

GRAVE No: F120 [Linked to F118 & F119]

MICHAEL, John & Margaret



Inscription

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

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

Also of MARGARET daughter of
HARRY & ALICE MICHAEL
died Dec 29th 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.

SOURCES

1847 MARRIAGE RECORD Llanelly Parish Church.

6th December. John Michael of full age, a bachelor and puddler of Brynmawr, father John Michael a farmer marries Amelia [Emma? **F119**] Richards, a minor of Brynmawr, father William Richards [**F118**] a hammer man. Witnesses William Richards [with his mark] and Thomas Michael.

1851 Wales Census living at 207 Saddlers Row, Ebbw Vale.

Emely [Amelia?] Michael aged 21 years, wife with daughter Mary Ann [**F118**] aged 3 and William [**F119**] aged 1 years. Also present 3 lodgers, all puddlers. Husband John Michael is not present.

1861 Wales Census living at 14 Forge Row, Ebbw Vale.

John Michael aged 41, a puddler born in **Radnorshire** with wife Am or Ann [Amelia?] aged 30 born in **Varteg Monmouthshire** with children Mary A [**F118**] aged 13, William [**F119**] aged 12 assisting an iron puddler, John aged 10 a scholar, Thomas 4 and Sarah aged 2.

1871 Wales Census living at Bethcar Terrace, Ebbw Vale.

John Michael aged 52 now a gardener with wife Emily [Amelia?] aged 40 with children Mary aged 24, Thomas aged 13, Sarah aged 10, Henry [Harry] aged 6 and Elizabeth aged 1 year.

1881 Wales Census living at The Green, Crickhowell.

John Michael aged 62 years an iron worker with wife Emma [Amelia?] aged 53 a milliner with Sarah aged 23 a dress maker and Emma aged 7 years.

Henry [Harry] aged 17 is living with his sister Mary Ann and her husband Daniel Lewis [F 118] and his grandfather William Richards [see marriage].

1891 Wales Census living at Main Road, Maesygartha.

John Michael aged 78 years [more likely his age] a retired farmer of Radnor with wife Emma [Amelia] aged 62 of Varteg with son HARRY, single aged 27 year a UNITED STATES SOLDIER, and Emma aged 17, a dress maker.

1893 DEATH RECORD St Elli [Llanelly Church] Parish records.

23rd September John Michael of Cheltenham dies aged 73 years and is buried on the 28th.

1895 DEATH RECORD Bedwellty Oct Nov Dec Vol 11a Page 57

Margaret Michael daughter of Harry and Alice Michael dies aged 18 months.

Additional information:

There are three entries in the Register of Enlistments for the United States Army for a Harry Michael of **Monmouthshire** England. He enlisted in the 2nd Calvary in 1886, the 3rd Cavalry in 1891 and the 5th Infantry in 1896. His date of birth is listed as 10th June 1864.

In the Spanish American war of 1898 the 5th Army Corps was dispatched to Cuba on the 7th of June and landed at Daiquiri on the 22nd. On July 3rd 1898 the 5th Army under the command of William 'Pecos Bill' Shafter began the siege of Santiago and was over by July 13th. The entry in 'Find my Grave' describes Harry Michael of England dying from cerebral softening on the 30th October 1898 at Santiago de Cuba. He was buried at Santiago then his body was re interred at Arlington National cemetery in April 1899.