

THE NORFOLKS OF EAST DRAYTON



The Old Hall

THE EAST DRAYTON NORFOLKS
A FAMILY HISTORY

BY

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Foreword

This short account of the East Drayton Norfolks is a joint effort, for I could not have attempted the work without enlisting the help, readily given, of my cousin, Leslie Norfolk. For many years he has accumulated "Norfolk-lore", and his genealogical tree of our family is a thorough and most interesting piece of research. Besides supplying a good deal of factual material he has supplemented our knowledge of earlier Norfolks by contributing a scholarly preface.

My own contribution has been to add background information, to integrate the facts and to write the text. We thought it likely that some record of our family's history would be of interest to our relatives and to our descendants.

We should like to thank Mr JH Norfolk and Mr RWS Norfolk for permitting us to include in the preface some aspects of their own research into families, which bear our name.

Further, we should like to record our sincere thanks to Mr William (Bill) Lee for his kindness in making possible the reproduction of this work.

WR Norfolk
Nottingham

November 1980

Preface

Conjecture as to the origin of one's name is fascinating. Ours, more common than one would think, is probably a "place name". In earlier days spelling was optional, so it is not surprising to find the name appearing as Northffolke, Norfolc, Norfack, Norff and so on; all of which in what follows are transcribed as Norfolk, except where the context calls for the original spelling.

I have met or corresponded with several Norfolks who are engaged upon genealogical research, and in particular must mention two who have produced a considerable amount of very interesting information. RWS (Bill) Norfolk (RWSN) of Hornsea has developed his own East Riding tree as a possible extension of a much earlier York tree starting in about 1250 and John H Norfolk (JHN) of Northwood, Middlesex has researched his own West Riding lot. In the absence of a South Riding I have christened my effort the East Drayton (Notts) Norfolks. It cannot be proved by any of the available evidence that there is a connection between these families, but there is of course the possibility that they do, in fact, share a common ancestor.

JHN has put forward four suggestions as to the origin of our name:-

- 1 Those who were indeed the North Folk. That is those whose appearance linked them to the Viking element in our nation's ancestry, and thus in the 12th and 13th centuries, when the need for surnames arose, acquired that of Norfolk.
- 2 Those who moved out of the county of Norfolk and acquired the name de Norfolk in their new abode.
- 3 Those who worked in the household of an early Duke of Norfolk and who had taken over the Lord of the Manor's name.
- 4 Those who were brought up in a foundling hospital. It was the custom for the nobility in days gone by to give their name to some of the inmates, as often the children were nameless. The Dukes of Norfolk have been benefactors in this matter on many occasions.

RSWN suggests that the Yorkshire Norfolks originated as (2) above. The baronial family of Warenne had two holdings, one in Norfolk and the other in the manor of Wakefield in Yorkshire. Possibly some early member of the family was a feudal tenant of the Warenne's in Norfolk and moved to become a feudal tenant of the same family in Wakefield; if so he would naturally be called "de Norfolk". Support for this is that Martin Norfolk's son, Nicholas, held land in Wakefield at a later date which made him a feudal tenant of the Warenne's while Martin's grandson served under the command of the Earl of Surrey (Warenne) at the end of the 13th century during the war with the Scots, and must have been present at the Battle of

Dunbar. A document relating to Wakefield (or Nostell) was witnessed by Willemus de Norfolk between 1155 and 1175, and between 1202 and 1219 documents relating to Sandal were witnessed by Magistro Gilberto de Norfolk. Martin Norfolk, citizen of York, was the overseer of the King's works at York Castle between 1245 and 1251, and as this was the period when Clifford's Tower was built he presumably had a hand in the construction work involved. He was also Bailiff of York in 1249 and owned land at Naburn at that time.

An early connection with Nottinghamshire is found in "Honours and Knights Fees" by William Farrer, Vol 111, pages 110-115. "Towards the end of 1205 Gilbert de Norfolk had died and his relict, Emma de Bello Fago, gave 600 marks for the inheritance at Lowdham in Notts". Also, "The gift of Gilbert de Norfolk of the quittance of the passage of the river Trent at Gunthorpe and the quittance of the gateleie at Ludham". (Fine Rolb 1328).

RWSN points out that generally when any members of the family are mentioned on documents dated before 1400 they are described as "de Norfolk" indicating that the name was in fact a "place name". After 1400 the prefix "de" started to be dropped. A good example of this is Nicholas Norfolk, for on at least twelve documents written during his lifetime he is referred to as "de Northfolk" but on his tombstone in the church at Ancaster Melbis (the parish church for Naburn), the "de" is dropped and he is described as "Nicholas Northfolk". Shortly afterwards the Northfolk became Norfolk as is shown by a document relating to Nicholas's son, William, in which he is described as "William Norfolk alias Northfolk, gentelman of York".

JHN refers to the Harlein Society's "Knights of Edward III which notes a Richard de Norfolk whose arms are blazoned "Gules a fesse between two chevrons argent (Segar)" and in "The Ancestor" Vol 7, page 185, in an article entitled "A Fifteenth Century Roll of Arms" one "Robard Northfolke of Yorkechyre's arms are blazoned party gules and silver (sic) with two bars countercoloured". From the Yorkshire Archaeological Society's Record Series, Vol 31, he also notes that a Robert Norfolk served on an inquisition jury at Scarborough on 7 July, 1281, 13 July, 1297, 5 Sept, 1298, 20 Oct, 1298, and from Vol 37 of the same series notes that the (presumably) same Robert served again on 22 July, 1303. RWSN has tried to prove that the arms mentioned in "Knights of Edward I" belong to Richard de Norfolk, a grandson of Martin who was killed in Scotland in 1301, but without success. These arms are not similar to those of Nicholas of Naburn which were "party gules and argent with two bars countercharged", as shown on his tombstone. The same arms were born by his son, Robert, as described in Harlein M.SS.2169 (the source of the Ancestor article mentioned above).

Records at the Borthwick Institute, York, contain many references to the Yorkshire Norfolks far too numerous to mention here and covering a large area of the county. Of more interest to our branch of the family are wills of William de Northfolk of



Pontefract, 1401, William at Naburn (see RWSN's tree) 1471, William at Misterton, 1541, Charles at Misterton, 1545, Thomas at Elkesley, 1574, Robert at Misterton, 1595. and so on. For general interest an extract of the will of William de Northfolk of Pontefract, dated 21 April 1401, by kind permission of the Borthwick Institute, of William Norfolk's will made at East Drayton in 1625, and a copy of the original will on parchment of William Norfolk, dated 26 January, 1683, are reproduced.

