

PAULINE ADAMS

AND SOME FAMILIES OF
PRINCE OF WALES TERRACE, BRAY, CO. WICKLOW

by

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The present writer recently edited 'The Diaries of Mary Hayden', published 2005/2006 by Morrigan Books in association with the National Library of Ireland, holders of the original manuscripts.

Mary Hayden (1862-1942) was an historian, university professor, and activist in national, language and women's issues. She was a friend of both Yeats and Pearse. Her diaries detail the day to day life of the professional middle classes in late Victorian Dublin, from 1878 up until 1903.

The diarist spent a lot of time in Bray in those years, and information about the families detailed below has been gathered both from the diaries themselves and subsequent research.

Prince of Wales Terrace is situated on Quinsboro Road, Bray. It is a very impressive mid-Victorian terrace of substantial houses. Architecturally it is perhaps one of Ireland's finest examples of such terraces. Residents in the early 1880's were: *Number One*, Edward McGauran; *Number Two*; Mrs Robin; *Number Three*: Thomas Lowe Whistler MB FRCSI; *Number Four*: P.F.Comber; *Number Five*: Mrs Reilly; *Number Six*: Mrs Fay; *Number Seven*: Hugh Brew LRCSI; *Number Eight*: Henry Vesey Colclough; *Number Nine*: James Merriman; *Number Ten*: Mrs Scovell; *Number 11*: John Dalrymple Carnegie; *Number Twelve*: Bray Club.

The families noted immediately below are those dealt with in *The Diaries of Mary Hayden*.

Number Four, home of Patrick Forstall Comber, an engineer.

Origins and descendants of the family:

Henry Comber is said to have arrived (in the south) from Northern Ireland around 1710. He entered as a tutor the family of a noted barrister, Peter Daly, of the Connaught Circuit. Daly was married to Margaret, daughter of Thomas Bermingham, 22nd Lord Athenry.

Henry Comber had three sons, Patrick, Peter, and Henry.

Peter's grandson George Comber was a farmer at Garbally Estate near Ballinasloe in 1893. Henry married a woman called Scott, and Patrick married her sister, Sarah Scott, and had one son, Thomas.

Thomas Comber married Catherine Gannon, daughter of Edward Gannon of Rossbeg House, Kilmeena, Westport, Co Mayo.

Their son was to be Patrick Forstall Comber, who in 1859 married Mary, eldest daughter of John Forstall of 12 Broughton Street, Edinburgh, Scotland.

John Forstall (died 1871) was originally from New Ross, Co Wexford, and had married Margaret Fegan of Longford. John Forstall had a brother, Moses, 'a Captain in the Spanish Service', who married Kate Bingham. John Forstall had three daughters, Mary, Catherine and Margaret. He had no son. Consequently, when Patrick Comber married Mary he was asked by his new father-in-law to take on the name Forstall, and thus he became Patrick Forstall Comber.

While living at Prince of Wales Terrace his occupation was 'Bray Town Surveyor/Engineer'. Previously he had been a Clerk of Works in the British War Office, and had helped set up the Melbourne Australia branch of the Royal Mint in 1869. In the mid 1880's he moved from Prince of Wales Terrace to another house in Bray, Fairy Hill, a large house in its own grounds on the then outskirts of the town. In the 1890's he maintained an office at 8 Anglesea Street, Dublin. After Fairy Hill he moved into Dublin

and was to die there at 19 Lower Leeson Street on 25th June, 1909. An obituary notice relates:

“The death of Mr. Patrick Forstall Comber occurred on the 25th inst. at his residence, 19 Lower Leeson St. Dublin. When in the Royal Engineer Department he carried out extensive works in Scotland, Chatham and Corfu. Later he served in the Colonies and established the Royal Mint in Melbourne. Subsequently he was engineer for various public works in Ireland, the Bray sea wall and harbour, for sewerage and other works at Bray, for the water supplies of Tipperary, Athlone and Carrickmacross, and other works. He was member of the Institution of Civil Engineers, of the Institution of Civil Engineers of Ireland and of the Municipal County Engineers' Association; life member of the Royal Sanitary Institute, member of the Royal Institute of Public Health and Fellow of the Surveyors' Institution.”

There were ten children from the marriage of Patrick and Mary Comber.

These were Mary Catherine (b.1860), Margaret (b.1862), Frank, Charles (b.1864), Agnes (b.1875), Joseph (b.1877), Bernard (b.11/8/1878), Paul, Pauline (bapt.1881), Arthur (b.1891).

Margaret Comber married a Dr Murtagh of Drogheda, and their descendant was Eithne Stephens of Lower Leeson Street, Dublin.

Frank Comber died as a soldier in Algeria.

