

Edward and Thomas America Bound

Emigration gave rise to the “American Wake”. This celebration of departure gradually changed over the century from one of great sadness in the early years to a more muted acceptance of the need to leave in the middle years to a joy at leaving and the accompanying expectation of financial support for those staying together with the prospect of passage money for those following.

Irish Emigration to North America in the 1800’s

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It was the dawn sounds that woke the two young men, the bird song welcoming the new day, other men shuffling sleepily to their places of work, all that and the early morning sun only partly obscured by the clouds. It had been a cold, but dry night and Edward was the first to wake, indeed he had hardly slept for worrying about the journey that he and Thomas were about to make and the family he was leaving behind. Thomas for his part had slept like a log, his worries about the journey having been overcome just two days earlier, as soon as he had crossed the Antrim county boundary on the way south to meet up with his cousin. They should have been in Dublin by now but, having missed the last train, they had settled down for the night on the station platform. The plan now was to take the early train to Dublin and then the Dublin to Liverpool packet before boarding the steam ship *Bothnia* bound for New York. Thomas was twenty four years old while Edward was three years his junior, they could have been taken for brothers, both around five feet ten inches tall with brown hair and a ruddy complexion marking them out as men of the fields. It had been two years earlier, at the wake for Edward’s mother Margaret, that Thomas had first planted the idea of them trying their luck in America. He had just returned from New York having been working as a deck hand on the emigrant ships ferrying their cargo from Liverpool to the new world. He had entertained the family with tales of opportunities and he and Edward had argued with Edward’s Da about going over to America to try their luck and maybe pave the way for the family to follow. It had been Thomas who had taken the lead.

“Uncle Henry you know what’s happening in the fields round here better than I do. But even I know that the farmers are not playing fair with the likes of you, evictions are still going on, landlords wanting to get families off the land.”

“That’s as maybe but Lord Rathdonell, he’s different, he’s treated this family right and I for one trust him”

“But he won’t need so many men if he moves to livestock instead of grain”

“Why should he do that?”

“He’ll make more money, that’s all he’s interested in”

“I don’t believe that that’s all he’s about. He’s a good man, he’ll look after us”

“You and John may be alright, him being a herd. But what about Ed and Joseph, I can’t see him looking after them as well”

“Ah you’re exaggerating, trying to make a point, just to make our Ed go with you. Why aren’t you going on your own? Is it that you’re not so sure and you just need a nurse maid to go with you”

“That’s unfair uncle Henry. If we go to America and find out that both our families would do better over there then we can work out a plan to get all of us over so that the family can stay together”

“Ah I still think that there’s plenty of work here in the fields and if not there’s industry aplenty in this country of ours, you only have to look”

Thomas paused and then spoke in a voice that was filled more with despair than with hope.

“I’ve looked for work in the shipyards and factories up north and you can forget it, unless you know someone. Even now there’s many hundreds walking around this country begging for work. America is growing, not dying, like this place. There’s plenty of work and opportunity over there and once we’re settled the family can follow. That’s what I believe.”

“You’re wrong” was Da’s abrupt response and, shrugging his shoulders, he moved away. And so the discussion ended until a few days later when Da took Edward aside.

“Ed, I’ve been thinking about the words we had last week. You’re right to have such ambitions but now is not the time for you. Wait a while, then see how you feel and, if you still have the same desire then I will support you”

The words his father spoke left Edward dreaming about a future filled with hope but it was a letter from Thomas a few months later laying out a plan that brought to reality the dream that was now to be tested. Still apprehensive about the steps that he was about to take Edward was afraid that, in some way, he might have been persuaded not to follow them through at this time, particularly now that Mary Jane had moved over to Liverpool just three weeks earlier to help nurse their brother William’s second child. As a result he moved out of the family home and, without telling his Da, he left Thomas to make the arrangements. Then the waiting for Thomas, and how, twenty four hours earlier at around ten o’clock he had spied a figure he recognised as his cousin striding across the field towards him. He had felt a sudden surge of adrenalin course through his body rendering him unable, for a moment, to move a muscle, the time had come.

“Morning Ed. You ready to go?” more a statement than a question were the first words that Thomas had uttered in greeting.

“Aye Tom, I’ve been ready this last week. Where were you last night, where did you stay?” responded Edward as he greeted his cousin with a warm embrace.