The earliest East Drayton Norfolk for whom I have documents is the William who died intestate before 1600 leaving less than £40. His son, William also, was granted the

administration of this on 7 January, 1600. From then onwards the succession is clear and well-documented. But where did this William come from?

A study of some of the wills and references I have suggests as his father one John Northfolke who was alive in 1541, and who was possibly the brother of William Northfolke, a husbandman of Misterton, Notts. This William's will, dated 14 May, 1541, mentions John's two sons, Thomas and William and daughter Elizabeth. Although referred to as the children of John, Thomas and Elizabeth or William and Elizabeth could have been husband and wife. A Thomas Northfolke lived at Elkesley, near East Drayton, and made a will on 23 May, 1574 in which he mentions his wife, Elizabeth. Could this couple be "John's children"?

Misterton is a village some 12 miles north of East Drayton, on the left bank of the River Trent. Whether John Northfolke lived thereabouts and who was his father are subjects for further research; he may even have lived in East Drayton for all we know. But it is interesting to note that two of the witnesses to the will of Robert Norfolk (obit 1591) were William and Thomas Pettinger, a name which occurs later in East Drayton. It was a Pettinger who accompanied grandfather William Norfolk on the famous train ride to Nottingham Goose Fair in 1847, described later; they were probably cousins, assuming that grandfather Norfolk's friend, William Pettinger, was the son of George Pettinger who married Mary Norfolk (our grandfather's Aunt Mary) at East Drayton on 13 August, 1808.

It could, of course, be that we East Drayton Norfolks are connected with that 1205 Gilbert de Norfolk of Lowdham, Notts and the Trent crossing at Gunthorpe. After all, Gunthorpe is only 25 miles up river from East Drayton. Another interesting possibility is that we are descendants of persons unknown who, way back, arrived in East Drayton from somewhere "up North", perhaps peacefully, but perhaps not, settled there and became known as the Northfolk.

Leslie W Norfolk
Bath
November 1980

Our Rural Background

For approximately 350 years our ancestors lived in the village of East Drayton which is about four miles north of Tuxford in North Nottinghamshire. In fact, twin sisters, Mary and Martha Norfolk, then in their eighties, were living in the village in 1944.

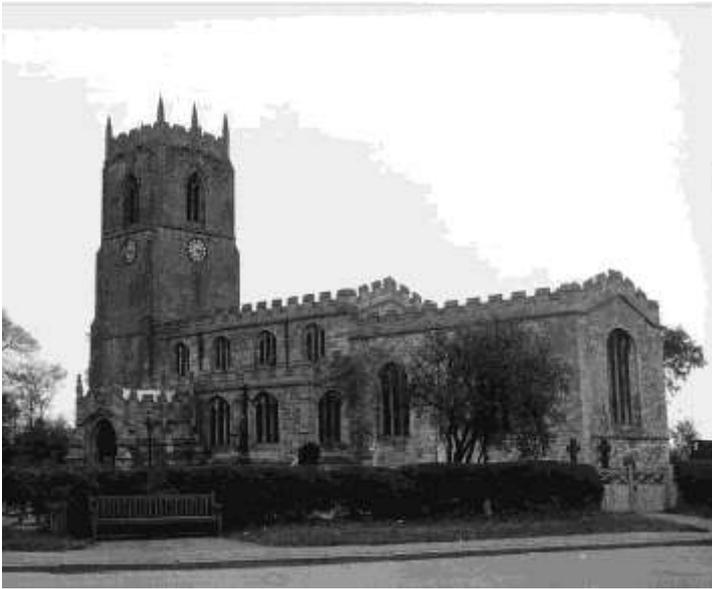
As Leslie explains in his Preface the first East Drayton Norfolk he has been able to trace was one William Northfolke, who died shortly before 1600. In his "Antiquities of Notts" (1677) Thoroton gives a list of those said to be land-owners in East Drayton in 1612, and this includes William Northfolke, yeoman, son of the William mentioned above.

A glance at the early history of the village may be of interest. As "The Place Names of Notts" by JEB Gover and others reveals the village has been known by various names down the ages, such as Draiton, Magna Drayton, Estdrayton, Drayton-in-the clay and Grett Drayton. The word "dray" implies dragging or the stiff ascent of a slope which necessitates dragging.

In the Doubleday Collection at the Nottingham Central Library an article by "WED" refers to the Domesday Book entry for East Drayton. Apparently the village was a dependency of the royal manor of Dunham, and "WED" concluded that its population, probably about 150, was largely of Danish origin, in 1086.

A number of our ancestors lie at rest in the churchyard of the ancient and dignified parish church at East Drayton. However, except for a few wills and parish records we have only a limited knowledge of our forebears, but perhaps we can visualize the sort of lives they would lead. The men and the boys would labour to wrest a living from the land, their toil unrelieved by steam-driven machinery until about the middle of the 19th century. The women and girls would concentrate on domestic duties, no doubt lending a hand with dairy-work and at such busy periods as seed-time and harvest. Social life would be centred on the parish church, which of course would be the largest communal building in the village.

Arthur Mee in his "Nottinghamshire" considers that this church of St Peter and St Paul is a fine example of the late medieval style of architecture. He adds that the tower is of the 14th and 15th centuries and refers to a handsome 15th century porch. White in his "Directory of Notts" (1864) writes of "a fine and spacious Gothic fabric with a lofty tower and four bells". Other writers praise a fine old rood screen, and state that the interior of the church was completely restored in 1873.



Events such as christenings, weddings and funerals would, of course, arouse special interest in a close-knit rural community. Imagine the excitement when the reading of the banns confirmed that Cousin George had named the happy day and was to marry Elizabeth after a leisurely courtship. Think of the sighs and head-shakings when the passing-bell informed the villagers that Old Tom had slipped across the border which

separates this world from the next. We may conclude that through the centuries many generations of Norfolks attended Sunday services at this ancient church, and played their part in the religious and social life of the parish.

Travel, of course, would be slow, and difficult in the pre-railway era. Until about the middle of the 19th century most villagers would have made journeys on foot, on horseback or by farm-wagon to neighbouring towns and villages.

Few would have ventured further south than Nottingham, though an occasional intrepid traveller would actually have reached London. How eagerly such a bold adventurer would have been listened to on his return to the village.

