

## **Charlotte Quaife Wickenden And Her Family**

By Lottie Wickenden Ogden

Since Grandmother Wickenden was a permanent member of our family something should be written about her. She was born Charlotte Quaife, at Chatham, Kent, England, on October 26, 1827, to James Edmond and Mary Poynter Quaife. There was an older brother, Robert, and several younger sisters, Mary Ann (Rogers), Sarah (Heavens) and Elizabeth (Phillips). She used to tell us tales of her early life and the most thrilling was the story of the shipwreck when the family was returning to England from Canada after having lived over there for several years, beginning in 1832. (Letters concerning their ill-fated sojourn in Canada will be found at the end of the book.) They had passage on a sailing vessel carrying rough lumber back to England. Even the deck was piled high with lumber and they had very little space in which to move around. It was a long journey, two months or more, and by the time they reached the other side the crew was drunk. In drawing near to Ireland, the ship foundered on the rocks and all their possessions were lost except the clothes they were wearing. They were rescued by people from the shore and given shelter, but having no money or anything they had to wait until a letter could reach their relatives in Chatham and money could be sent. Grandmother remembered how poor the people were and how glad they were when they finally reached England. She remembered especially how her only pair of shoes was stolen by their rescuers.

Her schooling was very limited, but her family was respected in their community. The Quaifes were originally French Huguenots who left France when the Huguenots were severely persecuted. They were weavers by craft.

She married Thomas Wickenden in 1849. He was a sailor who in time became captain of his own ship "The Mary Caroline." He was a Freeman in the town of Rochester which gave him certain voting rights and also the privilege of sending his sons to Sir Joseph Williamson's Public School without payment.

I have heard Grandmother say that long, long ago the Wickenden family had large holdings of land on what was known as the Isle of Thanet, which was the name of the most eastern section of Kent, but that in the days of Henry VIII their land was confiscated. The name is very old, and Uncle Robert Wickenden found an old record in Rochester Cathedral which told of a Wickenden who a judge in Rochester in the year 1200. The Wickenden coat of arms was one of the earlier ones granted.

Grandfather Wickenden was only 34 when he and his whole crew were drowned on New Year's Day, 1861. The oldest son, James, was ten years old, and Father was eight on that February 7. As another son, Robert, was born six months later. Grandmother had three young sons to support and very little means on which to live. She worked very hard at anything she could find to do and at one time she was a nurse in the local Alms House which was quite a good-sized institution. The boys were sent to Sir Joseph

Williamson's Mathematical School and received a first-class basic education until they were twelve years old.

When father was twelve he left school and was apprenticed to a grocer for four years. He used to tell about different houses where he would deliver groceries and one of the places was Gad's Hill house where Charles Dickens lived. Many of the places described in the latter's novels were located in and about Rochester. In the last, an unfinished novel, "The Mystery of Edwin Drood," the apartment over the gate house where Edwin Drood's uncle lived, was one where a Wickenden ancestor formerly had lived.

Grandmother's brother, Robert Quaife, had become a minister and had moved to Toledo, Ohio, at some time during father's boyhood. In 1869 Uncle Jim came over to be with Uncle Robert, and Father followed in October 1870, landing at Boston. On arriving in Toledo, he first found work with a grocer. After several different jobs he finally found one on a surveyor's gang and right away he knew that he wanted to be a civil engineer. He bought books, studied the higher mathematics and learned all he could of the profession. Within ten years from the time he came from England he was one of the engineers in Smith Bridge Company of Toledo.

In 1874 Father and Uncle Jim sent for Grandmother and Uncle Rob, then thirteen years of age, to come from England to Toledo. In the meantime, father had built the small house on French Street (Greenwood Avenue) and Uncle Jim had a small house directly in line with Father's house facing on Starr Avenue. The two lots back up to each other. Uncle Jim must have married Lucy Wales about this time.

Grandmother and Uncle Rob lived with Father and Uncle Rob went to the old Franklin School. Later he got a job in the photograph gallery of North and Oswald, prominent photographers in Toledo. Some little time later he had his own photograph gallery in Dundee, Michigan. Grandmother kept house for him some of the time. Later Uncle Jim took over the shop and Uncle Rob went to New York, and later to Paris, to study art.

Father had been brought up in the Methodist Chapel in Rochester, but in Toledo he became interested in the little recently organized Baptist Church in East Toledo at Fourth and Victor Streets and sang in the choir. A young lady named Consaul was the organist of the church and a romance developed. They were married December 17, 1879.

It was sometime in this period that Grandmother Wickenden went back to England for a visit. I do not know how long she was there, but I was old enough to remember that when she came back to Toledo she brought me the little English dishes for my play dishes. I prized them highly. Eventually I passed them on to Charlotte Winans as she was the "Charlotte" named after Grandmother. I was named for both my grandmothers, but Father thought "Lottie Lillis" was more euphonious than Charlotte Lillis would have been. She wrote long letters to her sister over there and spoke of England and especially of Rochester so much that when I was there in 1913 it all seemed familiar. I felt as if I had been there before.

Grandmother deserves much credit for working as hard as she did after her husband's early death in order to give her three sons a chance. She lived to see each of them an asset to the communities in which they lived. She had no easy time of it in a houseful of noisy children growing up, and her ways were not always Mother's ways; but Mother was always patient and in Grandmother's last year, when she was paralyzed, Mother gave her constant care and attention. She lived to be 76 years old and died in Toledo, August 17, 1904.