German there. Upon returning to England he got a job at Cowing Jarvic Textile, a wholesale company in London. He took classes at the College of Science and Technology at night.



*Bessy Stokoe, had a flat in London where she owned a fashion boutique.
Tom's Aunt Lily and Uncle Hans Hilfilker who he lived with while working in Switzerland.*

The great depression hit England on August 21, 1931. Six hundred thousand people lost their jobs within one week. As his mother's relatives had a farm in Derbyshire, he was fortunate to obtain employment there. He next journeyed to the outskirts of Cambridge where he lived with a family in their Elizabethan manor. Tom worked on their farm for a while and finally returned to the family home to Howe Mill in North Cumberland, located twelve miles south of the Scottish border.

Times were tough in England. No one had any money. Jobs were scarce so Tom decided he would set sail for Western Australia. Arriving there he worked on a fruit farm picking apples and pears and recalls chasing kangaroos.

From Australia he sailed on to New Zealand and journeyed around the country working where ever he could find work. In 1938 he had the desire to travel in the Pacific so he boarded the ship 'Maui Pomare. Arriving in Apia, Western Samoa he met Bella Crichton, a Samoan girl from Savaii. After he returned to New Zealand he sent for her. They were married on April 1, 1939. He was employed by the Society Security Department in Wellington until he was drafted into the New Zealand Army.

Letters and documents chronicle the lives of the Manchester Stokoes during the Great Depression and beyond. His two sister's biggest concern was helping young Tom find suitable employment during this period.

Bessie to Lil, February, 1932

. . . I heard from father yesterday, but his remarks about Tom were not helpful 'He would have to find something & nothing has turned up, etc. etc., etc.. completely useless statements.

So I put in a few words about Tom needing help. Father's procrastination in this has reached the limit but he must accept responsibility for not [helping him.] Whatever it costs him he must wipe off the family debt; count it as our share because we've both let him off pretty lightly. I wonder if he realizes how lucky he has been? Carlisle speaks like he must do what he wants. No wonder we have no money in the family if the Stokoe's have just bungled & procrastinated through the generations like this. Love to you both, Betty

Letter from Tom at Hard Bank House, Howe Mill on April 2, 1932 to Lilly's intended:

Dear Harris,

Our discussion took place last night while Lil was in Carlisle. I do not know what you said to him in the afternoon but his defiant views are as follows: Beekeeping give much work and little profit and the last two years were hard enough for those who keep bees round here. He was adverse to the project and clinched his argument with the question 'and who's going to keep you until you make profits?

He hit the watercress idea on the head at once by saying that the water was polluted. Then followed his ideas about the property. This he said was a nuisance to him, and he would be well rid of it. You must be well aware that he grudges every penny spent on it and his refusal to entertain any more ideas on any scheme for money making on the premises is adequately back up by his final statement: 'I do not want to see you loafing about here. I have seen too many chaps doing the same thing and they never made anything. I want to see you out in the world under a master independent of me and making your own way in the world.

He also stated that he would get a job himself if he could but nobody wants him now. At this point there is no doubt that he will not be satisfied until I am away from here. I thank you for your kind offer to accommodate me in _____ for although I do not wish to batten on your hospitality, it remains my only place of refuge at present. I shall let you know shortly when I shall be in MFC but I must talk it over with Lil first. Trusting you had a good journey and feel better for the rest. Yours sincerely, Tom

Letter from Bessie, 36 Springfield Rd. to Lily Hall, September 2, 1932

My dear Lil,

Thank you for your letter I presume you are now settled. Will you give Harris my birthday greetings. I know it is sometime in the early part of the month, but I don't know which day.

Lil and Harris' wedding photo.

As for the unemployment money, Tom did mention it to me before he left London. He applied for it but as he has received some money from the farm it was not due to him until the week following. But there has no need for him not to apply for it afterwards when he is in Manchester as he has, I feel been quite helpless, about it. What Tom wants is completely out of my line. I still say traveling is not Tom's job. I really don't think he would care for it. This time he must do something he really has a desire to do.



With the money Tom has & with a little of Father's help, he could perhaps have some sort of training, say for 6 to 12 months, but there must be a job at the end of it. Bob Harris thinks there is a chance of finding somebody whom he could approach with the view of being taken on a short apprenticeship -- say bee keeping or something else. Also we might see what opinion the agriculture college has on where is the best to take up bees and if they can assist in getting jobs etc. . .

Now I am so busy trying to hold my other job. Perhaps you would do this (research) as an act of kindness and let me know the results. It's very worrying having a male member of the family doing nothing and unpleasant for Tom. I should think just now is the time to get a good price for the farm. Everybody is selling just now to pay taxes. Probably How Mill will be valuable. . .

**Letter to Bessie at Savile Garth, St. John's Lane, Halifax. Yorks, December 3, 1932
Hard Bank House, Howe Mill, Carlisle, July 20, 1933**

Dear Bess,

I am now well again and ready to return to Meadow Place. Our esteemed father is full of grievances and as Auntie was off to Barbor to stay with Mrs. Pearson on Tuesday, he let off steam on Wednesday morning. He had his speech ready and wasted no time. His main points are:

1. I had better get back and do some work.
2. I never seemed to do anything.
3. He is very dissatisfied with me.
4. He will take good care that I get nothing when he is gone, and would rather sell up than let any of his property fall into my hands.
5. Other members of the family have been talking about him and his affairs and he wants to know the culprits. I regard numbers 1 & 2 as an insult. The remaining items on the programme don't worry me in the least.

He opened out in the afternoon by saying I was favored because he had spoken to me. On hearing I intended to clear out the next day he asked me to stay till auntie returned. He then accused me of having no guts, not sticking to my work and never since leaving school having

kept him informed about anything. He likewise said that I always wanted to be master (which some call ambition) and was not content to take orders and do as I was told. He was worried about my lack of progress but while that troubles me also, I do not see he is justified to spout he is anything but great and famous himself, although he spent the best of his life in the pre-war days, when there was work and wages for any half-wit.

