

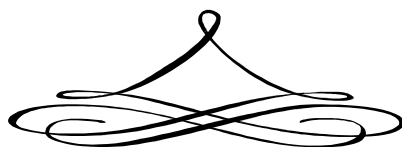
## Aunt Sarah Edinburgh's 1846 Letter

To her nephew, Thomas Chamberlain & wife Susan (Susannah Bull)

For the early European pioneers and settlers of nineteenth century New Zealand any correspondence from their family and friends back in the "ol' country" would have immediately become a prized possession to be treasured and re-read innumerable times. Thomas & Susannah CHAMBERLAIN in Wellington, New Zealand received one such letter from their unmarried Aunt, Sarah EDINBURGH back in Preston Capes, Northamptonshire, in about 1846. Sarah was a schoolmistress at the village school and died about five years later at the age of 77. Below is a copy of what was probably her second and final letter.

Sarah's letter features the final days of young 21-year-old Caroline SMITH but also notes other village deaths during 1844 and 1845. The letter is written on both sides of two sheets of paper 370mm x 225mm folded in half with an impressed "BATH" water mark in the top left-hand corner of the fold, and cursively written in ink throughout. The letter ends abruptly at the bottom of the fourth side and originally may have included more pages of family or personal news.

Caroline's parents, Charles and Alice SMITH had nine children of which five seem to have survived. Alice, was a schoolmistress and together with Edward CLEAVER, also listed below, would have been a career related associate of the letter writer, Sarah EDINBURGH.



(Side One)

**Death Scenes of A piass (pious) young female Carroline Smith [abt.1823-1844] the Daughter of Charles and Alice Smith of Preston Capes in Northamptonshire in England.**

**In our calling to see her about a month before her departure she related to us a most remarkable and heavenly vision which she in the night before see. She said that she saw three most butiful angels at the far side of the room and their appearance was most butiful and then she saw them overing over her bed but then at a great height but said she the are my ministering angels and my time in this world is not long but his grace is always Sufficient for my Support and Consolation at another time she said after being in the greatest pain, being told that pain was hard to bear she smilingly said bless you I don't mind it is nothing when you have the love of God shed abroad in the heart and Jesus Christ always to bear part of my pain and he always as done and always will then said she these that is over, there is one the less to come and the(y) are not of a long duration for in a little time the(y) will be all over and I shall be in heaven with the Lord where pain and sorrow will be no more then repeating these words what is there here to Court? My stay or keep me back from home when angels becken me away and Jesus bids me come but the will of the Lord be done I will willingly wait the Lord's time for I know he will do all things well. Her afflictions during the last three weeks would not admit of her talking much but she continued to testify to all around of the goodness of god to her soul.**

(Side Two)

**The day before her death seeing her mother in tears said don't cry for me mother I don't fear death it is only parting with you for a short time, pray do prepare and follow me for I know you will come to heaven to me, Then calling her brothers and sisters to the bed side adressed them in a most remarkable manner and Exhorted them one by one to be sure and prepare to meet her in heaven then asking for her father said, did I wish him good morning this morning, and on being told that she did said, well bless god but I should like to see him if there will be time for him to get here before I depart and if not tell him again from me to be sure and go to meeting and prepare and come to heaven to me. And in the afternoon she said, his this dying? It is most butiful, I did not think it was just like this, and on being told that it was Religion that supported, in a dying moment she Smilingly said Religion what think you I could have**

done without it now it is true heart felt Religion that bears me up I would not part with it for all the world and about three a clock in the afternoon she said, O Mother what a butiful sight I now see, O if you could just see what I see now Mother, I can see John and my sisters all in heaven most butiful waiting to meet me and in a short time she said I see Jesus Christ Standing at heaven's gate with it wide open and a most butiful crown in his hand he says it is for me but I must wait a short time longer for it and I am willing to wait the Lord's time the will of the Lord be done. And then a gain seeing her mother in tears said, Mother don't cry promise me you wount cry, for I cannot cry now the fountain is all dried up, my tears are all blotted there is no more to come, and it is all joy and peace and love now, and on being told by one of our friends to keep the prise or end in view for when in the Valley of death perhaps satan might be allowed to buffit her,

