

WALCH FAMILY JOTTINGS.

compiled by

JANE SHART MAN.

GEORGE TURNER WALCH.

FORBEARS.
(Paternal).

Authentic information as regards our forbears is not available further back than 150 years, but tradition has it that when in 1688 William of Orange came from Holland to be King William the Third of Great Britain he brought with him a Walloon Regiment in which was our paternal Grandfather's Grandfather who, after he had taken part in the Battle of the Boyne, in July 1690, was rewarded by a grant of land in the North of Ireland.

So far mere tradition, but then we come to ascertained facts.

OUR GREAT
GRANDFATHER.

Our Great Grandfather died when our Grandfather was still quite a boy. His Mother married again and his stepfather treating him badly, he ran away from his home and enlisted in a regiment going for service to America.

There he fought at the battle of Bunkers' Hill, (17th June 1775).

Some time after that he was given a Commission. When he became an ensign, we do not know, but an old Army List shows that in 1795 he was a captain in the 80th Regiment.

He married, exactly when has not been ascertained, but in 1788 when his regiment was stationed at Birmingham, his only son our Father was born there on the 16th October of that year, and was christened "James William Henry".

Soon after this our Grandfather went to India with his regiment taking his wife and little son with him, and in India and Ceylon he remained for the rest of his service till he died in 1844.

In India there were born to him two daughters,

Catherine (in 1791) who married Captain Peter Bruels Man of the 54th Regiment, and was generally known in our family circle as "Aunt Peter", and another daughter who married an officer of the name of Slade; she died not long after her marriage.

FATHER.

When our Father was only 8 years and 7 months old he was given a commission in the army through the influence of General Auchmuty who was a great friend of his Father's.

That our Father should have been a full blown Ensign drawing the pay of that rank at so early an age seems now-a-days almost incredible but it is nevertheless a fact - see statement of service given later on.

Of course he had to go at once to England for education. In an account of his early life written by our Mother she says " it was arranged that he was to go to Mrs Harness the wife of the Colonel of the 80th Regiment who lived at Dronfield in Yorkshire to be educated with her son. The Captain who had charge of him was well known and liked at Madras, and he had full directions what to do with his charge written out and carefully placed in a desk which was given to the boy as a parting gift from his Mother.

The voyage was a fair one until they reached the Bay of Biscay when they were overtaken by a hurricane and were nearly foundering when a sail was seen and all the passengers left what they thought was the sinking ship and went on board the other vessel which was also bound for England. They much wished to take the boy with them but the Captain objected, saying he must sink or swim with him. A few hours afterwards the ship was taken as a prize by a French frigate and towed into Brest harbour and sunk.

It being a time of war between England and France, The Captain, crew and little boy(our Father) were put into prison.

He used to say he was not badly treated, indeed some English families in Brest used to get permission for him to visit them occasionally.

He was made to work in the prison as errand boy and cook's boy for many months.

The Captain managed to write to his wife, and

through the efforts of friends, when there was an exchange of prisoners he obtained his release, but no amount of persuasion would induce the authorities to let him take the boy with him, and this mainly because he had boasted of being an officer.

I must here mention that the vessel into which the passengers were transferred was never heard of again, and was supposed to have gone down in the same storm.

When the Captain reached England he used every effort to get our Father released, but he could not do so until after the war, nearly three years from the time of his imprisonment.

Then the difficulty arose where was he to go ? For his desk went down with the ship. Both the Captain and the boy remembered the name of the lady but nothing further, so after putting him into decent clothing the Captain said there was nothing for it but to take him to his own family in Scotland, bring him up with his own children till he could hear from his friends in India.

Of course both they and Mrs Harness had long ago given him up as drowned.

Well they were travelling from London to Scotland in the old stage coach days, and when at dinner at an inn on the road the Captain was telling the story to a gentleman sitting by him, and the waiter, hearing what he said told him there was a family of the name of Harness living about 5 miles distant.

Of course the Captain thought it right to enquire if this were the same family as he was seeking, so he ordered a post chaise and drove to Dronfield. Mrs. Harness was indeed astonished, having given him up long ago.

Of course he was at once sent to school, but was scarcely four years there, when, not quite 15 years of age, he was in September 1803, ordered to join at Jersey, the first battalion of the 80th Regiment and with it he shortly went to India.

In 1809 he was made "First Adjutant of Seringapatam" (captured in 1799) but at the end of the year he had to accompany his regiment and in various staff appointments chiefly in Trichinopoly and Cannanore till in 1820 his regiment having completed its tour of Indian service was sent on garrison duty for a

short time to Malta and Gibraltar and thence to England arriving there at the end of 1822 or early in 1823.

On the 5th June of the latter year he married at Rainham in Kent, our Mother, Eliza, daughter of Charles Nash a farmer of Mackland, she was years of age.

In July of the same year, wishing to serve again in India, he exchanged into the 54th Regiment just going there, and in that Regiment he remained for the rest of his military career.

In 1824-25 he served in the "Campaign of Ava" (now called Burma) - see statement of services given further on.

Whilst on this active service our Mother had to stay in Madras (Fort St. George) though she was very anxious to join him.

In answer to a letter from her entreating to be allowed to do so he wrote "For your sake it cannot be - this is no place for a young wife."