“A barn about four miles from here, warm enough and dry”

It was then that John became aware of Thomas’s arrival and, putting down his tools, he had moved over to the two men.

“Hello Tom”

“Hello John” responded Thomas warily. They had never been close and Thomas, believing that John blamed him for putting thoughts of emigration into Edwards mind, was unsure as to how John would react upon his arrival.

“You planning on leaving now?”

“No reason not to. There’s a train to Dublin late afternoon, we should be able to make it in time, and the Liverpool packet sails early tomorrow morning. We’ll have time to go up and see William, stay with him overnight and then board the *Bothnia* in the evening.”

“Well you’d better talk to Ed first, he’s got some news”

Thomas turned towards Edward, a look of alarm on his face.

“Ed, what’s the problem?”

“It’s nothing, just that William’s become a dad again and Mary Anne’s not to well so Mary Jane has gone over to help. It’s supposed to be just for six weeks, but you never know”

“What’s that to do with us?”

“Well Da seems alright but now Mary Jane has gone I don’t know how he’ll take me leaving, particularly if she doesn’t come back”

“He’s still got John and Lizzie and Joseph and Sarah’s only just over the fields. He’ll be alright, he’ll understand”

“I know, but I feel bad not having told him about us going”

“Well, it’s a bit late now, come on he’ll be alright, after all he has agreed about us trying America”

John had remained silent but earlier he had made it clear that he thought that Edward should delay a while, at least until it became clearer about how long Mary Jane would stay in Liverpool. Edward looked at his brother for guidance but none came.

“It’s down to you, it’s your decision” shrugged John.

Edward looked at Thomas knowing that he would go with or without him and that if he didn’t go now he might never again summon up the courage to make such a momentous journey. He turned to John.

“Sorry John, I have to go”

“Then you’d better get started but first you have to go and say your goodbyes” was John’s curt response.

No more was said and the three of them walked the half mile in silence over to the barn where Edward had been sleeping this last week, the tension between them heavy in the air. Edward gathered up his few belongings in a sturdy rope bag and they made their way to the family cottage. When they got there Thomas and John waited outside while Edward went inside. Lizzie was at a table preparing the evening meal.

“Ed, what’s the matter, what are you doing here at this time, has something awful happened?” was her surprised response on seeing him.

“No, nothing like that, I’m alright, where’s Da?”

“He’s out the back” she said blankly sensing from Edwards words and demeanour that something serious was about to unfold.

Edward went outside and, hearing him, Da looked up and spoke before Edward could get out a word.

“You going then” was all he said.

“Yes Da, how do you know?” said the surprised and nervous Edward.

“Son, it’s my place to know these things, I knew this would happen sooner rather than later. What’s your plan?”

“We get the evening train to Dublin, it gets us on the night sailing to Liverpool. We then have a day in Liverpool so plenty of time to see William and Mary Jane and the next day we sail on a ship called the Bothnia to New York. The crossing takes about ten days and when we get there we meet up with a mate of Tom’s, another Antrim boy, he’s called Billy.

“and then you start looking for work?”

“Yes, but Billy’s got contacts on the building sites, says we should be alright”

“and if you’re not?”

“We have to be” responded Edward with a nervous laugh.

“Aye, you’ve got to take chances if you’re going to get anywhere. You calling in on William?”

“If we can but we may not have time.”

“You make time” ordered Henry “and tell William I’ll try and get over to see him and wee William Henry. They’ve called him after his two grand fathers, but Henry William would sound better” he laughed.

“Yes Da, you have told me that he’s named after you” a remark that Da chose to ignore.

“Oh and give Mary Ann a hug from me and say hello to Mrs Williams. I met her once, a nice lady but very Welsh”

“Yes Da, I will”

“Oh and get Mary Jane to write and let me know when she’s coming home. I think that’s all, now come over here and give your old Da a hug”

They embraced, then Lizzie and John joined them, it was only John who remained dry eyed but none of them would ever be able to recall what was said in the next few minutes before Thomas came out to them.

“Ed, time to go”

Edward broke away from the family embrace and moved towards his cousin.

“Aye time to go” he said

Da and Lizzie remained where they were comforting each other while John walked to the end of the lane with the two men. Once there Edward, now in control of his emotions, turned to John.