"WED" describes an interesting link, in the article previously mentioned, between East Drayton and the Pilgrim Fathers whose village home was a few miles away at Scrooby. It seems that early in the 17th century Alice Rayner, whose family were important land-owners in East Drayton for many years, became the second wife of William Bradford. He, it will be recalled, became Governor of the Pilgrim Fathers' settlement in America. Speaking of the Rayners, Thoroton in his "Antiquities" tells us that John Rayner had the largest share of land in East Drayton and he, as Sheriff, proclaimed King Charles on his return to England in 1660 after his exile on the Continent. As a matter of interest, Leslie discovered a deed of land transfer between William Norfolk and John Rayner, dated 24 September, 1700.

We know that in 1669 the churchwarden at East Drayton, another William Norfolk, signed the Marriages and Burials Certificate for that year with a cross - a reminder that education for working people was not common before Forster's great Act of 1870. One wonders what that William thought about the stirring times through which he had lived, since both the county and the country were rent by the Civil War. While Nottingham Castle was held for Parliament, Newark was staunch in its support of the King.

An interesting extract, dated 25 October, 1689, from "Nottinghamshire Subsidies" edited by George Marshall (1895) gives us the following information: "Then assessment made for our good towne of East Drayton at 12 pence a pound of rent for one yeare granted by Act of Parliament for the aid and necessary defence of their Realmes of their Majesties, King William and Queen Mary, made by us whose names are here subscribed:

		£	s	d
Madam Rayner	for half	2	14	10
John Rayner	demesne each	2	14	10
Willi Norfolke			14	5
Leo Norfolke and his owne			15	8
John Norfolke			5	4
Willi Norfolke for Barthrop land			1	0
Willi Norfolke for Sowerberke Close			1	0

Assors. John Munke, Willi Norfolke."

From this extract we learn that our ancestors in the 17th century paid their proper contribution to the state; further, since Willi Norfolke was entrusted with the duties of assessor they must have been regarded as responsible citizens.

It appears that the village in 1790 was of considerable size and contained a number of well-built properties. One of its industries was hop-growing. While its population in 1821 was 266 the rural exodus of Victorian times was responsible for its decline to 161 in 1899.

We learn from the Rev Howard Chadwick's little book on "The History of Dunham-on-Trent"(1924), a village about three miles east of East Drayton that in the last decade of the 18th century (circa 1796) John and Leonard Norfolk were both freeholders in the manor and soke of Dunham. A glance at Leslie's tree shows us that John Norfolk (1715-1800) and his wife, Sarah, had ten children, including John and Leonard to whom Chadwick's entry probably refers, though in fact their father was still alive in 1796. The word "soke" is interesting, and one meaning was formerly the right of a miller to grind all corn within a prescribed area.

After centuries of use the old open-field system of farming was abandoned and was replaced by enclosure, a process which was taking place over much of rural England in Georgian times. In 1825 the land in East Drayton was enclosed, that is hedged or fenced around and made into separate farmsteads. Perhaps you can imagine the consternation such an upheaval would cause in the village, accompanied by speculation, fears and anxious waiting for the commissioners' decision on land apportionment. Under the Enclosure Award the Norfolks holding land were William (senior), William (minor) and Thomas; while a fourth parcel of land was held by John, William, Thomas and Joseph. These ancestors of ours were

probably all the descendants of the John and Sarah referred to in the previous paragraph. In total the Norfolks' holdings were modest.

Under the Enclosure Award the Norfolks, along with other land-holders, had to accept responsibility for the maintenance of roads, drains and bridges in the parish. Leslie discovered a document, dated 1826, which showed that our ancestors had paid their appropriate contribution for that year.

For a glimpse of East Drayton in the mid-19th century we turn to White's "Director of Notts" (1864) and learn that in 1861 there were 59 houses and 263 inhabitants. White tells us that the trustees of Lord HM Howard received the great tithes.

A study of Leslie's tree, reveals some interesting points. Although most of the Norfolks were farmers a few followed other occupations; for example, John (9A) early in the 18th century was a blacksmith, and George, born in 1830, was a joiner and wheelwright. A healthy country life was certainly conducive to longevity since John (8E) (1715-1800) lived to be 85; his sons John, William, Thomas and Joseph lived to the ages of 94, 75, 83 and 91 respectively. A further insight into bygone customs occurs in the case of John (7A) who died in 1761, and his wife Mary (they had four daughters all named Mary and only the fourth survived). It seems to have been common in former years when a child died in infancy for the parents to give the same Christian name to the next child of the same sex born to them. Of course infant mortality was alarmingly high in previous centuries when hygienic and medical knowledge were minimal.

One of the family wills which Leslie has transcribed - a laborious task - makes interesting reading. The religious sentiments expressed in it may sound strange to us but were quite normal when William Norfolk (4D) made his will in 1625. He prefaced it by saying "... first I commend and comitt my soule into the hands of Almighty God who gave it mee, trusting by and through the merits of Jesus Christ to have my sinns forgiven mee and be saved, and my body to be buried in the churchyard of East Drayton" Later he itemised the goods he wished to bestow including "... my best bound carte, a plough with the coulter and share, and my grey mare". Other goods bequeathed to his family include "a handiron, a paire of tonges, a pair of pincers, a handsawe with all my wimbles and other tools for husbandry". To his daughter, Joan, he bequeathed his "glass and pewter with all the linige and bedding aforesaid for her own use".

My great grandfather, William Norfolk (10D) (1793-1872) would be about 32 years old when the Enclosure Award was made. He married Elizabeth Newbert (1792-1878), and they had five children. The old couple were both alive at the age of 78 and living in East Drayton when the Census Return for 1871 was compiled. William was described as a land-owner who farmed 50 acres and employed one

man. It is reasonable to suppose that the couple spent the whole of their lives in East Drayton.

Whereabouts in the village did the Norfolks live? you may wonder. We know that in 1871 their address was 3, Down Street, but we believe that this was not the original home of the Norfolk family.

On Church Lane stands a most interesting dwelling known as the Old Manor House, which, by courtesy of the owner, Mrs Hamnet, I was able to visit in the summer of 1980. The widow of a well-known East Drayton resident and former church-warden Mrs Hamnet was about to vacate the house in which she had lived for 42 years. When the Hamnets bought it in 1938 it was a condemned farmhouse, which by dint of hard work over several years they were able to restore and renovate.

Mrs Hamnet thought it possible that the property was originally an oak-framed and plastered structure before the present brick building was erected. One room has a timbered ceiling, and another has a "squint" - a window which allowed the master of the house to keep an eye on his servants who occupied an adjacent room.

