

8. JOSEPH BAWDEN 1789-1867

Joseph Bawden, son of John Bawden and Frances Tremayne, was born in the Parish of Mawgan-in-Meneage, Cornwall, in 1789, and baptized in that parish's church on January 6, 1790.¹ In fact, it appears that Joseph spent his entire life living in that parish, specifically the small village of Mawgan Cross. Much of rural Cornwall consists of small settlements like Mawgan: two or three farmhouses and laborers' cottages often situated at crossroads. The fields are small and irregular shaped, bordered by massive granite- or slate-walled hedges. The farmsteads are often connected by narrow tunnel-like lanes with immense hedges on either side. This is a continuation from the Celtic past of the region; a physical reminder of Cornwall's "different" past.

Mawgan is about 4 miles southeast of Helston and is named for Saint Mawgan who was venerated not only in Cornwall, but also in Wales and in Brittany. Meneage is believed to be a derivation of the word "monk." The parish is comprised of 5453 acres of land. At Mawgan Cross stands a very old stone with a fascinating inscription in Cornish, which has been thus interpreted: What lieth here is not the soul. In 1841, the village totaled no more than 70 people. A 1870s gazetteer entry for the parish is very modest:

[Mawgan in] Meneage, the portion of the south of Cornwall from the Lizard [Peninsula] northward to the Helford River and Looe Pool.²

¹ Joseph Bowden (*sic*) entry, "Parish Records for Mawgan-in-Meneage, Church of England, Parish Church of Mawgan-in-Meneage, Cornwall" (microfilm: batch no. C020931, source call no. 0226169), Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

² John Marius Wilson, *Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales embracing recent changes in Counties, Dioceses, Parishes, and Boroughs, 1870-72* (Edinburgh: A. Fullarton, 1880). A gazetteer is a geographical dictionary or directory.

Joseph married (by banns) Mary Ede in Mawgan on January 2, 1813.³ Joseph and Mary next appear in the historical records in 1841 during the census conducted that year. This is the first British census to record the names of the people being counted, and is therefore the first census of any real value to genealogists. Joseph, his wife, and family were living in Mawgan Cross in 1841, but it seems that Mary died before 1851 as Joseph is listed as a widower in that year's census (His unmarried daughter, Mary, was the only other family member living with Joseph in 1851).⁴

On all of the census returns, Joseph's occupation is listed as "agricultural laborer." The difference between farm servants and agricultural laborers is significant: the former tended to be single, lived on a farm, and was paid by provision of their board; while the latter usually lived in cottages on an estate, or in a nearby village, and were paid a weekly wage or a piece-rate for casual work.⁵ Perhaps Joseph worked on Trelowarren, the estate of the Vyvyans, a noble Cornish family who still reside in the parish. Research has already shown that Joseph's fourth great-grandfather was tenant farmer of Trelowarren.⁶ A search through the records of the estate may prove profitable for future researchers.

³ Joseph Bawden and Mary Ede entry, January 2, 1813, "Mawgan-in-Meneage Marriage Register Transcriptions – 1800 to 1899," <<http://www.westcountrygenealogy.com/mawgan/marriages.htm>> (November 7, 2003). Banns are notices, proclaimed in church, of a couple's intention to marry. This publicity gives people the chance to declare any reason why that couple cannot marry. Banns are called in the church in which a couple is to marry on three Sundays before the wedding takes place. Marriage by license was introduced in the fourteenth century and authorized a wedding without banns being proclaimed.

⁴ Joseph Bowden (*sic*) household, 1841 U.K. census, Parish of Mawgan-in-Meneage, Cornwall, piece HO107/0138, folio 12, page 17; and, Joseph Bowden (*sic*) household, 1851 U.K. census, Parish of Mawgan-in-Meneage, Cornwall, piece HO107/1912, folio 462, page 13, number on schedule 45.

⁵ Mark D. Herber, *Ancestral Trails: The Complete Guide to British Genealogy and Family History* (Baltimore, Maryland: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 2000), 65.

⁶ Cornwall Records Office, "Arundell Family of Lanherne and Trerice," <http://www.a2a.org.uk/search/records.asp?cat=021-ar_4-1&cid=1-1-7-2-1> (March 25, 2007). This document is a lease dated November 10, 1644. John is described as a "husbandman" who leases Arundell Wood which was "in tenure of Sir Francis Vivian."

What were the homes of Cornish farmers like during this period? The Cornish historian

A. K. Hamilton Jenkins gives us a glimpse into a typical cottage:

Most of the cottages at this date [nineteenth century] were built by the people themselves. The walls were generally made of cob, which is a mixture of clay and chopped straw, beaten hard; whilst the roofs were thatched. Stone, of course, was sometimes used, but only when this could be got free of cost...An open hearth would be added in due course for cooking and heating, and a few sticks of furniture to make the room habitable. Life in such cottages was, of course, very primitive. Few of them had any upstairs rooms. Where the family was a large one, a stage of boards, called a "talfat," was generally constructed beneath the rafters of the roof. This extended over half the living-room, and was reached by a ladder. Here the children would sleep, lying close together to keep themselves warm on the bare, draughty floor. Even the less hastily constructed cottages commonly had but one bedroom. This would contain a single bedstead, a wretched affair with crossed ropes, instead of springs, to carry the mattress. The latter was little better than a mat, about half an inch thick, and packed with straw or chaff...The downstairs rooms where the family lived by day was equally cramped and wretched. The tiny window was often stuffed with rags, or had a slate inserted to take the place of a broken pane of glass. Wall-paper was an unheard of luxury, and the insides of the rough cob walls were generally – though not always – whitewashed. The floor simply consisted of the trodden-down earth which was leveled now and again with a shovel. At a latter date floors of lime-ash were introduced, but even these were very damp and cold. Where stone was more plentiful, the flooring was often constructed out of great slabs of granite. Over this the housewife sprinkled dry sand which took up the dirt from the men's boots. This single downstairs room had to serve for every purpose. It was the kitchen, nursery, wash-house, and sitting-room combined. The furniture generally consisted of a long table, not much better than a rough carpenter's bench, and sometimes three or four hard, straight-backed chairs. In many cases, however, there was nothing to sit on but a form which was placed along one wall, and a three-legged stool which stood in the chimney corner. The children simply sat on blocks of wood...

