

NAME: William Towsey

BIRTH DETAILS: circa 1642, East Challow, Berks

DEATH DETAILS: July 1722, Letcombe Regis

CHART REF: Towsey Chart F1

MARRIAGE DETAILS: 19 Feb. 1666, East Lockinge, Berks.

SPOUSE: Mary Freeman

William Towsey was the last of the four children of John and Dorothy Towsey, for whom we have some record.

William married Mary Freeman at East Lockinge, in 1666. Their first two daughters, Mary and Ann, were both christened eleven months later, in January 1667. The family then moved back to Letcombe Regis, where they had four more children, only one of whom did not survive to adulthood.

To find out more about Mary Freeman's family, see the Towsey Tale of her grandfather, John Freeman, born circa 1589.

William Towsey had been born at the start of the Civil War and grew up to be a farmer.

In those days farmers were known as either a husbandman: a poorer farmer, probably leasing his land, or a yeoman, who usually owned and worked his own land. A gentleman would have had others to work the land he owned, though he might still be referred to as a yeoman.

William Towsey was a yeoman and he and Mary had seven children of whom we know. The first two were born at East Lockinge and the others after they moved to Letcombe Regis.

William's wife Mary, died in 1681, when her children ranged in age from fourteen to four years.

William must have been well into his seventies when he died in 1722.

To his eldest son William, (a mason, christened 1671), he left a house in Letcombe Regis. To his daughter Ann, by now married to Thomas Hawks, he left fifty pounds and a quarter share of the money he had in bonds etcetera. To the youngest son, Edward, our ancestor, he left his clothes, bed and bedding. The rest of the property was divided equally between the three sons, William, John and Edward. It is possible that the farm lands had already been passed on to one of the sons, but because the balance of the estate was divided evenly, it is more likely that it had not been.

It was Edward who moved the short distance to Wantage, (then in Berkshire but now a part of Oxfordshire), where our family stayed for the next three generations.

Edward's brother, William stayed in Letcombe Regis, where that branch of the family did not do as well as Edward's descendants in the bigger town of Wantage. In fact by the time William's grandchildren are dying off, we see them arguing over an ever shrinking stash of assets. We also see bankruptcy, illegitimate children and God-only-knows what other sins that have not been recorded.

That William (the mason), and his descendants, can be seen on their own Towsey Tale.