On the wall of one room is a coat of arms worked in plaster, showing the lion and the unicorn. A shield bears the inscription "W.I.1624" and has the words "Honi soit qui mal y Pense" (the motto of the Order of the Garter), and below are the initials "T.H."

Another intriguing feature of the house, set in the rear wall, is a small door which the Hamnets discovered under many layers of wallpaper. On opening this door they found in the thickness of the wall a narrow passage. For what purposes, I wonder, did previous occupants use this convenient recess? Could it have been a hiding-place, for instance?

A former owner of the Old Manor House was Mr Norfolk Scott who died in 1935 at the age of 88, having lived there all his life. Apparently his father and grandfather lived in this house before him. An article in a local newspaper reporting Mr Scott's death described the house then as a thatched, two-storied building, originally known as the Old Hall. The kitchen contained a baking oven and two ancient coppers, one for making cheese and one for brewing.

The article goes on to say that the house was once the home of the Norfolk family. Mr Norfolk Scott believed that at some time in the 18th century his ancestors came to Laxton, and his grandfather, John Scott, moved from there and settled in East Drayton. Here romance stepped into the story, for John met Elizabeth (10A), the only child of Thomas Norfolk (9D), (1754-1837) and his wife Jane (1760-1838) and persuaded her to marry him, which she did in 1803. Was this, I wonder, the point at which the house passed into the hands of the Scotts, or was it on the death

of Elizabeth's parents? A study of the deeds of this house would be most interesting, but this has not so far been possible.

William Norfolk (11B) (1824-1899)

My grandfather, the son of William (10D) and Elizabeth mentioned above was born in 1824; fortunately we know much more about his life and times. As a young man he kept a rough diary contained in three note-books, and these tell us not only about his own affairs but about the social life of the village. I will deal more fully with these note-books in a later section of the Norfolk saga.

William worked on his father's land, and evidently had some elementary education, but it is fairly clear that he was largely self-educated. His note-books, compiled between the ages of 19 and 26 suggest an observant, methodical, rather conventional young man who worked hard but enjoyed any social activities that came his way.



William Norfolk (1824-1899)
and
Mary Norfolk (nee Preston)
(1837-1919)

In 1860, when he was 36, he married Mary Preston (1837-1919), a farmer's daughter of 23 who was born at Carburton, a village near Thoresby Hall. The marriage took place in the village of Markham Clinton. In later years Mary would explain with a twinkle that she accepted William's proposals only because of his persistence!

They spent their early married life in East Drayton where their daughter, Mary (12A) (my Aunt Polly) was born in 1861. Three years later William leased from the Saville Notts Estate (Henry Saville of Rufford Abbey) a farm known As Inkersall Grange, consisting of 412 acres. The farm is near Bilsthorpe, just off the A614, and is now owned by Eastwoods, the well-known egg-producers.

We believe that William went bankrupt at Inkersall Grange Farm, and one family story maintains that the land was over-run by rabbits. William and Mary spent about five years there, a period in which three sons were born: William (12B) (Uncle Will) 10 August, 1865, Joseph Preston (12C) (my father) 5 April, 1867 and Robert (12D) (Uncle Bob) 5 July, 1869. No doubt as a result of William's financial difficulties, which may have been aggravated by his drinking habits, the family moved to a smaller farm of 152 acres in the village of Darlton, adjacent to and south of East Drayton, in 1869 or 1870. According to the 1871 census they lived in a farm-house on Stepping Lane in that year when William employed two men and a boy. It was here that John Tom (12E) (Uncle Jack) was born in October, 1870.

The Norfolks lived here for nine or ten years, and Uncle Bob recalled the daily walk to school with his brothers, a distance of about four miles. Apart from the five children already mentioned William and Mary had a baby daughter, Sarah Elizabeth who lived for only a day; they also had another son, Francis Newbert (12F), born on 28 March, 1873 who died in boyhood.

In the autumn of 1879 William and his family left Darlton and settled in Warwickshire, at Dunchurch, a village near Rugby. They lived for a short time at

Onley Grange Farm where William was employed as a farm bailiff by a wealthy colliery proprietor, John Lancaster. You may wonder why William at the age of 55, with a wife and five children left the district in which he had spent the whole of his life. We do not know the answer, but it is worth recalling that the period 1873-1896 is known as the Great Depression in English agriculture; and William, like many other farmers, may have run into difficulties, or simply preferred the certainties of a regular income.

At Onley Grange Farm William apparently became a reformed character and did much to improve a property which needed attention. In addition he was involved in the extension of the Oxford Canal to facilitate the transport of farm produce and farm supplies. In 1882 William and his family moved to Bilton Grange Farm, also in Dunchurch, and we believe he continued to act as bailiff to Mr Lancaster who died in 1884. William probably remained in the employ of the Lancaster family at Dunchurch until his death on 13 March, 1899 at the age of 74.

In a hard-working life that spanned almost the whole of the Victorian era my grandfather had witnessed many changes, not only in agriculture but in social and economic spheres. For example, the extension of education to working-class children and the steady growth of improved means of communication were of great importance to the majority of the population

Rural Observations

William's diaries were written at intervals between the years 1843 and 1851; these jottings he ungrammatically entitled 'Memorandum of Observations'. Although his entries were irregular they contain frequent comments on the weather and descriptions of the work he did each day at East Drayton. Further, there are accounts of visits to local markets, and prevailing prices are quoted; for instance, in 1843 butter was 8d to 9d per pound, while eggs sold at 8d a score; later that year cheese was sold at 40 to 50 shillings per hundred-weight! In May, 1850 he sold a cow (heifer) for £8 10s; and in October of that year four lambs were sold for 14s 6d per head.

Interesting light is thrown on the social customs of his times. Thus he writes in 1843 of a visit to a Ranters' camp meeting, which reminds us that the Ranters or Primitive Methodists were a religious sect who had seceded from the Wesleyans. Although William attended the Church of England his diaries occasionally refer to his visits to Methodist functions held locally. A Wesleyan Methodist chapel was built in the village in 1858.

On 12 November, 1843, William visited Tuxford Statutes, and observed that there was very little hiring, adding "wages very low this year". This would be the Martinmas hiring fair where servants and farm workers seeking employment were engaged. Christmas festivities are not described in William's note-books, probably because they had not then attained the popularity which they later enjoyed.

