

OBADIAH

For as far back as I can remember my parents and I lived with my maternal grandparents so I did know something about them, their names, their approximate ages and where they were born. They were Frank Harold RODGERS, born Staveley in 1883 and Laura MILLTHORPE born Barrow Hill in 1886. I had a copy of Frank's birth certificate so knew his parents were David and Mary Ann. MILLTHORPE can be found with variations such as MILNTHORPE, MILNETHORP, MILTHORP and MILTHROP amongst others.

My search began in the mid 1970's, there was no internet or IGI so the obvious place to start was the Staveley Parish Registers at Matlock. I worked backwards from 1890, finding my grandparents and their siblings and discovered that Laura's parents were John Swan and Harriet MILLTHORPE. John Swan almost always used both names. The benefit of searching a register is that you find other members of your family and occasionally marginal notes that never appear in an index. Also, seeing the original you can draw your own conclusions if the writing is difficult to read. I did not find marriages for either David and Mary Ann or John Swan and Harriet.

Only the 1871 census was available then and I found that John Swan was born YKS Ecclesfield c1839 and Harriet LEI Coleorton. Ecclesfield Registers were in Sheffield Local Studies in Graves Central Library as were some Derbyshire Census returns and Local Studies closed at 5 p.m. However, if you arrived before 5 you were allowed to take material into the Business Library which remained open until 9 p.m. which was very useful when I was working. The Ecclesfield registers were indexed which was a great help and I found John Swan to be son of Obadiah and Elizabeth born in 1839. There had been another son, William, who had died in infancy and Obadiah himself died in 1842 at the age of 39. I have his death Certificate

I searched the whole of 1841 census for Wadsley Bridge, given as his place of residence, and for all the Ecclesfield parish in case the family had moved without success, then went back to the register where I found the burial of Mary, wife of Obadiah and the baptism of a daughter Hannah in 1824, there were no other MILLTHORPE's, no marriage of Obadiah to either Mary or Elizabeth and no baptism for Obadiah.

Armed with this information I went back to the Census to look for this group of names and found what I firmly believe to be the family entered under the name MILLSOM. There was
Obadiah aged 35
Elizabeth aged 25
Hannah aged 17
John S aged 2 And a Cyrus Dimberline. All born in Yorkshire

The Yorkshire Parish Record Society have indexed a great swathe of parish records for the county, there are copies in Sheffield Library and I gradually worked outwards from Sheffield recording all MILLTHORPE's. It is not a common name and found almost exclusively in the old West Riding towns. No sign of an Obadiah or either marriage.

Over the years I continued to visit both Matlock RO and Chesterfield Library and in the 1851 census I found John Swan MILLTHORPE living in Staveley with William and Elizabeth Brittain and a young family, so it would seem that Elizabeth had remarried. I found the marriage in Staveley in 1844 and, joy of joy, her father's name was given as Samuel DIMBERLINE and her birthplace as YKS Tankersley. There was a Samuel DIMBERLINE born YKS Barnby Dunn with

wife Eleanor born London living in Staveley so there was a possibility that these were here parents. The registers for Tankersley were not deposited so I visited the church – no baptism for Elizabeth DIMBERLINE.

In the meantime the IGI (then called the CFI, Computer File Index) had come into being but could only be seen at the LDS Headquarters in Huddersfield so that was another journey – nothing useful found. After a while it did become available in the STAKE Library at Grenoside north of Sheffield and also in Local Studies in Rotherham Library. For about five years I searched the DIMBERLINE name and its many variations which was interesting as the descent was from a des MOULINS, a Walloon companion of Vermuyden but found no likely Elizabeth.

Then Tankersley registers were deposited and I could spend more time with them. I had known from the IGI of a marriage John SWAN to Eleanor MILLTHORPE in 1815 and thought that maybe Obadiah and Eleanor were siblings but there were no other MILLTHORPE's. However, there was an Elizabeth, daughter of John and Eleanor, of the right birthdate, and further probing revealed what I believe to be the truth. Also in Tankersley were a Samuel and Martha DIMBERLINE and a burial for Martha. John SWAN dies and searching the Sheffield Cathedral records for another line I found two marriages in 1835 and 1836, Samuel DIMBERLINE to Eleanor SWAN, both widowed, also Obadiah MILLTHORPE widower to Elizabeth SWAN. Why St Peter's. who knows? Samuel was not Elizabeth's father as stated in the marriage register. he was her STEP father, her mother's second marriage.

My reading of the situation is that Samuel and Eleanor moved to Staveley for whatever reason sometime before 1841, Elizabeth was left widowed with a small boy and pregnant with a daughter, Mary, who was born in Staveley and moved there to be near her mother. What happened to Hannah you might ask? She died in the Workhouse aged 19, parents unknown according to her death certificate. Cyrus DIMBERLINE was the son of Samuel and Martha and there is another DIMBERLINE connection.

I made contact with a grandson of Mary who lived in London and he searched the London repositories for any trace of Eleanor – none found. Mary did marry a CARR, the maiden name of his mother was DIMBERLINE. I have had other searches made in London and the name does occur briefly but no Eleanor or any variation.

There are brief mentions of MILLTHORPE in both Sheffield and Rotherham but no clear line to follow. Two marriages are of a time scale that could have produced Obadiah but he is not mentioned, his marriage in 1836 is too early to give a father's name and he died before 1851 when his place of birth would have been mentioned.

I was for a time a member of the Sheffield Family History Society and involved in projects to index the Sheffield Census returns. In 1841 there is mention of a John MILLTHORPE and I believe this same man appears again in 1861, giving YKS Tickhill as his place of birth – no baptism found of any of the name. In 1851 there is a Jane MILLTHORPE, a servant born YKS Doncaster. Odd mentions appear in census for Rotherham but nothing relevant.

Since going online I continue to search the indexes but to date have found no trace of an Obadiah who was born c1803, an Eleanor born c1798 or a marriage of Obadiah to Mary.

By Eileen Beech