

LUCY AND HENRY SARELL ONGLEY

Henry Sarell Ongley was the only son of Charlotte Sarell who had married William Ongley. After his father died, Charlotte travelled to Constantinople and married Jonathan Hardy, who like his maternal uncles, was a Levant Company merchant, and Henry grew up in the city along side the family of his uncle Richard.

Lucy Sarell was the second daughter of Richard Sarell and his second wife Euphrosyne Rhasi. She was born at Constantinople on the 25th May 1824.

The Sarell family were well respected amongst the British community in Constantinople, and Richard had for a period of time been the Chargé d'Affaires when the embassy had been withdrawn in 1827, and subsequently he had been appointed as a Vice-Consul in the city. The family at this time was living, not only in the Pera district of Constantinople, but also at Therapia, further along the European shore of the Bosphorus.

With these connections, on the 14th March 1837, Henry was appointed as H.M. Consul in Crete, then part of the Ottoman Empire, and went to live in Canea (Hania). His Commission was signed by William IV.

With Crete being part of the Ottoman Empire, and therefore the Consulate coming under the jurisdiction of the Embassy at Constantinople, there were sufficient reasons for Henry to travel to Constantinople and to see his family. But it was also periodically a turbulent time, with the struggle for Greek Independence never far from the surface, and in 1841 there was a major rebellion against Ottoman rule in Crete. Henry, however had good relations with the Governor of the island, Mustapha Naili Pasha, who had put down various rebellions with the assistance of the Egyptian forces of Mehmet Ali but from 1840 onwards Mustapha Naili Pasha had served the Sultan rather than the Khedive as Crete returned to direct Ottoman rule.

Lucy was by now growing up, and on the 25th August 1841, with her fathers consent because she was only seventeen and therefore a minor, she married her cousin Henry, at the Ambassador's Chapel in Constantinople.

In Crete, Henry and Lucy were to live at Canea or rather at Chalepa which was the country suburb of Canea, and about one and a half miles from the port on the west side of the Akrotiri headland. They would spend the next seventeen years there. In that time Lucy would give birth to nine children: the twins, Charlotte and Caroline, in 1842; Mary in 1843; Henry Hardy in 1845; Eugene in 1846; Alfred James in 1851; Charles Jonathan in 1852; Lucy in 1855 and Mina Augusta in 1857.

Of their children, all but the young Lucy survived their childhood in Crete. Lucy died in 1857, on the 5th June. She was only two years old.

Henry had established good relations with the leading Ottoman Pashas governing the island, and in particular, with the Governor, Mustapha Naili Pasha and other members of his family. In 1850, Sultan Abdul Mecjid visited Crete, and had kind things to say about Mustapha Naili Pasha, but the following year on 5th October, a steamer arrived from Constantinople with orders from the Sultan, recalling Mustapha Naili Pasha.

Henry reported this move Viscount Palmeston, with the assessment that it was viewed with regret by the Christian population of Crete. Mustapha Naili Pasha's son, Veli Pasha remained on the island as Lieutenant Governor until the new Governor Vamik Pasha arrived in November, and then he left to take up a new post in Bosnia. It might have been the tensions between Cairo and Constantinople that led to the removal of the Governor, given his early relationship with Mehmet Ali and the Khedive.

Veli Pasha returned to Crete as Governor, and resumed the good relations with Henry Sarell Ongley. He was a man of liberal outlook, with family connections amongst the Crete Christian Community. His mother was a Christian and daughter of a priest. He had for a brief spell been the Ottoman Ambassador in Paris during the Crimean War and had a liberal and modernizing outlook, which upset both the Greek Nationalists and the Muslim fundamentalists.

During the Crimean War the Ottoman Government, in return for the assistance given to it by Britain and France, had issued the Hatt-i Humayun, which gave Christians full civil rights on an equal footing with Muslims. Veli Pasha was an enthusiastic proponent of the decree but found that in attempting to implement it, it destroyed his career. Henry Sarell Ongley became a close confidant of the Governor over the next few years as he abolished slavery, and revoked the death penalty.

One of the first effects of the Haat-i Humayun, was that a sizeable number of Muslim converted to Christianity. This was in breach of Shari'a law and under Shari'a law it is punishable by death, and there was considerable anger and unrest amongst certain sections of the Muslim community that these conversions were being allowed.

There was also unrest amongst the Christian Community at increased taxes that were being raised to pay for the building of a road from Canea to Rethymo and the provision of street lighting in Canea and Candia. Into this situation, enter Monsieur Derché, the French Consul who along side the Greek Consul, were keen to undermine the Governor, whose closeness to Henry Sarell Ongley, they perceived to be a problem.

In the spring of 1858, things came to a head, with demonstrations and calls for Veli Pasha to be recalled. There were also accusations of corruption levied at Henry Sarell Ongley, and a petition sent to the Embassy at Constantinople. Subsequent investigations showed these allegations to be totally unfounded.