Though conditions of life were often very cramped and wretched in the poorer cottages of the last century, the houses owned by the more substantial farmers were jolly enough places in which to live. In addition to the kitchen, and back-kitchen, "spence" (larder), and dairy, the majority of these houses also possessed a "hale," or parlour. Though this room was used on very special occasions, such as Christmas and the Feast, it was regarded with great pride. The furniture of the hale generally consisted of three or four painted wooden chairs and a large table, kept beautifully clean by constant scouring...But the most treasured piece of furniture of all was the "buffette," or old-fashioned corner-cupboard with its glass door. In this was kept the best china, in addition to many knick-knacks and curious ornaments...The parlor was a show place, but it was the kitchen which was the real living-room of the house. Many old farm kitchens were of great size...The furniture of the kitchen generally consisted of a grandfather clock, a warming-

pan for airing beds, a hutch containing a sack of flour, pitchers for drinking water, and (near the fireplace) a bellows, salt-box, and candle-box.⁷

This is likely a fair description of the cottages during Joseph's life, but what were the events Cornish farmers would have faced during this period? As the Cornish historian Frank E. Halliday states, agricultural laborers of the early nineteenth century suffered from falling prices following the Napoleonic War (1799-1815).⁸ During the war, as Halliday describes, cultivation in Cornwall had been pushed up the hills and into the moors, while the better land had been driven until it was exhausted so that with peace and falling prices the whole Cornish farming economy was thrown out of gear.

But perhaps the greatest agricultural event that Joseph and his family had to face was the Potato Blight that struck Cornwall in the late 1840s. This decade, which would become known as the "Hungry Forties," is infamous for the famine that devastated Ireland leaving more than a million dead. It should be noted that the Blight not only struck Ireland, but also other regions of Britain including Scotland, Wales, and Cornwall. While the Blight impacted all these areas, it didn't affect them with the same devastation. In Cornwall, emigration proved to be the safety value for preventing mass starvation when thousand of miners and their families left for the lead regions of Wisconsin.⁹ For Joseph, and those who remained in Cornwall, bad harvests soon doubled the price of grain.

After the arrival of the Potato Blight and the hard winter of 1846-7, bands of the hungry rioted in many towns in Cornwall to prevent merchants from sending grain out of the county and

⁷ A. K. Hamilton Jenkins, *The Story of Cornwall* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1948), 92-97.

⁸ Frank E. Halliday, *A History of Cornwall: The Essential Guide to Cornwall Past and Present* (Poughkeepsie, New York: House of Stratus, Inc., 2001), 315.

⁹ Halliday, *History of Cornwall*, 316.

to enforce the sale of food at what they considered reasonable prices.¹⁰ Fortunately for Joseph and his family, the prices of food soon fell and farming in Cornwall entered a period of relative prosperity during the 1850s.¹¹ By 1861, Joseph – now age 71 – was living with his daughter and son-in-law, Mary and John Jewel, still in Mawgan Cross (also living with the family was a boarder, Mary White, who was a “pensioner of Sir R. R. Vyvyan,” lord of Trelowarren).¹²

Joseph died in Mawgan Cross on February 11, 1867, at the age of 77.¹³ It is assumed that Joseph was buried in the parish’s cemetery although this has yet to be proven. Also, it appears that Joseph didn’t write a will as a search of the probate records proved unfruitful.¹⁴

¹⁰ Philip Payton, *Cornwall: A History* (Fowey, Cornwall: Cornwall Editions, Limited, 2004), 214-215.

¹¹ Halliday, *History of Cornwall*, 317.

¹² John Jewel household, 1861 U.K. census, Parish of Mawgan-in-Meneage, Cornwall, piece RG9/1572, folio 123, page 5, number on schedule 23.

¹³ Joseph Bawden, death certificate (1867), General Register Office, Southport, Merseyside, U.K. Copy of original held by the author.

¹⁴ Principal Probate Registry of Great Britain, “Calendar of Grants of Probate and Letter of Administrations in the Principal Registry and in the Several District Registries of Her Majesty’s Court of Probate, 1867” (microform: source call no. 251191 and 251192), Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Children of Joseph Bawden and Mary Ede:

- i. Thomas Bawden, baptized April 4, 1813 in Mawgan-in-Meneage
- ii. Mary Bawden, baptized March 27, 1814 in Mawgan-in-Meneage
- iii. Joseph Bawden, baptized July 16, 1815 in Mawgan-in-Meneage
- iv. Frances Bawden, baptized September 15, 1816 in Mawgan-in-Meneage
- v. Jenifer Bawden, baptized March 29, 1818 in Mawgan-in-Meneage
- vi. William Bawden, baptized November 21, 1819 in Mawgan-in-Meneage
- vii. Elizabeth Bawden, baptized July 29, 1821 in Mawgan-in-Meneage
- viii. John Bawden, baptized February 23, 1823 in Mawgan-in-Meneage, and died before August 1824
- ix. John Bawden, baptized August 8, 1824 in Mawgan-in-Meneage
- x. James Bawden, baptized October 4, 1826 in Mawgan-in-Meneage
9. xi. Richard Bawden, baptized August 31, 1828 in Mawgan-in-Meneage, died September 26, 1904, in Illogan