Joseph Comber went to Chile in the 1890's, to work in the Nitrates business. His brother Bernard (Barney) followed him there after the Boer War, and B. is also recorded as arriving in the USA in 1919. Joseph's children were Elizabeth (b.1925) and Brigitte (b.1931). Joseph died in 1943 and in 1945 his widow and daughters went to live in England.

Number Eight, home of Henry Vesey Colclough, a solicitor.

Origins and descendants of the family:

The original Colclough in Ireland was Anthony Colclough, an officer in the army of King Henry viii. In 1575 he was granted the dissolved Benedictine Monastery and lands of Tintern Abbey, in Co Wexford, which remained the family estate up to the 1950's, when it passed to the Irish state. Henry Vesey Colclough was a scion of this family, most likely a son of John Colclough of Finnstown. (Henry had a sister Mary, who married a Mr Spain). For traditional reasons obscure, the family name is pronounced Coakley, and indeed some branches spell it in that manner.

Henry Vesey Colclough married, in 1868, Catherine Forstall, second daughter of John Forstall of Edinburgh, see above. Children of the marriage included Constance (born 29/1/1871), Angela (born 21/8/1869), Pauline (born 29/06/1874, died 10/9/1957), and John. The family emigrated to the USA in 1883.

Constance Colclough married (16/11/1887) John Macauley Eager (1862-1916), a Brooklyn born doctor in the US public health service. He served in Naples in 1910, health screening potential US immigrants in connection with a cholera epidemic. He died in Naples 18/8/1916. He was son of another John Macauley Eager and Margaret McLaren.

Pauline Forstall Colclough was living in North Carolina in 1898 when she married Walter J. Adams, a physician, of Norfolk, Virginia. As Pauline Adams she is now remembered as one of America's leading suffragists and champion of women's rights. She was one of those women in 1917 jailed for picketing President Woodrow Wilson at a military ceremony, which incident led eventually to the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment (granting women the vote) in 1920.

Pauline had two sons, Edward Forstall Adams (Forsty), and Walter P.Adams (1899-1996), of Norfolk Virginia. Walter had a daughter Charlotte (married Harrell), and a son, Walter P.Adams jr.

In old age Pauline wrote an account of her childhood, 'Earliest Impressions of Life in Bray'. She remembered...

When about three years old I walked beside a baby carriage with infant brother John in it and a wet nurse wheeling it. She talked a lot about hell and told me that a little boy who was playing with me in the sand was going to be burned up in hell because he was a Jew and God did not like them and all Protestants would burn forever too. Next thing I remembered was that Mama would not let me go to the beach, but took me to a revival or mission they were having. The priest talked very loud so that all the beggars, that sat in the back behind their separate communion rail, would hear him. I could not go to sleep as he kept pointing (I thought) at me and saying I drove in the nails in someone's hands and it was I that pressed thorns in his head, and I cried so much and called "I did not do it" so my Mother dragged me out of church before I could tell him that it was Constance's sin did it for she "broke the basin". It seems I had not told this before for I always believed in "Tell Tail Titt, your tongue will be split, and all the dogs in the town shall have a bit". So I held my tongue all the way home and my mother was holding a handkerchief at my mouth thinking I was going to throw up. Then she put me to bed with a basin beside me and I tried to be sick in it but nothing would come out but I made Mama stay there as I felt sure she would not let them "Split my tongue".

Next I remember having a large book and colored chalks and being in the bow window where the governess was teaching Angela and Constance and I was not to say a word. After lunch the Governess took us for a walk if it were not raining very hard and she would hold my hand so I could walk on a wall we passed on our way to the laburnum tree which we all loved as it had long golden flowers. We often passed a big house with a garden with about twenty children playing in a garden. We would want to peep through the fence but the governess said that was not polite but I always wanted to run back to give a last look as I believed they were always going to be taken away to hell as they were all Protestants. The Governess did not say that but the wet nurse had made such a

lasting impression that I thought the Governess just did not know as she said that little children did not go to hell. It was only when they grew up and committed sins that they went to hell. It was then my firm belief that all the children ought to be killed so there would be no chance of their being sinners and be burned forever.

My next memories was that I made a scene and had to be taken up and carried by a man who was taking Mama to play tennis with some people who were waiting at a court. We had taken a short cut through a back street, and women were washing clothes and throwing the dirty water out on the street. I noticed one tub poured out red blood which got me excited and I begged them to find out who was murdered and to call the police. I wanted to see who was killed. That was when the young man had to take me up and carry me, and he got his nice tennis clothes over mud. He promised me to send the police to see about it.

There seemed to be no children my age nearby except one little girl called Cecelia McGowren (sic) whose Mama was dead. They would send for me to spend the day and stay for dinner at which time a butler would bring her Papa his toddy which he made by cutting up an apple in small pieces and pouring very hot water on it with a silver spoon in the glass so it would not break. If it were cold and rainy we would sit in front of the fire and play checkers, if fine we rolled our hoops on the sidewalk. When Mama and Papa had a party I was always asked to recite "Queen of the May". One of the guests used to take me on her lap and tell me "The House that Jack built". I think it was Maggie Comber.

