

## The Americans in Moreton Morrell

### Introduction

At the outbreak of the Great War two related wealthy American families resided in Morton Morrell and were determined to help the war effort.

At the outbreak of the War **Robert Emmet**, who was born in New York in 1872, was living at Moreton Paddox with his American wife, Louise. His family was very wealthy. He came to England at the end of the nineteenth century. Ironically he gave substantial support to Britain's war effort despite being the great grand nephew of Robert Emmet the Irish Patriot who was sentenced in 1803 in Dublin to be hung drawn and quartered.<sup>i</sup>

At the time of the 1901 Census he was living in Barford at Watchbury, Church Street with Louise who was born in 1877 and also came from a rich New York family involved in banking. They had three infant sons. The eldest was Robert Emmet born in 1898, then James Albert Garland Emmet born in 1899 and Thomas Addis Emmet born in 1900. All three were to serve in the British armed forces. The two oldest in the army and Thomas in the Royal Navy, Robert the eldest was to lose his life.

Also living with them was **Charles Tuller Garland**, Louise's brother who was born in 1875.

Circa 1904, Robert wrote to his own University, Harvard from the Priory, Warwick that he had "bought 500 acres in the centre of Warwickshire and was building an Elizabethan house and stables etc named Moreton Paddox" and that he "added to his menagerie a little tow-headed girl Aileen born on 26<sup>th</sup> December 1903." The 1911 Census shows only Aileen now age seven living in Moreton Paddox attended by house of servants. Presumably the rest of the family were either away in London or overseas possibly in the United States.

By 1914 both Robert Emmet and Charles Garland were living in Moreton Morrell and London. Robert had built Moreton Paddox and Charles, by 1909 had built Moreton Hall. Charles had married Margaret Williams daughter of the then deceased Frank (Francis) Williams J.P. of Barford.

They were taking part and prominent in fox hunting, horse racing and polo playing. These activities across rural counties provided expert riders and mounts who on the declaration of war would be ready to contribute.

*" what good service has been rendered by polo players and their ponies at so momentous a crisis. It has long been admitted that the polo pony is a most useful type of horse for military purposes. ... Though too small, of course for artillery or ordinary cavalry he makes an excellent mount for Territorials, mounted orderlies, senior officers of infantry regiments, etc. He is handy, fast and easily accustomed to military service. ... Small wonder therefore that the military authorities on the issue of mobilisations orders were particularly keen on polo ponies..."<sup>iii</sup>*

## A local's view of the arrival of the Americans

Major Thomas Bouch who lived in Ashorne and is mentioned in our Newbold Pacey Section wrote in article in the sixties, referring to Charles Tuller Garland, "Our new neighbour hunted hard. He played polo. He took a grouse moor and a deer forest on the Atholl Estate. He entertained sumptuously. He married an English wife." "He persuaded Walter Buckmaster who may be termed the W. G. Grace of polo history to come and live in the old Manor House with its monastic fishponds. He made his own polo ground where the best players of America and England and India competed in his tournaments. He provided a lordly village cricket ground with pitches smoothly rolled and a suitable rustic pavilion. He erected a Real Tennis court, which is probably the most modern in existence and many think the best in the world." Bouch then continued and commented on the Emmet family and the building of Moreton Paddox, "Garland had a sister as rich as himself who was married to an American doctor, called Emmet, a devout Roman Catholic and a descendant of the Robert Emmet famous in Irish history. This lady also desired to build an English home for herself close to her brother indeed the two front gates are no further than 100 yards apart. She bought 400 acres and proceeded to erect a third enormous edifice...." *(the first house of the three was Ashorne Hill build by yet another American, Arthur Tree who had arrived first and built Ashorne Hill – more can be read about the Tree family on the Newbold Pacey section)* "a truly beautiful replica of an Elizabethan Manor with banqueting hall, minstrels' gallery...."

"The Emmets were very much liked by all their neighbours. They entertained pleasantly, without ostentation ....."