One most interesting entry is for 4 October, 1847 when William and his friend, William Pettinger, set out in the small hours to walk to Darlton, the next village, on the first stage of their visit to Nottingham Goose Fair. At Darlton two conveyances awaited them: Mr Pettinger's cart and Mr Black's gig. At 4.30 am they left the village, six in all, and "got as far as Normanton by day-break". They arrived at Newark at 7 o'clock and "put up our horses at a public-house, the sign was the "Reindeer". They then, as young William put it, "partook of some refreshment" and later in Newark watched some workmen who were constructing the new Corn Exchange.

At last the special train from Lincoln drew into the station where several hundred excited travellers awaited its arrival. The Midland line from Nottingham to Lincoln had been opened only the previous year, and this enabled William and his friends to embark on this memorable adventure.

William could see little of the countryside during the journey as "the train carriage I rode in was shut up". He adds that the train consisted of 38 carriages which were drawn by two engines. However, he did observe an ancient windmill, and he wrote of a large hill planted with trees and evergreens "Which make it look very beautiful"; almost certainly this was a reference to Colwick Woods.

On reaching Nottingham he was impressed by the vast crowds of people, which prompted him to write: "This put me in mind of the last great day when we shall all be called to one place to account for our former sins", and he concluded with the stern warning; "if not prepared for this solemn change how awful it will be". For William, theologically, there were no soft options!

The factories, houses and streets which he saw all made an impression on him. On reaching the Market Place where the Fair was formerly held he noticed that one side was crowded with cheese offered for sale. In front was Wombwell's and Hilton's collection of wild beasts, behind them was a circus as well as several side shows, bazaars and innumerable stalls.

After a sightseeing tour the party again "partook of some refreshment" (an activity which seems quite often to have engaged William's attention) and then made their way to the Cemetery, which we may think was a strange way of celebrating a day's outing, though William certainly didn't. He regarded it as "a very large and splendid burying ground, one of the most elegant places I every saw". They then walked to the Barracks, and approved of their neat and clean condition. From there they crossed the Park, admired the view of the buildings on Standard Hill then made their way to the Castle where Mortimer's Hole aroused their interest.

On returning to the Fair they mingled with the merry-makers until 7 o'clock when their train was due to leave.

At 10 o'clock they reached Newark and visited a public house where they "partook of a most excellent tea". Soon afterwards they set out for home, and William and his friend reached East Drayton" just as the clock was striking two". Surely this was an excursion which they would never forget.

In July, 1850, William went with his sister and two of her friends on a journey from Retford to Hull by rail, from there to Spurn Head and the German Ocean by the "Manchester Packet which is a very splendid one". This reminds us that steam-ships at this period were growing in popularity.

The coming of the railways and their extension in North Nottinghamshire deeply interested young William. When he went to Lincoln in 1847 he went to the station, watched the trains coming in and noted with approval, "The stationhouse is a very large and splendid building". In 1847 on a visit to Retford he watched men busily working on the railways and remarked "... but now there are a great many lines completed, and if we should be permitted to live only a few years more we shall have locomotives flying in every direction, railroads will be as common as the waggon roads are from village to village". But he added a note of caution: "There was at this time rather a stagnation among the shareholders; they could not meet their calls which caused them to turn a great many men off the lines they are making". However in

1848 he commented; "Railroads are fast increasing in this neighbourhood; they are busy making a railway from Boston to Lincoln and from there to Gainsborough".

William noted in 1850 that coal he fetched from Retford cost nine shillings a ton instead of twelve shillings which he had paid a few years earlier. Some coal there was to be bought as cheaply as six shillings and eight pence a ton, a price never known, he adds, before the opening of the local railway. He realized that railways in economic terms were beneficial to farmers, since they made it easier to obtain essential supplies such as drainage tiles, fertilisers, bricks, timber and coal, while also widening the market for the farmers' produce. He adds, "They are now busy making a new line direct from London to York. I firmly believe that they will become as common as the turnpike roads are at the present time".

One interesting village custom which William describes concerned the setting of a yard of potatoes. In May, 1848 he and others in the village each set a square yard of ground with potatoes, their purpose being to see who could produce the most weight. The uprooting ceremony was to take place on 5 November. Each contestant was to subscribe a shilling, and half of the money was to be awarded to the person who could produce the greatest weight; the second was to receive a third, and the third contestant was to have the remainder of the stake. The potatoes were not to be set before 1 May and were not to be disturbed after 1 July. How did the competition fare? William records on 5 November, "We got the yard of potatoes up, and some of them turned out very badly. The first prize was awarded to me, my square yard produced seventeen pounds, eleven ounces. John Mills won the second prize and William Byron the third". That night to celebrate the occasion a party of twenty gardeners sat down to "a most excellent supper provided by Mr Harpham at the sign of the Blue Bell".

However, William's jottings occasionally ventured beyond local affairs and farm work, for his diary reflects his views on national events. For example, he records that in 1847, "Our Sovereign made a proclamation for a general fast all over England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales", because of famine in Ireland. He adds: "We cannot call it a fast for famine, for we have not had any at present. Divine service in the afternoon was well attended". He adds: "The fast day was because of great distress in Ireland, hundreds have perished during the past winter for want of food, provisions have not been very plentiful and the prices extraordinarily great, so that poor people could hardly purchase enough to keep them from starvation. But the cause of this great destruction is through the failure of the potato crop which is the chief part of their living in Ireland".

As we have seen William commented several times on the growth of the railways, and the application of steam to farm machinery also attracted his interest. In November, 1849 he spent a morning watching the operation of the first steam threshing-machine "that ever worked in our parish". What a mechanical marvel this must have seemed to him at that time.

In the mid-19th century Free Trade was a fiercely debated issue. William tells us that in January, 1850 he went to a "protection meeting" in Retford Town Hall "for the purpose of considering the oppressed state of the country which is supposed to have arisen from the effects of Free Trade. On this occasion Lord Henry Bentinck took the chair and delivered a most excellent speech in favour of the agriculturist, and several other gentlemen addressed the meeting in a similar manner".

We learn from William that corn prices that year were lower on average than for the fast 15 years, and in 1851 he comments gloomily; “The country is now in a very depressed state; everything sells very badly and the crops are proving very deficient. I cannot see how the tenant farmer with the present price of grain is to make his payments, and it is the opinion of many people that this Free Trade system will be the means of ruining half the country, unless some plan can be adopted for us to gain protection, or else let us have general Free Trade throughout the world”.

Fortunately William's gloomy view of Free Trade was not fulfilled, and the period 1846 to 1873 is generally regarded as a “Golden Age of English agriculture”. The growth of manufacturing industry created new sources of employment, increased earnings and raised the standard of living of working people, who thus increased their demand for the farmers' produce, and in an age not yet threatened by the import of cheap wheat and meat farmers generally prospered.

