

The Diaries of Charlotte Grove / Diary Notes / People & Families

SHELLEY

SHELLEY - Charlotte GROVE was a first cousin of the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley. Percy's mother, Elizabeth PILFOLD (1762-1846), was the eldest child of Charles Pilfold and Bathia WHITE. Their second child, Charlotte (1764-1828), married Thomas Grove.

Elizabeth Pilfold married Sir Timothy Shelley in 1791, at West Grinstead, Sussex. Sir Timothy (1753-1844), of Field Place, Horsham, was an MP and 2nd Baronet of Castle Goring. His parents were Sir Bysshe Shelley (1731-1815) and Mary-Catherine MITCHELL.

Timothy and Elizabeth had the following children:

1. Percy Bysshe (1792-1822). Following the failure of a teenage romance with his first cousin, Charlotte's younger sister Harriet Grove, Shelley impulsively eloped to Scotland and married the unhappy 16 year-old Harriet WESTBROOK (b.1795) in Edinburgh on 28th August, 1811. The couple had a daughter, Elizabeth Ianthe, in 1813. In 1814, Shelley abandoned Harriet (then pregnant with their son Charles) and ran away to Switzerland with Mary Wollstonecraft GODWIN. On 10th December, 1816, estranged wife Harriet's heavily pregnant body was pulled from the Serpentine, in Hyde Park. Officially, she had committed suicide, but there were some strange circumstances surrounding her death. Within only a few weeks Percy had married Mary (1797-1851) in London, on 30th December, 1816. Mary Shelley is probably best known as the author of the Gothic novel, "Frankenstein".
2. Elizabeth (1794-1831). Said to be the favourite sister of her brother, Percy Bysshe, Elizabeth wrote poems for his "Victor and Cazire". She did not marry.
3. Helen (1796-1796).
4. Mary (1797-1884). She married Daniel Franco HAYNES in 1819. A diary entry suggests they had a daughter, born 16th June, 1820. However, after eloping with James O'Hara TREVOR in 1827, Mary married him in 1829, following her divorce from Daniel Haynes. By 1840 Mary and James had three daughters.
5. Helen (1799-1885). Did not marry.
6. Margaret (1801-1887). Also did not marry. There is a possible diary reference to Margaret on 15th February, 1831, except that it refers to Charlotte's cousin "Margaret Pilfold", who did not exist. Whatever her true identity, Charlotte describes Margaret as "*.....a very elegant pretty young Woman*".

7. John (1806-1866). John, of Avington Park, Hampshire, married Elizabeth BOWEN in Dublin, 1827. They had five children by 1840, including at least two daughters.

Harriet Grove, probably upon hearing of Shelley's elopement with Harriet Westbrook in 1811, attempted to erase all mention of her cousin in her diaries of 1809 and 1810. Her sister Charlotte's 1811 diary provides further insight into the ending of the affair and the effects on the families and individuals involved.

Other surnames associated with Shelley – MIDDLETON, CHATFIELD and TRECROFT.