This policy of doing as he was told and boarding on as usual has got him nowhere and it won't get me anywhere either unless I show some element of leadership also. And who keeps information to himself? But he flies into a temper when you tell him that and demands what you want to know about his property.

And what of Bessie? She has not written home for ages and what is she doing anyhow? So one by one his bottled up worries unfolded themselves and it became quite obvious that he was put out because he did not know what was going on amongst the family. However, he is quite alright today and inclined to be friendly so I am staying a few days longer. I hear from Lil that you are going into Scotland soon, and wish you a happy holiday. You will get another letter when I have got back again. Much love, Tom (Prodigal Son)

Advice from Bessie on July 21, 1933 from Savile Garth Halifax:

My dear Mot.

Thank you for your two letters and for keeping me posted with your affairs; that is what I like. I am glad you are feeling better, and I should like to be quite sure that you are fit to start working hard again. I should like you to have a thorough examination so that we are quite sure that everything is all right now; we must avoid a repetition of this.

Try out Meadow Place again, and let us know if the food has improved, and if it doesn't then we shall have to think out some other scheme. Don't let anything else get you down again just for the want of saying something about it. Get in touch with Lil. Before you go back and see the Dickens are advised before you return there.

I haven't words to say what I think about the way father treats you, but just ignore it all; you have got on without him so far. I am afraid it is no good getting annoyed about it all he is just incapable of human understanding and not the slightest notion of his duty to his family. He ought never to have had any children.

If he would like to send a questionnaire along to me I should be most pleased to answer in a suitable manner. To the third point you might also answer that you are dissatisfied with him and that if he is worried about your lack of progress he might have done something towards helping you along.

If he asks you again what I am doing you might answer that I am working hard to earn a living as I have done since I was 16, which is not to his credit. And if he wants to know again why I have not written I am still waiting for his reply to my letter about 1 year ago in which I

asked him to help you. Keep cheerful. I will write you again. I am spending my holidays at Tona's home this year, and going to Bette MacGregor's wedding in Edinburgh on the way. I leave here on Thursday night, but will write you before then. Write me again. Much love.

Letter from Bessie, August 24, 1933

My dear Lil,

Thanks for your letter. I am sorry you haven't been too well. I hope you are getting better; you seem to be having a bad patch. I had a letter from Tom about a few of my views. I don't care to pass any opinion on matters of farming as I know nothing of them and unless I have some knowledge of a thing I don't feel capable of making any judgment.

But if it's a question of taking an intelligent view of some problem I am always willing to share what bit I've got. I feel particularly hopeless as regards to recommending a course Tom should take. I'd much rather ask someone in authority. I hope he has written to some of the places I suggested. The more information he gathers the better able he will be to form a judgment. I don't like to squash any ideas he has because I would be so pleased if he would have an idea of his own and do something. He has never done that yet. . .

There are lots of farms which have good food, electric lights, baths and up-to-date methods. I think it's just a matter of time until he finds something. Isn't Tonya nice & sweet? Send the photograph please as I want it for my snap album. The Fisher family was awfully nice to me. . . I'll tell you about the holiday when I see you. Are you and Harris going away? Love to you, Betty.

Letter from Betty's employer, Feb. 17, 1934

After Betty's shop in London failed she moved to Halifax where she supervised one hundred girls in a Woolen Mill. However she became ill and was suffering from an infected tooth. Note from her manager:

Dear Miss Stokoe,

I was indeed exceedingly sorry to hear of your indisposition and do hope this will only be of short duration. I trust it is nothing serious, and that soon you will be up and here again. It is so unlike you to be ill! Please pardon brevity and scrawl. Saturday is invariably a busy morning down here. Cheerio & all. Best wishes for your speedy return. Sincerely yours,
T. Jackson

Letter from Tona, April 3, 1934

My dear Lily,

. . . I do hope you are all right my dear - you have been so sweet and thoughtful to everyone

else. I keep thinking of all the little things you've done. You helped me to be brave these terrible days. I'd do anything that would help - for your own sake as well as for Bessy's. . . there were alternatives on that Sunday: 1. To remove the tooth. 2. To deaden the exposed nerve. 3. To put on an adhesive dressing which they did. . . They told her to see about it at once - if it gave her trouble - and let them know. . . it's all been a ghastly sequence of unfortunate coincidences piling up against her. . . I resented the way they inflicted [the decision to have a temporary filling.] . . . I keep going over and over the whole thing but it's useless now. . .

Letter to Mr Thomson from John Baldwin & Sons Ltd, speciality Spinners, Ganny Mills, Brighthouse, 2nd March, 1934.

Dear Mr. Thomson,

I am shocked to hear of the untimely death of Miss Stokoe for whom I always had the highest admiration. To you, who have worked with her for so many years, the loss must be particularly distressful. Although my acquaintanceship with her was short, I could not but be impressed by her obvious ability and grasp of business detail, and I should think that P & I B's have lost a valuable servant.

Notice clipped from newspaper

STOKOE On February 26 at Halifax, BESSIE (Betty) STOKOE of Manchester and London, younger daughter of Thomas Stokoe, Howe Mill, funeral Manchester crematorium Friday, 2nd, inst., at 3 o'clock. Inquires Richard Belt Rushholm.

Thank You Note

5 Wingate Drive, Didsbury, Manchester
Mr. Stokoe and Son and Mrs. Harrison Hall gratefully acknowledge and desire to express their deep appreciate of your kind expression of sympathy in their recent sad bereavement. March 1934.

In His Majesty's High Court of Justice the Principal Probate Registry.

Be it known that Bessie Stokoe of 34 Heath Crescent Halifax in the County of York died on the 26th day of February, 1934 at the Royal Halifax Infirmary, Halifax - intestate, a spinster.

And be it further known that at the date hereunder written Letters of Administration of all the Estate which by law devolves to and vests in the personal representative of the said intestate were granted by His Majesty's High Court of Justice . . . to: Thomas Stokoe of Hardbank House How Mill, Carlisle in the County of Cumberland, Retired Chemist, the lawful Father and only person entitled to the Estate of the said Intestate. That the net value of the estate amounts to 444 pounds 12 shillings. Dated the 17th of April, 1934.

