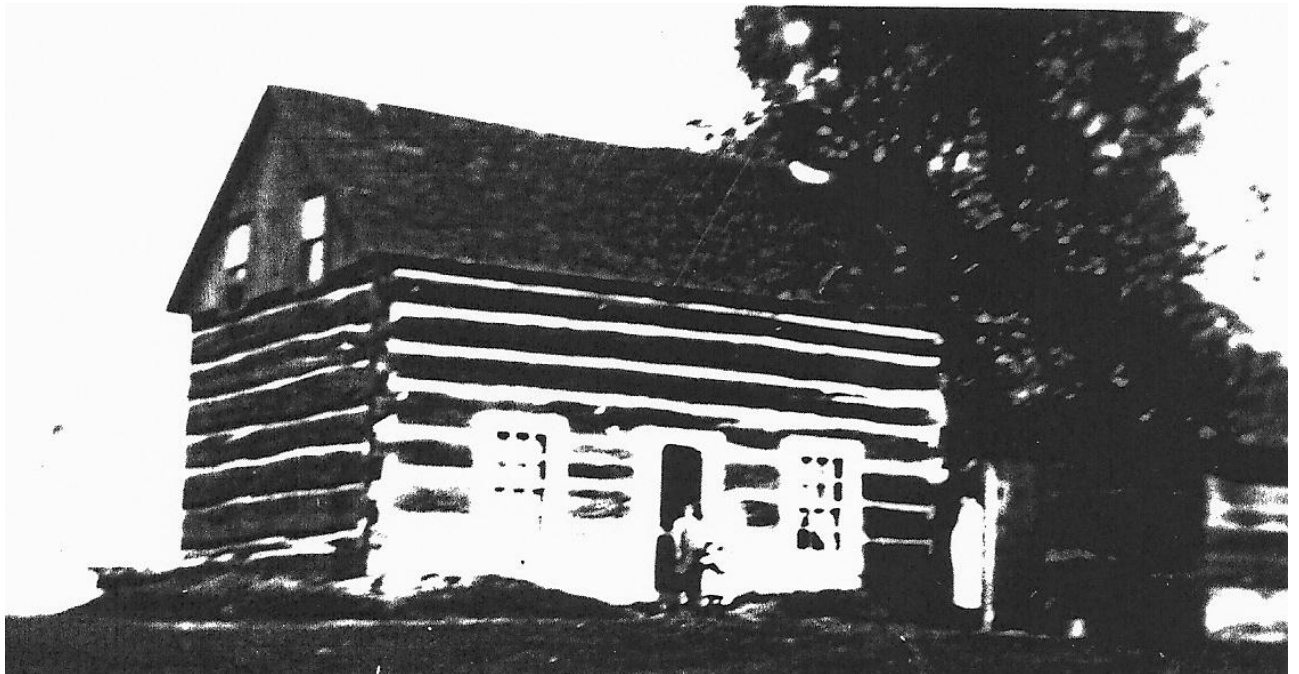


The Bennett Family
In Canada Over 165 Years

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A Story of English Roots
And
Ross Township Descendants



by Fay E. Bennett, December 2011

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Photograph on front cover page is representative of the log homes built by early settlers in Ross Township. It is the home of James and Jane Bennett's son – Thomas Henry Bennett. Photo provided by Thomas Henry's great granddaughter, Helen Armstrong.

Dedication

**This account of the Bennett family has been prepared for
the children of**

Joseph & Margaret (nee McLaughlin) Bennett:

George Bennett, Edna Peever,

Helen Lumax and Erma Johnson

And in memory of ... *Ruby Bulmer and Veldon Bennett*

**They have all contributed to and supported the
documentation of the Bennett family history.**



George, Erma, Ruby, Edna, Helen, Veldon – 1994

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Chapter One - Our English Roots

