

CORY (Cory Brothers and Company Limited)

Two distinct families of industrialists in South Wales have borne this surname. This family, who founded Cory Brothers and Company Ltd., is to be differentiated from the family of **John Cory I** and his sons, who founded **John Cory and Sons, Ltd.**

JOHN CORY (1828 - 1910), shipowner, coalowner, and philanthropist

Born 28 March 1828 at Bideford, Devon, eldest son of RICHARD CORY I (1799-1882), by Sarah (died 5 October 1868), daughter of John Woollacott, both of Bideford.

The father, RICHARD CORY I, was the owner and master of a small vessel and traded between Cardiff, Bristol, and Ireland. About 1838 he opened a ship-chandler's store and also traded as a provision merchant, etc., near the Custom House, Cardiff, and brought over his wife and three young sons - JOHN, aged 10, RICHARD, aged 8, and THOMAS, aged 5, to Cardiff. Richard Cory and his two eldest sons, JOHN and RICHARD, eagerly seized the advantages now offered by the opening up of collieries and the improved methods of transport and of export in the forties in order to extend their business. They moved to the docks district about 1842 and added a ship-broking business to that of the chandler and provision dealers. They soon became agents for **Wayne and Co.**, and, at the end of their agency, became shippers of coal on their own account.

In 1856, Richard Cory disposed of his provision business, and, with his two sons, began to trade as Richard Cory and Sons, concentrating on their business as ship-brokers, ship-owners, coal-merchants and exporters, and colliery agents. In 1859 the father retired, and the business was then carried on by the two sons, John and Richard, as Cory Brothers and Co., becoming a limited liability company in 1888. With the universal demand for Welsh steam coal for shipping in all parts of the world, and especially after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the firm established coal depots, offices, and agencies along all the great trade routes of the world. In addition, they became coal-owners in their own right by acquiring the Pentre colliery in the Rhondda in 1868, and, later, the Gelli, Tynybedw, and Tydraw collieries in the same valley, Aber colliery in the Ogmore valley, Rheola and Glyncastle in the Neath valley, and the Penrikyber [sic] colliery in the Aberdare valley. They also became the largest private wagon-owners in the United Kingdom. In addition they erected coke-ovens and washeries at the Gelli colliery.

The brothers became very wealthy, but they assisted all kinds of movements which helped in the social, educational, and moral progress of the people, especially of Cardiff. Both brothers, like their father, assisted the temperance movement. After having been a Churchman, and for a time a churchwarden, Richard Cory I became a leader of the United Methodist church in Cardiff, John became a Wesleyan, and Richard II a Baptist, but both gave unstinted assistance to all evangelical movements, particularly the Salvation Army.

Among JOHN CORY's activities, it may be mentioned that he was a founder and vice-chairman of the Barry dock and railway; alderman of the Glamorgan County Council; a member of Cardiff School Board for twenty-three years; president of the British and Foreign Sailors' Society; trustee and guarantor of Wesleyan Methodist churches; and lord of the manor of S. Nicholas. Among his many benefactions may be mentioned the gift of Maendy Hall at Ton Pentre to the Salvation Army; donations to the Band of Hope Union, Dr. Barnardo's Homes, Soldiers' and Sailors' Rests in many towns (including the John Cory Hall in Poplar); the Cardiff Police Institute; the original Cardiff Y.M.C.A.; the Cory Temperance Hall, Cardiff, etc. For many years before his death his benefactions amounted to nearly £50,000 a year. He was held in such esteem by the people of Cardiff, that they erected during his lifetime a bronze statue, the work of **Sir William Goscombe John**, in front of the City Hall (1905).

John Cory married, 19 September 1854, Anna Maria (died 1909), daughter of John Beynon, colliery proprietor, Newport, Monmouth, by whom he had one daughter, FLORENCE MARGARET CORY, of The Duffryn, S. Nicholas, lady of the manor, and patron of the living (died 11 November 1936), and three sons: (1) HERBERT B. CORY (died 1927); (2) SIR CLIFFORD JOHN CORY, Bart., president of the South Wales Coalowners' Association, 1906 (died 3 February 1941); and (3) REGINALD R. CORY (1871-1934).

John Cory died 27 January 1910 and was buried at S. Nicholas church.

RICHARD CORY II (1830 - 1914),

The second son of Richard Cory I and a brother of John Cory; he was a partner in, and co-director of, Cory Brothers and Co., Ltd., Oscar House, Cardiff; a generous benefactor, particularly to Baptist chapels, colleges, and missions, the Salvation Army, the temperance movement, the Y.M.C.A., and Cardiff University College. He married Emily (died 1 July 1919), daughter of Joseph Vivian of Roseworthy, Cornwall. He died 20 September 1914 and was buried at Cardiff cemetery, leaving four sons and three daughters.

Author

Watkin William Price, (1873 - 1967)

Sources

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Kelly's Directory

Burke's Landed Gentry

Who's who?

P.D. and G.L.M. Review. A magazine of the coal trade activities of Powell Duffryn Associated Collieries, Ltd., GuÃ©ret, Llewellyn & Merrett, Ltd., and allied companies; October 1937

Further Reading

NLW Archives: **General Election 1906 Wales and Monmouthshire. A Souvenir containing photographs, biographical sketches etc., of all the Welsh MPs: Clifford J. Cory**

Additional Links

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