Note from 59 Sussex Gardens W. 2, Sunday

My Dear Lily,

I cannot find words to express my sorrow about Betty's terribly sad death. It was a terrible shock which I heard from Tonya yesterday. It is just unbelievable. Tonya came over today. I wanted to hear all about her illness. I felt so sorry for you Lily. Yours is the biggest loss. It seems all so strange to see a sweet soul like Betty taken away so young. She was the sweetest, kindest soul I ever met. Tonya, Eve & myself all loved her. I cannot find words to write Lily, but please accept my deepest sympathy. Mae

Letter from Aunt Lily (Mrs. Hans Rudolph Hilfiker)

Dear Tom!

I feel I must write to you on a subject which is most painful to me - with the love and respect which I owe to my dear departed sister. Naturally the well-being & interest of her children is a matter of great importance to me. I was grieved to find that the harmony which I thought to exist between you and them was missing. Although what seems to me a lack of confidence which you have never placed in them. I was frankly surprised on Bessie's last visit to me two years ago, when she cried bitterly and told me she had wiped her hands of you altogether, owing to the fact that you had done nothing toward Tom's education nor troubled to do anything in fixing the lad up in a situation, in spite of various letters she had written to you & to which you had never given her a satisfactory answer. She also never knew how you were financially situated. Not that there would have been any undue advantage taken of the situation but it would have relieved matters considerable.

Also that she & Lily since leaving school had been left to their own resources to finish their education and look out for themselves. It upset me very much as I had never seen Bessie in tears before, she was not the girl to trouble over trivial matter. I am certain had you taken the children into your confidence, they would never have misused it in any way but it would have freely relieved their worries & struggles in life. I am sure you have every cause to be proud of them, as their dear mother certainly would have been. I should certainly have kept Tom here had the authorities allowed it & you will no doubt remember I wrote you to this effect. He worked hard at his job & was very anxious to get on. I was sorry to lose him, as the young lads of this century stand a very poor chance without a thorough education and someone to back them.

Bessie talked over all her intimate affairs with me the last time she was here & now when I come to reflect it would seem to me as though she had a premonition that we should never meet again & amongst things she said, that no one should look into her affairs but Lily & any money & all she possessed should be solely for her & Tom as she had earned every half penny herself. As I know you; you would no doubt agree.



I am sorry at this moment I cannot leave home, but perhaps you will be kind enough to write me. I had the intention of writing you about things after Bessie's return, but not being too

well of late and having nothing very cheerful to report I neglected doing so. I find it now necessary to write as I am much concerned about Lily's state of health & nerves. I had hoped to see her better, but the great blow she has received at the loss of Bessie has not improved things for her. She is now doing her utmost to fulfill Bessie's wishes in every respect, but the opposition she is meeting with seems to be making it impossible.

Also not adding to the improvement of her health it is pulling the poor girl to pieces. It grieves me to see it, if this state of affairs goes on much longer there will be nothing left of her. I quite agree & uphold her sentiments, that whatever she has promised Bessie it is her sacred duty to fulfill. Cannot you talk matters over with her reasonably Tom & come to some mutual understanding? I shall be glad & thankful to have news from you to this effect. Hoping you are all well, kindest regards from us all.

Yours very sincerely, Lily (Hilfilker)

Letter from Tom to Lilly Hall, from Hard Bank, Howe Mill, Carlisle, on Sept. 7th, 1934:

I thank you for your letter, and expect that you will now have received my last to you. The old man has certainly been well behaved since my arrival, but he usually is when it seems as if I am soon to go on some job to the other end of the country. Trouble starts when I am at home with no immediate prospects.

I agree that he will be pleased if I do vanish into the Service but nobody will be more blessed than I. His interest in me has certainly been of a negative order, and I am sure that he is strong in demanding his rights as a father but weak at doing his duties as such. My last letter will have fully explained my general attitude to recent events and I need not harp on that subject any further. You may rest assured that I have not spoken against you here.

As regards writing your drafted letter to Aunt Meg, I seem to be in error in regard to the standing of trouble through Aunt M. The alleged swindling or trickery took place at her mother's death this would be in 1908 not 1896 (our grandfather's death.) It is stated that Meg and her mother lived together, had little money and only the necessary household effects. Margaret's mother died and left what there was to M. according to her will. This, auntie here considers all in order and she knows of no trouble between Pa and Aunt M.

If you know of any such trouble or have anything you wish to prove you can please yourself about it. Perhaps you have got information through Aunt Lily who heard it from our mother, but Aunties at Howe Mill disclaim any knowledge of such. Personally, and accepting your evidence to exist, I would not be deterred from sending my draft letter, if I was in your position, and had especially strong feeling about it.

If Margaret is hoping for a good peace in the old man's will in the hope that she will outlive him, (born Dec. 30, 1880 to his Jan 28th 1868) then your share of Bessie's money may be in danger. Ditto mine. Also Hard Bank estimated value at 2,000 pounds.

I have already told the loner to keep his property and as he will now alter his will to cross Bess out, there should be a fight in the open if you want to keep Meg out. Considering myself out in any case except for a share in our approximate 300 pounds, may I offer a suggestion? The old man, I have noticed, reminds people of unpleasant occurrences of an earlier date when things didn't turn out well.

Letter from Tom to L. Hall from Hard Bank, Howe Mill, Carlisle, Sept. 26th, 1934:

Dear Lil,

Thanks for your letter just arrived. I am not keeping whatever you write me thinking it best to burn them after answering. So far I am not short of money still having 6 pounds but as I am keeping this in reserve Auntie lends me for stamps, but I spend next to nothing when here. Pa has been so mild of late that I am wondering what he is up to, though I put it down to the possibility of my disappearing into the Service. Also I suspect that he now fears opposition and wishes to bide quiet until his position is stronger and he can again start the offensive. Afraid of public opinion he can be bullied into doing his duty rather than be talked into it.

