



## **News from the St. Tudy History Group Research Team ...**

Whilst trawling through old newspaper articles of the Cornish and Devon Post, I came across a headline from September 1895 "A St. Tudy Hero in America", I had to investigate.

It transpires that Mr. Richard Greenaway, a friend of the "Hero", wrote to the newspaper telling them of this heroic act. His friend from St. Tudy was James Philp, who was now living in Algonquin, Illinois with his family, had rescued his neighbours from their burning home, and was "much hurt and burnt". I have since found out that this was his daughter's home.

It all started here in St. Tudy when James and Jane Cornelius, a St. Teath girl, were married in June 1850. I found them living in "St. Tudy Village" in 1851 on the census, James was a Blacksmith. I think he may well have worked for his relatives, the Hoopers.

Following James through the American Census information, he appears to have arrived in America in 1851, and worked hard and increased his wealth and position in society. His brother Robert immigrated later in 1855.

In 1863 James was drafted to fight in the American Civil War, and his brother Robert, the following year, and luckily both survived. By 1870 James's estate was valued at \$10,000 from \$4,000 the previous year, so he was prospering. Apparently he had set up a carriage manufacturing business.

In a book in the Algonquin Local History Society there are articles and photos of James, and they say that "Mr. Philp was one of the most prominent men in the town during the 1800's. In addition to his Smithy, he dealt extensively in real estate, was a money lender prior to the establishment of a bank, was Justice of the Peace, school director, village trustee and was one of the founders of the Algonquin Insurance Company. He spent his later years in California, but died, aged 80, on a trip back to Algonquin to see his son".

The current descendants in America have James's diary where he writes about the voyage, crossing the ocean from Padstow to Quebec in seven weeks, on the barque – Belle of Padstow. The trip took them past their last views of Cornwall, then the fields of Ireland, through iceberg-filled waters of the North Atlantic to the haven of the St. Lawrence River and Quebec, then onto Algonquin, Illinois. What a journey! I am currently trying to get a copy of these diaries.

Now through this article, this story of adventure, bravery and pioneering spirit, has been told to the current day inhabitants of St. Tudy where James and Robert's journeys began some 170 years or so ago. I wonder how they felt seeing their last vision of Cornwall, and what they would think if they knew their story was being told now? The newspaper article talking of James's bravery said "He has done much to help others in his native country of England who could not help themselves". I think this shows James's character. I would hope that they were proud of their achievements in life, and of their humble beginnings in St. Tudy.