“Thanks for helping me about Da. I’ll write to him as soon as we get to New York”

“Make sure you do or I’ll come over myself and beat the living daylight out of you. Here take this” and he thrust a pound coin into Edward’s hand.

“No need to do that” responded Edward trying to give it back.

“I know, but take it anyway, it makes me feel better and maybe it’ll come in handy. Now leave, you’ve a few miles to go and you’ll have to move smart if you’re to catch that train” The two brothers looked at each other and embraced. Edward, now choked with emotion turned from John and he and Thomas walked away without a backward glance.

“Make sure you call into see William before you sail and give my love to Mary Jane” John, , managed to shout out to his brother before mouthing a silent prayer for his safety, for him the loss of another sibling was almost too much for him to bear. Edward was the third brother he had seen wrestling with his emotions in a search for a new and better life away from his place of birth and he knew that he would never leave. As the elder brother he had a responsibility towards his Da and his sisters but he also knew in his heart that he was bereft of the courage to risk all outside the confines of this place where he had been born.

The confrontation with Henry had taken up valuable time and as they reached the outskirts of town they heard the shrill whistle of the Dublin train, the sound it made as it left on its journey north, they would now have to take the night boat twenty four hours later. They got to the station and found a spot against a wall in the lee of the wind and settled down for the night. Now, lying on the cold hard floor of the platform and trying to muster the means to entertain the day, Edward suddenly became aware of a tall, grey haired upright figure dressed in black standing over him. He looked up.

”Good day Edward and what may I ask are you doing here at this time in the morning? You look as if you’ve been here all night and who is this fellow beside you?”

“Ah, ah reverend Henderson.” was all the shocked Edward could manage as he struggled to move his thoughts from the past into the present. He scrambled to his feet giving Thomas a dig in the ribs on the way up, brushed his clothes down and stood looking up at the stern face of the man whose sermons had put the fear of god into his soul from a very young age. Thomas hadn’t moved so Edward, feeling a desperate need for support for what he knew would be a fierce interrogation, gave him a kick.

“We’re waiting for the Dublin train sir. Going up looking for work” he lied.

“Not going any further than that, I trust” responded the suspicious reverend.

“Ed, who’s this feller” interjected Thomas from the ground.

“The reverend James Henderson, our vicar, he knows the family, you’ve met him, he buried Ma back in ‘81” Edward blurted out.

“Ah yes I remember, good morning your honour, lovely morning so it is” said Thomas as he rose stiffly from the ground.

“You’re Thomas, from county Antrim, as I remember. I never forget a face. Edward tells me that you are both off to Dublin to find work”

The look of confusion on Thomas face at this statement confirmed the suspicions the reverend Henderson held that Dublin was not to be the final destination for the two men. He turned to Edward.

“Edward, have you lied to me? I wouldn’t have believed it possible, what would your Da think, you lying to a man of the cloth. Now tell me the truth, where are you planning to go”

Edward, overawed by the man, could find no words but Thomas, having recovered his composure, squared up to the man and spoke for both of them.

“We’re going to America to find our future” and then followed up with a plea for support from his cousin. “That’s right, isn’t it Ed?”

Edward stood between these two protagonists still unable to formulate a coherent thought.

“Is that correct, Edward?” the reverend Henderson demanded.

“Of course it is, I’ve just told you” continued Thomas.

“Young man, let Edward respond for himself.”

The reverend Henderson turned to Edward.

“Edward?” he demanded.

“Yes sir, we are, going to America”

“Now Edward, tell me why you are going to America.” and to Thomas. “Not you”

“To find a better life for ourselves and our families, there’s no future here” Edward stammered, reciting the mantra that his cousin had drummed into him.

The reverend, shocked and believing that such a move would lead inevitably to the breaking of the bond between Edward and his family responded to this news.

“Edward, I hope you have thought this through. I have known you and your family for many years, even if not in church as often as I would have liked. I believe it is my sacred duty to ensure that my flock remains safe and together, and I do believe that if you go to America you’ll never see this place again or your family, your Da, your brothers, your sisters? It is my experience that families rarely follow” he paused to gather his thoughts and then “What about your Da, what does he think? What do your brothers and sisters think?”

“Da’s alright about it, well not exactly alright but he has given us his blessing”

“Have you thought about the money you bring into the home? How will they survive without that?”

Thomas, seeing Edward struggling to respond fought back in defence of his cousin and the plans so carefully made.