I therefore am pleased that Aunt Lily is writing him. As regards the part you do not understand the words are mine. I infer that Harris swallowed everything the old man said and adopted a hostile attitude towards me. That attitude persisted until Bess spoke up for me before she died and had she never died the position would have been 'as you were.

He would still have believed the old man. Margaret was here when I arrived from and had been here a week. His comment was as follows: 'Just like them. They kept father (old man) messing about in _____ for ever so long. They will turn round and say they have left you for two months. They wanted someone to mind the house for them while on holiday. Then Harris returns and gets nasty.

I am well aware that the old man liked being in _____. He was only too glad to mess about there. He subconsciously lumps you and Harris together as one. But while I largely agree with his general attitude toward Harris, I haven't company on ideas of you and your motives.

As regards Aunt Lily writing Tom Dickens I quite expect that a letter for me is at Didsbury from which address I last wrote him. In that case it has possibly laid there a month as I was expecting to hear any day when I left. It should contain a cheque which I would cash and send back the feeding money. My doubts are that the cows being sold to one or more persons, cheques in payment would be made out to YK. Dickens who, under influence of Mrs. D., would draw out, subtract feeding bill and remit any sum considered fit as my share. I will not know where I stand until I see that letter.

Interview with Tom,

My father did not believe in spoiling his children. I never got any present for Christmas. He gave me sixpence once--one little silver sixpence. That's when I was about eleven years old.

He wrote me a letter when I was seventeen and sent a 10 shilling note but I never got that letter. Someone stole it. I never got it so I don't know what he said. It was the only letter he ever wrote to me. He wasn't very communicative. He wanted me to get in the world and just get lost. He was not the only one. A lot of people felt that way.

Tom to L. Hall, Hard Bank, from Howe Mill, Carlisle, Feb. 22, 1935 concerning Bessie's estate:

. . .As regards what passed in Manchester discussion is futile and as far as I am concerned the question of Bess' money is finished with. It has been a fight between you and Pa and I have done my best to keep out of it.

If it is your intention of bringing up these matters tomorrow please do not come. Saturday will be our last meeting before I leave. Let us meet in peace or not meet at all. As already stated everything is carefully timed and arranged. The programme will not allow for any further meeting after tomorrow and will be strictly adhered to. I will wait for your train. Love from all. Tom

Lily wrote to a friend about her separation. He writes back with condolences and some comments about the war.

. . . One certainty is Hitler's loathsome hordes could never destroy beautiful rural England in centuries. We out here cannot understand or realize what you English Folk have to endure, but be assured we, one & all, even those who have never seen Old England, take off our hats to your spirit & courage & 99 per cent of the men from youth to old age would be with you if only the Military Authorities would take us. Now dear Pal please write me fully if I can be of any help to you, be sure I will if it is anywhere in my power. Wish all best wishes & kindest thought, Yours Sincerely, L. Sharpe

Concerning the Halls Separation:

According to Tom, his brother-in-law went out to mail a letter and never returned. Lil's records indicate they were having marital problems ie: Harris was working long hours. He traveled constantly and could not account for some weekends when they were apart. Lily claimed she had no idea where Harrison was for some years until she accidentally ran into him coming out of a London shop. She said that they talked, then visited a solicitor and came up with an agreement. No decree of divorce was filed. Harris paid Lily alimony but lived apart from 1939 onward.

The Hall family owned HALL's Famous Food Shop in Manchester. The business was under contract with His Majesty's Government. Harris must have been an astute businessman for he owned building lots in Grant and Lincoln counties and had some stock in an Albanian oil field. However like many others during the depression, he probably sustained heavy losses. Records indicated that he sent Lily money on a regular basis saying he was 'doing the best he could.' Lil's response: 'It isn't good enough!' Harrison felt Lily should consider taking in

borders to defray expenses but she never did. She made a list of possible positions that interested her but evidently never went searching for jobs. Her advice to nephew Tommy: 'Never get married!'

Lily's Letter to L. Sharp:

. . . Perhaps by now you have received the card. . . I regret to say! I have worried very much about your business with England. It is not the country we all knew in the past. This government has too many far left members. The sooner we get them out the better. . . I am enclosing a cutting from the Scotch paper. They give more candid news.

Thousands are on strike in the car industry and tool makers. They will not be satisfied until they get all workers to join them in the cities & towns. I am telling you in confidence. I don't like to run down my own country. I am so concerned about you doing business here. Newton-le-Willams has about five shops. All taken over by General Electric. . . not paying. . . part of the government has taken them over. This firm makes up so many M/c. . . I did not want you to give them any chance to copy your patent. . . I am only expressing my thoughts because I am concerned about you. . .

Letter from Tom in New Zealand, to Lily Hall - January, 1938:

. . . The store sells everything and there is a hotel where the bushmen put fivers across the bar. A great mob these west coasters noted for booze and hospitality. They will spend more in one night than a working man in England would spend in a month.

Sorry to learn that you were suffering from pains in the face and neck but glad of your proposed trip to Holland. Do not fail to go and enjoy yourself. Had a letter from Auntie Margaret last week. The old man was seventy last January but she seldom says much about him and have never had a line myself since leaving over two years ago. Gave up writing after sending him three letters.

Have made my will, deposited with the Public Trustee in Wellington under which you receive 291 pounds less 20% expenses in the event of my death. It was lodged on January 21st. Will write again when I have further news. Much Love, Tom

Concerning marriage to Bella Crichton, Tom writes:

Got married after Chamberlain said, peace in our time. Biggest swindle ever and a tragic one. We found ourselves in uniform firing guns, off to New Caledonia, the ship ahead being torpedoed but missing us. The Solomon Islands met some cannibals and Japanese, who were more dangerous by far.

Back to New Zealand, on to Egypt and a journey to Palestine, around Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Jaffa. On to Italy astonishing confusion with surrounding Germans, Italians, Yugoslavs all mixed up. Thousands of refugees, tragic sights you always remember. A ragged

starving column of Moslem Albanians who had fought on the German side. They looked as though they had not eaten for a week and one or two of them glared at us with hatred in their eyes.