Moreton Hall in the 1930s



Moreton Paddox in the 1950s<sup>iii</sup>

*Moreton Hall and its grounds are now the agricultural campus of the Warwickshire College. The "Elizabethan Manor" of Moreton Paddox has now gone and the current developments at Moreton Paddox incorporate some of the original ancillary buildings and garden of the hall. The farmhouse and barns which were present before Moreton Paddox have been converted into homes.*

## Robert and Louise Emmet and their sons



*Photo of Louise Emmet and the children, Bobby, Gar (Garland), Tommy and Aileen. Published with the kind permission of Mrs Rowena Phillips.*

On the eve of the outbreak of the war, Robert Emmet over the bank holiday had a house full of friends who were reserve officers or already in the cavalry. They were enthusiastically waiting for the government to declare war. Once it was declared he consulted his own three sons and Louise his wife about whether they should return to the United States or stay and fight for the allied cause. They voted unanimously to stay in the United Kingdom. Emmet raised the “Star and Stripes” over Moreton Paddox to demonstrate solidarity with England. He was advised by his brother-in-law Charles Tuller Garland to take it down as he was in danger of having the house burnt down by local people as it was being misconstrued as a declaration of neutrality.<sup>iv</sup>

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## Moreton Paddox Convalescent Hospital

The Leamington Courier records that the Emmets had offered Moreton Paddox as a convalescent hospital. The War office accepted the offer. The couple prepared and equipped a fifty bed hospital. Mrs Emmet engaged four trained nurses and six assistants and opened eight wards. Doctor Oldmeadow of Kineton and Doctor Pitt of Wellesbourne offered themselves as medical advisors.

The Courier goes on to report that local firms had helped with the expenses including the linen company providing free beds to equip the hospital and also put at the disposal of Mrs Emmet, five motor vans... to convey the wounded to and from the Paddox.

Robert Emmet wrote in a personal memoire about how Moreton Paddox their home was converted into a military hospital

*"My wife and the women plunged with an admirable enthusiasm into emptying Moreton Paddox of superfluous furniture and converting it into a military hospital.....The living-hall, the Billiard room, the card room and the dining room were all converted into wards for enlisted men, the family keeping only the library as a living room and dining room.*

*All available bedrooms were converted into private rooms for officers.....Hospital beds and bedding with other equipment were very promptly imported.....*

*A completely equipped motor ambulance was procured to be driven by Lou's own chauffeur. Lou herself assuming the position of House Governor, made herself familiar with all the forms and regulations of the War Office for military hospitals that she might successfully run the whole hospital at her own expense, free of any cost to the country.....*

*The first batch to arrive were wounded Belgium soldiers who were kept in order by a masterful sergeant. The gratitude of these men after being returned to their homes was very touching. In all there were five wards for enlisted men and six private rooms for officers accommodating a total of fifty-six patients.....*

*Upon closing the hospital she received a citation from the War Office expressing the highest commendation and most appreciative thanks"*

Simon Emmet who gave his kind permission for this extract to be published adds:

*"My Grandmother had a commemorative medal struck for all those involved in helping with the running of the hospital."*

We have a report of how one young wounded soldier enjoyed these facilities.

Private Walter Sales, 2nd North Staffordshire Regiment from Dilhorne, (Staffordshire) *“went to France with the second draught of men and was wounded in the thigh at the battle of the Aisne. After some time in the base hospital at Boulogne he came to England and had been for many weeks in an improvised hospital at Moreton Morrell in Warwickshire at the home of a wealthy American. There were 15 British and 15, Belgians being cared for by two nurses in the employ of their kindly host, the spacious dining and drawing rooms being placed at their disposal. Twice a week they were taken on motor drives. A Leamington medical gentleman acted as consulting doctor and visits were made by the doctors from Stratford-on-Avon. Private Sales still has to use crutches and will have to do so for some twelve months.”*<sup>v</sup>

Robert Emmet immediately war was declared offered to raise and equip a troop of Yeomanry at his own cost which would have meant using his own mounts. He enrolled fifty five men. In fact apparently for technical reasons, the War Office did not accept the offer but the men were encouraged to join the cavalry or yeomanry. Mr Emmet also said he would not keep in employment any single young men who were eligible for service. He also is reported as offering to make up the army pay of volunteers working for him to the level he had been paying them as employees.

*The Warwickshire Roll of Honour lists one of his employees Gunner Herbert Percival Hancox who had been a servant to Major Emmet for seven years before the War. He was a married man. He died of wounds in September 1918 in Emmet’s unit in France age 32. He had survived most of the war having commenced his war service in the Balkans. According to Robert Emmet’s memoir Percy Hancox served with him as a batman in Egypt and then with him in the Royal Artillery in France.*<sup>vi</sup>

Despite his American citizenry, Robert Emmet was anxious to serve and the Courier reports that for the *“past ten year he has been a student of war and is familiar with the methods of the British Army ....Mr Emmet had seen service in the Spanish-American War”* (in Puerto Rico as a Second Lieutenant).

