

## People of the S&DR: Percival Tully

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### The Early Years

Percival Tully came from a country background and like thousands, and ultimately millions, of others in 19th-century Britain was attracted by the opportunities in the rapidly-developing urban-industrial areas. Stockton and Darlington were two of those, their populations each doubling between 1821 and 1841.<sup>1</sup>

His paternal grandfather owned farmland at Whickham, near Gateshead,<sup>2</sup> and by the time of Percival's birth in 1794 his father, Bartholomew, was himself farming, in the village of Kibblesworth on the lower west slope of the Team valley, near Birtley. In his case on land rented from the executors of Sir Henry George Liddell of nearby Ravensworth Castle.<sup>3</sup>

Percival was the fourth and youngest child of Bartholomew and his wife Ann (nee Collingwood), a native of Northumberland. Bartholomew was clearly a respected figure in the area as a member of the local farmers' association.<sup>4</sup> In 1803, during the Napoleonic wars when there was a real threat of a French invasion along the east coast of England, he - 'Bartholomew Tully, Gent.' - was appointed by the War Office to be a Lieutenant in the voluntary Loyal Usworth Legion.<sup>5</sup> Percival's elder brother - John Collingwood Tully - was later appointed Ensign.<sup>6</sup>

The family lived in Kibblesworth until at least 18077 so Percival will have spent the first 13 or more years of his childhood there. Although rural in itself, a couple of miles up the hill behind the village, and easily reached by an adventurous youngster, was a network of wooden waggonways that served numerous small collieries around Tanfield and South Moors. Powered by gravity and horses, these precursors of the 'iron road' railways had carried coals since the 17th century the eight or nine miles north down to the Tyne. From 1725, the upper parts of the lines had been channelled - some across the purpose-built Causey Arch - into the carefully-engineered Tanfield Waggonway, near Marley Hill. This led in a more direct, efficient and profitable way to the river at Dunston Staiths. Young Percival Tully would certainly have seen this in operation. Part of the Waggonway line remains in active use today as the lovingly-curated Tanfield Railway, albeit now with steam engines running on iron rails.

By the mid-1810s John Collingwood Tully was the owner of a 'paint, colour, and mustard' manufacturing company in south Tyneside<sup>8</sup> and by 1818 Percival had also gone into business, running a corn mill. Urpeth (or Kibblesworth) Mill was one of a number that utilised the force of the young river Team. It would have employed several men but we know of Tully's presence and position there because of the sudden death of one of them, on the Gateshead turnpike, who was described in newspaper reports as a servant of his.

The man, a George Milburn, was a waggoner, found "warm, but quite dead, his face bloody,

and his neck dislocated" by no less a traveller than "the Earl of Morton, his lady, and suite, in two carriages" who were "proceeding for Durham, on the way to attend her Majesty's funeral".<sup>9</sup> 'Her Majesty' was Queen Charlotte, the wife of 'mad king' George III. She had died on 17 November and was buried at Windsor Castle on 2 December. Milburn's body was found on 23 November. Durham would have been a staging point for the Earl, the Queen's Chamberlain, on the long journey from his family seat near Edinburgh. A Coroner's jury recorded a verdict on Milburn of 'Died by the visitation of God'.

### And So to the Railway

The next public mention of Percival Tully was his most famous, in late 1825, when he was working as a clerk for the Stockton and Darlington Railway Company at their Cottage Row, Stockton terminus. In the Company's much-reproduced poster/handbill for the Experiment passenger coach, dating probably from November of that year (and now invariably dubbed 'the world's first railway timetable'), it was announced that:

"Mr. TULLY at Stockton, will for the present receive any Parcels and Book Passengers".<sup>10</sup>

When the operator Richard Pickersgill took over the Stockton coach bookings in April 1826 Percival was removed by the S&DR to "the Weigh house now ready" next to their coal depot at St John's Crossing on Bridge Road.

