

1-1-1948

Ancestry and Some Descendants of William Gregg I

Howard T. Dimick

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmhr>

Recommended Citation

Dimick, Howard T.. "Ancestry and Some Descendants of William Gregg I." *New Mexico Historical Review* 23, 1 (1948). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmhr/vol23/iss1/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in New Mexico Historical Review by an authorized editor of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu, lsloane@salud.unm.edu, sarahrk@unm.edu.

ANCESTRY AND SOME DESCENDANTS OF WILLIAM GREGG I

By HOWARD T. DIMICK

I. Introductory

WILLIAM GREGG I is the genarch in America of a line of Greggs numbering many individuals of talent and some of marked distinction. Among the distinguished are William Gregg who introduced cotton mills in the Graniteville district of South Carolina, Brigadier-General John Gregg of Alabama and Texas, and Josiah Gregg, Santa Fe trader and early American explorer, quondam resident of Santa Fe, whose Western travels and death in the wilderness of northern California are items of Americana still green in the minds of New Mexicans.¹

II

William Gregg I [William the Quaker] was one of the three earliest Gregg arrivals in the American colonies, having settled in the Christiana Hundred of Delaware in the period 1680-1682. Although some of his descendants have claimed that he came to the colonies from Scotland, I am of the opinion that he lived for many years in Ireland prior to his emigration, residing in the Londonderry district of Ulster.²

The tale extant in some quarters that William Gregg I came to the colonies with William Penn is no doubt apo-

1. J. S. Buckingham, *The Slave States of America* (2 vols., Fisher, Son & Co., London, 1842), I, 43; R. S. Cotterill, *The Old South*; . . . (The Arthur H. Clark Co., Glendale, 1936), 197; W. F. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1941), 73; Josiah Gregg, *Diary & Letters: Southwestern Enterprises*, . . . (Univ. of Okla. Press, Norman, 1941), 1-72, cited hereinafter as *Diary & Letters, I*; Josiah Gregg, *Diary & Letters: Excursions in Mexico and California*, . . . (Norman, 1944), 361-379, cited hereinafter as *Diary & Letters, II*.

2. *Biographical and Genealogical History of the State of Delaware* (2 vols., J. M. Runk, Chambersburg, 1899), I, 640; Henry C. Conrad, *History of the State of Delaware* (3 vols., Wilmington, 1908), II, 462, 481. It is believed that William Gregg I went to Ireland about the time of the Cromwellian civil war.

cryphal, and the myth turns on the point of Gregg's being a Quaker. It is far more probable, however, that William Gregg had no connection with William Penn, but emigrated to the colonies directly from Londonderry, Ireland, and landed at New Castle, Delaware, from which incident he is sometimes called William Gregg of New Castle. At any rate, he was a very old man, a widower, at the time of his arrival, and had four children: John, Ann, George, and Richard Gregg.³ The children of John Gregg, son of William Gregg I, are of especial interest.

John Gregg married Elizabeth Cook, and their children were:

William Gregg II,
 Thomas who married Dinah Harlan,
 Joseph who married Hannah Beeson,
 Samuel I who married Ann Robinson,
 Hannah who married George Robinson,
 Rebecca who married — Spragg (Sprague),
 Amy who married Joseph Hadley.

William Gregg II married Margery Hinkey. Her father's name is believed to have been Herman Hinke or Heinke corrupted to Hinkey.⁴ William II married a second time, his second wife having been Anne Woodnut. By Margery Hinkey William Gregg II had four sons of importance in this account: Herman, William III, Joshua, and Jacob Gregg.

Jacob Gregg married Mary Polly Hatcher,⁵ and among their four sons were two of direct interest: Harman [probably Herman] and John Gregg. Harman [Harmon] married Susannah Schmeltzer (spelled Smelsor) and of their large family two sons, John and Josiah Gregg, are of particular interest.⁶ John Gregg, brother of Harman, married

3. *Family records of Mrs. Louise P. Bosworth*; Howard T. Dimick, "Four Johns Gregg of Texas" in *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*: to be published, probably in 1947. Mrs. Bosworth, a Gregg genealogist, is a descendant of William Gregg I.