The Yugoslav partisans who marched alongside them, Marshal Tito's men, had orders to shoot any man who fell out of the ranks and never took their hands off their Tommy guns. Home to England across Italy and France after a journey to Austria. Back to Italy and once again the Suez Canal, Ceylon, Australia and the Tasman Sea to New Zealand . . .

Letter from L. Hall to Colonel, 6th Field Regt, 2nd N.Z.E.TI
Re: 463040 Gur. T. Stokoe, 30th BTY, 6th Field Reg. August 21,

I desire to make an urgent appeal to you, to make it possible for the above named to be granted his leave now due in England, if only for a short time. He has done services with the forces during the war since 1940. Tom Stokoe is my only brother, & we are the last of the family. My father died three years ago, leaving my brother trustee of his estate, & such a considerable time has now elapsed involving present loss. The continued strain of war, conditions & resultant anxiety in regard to my brother's leave has exacted a very heavy toll on my health & as a last resource, I beg of you to kindly take a personal interest in my appeal & enable my brother to obtain such leave as is due to him so that he can complete his personal duty as trustee of my father's estate.

Yours Faithfully, L. Hall



Aunt Lily Stokoe pictured in 1910 about the time she moved from Kirby Lonsdale to Manchester to care for her brother's children.

This is the last will and testament of me - Thomas Stokoe - of 13 Berrie Grover Levenshulme in the County of Lancashire. . . I appoint Lily Stokoe my sister of 13 Berry Grove Levenshulme, Lancashire to be the Executer of this my will. I direct my Executor to pay my just

debts and funeral and testamentary expenses. I give and bequeath to my sister Lily Stokoe, my daughter Lily Stokoe, my daughter Bessie Stokoe, and my son Tom Stokoe, in equal shares after all expenses are paid the property at Hard Bank, Howe Mill, Carlisle, to be sold, insurance money, bank deposits and shares all to be gathered in and equally divided amongst the aforesaid. I also appoint my sister Lily Stokoe as trustee for my son Tom Stokoe until he is twenty one years of age, as she has always looked after him and brought him up, and been a good guardian to him. Witness my hand this fifth day of May, 1924,



Thomas Stokoe.

Deceased died 4th November 1942. By his Will the testator gave his residuary estate equally between his sister Lily Stokoe and his two daughters and son, (Lily Hall), Bessie Stokoe and Tom Stokoe (pictured.)

Bessie Stokoe predeceased the testator who did not leave a widow surviving and accordingly a one-fourth share - 885 pounds. 11- of the gross residue - 3,543 pounds. 15. 9 - lapsed and went as on a partial intestacy between his two surviving children, Lily and Tom, equally. . . the testator's funeral, testamentary and administration expenses and debts - 227 pounds. 19. 4- are payable out of the lapsed one-fourth share of the gross residue, leaving a new lapsed share of 1,657 pounds for division between the two surviving children. The income from the estate is divisible equally between Lily and Tom Stokoe,

Upon the distribution of assets, Aunt Lily sent Tom his one third share from the sale of Hard Bank, Howe Mill which Tom used to purchase a farm in Westmere, New Zealand. Both Aunt Lily and Aunt Margaret regularly sent their nephew money for his birthday. He believed that most of the proceeds from the sale of family property went to support his maiden aunts. These spinsters spent their time traveling, visiting and playing cards. It appears that Bessie was the only female in the Stokoe family to pursue a career. Their sister Lily never worked.

Letter from Tom, during World War 11 to his sister, December 18, 1942

. . . . attended by some degree of hardship in which climate, fever, dysentery, poisonous insects and unusual conditions must be encountered in addition to the enemy. My continued survival is in the balance but I shall send you a further letter later on and if at the close of the war no news is heard of me you will know that I am gone. Recently news of our father's death reached me in the field. A cablegram having been sent from Preston and the words enclosed in a letter from Bella, no cables being received direct in this island.

Have you any idea how old he was? We both guessed that he was getting on in years but such matters were always such a mystery. As were certain other things surrounding him that we were always more or less on the outer circle. In his day of course children were seen but not heard, but as we are now not exactly children ourselves, the position has altered and we are entitled to ask question and receive satisfactory answers. . .

No doubt Aunt Lily will be allowed sufficient to carry on with and I honestly believe that

this is due to her. Apart from this I know little of his affairs but remembering the trouble which attended the death of our sister in 1934, I sincerely desire that this be not repeated. According to the cablegram a letter from Preston is on the way and should you feel inclined perhaps you would just send me a few lines to say whether all is well with yourself and Aunt Lily. This should reach me somewhere between here and Tokyo during 1943, and in the meantime I wish you goodbye and good luck.

Should Mrs. Gibson and family still be alive just tell them that Gunner Stokoe of the N.Z. Artillery sends his kind regards. She was very kind to me as was yourself. Keep cheerful, we are not dead yet. Written in the bush on December 18, 1942. Happy New Year to all.

Love Tom



Lily Hall (left) enjoy a picnic with Auntie Margaret (center) and Auntie Lily (right.)

Letter from Auntie Margaret to Lil, from Hard Bank Howe Mill, Carlisle February 9, 1945

Dear Lily,

I have been expecting a letter from you for a long time, and often wonder why you do not write. Now that the war is over, am hoping we can get things settled up. We have got the notice to leave from the farm tenant so it can be sold with, 'vacant possession, in Feb. 1946.

The sale has not been arranged yet, but expect it will be sold before winter sets in. The property may sell better altogether, I intend to see the Solicitor about that. I mentioned it to him some time ago and he thought it might do so.

There are things here that you want; what are you going to do about them? If you are not able to come up let me know what to do about them. Have you heard from Tom lately. My last letter was end of June. He was in Italy and war not ended in Japan. A letter may have got lost. I wonder if he has had to go back to New Zealand. I was hoping he would be able to come here while he was in Europe, I know he would do so if possible.

