

The Hogben Story
Yorkshire Years 1873-1930
By Roy Hogben (2010)

Roy Hogben was born in the United States in 1939. His parents had emigrated from Great Ayton in 1930, as he says in his family history, "in hopes of a new life". Through listening to the recollections of the previous generations and through painstaking documentary research on visits to North Yorkshire, Roy has produced a book of great value, not only to his family, but also to any student of social history. The stimulus which drove him to produce this text is explained in his introduction:

"I was raised in the United States of America, by an English family. My only relatives in this country were my Durham born mother, and Yorkshire through and through father and older brother. Living two miles away were my Yorkshire born grandmother, step grandfather and two Yorkshire raised bachelor uncles. This was the extent of my family in America. The rest of the family were 3,000 miles away, in England; an abstract place and people to a young boy. We ate English food. We spoke with a Yorkshire dialect and accent".

His forebears on his father's side came from Kent and on his mother's side from Cornwall. Such population movements to the north east were common in the nineteenth century. Wages for coal and ironstone miners were relatively attractive. From the 1870s generations of Hogbens lived in east Cleveland, many working in ironstone mines. In 1908 Roy's grandfather, Robert, worked at the Pease & Partners mine at Lingdale. At that time the firm saw the attraction of ironstone production from a new drift mine in Great Ayton. Robert, along with his two brothers-in law were selected to move to the village to drive the drifts of Ayton Mine. Because the workings were close to the Capt. Cook's Monument on Easby Moor it was usually referred to as "Monument Mine"

The book tells of the highs and lows of family life in Great Ayton as sons and grandsons worked in Monument, Ayton Banks and Roseberry Mines. Roy has researched with care and gives a sensitive and moving account of homelife and underground working conditions. Great Ayton mines were almost exclusively in operation in the early twentieth century – late starters compared with the mines of east Cleveland. The boom years up to and including the First World War were followed by decline. By 1930 ironstone production had ceased. Many mining families were forced to move out. The destination of many including the Hogbens and their relatives was the States where large coal mines offered greater opportunities, but the great depression there was just around the corner!

Photographs of family members, their houses, underground workings plus maps and diagrams add to the attraction of this book. There are frequent references to families, the names of which are common in twenty-first century Ayton.

It was a great pleasure for members of the Great Ayton Archaeology Project to meet with Roy and his wife Eve in 2008 and assist with the Ayton period of his family history. As usually occurs, the transfer of information was not entirely one-way. The "Hogben Story" has given us a better understanding of the social history of our industrial village.