4. Margery's father was a German scientist; she was a granddaughter of Augustine Herman.

5. She was usually known as Polly Hatcher.

6. Josiah Gregg, *Diary & Letters*, I, 1-72; *Pennsylvania Archives*, 3 Ser., (29 vols. and index, William S. Ray, Harrisburg, 1894-1899), XXI (Schmeltzer), XVII (Smelsor), XVIII, XXVI (Smeltzer), *passim*.

Catherine Grotts of Illinois, and later settled in Texas, residing in the Sulphur Bluff area of what is now Hopkins County.⁷ John and Josiah Gregg, sons of Harman Gregg and Susannah Schmeltzer, were engaged in the Santa Fe trade between Northern Mexico and the United States.⁸ Josiah Gregg on December 20, 1850, rediscovered Humboldt Bay, California.⁹

III

In the decade 1753-1763 four Gregg brothers were born near Winchester, Virginia. Their birth is established by entries in a family bible, but since the word "near" is elastic when applied to the pioneer country there is the problem of whether they were born on Virginia soil or over the line in Maryland. The four brothers, Nathan, James, William, and Samuel Gregg, were descendants of William Gregg I of Delaware.¹⁰ They were of the fourth generation in America, but their father has not yet been identified in the line.¹¹ Whether or not their mother was a Virginian is still undetermined, but it is certain that Greggs of their line were in Virginia after 1750 as shown by the birth of their cousin John Gregg, brother of Harman Gregg, near Petersburg, Virginia, on December 3, 1780.¹² Of the children of William Gregg II one son, Joshua Gregg, was twice married, but the name of his first wife and a record of their children are not available. For that reason it has been assumed that he may have been the father of the four Gregg brothers born near Winchester.

7. Gregg family records. Courtesy of Frank Gregg, Birthright, Texas.

8. Josiah Gregg, *Diary & Letters*, I, 1-75; Howard T. Dimick, "Reconsideration of the Death of Josiah Gregg" in *New Mexico Historical Review*, XXII, 276, 315-316.

9. *Ibid.*, I, 126-127; *Diary & Letters*, II, 361-379; Howard T. Dimick, "Visits of Josiah Gregg to Louisiana, 1841-1847," in *The Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, XXIX, 4; Dimick, "Reconsideration of the Death of Josiah Gregg," *loc. cit.*, XXII, 278, 279.

10. *Family bible* of Jane Gregg Gammon (records of Mrs. Louise P. Bosworth). Jane Gregg, daughter of Nathan Gregg of the four brothers, married George Gammon and lived in Sullivan County, Tennessee.

11. Destruction of records during and since the Civil War has made the research into the paternity of the four Gregg brothers slow and so far unproductive.

12. Gregg family records.

IV

Of the four Gregg brothers Nathan and James are of especial importance in this account. Nathan Gregg married Annis Gamble and there were several children: Jane, James G., and Nathan who remained in Tennessee.¹³ Jane also remained in Tennessee, but James G. emigrated, and will be mentioned again. James Gregg of the four brothers married Rachel McClellan, and their eldest son was Nathan Gregg who settled in Lawrence County, Alabama, in the period 1821-1823.¹⁴

Nathan Gregg of Alabama married Sarah Pearsall Camp, a widow, and among their children was John Gregg, afterwards the famous brigadier of Lee's army who on August 16, 1864, saved Richmond from capture, and whose death near Richmond on October 7 of that year was regarded as a calamitous event in the fortunes of the Confederacy.¹⁵

James G. Gregg, son of Nathan and Annis Gamble Gregg, married Mary Baker. Two of their children, George Gammon Gregg and Endymion Baker Gregg, are of importance as cousins of the children of Harman Gregg of Missouri and Nathan Gregg of Lawrence County, Alabama. The children of James G. and Mary Baker Gregg early recognized a blood relationship to the Missouri and Alabama branches of the Gregg family. James G. Gregg moved to Fayetteville, Arkansas, in 1837. While living there his sons George Gammon and Endymion B. Gregg were in touch with the Missouri family, and George Gammon Gregg thought of joining one of Josiah Gregg's Santa Fe caravans. In-

13. Oliver Taylor, *Historic Sullivan: A History of Sullivan County, Tennessee* . . . (The King Prtg. Co., Bristol, 1909), 200-201.