“Don’t you talk to him like that, we’re going because we have no choice but to leave and nor do his brothers and sisters coming up behind, and we will be reunited. So leave him alone”

Edward at last finding in himself a deep belief as to why he was going to America summoned the courage to face the reverend Henderson.

“He’s right, we have to try” he said quietly. “Da agrees with what we’ve planned , he doesn’t like it but he knows it has to be. Now please leave us alone and if you can find it in your heart, say a prayer for us, if not, so be it”

Edward, tears in his eyes, turned and walked away. Thomas continued looking at the reverend Henderson, waiting to make sure that the battle was won before turning to follow his cousin to the end of the platform.

Oblivious to the people who had gathered on the platform the reverend Henderson, who had witnessed this scene many times before sighed and then evoked a prayer for the safety of the

two young men before him. He turned on his heel and walked with measured gait towards the sanctity of his church.

Edward moved towards the end of the platform, eyes searching the track, then the sound of the whistle, a scattering of birds in the sky, cattle disturbed in the fields, smoke muddying the clear blue sky. It came into sight, a mighty beast bellowing out smoke and steam, metal wheels crunching the rails. Edward clenched his body as he stood his ground against this invading force. It was upon him, and engulfed by the power of its being he instinctively closed his eyes. The noise stretched his ear drums to breaking point, the smoke choked him, flying ash burnt his skin, his whole being was in shock. A screech of brakes, carriages fighting against each other, then a momentary silence before the familiar sounds of the day were slowly returned to him. He opened his eyes, people engaging with each other, normality of a sort had resumed.

The two cousins reached Dublin station four hours later and walked the quarter of a mile to the landing stage before boarding the Dublin to Liverpool packet. At ten o'clock that evening the boat slipped quietly out through the mouth of the Liffey into the Irish sea. The two men settled down on the upper deck in the lee of the funnel pulling their heavy coats around them making themselves ready for whatever the weather could throw at them. As it turned out the sea was as calm as could be expected and the boat reached Liverpool eight hours later with them both having grabbed a few hours sleep. They disembarked, albeit dishevelled and unshaven, and enquired of a Dockyard policeman as to how to get to Kirkdale, where Edward's brother William and his family resided.

"Follow that road, Great Howard Street for about four miles, it then changes its name to Derby Road and when you get to Bankhall Street, ask again. It should take you about two hours"

They thanked the man then set off and just before eleven o'clock they were standing outside number twenty Miranda street. It was Edward who knocked at the door, it was his sister Mary Jane who opened it.

"Ed what are you doing here, and Tom, is that you? Come in, come in"

Edward stepped through the open door and put his arms round his sister.

"Come here sis, give us a hug and tell us how you are getting on. How's Mary Anne and the new arrival?"

As he and Thomas moved through the house and into the front room Mary Jane closed the door behind them and shouted up the stairs

"Mary, its Ed and Tom, come down, come and say hello"

In the front room was a young child playing on the floor.

"Hello young lady, you must be Margaret Jane, come and give your uncle a hug" directed Edward, at which, never having seen this man before, she immediately burst into tears and ran to hide behind Mary Jane's skirt.

“This is your uncle Ed and he’s your uncle Tom, they’ve come over from Ireland to see you and your baby brother so stop crying and go and say hello” she explained. But Margaret Jane remained transfixed, preferring to stay in the security of the folds of her aunt’s skirt. At that moment an elderly lady came into the room.

“Ed, this is Mrs Williams, Mary’s Ma. Mrs Williams this is our brother Edward and him over there is our cousin Tom, he’s from county Antrim”

Mrs Williams nodded and Edward moved over to shake her hand.

“Da says hello and hopes that you are well”

“Yes I am thank you, I remember your Da, a nice gentleman. Now sit down” she fussed “I am sure you could do with a mug of tea” and without waiting for a reply she returned to the back parlour.

Edward turned to Mary Jane “Mrs Williams, she seems a nice lady, orders you about a bit does she?” he said sheepishly.

“Forget Mrs Williams, what are you doing here” Mary Jane demanded.

“Yes, she can be a bit of a dragon, try’s to do everything but she’s lovely really but sometimes it’s a real problem for me to be allowed to do anything”

“And the kids how are they?”