(Side Three)

she Smilingly said I don't fear him I don't care for him now for Jesus Christ supports me now and he will support me to the end. And in the evening a boue six a clock she said O Mother there is a butiful star O what a buty jest over Elizabeth Wrigts head O if you could but see it. And at another time when she thought that she was gon but reviving a gain a little she said, Mother I thought I was going then and if I had O how butiful but Jesus Christ told me I must go back and stop a short time longer, and then repeating the words of the hymn, the church triumphant in thy love the(i)re mighty Joys we know, the(re) sing the lamb in hymns above, but stoping said, but I cannot sing here now but soone joine in singing hallelujahs to the lamb in heaven. A short time before her departure she smilingly said why is his charriot so long in coming why tarry the weels of his charriot. After this she lay composed for some time then putting her hand out to shake hands with her Mother telling her how happy she was, she was h(e)ard to Speak but wonce (more) more and her last words w(h)ere Come lord Jesus and come quickly and receive my Spirit. Haveing thus adopted the dying prayer of Stephen like him she gently fell asleep in the harms of Jesus without a sigh or a grone.

Aboute three A clock on Saturday Morning February 3 in 1844 Aged 21 years

Her text was taken from the 14 chapter of Revelations and 13 Verse.

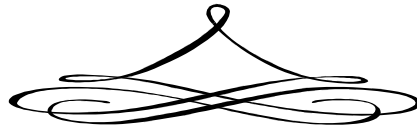
And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me write Blessed are the Dead Which die in the lord from henceforth: yea saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours and their works do follow them.

Hymns 48 and 799 Wesley's book

(Side Four)

**Thomas and Susan** I thought you would like to see this that was rote of what **Carroline Smith** said before she died. I heard that there was papers rote of what she said by one of the meetings? that went to see her and your Mother got one of the papers and I rote this from one of them. I want to sent it for you to see it for I thought you would be pleased to see it. **Your Mother** (Elizabeth Wright mentioned earlier over whose head Caroline saw a star) said it was delightful to be with her. She said it done her good to be with her to hear her talk in that way. You may send me word how you liked it when you rite a gain back. but put it on a strip of paper by itself and put it inside the letter for your letters are seen by a great many people who I don't want them all to know just every thing. Prhaps you may have this to see when I am in my grave and say 'my Aunt Rote this'. **Quiney** says he will rite to you but I don't know when and your Mother said she shall send a letter and **your sister Jane** (Hinton) Will send you a letter. She sent you one but you never sent word Wether you had it or not. I rote that for her, part for her and part for me a very full letter. She thought you would have sent her a letter before now. But I must tell you all the deaths since I rote to you before. **William Haynes** his dead, **Old Mrs Hands** his dead, **Old Mrs Howard** his dead, **Mrs Lee** his dead, these died in the year 1844. **Old Edward Cleaver** his dead, and **Old John Stevens** his dead, **Edward Gibbs** his dead, **Old Mrs Sorril** his dead, **Butcher Hancock** and **Mary Cleaver** was married in October 1844 and then died in

September 1845, all these last died in 1845. **Henry Jones**, his father and Mother his well and Brothers and Sisters are all well. **Thomas Smith** sends his Respects to you and **Charles and Alice Smith** and All the Rest of your Neighbours for I have not room to name all these names. **Mr and Mistress Gossage and Mr Richard** are well. Your mistress was a long time before she got over the death of her Daughters.



Although the letter's final statement could indicate that Thomas or Susannah served Mistress Gossage sometime in the past, the reference to "Your mistress" may indeed NOT refer to Ann GOSSAGE at all, She does not appear to have had children. Perhaps it refers back to Caroline's mother Alice Smith, who, according to the records did lose a son and two daughters. Before her death, Caroline mentions a "John"—perhaps brother—and "sisters", apparently already deceased.