At around the time Pauline wrote the above, she also wrote the following piece, entitling it "The personality of Henry Vesey Colclough Esq., Solicitor & Attorney-at-Law, Dublin, Ireland."

Papa would generally arrive by train at 5.30 from Dublin and he would always give his three little daughters a grand hour in playing "Blind Man's Buff" in the hall before dinner and after dinner he played many easy games of cards with us. Mama used to say "Now Henry, you must be tired and it is time for the children to go to bed". Then he would promise Mama that if she would give us just five

minutes we would stop our game and go without tears of remonstrance. Nolens volens so we all would be happy. He loved Latin quotations and we always thought they were English. In the summer he used to take us to the large poppy field behind the house. Here he would help us to gather a pile of stones. On top of these he would place a large wobbly one and we would all have distances in throwing stones to knock it down. This game he called "Ducks down, Colley Wabbles" and we just loved it. If any of us moved from our post, she was made to skip her next turn. If she were to do it again we were allowed to call her a "cheat" and it broke up the game and we all had to march home in silence except we were allowed to sing "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep". And then we all got to be good friends again. We never even heard the word, spanked, whipped or beaten much less the deed and we always loved our parents.

When we were older, 6, 8 and 9 we all adjourned to the drawing-room where Papa read to us beautiful poems, Maud Muller, the Raven Enoch Arden, The Ancient Mariner and would put a marker in the best places so we find the parts we wanted to read to ourselves.

The one who read it back to him would have choice of what she wanted him to read next.

He hated vulgar ungrammatical people and would make a great display of covering his ears if any were to make a mistake in grammar, in using "shall" in the place we should say "will"; or after "if" using "was" instead of "were".

Although in good neighborhoods, we tried to talk the way the sidewalk children did in America. They never had read any poems and did not know what grammar was. Papa never had time to play with us or sing after he came to America and the lovely family circle was all broken up.

Number One, home of Edward McGauran, a solicitor.

Origins and descendants of the family:

The family had routes in Cavan, and Edward McGauran was Crown Solicitor for that county. He had been married to Bridget Morrin, who predeceased him. (She was that dead 'Mama' mentioned above.)

Edward McGauran died suddenly on 24th March 1887. He is buried in Cullies Cemetery outside Cavan Town. The McGauran children were Josephine, and Cecelia (b.20/11/1872). Josephine married Frank Kelly. He was son of Joseph Kelly, owner of the long established 'City Saw Mills', in Dublin's Thomas Street. (The distinctive arched entranceway to that premises, now a Chadwicks branch, still survives as a major feature of the street).

Josephine, known as Josie, Kelly was, despite her marriage, something of a 'girl about town', working as an opera singer, chanteuse and involved generally in showbusiness. In this capacity she worked in Melbourne, Australia, and also toured India, living in Calcutta. It appears from evidence in *The Diaries of Mary Hayden* that Josie Kelly could have been the inspiration for James Joyce's 'Molly Bloom'.

Upon her father's death Josie's sister Cecelia was a legal 'infant' of 14, without home or guardians and, following court proceedings, Patrick Forstall Comber and his wife Mary were appointed her guardians. She went to live with that family, by then moved to Fairy Hill. Cecelia later became a nurse, in various hospitals, and also worked as a lady's companion.

Complex legal proceedings concerning inheritances continued, up until the 1920's, involving lands at Stroane, Drumsillagh and Drumcalplin (all in County Cavan), these lands being owned by Josephine McGauran Kelly but mortgaged to her late father, who appears to have left his interest in them to Cecelia!

Other family houses in the terrace, not dealt with in the Mary Hayden diaries, include:

Number Three, home of Thomas Lowe Whistler, a surgeon.

Origins and descendants of the family:

A descendant of a Gabriel Ralph Whistler (died 1657) of Magherafelt, Thomas Whistler's grandfather was another Gabriel. The four sons of this Gabriel were Thomas Lowe (senior), Gabriel, William and Robert Gore. Thomas Lowe Whistler (senior) had been a physician in Galway. Thomas Lowe Whistler (junior) was born c1813, and graduated from Dublin University in 1831. He himself had two daughters, born in 1854 and 1856, and one son, born in 1852. His uncle William had gone to sea and had never been heard of again. In correspondence with the renowned American artist James McNeill Whistler, concerning family history and possible relationships, it was suggested that this William might be the connection between the two men.

Number Seven, home of Hugh Brady Brew and his wife Henrietta.

Hugh Brew, a doctor, died 16/March/1908.

Number Ten, home of Miss Scovell.

She was a member of the family of a noted Kingstown (DunLaoghaire) yachtsman, Henry Scovell, of Ferney, Stillorgan, Co Dublin.

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