Emmet himself joined the Warwickshire Yeomanry. He was commissioned Major on 10 September 1914 and was ordered to Egypt on 24<sup>th</sup> August 15. Whilst in Egypt he suffered badly from heat apoplexy and was hospitalised. His condition was such that the medical authorities concluded he should be evacuated back to England. He returned to England in May 1916 and transferred to the Royal Field Artillery on the 20 November 1916 and went to France on that day being assigned to Battery A, 168<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 32<sup>nd</sup> Division of the British Expeditionary Force. In June 1918 he was detailed for special work at Artillery Headquarters, 32<sup>nd</sup> Division. He joined Battery B, 161<sup>st</sup> Brigade on 12 August 1918. He was with the Army of Occupation in Germany from 11 November 1918 until 7 March 1919. He is recorded as having served throughout the war. He was mentioned in despatches and received the D.S.O in 1917.<sup>7</sup>

During his time in France and Belgium he played a role in the following engagements, Somme offensive 1916/17, (Beaumont-Hamel, Serre, Saint-Quentin battle, Messines

Ridge, Flanders offensive 1917,(Nieuport, Passchendaele), Somme defensive 1918, Somme Offensive 1918, (Hindenburg Line).

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Robert Emmet Junior

Tragically Robert Emmet's oldest son, also named Robert and who was a second Lieutenant in the 1<sup>st</sup> Life Guards, died of typhoid on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1915 in hospital in England at the age of 18. There is no indication that Robert ever left England. There was international reporting by the press because of the irony of the full military honours awarded to Robert junior.

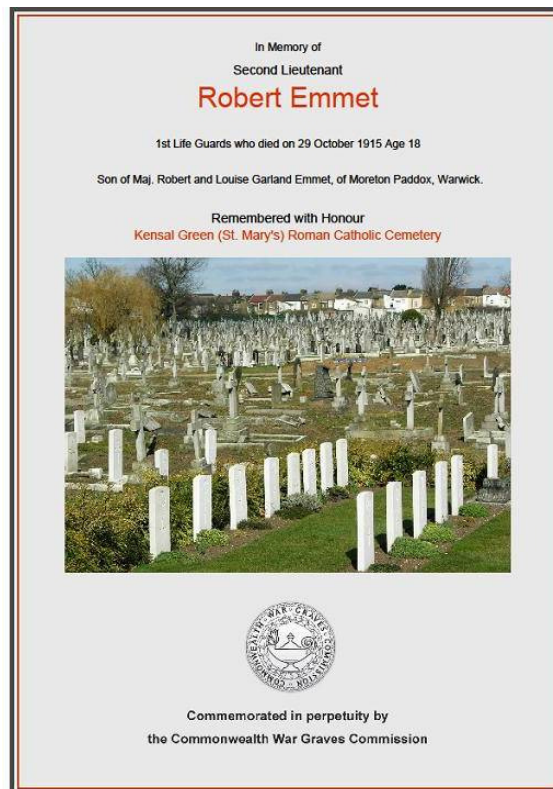
At the outbreak of war, Robert (called Bobby by the family) had only been 16 years of age and special permission had been sought and obtained by the Warwickshire Yeomanry for the Secretary of the War office to agree to him accepting a commission as a second lieutenant in the 1<sup>st</sup> Life Guards

This article extracted from the Advertiser, Adelaide, South Australia was published on the 5 January 1916:

*"Lieutenant Robert Emmet, of the 1<sup>st</sup> Life Guards, whose funeral with military honors took place at Kensal Green in November last, was a collateral descendant of the Irish patriot whose name he bore. Robert Emmet, who was executed for high treason for his share in an abortive insurrection, -will always be remembered for his pathetic love story, immortalised by Thomas Moore in two of his Irish melodies ("She is far from the land" and "O breathe not his name") and by Washington Irving.*

*Emmet's elder brother, Dr. Thomas Addis Emmet, also an Irish rebel, settled in New York, where he achieved fame. His statue stands in one of the great thoroughfares of the city to-day. It was from this Dr. Emmet that Lieutenant Emmet was directly descended, his grand-father, Dr. Thomas Emmet, of New York, being a grandson of the original Thomas Addis. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Emmet's father settled in England, and lived at Moreton Paddox, Warwickshire, and in London. He was till recently fighting in the Dardanelles with the rank of major."*

"Young Emmet was a most promising officer, and was accorded a military funeral, 300 officers and men of the First Life Guards being present, including the commanding officer, Sir George Holford, and Major General Sir Francis Lloyd"<sup>8</sup>



## James Albert Garland Emmet

James was born in 1899 Tuxedo, New York. His mother and father Robert and Louise Emmet settled in Warwickshire in the late 1800s and built Moreton Paddox, in Moreton Morrell.