We are having a few fine days just now and farmers busy with harvest. Hoping you are keeping well. Love and Best wishes, Auntie Margaret.

Lily Stokoe died Dec. 21, 1963 at the age of 89. She named Tom and Lily Hall joint heirs:

In the High Court of Justice, The District Probate Registry at Manchester. Be it known that Lily Stokoe of 6 Avenham Road Preston, Lancashire, spinster, died on the 21st day of December 1963 at 32 Watling Street Road, Fleetwood Preston, aforesaid domiciled in England.

And be it further known that at the date hereunder written the last Will and Testament. . . I appoint my niece Lily Hall to be my Executor, and direct that all my debts and Funeral Expenses shall be paid . . . I give and bequeath unto my said niece Lily Hall and nephew Tom Stokoe . . . [all my property.]

24th January, 1968 note to Mrs. L. Hall, 5 Wingate Drive, Didsbury, Manchester 20:



Re: The Sale of Laburnam Cottage (pictured above). The above matter has now been completed, and we are holding the sum of 1,212.19 pounds being the proceeds of the sale. . . Out of this sum we are paying Messrs J.R. Bridgford and Sons. . . and shall deduct our own charges. . . Do you wish us to draw two separate cheques in respect of the balance namely, one in favour of yourself and one in favour of your brother Tom Stokoe or are we right in thinking that there is a joint account in both your names in which case we shall make the cheque payable to both of you together. Please let us have your instructions.

Tom in 1985 Interview,

I was the only boy in the family. None of my aunts got married. These little Stokoe boys are the only direct descendants. Yesterday, I got a letter from Sarginson. He is very embarrassed because my sister wants to leave him the house. He feels that I am the brother and the last of the family. By rights it should come to me because when one aunt died she left a small house near Wilmslow. I was in New Zealand. My sister wrote me a letter right away. She asked me to sign over my half share to her. She said the place was nothing but a burden, and so on and on. Perhaps when someone leaves you a property and it doesn't cost you anything, then it's not very much of a burden. You can sell it and pocket the cash. This is the sort of a burden a lot of people would be very happy to have. Anyway, I signed over my share to Lily. Sarginson knows about that. He knows that I gave my half share away to her and now she is not going to leave me anything. It all goes to him. . .

Mrs. Sarginson was a social welfare worker going around looking after old people. When my sister took ill, she was taken in by the Catholic society of sisters who live just around the corner. They took her in for about three months and looked after her. And of course they notified the public health people. They said, here is an old lady, 80 years old and not very well, you need to send someone around to see her. So Mrs. Sarginson, the last couple of years before she retired, looked in on my sister a couple of times a week. When she retired she went to visit her more often.

When she got worse she started going every day. Her husband with her because she had to lift and carry her. Lily is a big woman. These people are rather small. She can't look after herself. She has funny ideas in her head. She feels she must reward them for the help they have given her. *Lily Hall's home at 5 Wingate Drive, Didsbury Park, in Manchester, England.*



Tommy visited England and stayed at a Bed & Breakfast around the corner from Aunt Lily on two different occasions. Once in 1973 and again, for three days, in the summer of 1976. During his last visit he told Lily he was planning to marry Diane. Lily did some astrological calculations and assured her nephew that it was a good match. She tried to give Tommy four or five diamond rings and when he refused to accept them she showed him where she would hide them so upon her death he could reclaim them. The Sarginsons ended up with everything.

Tommy's June 1, 1978 letter to Aunt Lily



Tom & Diane Stokoe with sons David Thomas & Steve and Bella in 1980

I have a new born son. I have named him David Thomas Stokoe. He was born on May 26, 1978 at 10:20 p.m. He weighed 8 lbs 6 ounces. Diane and the baby are fine. He was 22 inches long. He is slightly darker than Stephen and it seems his hair will be dark. Stephen has light red hair, is mischievous and a strong little boy; his speech is progressing and he carries an interesting conversation.

I called mum and dad the night he was born and told them the news. So now I have two little Stokoe sons to carry on the family name. We hope you are well Aunt Lily. I still envision Didsbury Park, your street and house. I enjoyed the train ride from London to Manchester and hope someday I will have the opportunity to do that again. I will send you some photos of Stephen and David. Stephen keeps on wanting to pick David up. It is an exciting thing for him to have a younger brother. We wish you well Aunt Lily. Love Tom & Diane

Letter from Harold Hilfiker at CH 8802 Kilchberg, December 10th 1984. From Beinsbergstrasse 58, Switzerland to Authur Sarginson in Manchester.

Dear Mr. Sarginson,

Very many thanks for your letter and the news concerning my cousin Mrs. Hall. I hope they keep on being good ones. Your confirmation will be welcome. I had news just lately from my cousin in Sudbury informing me that he had received a card from our cousin Lily. So everything seems to be all right.

I should feel very much obliged to you, if you could give me Mr. Tom Stokoe's address when writing me next. I suppose, he is still in New Zealand. Thank you in advance for the trouble you take in keeping me in contact with Mrs. Hall, I remain, yours truly, H. H. Hilfiker. (No correspondence ever reached Tom from his Hilfiker cousin.)

In 1980 Tom had stayed with his sister in Manchester for several months when he retired from Dole Pineapple Company. He returned with Diane in August of 1985 at the request of the Sarginsons. That summer Tom and Bella were visiting Tom's family in Salt Lake when he received a letter from Authur asking him to come at once to Manchester to put Lily's affairs in order. Tommy was working full time. Diane was completing her master's degree in family and local history. So it was agreed that Diane would take Grandpa to England while Grandma took care of the children.

Of the 1985 visit to Manchester, Diane writes,

Tom Sr. and I arrived at #5 Wingate Drive Monday evening on August 12th. Bedrooms upstairs had been prepared for us by Authur and Gladys Sarginson. We found Aunt Lily bedridden, feeble and often confused. On the 15th we celebrated Tom's birthday with her and the Sarginsons. It was then that Auntie told me that she was leaving her house to 'young Tom.' I asked which Tom she was referring to. 'Why, your husband, my dear,' she replied.

