

## William James and Margaret Ann Williams Pye

*A life sketch compiled by their great great granddaughter, Holly Quinn Knighton, from information and notes left by their granddaughter, M. Jean Smith Vandiver and personal accounts from their granddaughter, Avis Smith Krammer.*

William James Pye was born in Garston, Liverpool, Lancashire, England on 20 October 1869 to William (his namesake) and Mary Ellen Boardman Pye. "Billy" left school at 12 years of age whereupon he was employed by a brick maker. His job was to wheel the clay from the clay yard to the brick maker. As young man, he was an employee of the Garston sewer department. He helped lay the drains and pipes at Speke Road Airport. In 1902 when Garston was incorporated into the city of Liverpool, he became a District Foreman. In the 1911 census, he is listed as a sewer foreman for the Liverpool City Council. Later, he was appointed an Inspector of the southern half of Liverpool by the Council. He retired at the age of 65 around 1934. It is known that he was a member of the Orange Order, a Protestant fraternal organization, as he was a drummer in the Orange Lodge Band. Parades are a big part of the Order's activities. Most Orange lodges hold a yearly parade from their Orange hall to a local church. William was certainly involved in such parades. William wore a small gold stud earring in each earlobe. He suffered from gout and it was believed that wearing gold help combat flare-ups.



William & Margaret Pye  
About 1888

Margaret Ann Williams was also born in Garston, Liverpool, Lancashire, England on 18 March 1871 to Thomas and Elizabeth Ann Barlow Williams. Thomas was a puddler at the forge and his father was a brick maker. Elizabeth Ann's father was a tailor. Margaret married William James Pye on 21 May 1888. They were very young when they married – William 18 and Margaret 17. To this union were born ten children but only six were raised to adulthood. They also adopted a grandson Frederick Arthur Pye born to their unwed daughter Judith Ellen and raised him as their own.

According to census records, the Pye family lived in various houses over the years but always in Garston. In 1901, it is recorded that they lived at 4 Arthur Street and also had an 18 year old girl boarding with them – Minnie Pegram. One can only wonder if there is a connection to their daughter F. Georgina marrying into the Pegram family years later. In 1911, the William Pye family was living at 4 Window Lane – a 6 room house. By 1937 when their daughter Judith Ellen Pye Smith came back to visit with her family from America, William and Margaret Pye



William & Margaret Pye  
1948

and sons, Arthur and Fred, still living at home, were residing at 18 Lyon Street. The Pye's occupied this residence the rest of their lives.

In 1948, William and Margaret celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary - their diamond wedding. From pictures of the celebration, all their living children, except for Judith Ellen who had moved to America many years previously, were in attendance along with spouses and their children. Not quite two years after this celebration, William died on 23 February 1950 at 80 years old. Margaret died just over a year later on 1 December 1951 also at 80 years old. They are both buried sharing a headstone with their son Eric in the Allerton Cemetery in Liverpool.

*The following is a short sketch of each of their children.*

Their first son, William Thomas, died of scarlet fever at only 1½ years old. He is buried in St. Michael's Cemetery, Garston, England. Unfortunately, their second child, Janet Elizabeth, also died just two weeks after William Thomas at only a month old. One can only imagine their devastation to lose their only children so close together and so young.

Their third child, John James, known his entire life to all as "Jack", was born 27 April 1891. He was injured when 14 or 15 years old while working as an apprentice. A plank fell on his leg and knocked his knee cap off. He was in the hospital for 11 months and had 11 surgeries. Because no visitors called from the Church of England, his mother changed their membership to the Methodist Church. Jack married Ethel Mary Farrow and to this union were born two children, James Noel (known as Jim, died at age 47) and Hilda Douglas (died at age 13). Jack died 16 October 1962 at the age of 71.

Mary Elizabeth, their fourth child, was born 4 February 1893. She married Frederick (Fred) Green and had two children Ivy (died of a heart attack at age 42) and Fred (Freddie). She and her husband owned and operated a fish and chip shop. In a picture of the shop, one can see a reflection of a tall tower of sorts in the window. M. Jean Smith Vandiver was told that during World War II, a net was placed over this structure to protect it from bombs dropped. The net did indeed catch a bomb and it didn't detonate! A birthday party was planned for Mary for her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in February 1993. Unfortunately, about 3 weeks before that, she suffered a hip fracture. Surgery was performed but she died 3 days later on 10 January 1993.

Thomas, the fifth child born 11 June 1895 died at just 6 weeks old on 21 July 1895.

Judith Ellen, known as “Nell” her entire life, was born on 26 June 1896. She met and married US soldier Stanley George Smith during World War I as he was stationed in England. She moved to the United States leaving her 3-year-old son Fred to be raised by her parents. She didn’t return to England to visit family but only twice again in her lifetime – once in 1937 with Stanley and her two daughters, M. Jean and Avis and then again in 1949. Traveling this time with a dear friend, Florence Lee. Nell died of cervical cancer on 17 September 1964 at the age of 68.

Frances Georgina was born 27 September 1898. She was known by her middle name Georgina throughout her life. She married George Pegram and they had 5 children - Marjorie, Bill, Norman, Stanley, and Edna. Two of the boys, Stanley and Bill, as adults came to the United States to visit their cousins M. Jean Smith Vandiver and Avis Smith Kramer. George was a Master Mariner and worked on the banana boats. The Pegram family lived at 20 Durham Street, Garston, literally one-minute walking distance, around the corner from William and Margaret Pye. Georgina died 2 November 1954 at the age of 56.

William Edward, their eighth child, was born 8 July 1904. He was known as “Bill” but on a few photos labeled by his mother, she refers to him as “Willie”. He married Catherine Agnes (went by Agnes) Mayers but they had no children. He died 20 May 1967 at the age of 62.

Arthur Frederick was born 25 June 1906. He always lived in his parents’ home at 18 Lyon Street, Garston, even after their passings. He was married to Isabella Jones later in life in 1955 and unfortunately died just five years later on 8 October 1960 at the age of 54.

Lastly, Eric George their last child, born 6 February 1910 died just shortly after his 16th birthday on 18 February 1926. His sister Judith Ellen Pye Smith who was living in the United States at the time of his death told her daughter Avis that one night Eric appeared to her at the foot of her bed. She later received word by mail of his passing and when comparing dates, concluded that he had appeared to her the night before he died. She believed he had come to say “good-bye”.

Frederick “Fred” Pye, born 14 March 1916 to Judith Ellen Pye, was adopted by his grandparents William and Margaret Pye and raised as their own when Judith moved to the US with her new husband in 1919.