At the outbreak of the Great War, James was only 15 years old he was the second oldest of three brothers and a sister. Robert consulted the family as to whether they should return to the United States or stay and support the British war effort.

All the family voted to stay and Robert was quoted in the local press as volunteering his sons for war service.

When he was old enough James joined the 1st Life Guards as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant and during his war service was promoted to Lieutenant.

He saw active service and his medial index card shows he went overseas to France on the 20 October 1917 when he would have been between 18 and 19. The 1<sup>st</sup> Life Guards served on the Western Front throughout the war and it seems likely that when he joined them in France he would have been in the trenches.

He survived the war and by the time he retired from the Life Guards he was a captain. He married and lived on at Moreton Paddox until after the Second World War when he moved to Ireland.

## Thomas Addis Emmet

Thomas being born in 1900 does not appear to have served during the First World War but did serve in the Royal Navy.

*In the 1930s Robert and Louise Emmet returned to the United States where they had been regular visitors. Robert Emmet is recorded as applying for naturalisation as a US citizenship in 1931 and hence renouncing his British citizenship. Louise and Robert celebrated their Golden Wedding residing on Park Lane, New York in 1947. Louise died in 1947 and Robert in 1955 at the age of 83.*

## Charles Tuller Garland

Also at the outbreak of war, Robert Emmet's brother in law, **Charles Tuller Garland** was seeking to help the war effort. Prior to the war, he had founded the Moreton Morrell Tennis Court Club and an article written by Andrew Hamilton on the web site of the club provides information about his life and activities.<sup>9</sup>

Both Garland and Emmet had given up their American citizenship at the outbreak of the war. Charles T Garland like Emmet raised a troop of soldiers and they were given drilling in Moreton Morrell. Although the War office did not accept their offer of troops, both men encouraged their men to join up.





Garland who was a fine horseman joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> Life Guards, a division of the Household Cavalry. The Moreton Morrell Tennis Court Club article describes that he joined as a temporary 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant on 15 January 1915. He was invalided out of the army due to a heart condition. Perhaps that was immediately fortuitous as the majority of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lifeguards were slaughtered at the Battle of Ypres 1915.

No information has been found as to his remaining military career except that the Midland Daily Telegraph reported in September 1918 that he had been adopted as the parliamentary candidate for the discharged soldiers and sailors in Leamington district. It added he was discharged from the Warwickshire Yeomanry which he had joined as a trooper. Similarly the Stratford Herald reported in his obituary that he had joined as a trooper. However War Office Records show that he was in 1916 a Second Lieutenant with the 2nd Life Guards

Margaret his wife died in 1917 at the early age of 35 and he died of his heart condition in 1921 only 46 years old.

***Photo of Charles T Garland shown with the kind permission of Andrew Hamilton and the Moreton Morrell Tennis Court Club and copied from the website of the Club where there is more information about the Charles Tuller Garland***

<http://www.mmtcc.co.uk/garland.htm>

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<sup>i</sup> He was in fact hanged and after death beheaded in 1803. (It was Robert Emmet's older brother, Thomas Addis Emmet who "would emigrate to the United States shortly after Robert's execution and would eventually serve as the New York State Attorney General. His great-grand-nieces are the prominent American portrait painters Lydia Field Emmet, Rosina Sherwood Emmet, Jane Emmet de Glehn and Ellen Emmet Rand. Robert Emmet's great-great nephew was the American playwright Robert Emmet Sherwood." ) (Wikipedia)

<sup>ii</sup> The Polo Monthly September 1914

<sup>iii</sup> <http://www.search.windowsonwarwickshire.org.uk>

<sup>iv</sup> Page 120 and 121 from Catastrophe Europe goes to War 1914 by Max Hastings

<sup>v</sup> Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel

<http://19141918.invisionzone.com/forums/index.php?showtopic=200646>

<sup>vi</sup> Extract from the Warwickshire County Roll of Honour 1914 to 2005

<sup>7</sup> Harvards Military Record in the First World War

<sup>8</sup> Wairarapa Daily Times 6 June 1916

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.mmtcc.co.uk/garland.htm> (Article about CT Garland written by Andrew Hamilton)