There had been a fire in the house in 1965 and no repairs had been made. Consequently, Lily's house had no electricity, toilet facilities and no running water. Grandpa and I went elsewhere or out into the back yard to relieve ourselves. The Sarginsons, having investigated, provided us with the names of the people that we needed to contact so an application could be filed in the city of Manchester for a grant for Lily in order to make the repairs.



As city inspectors were coming to assess what repairs needed to be made grandpa and I spent three days cleaning and hauling out years of Lily's accumulation. She watched and became very agitated. She was also unhappy about what she considered her brother's excessing drinking. Authur Sarginsons brought six packs of beer for grandpa. My interest was to preserve the photos, letters and old documents. Lily would identify people. She agreed to allow me to take the items back to the U.S. with us when we left.

It was cold in Manchester that summer. Grandpa had not brought a coat so he wore an old green rain coat that he found in one of Lily's closets. I left to fly to Turin, Italy for a few days to worked on my thesis and left Grandpa with his sister. It was the coldest summer on record there so when I returned I suggested we visit his cousin in Sudbury. Cyril Witkinson was the secretary of the Sudbury Horticulture Club and was very proud of his beautiful English garden. The cousins who had not seen one other since 1918. They had a good visit before we returned to Manchester to say goodbye. Arthur drove us to the bus station but the bus driver refused to allow us to take a trunk containing the family material along. Arthur placed the trunk in the boot of his car and promised to mail me the contents.

Letter from Sarginson to Diane in December, 1986

Dear Diane,

Mrs. Hall was cremated on Monday 2nd of December 2:30 p.m. our time. All the arrangements were carried out to her wishes. Glayds and I went to see Mrs. Hall in the Chapel of Rest prior to the funeral. She looked very beautiful in pink satin edged with lace. The funeral itself was as she would have wished. Those attending were Sister Perpetua, Sister Lucy, Mrs. Hall's life-long friend Mrs. Maddocks, who had traveled from Nottingham, a close neighbor and ourselves. There were several others at the church as well.



Cousins Cyril Watkinson and Tom Stokoe in Suffolk - 1985

After discussions it was decided to buy a large cross of flowers between Sister Lucy, Perpetua and ourselves. We also had a nice letter from Cousin Harold in Switzerland, who sent flowers and a donation for the hospital. The same applied to Cousin Cyril in Suffolk who also arranged for us to have flowers made on his behalf together with a donation for the hospital. I have since replied to both these letter and have forwarded a copy of Mrs. Hall's certificate with press cuttings that we had done. I have also forwarded a copy of Mrs. Halls simply drawn up will and explained Mrs. Halls reasons for same. I shall be doing the same for Grandpa next. We have not had word at present from Hawaii but I appreciate it is a busy time of year.

Reference Mrs. Halls will, as regards to Grandpa, she felt not only that he was reasonable secure at this time in his life, but she was also bitterly ashamed of his drinking, and felt this reflected very badly on the Stokoe name. She passed away feeling so bitter at the recent visit and consequences of same. We felt that things happened much too fast for Mrs. Hall and the general activity upset her a lot. It was just not Mrs. Halls way of doing things, as I think you will appreciate.

We can't make any decision at all on Mrs. Halls house etc, until we have confirmation from her solicitor, so I mentioned in my previous letter there will now be a waiting period before any decision can be made. Mrs. Halls bank book, jewelry and personal effects are at the solicitors office until probate is effected and all this takes time, as you will appreciate. We regret

she was bitter to the end at the outcome of your recent visit. We tried our utmost to heal the rift but to no avail. She was, as you see, mysterious to the end. These were your Grandpa's words. We are hopeful he will understand his sisters reasoning in permitting us to benefit along with Sister Pompetus. As you will see even Sister Lucy was forsaken and she also had been so good. As you well know Mrs. Halls house is in rather poor condition. So nothing can be decided at this point in time. At a later date I will gather items of family interest to you and have them sent over to Salt Lake. But all this will take some time.

Having explained Mrs. Halls wishes and feeling, may I now reply to your letter dated 2nd Dec. which I received on 9th December. Being the kind of a person I am, I have honoured your wishes and quite naturally, I don't betray a confidence. . . I most certainly will gather all historical family date and send it to you. It could be quite a large package so I will try to forward same. I did recently make enquires at the post off regarding those two suitcase that were left behind. They said it would be very very expensive and suggested air freight or surface mail. But more of that next year when the packages are made up.

As I write this letter my morning mail has just arrived and I've received a nice letter for your Grandpa. He has reminisced a lot on Aunt Lily past life and requests I keep him informed of any development. I will, as promised, send him full details of Aunt Lily's passing plus her death certificate, press cuttings and will copy. I will also explain his sister's reasons for making the decision she did. Hopefully if he is an understanding person he will acquiesce to her last wishes. As I am sure you will appreciate we have a very busy period ahead of us, but I will be contacting you again when documentation and package are prepared. We hope the festive season for you and your family. Yours with respect, Authur Sarginson and Gladys

p/s Mrs. Halls burial expenses were a lot more than we anticipated nearly 600 pounds. But we have met these. Arthur.

Notices appearing in a local newspapers:

Hall (Lilian) On Nov 27, 1985, in hospital after much suffering, Lillian, age 87 years, dearly loved Wife of the late Harrison Hall, and dear sister of Tom Stokoe. Service and committal at Manchester Crematorium on Monday, Dec 2, at 2:30 p.m. No flowers by request. Contact William Peacock, Tel 448 3397/865 1320. The Sarginsons were her beneficiaries.

Hall (Lily) Mr. And Mrs. Sarginson would like to thank all relatives, friends and neighbors for messages of sympathy and beautiful flowers at this sad time. Thanks also to the Rev N. Baker for his kind ministrations to the nurses of Beech Ward and 1 B, Wittington Hospital, also district nurses special thanks to Sister Lucy and staff and Sister Perpetun (Catholic Rescue Society, Didsbury) for their care and devotion to Mrs. Hall.

