

THE BOOTT AND HADEN FAMILIES AND THE FOUNDING OF LOWELL.

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THE story which follows came to light as a result of a query some years ago from Mr. F. W. Coburn, Editor of the *Lowell Courier Citizen*, Lowell, Massachusetts, U.S.A., requesting information respecting a certain Kirk Boott, the founder of Lowell, who was reputed to have emigrated from Derby. The correspondence thus initiated, and researches made locally, have revealed interesting connections between the two towns and strong associations with local families, throwing many sidelights on life in 18th and early 19th century Derby.

Lowell, a cotton manufacturing centre which has been styled the "Manchester" of America, is famed historically as the birthplace of the celebrated artist, James McNeill Whistler, who was related by marriage to two Derby families, the Bootts and the Hadens.

The founder of Lowell was Kirk Boott (1790-1836), whose father and grandfather were born at Derby in the 18th century. The grandfather was Francis Boott (1732-1776), a market-gardener living in All Saints' parish. Although I have been unable to verify the fact, he was probably son of the Francis Boott who, according to an advertisement in the *Derby Mercury*, kept a shop at the Market Head in 1739, and who married Elizabeth Needham, member of an old Derby family, at St. Werburgh's on October 15, 1721. Boott was a

leading member of the Derby Society of Florists which, more than 200 years ago, held an annual Flower Show and feast at the Royal Oak and the Town Hall. He was married at All Saints' to Elizabeth Cheshire, and they had a house in King Street, where he died "of gout in the stomach" on June 17, 1776. The *Mercury* gives a long account of his death, terminating: "He was in the 45th year of his age, was a kind and affectionate husband, a very tender and indulgent father, and a most diligent and industrious tradesman: in short, few men were better respected by their neighbours, friends and acquaintances."

We know little of Francis and his wife, Elizabeth, but his son, Kirk, never writes of them without the deepest reverence and testifies to the noble principles and admirable precepts which he imbibed from them. Francis Boott was a hard-working and moderately successful man of business, and although it failed some years after his death, he left a legacy of industry and honesty to his children which was to prove of value in their later years.

He had a brother, also named Kirk Boott, "a gardener of considerable business" at the Market Head. He married Anne Norman, of Staveley; at All Saints' on October 5, 1758, and dwelt in Queen Street, where he was a neighbour of Joseph Wright, the painter. His son, Kirk, became the London agent for the business of his cousin, Kirk, and married Mary, daughter of Thomas Kirk, of Derby. In 1773 the Corporation bought part of the ground on which his house stood at the Market Head, with the intention of widening that narrow and dangerous passage. The property was pulled down in the Spring of 1774, greatly improving the appearance of the Market Place, and Kirk Boott then retired from business. From 1776-9 he was a Commissioner of the Derby Court of Requests, which had been set up about 1750 to allow the easier and more

effective recovery of small debts. He died on March 9, 1780, in his 61st year.

Francis Boott, on his death in 1776, left seven young children, James, Kirk, William, Francis, John, Eliza and Nancy Ann. Of these we are primarily interested in Kirk, the second son, who left Derby and emigrated to Boston, U.S.A. A Derby contemporary tells us that the only future then foreseen for an emigrant was his presenting himself after some years at his old home town, worn out, in rags and demoralized. But Kirk Boott returned to Derby in vastly different circumstances, having prospered and been well-rewarded for his enterprise. Settling in Boston as an importer and merchant shortly after the American Revolution, he quickly became a very substantial citizen. The story of his rise, as recounted in his own letters to his family in Derby, makes fascinating reading.