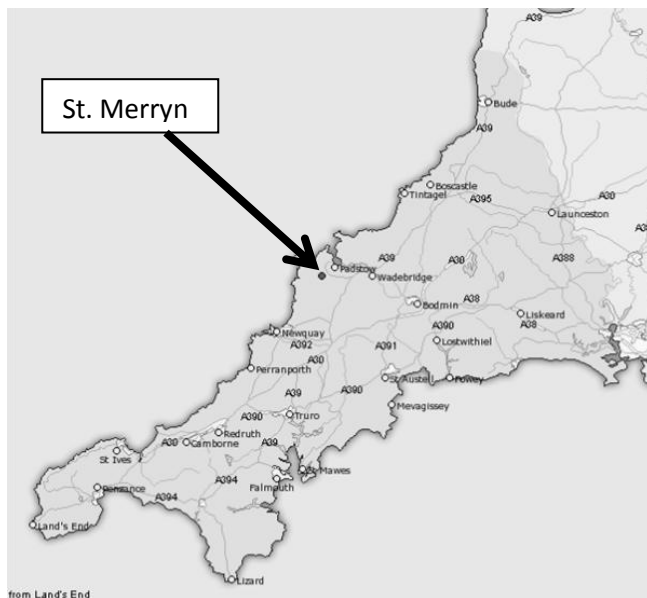
Introduction

The Bennett surname originated from the medieval Roman given name Benedict (Latin Benedictus meaning 'blessed'). The name's popularity is attributed to St. Benedict (c480-550), who founded the Benedictine order of monks in Italy. It was initially used as a personal name and grew in frequency after the Crusades to the Holy Land in the 12th century when it became the practice for returning soldiers or pilgrims to call their children after saints or prominent members of the early church. Personal names became surnames over the next two centuries, the first surnames being recorded in England^{1,2}. The Bennett surname has also been derived from old French forms Beneit and Benoit which were popular among the Normans^{1,2}.

There is no doubt that the Bennett family in Ross Township descends from ancestors in England. Our Bennett ancestors are documented as early as 1706 in the County of Cornwall which is located in the most south western part of England. It is bordered to the north and west by the Celtic Sea, to the south by the English Channel, and to the east by the County of Devon. Historically, tin and copper mines, china clay extraction, fishing and agriculture contributed to the Cornish economy³.



Pic 1: Map of England-County of Cornwall



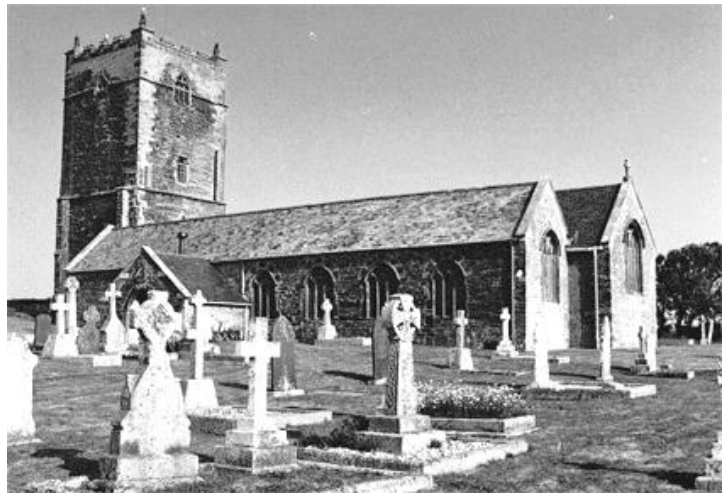
Pic 2: Map of Cornwall – St. Merryn

The parish of St. Merryn holds the records of our Bennett ancestors. The number of generations living there prior to 1706 is unknown, however at least four generations preceding our English immigrants are documented. St. Merryn is both a civil parish and a village⁴. The parish boasts more than 5 ½ miles of coastline, with some of the most dramatic cliffs and beautiful beaches in Cornwall⁵. The village is located in the parish approximately three and a half miles south of the fishing port of Padstow and approximately eleven miles north-east of the coastal resort of Newquay. It is built around a crossroads and has a post office, various shops, restaurants, public houses, and a petrol station with garage⁴.