14. James Edmonds Saunders, *Early Settlers of Alabama* (Graham & Sons, New Orleans, 1899), 200; Thomas McAdory Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography* (4 vols., S. J. Clarke Co., Chicago, 1921), III, 704.

15. Charles W. Field, "Campaign of 1864 and 1865" in *Southern Historical Society Papers*, XIV, 553, 558; Douglas S. Freeman, *R. E. Lee, A Biography* (4 vols., Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1935-1941), III, 509 (note); report of Robert E. Lee to James A. Seddon, October 7, 1864, in *Official Records*, Ser. I, XLII, Pt. I, 852.

A biographical and military history of Brigadier-General John Gregg is now in preparation.

stead, however, George G. Gregg settled at Marshall, Texas, about 1841, and went into the mercantile business there; Endymion B. Gregg followed him there a few years later.¹⁶

Both the Missouri and Alabama branches early recognized a blood relationship to the Greggs at Marshall, Texas, and at one time or another John and Josiah Gregg of Harman's family and John and Edward Pearsall Gregg of Nathan's family visited their cousins at Marshall. Among the children of George Gammon Gregg there was recognition of a remote grandfather (forefather) William Gregg—probably William Gregg II.¹⁷

V

John Gregg, son of William Gregg I of Delaware, married Elizabeth Cook and his children have already been named in Section II. His son Samuel Gregg I married Ann Robinson. They had one child Samuel Gregg II. Samuel Gregg II married Dinah Chandler. Their children were:

Samuel III, Jesse, Thomas, and Mary.

Samuel Gregg III married Ann C. Walraven (first wife) and Sarah Sutton (second wife). By Ann Walraven he had: Peter Walraven, Anna C., and Samuel IV.

By Sarah Sutton he had one daughter Mary Sutton Gregg.

Samuel Gregg IV is not known to have married, and the succession of Samuels Gregg must on that account be broken and the eldest son of Samuel Gregg III, Peter Walraven Gregg, must be substituted. Peter W. Gregg married Mary A. Shields, and they had:

Samuel V, Lydia, and Anna C.

Samuel Gregg V married Margaret A. Chandler, and they had:

Elsie, Willard S., Elizabeth, Irwin W., Joseph C., and Helen H.

16. *Family bible* of George Gammon and Mary Wilson Gregg; records of Mrs. Louise P. Bosworth; Gregg family records. George G. Gregg was the writer's matrilineal grandfather. Endymion B. Gregg was the matrilineal grandfather of Mrs. Louise B. Bosworth.

17. *Gregg family records and reminiscence.*

It was from records preserved by these descendants of John Gregg, son of William Gregg I, that I found means of definitely tracing the ancestry of William Gregg I of Delaware.¹⁸

VI

Handed down from John Gregg, who had come to the colonies from Ireland with his father, was a motto ascribed to "ancient Celtic kings" which read: *Srioghal mo dhream een do*, and was said to mean "spare not."¹⁹

Inspection of the motto reveals that there is a linguistic discordance or anomaly between the words *Srioghal mo dhream* and the words *een do*. "Spare not" given as the meaning of the motto is questionable. It would appear that there are too many words in the motto merely to mean "spare not." Impressed by these conclusions, I sought to learn whether such a motto might be found on the arms of the Gregory or the Gregor families (particularly the Clan Mac Gregor). Aided by The Library of Congress, I found that the pseudo motto was in fact *two* mottoes in combination, one much older than the other. A part of the older motto was given as the meaning of the combination. Both mottoes were traceable to the arms of the Clan Mac Gregor of the Scottish Highlands. They had become garbled in the process of being handed down through the Gregg generations, and were attributed to ancient Celtic royalty as late as 1899. It was evident that these mottoes preserved but misunderstood were not the glib findings of venal genealogists but were legitimate items of the Gregg family records. From them, therefore, the true ancestry of William Gregg I [William the Quaker] and his descendants could be taken back to Gregor Alpin — third son of King Alpin — who founded Clan Mac Gregor, and to Gregor Alpin's eldest son Doughtal Gregor who became the first Mac Gregor.²⁰