Dr. Francis Boott, son of the emigrant, says of his father, "Misfortune compelled him to leave Derby on the 16th January, 1783, when he was 27 years old." Of the nature of these misfortunes we can only guess, but we can infer that they did not result from neglect or mismanagement, as his first letter to his mother says, "let us not depress ourselves at the thought of them." We can assume that the market garden business, though it prospered during the lifetime of Francis Boott, did not suffice to support the widow and seven children left by his early death in 1776. The cares and welfare of the family devolved upon Kirk, for the eldest son had not his strength of character, and he tells us that he had to rise at five in the morning to pull radishes. The produce of this garden was sold by his mother and sisters in the front shop of the old house in King Street. Friends rallied round them in their hour of need, and Kirk mentions especially John Wright, brother of the painter, who apparently helped to finance his journey to America. The eldest son of "Equity" Wright,

John Wright was a noted Derby attorney, who died in 1798.

When Kirk left Derby he had no idea of going to America, but settled first in London, where he lodged in Fleet Street. His brother James was apparently with him at first. It is not clear from the letters what actually decided him to undertake his American venture. One letter sends his "affections" to Dolly and Horrocks. Dolly was Miss Sarah Wallis, whose father had died, and who evidently lived with the Bootts in King Street; she was Kirk's boyhood sweetheart, and later married Dr. Thomas Haden. John Horrocks was a noted Derby attorney who, after 40 years courtship, married Eliza Boott, Kirk's sister, when both were middle aged. They married in London in November, 1818.

In several letters Kirk signs or refers to himself as "Church," which indicates that his curious christian name derives from the attachment of the family to the orthodox church to distinguish them from others who became dissenters. On January 28, 1783, he writes from London of a visit to Drury Lane Theatre, where he saw the Royal family, but was not greatly impressed. He seems at this time to have possessed rather radical views. He also mentions his adoption of a wig, possibly a symbol of his social advancement.

He evidently had qualms regarding his American adventure, and on setting out in the barque, "Rosamund" in March, 1783, he warned his family against over-optimism. He admits his lack of knowledge of the world and business, but hopes that industry and care will as far as possible obviate these defects. Arriving in Boston he took a store in Union Street, hoping to dispose of the merchandise he had taken over with him. But the War had damaged the trading interests and he was doomed to disappointment in the coming months. By the end of the year his letters reveal him in the depths of despair—many of his goods unsaleable,

the rest producing little profit, and he regrets having undertaken the business. During these months " Jack " Wright, the painter's brother, was supporting the family in Derby. Kirk contemplates returning to England in a few weeks, but his friends in England sent out more goods and thus he had to stay.

From the Spring of 1784 onwards his business prospered, and his financial and social success were soon assured. Kirk Boott had the faculty of making lasting friendships with the most refined and intellectual people of his day, both in his early youth in Derby and in America. This is proven by his close association with the Wrights, Wallis's, Duesburys, Hadens and others in Derby, and with Cabots, the Lowells and the Amorys in Boston.

He corresponded regularly with his family in Derby, especially with his favourite sister, Eliza, and a large collection of his letters exists in the hands of a descendant in America. These shew the emigrant to have been a delightful person, shrewd, observant and well-educated, though it is probable that the latter resulted from his own efforts, since he does not appear to have received more than a slight education. For many years he contributed to the support of his widowed mother, who died on December 20, 1802, in her King Street home.

Kirk's letter of May 12, 1786, tells of his marriage to Mary Love, on February 10, 1785. For some reason they had kept it secret from both families for fifteen months. His wife was a Scottish girl, daughter of the captain of the ship which had taken him to the States. They had nine children, from whom have descended a large family connection, centralized around Boston. He died in 1817, leaving a flourishing business, a mansion known as Rivere House, and a fortune of over 100,000 dollars. The legacies included one of more than 11,000 dollars, to be held in trust for his two sisters, Eliza and Ann. They were then living in

Queen Street, Derby, and the interest was paid to them regularly for the rest of their lives.

The second of his sons was Kirk, the founder of Lowell, who was born at Boston in 1790. He was sent back to England to be educated at Rugby School. Returning to the States he entered Harvard, but later joined the British Army and saw service with the Duke of Wellington in Spain and Portugal during the Peninsular War. He soon received a commission and commanded a detachment at the siege of San Sebastian in July, 1813. When the United States entered the War against Britain his regiment was ordered to America, but Boott, like a true patriot, refused to fight against his countrymen, and was granted leave of absence. He retained his commission until peace was declared after Waterloo.