Most villages in Cornwall have a 'Churchtown'. St. Merryn follows this historical pattern and her 'Churchtown' is located about six hundred yards east from the crossroads which marks the centre of St. Merryn village. It includes the church (Church of England), church hall, vicarage, old vicarage, cottages and the Cornish Arms public house⁴. In 2009, St. Merryn church celebrated its 750th anniversary. This author was in contact with a distant Bennett cousin, Pat Evans of New South Wales, Australia in the 1999. Pat had visited St. Merryn and provided pictures of the interior and exterior of the church. One of her photos included a Sunday School Roll that hangs

in the church. It is dated 1825 and includes the names of Bennett ancestors James Bennett and Jane Gregor.

The focus of this Bennett family document is an introduction to the James and Jane Bennett family of St. Merryn who immigrated to Canada over 165 years ago; their son George Bennett and his wife Fanny Johnston who lived in Ross Township; and a closer study of third generation Joseph Bennett and Margaret McLaughlin and their children's descendants.



Pic 3: St. Merryn Church

James Bennett's Origins

Our first Bennett ancestor in Canada, **James Bennett**,^{6,7} was born about 1812 in St. Merryn, Co. Cornwall, England.^{8,9,10} He was the seventh child of **William Bennett**^{6,9} and **Elizabeth Brewer**^{6,9} who had a family of 11 children. James was baptized on 14 Jan 1815 in Churchtown, St. Merryn, Co. Cornwall, England.¹¹

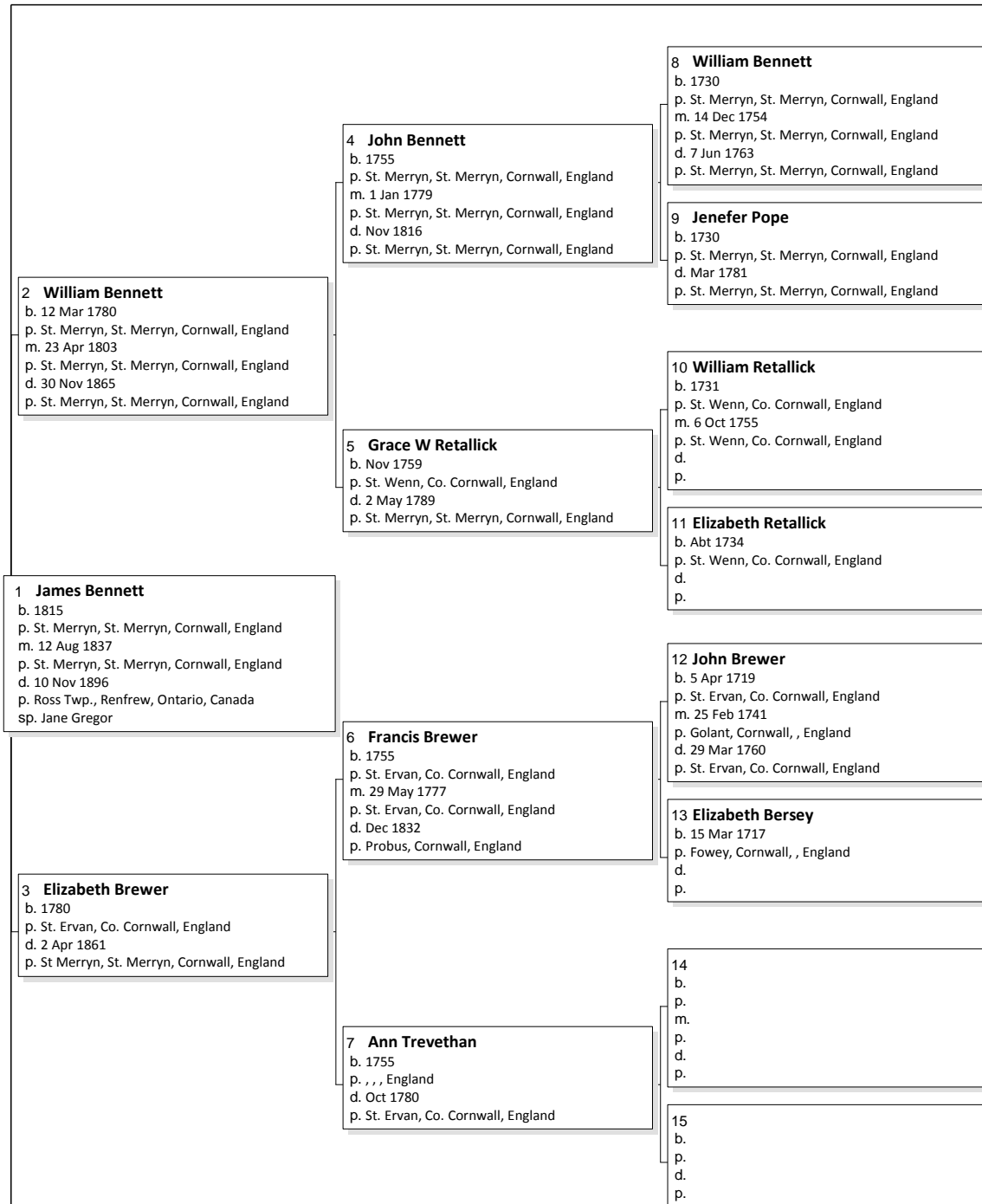
James' father **William** was the son of **John Bennett** and **Grace W Retallick**. He was born in 1780 in St. Merryn, Co. Cornwall, England.^{6,9} He was baptized on 12 Mar 1780 in Churchtown, St. Merryn, Co. Cornwall, England.¹¹ William died on 30 Nov 1866 in St. Merryn, Co. Cornwall, England^{6,9} aged 86, and was buried on 2 Dec 1866 in the Churchyard.¹¹ He was employed as a mason. The 1841¹², 1851¹³ and 1861¹⁴ British census shows his residence to be Padstow, St. Columb Major, Co. Cornwall, England which as indicated earlier, was about three miles from St. Merryn.