18. The descendants of John Gregg are given from *Biographical and Genealogical History of the State of Delaware*, I, 640-641. By courtesy of The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

19. *Ibid.*, I, 641; James Fairbairn, *Fairbairn's Crests . . .* (Heraldic Pub. Co., New York, 1911), 589.

20. Alexander Nisbet, *Heraldic Plates . . .* (George Waterston & Sons, Edinburgh, 1892), 157-161; George Eyre-Todd, *The Highland Clans of Scotland* (2 vols., D.

The older Mac Gregor motto was found to be *Ein doe and spair not*. Its age is uncertain, but it is probable that it was the motto of Clan Gregòr (Mac Gregor) from an early date. The later motto dates from 1801, when Sir John Murray Mac Gregor obtained permission to change the Mac Gregor motto above the crest to '*S rioghal mo dhream*, meaning "royal is my race." It is probable that Sir John Murray Mac Gregor was motivated by pride in the royal line of Mac Alpin in changing the older motto which the early Mac Gregors found adequate. Personally I find the older motto preferable because of its Scottish and its historical connotations.²¹

VII

The ancestry of William Gregg I of Delaware is thus established as of clannish and pure Scottish blood.²² William Gregg I was not of Scots-Irish lineage, although that has been supposed to be the case because of his long residence in Ireland.²³ But residence in Ireland did not modify the Scots clannishness of William Gregg I; and it may be inferred with reason that he became a Quaker because he had seen the folly and retribution of clan wars and Highland turmoil. There is good reason to infer that he was born William Mac Gregor; and that the family name was changed to Gregg after Clan Mac Gregor was abolished by an act of parliament under Charles I in 1633.²⁴

Appleton & Co., New York, 1923), I, 166-171; *Biographical and Genealogical History*, I, 640.

Srioghal is also given as *S'rioghal* and '*S rioghal*. The latter is believed to be the correct form. The lack of readily available sources on heraldry prevented the writer from research on the point.

21. Alexander Nisbet, *op. cit.*, 158-161; James Fairbairn, *op. cit.*, 589.

22. Howard T. Dimick, "Reconsideration of the Death of Josiah Gregg" in *NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW*.

23. The date of William Gregg's emigration to Ireland is not known but is believed to be about the time of the Cromwellian Civil War. He may have been accompanied by his parents and by brothers and sisters. If any of the brothers or sisters married Irish nationals it did not change the Scots clannishness of William Gregg whose descendants were not of Scots-Irish character.

24. Frank Adam, *The Clans, Septs, and Regiments of the Scottish Highlands* (W. & A. K. Johnston, Edinburgh & London, 1924) 78-79; Peter Hume Brown, *History of Scotland* (Univ. Press, Cambridge, 1909-1912), II, 253; Thomas Wright, *The History of Scotland from the Earliest Period* (2 vols., Thomas C. Jack, Edin-

It is fortunate that this line of Greggs preserved some of the family records and that publication of the mottoes was made in Pennsylvania with the aid of the Delaware descendants.²⁵ It is a matter of conjecture and surmise as to the failure of genealogists to trace and publish the data of the correct form and meaning of the mottoes since the biographical publication in 1899.

burgh, n.d.), II, 440; Henry Cabot Lodge (Ed.), *The History of Nations* (25 vols., John D. Morris & Co., Philadelphia, 1906), XII (Ireland and Scotland), 248, 249, 333-340.

25. *Biographical and Genealogical History*, I, 640-641. A forthcoming article is of interest: Howard T. Dimick, "Four Johns Gregg of Texas" in *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*.