During his boyhood and youth Kirk Boott saw a great deal of his relatives in Derby, and while he was in England he made the town his home. Here he became acquainted with his future wife, Anne Haden, second daughter of Thomas Haden, a Derby physician. Here, too, he was surrounded by his father's old friends, the Wright family, Horrocks, the honest attorney, Dr. Haden, and letters also prove that he formed a strong friendship with a young Strutt, possibly a son of Jedidiah. He was already interested in cotton, and another of his acquaintances was a Mr. Launeck, superintendent of one of the Derby cotton mills and a relative of the Hardcastles. He married at St. Michael's Church, Derby, in November, 1818, and shortly after the wedding he and his wife returned to Boston.

Here he sought to put to practical use the knowledge of the new textile industry which he had acquired during his stay in Derby. The industry was in process of being revolutionized by the advent of new machinery, and America was feverishly trying to develop its cotton and silk trade in order to compete with and, if possible,

dispense with, British goods. The search for water power to work the mills and bleacheries led Kirk Boott to the banks of the Merrimack river, and the founding thereon of Lowell. He set out in 1822, backed by some Boston financiers, and the situation of Lowell in a bend of the Merrimack proved admirably suited to the purpose.

On the ground of ancestral and personal attachments Boott wished to give to the new town the name of Derby, but in this he was over-ruled by his capitalist supporters, who venerated the memory of Francis Cabot Lowell, the man responsible for the introduction of cotton manufacture into America. A majority prevailed, and "Derby, Massachusetts," became Lowell. Until his death in 1837 Kirk Boott was the most prominent citizen in Lowell, leading the townspeople in both civil and religious affairs. He represented the town in the State legislature, founded its first church and altogether took an active and efficient part in its affairs.

The church was consecrated St. Anne's, in honour of his wife, and Boott, wishing to perpetuate the memory of St. Michael's, Derby, wherein he was married, resolved that the new church in Lowell should be an architectural copy of the Derby church. He drew up plans and personally supervised the erection, stone by stone, of a church resembling, as closely as materials would permit, our little church of St. Michael's in Queen Street. He visited Derby once more in 1836, and died the following year of apoplexy, leaving a widow and six children.

It was Kirk Boott who induced Major George Washington Whistler, father of the artist, to settle in Lowell to start the manufacture of locomotives. The Bootts and the Whistlers were closely associated for many years, and it is interesting to note that "Jimmie" Whistler's career would not have been that of an English artist, had not his parents become intimate with Kirk Boott and his wife. We know that Whistler's sister

married Seymour Haden, who was Mrs. Boott's nephew, and the young lady of Whistler's famous "Music Room" study was a Miss Isabella Boott, daughter of Francis Boott, of London, Kirk's younger brother. The intimacy of the two families is evident in the naming of the artist's brother, Kirk Boott Whistler, who was baptised at Lowell, 31 August, 1838, but who unfortunately died in infancy. Whistler was always concerned, for some obscure reason, to keep his birth-place secret. For many years it was assumed that he was born in Russia, as he himself averred, and it is only recently that it has been proved that he was born in Lowell.

Another Derby family with whom the Boott's had close connections were the Duesbury's, proprietors of our earliest china factory. It is not generally known that William Duesbury III, grandson of the founder of the business, after selling out to Robert Blore and the subsequent failure of his colour works at Matlock, emigrated to America and settled at Lowell. Kirk Boott visited England with the intention of securing technicians for the Lowell mills, and Duesbury was one of those whom he persuaded to return with him. He was given a responsible position in one of the mills, and he became known as a water-colour painter of no mean ability, and also designed the Universalist church at Lowell. His character was somewhat unstable, and he married a Lowell widow, his first wife being still alive in England. The subsequent scandal cost him his post as a textile chemist. His son, William, by his first wife, followed him to Lowell and practiced there as a physician, but died young, and shortly after this Duesbury committed suicide by drinking corrosive sublimate.

