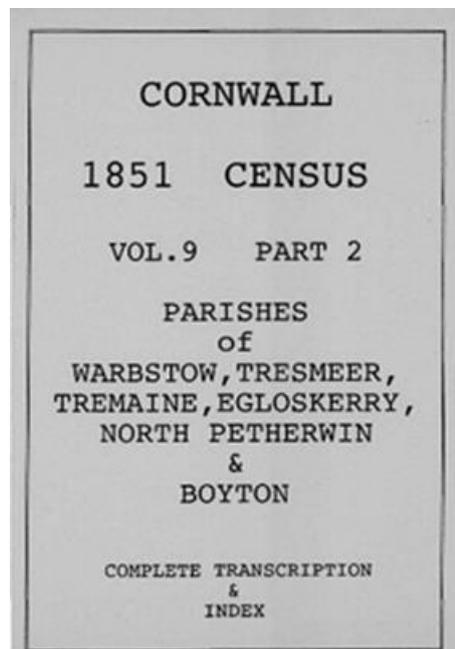


Edmund Turner
Egloskerry
Cornwall
Sunday 30 March 1851

We've just had a visitor at the house. Mother and father said he was an enumerator. He asked father to tell him who was in the house, where everyone had been born, what age we were and what the grown-ups did. It took quite a while – and the man has to go round the whole village!

What father told him was that he is the schoolmaster here. He's a printer too. Mother has the shop and father's sister who helps in the shop lives here. Then there's my big sister Ellen Elizabeth, she's 11, my wee sister Isabella Daisy and me. What was strange was that father didn't get to mention my other sister Clara Ann, who's 9. That's because she's away just now, up at Stratton visiting Granny.



I didn't tell you my age. I'm 7, so father is helping me to write this. I thought he and mother had lived here all the time. But they haven't. Father came from St Stephens. Some people call it St Stephens by Launceston as there are other places called St Stephens in Cornwall. Anyway it's just the next parish along from Egloskerry going towards Devon. Father told me tonight that when he was born there it was 1816.

His father was a butcher then, and like father, and me, his name was Edmund Turner. Once, in school, Mr Turner – I have to call him 'Sir' in school – told us that 1816 was 'the year without a summer'. It was really cold, and wet, and many people went hungry.

Ellen, Clara and I are all scholars at the National School where father is the master. He teaches all the scholars. He gives each age group a turn with him and the rest of the time we have to get on by ourselves and stay quiet. At first, I'd practise writing with my finger in a sand tray. A little while ago, when I got good enough, 'Sir' gave me a slate and slate pencil. When we are at school mother is busy at home. Her shop is in the front room. It's the village shop, a draper's and grocer's. On one side she keeps the materials, the clothes and the sewing things. I like the other side better, where the groceries and food are. Isabella is just two, so it's good that Aunt Eliza Jane Turner stays with us to help in the house and the shop.



Clara will be back from Granny's soon, I hope. That's Granny Elizabeth. I never knew Grandad. He died a long time ago, even before mother and father got married. Father had an older brother, William, and two sisters, Mary Ann and Eliza. After father was born, grandad became a farmer. Then Auntie Charlotte was born and they moved into North Petherwin Vicarage. Father says Grandad farmed the glebe for the minister, who lived somewhere else in a bigger house. They were there when Uncle Thomas, Uncle John and Aunt Eliza Jane were born. Grandad died when they were small. I like it when we go over to North Petherwin. It's by the Hellescott Road, over the Ottery then up out the valley. It seems like you can see for ever from there!

Granny lives with Auntie Charlotte and Uncle Lawrence who is a sailor. Father says he's a Master Mariner, a captain. That sounds grand. I wonder if I will get to go to sea when I am older. They live in Stratton, which is quite a long way from here. Father says Stratton will have to watch it doesn't lose out because Bude on the coast nearby is getting bigger.

I wonder what news Clara will have about the Stratton cousins, the Harwoods. Lucy is the same age as me. The others are younger – Amanda, Lawrence and Emma the baby.

I said that father is a printer. That's at the big house. Father says its proper name is Penheale. The minister, Mr Simcoe, lives there and he has his own printing press. Father says he likes to write about the Bible and such like and doesn't want to have to get them printed somewhere else, so Father is his printer.

There are lots of children up at the big house. Emily's about my age. She's the youngest, but I saw Mrs Simcoe in the village the other day and I think maybe Emily's about to get a baby brother or sister.

The Simcoe Arms is across the road from us. Uncle Thomas, father's brother, is the innkeeper. He's also a farmer, along the road at Causend. He and Auntie Mary Ann have just had a new baby, Nora. The other Auntie Mary Ann Turner is visiting them. She's one of father and Uncle Thomas's sisters. Mother says she's a dressmaker and maybe she'll buy some things from the shop!



Simcoe Arms



Egloskerry shop with Simcoe Arms opposite

Mother and father sometimes take us to see Grandmother and Grandfather Davy. They live a bit away from here, at North Hill. It's near the moor. Father says people call it Bodmin Moor, but we just say 'the moor'. They have a farm called Glubhole. I like running round to the barn when I'm there. It's at the back of the house and has a big arched doorway.

My Smith cousins live at the farm. That's John, Sydney, Elizabeth, William, Eliza and Joseph. Their father, William, farms with Grandfather Davy as grandfather is quite old now. Auntie Mary Ann (Smith this time!) helps Grandmother Davy. Mother says her father and mother are John and Ann Davy, and that they got married ages and ages ago. Father says it was 1809, the same year as his father and mother got married. His parents got married in the January and mother's parents in the December. One time when father and mother were talking I heard that her mother had been married before but her husband had died. It was through him that the Davys had property, like Glubhole.

I asked Father about when he and mother got married. He said it was in 1838, here in Egloskerry, so just across the road! He says it was a bit special because it got announced in the newspaper, the West Briton, which comes out on a Friday. Edmund Turner to Miss Davy!

One time I asked Father about Edmund Turners. He said his Grandfather had been Edmund. He had married Margaret – in 1780. That was when the American Revolutionary War was happening. Imagine that! Off to sleep now.