James' mother **Elizabeth** was the daughter of **Francis Brewer**⁹ and **Ann Trevathan**. She was born in 1780 in St. Ervan, Co. Cornwall, England.¹¹ She was christened on 13 Apr 1780 at St. Ervan, Co. Cornwall, England¹¹. Elizabeth married William on 23 Apr 1803 at St. Merryn, Co. Cornwall, England.¹¹ She died on 2 Apr 1861 in St. Merryn, Co. Cornwall, England aged 80, and was buried on 6 Apr 1861 in the Churchyard¹¹.

James' siblings' first names were Grace, John, Charlotte, Ann, William, Greshom, Thomas, Mary, Jane and Richard. In researching James' siblings, no information has been found that indicates any of the siblings left England. However descendants of a brother Thomas settled in Australia. This is the connection to Pat Evans. Another descendant of his brother Thomas came to Canada. Earl and Fay Bennett met Jean Gillings, a descendant of this line from Southern Ontario. Interestingly, there was a Trevathan family who immigrated to Hastings County from St. Merryn. Further research is needed to determine if there is a connection, however one would think that families from a small area would likely know each other. It would be an interesting investigation to identify other St. Merryn families in Renfrew and Hastings Counties.

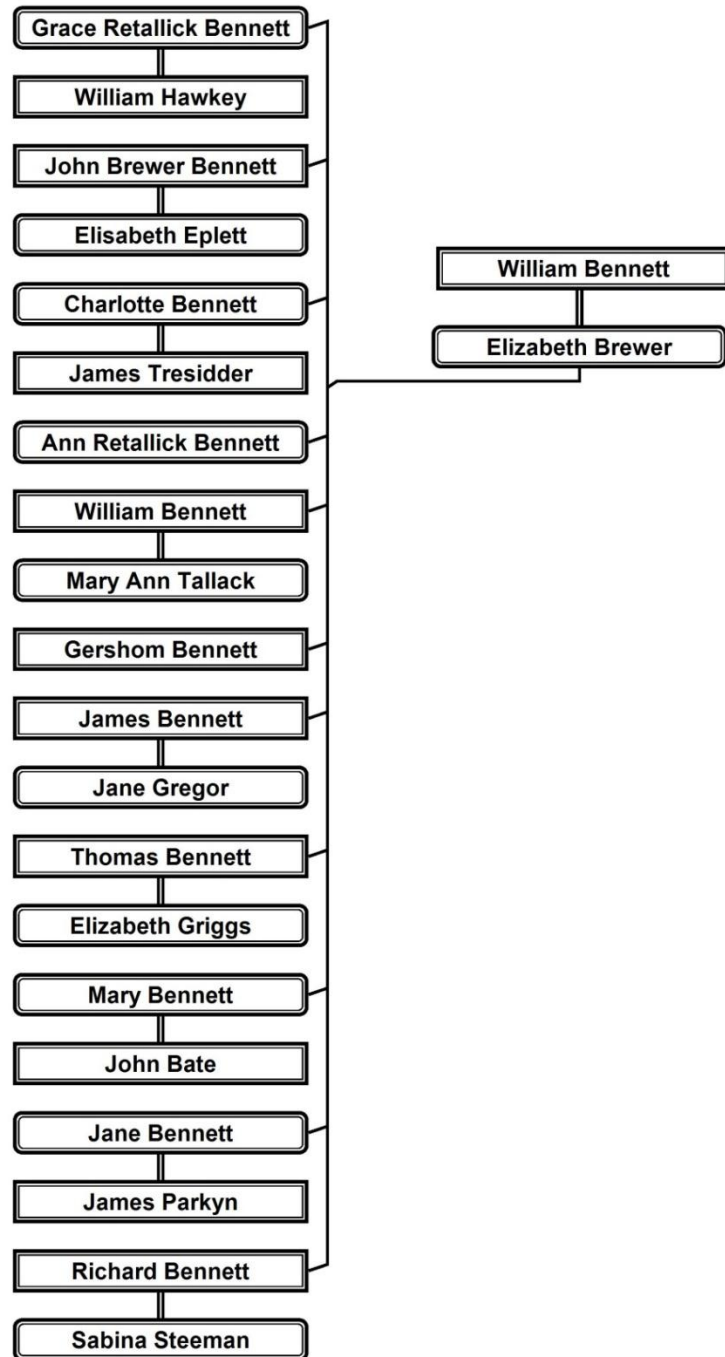
A three generation Pedigree Chart for James Bennett is provided on page 3. A Descendant Chart for his parents is on page 4.

Pedigree Chart for James Bennett



Pic 4: Pedigree Chart for James Bennett

Family of William Bennett and Elizabeth Brewer



