

Charles Towsey of Henley upon Thames in the County of Oxford Gentleman

Mary Harriet Sparks

Mr B Moorhouse

TOWSEY TALES

NAME: William Towsey

BIRTH DETAILS: 13 June 1734

DEATH DETAILS: Probably before 1778

CHART REF: Towsey Chart E1

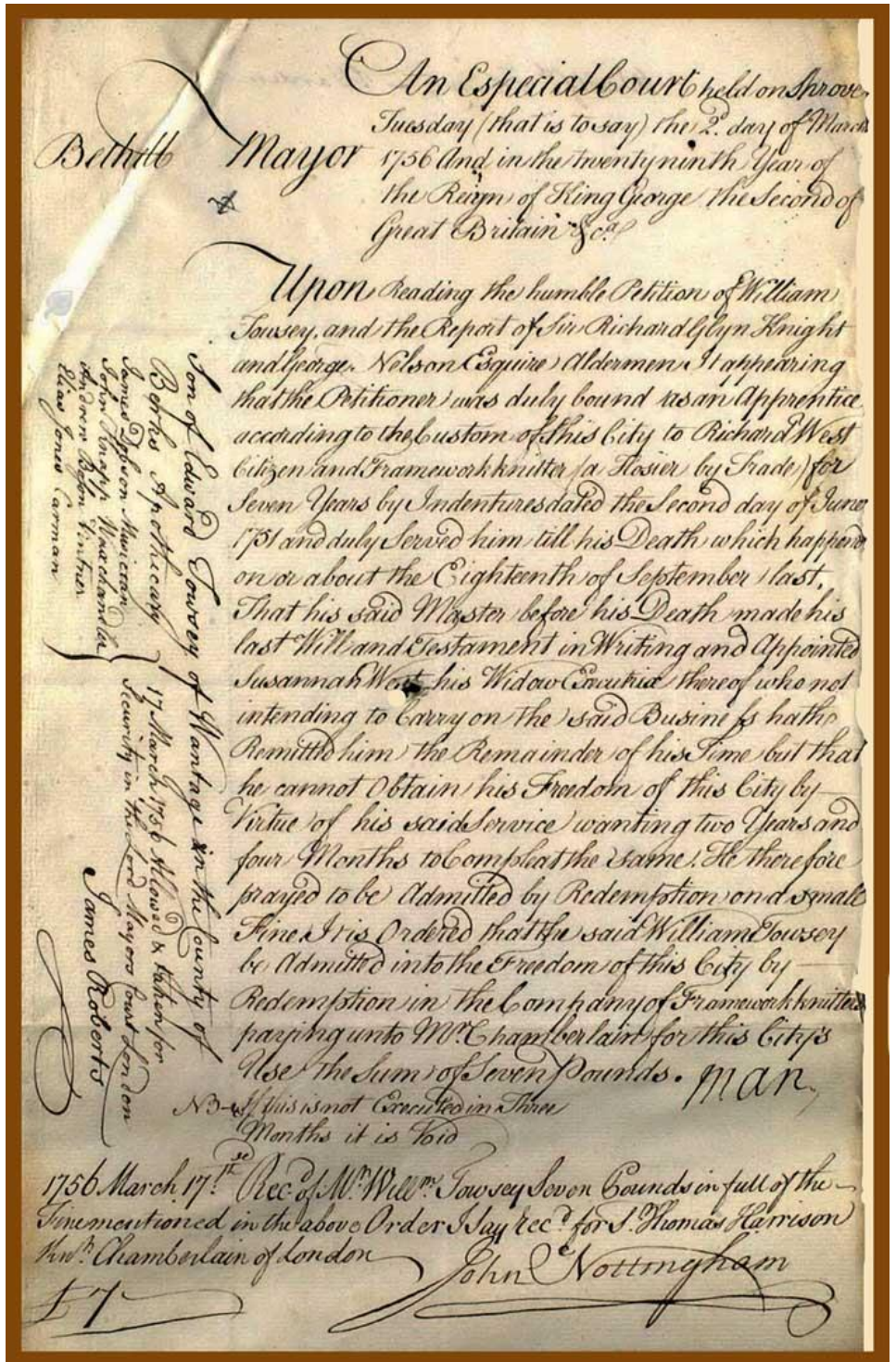
MARRIAGE DETAILS: unmarried

The Hon^{ble} Towsey
 Spirit Henley
 Henley on Thames
 Oson
 Edward Towsey
 Son of Edward Towsey
 of Henley on Thames
 in the County of Oxford
 Gentleman
 James Roberts
 Secy to the Hon^{ble} Mayor
 of London
 17th March 1756

The third child of the Second Edward Towsey, was another William Towsey, born in 1734. He was apprenticed to a framework knitter and hosier in London in 1751, for seven years. Unfortunately, after five years, William's master died. In such a circumstance, the widow could carry on the business and William's apprenticeship would have transferred to her. However, because she decided not to continue, William was left two years short of being allowed to become a freeman of the City of London. This situation was overcome by the payment of a fee by his father, Edward Towsey, in March 1756, allowing William to become a qualified hosier.

William Towsey then went into partnership, in Fenchurch Street, London, with someone called William Martin. They took on an apprentice in 1757.

In the mid eighteenth century, fifty years before the adoption of trousers as a fashion, men wore hosiery up to their knees. The tops of these knitted stockings were then covered by breeches, the bottoms of which were buttoned just below the



18th century hosiery knitting frame



knee.

For some time already, these stockings had been knitted on a specially designed frame.

William Towsey's partnership with William Martin ended in 1763 and in January of the following year, William Towsey was bankrupt. This might be because William was a poor businessman, but at about that time also, the hosiery knitting industry started going into decline.

We have not found any further records that we know to be this William Towsey, but as he is not mentioned in his father's will, we can presume that he died before 1778.