

## GRAVE No: F120 [Linked to F118 & F119]

### MICHAEL, John & Margaret



#### *Inscription*

In Loving Memory of  
JOHN MICHAEL  
of this parish  
Died Sept 23<sup>rd</sup> 1893  
aged 73 years.

*'Blessed are the dead which die in  
the Lord.'*

Also of MARGARET daughter of  
HARRY & ALICE MICHAEL  
died Dec 29<sup>th</sup> 1893  
aged 18 months.

*'Thy will be done.'*

### The Life of John Michael and Family

On 6 December 1847, at Llanelly Parish Church, John Michael — a bachelor and \*puddler from Brynmawr — married Amelia Richards, a minor and the daughter of William Richards, a hammerman. Amelia is possibly also recorded in some records as Emma. At the time, being described as a *minor* meant she was under the age of 21 and required her father's consent to marry, in accordance with the marriage laws of the period. While the legal minimum age for marriage was 12 for girls and 14 for boys, parental consent was compulsory for anyone under 21. John's father, also named John Michael, was a farmer. The witnesses to the marriage were William Richards, who signed with his mark, and Thomas Michael.

\*A *puddler* was a skilled ironworker responsible for converting pig iron into wrought iron — a physically demanding and hazardous job central to the iron industry of the 19th century.

By 1851, Amelia (listed as Emely) was living at 207 Saddlers Row, Ebbw Vale, with her young children Mary Ann (age 3) and William (age 1). Her husband John was not listed in the household, but three iron puddler lodgers were also present, possibly colleagues or boarders.

The 1861 census finds the family at 14 Forge Row, Ebbw Vale. John Michael, now 41 and born in Radnorshire, had returned to the home, still working as a puddler. His wife is recorded as Am or Ann (likely Amelia), aged 30, born in Varteg, Monmouthshire. Their household had grown to include Mary Ann (13), William (12, already assisting in iron puddling), John (10), Thomas (4), and Sarah (2).

By 1871, the family had moved to Bethcar Terrace, Ebbw Vale. John, now working as a gardener, was 52; Amelia (listed as Emily) was 40. Their children included Mary, Thomas, Sarah, Henry (Harry), and baby Elizabeth.

In 1881, they were living at The Green in Crickhowell. John, then 62, was recorded once again as an iron worker, while his wife Emma (Amelia) was listed as a milliner. Still at home were daughters Sarah, a dressmaker, and young Emma, aged 7. Harry (Henry), now 17, was living nearby with his sister Mary Ann, her husband Daniel Lewis, and their grandfather William Richards — connecting back to the 1847 marriage record.

By 1891, the couple had settled on Main Road in Maesygartha. John, now recorded as 78 and retired from farming, lived with Emma (62), their son Harry — listed as a soldier in the United States Army — and daughter Emma, a 17-year-old dressmaker.

John Michael died in 1893 in Cheltenham, aged 73, and was buried at St Elli's, Llanelly, on 28 September. Tragedy struck the family again in 1895 with the death of Margaret Michael, daughter of Harry and his wife Alice, aged just 18 months.

### **Harry Michael**

Born on 10 June 1864, Harry Michael of Monmouthshire enlisted in the United States Army multiple times. His records show service in the 2nd Cavalry (1886), 3rd Cavalry (1891), and 5th Infantry (1896).

In 1898, Harry served in the **Spanish–American War**, a brief but significant conflict between the United States and Spain, largely fought over Cuba's struggle for independence. It marked the emergence of the US as a global power, with major campaigns in the Caribbean and the Pacific.

As part of this conflict, the 5th Army Corps landed at Daiquiri, Cuba, on 22 June 1898 and began the siege of Santiago on 3 July. The fighting ended just ten days later, on 13 July.

Harry Michael died in Santiago de Cuba on 30 October 1898 from cerebral softening. Initially buried there, his body was later reinterred at Arlington National Cemetery in April 1899 — a poignant tribute to a Welshman who served and died far from home.