Pic 5: Descendant Chart for William Bennett and Elizabeth Brewer

Jane Griggor's Origins

Jane (Griggor) Gregor^{6,9} was born about 1815 in St. Merryn, Co. Cornwall, England.^{6,9} She was the seventh child of **Henry Gregor** and **Jane Jenefer Brenton** who had a family of eight children.^{6,9} Jane was baptized on 26 Dec 1815 in Churchtown, St. Merryn, Co. Cornwall, England.¹¹

Jane's father **Henry Gregor**^{6,9} was the son of **William Gregor** and **Rebecca Brabin**. He was born on 1 May 1785 in St. Merryn, Co. Cornwall, England¹¹ and died in Jan 1856 in St. Merry, Co. Cornwall, England^{6,9} aged 70. According to the 1841 Census¹², Henry was an agricultural labourer. The known residences of Henry were within St. Merryn Parish. The spelling of the Gregor surname has also been noted as Griggor, Greggior, and Grigger. The Parish and Census records usually spelled the name as Gregor.

Jane's mother **Jane Jenefer Brenton**, daughter of **Henry Brenton** and **Frances Old**, was born on 16 May 1784 in St. Merryn, Co. Cornwall, England.¹¹ She died on 2 Jun 1826 in St. Merryn, Co., Cornwall, England¹¹ aged 42, and was buried on 5 Jun 1826 in Churchtown, St Merryn, Cornwall, England.¹¹

Jane's siblings' names were Philip, John, Thomas, Henry, Mary, William and Richard. Her father married a second time and she had two sisters Nancy and Betsy. In researching Jane's siblings, no information has been found that indicates any of the siblings left England. A three generation Pedigree Chart for Jane Gregor is provided on page 8. A Descendant Chart for her parents is on page 9.

