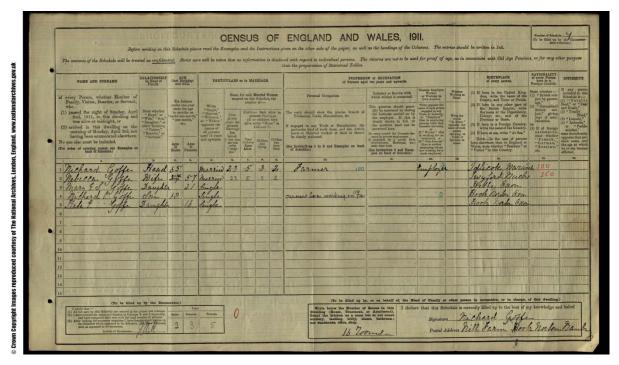
Richard and Anna Goffe From Hook Norton to Valparaiso (Indiana)

There is a brass plaque in St Peter's Church, Hook Norton, dedicated to Theodore Littleboy who was killed in an accident in Valparaiso, Indiana, in June 1928. [See the article on" William Theodore Darby Littleboy" in this section.] While I was researching his story for a presentation to the village Local History Group, I came across a reference to the Goffe family from Hook Norton who had also emigrated to this part of the United States. There must have been a connection, and a little more time on the internet began to uncover the links between Theodore Littleboy and the Goffes.

In the 1911 Census we find a young Richard Goffe, aged 18, employed on his father's farm. His parents were Richard and Rebecca Goffe and they lived at Nil Farm, north of Hook Norton. Completing the family were Richard's two sisters, Mary, aged 21, and Kate, aged 16.



1911 Census for Hook Norton

We move on a few years and pick up another story that I found on an internet message board posted by Carol Goffe, Richard and Anna's granddaughter. Carol told me that Anna Goffe was Danish, her maiden name being Lauritzen. She must have been an intrepid girl as in 1912 at the age of 18 she spent the winter in Tenerife.

Two years later she left Denmark for London. Anna then moved to Hook Norton where she worked as a maid for the Littleboy family. Whilst in their employ she met and subsequently married Richard Goffe (in 1920, in Copenhagen). The couple had two sons, Richard, born in 1921, and Martin, born in 1923.



Richard and Anna Goffe and their sons in Hook Norton

On 27 September 1929 the family left for the USA. They sailed from Southampton on the 16 November on the Cunard ship "Mauretania" bound for New York. Their immigration visas had been issued in London at the end of September. The ship's manifest reveals that both boys had been born in Hook Norton but their last permanent address had been Mariager in Denmark. Anna's last permanent address was also listed as being there. Perhaps she had taken her boys on a farewell visit to her family in Denmark.

The final sentence in Carol's message board posting said "They were issued a Certificate of Citizenship on September 6, 1935 at the Circuit Court of Porter County in Valparaiso, Indiana".

Family name. 1.50	Richard Charles
Address R # 4, Valparaiso, Ind.	
Certificate no. (or vol. and page)	Title and location of court Cir.Porter Co. Valparaiso, In
Country of birth-or allegiance	Jan. 9, 1893
Date and port of arrival in U.S.	Date of naturalization . F. Sept. 6, 1935
Names and addresses of witnesses	

I located the family in the 1930 US Census where they were listed as living on Valparaiso Road in Portage Township, Porter County, Indiana. Interestingly Martin Goffe was recorded as Basil Goffe: however, the General Register Office index for his birth named him as Martin T B Goffe, so he might well have used all his Christian names at different stages in his life. Richard's occupation in the Census was a farmer. The household was completed by Roe Shook, a farm labourer, presumably an employee.

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United States Census Bureau, 1930, Portage Township

From the research I had undertaken I had found a man from Hook Norton who had been tragically killed in 1928 and a young family moving from Hook Norton to the same area the following year. Was there a link or was it merely a coincidence?

When Theodore Littleboy was killed in 1928 he had been working on a farm owned by his uncle, Thomas Newton. A contemporary newspaper report said that he was shortly to have been married to a girl coming out from the UK and had recently undertaken extensive improvements to the farm.

I found an excellent web site covering the history of the area. Its webmaster is Steve Shook who turns out to be the grandson of Roe Shook who was living with the Goffes at the time of the 1930 Census. Steve very kindly gave me links to contemporary maps that feature on his web site. The Goffes did indeed farm as tenants on land owned by Thomas Newton, but it was not the same tract of land that Theodore Littleboy had. However, there is the likelihood that Theodore's father back in Hook Norton had been in contact with Thomas Newton, who was his brother-in-law, asking him to help the family of his former maid get off to a good start in their adopted country.



On the Newton Farm: Tom, Merle Schlobohm, Pete, Joan and Jean

Richard and Anna Goffe, as far as I have been able to establish, had three more children, a son and two daughters. May Jean Goffe was born in 1930 and married Herschel Maple in 1952. Herschel died in 2000, while May died in February

2011. At the time her obituary appeared in a local newspaper two of her brothers, John and Tom, and her sister, Joan, were still alive. Over the years it would seem that her brother Tom had been known by all of his Christian names at one point or another. May's other brother, Richard, predeceased her.

Richard Goffe died aged 73 in 1966, while Anna lived to the ripe old age of 98, dying in 1993. Descendants of Richard and Anna Goffe continue to live in the US fairly close to where the family first settled when they arrived from Hook Norton.

All of the research for this article has been undertaken online making full use of my subscriptions to Ancestry and Find my Past. In addition if it were not for Steve Shook's web site (http://www.inportercounty.org/) and the other links he has given me this article could never have been written. I am also grateful to Carol Goffe for the background information.

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