Another impressive function which William attended was the funeral of the Fourth Duke of Newcastle. His diary records that on 21 January, 1851 he went to Markham Clinton to see His Grace buried. The Duke, formerly of Clumber Park and a prominent local citizen, was given an impressive burial. William records; “Between two and three hundred of the tenants rode two abreast before the hearse, then the hearse and several mourning coaches followed”. But one aspect of this ceremony disturbed William and led to this severe comment; “The behaviour of the people was very bad, for I thought it more like being at a fight than a funeral”.

A Victorian Family

These short biographies of my grandfather's family, that is of my father, my aunt and my uncles have been written to give our descendants some idea of their lives and of the times in which they lived. Their careers were influenced by their rural up-bringing, their removal to Dunchurch in 1879 and by the wider opportunities for employment available to them in the last two decades of the 19th century. Further, theirs was the generation who witnessed profound technological changes, as well as the social and political upheavals occasioned by World War 1.

The first child, Mary (Aunt Polly) who was born at East Drayton in 1861 would be 18 years old when she moved with the family to Dunchurch. In 1889, when she was living at Mount Nod, a hamlet near Coventry, she married AE Fortnam (Uncle Fred) at Westwood Heath Church on 4 February of that year. The Fortnams established a grocery business at Sheep Street in Rugby, and later also at Oxford Street. They had three daughters and a son, my cousins Ethel, Lillian, Sybil and Sydney. Uncle Fred built a number of houses in Rugby, and on his retirement the family moved to a detached house on Hillmorton Road, Rugby, where as

children my cousins, my sister and I together with our parents frequently stayed. Uncle Fred died in 1937 and Aunt Polly in 1953.

Of my uncles William is known to have been living at Bilton Grange Farm in February, 1883 when he was 17 because a draft letter of his has survived. Later he moved to Nottingham and was apprenticed to a butcher, and afterwards established his own butchery business in Grey Friar Gate, Nottingham. In 1899 he moved to a public house called the Phoenix in the Denman Street area. This venture was successful and eventually he was able to return to farming and took over Little Steeping Manor Farm in Lincolnshire. He married Sophie Calvert and they had two daughters, my cousins Phyllis and Rene. He died at the age of 53 in 1918.

My father, Joseph, was born at Inkersall Grange Farm in April 1, 1867. He accompanied the family when they moved to Darlton and again when they went to live in Dunchurch. It seems likely that he finished his schooling in Rugby in 1881. On leaving school he was at first apprenticed to a grocer, but disliked the work and wanted to learn the joinery trade. After about a year he moved to Bestwood in Nottinghamshire and became a joiner's apprentice in the workshop of Bestwood Colliery. Probably his employment was arranged by Mr John Lancaster, his father's employer, who was a proprietor of the colliery.

At a later stage my father moved to Blaina in South Wales where the company owned another colliery, and lived with his brother, Bob, who was employed there in the colliery offices. I think it likely that my father spent only a short time in Wales, then returned to the Rugby area where he carried on his trade with local builders. On the death of my grandfather in 1899 he accompanied his mother when she moved to Nottingham where three of her sons were settled. This was probably in 1901. They lived in a house on Kenrick Road, Mapperley, where Uncle Bob joined them.

In 1910 Uncle Bob married a cousin, Edith Preston (Aunt Edith) and my father continued to live at Kenrick Road until his own marriage in 1912 to Ethel Warren, my mother. My parents and my grandmother lived together first at Bennett Road and then at Beech Avenue, both in Mapperley. Later my grandmother lived for a short time in the home of her daughter, Aunt Polly, where she died in February, 1919 at the age of 82.

For many years my father was employed as a joiner by Thomas Bow Limited, and was certainly employed by them during World War 1. Later he became a foreman with the firm engaged in the construction of housing estates in the Nottingham area. In 1924 he built the family house on Clumber Avenue, Mapperley, in which my parents, my sister Joan and I lived for many years. My mother died in 1942 and my father in 1946.

Uncle Bob was born in 1869 and spent his early boyhood at Darlton with his sister and brothers. When the family moved to Dunchurch he attended a school in Rugby where he proved to be an able pupil, and was given an excellent report at the end of his school-days by the Headmaster, Francis T Wright. Uncle Bob became office boy in the London office of the Bestwood Coal and Iron Company through the influence of Mr Lancaster. It was he who arranged my Uncle's transfer in 1885 to another clerical post with the company at Blaina in South Wales. Here he stayed for eleven years and was transferred in 1896 to Bestwood. As already explained he lived with my father and my grandmother at Kenrick Road, Mapperley until his marriage, after which my uncle and aunt lived first in Sherwood, then at Bestwood Park, and from 1931 at 42, Hampden Street, Nottingham. They had four children, my cousins Leslie, Roy, Betty and John. Aunt Edith died at the age of 61 in 1948; Uncle Bob worked on during World War II, retiring at the age of 83, and died in 1954 at the age of 85.

John Tom was born at Stepping Lane, Darlton, in October, 1870. He accompanied the family to Dunchurch in 1879, and on leaving school at the age of 14 was apprenticed to Pinder's, drapers, of South Parade, Nottingham. This apprenticeship of three of the brothers in Nottingham suggests that some influential relative assisted them and possibly arranged for their accommodation, since their parents were still living in Dunchurch. It is possible that this relative was Aunt Jenny, sister of my grandmother and married to a man named Byron. In those days the Byrons lived in modest affluence in Queen's Drive, Nottingham.

After leaving Pinder's John Tom went to London where he was employed by Marshall and Snelgrove. From there he moved to Cavendish House, Cheltenham, where he met Sukie Martin (Aunt Sukie) whom he married in 1896. She was the daughter of a Bedfordshire blacksmith, and was a clever dressmaker. At first the newly-weds lived in rooms above the dressmaker's shop which John Tom opened in Market Street, Nottingham in the year of their marriage. It was here that their only child, John Cyril, was born in 1897.

Later the family moved to 42, Hampden Street, Nottingham, then in the early years of the century they went to live in a house named Oakfields on Mapperley Plains. In 1910 "JT" as he was usually called, had another house built on Mapperley Plains; this was called "Howbeck Close", and in later years JT acquired 23 acres of land surrounding it. Here he lived until his death in 1943, by which time he had developed his business into the leading establishment of its kind in Nottingham.