The letter ends abruptly at this point. Following on is a "Who's Who" list of the people mentioned in Sarah's letter.

# Contemporary Preston Capes People

## Mentioned in Sarah Edinburgh's 1846 Letter

- SARAH EDINBURGH** - Letter writer. The unmarried daughter of Giles and Sarah EDINBURGH (nee DAVIS), Sarah was born in 1773/74 and baptised at Preston Capes on 5 Jan 1777. She was employed as a schoolmistress at the village school (listed as such in the 1851 census) and aged about 68 at the time of writing. Illiteracy required, and the letter indicates that she was possibly the official letter writer of the family. Sarah died aged 77. and was buried in the churchyard on 10 Dec 1851.
- ELIZABETH WRIGHT (nee EDINBURGH)** - The daughter of Giles and Sarah EDINBURGH (nee DAVIS), and older sister to Sarah, Elizabeth was born in 1769/70 and baptised at Preston Capes on 19 Jun 1774. She married first, Thomas CHAMBERLAIN by banns at the same church on 13 Feb 1800 and after his death in 1839, Elizabeth married William WRIGHT on 26 Jan 1840, again at the parish church. Her son Thomas, Susannah his wife and four children left Preston Capes at the end of 1841 to begin a new life in New Zealand. She died at the age of 81 and was buried in the churchyard on 12 Sep 1851. Sarah & Elizabeth's brother Giles EDINBURGH, b.1771 served under Nelson and died aged 26, at the naval 'Battle of the Nile' August 1798 on board HMS *Goliath*, a 74 captained by Thomas Foley. The earliest Edinburgh family records in the village date to 1760.
- THOMAS QUINNEY** - The son of Thomas and Jane QUINNEY (nee SORRILL), Thomas was baptised at Preston Capes on 5 Sep 1801. He worked as a farm labourer and married Ann BAILEY by banns at the parish church on 29 Oct 1827. Thomas died at the age of 82 and was buried in the churchyard on 20 Jul 1884. The Quinney's were a prolific bunch. However, I think Thomas, or William listed next are probably the best fit for the "Quiney" mentioned in the letter.
- WILLIAM QUINNEY** - The son of John and Elizabeth QUINNEY (nee STANLEY), William was baptised at Preston Capes on 5 Dec 1802. The earliest Quinney family records in the village date back to 1670.
- JANE HINTON (nee CHAMBERLAIN)** - The daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth CHAMBERLAIN (nee EDINBURGH), and Thomas' sister, Jane was baptised at Preston Capes on 5 Feb 1801. She married Richard HINTON, a farm labourer, by banns at the parish church on 5 Nov 1822 and a month later, they were the subject of a Removal Order by the Overseers of the Poor for the parish, dated 4 Dec 1822, for their removal to Warwick. However, the order was contested and on 23 Jan 1823, they were the subject of a second order, this time to Eydon. By 1841 they had 8 children, but Richard died soon after leaving Jane to continue in Eydon for another 30 years, living in a number of poor houses, working as charwoman, laundress and eventually, lodging with another widow, both paupers. The earliest Chamberlain family records in the village date back to about 1560.
- WILLIAM HAYNES** - The son of Daniel and Elizabeth HAYNES (nee ADAMS), William was baptised at Eydon on 9 Oct 1814 and moved to Preston Capes with his parents. He learned his father's trade as a blacksmith and married Hannah ADAMS of Fawsley, at Preston Capes on 19 Oct 1837. William died aged 30 and was buried in the churchyard on 6 Aug 1844. The earliest Haynes family records in the village date back to about 1650.
- MRS JANE HANDS** - Born in 1764/65, Jane came to Preston Capes as the wife of Samuel HANDS and was granted the administration of her husband's estate on 26 Dec 1820 after which she moved to Flore. Jane died 11 Sep 1844 aged 79 and was buried in the churchyard at Preston Capes on 14 Sep.
- MRS MARY HOWARD** - Born 1750, Mary lived with her daughter Mary, son-in-law, William PERRIDGE and their two children. She died aged 93 and was buried in the churchyard on 18 Dec 1844.
- MRS ELIZABETH LEE (nee KNIGHTLEY)** - Possibly the daughter of Charles and Elizabeth KNIGHTLEY (nee BOULTON), Elizabeth was born on 18 Sep 1782 and married William LEE, a Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge, by licence at Preston Capes on 5 Aug 1822. and was still living in 1822.
- EDWARD CLEAVER** - The son of Richard and Mary CLEAVER (nee THORNTON), Edward was baptised at Preston Capes on 6 Mar 1782. He married Ann HARRIS by licence at the parish church on 6 Oct 1808 and became master of the village school. Edward died on 1 Mar 1845 at the age of 63 and was buried in the churchyard on 4 Mar. The earliest Cleaver family records in the village date to 1631.
- JOHN STEVENS** - The son of Mary STEVENS, John was born in 1785/86 and was living at Fawsley when he married Mary GREGORY by licence at Preston Capes on 29 May 1817. Moved to the Swan Inn where he was described as publican and grazier. John died on 9 Mar 1845 aged 60 and was buried in the churchyard on 13 Mar.
- EDWARD GIBBS** - The son of Thomas and Silence GIBBS (nee SHORT), Edward was baptised at Preston Capes on 4 Jul 1802. He was employed as a farm labourer and married Mary. Edward died at the age of 43 and was buried in the churchyard on 8 Oct 1845.
- MRS MARY SORRILL** - Probably Mary who was born in 1763/64 and still alive in 1843. The earliest Sorrill family records in the village date back to 1637.
- JOSEPH HANCOCK** - The son of John HANCOCK of Everdon, Joseph was born in 1811/12 and began his working life as a farm labourer, later becoming a butcher. He married Mary CLEAVER at the parish church on 22 Oct 1844. After her death in 1845, Joseph married his second wife, Catherine KEY by licence at the same church on 26 Aug 1847. Catherine died in 1861 and Joseph married his third wife Mary. He died aged 77 and was buried in the churchyard 19 Apr 1889. The earliest Hancock family records in the village date back to 1658.