There is evidence that James & Jane corresponded with their siblings in England. The following is a transcription of a letter written to James and Jane Bennett from Jane's brothers Wm and Richard Greggior. An attempt to keep the spacing, spelling and punctuation has been made during transcription. There are several folds where the paper has split and been taped which creates some difficulty in the transcription. Keep in mind that this letter is written by two brothers which will help in the understanding of the family updates given. The original letter is in the possession of Merrill Wallace¹⁵.

St. Merryn Feby 21 1864

**My Dear Brother and Sister and family I was
glad after a long period of time to receive a kind
and loving letter from you also to find that you
are all getting on so well. Now I find you wish to know the
best means of getting over your Money I have been to
Wadebridge seen Mr. Coleave the trustee he says that
you must send home to Me What township and
the bank you will have it sent to and I will
deliver it to him and he will forward it immediently
and I shall send on the order to you in a letter
I have also endeavoured to send you as to the family
affairs as to who is living and so on
First Jameses Father is still alive but very feeble
his Mother been dead 3 or four years Jane still lives
home with the old Man Gershon died about 6 months since
John and family is all well. Thomas and family
is all well lost his oldest daughter Grace and family
is all well Bate and family the same had the
second son married yesterday to John Olds daughter
the Shoemaker Now I believe I have mentioned all
Jameses own family the all desired to return their
best respects to you and wish you health & happiness
As to our family I first begin with Brother John
there is about 10 Children 3 of which is Married the
live St. Minver all well we seen them about a week since
Thomas and family is all well still live in St. Allin
No more family. Henry and family is all well Live
down in the parish of Feock all well
Mary is in a dropsical state of health I fear it will
end bad as to the rest of the family the are all well
William and family is all well Susan is intending to send
a small Valentine if we have room to her Cousin Mary Ann
I have 5 no more than when you heard from me last
Richard and family is all well We have 6 Children
and I do not know that we have finished as yet.
Joseph Griggor is dead he was Captin of a vessel died in Newport
sudden left a wife and two children became 6illiam6 to Padstow Parish
(page two)
Betsy Griggor is still living with Mr. Hawkin Polmark
Eliza is married to a shoemaker residing in Padstow
James is in service and Martha is home to Shop with her
6illiam6her Hanna Salter still living**