William, my grandfather, was an individualist and so were his family – "characters" in an era not yet subject to the influence of the media on speech, dress and social habits. On the whole they were hard-working, thrifty and kindly people with a strong sense of family loyalty, and seen to advantage at their frequent family gatherings.

Because family history is being made every day I have not attempted to chronicle the careers of my own generation. However, this outline of our family's development may encourage some younger member to pursue his own researches, and possibly to continue this short account of a family which, down the centuries made its own rugged contribution to the history of a Nottinghamshire parish.

Bibliography

Besides obtaining information from various members of the family I have referred to the following publications-

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Chadwick, Rev H	The History of Dunham-on-Trent, e t c	1924
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Marshall, G	Nottinghamshire Subsidies	1895
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White, F	History, Gazetteer and Directory of Nottingham	1864

Footnote

In producing this edition, I have reproduced the text by scanning in the original and then proofreading it for the inevitable errors, which result. I apologise in advance if I have missed any. The diagrams and illustrations have been scanned in from originals where possible. I have not attempted any rewriting of the document, except with regard to the illustrations, to stay true to the original spirit of the work which has become in its own right, a valuable historical family document and stands as a testament to the hard work of the authors.

James Norfolk
December 2004

Will of William de Northfolk of Pontefract

Given at Pontefract, 21 April, 1401

Proved 4 July, 1401

To be buried in church of All Saints, Pontefract, near tomb of late wife, Alice.

Horse & harness as a mortuary

7lb wax for candies to burn about his body on day of his exequies, and on day of his obit

40s for funeral expenses and (for a commemoration?) for neighbours and friends on days of exequies and obit

40d to vicar of All Saints, Pontefract

12d to parochial chaplain of said church

3d to every chaplain of the church attending exequies; and 2d to each clerk (cleric) of the parish administering there.

6d to chaplain of parochial chapel of St Giles of Pontefract

2s to high altar of said church of All Saints for tithes withheld or forgotten

7s to fabric of said church for his burying place

2s to Gild of Corpus Christi of Pontefract, in addition to customary dues.

2s to Dominicans of Pontefract

12d to Dominicans of York

12d to Augustinians of Tykhill

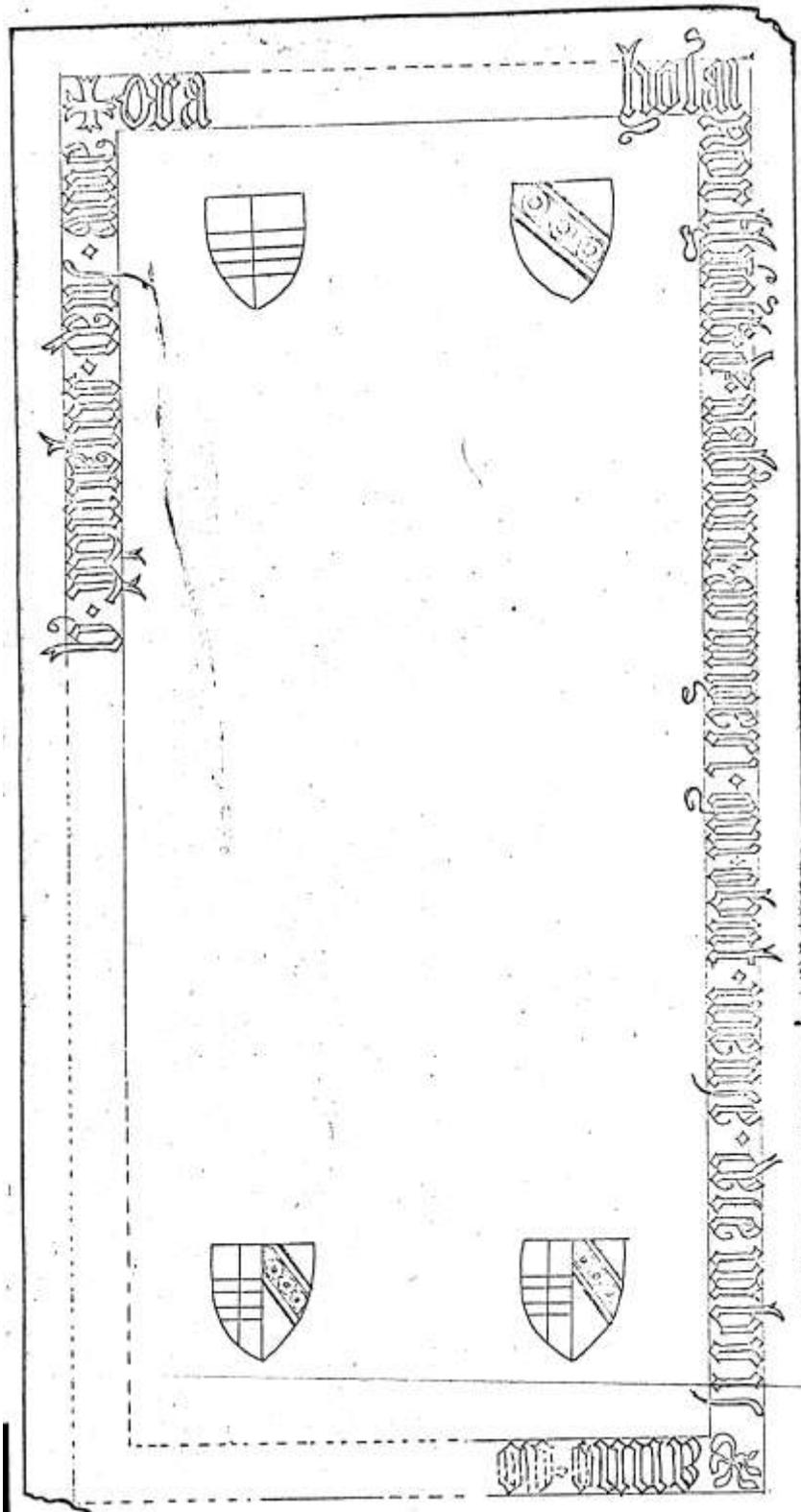
12d to repair causeway near the ferry

12d to upkeep of lights of Gild of Blessed Thomas "Loncastr"

2s to repair road on Preston Moor towards the coal pits

10s for a stone cross to be put where the wooden cross stands towards the hill of the Blessed Thomas near the road leading towards Bongate

Remainder to pay his debts and then to be disposed of by wife Matilda as seems best to her; she, John de Stretton and William Spicer chaplains being exors



The tombstone of Nicholas of Naburn (c1420) in the church at Ancaster Melbis. The text reads clockwise from top right: "Nicholai Northfolke de Naburn armigeri qui obiit mense decembris ann dom MCCCC".