**MARY HANCOCK (nee CLEAVER)** - The daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth CLEAVER (nee GUDGEON), Mary was baptised at Preston Capes on 16 Apr 1815. She married Joseph HANCOCK at the parish church on 22 Oct 1844. Mary died on 18 Sep 1845 at the age of 30 and was buried in the churchyard on 22 Sep.

**HENRY JONES** - The son of James and Susannah JONES, Henry was born at Wappenham in 1811 the eldest of 10 children. With his parents, he was the subject of a Removal Order by the Overseers of the Poor for Wappenham dated 27 Jan 1812 for settlement at Preston Capes. He was a farm labourer and married Mary WILLIT by banns at Preston Capes on 12 Oct 1832.

**THOMAS SMITH** - The son of Charles and Mary SMITH, Thomas was baptised at Preston Capes on 30 Mar 1782 and became a farm labourer. Thomas died at the age of 69 and was buried in the churchyard on 2 Nov 1851. His sister was Caroline the main subject of the letter.

**CHARLES SMITH** - The son of Charles [<1772-1814] & Mary SMITH [<1772-1796>]. Charles was baptised at Preston Capes on 26 May 1793. He became a shoemaker and married Alice WARREN by banns at Preston Capes on 13 Oct 1816. Charles died at the age of 68 and was buried in the churchyard on 9 Jun 1861. The earliest Smith family records in the village date back to 1597.