The Stockton weigh house, which still stands (often referred to erroneously as a booking or ticket office), was one of three built by the Company, the others being at Darlington and Thickley Spout, near today's Shildon Locomotion museum.<sup>11</sup> Loosely modelled on the toll houses of the turnpike roads of that time, each combined an office supervising a weighing machine (weigh bridge), and a dwelling for the toll collector. That at Darlington also had a 'Water Cistern', or reservoir, constructed alongside it.<sup>12</sup>

Toll income was the lifeblood of the S&DR so the role of the collectors was vital. Tolls were based on the weight and type of material (coal, limestone, etc) being transported, the distance carried and, for coal, whether it was for 'export' ('coastwise', mainly to London) or for 'land-sale' (from the railway's depots). The weighing machines themselves were not ready for use until July 1826<sup>13</sup> but the weigh offices seem to have been brought into operation as soon as they were finished - collectors presumably estimating weights based on the capacity of the waggons.

The first entry in the records ledger for the Darlington weigh house was on Saturday 15 April 1826.<sup>14</sup> It was for 171/4 tons of coals going from Old Etherley colliery to Stockton, on the account of the 'OE Depot'. Other coals were carried that day from Witton Park and New Etherley collieries to Darlington, while lime was taken from Middridge to Yarm and Stockton.<sup>15</sup>

These entries show that, unlike the weigh houses at Stockton and Yarm which could only monitor loads going to those places, the Darlington weigh house supervised all wagon movements down the line from it. To do so it was built not on the Darlington branch but on

the main line 'upstream' - west - of the Darlington branch junction.<sup>16</sup> It was clearly of great importance.

The man who recorded the Darlington movements on 15 April must have been an interim collector until the weighing machine could be installed since on 14 July 1826 the Company appointed a George Jackson “to the Weigh house at Darlington for One Month at 12/- [shillings] Week”. Even then the building of the weigh house complex was not fully finished as the Company agreed he was to be paid an additional “2/- Week for Lodgings until the Dwelling houses [sic] be ready ... in case he keeps it longer”.<sup>17</sup>

Jackson actually didn't keep the weigh house job much longer - he took a better-paid post (at 16/- a week) at the Darlington depot that November.<sup>18</sup> His replacement didn't stay much more than four months either before Tully took over. Perhaps it was the location: the weigh house was remote from Darlington proper - officially in Cockerton township - so the job may not have been greatly attractive, particularly to family men and at the modest wage offered.

Percival Tully, free of family ties and with no apparent attachment to Stockton, was eventually appointed to the Darlington weigh house from March 1827 at a weekly wage of 21/-, much greater than Jackson's. To get their money's worth the Company gave him an additional duty:

“besides attending to the weighing machine ... he had also to examine the waggons as they passed the weigh house in order to see that the axles were properly greased by the enginemen and report any cases of neglect”.<sup>19</sup>

### A Tavern Tale

The Darlington weigh house was nearly a mile away from the main facilities of Darlington and in the 1820s had very few neighbours anywhere near it. Places of social interaction, or to eat and drink after a toll collector's work was done for the day, were scarce. The S&DR had built an inn on Northgate, opposite the depot gates, that was ready for occupation by May 1827 but it was refused a licence by Darlington magistrates in September of that year and the next two.

There was, however, one inn already existing, just south of Northgate Bridge where it crossed Cocker Beck, and it offered Percival a rare opportunity for out-of-work company. Originally the Bridge Inn, it had been opportunistically renamed the Railway Bridge Inn by 1827 by its owner-landlord William Gray.<sup>20</sup> William and his wife had two unmarried daughters, Alice and Jane, and four and a half years after being appointed to the weigh house Percival married Jane at St Cuthbert's church in Darlington on the last day of 1831.<sup>21</sup> She was 26 and he 37.

There was much irony in this partnership for such a loyal servant of the Stockton and Darlington Railway Company as Percival, because just two years earlier Jane and her sister had represented their ageing father in contesting an appeal by the Company to licence its own recently-built inn, 60 metres to the north. The Grays had argued at the Durham Michaelmas Sessions hearing that their Railway Bridge Inn “was sufficient to afford all the

accommodation ... required” by users of the depot.<sup>22</sup>

In the event it was not Mr Gray's objection that was the nub of the appeal, although the Company did respond that:

“[his] house was not sufficiently near to the depot, he did not possess those facilities of accommodation, nor present those inducements in point of comfort and convenience in other respects, that were necessary for men of business and respectability”.