“Fine, Margaret Jane is lovely, although a bit of a handful and William Henry, well he’s a baby and all that that means. Mary Anne will be down just as soon as she’s fedhim”

“So you’ll be going back home soon?”

Mary Jane looked up sharply.

“Is there something bad happening back home?”

“No, everything’s all right” responded Edward. But before Mary Jane had time to question her brother further Thomas interjected.

“You’d better tell her”

“Tell me what, what’s the matter?” demanded Mary Jane. “Why are you here? What’s been going on”

Edward, tired from the past few days and taken back by the urgency in her voice responded with a brusqueness he did not intend.

“Tom and I are on our way to America, we sail tonight at ten o’clock. We thought you and William and Mary Anne ought to know”

Mary Jane sat down, stunned by this news.

“Oh my god, why, what does Da say?”

Edward, now faced with an interrogation much more personal than that from the reverend Henderson once again had a feeling of helplessness.

“He’s fine with it. Well not fine but he has given us his blessing”

“But he’s an old man, couldn’t you wait until.....” she couldn’t finish the words “he’ll be heart broken” was all she could say in argument.

“No, no you don’t understand, we’re only going to see what it’s like. We’ll be back in a couple of months and if it’s alright we can work out how best to get all the family over there”

“Don’t be stupid, once you get there you won’t come back”

The room fell silent again save for a snuffle from Margaret Jane, then Mary Jane spoke again.

“And what about me? Now I really will have to go back. Look after the house, Lizzie can’t be asked to do it, she has school to attend”

Edward was quick to respond.

“No, don’t worry, she’s doing a grand job. I’d never of thought it but she’s ordering Da and John around as if she’d been in charge for years. John say’s for you to stay as long as you’re needed. Don’t get me wrong but I think Lizzie’d be a bit put out if you came back too soon”

“Two months you say?”

“Yes, two or three, then we come back and work out how to get the whole family over there”

“You mean all of us?” she said in surprise.

“Well yes, whoever wants to go”

“Da and John?”

“Well maybe not. But you, and Sarah and Lizzie and Joseph and William, no reason why not”

“James and Henry?”

“Yes them to, there must be constabulary in America, it’d be easy for them to find a job. That’s why we’re going, just to find out”

Mary Jane turned to Thomas.

“What about you, do you believe in what he’s saying?”

“Yes, I’ve talked about it with my Ma and Da many times it and we want to give it a go. It might take a few years but as each one of us goes so it’ll be easier to get the money over there for the next one. You see, in five years time we’ll all be Americans, now wouldn’t that be great”

Mary Jane looked at him with disdain.

“Thomas Bremble, not all of us want to be American and I don’t care about your family, what they think. You’ve obviously made up your mind and I only have your word for it about how your lot up north are thinking. I’m just concerned about my family and whether I’ll see this little brother of mine again”

Edward looked at his sister in surprise and not without a little pride.

“Mary Jane, I never knew you cared for me like that” he joked. It was then his turn to be impaled by a stare.

“This is no joking matter. Does William know anything about this plan of yours?”

“No he doesn’t. I was hoping to tell him meslf but we missed the packet yesterday and we have to get back to the Dock by six this evening at the latest”

“In that case you won’t see him. I’ll have to tell him”

“Ah, he’ll be alright with it, after all he was the first to leave home, so he knows how it is and anyway as I said I’ll be back in a couple of months and we can make a final decision about whether we all go or not”

Mary Jane paused as if making a decision and then

“All right then, if you’ve got Da’s blessing I’ll give you mine but you better make sure you come back” she finished.

“Ah sure I will, now let’s go and see that little nephew of mine” Edward responded, somewhat embarrassed by the tenderness of his sisters voice.

An hour and a half later and after a tearful departure, Edward was saying his farewells to his brother William. He and Thomas had called on the Bakery where William was employed and, being early evening William, with the sweat from the heat of the ever alight ovens trickling down his arms and face, was finishing his days work before handing over to the night shift. He was surprised to see his younger brother.

“Ed, what are you doing here, you come over to help out?” he exclaimed wiping his hands on his apron before embracing his brother who then proceeded to explain the reason why he was there. William, always the elder brother responded to the news in typical fashion.

