



THE TITHE AWARDS MAP 1841

[See page 24]

Land Use Descriptions

are taken from the original key to give some indication of how much pastoral farming is still involved.

The Area Shown (approx. $\frac{1}{2}$ m x $\frac{3}{4}$ m)

is only a very small part of the whole as the Fen Holdings extend 3 miles to the East.

Of the total 337 Holdings listed, 128 are Arable, 80 Pasture, 30 Meadow, and the remainder Houses, Other Buildings, Gardens and Orchards.

Some Landowners

are indicated here by Initials:

- M.B. = Marquis of Bristol
- G.P. = George Packe Esq.
- H.C. = Rev. Henry Charles
- J.C. = Rev. John Charles
- N.C. = Normanton Charity
- W.D. = William Devises of Sills

Some Occupiers mentioned in the text

No.	Owner	Occupier	Land Use
739	M.B.	Ed. Green (& J. Thurlby)	2 Houses & Gardens
738	P.M. Trustees	P.M. Society	Chapel
737	M.B.	Ed. Green	House & Garden
754	M.B.	Ed. Skinner	House & Garden
698	W.D.	Ths. Barrand	Houses & Garden
783	M.B.	Henry Green	Yard. Buildings. Inn
776	John Line	Wm. Audiss	House, Garden, Orchard
723	M.B.	Robert Roberts	House & Garden

From the Key to Tithe Awards Map provided by Miss S. Priestley, B.A.

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a quarter and that "the Donington preacher" (i.e. travelling preacher in charge of the Branch) "be corresponded with".

In the end a more drastic plan of reorganisation was produced by the District. Districts had emerged as early as the 1820 Conference in order that groups of circuits might make easier the task of stationing the travelling preachers. After the retirement of Bourne and Clowes who had exercised an unofficial sort of general oversight the Districts took a more active part in leadership.² After being placed in the Scotter District to begin with our part of Lincolnshire was at this time in the Nottingham District.

The scheme it proposed did not arouse enthusiasm at Donington. The Quarterly Meeting resolved "That the Conference be respectfully informed, through the secretary of the District Committee that, in our judgement, the adoption of the plan laid before us by the District Meeting would not answer the end proposed by the District Meeting but would be decidedly injurious to the interests of the Donington Circuit" (May 10th 1861).

There seems to have been no revision of the plan in response to this but nevertheless, that November the Quarterly Meeting resolved to carry out the suggestion of the District Meeting and to inform the General Committee that "in so doing we gave up eight causes and 98 members".

That December the Sleaford Quarterly Meeting approved the action of its Circuit Committee in accepting "the eight places offered to the Sleaford Station by the Donington Station". The eight places were: Little Hale, Helpringham, Great Hale, Billingham, Heckington Fen, South Kyme, Scredington and Osbournby. A meeting was held at Sleaford to celebrate this circuit amalgamation in which eight speakers from each half of the new whole took part. The spirit of the meeting was reported as very good.³

The Sleaford Quarterly Meeting which accepted the new village causes also arranged a full week's Protracted Meetings at three of them, including Little Hale. Protracted Meetings were a newly imported tool of American Evangelism used, at least in the Sleaford Circuit from the early fifties. Camp Meetings remained a regular feature

of the circuit's life. There was another at Little Hale in 1862 and most years as many as seven were planned at various parts of the circuit in June, and three or four more later in the summer. The Quarterly Meeting also planned three or four Communion Services and Love Feasts, but by the 1860's arrangements for these were usually left to the "planmakers".⁴ In the Wesleyan plans of the period there were usually three or four Communion Services a quarter at Sleaford and one a quarter in the villages, much as still obtains.