Rather, it was the inappropriate behaviour of the Darlington magistrates that turned the case. Two of the three justices for the town had financial interests in the Darlington to Stockton turnpike road which they feared would be undermined by the new railway, and they had persistently tried to frustrate the progress of the Company.<sup>23</sup> The Sessions bench voted by “a decided majority” in favour of the S&DR's appeal and the new inn - promptly named the Railway Tavern - opened soon afterwards.<sup>24</sup>

### Tolls and More

The Darlington weigh house became the first family home of the Tullys - the baptismal record for their first-born, William Collingwood Tully in October 1832, citing the family abode as 'Cockerton' and the father's occupation as 'Clerk of the Railway weigh house'.

But that accommodation must have proved inadequate for a growing family - or perhaps Percival's wages and position in the Company encouraged him to progress beyond 'living over the shop' - for in April 1833 he bought a “lately erected and built” mid-terraced house in the newly-developed Alliance Street, across the township boundary in Darlington but just 150 metres from the weigh house.<sup>25</sup> Alliance Street was also known as Hope Town and the Tullys were among its first residents.<sup>26</sup>

In August 1833, at the commencement of the Company's use of locomotive engines to haul merchandise and passenger coaches, “Percival Tully or his assistants” were given an additional duty by the management committee of seeing that “the Trains started from Darlington”.<sup>27</sup>

The S&DR were clearly happy with Percival's work and his adaptability as for the year 1834-35 he was awarded a contract at the apparently-generous sum of £130 (equivalent to 50/- a week) for “weighing coals and pumping water”.<sup>28</sup> (The Company's traffic superintendent, John Graham, was paid only slightly more, £150, in 1835.) The reservoir, or 'water cistern', for replenishing locomotives at Darlington was alongside the weigh house; it can be seen on a Company-commissioned map of 1839.<sup>29</sup>

The S&DR were unusual in the railway industry at this time in awarding short-term contracts to staff. The economic historian Maurice W Kirby believes the reason could stem from the Company's early origins:

“... in the operational management of the undertaking the Stockton and Darlington Company

remained distinctive. Whilst the trunk line railway companies began to recruit professional salaried managers from the later 1830s, the [S&DR] management committee remained committed to the practice of subcontracting in major aspects of the company's business. ... The practice [had] its roots in the domestic system of manufactures in the eighteenth century".<sup>30</sup>

Whether a 'manager' or not, Tully continued as a contractor: the contract awarded to him for 1836-37 was for weighing coals, with no extra duties stated, but at £100 a year was still almost double the rate he had started on. It was renewed for another 12 months, to 31 January 1838.<sup>31</sup> And then apparently again, as at the baptism of his and Jane's fourth child in October 1838 his occupation was still being given as 'toll collector'.<sup>32</sup>

### The Will of William Gray

The Tullys had been joined at Hope Town (although probably not in the same house) sometime around 1834-36 by Jane's father, William Gray, who - at about 90 years old - had finally handed over the running of the Railway Bridge Inn to a tenant. His wife had died in late 1833. William ('gentleman, of Hope Town') drew up a will in March 1837 that named Percival ('of Hope Town aforesaid Clerk to the Stockton and Darlington Railway Company') as one of his two executors. The will shows him to have been a man of property (and not just in Northgate), which he apportioned between his daughters. When he died at the end of 1838 and probate had been granted (August 1839), he had willed the inn and its adjacent properties in trust to Jane:

"... And as to for and concerning all that my said dwellinghouse situate at Northgate Bridge and known by the Sign of the Railway Bridge together with the garden stable outbuildings and appurtenances thereto belonging And also all those my said several dwellinghouses yard stables and premises with the appurtenances adjoining the said last mentioned premises on the North in trust for my said daughter Jane Tully her heirs executors and administrators and assigns forever".<sup>33</sup>

One of the first things the Tullys seem to have done after William's death was to move into his house, a bigger one at the north end of Alliance Street/Hope Town, where they appear to have been at the time of the 1841 Census.<sup>34</sup>

Whether coincidental or not, William's death was followed by changes in Percival's life, most notably his parting from the S&DR, at least from full-time employment. At the baptism of his son Percival John in August 1840 Tully's stated occupation had nothing to do with the railway: he described himself as a 'brewer'.<sup>35</sup> And this was no error - in the Census ten months later he was recorded as a 'brewer & agent'. So even if 'agent' was for the railway, it was presumably in no more than a part-time - and possibly self-employed - capacity. The fact that the Tullys were able to employ a servant in 1841 suggests that, whatever the circumstances of the change in occupation, the family was not poor. Presumably the benefit of William's will.