**ALICE SMITH (nee WARREN)** - Born at Priors Hardwick, Warwickshire in 1795/96, Alice was already a resident of Preston Capes when she married Charles SMITH by banns at the parish church on 13 Oct 1816. She worked as a schoolmistress.

**CAROLINE SMITH** - The daughter of Charles and Alice SMITH (nee WARREN), and feature subject of the letter, Caroline was baptised at Preston Capes on 27 Dec 1822. She died at the age of 21 and was buried in the churchyard on 6 Feb 1844.

**WILLIAM GOSSAGE** - Born in 1786/87 at Long Lawford, Warwickshire, William was the husband of Ann GOSSAGE and in 1851 was farmer of 300 acres which he leased from the Fawsley estate. He died on the 27 Sep 1852 at the age of 65 and was buried in the churchyard on 30 Sep.

**ANN GOSSAGE** - Apart from her step-daughter Elizabeth, Ann appears to have been childless. There are no records referring to daughters of this family who died as mentioned in the letter. The final statement probably refers to a different "mistress".

**ELIZABETH GOSSAGE** - The daughter of William GOSSAGE, Elizabeth came to the parish with her father and step-mother. She left the district upon her marriage to William Hudson GOODWIN of Burton Overy, Leics, by licence at the parish church on 29 Dec 1847.

**RICHARD GOSSAGE** - brother of William above.

## Another Contemporary Preston Capes Family

**JAMES GIBBINS** married **JOYCE GIBBS**, daughter of ROBERT & MARY GIBBS.

Notes: for JAMES GIBBINS & JOYCE GIBBS:

- The family history of the GIBBS family in Preston Capes dates back to around 1725.
- Born in 1784/85, James was already a resident of Preston Capes when he married Joyce GIBBS at the parish church on 10 Apr 1806, the banns having been published on 23 Mar, 30 Mar and 6 Apr. He worked as a farm labourer and moved to Maidford after his marriage. In 1809, they were the subject of a Removal Order by the Overseers of the Poor for Maidford and returned to Preston Capes. James died at the age of 44 and was buried in the churchyard on 29 Oct 1829

Children: of JAMES & JOYCE GIBBINS are nine issue and include fifth child:

**WILLIAM GIBBINS** [1814-1888] who...

Married: **MARY WOOD** 28 Mar. 1836, at Preston Capes. Mary came from Preston Bissett, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

Notes: for WILLIAM & MARY GIBBINS:

- The son of James and Joyce GIBBINS (nee GIBBS), William was baptised at Preston Capes on 22 May 1814. He worked as a farm labourer and married Mary WOOD of Preston Bissett, Bucks, by banns at Preston Capes on 28 Mar 1836. William died at the age of 74 at the Daventry Union Workhouse and was buried in the churchyard at Preston Capes on 23 Jan 1890.
- In 1841 contemporary residents/neighbours in Preston Capes were Thomas & Susannah CHAMBERLAIN (nee BULL), and youngest brother, Richard & Elizabeth CHAMBERLAIN (nee HORN).
- Samuel CHAMBERLAIN, 3 yrs old, fourth child of Richard & Elizabeth CHAMBERLAIN, appears to have been staying with William (27) & Mary (nee Wood, 24) Gibbins and their 2 children Mary Ann (4) and James (6mths) at the time of the June 1841 Census taken for Preston Capes, Northamptonshire.

Children: of WILLIAM & MARY GIBBINS are:

- MARY ANN GIBBINS** [1837-1857]
- JAMES GIBBINS** [1840-1869]
- JOYCE ANNE GIBBINS** [1843-1862>]
- THOMAS GIBBINS** [1845-1877>]
- ELIZABETH ANN GIBBINS** [1847-1851>]
- JANE ANN GIBBINS** [1849-1872]
- ANTHONY GIBBINS** [1851-1861]
- WILLIAM GIBBINS** [1853-1861>]
- ARTHUR ESAU GIBBINS** [1857-1857]
- JOSEPH GIBBINS** [1858-1859]