At this time also the old Book Steward's account book was used as the first Circuit Baptismal Register. For the period 1862-1879 it shows the following occupations in the Little Hale area: Labourers (2), Grocer, Grocer & Draper (2), Groundkeeper, Blacksmith, Publican, Showmaker, Boot & Shoemaker. One of these last was William Skinner. In 1862 he was appointed by the Quarterly Meeting to be Society Steward at Little Hale where the Annual Sunday School Meeting appointed him Superintendent over many years. William Skinner was born in 1819. His son Samuel, born in 1849, was appointed Assistant Leader at Little Hale.⁵

Little Hale Chapel was licensed for marriages in 1860, the first being celebrated on September 11th that year between William Smith and Betsy Pearce (both of Heckington). In 1870 there was a double wedding involving chapel families: Joseph and Betsy Audiss married respectively Mary Elizabeth Roberts and Samuel Skinner. In 1875 Susan Skinner was married to John Parker.

Two contrasting pictures link the enlarged circuit with the wider world. The first is the introduction into Lincolnshire (from Norfolk) of the Harvest Home as a village festival. This was taken up with great gusto by the Parish Churches of Swaton, Helpringham and Walcot. At Little Hale, at a service conducted by W. Audiss, it was thought fitting to express thanks in a special gift to the chapel of Paraffin Lamps (advertised that year as the New Light).⁶

The second was the distress in Lancashire caused by the effect of the American Civil War on cotton supplies. 300,000 idle hands were reported and £100,000 needed "to see them through the winter". The Quarterly Meeting felt the people of the circuit too poor for it to arrange

collections in all the chapels. Perhaps it was felt that those who could would take part in the many local efforts being made to send money and clothes.

VIII THE CHANGING VILLAGE SCENE

The first half of the century had been a time of village growth. Now comes decline. The population of Little Hale peaked at 362 in 1881. In 1891 it was 286. At first glance this hardly seems borne out by the entries in White's Directory for the years 1856 and 1892. These show 22 names in the later entry as against 18 in the earlier. In both 13 of these are farmers with an increase in those who are "on the fen". This is perhaps an indication of the splitting of holdings which was beginning to take place.

The increase in non-farming occupations includes a schoolmistress living in Great Hale, a "Mr" with no occupation, and a new shopkeeper and craftsman. There is now no local shoemaker (a trade feeling the pinch of factory competition) and the "Wheelwright and smith" has gone, though there is now a blacksmith. There are still two pubs, the Nags Head and the Bowling Green, though they have changed hands. There is still a grocer but John Green who had been Grocer and Draper is now Post Master. Post is collected and delivered daily; a carrier calls for Sleaford on Mondays, Boston on Wednesdays; and the railway stations of Heckington and Helpringham are in action (the Sleaford-Boston line having been opened in 1859). Life is surely getting better and better.

But not quite in every way. The easier journeys to town, the changing occupations, the reduction in numbers of the villagers unlisted in White's, these are all signs that the land itself cannot support the "hands" it did. There are still incomers, on the farms and in the village. In fact this is the most striking single feature of the contrasting entries. Of the 18 names listed at the beginning of these 36 years, only two are identical: John Green and John Hutchinson. Two other family names are still there, Charles Faulkner has taken over his father's farm and Monica Dickens her husband's. For the rest of the known names it is a clear sweep.

All three sections of this changing population - the "goers", the "comers" and the "stayers" have their chapel representatives. William Audiss, chapel manager, has gone to America (with 20 others); the Skinners (father and son) are still on the Trust in 1882 but have gone by 1904. John Green we know as a member of the congregation in 1860. The two farming families on the Trust in 1875, although still on that of 1904, have been moving out of the immediate area. John Hutchinson, victualler of the Bowling Green in 1856, farmer and landowner in 1892 came on the Trust in 1882. Charles Priestley (described in White's in 1892 as "shopkeeper, bricklayer and assistant overseer" and as "builder" when coming on the 1904 Trust) brings on the board a name still very much in play in 1987.