Percival's career as a brewer (perhaps at the nearby New Inn, which had a brewhouse<sup>36</sup>) was

not a long one, as at the baptism of his daughter Alice on 1 January 1843 he was once again - and for the last time in documentary evidence - associated with the railway, describing himself as a 'railway agent'.

The family were still living at Hope Town at that point but the tenant at the Railway Bridge Inn left soon after and the Tullys were installed at the pub by mid-1844.<sup>37</sup> Two more sons were born, in 1846 and 1847, while Percival was the innkeeper there.

But then another change. The Tullys left Northgate and Darlington altogether, moving ten miles to a place - St Andrew Auckland ('South Church') - with which they had no obvious connection. The move could not have been to do with any dislike by Percival of innkeeping because he took over the Crown and Anchor pub. The whole family - now nine strong - was enumerated there in the Census of 1851.<sup>38</sup>

Perhaps significantly, no servant was recorded with the Tullys at the Crown and Anchor, despite so many children for Jane to have to look after: could that suggest new-found hardship? A firmer indicator of financial stress was a notice in the London Gazette in December 1851 concerning a legal dispute "in a cause Peascod against Tully, the creditors of William Gray, late of Hope Town, in the county of Durham, Gentleman, deceased" which was to be settled by the Court of Chancery in London.<sup>39</sup> A Court of Chancery was one that had jurisdiction over all matters of equity, including trusts and land law.

This case is something of a mystery as there do not appear to be any newspaper reports of the court's findings. But it does not sound encouraging for the Tullys' fortunes. Worse was soon to follow for Percival with the death of his wife, Jane, at South Church at the age of just 47 in April 1853.<sup>40</sup> Percival was now left alone at the age of 58 with seven children, aged from 20 to six.

### Another Land, Another Opportunity

Where could Percival turn? To a new life in a new country for his remaining family was his answer.<sup>41</sup> Australia was the main destination for English emigrants at the time but Tully opted for the United States of America. A steady stream of ships crossed the Atlantic from Liverpool to the USA but most of their passengers were Irish, with many others from Germany but few from England itself. After the East Coast, New Orleans was one the principal ports sailed for - the gateway to the vast, and fast-developing, mid-West.

A testimony from Percival's youngest child, Thomas HG Tully on 27 October 1868, when he was old enough to apply for naturalisation as a US citizen, summarised the family's journey:

"I do solemnly swear that I am of the age of 21 years; that I am a native born citizen of the Queen of Great Britain that I emigrated from Liverpool to the United States of America in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty-four and landed at New Orleans in the state of Louisiana on or about the Month of January in the year last aforesaid... and that I have from that time up to the present day been a resident within the limits of the United States; and that

I am now and have been for the last Eight a resident of the County of Madison in the State of Illinois".42

Although Thomas was in Edwardsville, Illinois in 1868, that is just 25 miles from the city of St Louis, Missouri, on the opposite side of the Mississippi river. And it was in Missouri, and the St Louis area in particular, 700 miles upriver from New Orleans, that the migrating family, including six- or seven-year old Thomas, appear to have headed on arrival. Presumably on board a paddle-steamer. Missouri was a boom state: "with increasing migration, from the 1830s to the 1860s Missouri's population almost doubled with every decade".43

In 1857, a Percival Tully of St Louis County commenced the process to buy - presumably at a knock-down settlers' price - 320 acres of land in Iron County, Missouri, one of many such plots put up for sale by the US government.44 Iron County, not surprisingly, had an abundance of iron ore within its borders. (To resume a railway theme, the St. Louis and Iron Mountain Railroad was completed in 1857.)