The coats of arms are those of Northfolk top left and Dauney top right

Drawing courtesy of RWSN

THE EAST DRAYTON (NOTTS) NORFOLKS

possibly brothers

(1A) WILLIAM NORTHFOLKE
Husbandman
MISTERTON Will 14 May 1544

(1B) JOHN NORTHFOLKE
Ame 1544

(2A) CHARLES = ISOBELL
Will 24 Aug 1546

(3A) ROBERT NORFOLKE = MARY
Will 24 Jul 1596

(3E) THOMAS

(3F) WILLIAM
died intestate - adm granted
to son 7 Jan 1600 by Geo.
ORMONDE, Cleve.

(3G) ELIZABETH

NOTE: Although referred to in will of (1A) as the
children of JOHN, ELIZABETH could have been
the wife of either WILLIAM or THOMAS
See will of THOMAS NORTHFOLKE of ELKSLEY (son W
of EAST DRAYTON) will wife ELIZABETH.
Will dated 23 May 1570

d. between 28 Feb. 10 Dec 1591
(predeceased father)
Will 28 Oct 1591 witnessed by
W^m + THOS PETTINGER - name
occurring later in EAST DRAYTON
see (10B)

(4A) ROBERT = ALYCE

(4B) HELEN = THOS COOKE

(4C) ANNE = CROFT

(5A) ANNE (only child)
undiv 21 in 1545

(4D) WILLIAM NORFOLK
Yeoman EAST DRAYTON
Will 2 Sep 1625

(5B) WILLIAM = MARY
Yeoman E.D. Will 26 Jan 1683
proved York Oct 1687

(5C) JOANE
Buy E.D. 9 Sep 1670

(6A) WILLIAM = MARY
Yeoman buy E.D. 26 Nov 1700
Will 26 Sep 1700 No issue
bequests to
ELIZABETH WOODALL - Attachee
JOHN BATTYSON - labourer

(6B) JOHN = JANE (buy as Anne E.D. 26 Oct 1714)
ELIZABETH MORE (?)
of KIRTON 10 Feb 1715

(6C) LEONARD = MARY
Yeoman buy E.D. 21 Mar 1719
Will 25 Mar 1719

(7A) JOHN = MARY
alive 1700
buy E.D. 15 Jan 1761

(7B) WILLIAM
alive 1700
buy E.D. 20 Feb 1720

(7C) ANNE

(7D) ALICE

(7E) JANE

(7F) LEONARD = SARAH
b 1697
d 4 Oct 1792
Adm to W^m (8L) 22 Jun 1792

(7G) MARGAROT =
JOS. GRAY

(7H) ELIZABETH
b 1701

(7J) WILLIAM
1701/02

(8A) MARY
1689/89

(8B) MARY
1700/00

(8C) MARY
1701/01

(8D) MARY
1709

(8E) JOHN = SARAH
b 1715
d. 7 Apr 1800
Will 12 Mar 1789

(8F) WILLIAM
buy E.D. 16 Feb 1746

(8G) LEONARD
1725-1765

(8H) MARY
b 1722
buy E.D. 10 Mar 1789
spinster

(8I) WILLIAM
1741/42

(8K) ANNE = W^m STREET
b 1744

(8L) WILLIAM
b 1747
(?) buy E.D. 4 Apr 1821

SARAH = RICHARD SWANWICK
(has. chr)

(9A) JOHN
bab 29 Dec 1745
buy E.D. 20 Aug 1840
Will 30 Jun 1821
no issue

(9B) ELIZABETH = W^m BELL

(9C) WILLIAM = ANNIE BAWSON
b 1751
d 3 Sep 1826
Will proved 28 Oct 1826
No issue

(9D) THOMAS = JANE BELLAMY
b 1754
buy 16 Feb 1827
Will 31 Oct 1821

(9E) LEONARD
b 1757 buy 20 Jan 1818
Will 2 Apr 1818
Heir LEONARD from
HELENA COOPER
buy 15 Dec 1819

(9F) SARAH
1762-1760

(9G) GEORGE = MARY
b 1759
d. 1790

(9H) SARAH
1760/61

(9J) JOSEPH = SARAH SPIVEY
21 Jun 1788
buy 21 Oct 1783
buy 12 Mar 1833

(9K) MARY
b 1766
Will 2 Oct 1801

GEORGE BELL
SARAH = KATTON BELL
ELIZABETH = RATLIFF BELL
(all mentioned in will of (9K))

(10A) ELIZABETH = JOHN SCOTT
b 1782
d 1861

(10B) MARY = GEO. PETTINGER
b 23 Mar 1789

(10C) ANNE = JOS BELL
b 20 Oct 1790

(10D) WILLIAM = ELIZ. NEWBERT
b 23 Mar 1793
d 4 Feb 1872

(10E) SARAH = STORIS
b 17 Oct 1801

(10F) ELIZ. = PARHAM
b 16 Jun 1802

GEORGE NORFOLK SCOTT
b 1804

JOHN N.S.

THOMAS N.S.

(11A) MARY
bab 10 Dec 1821

(11B) WILLIAM = MARY PRESTON
20 Nov 1860
b 20 Jul 1824
d 10 Mar 1899

(11C) SARAH
bab 23 Jan 1827

(11D) GEORGE = MARTHA
bab 20 Jan 1820
(?) d 7 Jun 1877

(11E) ELIZABETH ANNE

(12A) MARY = A. FORTNAM
bab E.D. 27 Oct 1861
d 27 Dec 1893 RUBY

(12B) WILLIAM = S. CALVERT
b 10 Aug 1866
d 10 Mar 1894

(12C) JOSEPH = E. WARREN
b 5 Apr 1867
d 5 Sep 1946

(12D) ROBERT = E. PRESTON
b 24 1869
d 10 Jul 1946

(12E) JOHN T. S. MARTIN
b 8 Apr 1870
d 1943

(12F) FRANCIS N.
b Jun 1878
d Dec 1880

(12G) JOHN W^m
bab 5 Dec 1873
d 10 Mar 1894

(12H) ANN
bab 21 Oct 1876

ETHEL
SIDNEY
LILLIAN
SYRA

IRENE
PHYLLIS

JOAN
WILLIAM (REX)

LESLIE
NORMAN (ROY)
MARY (BETTY)
JOHN

JOHN C.

? JOHN G. BIRTS