IX THE FAITH AND THE FIELD - HOME AND ABROAD

The background to the changing village is the widespread hardship experienced by agricultural labourers. There was considerable variation from area to area even within the county and in the amount of payment in kind, but in the 1840's Lincolnshire wages had stood among the highest in the country. (Ambler cites figures 10s.0d, 12s.0d and 15s.0d in different parts of Lincolnshire.) The seasonal fluctuation in wages and the lay-offs in the worst of the weather when the money was most needed and the gang system with its wide use of women, children and Irish labour at cheaper rates combined with rising prices after the Crimean War and in the early seventies to create hardship which was increasingly resented as injustice. Looking back from Westminster to his "crow-scaring" days in Norfolk, Sir George Edwards wrote of seeing his parents faint from overwork and lack of proper food.¹ He also says how his Local Preachers studies made him "realise that the conditions of the people were not as God intended them to be".² Still more telling is the quotation Nigel Scotland gives from a slightly later time: "We are indignant that the grandest doctrine of the Christian faith" (sc. the belief in heaven) "should be prostituted to the service of oppression by being used to teach slavish contentment with injustice. We hold that the bodies of men need saving as well as their souls..."³

In 1871 legislation made Trade Union activity possible. There were strikes in industrial areas. The bad harvest that year and the price rises it brought, led to a rash of protest and union formation on the land in February 1872, in Warwickshire (at Wellesbourne) and in Lincolnshire (at Horncastle where 700 labourers from a score of parishes demanded 3s 0d a day for 10 hours).⁴ The two organisations which rose to channel this surge of activity, the National Agricultural Labourers' Union and the Amalgamated Labour League, found leaders of Primitive Methodist background respectively in Joseph Arch and William Banks. Nigel Scotland claims that in Lincolnshire 30% of the 254 Union Leaders were Methodists of one or other variety and a high proportion of these church officials, not merely loose adherents. His detailed index of Union and League officials, however seems to show a much lower level of activity in our part of the county. The Heckington Fen Branch of the League is the nearest with one (Wesleyan) Methodist leader.⁵

Hard times also pressed tenants and owners. Rent rolls fell by 20%, even 60%, from 1879 to 1892 so that on the Bristol Estate over one million pounds invested in land improvements returned only 2%.⁶ Many tenant farmers went under. As early as 1872 the Sleaford Gazette advertises a land sale where all tenants are under notice to quit. One agent put it to Rider Hagard: "...farmers too want justice, not a dole. The question is: is agriculture to be kept subservient to all other interests in the state?" Certainly it looked like remaining so for a long while yet.

Meanwhile in an area like Little Hale, where many were small farmers who shared the same hardships (as well as the same pews and same faith) as their labourers, there was no doubt a sense of being fellow victims in a situation with no cure.

It was not just desperation however which drove individuals, and in the end Union policy, to seek emigration. For the latter there was the hope of increasing bargaining power by decreasing numbers. For the former there was a hope (in a very loose sense described as "millennarian")⁷ of God's purpose unfolding a new future in a promised land. How one wishes we had William Audiss's own thoughts as he prepared to lead the party of 21 from Little Hale, who in 1870 left for America. There are still those in the village who remember their departure from

Heckington Station. The Sleaford Gazette reported that many of them were Primitive Methodists and said they would be sadly missed - as indeed they were.⁸

From very early in its history, Primitive Methodism had seen others leave for America and as early as 1829 Conference had sent missionaries there for their pastoral care.⁹ The work there never prospered, though it was to do so later in Canada. A more successful mission field was Australia where emigration from Britain had been going on from the 1840's and was greatly increased by the Gold Rush of 1851. In 1842 Conference had suggested that Sunday Schools might support this work and the following year the Sleaford Quarterly Meeting is arranging the collection of 1d from every scholar. One of the early missionaries was Edgar Tear who went out in 1847 (six years before that he had travelled to Sleaford from Burton with a short spell at Boston and there was some disagreement as to the right division of his expenses). He was one whose health gave way under Australian conditions and in 1858 he was superannuated.

X RELIGION AND EDUCATION

The children's pence for the Australian mission bring us back to Little Hale where the Religious Census of 1851 found 10 Sabbath Scholars attending the afternoon service. The Sunday School itself began in 1839.¹ The Minutes of its Annual Meeting for 1858-1898 have just come to light and show a strength of 70 scholars and 12 teachers when numbers are first recorded.² Tickets were given for early attendance (the session began at 9.30 a.m.) and at the close of the morning and of the afternoon service for good behaviour. These were valued at 1d each and at the anniversary exchanged for books chosen by the children. There was a bonus system of 6d for "Bible scholars" who recited and 3d for "others who gave recitations" on this gala occasion. Later this gave place to a merit classification of 1s 0d, 9d, 6d, and 3d awards for a total of some 20 of the scholars.