After the campaign was over he held various regimental and staff appointments at the chief military stations of the Madras Presidency. Those were the days of the Army purchase system (abolished in 1871 by Lord Cardwell when Secretary of State for War) and our Father, not being well enough off to take advantage of that system and therefore having to depend solely on death steps for promotion it was very slow and it was not till 1837 after 39 years and 9 months on full pay, that he became a Major by brevet.

He then went of half pay and returned to England with his family of 3 sons, Arthur, James and Charles and 2 daughters, Eliza Litchfield and Jane Smart and settled down for a time in Exeter.

It soon became apparent that his half pay was not enough to enable him to live with comfort in England, and, chiefly for the sake of his boys, he turned his thoughts to emigration. They were directed towards "Van Diemens Land" (now Tasmania) by the advice of a distant relative of our Mother, Mr. Henry Hopkins, who had some years before gone out there and done well and by that of friends named Graycroft who were relative of Sir John Franklin the great arctic explorer, then Governor of that Colony.

The Home Government was at that time in its anxiety to get desirable settlers for Australia giving the old military and naval officers grants of land there and one of half a square mile (320 acres) was given to our Father in the northern part of "Van Diemens Land" and to that, then far away land, the family went off, leaving England in July 1842 in the ship "Royal Saxon" carrying over 400 emigrants.

On arriving in the Colony before settling on his land our Father wisely sought the advice of friends and old residents, who were unanimous in deciding that as a long military career had by no means provided a promising training for an agricultural venture, and as the prospects of farming were then very depressed in the colony it would be most unwise for him to sink his small capital in the land.

The advice was accepted and the land was sold, though doubtless with regret, and so vanished the attractive visions of a settlers life and it then became necessary to get other occupations for the boys.

IS COMMISSION
ANTED IN 1844
S IN THE 22nd
GIMENT KNOWN
"NAPIER'S"
CAUSE SIR
ARLES NAPIER
E CONQUEROR
SEINDE
S ITS
LONEL.

Promise of a commission in the army was obtained (and granted in February 1844) for our eldest surviving brother, Arthur, and the second son, James, was sent to a tradesman in Launceston to learn business. Charles was too young to make it necessary to at once place him but less than two years later, when not quite 15 years of age, he went to sea, at his own wish as an apprentice on a sailing ship trading to England.

George was then little more than an infant.

For our Father himself fairly suitable occupation was provided by Sir John Franklin who was just about to return to England and then go (in May 1845) on his last arctic expedition from which he never returned. He offered our Father the post of Commandant of the temporary convict station of Broadmarsh, expressing in his letter doing so his regret at not being able to offer Major Walch "something worthier of his abilities and rank".

But Major Walch was glad to accept the offer and took up the appointment in September 1845 and held it till the Broadmarsh station was done away with.

He then (in 1846) chiefly with the object of providing for James bought the Hobart Town Bookselling branch business of the London publishers, Thomas Tegg & Co. Six years after this on 25th March 1852 our Father died in Hobart Town honoured and respected not only by his own family but by great numbers of friends.

STATEMENT OF SERVICE OF JAMES WILLIAM HENRY WALCH of H.M's 54th REGT. of FOOT WITH A RECORD OF OTHER PARTICULARS.

<u>RANK.</u>	<u>REGT.</u>	<u>DATES.</u>	<u>HOW OBTAINED.</u>	<u>LIST OF DATES OF ANY BATTLES, SIEGES, CAMPAIGNS.</u>
Ensign	80th	10.5.1797.	Without purchase	Campaign in Travancore 1809. Acting Adjutant to Lieut-Col. J. Cuppage.
Lieut.	80th	27.9.1803.	do	
Captain.	80th	1.7.1815.	do	
Captain	54th	31.7.1823.	do	Campaign in Ava 1824-25.
Major	In the Army	10.1.1837.	By Brevet.	Acting Major of Brigade 2nd Bengal Brigade Brigadier.
Major	"Unattached"	17.2.1837.	Without purchase	General W. Morrison C.B. 4th Regt. 17.

BORN AT BIRMINGHAM 16th OCTOBER 1788. AGE AT ENTRANCE INTO THE ARMY, EIGHT YEARS AND SEVEN MONTHS.

INSTANCES IN WHICH THE OFFICER HAS DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF BY VALIANT OR SKILLFUL CONDUCT. WHEN, WHERE AND ON WHAT OCCASION.

SERVICES ABROAD.

	<u>PERIOD.</u>		<u>STATION.</u>
	<u>From</u>	<u>To.</u>	
" On the morning 29th March 1825, the Division assembled & moved forward at daylight. About 8 of the advance under Brig-General Macbean C.B. had arrived within the range of the enemy's artillery from the entrenched position and advanced works of Arakan. Two six pounders having been so far advanced in a gorge leading to the enemy's works as to be considerably exposed to the fire from them, they were protected during the day and gallantly brought off by Captain Walch with his company and others towards the close of evening."	May. 1804	Aug. 1817.	India, Madras Presidency.
	Dec. 1820	Sep. 1822.	Gibraltar & Malta.
	Sep. 1823	Dec. 1829.	India, Burma Madras Presdy.
	Jan. 1830.	May. 1837.	India Madras Presidency.

On full pay 39 years and 9 months. Landed in England from India May, 10th, 1837.