“So little brother, that’s what you too have been cooking up these last few months, planning a trip across the pond. Can’t say as I’m surprised, I heard as to how Tom had been entertaining you all with his tales of the wealth just waiting for anyone willing to give it a go. Well, good on you and when you get settled over there send us a bob or two and we might come over to join you”

At this the two brothers had embraced and now two hours later Edward found himself standing on the landing stage looking up at the ship that would be carrying him, his cousin and a myriad of other people across the ocean. The *Bothnia* was one of the new iron hulled steam ships of the Cunard line, about ten years old, but also carrying three masts proclaiming her as a barque. Her smoke stack, set behind the foremost mast, was emitting a steady stream of black acrid smoke as she was being made ready for the voyage ahead. All round Edward was the hustle and bustle of passengers being seen off by friends and family, some in tears with others in joyful anticipation demanding that their loved ones deliver letters, messages and gifts to those who had preceded them and clearly with an expectation that it would be their turn next. Edward’s overwhelming feeling was one of disorganised chaos with people moving round seemingly at random, their voices mingling with the sound of the ships already moving down the Mersey and of the trucks, carriages and trains arriving at the dock side to disgorge yet more people and goods. Edward was mesmerised, he had never imagined that so many people from so many different places could gather in such proximity. Overwhelmingly there were voices from all parts of Britain, their different accents proclaiming both their place of origin and their station in life and with many having clearly taken a similar journey as his across the Irish Sea to be here. There were others clearly of a foreign origin, mouthing words that were alien to his ear and for which he had no way of knowing their meaning. What intrigued him most were the dark people from Africa and India and the China

men from the Far East, all plainly members of the crews of the multitude of ships currently in port. There was smells familiar to him from the river and those not so familiar from the warehouses that towered above everything and which defined the world of the Liverpool waterfront. But most of all there was the smells of the people that formed the tightly packed throng surrounding him, the washed and the unwashed, the sweetly perfumed ladies, the cigars of the wealthy men and, strangest of all, were the differing smells of those from countries beyond the seas. High up on the bridge he could see the officers of the ship supervising the crew as they made the ship ready to sail. Others were helping passengers come on board, some laden with luggage and others like him with just a single carry bag containing all their worldly possessions. Edward, lost in a world of wonderment, sucked in all these sights and sounds. It was Thomas who broke the spell.

“Come on Ed let’s get aboard. I’ve found out where we’re birthed, it’s down in the bowls of the ship but nice and warm and don’t worry, it’ll only take just over a week.” and with that the two of them forced their way through the milling crowd and up the gang plank. As he reached the deck Edward glanced down on the throng below, to his eye they looked like a swarm of ants who had been disturbed from their hiding place beneath a slab of stone with no rhyme or reason as to how they were moving other than to eventually make their way up the gang plank onto the ship. He then looked towards the city, it’s dimly lit streets stretched into a black darkness with occasional shadowy figures flitting in and out of the light from the street lamps. He then looked towards the river into an inky mass of space given shape only by ghost like ships sliding downstream towards the open sea and tiny specks of light from the homes on the farther shore. Edward could feel and hear the whole of the ship throbbing to the beat of the powerful engines at its heart, the heart that would take it’s cargo of souls to a future that for most of them could only be guessed at.

22nd May 1883 New York

Dear Da

Just a short letter to let you know that we have now arrived safely in New York. It's an amazing place, nothing like anything I have ever seen before, not even in Dublin. The buildings are so tall and there are so many people here from all over the world. Tom and I are staying with a family from Belfast for a few nights before we go on to a place called Nebraska, about 1000 miles west from here. It's only in this last 20 years or so that it's been cleared of American Indians and the land given over for farming and there's still plenty more land for the having. We've signed on with one of the largest ranches in the State, we'll work the season and see if we can save enough to put a deposit down on our own land. Its good money and I should also be able to send some back to you and the family.

We stayed overnight in Liverpool with William and Mary Anne and saw the children. Hard to believe Margaret Jane is now 2 years old, she had her second birthday a couple of months ago and little William Henry, just 5 weeks old and named after his Da and you, and looks just like you. They're all fine, William is working as a baker in a local store, been there six months or more.

Da, please forgive me for the way me and Tom left. I know I should have spoken to you about our plans but I didn't know the words and I didn't want to leave with harsh things having been said.

Give the girls a hug and tell Joseph to keep out of trouble. Don't be too hard on John, he really did try to stop me.

I'll write again soon

You're Affectionate Son

Ed

(5866 words)