The distinction between "Bible" and "other" must mean that there was some sort of general education involved, but not apparently as dominant as at Tunstal in 1818 where an anniversary handbill listed the scholars: Boys: 80 in

writing; 3 113 in reading. Girls: 73 in writing; 134 in reading. Since then there had been considerable growth of day school provision in the country at large, especially, from the late 1830's in denominational schools. In Lincolnshire the Church of England formed its Diocesan Board of Education in 1839 and Bishop Wordsworth spoke of "the battle for Christianity being fought in the schools". In 1843 Jabez Bunting had issued a similar clarion cry to the Wesleyans - "Let us establish day schools. Let us go body and soul and spirit into it".⁴ Of the 370 Wesleyan Day Schools established in England by 1847, 26 (by 1851) were in Lincolnshire. There were then 250 church schools in the county, 449 by 1895.

Although there was "a school for the poor" at Great Hale⁵ at Little Hale itself the only week-day provision had been "a female teaching a few small children". So said William Audiss urging at two public meetings in 1865 that a new chapel be built and the old one converted into a Connexional Day School.⁶ Although the Sleaford Gazette reports general agreement with such sentiments, and although the Circuit gave the go ahead that December to purchase more land and build the new chapel, and this was reaffirmed at intervals, it was not to be.

All this sectarian effort frustrated the early attempts to forge a national system of education, but it did witness to the widespread conviction that religion and education belonged together. And literacy was improving. In 1859 the Sleaford elementary schools could show the inspector, two thirds of their scholars able to read and write.⁷ Among the older generation the Little Hale Deeds show a falling ratio of those unable to sign their names - 50% in 1836, 20% in 1875.

In an informal sense, Little Hale Sunday School did play an educative role in the community. It provided a public subscription library; 4d a quarter or 1s 0d a year payable in advance. Books for this and the school and its prizes were at first purchased from the Connexional Book Room in London. After 1860 it was found more accessible to use a local supplier, Mr. Fawcett of Sleaford.⁸

The Library was managed and the Sunday School superintended by William Audiss and William Skinner, both local preachers. Junior members of their families as well as others in the church are found as Secretary and Treasurer

for the school and taking active parts in the annual mid-week tea meeting which followed the anniversary.⁹ The allotment of tasks for the cleaning of the copper in which the water was boiled, and of the nearby barn where the tea was held, the fetching of the hot water, the actual making of a 3½ stone cake (5 stone for some years) and its buttering, and the selling of tickets to pay for it all - all this was a demonstration of the meaning of fellowship. Scholars also from time to time were encouraged to look to the practical side of religion. At the back of this Minute Book are pages headed with the legend: "We the undersigned do voluntarily contribute our mites to ..." Richard Smith who had broken his arm; Felix Atkinson accidentally and fearfully burned; John Parker and Susan Skinner on their wedding day.

More formal day school education reached the village in 1875. In March that year, Emma Freeborough (Prov. Cus.) as she describes herself, began the log of the school of which she had taken charge with 22 scholars.¹⁰ In 1892 her successor is congratulated by the Diocesan Inspector on the way she has struggled with a nearly impossible task. The average attendance in the five standards of the school was then over 40. At least at times in the early years the single handed teacher had the moral support of a vicar (and more usefully of his wife and daughter's help with the children's reading). The Vicar of Great Hale parish had for long been non-resident.¹¹ In 1892 the Inspector particularly congratulated Mrs. Debus on not letting secular subjects crowd out the religious and suggested the purchase of about 12 Bibles and some large cards showing the Lord's Prayer, the Creed and the Ten Commandments.

The gift of Bibles features regularly in the Sunday School Minutes - 1/6d reference editions for those who have left the school and are now teaching in it, 1.0d ones for other leavers, and at a later stage 10d Bibles for those who have left and gone into service. This last is one of several hints of harder times and of the poor outlook for the rising generation of many village families. In 1882 and 1883 the numbers of scholars falls from 71 to 64 then to 54. In 1887 it was resolved that "the old people on parish relief" be invited to the tea without charge.