His sister Sarah, who died in 1876, had her portrait painted as a child by Wright, of Derby. Several of her letters are in the Derby Public Library, and writing to her brother Henry (the well known architect) she says

“ I was in town and at Dr. Pidduck’s on Saturday. They were very kind and they have a very nice lad, whom they sent to Dr. Boott’s for me, and who brought me Mrs. Boott’s love, and that Mr. Horrocks was quite well when they last heard from him. I sent him my compliments . . . I shall write to William, too.” Apart from the reference to her brother William this letter proves that the Duesburys, the Bootts and the Hadens were close friends (Horrocks had married Elizabeth Boott), and that all the exiles from Derby, who were living in London, kept up their connection with each other.

The Dr. Boott referred to in the letter was Francis, son of Kirk, the emigrant, and brother of the Lowell founder. After completing his education at Harvard, he returned to England and for several years travelled to and fro between the two countries, making lifelong friendships in both. He must also have paid frequent visits to his relatives in Derby, for in 1820 he married a Derby girl, Mary Hardcastle, at St. Michael’s.

He represented the London branch of his father’s business, but on its failure, he commenced the study of medicine. He took his Doctor’s degree at Edinburgh, and in 1824 began practice in London. For seven years he practiced very successfully, earning fame by his treatment of malaria and other fevers. He was in several respects a judicious innovator. He resided at 24, Gower Street and was one of the founders of London University in 1827. Boott retired early from medical practice, and devoted himself to the cultivation of his literary and scientific tastes, which were varied and profound. A Vice-President of the Linnean Society, he published monographs on botanical and medical topics, and merited a place in the Dictionary of National Biography. His death occurred on Christmas Day, 1863.

Another brother, James Boott, became interested in

horse-breeding and from one of his visits to Derby in 1822, he returned to America with a horse known as Bellfounder. This animal sired the famous Hambletonian and became the progenitor of numerous pedigree horses, which have since won fame on the American turf. The only point of interest to historians is that Boott was accused in America of having falsified Bellfounder's pedigree, and his refutation of the allegations rested upon a stud-card, printed at Derby, which accompanied the horse to America.

We now revert to Francis Boott (1732-1776), the market gardener, several of whose sons remained in Derby. John succeeded to his father's business, carrying on the trade of gardener. His three marriages are recorded in the parish registers of St. Werburgh's church, but he does not appear to have had any issue. Another son, James, by trade an auctioneer, became a Colonel in the Derbyshire militia. An advertisement in the *Derby Mercury* for 5 November, 1804, presents the thanks of Major Boott and the officers of the Loyal Loughborough Volunteers to the inhabitants of Derby "for the extremely polite and hospitable attention, with which the corps were honoured, during their stay on permanent duty." He lived at Loughborough for many years, married twice, and left five children at his death in 1822, of whom a son, Kirk, emigrated to Canada.

Such were the circumstances in which Lowell was founded, and it is gratifying to find the family of a humble Derby market gardener playing such a prominent role in the inception and early development of the city. To the Boott family, more than to any other, Lowell owes both its origin and its prosperity. Living to-day (1946) in New York there is a Kirk Boott who is a direct lineal descendant of the founder being the fifth in direct succession to hold this name. He has a son, a metallurgical engineer in Boston, who also perpetuates

the curious name of Kirk Boott. It so happens that by the adventitious turn of fortune and the prominence achieved by the Boott family in New England, we know more about their antecedents than we might have known to-day had Kirk Boott been content to remain and grow vegetables in Derby.