Whether this is 'our' Percival we can't say for certain but a Percival Tully who does match his description - male, white, aged 64, birthplace 'unknown' - died in St Louis of an 'abscess in abdomen' in the week ending 31 May 1858. He was buried at the Wesleyan cemetery.45

As for the Tully children:

- a 'Tully, Wm. C.; native country, England' applied for naturalisation in St Louis in 1860;46
- Thomas was recorded back in St Louis, working as a carpenter, regularly from 1870. He called his son (Percival Tully's grandson) born in 1884, Percival;
- a Bartholomew Tully, 'widower, born England 1845, parents born England', was recorded in the 1900 US Census in Jefferson County, Missouri.47

#### A Percival Postscript

A series of newspaper reports back in England of Percival senior's son, Percival John Tully, are especially conclusive of the family's emigration. In an echo of 1851/52, a legal case before the Court of Chancery was involved, and also a seemingly minor issue before the Darlington Borough magistrates. Both tales were in the news in 1882.

In the Chancery case 'Mr Percival John Tully, of St Lewis, US' and a Darlington stockbroker, Joseph Airey, were the plaintiffs, and a John Graham and Nicholas Whorlton, the defendants.48 It involved the (by then re-re-named) Bridge Inn in Northgate, with the plaintiffs asking for judgment for an account and for the redemption of a mortgage.49

The second case, a few months later, again involved 'Messrs Airey and Tulley [sic], owners of the Bridge Inn'.50 The pub by then had as its neighbour a theatre, the Theatre Royal.51 Ever since the latter was built the pub had had a back door opening into the theatre yard so that theatre-goers "requiring refreshments could go that way without being a few yards not under cover". The theatre management now wanted to be able to sell alcoholic drinks

themselves so had applied for a licence. But Messrs Airey and Tully had objected, and had an unlikely ally in the Darlington Temperance Society, and “after a long absence” the Bench refused the theatre's request.

The moral is though, that even after the Tullys had been away from Darlington for nearly 30 years a Percival was keeping a watchful eye on happenings. Railway or not.

Brendan Boyle

#### Notes

1. The population of Stockton parish increased from 5,184 in 1821 to 10,071 in 1841, and that of Darlington township from 5,750 to 11,033. Census, via the directories of Pigot & Co. 1834 and Slater's 1848.
2. Land Tax returns, Chester Ward West, Whickham parish and township, Joseph Tully. Durham County Record Office (DCRO) Q/D/L.
3. Land Tax returns, Chester Ward Middle, Kibblesworth township, Bartholomew Tully. DCRO Q/D/L.
4. Beamish South Moor Association notices, Newcastle Courant 11 & 18 Jan 1800, 22 & 29 Jan 1803, 26 Jan 1805, 24 Jan 1807.
5. London Gazette, 20 Sept 1803. Usworth is 3 miles east of Kibblesworth.
6. London Gazette, 10 Jan 1804.
7. Newcastle Courant, 24 Jan & 16 May 1807.
8. London Gazette, 4 Nov 1817; ending of a business partnership of JC Tully and Co.
9. Various newspapers in December 1818, including the Tyne Mercury, Durham County Advertiser (DCA), Cumberland Pacquet, Evening Mail, Caledonian Mercury, Morning Advertiser and Morning Chronicle.
10. See The Globe 9, July 2019: Tully, the Timetable and the Ticket Office.
11. A fourth was built at the end of the 'Yarm' branch (at Egglescliffe) by the landowner of the new coal depot there, Thomas Meynell. The fact that he was chairman of the Railway Company didn't stop him from also conducting business in a private capacity.
12. The management committee of the Company heard on 1 July 1825 that “a Dwelling House will be required at each of the 3 Weighing Machines orderd [sic] at a former Meeting” and resolved that “proposals be issued for [their] Erection ... without delay”. A plan for “the Weighing Machine, Water Cistern and dwelling house at Darlington” was approved by the committee on 26 August 1825. NA RAIL 667/30.
13. S&DR committee minutes, 14 July 1826. NA RAIL 667/31.
14. Sunday being a strictly-observed day of rest the next entries were on Monday 17 April.
15. Stockton and Darlington Railway Company, Accountant's Records, April 1826 - March 1827, Darlington Weigh House Records Book. NA RAIL 667/1449.
16. A smaller weighing machine would have been installed at the road entrance/exit of the Darlington depot to weigh merchants' cartloads. One is shown on an Ordnance Survey map of 1855.
17. S&DR committee minutes, 14 July 1826. NA RAIL 667/31.
18. S&DR committee minutes, 11 Nov 1826. Cited in The North Eastern Railway, Its Rise and Development, 1914, WW Tomlinson, pp134-5.
19. S&DR committee minute, 23 March 1827. Cited in Tomlinson, pp134-5.
20. History, Directory & Gazetteer of Durham & Northumberland, Wm. Parson and Wm.

