

Frederick Pye

Compiled by his grand niece, Holly Quinn Knighton, from interviews with his relatives.



Fred Pye

Frederick (Fred) Pye was born on 14 March 1916, in Dingle, Liverpool, Lancashire, England, to Judith Ellen ‘Nell’ Pye. Because Fred had been born out of wedlock, he was immediately adopted by his grandparents, Nell’s parents, William James and Margaret Ann Pye, as was common in those days. He was 3 years old when his mother, Nell, left England with her new husband, Stanley G. Smith. It is known that Stan and Nell both had the desire and intention for Fred to come with them to the United States, but because the grandparents

had legal custody, they had the final say, and they would not release him to go with his mother. However, an agreement was made that Fred would join the Smith’s in a few years once they had become established in the States. The truth of the circumstances and relationships was kept from Fred himself and Nell’s other children for years. He was known to his half-brother, Arthur, and half-sisters, Jean and Avis, in the States as “Uncle Fred in England”, and Nell was, to his knowledge, only a sister who went to America. It wasn’t until the Smith’s first visit back to England in 1937 that Fred and Jean found out the truth. Avis, who was only 4 at the time, wasn’t told however, but of their trip recalls a fight between her mother, Nell and her Grandmother Pye (who she recalls was “not very nice”). While upstairs, Avis heard a tremendous ruckus downstairs. She came downstairs, even though her sister Jean who was standing at the bottom of the stairs instructed her to go back up, to find Grandmother Pye, who was holding a butcher knife, and Nell fighting in the kitchen. Both were yelling and carrying on. Aunt Georgina, Nell’s sister who lived close by, happened at that moment to come by through the back kitchen door and broke up the fight. Years later, Avis is led to believe that it was a fight about Fred. She believes that one of the hopes of her mother and dad and one purpose for this trip to England was to bring Fred back to the States with them at this time for Fred was now 21 years old. Fred found out the true identity of his “sister” Nell just 3 days prior to the Smith’s arrival in England and as one can imagine, was quite upset to find out this truth so late in life. He was given the choice to stay in England or to go to the US, and he chose to stay in England. Only years later, in August 1979, at Stan Smith’s 85th birthday party and Fred’s first visit to the States, did he

express his regret about not coming back to the US with the Smith family in 1937. It was also just before his visit and the 85th birthday party that Avis, at the age of 45, was told the truth of Fred being her half-brother.

Concerning Fred's father, Jean told Avis years later that during their trip to England in the 30's, Jean and her mother, Nell, were out shopping, and Nell pointed out Fred's father to Jean. During Fred's second trip to the States in the 80's, Jean's son, Del, asked Fred if he knew or had a relationship with his biological father. His reply was that he knew who he was, – he knew his name and could recognize him on the street – but that he didn't ever have any kind of contact with him otherwise. However, by the tone of his voice, it was more than clear that Fred felt that he didn't miss much. Nothing else was or has been said about this man or who he was.

Fred married Violet (Vi) Knight on 7 March 1942, and to this union were born a daughter and two sons. Fred lived in England all his life was a master mason by trade. He was in the British infantry during World War II, apparently fighting on the front lines in Belgium and France. His unit was also one of the first to enter the Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp in northern Germany.

Jean kept contact with him through her latter years, and he was still living at the time of her death in 2003. His wife Vi by that time was suffering from Alzheimer's disease and was living in a rest home. Vi passed away in 2006. Fred passed away 19 December 2017 at the age of 101.



Fred and Vi Pye's Wedding