The wife of Lowell's founder, Anne Haden, was the daughter of Thomas Haden, a Derby physician. The family cannot be traced in Derby earlier than the middle of the 18th century, but I believe Thomas to have been brother to the Alexander Bunn Haden, who officiated at his daughter's wedding to Kirk Boott, and therefore the son of Joseph Haden, of Dudley. He was born on September 22, 1761, and must have settled in Derby when quite a young man. He came here as apprentice to Richard Wright, the doctor brother of the celebrated painter, Wright of Derby, and his services were so appreciated that he was soon taken into partnership by that gentleman. The *Mercury* records the dissolution by mutual consent, of his partnership in 1806, the reason no doubt being the retirement of the senior partner, for Richard Wright was then in his 76th year.

Haden became an eminent practitioner and citizen, highly respected by his fellow townsmen. He was for a time chief magistrate for the Borough, and twice occupied the Mayoral chair, in 1811 and 1819. He was medical attendant to the Mozley family of printers, and Thomas Mozley, in his *Reminiscences* says, "I think the bonniest, the kindest and the brightest, as well as the ruddiest, of our elder contemporaries was old Mr. Haden, who with a very large medical practice combined a scientific knowledge of music and a most sensitive ear, and who had the management of the Derby oratorios." He was interested too in the realm of pure science and one of his closest friends was Erasmus Darwin. When the worthy Doctor founded the Derby Philosophical Society in 1784, Haden was one of the earliest members.

Although a good deal younger, he was intimately acquainted with Wright of Derby, as several anecdotes in William Bemrose's life of the painter testify. He assisted Wright to pack his pictures, and in return the painter taught him to play the flute, on which he was no mean performer. Haden used to relate that Wright asked him whether he should teach him to paint or to play the flute, and his youthful imagination foolishly chose the latter. Wright considered Haden one of the handsomest men in the town, and prevailed upon him to sit for his picture "Edwin, after Beatty's *Ministrel*." This was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1778, when Haden was only 17.

Just after Wright's death in September, 1797, Haden was asked by Leigh Phillips, Editor of the *Monthly Magazine* and the painter's biographer, to send him some material facts for a biographical account of Wright's life. With Richard Wright's assistance, Haden wrote a brief account and forwarded it to Phillips.

Thomas Haden lived for many years at No. 2, St. Michael's Churchyard. He married Sarah, daughter of George Wallis,¹ of Derby, and his wife, Rebecca (Clarke), and they had ten children:—

1. Charles Thomas, born Oct. 2, 1786.
2. Richard Wright, born 1787.
3. Henry, born 1790.
4. Frederic, born 1800.
5. John Clarke, born 1804.
6. Sarah)
7. Anne) Twins, born 1788.
8. Harriet, born 1803.
9. Mary Rebecca, born 1799.
10. Eliza died unmarried at Riddings.

The eldest son, Charles Thomas Haden, was educated at Derby School and Rugby, where he made the

¹ A curious fact is that his partner Richard Wright had also married a Miss Sarah Wallis.

acquaintance of Kirk Boott, and following in his illustrious father's footsteps he began the study of surgery at 17. When the Derby Infirmary opened in 1810, he was elected Surgeon at the head of the poll, although he was only 24 years of age. He had married Emma, daughter of Samuel Harrison, the famous Belper tenor vocalist (for whom see D.N.B.). Haden was, like his father, a gifted musician, and he met his wife during the preparation for the three-day musical festivals which, staged on a grand scale at All Saints' and the old Bold Lane Theatre, were a feature of life in old-time Derby. They had three children, the eldest of whom was Sir Francis Seymour Haden, the famous etcher, to whom we shall presently return.

Only 38 when he died, he had already achieved fame as a surgeon, and as author of several works on medicine. His death on January 11, 1824, occurred during a voyage to the Mediterranean with Sir William Curtis in that knight's yacht, and he was buried at Malta, where there is a stone to his memory.

Richard Wright Haden also attended Derby School and later spent 21 years in the merchant service. Returning to Derby he became a partner in the firm of Cox and Haden, wine merchants, in the Market Place. He was a J.P. and Alderman of the Borough and was elected Mayor for the year 1834-35. The Hadens were a musical family and Richard was an accomplished performer who became president of the old Derby Philharmonic Society. Three of his sons attended Derby School — two of them later emigrated, one to Jamaica, the other to Ceylon, but Thomas, the eldest, remained in Derby to become a J.P. and a Director of the Derby Savings Bank.