Diane's letter to Hargreaves & Sons, Lily's Solicitor, 14 months after her passing. October 11, 1986.

Dear Solicitor,



Aunt Lily with Gladys Sarginson.

I am writing in behalf of the Stokoe family concerning a matter of grave importance. Over a year ago, Tom Stokoe, my father-in-law, and I made a trip to Didsbury at the request of Mr. Authur Sarginson, who was then caring for Mrs. Lilian Hall his 86 year old, bedridden sister. There had been a fire and the inside of her house was a squalor. There were broken windows, no sanitary facilities and cracks in the walls which provided little protection against the cold.

The Sarginson's greeted us with a number of requests for home improvements. We were advised by Gladys Sarginson that Mrs. Hall was incompetent and that we, being her next-of-kin, needed to assume responsibility for getting her house repaired and putting her affairs in order. Mr. Sarginson outlined the process for applying for a home improvement grant from the city. They gave us a list of people to call. Mrs. Sarginson handed me a leather bag containing the deed to Mrs. Hall's house and other papers. Aunt Lily became suspicious of me and very annoyed at what she considered her brother's excessive drinking.

I spent three days cleaning her house and contacting the city officials about securing the home improvement grant for her. During this time we were continually pressed by Arthur to have Lily make out a will as there was not one among her many papers. We talked with Auntie several times about it. She told me she wanted the Sarginsons to live in her house until they passed on and then it was to go to 'young Tom.'

After doing all I could to help them, I left the matter took trip to Italy to work on my dissertation. . Mrs. Hall died on November 23, 1986 leaving everything to the Sarginsons. I

have spent several months trying to get Arthur to forward the family material and even sent him \$250 to do so. Please advise. (No reply arrived from the solicitor.)

Tom and Diane's 1994 trip to England

Diane continues, 'Tom and I flew to Manchester in the summer of 1994. While interviewing people there we discovered that Gladys Sargenson made a practice of befriending old ladies and then falling heir to their property when they died. Fortunately I was able to secure the Sargensons' new address by calling the public works department, Arthur's former employer. I discovered he retired and moved to Wales after Lily died. They provided his new address so we drove to Wales and found the couple in their new country cottage. Arthur looked shocked when he saw us standing at his front gate. I asked for the suitcase but said nothing about the \$250 I had sent him for postage. He produced the suitcase. They were no longer friendly and engaging, but seemed rather uncomfortable. Gladys said practically nothing to us after acknowledging our presence. We were not invited to stay for tea.

The first two chapters of this history was compiled from the family material we found in the suitcase. We obtained birth certificates and newspaper articles from various records offices. Much more surfaced as we talked to people in Manchester, Kirby Lonsdale, in Hexham and at Howe Mill. The new owner of Howe Mill gave provided a map and was particularly helpful.

Ada Anne Dunn's Ancestors



Edward Dunn, Ada Annie's father, was born on June 7, 1839 in Stockport. He was a coach proprietor. He married Ada Dickens in 1859. She was the daughter of John Dickens, a farmer who lived in Flagg Moor. Edwin and Ada had seven children. Tom and Lily Hall's mother, Ada Anne Dunn, is pictured above. She was their fifth child.

**Article about Ada Dickens – Ada Anne's mother- Daily Independent –
'98 And Still Going Strong - Grannie Dunn's Party at Sheffield.'**

Singing 'There's Room for Millions More,' in a high pitched voice which rang throughout the old ladies' ward at Neither Edge hospital, Sheffield, Grannie Dunn welcomed a 'Daily Independent report to her 98th birthday party yesterday.

The party was the result of the kindness of a visitor to the hospital, Mrs. Potter, who had also succeeded in finding a vantage point for Mrs. Dunn to see the Duchess of York when she came to Sheffield two year ago.

Sitting up in her bed, looking well and hearty, Grannie Dunn protested loudly that she ought to have been up and at work.

Despite her age she does everything for herself. She can knit, sew, wash and do her own mending. She has no use for spectacles. Her favorite book is the Bible and she has read it from cover to cover several times. One of the first things she did when she entered nether Edge Hospital five years ago was to institute prayer reading.

Every night she calls for silence in the ward while she prays and reads a passage from the Bible. She has not the slightest doubt that she will live to be 100 and no-one who saw her walking about the ward could have any doubts either.

She is the daughter of a farmer called Dicken who lived at Flagg Moor, near Buxton, Derbyshire. When she married at the age of 22 she went to live with her husband, a coach proprietor in Stockport. She has a daughter, who is now in Switzerland and a son who lives in Sheffield. Among the many birthday cards which she received yesterday was a beautiful one from her daughter Lily (below) who wishes her 'many happy returns and the best of health.

Notes from an interview with Tom on June 23, 1985 - She was a good old grandma. I used to go and stay with her. She lived in Stockport a few miles away from Manchester. The old lady kept me up at night playing drafts (checkers.)



Ada's sister Lily with her husband Hans Rudolph Hilfilker and baby Harold.

There was an old grandfather clock bought in 1790. It had all the phases of the moon on its face. There was also a cuckoo clock. It chimed every hour and every half hour. I would sit playing with the old lady while the clock ticked the night away. She never worried about going to bed until 12:00 or 1:00 in the morning. 'Come on now, she would say, 'let's play another game.



My Grandfather Dunn was an old man with a bushy beard. There was a gas explosion in his house that blew his beard off and singed his whiskers. In those days they used gas. Everybody had gas. There was not much electricity. They used coal from the gas works. It would come through in the pipes that ran in their iron stove. Somebody left the jolly thing on and it was full of gas. The explosion blew off his whiskers but didn't kill him. He must have gotten quite a shock.

Tommy, 'I can remember as a boy in New Zealand, about age six or seven, my father telling me to write to his two aunts. I did. One lived in Sheffield and the other in Manchester. The Sheffield Aunt was probably the wife of Ada Anne's brother, Thomas Dunn, who was born on March 2, 1870.