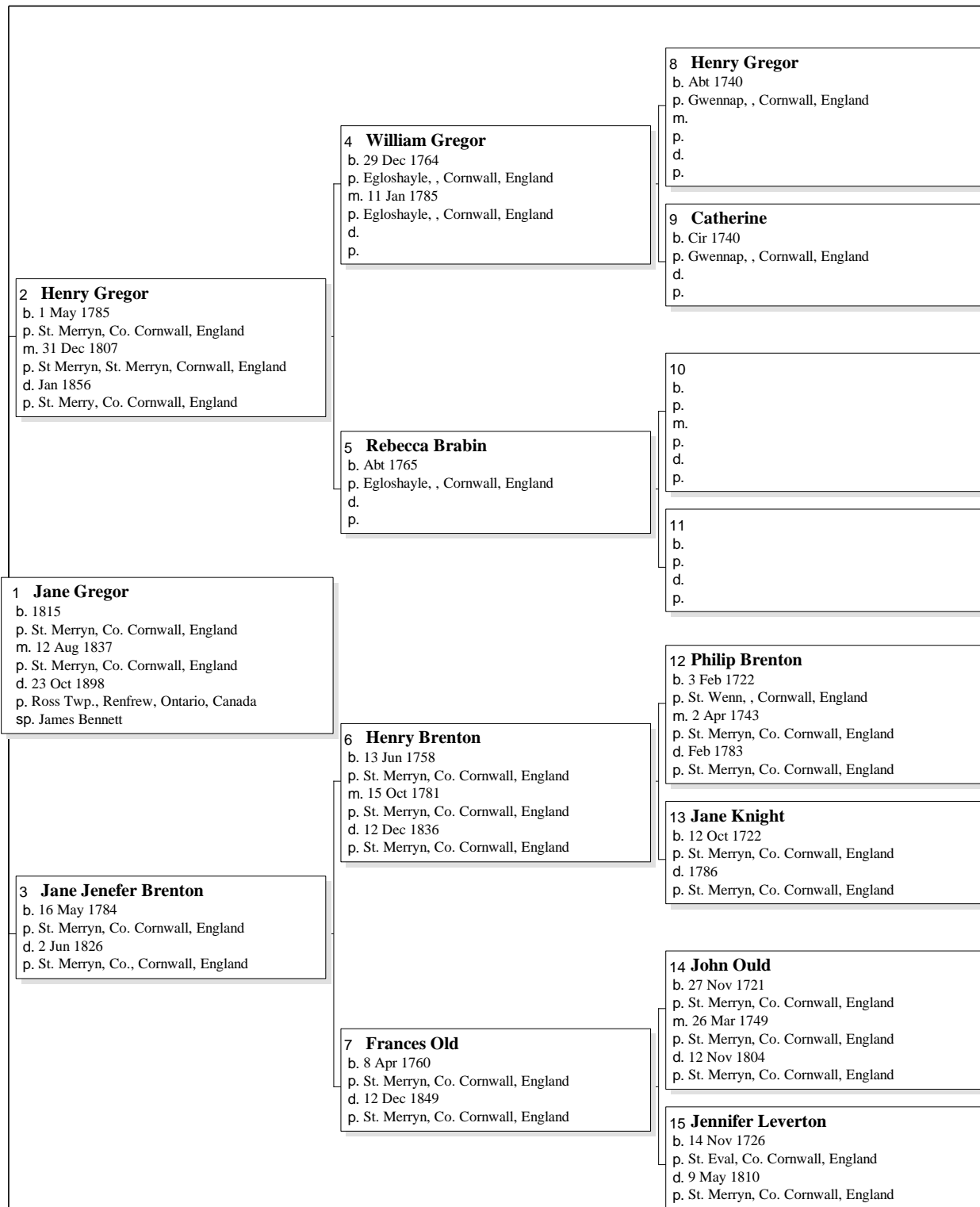
as to your uncles and ants uncle Henry Brenton is still
living all well ant Betty is dead, he married Eliza last Thursday
Joseph and family is all well 9 Children, 4 Married
Henry and family is all well 5 children. Mary and family
is in Ireland Betsy and family is in America both dead
left several Children we do not hear from them
Ant Fanny Moscomb and uncle Henry is still living with Elias
and Mary the ware Millers at Porneten Mill near Wadbridge
gave her best respects to you. Uncle John and ant Jane Brenton
is all well still keeping the Publick House to Churchtown
Uncle Richard and family is all well with the exception of Jane
Blythe the oldest daughter She is left a widow with 8 children he was
a Captin doing very well She has salireys from Q (?or2) or the Clubs
Fany Bray and Richard is very well as to the rest
of Ant Salleys Maidens the has turned out bad the have
7 Base Children between the two one has 3 and the other 4
and Henry Martyn is somewere in the West knocking about
you say you never heard from none of the Frenbaths family
and about the Spoons I do not know the directions the are
some ware about Coburg I think the young William lives in
Port Hope the young Stephen Ivey is home from America stoping
at Towan with his Brother ?Las thinking of going out this
spring I was thinking of sending out a letter by him to see
what became of them We hear that uncle 7illiam Frenbath
is dead a few months since, I have to say that
Luke Bennett and John Tremonth sends their kindest respects
as we all of us join in with Brotherly love and wish you every
Comfort that this World can afford you. So as soon as you
receive this I wish you to forward a answer ameidently
I Received the Newspaper as you wish to know all right
So We Remain your affectionately Brothers Wm & Richard Greggor
To James and Jane Bennett