All five sons of Thomas Haden received their early education at Derby School. Henry was there during the headship of the Rev. James Bligh (1793-1834). He lived for a time at St. Alkmund's Vicarage, became a

surgeon in the Derbyshire infantry and died as a result of injuries received during the Reform Bill Riots in Derby in 1831. There is a monument to his memory in All Saints'.

The fourth son, Frederic, died of yellow fever at Berbice, British Guiana, in 1823, while serving as mate of the "Albion" under his brother Richard. The youngest son, John Clarke Haden, proceeded from Derby School to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, obtaining his M.A. in 1830. In 1834 he was appointed "priest-in-ordinary" to William IV and continued in this office under Queen Victoria. In 1846 he became Precentor of Westminster Abbey, which post he held, together with his appointment at court, until his death. He was a close friend of the Whistler family, corresponding with them and frequently visiting Lowell.

Thomas Haden's twin daughters, Sarah and Anne, in their childhood sat for Joseph Wright's well known picture "The Twins," at present in the possession of the Oakes family, of Riddings, near Alfreton, descendants of Sarah Haden. She married James Oakes, one of the family who were innkeepers and carriers on an extensive scale in 18th century Derby. Their offices and stables were situated in Oakes Yard, St. Peter's Street, which still exists to-day. James Oakes moved to Riddings and founded the firm of James Oakes and Company, which was associated with a group of collieries, soon amassing a substantial fortune. Much of their wealth arose from the fact that oil was found in their collieries. When the flow was discovered Oakes sent for his brother-in-law, Lyon Playfair, who identified the precious liquid, and found that the spring was producing 300 gallons a day. James Oakes, however, was too engrossed in his coal and iron, and Playfair advised his friend, James Young, the chemist, to turn the petroleum to account. Young bought up the yield of the spring and began the manufacture of

illuminating and lubricating oils. Thus did the paraffin and petroleum industries originate in Derbyshire, an insignificant beginning to the world-wide search for oil which followed later.

Unquestionably the most illustrious member of the Haden family was Sir Francis Seymour Haden, eldest son of Dr. Charles Thomas Haden, who achieved fame both as surgeon and artist. Born in Derby, he was at the Grammar School towards the end of Mr. Bligh's deplorable headship, and at the time there were but two pupils—young Haden and William Hope. After the former's departure to King's College, London, Hope remained for some time the only scholar to enjoy the privilege of Mr. Bligh's teaching. Haden continued his medical studies at the Sorbonne, Paris and Grenoble, and then built up an extensive practice in London. He pursued his professional career as a surgeon until 1887, but he was better known by his etchings, which are the chief memorial of his life. Through the family connections he visited Lowell on several occasions, and in 1847 he married Dasha Delano Whistler, half-sister to James McNeill Whistler, the celebrated painter, etcher and wit. The genius of his younger brother-in-law, "Jimmie" Whistler, was undoubtedly an important personal factor in Haden's development as an artist. Haden and Whistler were both fastidious and a clash of temperaments was inevitable sooner or later. The story of their quarrel, which was never composed, is well-known, and may be traced in the Whistler biographies. Haden was rewarded for his many public services by a knighthood in 1894, and he died on June 1, 1910, in his 92nd year.

By the this time the two families had travelled far from the midland town of Derby, wherein they had their humble origins, and their representatives had spread right across the world. They had settled in London, Canada, Jamaica, Ceylon, Lyons, France,

St. Petersburg, Russia, South America and in many parts of the United States of America. This story shows how two families of modest origins in Derby could, by taking advantage of the conditions obtaining at the time, and the twin opportunities provided by the rapid increase in emigration and by the Industrial Revolution, rise to some eminence both in the old world and the new.