White, vol I, 1827.

21. 'Married. The 31st ult. at Darlington ... Mr Percival Tully, of the Rail-way Weigh-house, to Miss Jane Gray.' Newcastle Courant, 7 Jan 1832.
22. Newcastle Courant, 31 Oct 1829.
23. After the first licence application the S&DR recorded: "that the Magistrates, pursuing that apparent course of hostility which they have hitherto held towards this Company, have refused to grant the Licences requested for the houses at Northgate Bridge and Aycliffe Lane'. S&DR committee minutes, 28 Sept 1827. NA RAIL 667/31.
24. The Railway Tavern in Northgate is still trading 190 years later under its original name.
25. Conveyance of 16 April 1833, DCRO D/Whes 3/42.
26. See 'Hope Town - The World's First Railway Village?' elsewhere in this journal.
27. S&DR committee minutes, 23 Aug 1833. NA RAIL 667/32.
28. The Origins of Railway Enterprise, MW Kirby, 1993, Table 12, p106.
29. Plan of Part of the Main Line of the Stockton and Darlington Railway Extending from the Junction of the Clarence Railway to the Weigh House near Darlington, Surveyed by T Dixon, Darlington, 1839. NA RAIL 1037/454.
30. Kirby, p102.
31. Kirby, Table 12, p107.
32. Bartholomew Tully, 'son of Percival and Jane, abode Hopetown, father's occupation toll collector', was baptised at St Cuthbert's, Darlington, 21 October 1838. He followed Mary Anne in 1834 and Jane in 1837. Bartholomew died in infancy, in 1839. (A later son, born 1846, was given the name Bartholomew Butiman Tully, but 'Butiman' seems not to have been used subsequently.) England, Durham Diocese Bishop's Transcripts, 1639-1919, via FamilySearch.
33. North East Inheritance Database, <http://familyrecords.dur.ac.uk/nei/data/neisearch.php>; DPR/I/1/1839/G12/1-5.
34. This is suggested by the layout of the 1841 Census record sheet, on which the Tully household was the first listed in Hope Town rather than one of the middle records, even though Tully had undoubtedly bought a mid-terrace house in 1833. This larger house overlooked the railway and was within sight of the weigh house.
35. Durham Diocese Bishop's Transcripts.
36. The New Inn was around the corner from Alliance Street in what became Otley Terrace; among its facilities was a brewhouse. Durham Chronicle, 19 Feb 1836.
37. York Herald, 20 July 1844.
38. The children were: William Collingwood, a currier's apprentice (aged 18); Mary Ann[e] (16); Jane (14), Percival John (10); Alice (8); Bartholomew (5; ie. Bartholomew Butiman) & Thomas H (4; full name Thomas Henry Gray). All born in Darlington.
39. London Gazette, 19 Dec 1851.
40. England Deaths & Burials, 1538-1991, via FamilySearch. And Darlington & Stockton Times (DST), 9 April 1853.
41. After Jane's death in 1853 there is no UK record, official (in censuses or compulsory birth, marriage or death registrations) or unofficial (newspaper reports of marriages, etc) of any member of the Tully family.
42. County Naturalization Records 1800-1998, Illinois, Madison County, Edwardsville, via FamilySearch.
43. Wikipedia.

44. Iron County, Missouri - Land Patents, US Bureau of Land Management.  
[www.glorerecords.blm.gov](http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov).
45. Missouri Death Records, 1850-1931, via Ancestry.
46. Naturalization Records, 1816-1955, Missouri Digital Heritage, Naturalization cards, county of St. Louis City (reel no. C 25807, vol. 3, p. 366).  
<https://s1.sos.mo.gov/records/archives/archivesdb/naturalization/Detail.aspx?id=185018>.
47. 1900 US Census, via FamilySearch.
48. For Percival John to be taking the lead for the family his elder brother William Collingwood must have died by 1882.
49. DCA, 28 April, 5 May & 14 July 1882.
50. DST, 9 Sept 1882.
51. The Odeon cinema stands on its site today.

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