

The Staleys of Forest in Teesdale by Dani Miles, nee Cameron

Mock if you must, but, on many occasions, I have felt the hand of the ancestors on my shoulder in my endeavours to record their lives. . The events are too numerous to mention, and not explicable as "coincidence". Some months ago I was looking through the archives of the *Teesdale Mercury*, for a death report, and I came across an obituary for a "Mrs Maria Staley". As she sounded like a feisty lady, I saved the obituary and hoped we were somehow related, knowing that I had Staleys in my tree.

A chance e-mail conversation with a tractor engineer, who serviced that of my great aunt Ada Kellett nee Cameron, in Langleydale, revealed that they were devout "Chapel", very hospitable and still prayed before meals in the 1970s. I was trawling the web for Methodist ancestors, and on the web site "My Primitive Methodist Ancestors", came across an article in the *Christian Messenger*, 1903, by the Rev C. Pettler, transcribed by Geoff Dickinson, which refers to the stirring work of "Mr and Mrs. Staley"..... At Ebenezer Chapel, Forest, the home of the Staleys, a most devoted Primitive Methodist family, the work grows steadily"

Apart from musing if Geoff was any relation to my 3 x Cameron great grand mother, Margaret nee Dickinson 1794, who married Jeremiah Cameron 1787, of Egglestone, I wondered **which** Mr and Mrs Staley? Having boiled the candidates down to two couples, I felt that Maria's work in Methodism was familiar, found her obituary, and then deduced which "John Staley" was **her** husband, and so the couple were identified. The *Teesdale Mercury* of April 1941 stated:

"Funeral at Forest. *The interment took place on Monday at Forest-in-Teesdale of Mrs. Maria Staley, of Rose Tree Farm. Mrs Staley, who was 79 years of age, was the widow of the late Mr. John Staley. She was a member of an old Teesdale family, and a prominent member of Ebenezer Chapel, - Forest, where she had held office as steward. From girlhood she had been a preacher in the Teesdale circuit. She is survived by four sons and five daughters."*

I was delighted to find that the father of her husband (**John Staley 1857-1928**), John Staley 1821-1887, was the much older brother of my 3 x great grand mother, Tamar Staley 1809 whose husband was John Lee 1803. So, our common ancestors are their grand parents, John Staley 1784 and Jane Tarn. (The Tarns are a well known local family and weaves it way into my tree several times. Other names in the *Christian Messenger* article – eg Bainbridge, Dent, Thompson, Beadle, Coltman, Scott and Lowe are also in my tree. The inhabitants of Forest in Teesdale did not move far from their roots, and in a close-knit caring community – why would they?)

The early Staleys were relative "incomers" to the area. They left a beautiful, but harsh area with waterfalls, where lead had been extracted since time immemorial. (A church there has the oldest depiction of a leadminer, in Europe.) They arrived with 13 other Derbyshire lead miners, to help the locals extract the lead more efficiently. Most of them returned when the lead became uneconomical to mine. Thomas Staley, 1743-1812, came to Teesdale and married a local girl, Margaret Ireland – another very old name in the area. They had a large family amongst which, a son, **John Staley 1784 - 1829 born in Forest who**

John Staley 1784 - 1829 and Jane Tarn 1788-1847, had Tamer Staley in 1809, and John in 1821, as well as several other children..

Tamer married John Lee 1803, - son John Lee 1829, of Mickleton - daughter **Jane Lee 1856**, daughter Ethel Cameron, - son Norman Cameron 1917, - daughter, (the author), Dani Cameron. Tamar's granddaughter, Jane Lee 1856 married John Cameron 1850, for many years Supt of Police Barnard Castle. His family were Congregationalists, as they had a chapel conveniently opposite their house in Queen St. Barney. Other members of the family were devout Methodist. In the Bourne Chapel at Middleton, were Cameron family memorials. The one shown, is currently urgently looking for a home, as the chapel is being re-designed for modern usage.

John Staley 1821 married Susannah Tallentire 1832 and had **John Staley 1857-1928, who married MARIA COLLINSON GARGETT 1861-1941**. She was the daughter of Edward Gargett 1838, and Mary Jane Collinson 1837. The Gargetts were lead miners that had lived in Forest for generations. Mary Jane's parents were from Stanhope.

Maria and John had nine children. Two sons served in, and survived WWI. John died in in 1928, aged 71.

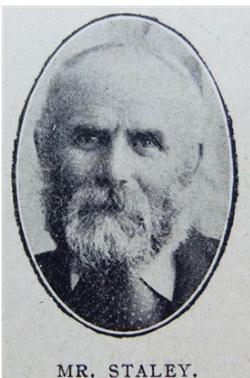


The couple possibly with their family. The eldest son, Edward, was born 1883. Adeline has been identified as seated on the floor Right facing, she was born in 1897. She looks no more than 10 here, so this photo was probably taken about 1907, at which time Maria would have been 46. (Photo-Christine Waistell)
Photo From the Christian Messenger – 1913,

Article in *Christian Messenger*, of 1913, describes the work of “Mr and Mrs Staley” of Forest in Teesdale . Maria



is Maria Collinson Staley , nee Gargett, 1861-1941.



John Staley, 1860-1937, of Forest, whose parents John Staley 1784 and and Jane Tarn, were my 3 x great grandparents.



Also named as very active in Middleton, was James Watson 1869 married Judith Hannah Robson b 1870. He was a grocer's assistant and then in 1911, a Drapery Manager in Middleton. He lived at 17 Bridge Street Middleton

The plaque from Bourne Chapel now looking for a home or it will be discarded.