By June 1858, the Ottoman Government was aware that events in Crete were getting out of hand, and dispatched Admiral Ahmet Pasha to the island. Within a few days of his arrival, he informed Veli Pasha that he was dismissed from his post. Veli sought Henry Sarell Ongley's advice and in following it, ignored the instruction, but withdrew to his country house.

On 5 July, events came to a head, when a young Christian murdered a Muslim shop keeper. He was caught and taken to the Governors House where the crowd demanded his execution. Admiral Ahmet Pasha, consented. Veli Pasha raised his objection but was told by the Admiral that he was no longer the Governor.

Veli Pasha sought the view of Henry Sarell Ongley, who continued to assert that Veli

was the Governor, and in so doing implied that he had the support of Britain. But the situation was extremely critical, with the Admiral accusing Veli of being a revolutionary. The Embassy in Constantinople was also concerned about Henry Sarell Ongley's actions, and decided that it was imperative to remove him, and dispatched Henry Longworth to replace him and to investigate his conduct.

In the meantime, Veli Pasha had to seek refuge in the Ongley's house as he feared that the Admiral would send soldiers to seize him and forcibly remove him from Crete. However when his replacement arrived on 13th July, with the necessary papers, Veli Pasha and his family left Crete.

On 23rd July Henry Longworth arrived in Crete. On the same day, Henry Sarell Ongley, with Lucy who was pregnant and his family left for Constantinople, with the prospect of his career in ruins. He did not know that the British Ambassador Sir Henry Bulwer Litton had written on 10th July that "...it would be a bad thing to give Mr Ongley another consulate."

Longworth's investigation, far from indicting Henry Sarell Ongley, disclosed that Consular and business accounts were all in good order and to the benefit of the British Government, and that the overwhelming majority of merchants had only good things to say about him. He concluded by saying:

"Mr Ongley, though an indifferent sort of man, had some bitter enemies here and that will explain the number of unfounded calumnies of which he has been the object."

As Henry's name was cleared he was given charge of the Consulate at Jassy in Rumania, from September 5th but it is unlikely that he went there as he held this post only till December 6th of the at year. He was also appointed as the Consul for the Morea (the Peloponnese) from the 28th September 1858 and the family moved to Patras, where on the 19th November, Percy was born.

Henry and Lucy would have another three children after Percy, Albert Hugh, in 1861; Frederick in 1862 and their youngest Evelyn Helen Victoria in 1865.

In 1861, their oldest son joined Henry, working in the Consulate as a clerk, and would continue to do so for the next four and half years.

Although the Ongley family was not in Constantinople, they continued to keep in touch with Lucy's sisters in the city. For example, Caroline is recorded as being present at her Aunt Nizza's wedding to James Crawford in March of 1862, and there is evidence of close links between the families over the years, from a number of different sources.

In Patras, meanwhile, a tragedy had struck the family on the 1st October 1862, in that Alfred the third son had died; he was eleven years old. It fell to his father, as it did when Lucy had died in Crete, to record the death in the Consular records.

The family was growing up and Henry Hardy Ongley, the oldest son moved to Resht in Persia to be the Acting Consul there, in 1866. His uncle, Charles Alison who had married Lucy's late sister, Eliza in 1863, was the Minister in Teheran, and this move

was closely related to the family connection.

In 1870, Charlotte married Francis Stafford O'Brien, at Patras, the civil part of the ceremony taking place in Henry's office on the 12th December, and was conducted by him, although the religious ceremony had taken place on board the H.M.S. Enterprise, on the 30th November. Francis Stafford O'Brien was at this time a Lieutenant in the Royal Navy and might well have had an influence on the education of Frederick the youngest son who would spend a year as a Naval Cadet.

Henry retired with a pension on 1st October 1874. But the activities of his eldest son, who had resigned from his post in Teheran in 1872, were to cause considerable problems for the family. Charles had taken up a commission in the First West India Regiment in 1875, and Frederick was a Naval Cadet, when a financial crisis hit Henry Sarell Ongley to the extent that he had to commute his pension into a lump sum in July 1875. Charles resigned his commission in embarrassment at his father's insolvency, and to a large extent broke off relations with his family. Frederick's naval career was also ended at this time. The cause of the financial crisis was down to Henry Hardy Ongley, who apparently created the crisis either by persuading his father to commute his pension or placing him in a position of having to do that to resolve the crisis.

After Henry's retirement, the family appears to have moved to Cyprus. Frederick would become a clerk in the Cyprus High Court Justice and Commissioners Office in 1879. His sister Evelyn was living at Limasol when she married John Culling in 1884, and it is fair to assume that this was the family home. Certainly Caroline, who never married, continued to live in Limasol till her death in 1932.

Henry died in 1892, on 25th December probably in Limasol and Lucy died in 1904. Whatever the cause of the problem in 1875, the tear in the family was never repaired in their lifetime.