We hear that John Hellyar in America is dead died about 2 months ago

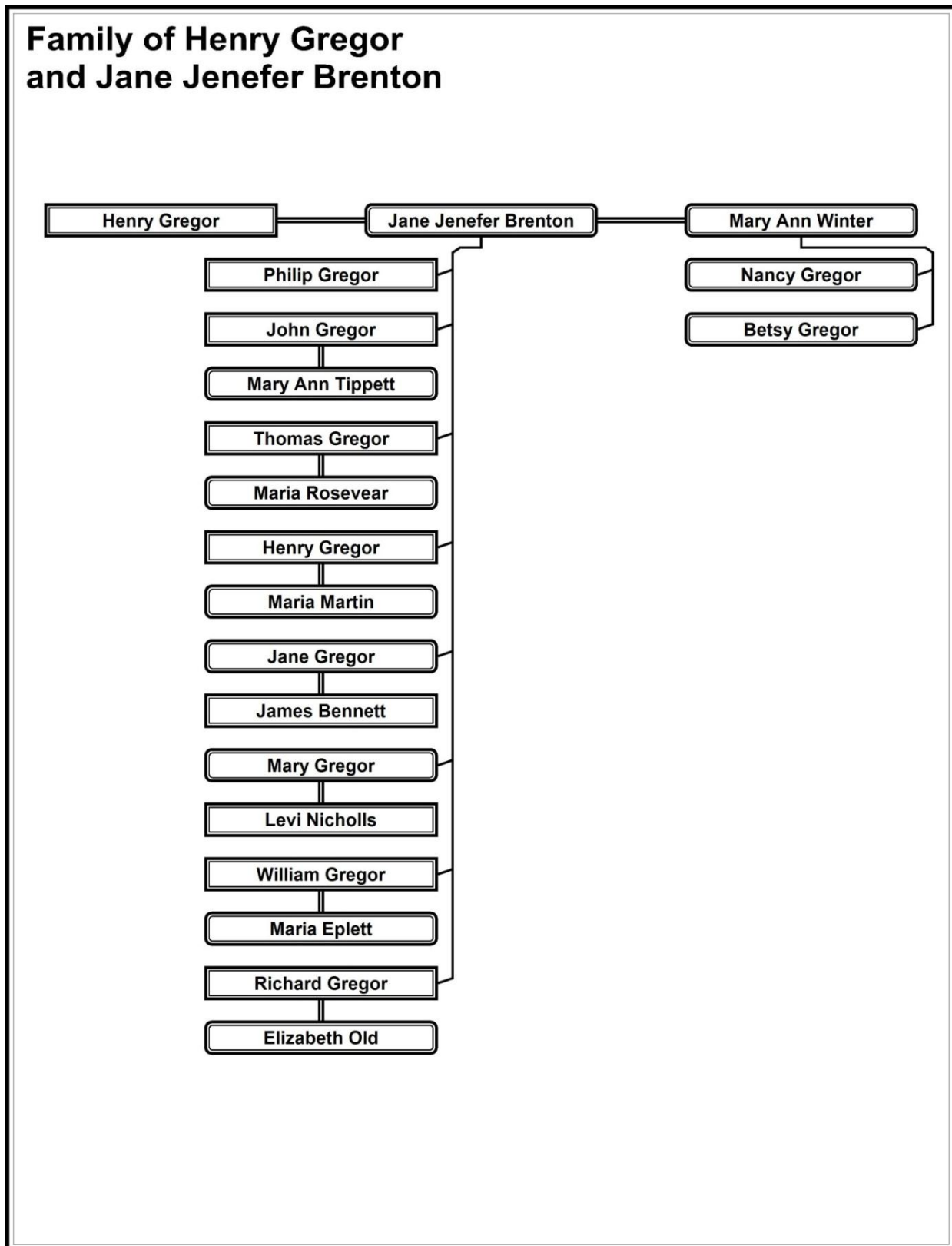
The price of wheat now with us is low about 15 (a symbol is here) Bushel Barley 9 (a symbol is here) Oats
7 at 24 gallons Beef 7 and 8 pre pound Pork 5 Mutton 7 Butter 1 (a symbol is here) Potatoes from 12 (a
symbol is here) to 6 (a symbol is here) cages 224 for a shilling So I Conclude
by wishing you good boy from Joseph Brenton

We are so fortunate to have a letter, so rich in family information, survive 147 years. It
provides us with a sense of the family connection across the Atlantic Ocean.

Pedigree Chart for Jane Gregor



Pic 6: Pedigree Chart of Jane Gregor



Pic 7: Descendant Chart for Henry Gregor and Jane Jenefer Brenton