A minute of the March Quarterly Meeting in 1865 links the circuit with another side of the connexion's educational

life. It registered its support for two suggestions of the Connexional Finance Committee to the ensuing Conference; one was about the Jubilee School. The York Conference of 1863 had sanctioned the use of some of the fundraised in celebration of the Jubilee for the establishment of a school in York for the sons of travelling preachers. It became known as Elmfield College. Samuel Antliff who had been stationed earlier at Sleaford was Secretary to its Trust. John Petty was its first Headmaster. A similar school was soon established, but by a non-profit making limited company, at Bourne College, at Quinton, Birmingham.

The other suggestion approved in 1865 was the establishment of a theological institute¹² for the training of the ministry. Conference that year took the first step by adding to John Petty's burdens the tutoring of 20 prospective candidates. On his death in 1868 the institute proper was set up at Sunderland with Samuel Antliff's brother William as its first principal. This moved to Manchester under James Macpherson in 1878. There, its buildings and its course enlarged by the liberality of the later Sir. William Hartley it received in 1892, as Tutor in Biblical Introduction, Exegesis and Theology and the History of Doctrine, Arthur S. Peake, M.A. and Fellow of Merton who was to do so much, through his own writings as well as through his share in the shaping of the ministry, to help not only Primitive Methodists to love God with all their mind.

It is a feature of present day history writing to ascribe the success of such popular religious movements as Primitive Methodism to an affinity between its own naive folk theology and the superstitious sub-strata of the "old culture". It is a useful insight. But less than justice seems sometimes to be done to another sort of affinity, that between a Bible based, word conscious message and a deep thirst for the magic called knowledge. Such a thirst is apt to be strongly felt in a population awaking to all sorts of new needs and possibilities but still largely denied the opportunity of their satisfaction. At one level this affinity can be seen at work through the Minutes of the Sunday School and Quarterly Meeting alike, the different hands, the indifferent spelling, give glimpses of a community in which the skills of writing, of decision making, of corporate activity were being shared, and the lives and insights of people enlarged. At another level it

can be seen in the local preacher of Lincolnshire fields as of the Durham mines teaching himself Greek the better to feed himself and his flock from the New Testament.¹³

The evolution of preacher training at Circuit level can be followed through some of its stages in our Minutes. By the '40's direct on the spot engagement had given way to a stepped series of promotions under the direction of the Quarterly Preachers' Meeting: first put on the plan as Prayer Leader, then "given a note" to accompany an accredited preacher, then appointed exhorter, then preacher on trial, and finally on "full plan". In the early years a doctrinal statement had to be provided by the preacher, then an apparently wider examination was made by an individual, later by several experienced preachers. William Audiss, "manager" of Little Hale and himself a preacher much in demand, was a regular member of such examining committees. (1862, '63 and '65.) Other known Little Hale preachers are William Skinner (the Society Steward), John Parker, and Samuel, John and Jarvis Newton. Like Audiss, Jarvis Newton was sent by the circuit as its delegate to the District Meeting. Samuel Newton was appointed Assistant Leader at Little Hale the same year (1872). John Parker was Society Steward for 50 years and for very many, Superintendent of the Sunday School.¹⁴

In the Sunderland District concern to provide for the training of preachers had led to the formation of a Preachers' Association and the publication of a magazine - the Christian Ambassador. The only reference in the Sleaford Minutes to any formal guidance is the recommendation, in 1868, of "Mr. Petty's Catechism and Mr. Wesley's Selected Sermons".

Development can also be traced in the way in which local preachers were sent forward into the ministry. The "pledging" of Sarah Cope in 1834 has been mentioned. Then in 1838 a Minute simply reads "that we take out Marshall Tinsley as a Travelling Preacher" and "that he be stationed in this circuit for six months". (The Book accounts show he was.) In 1841 the motion is "that we pledge James Norton to the District Meeting". (Again we find signs of his ministering in the circuit.) Then in June 1861, with John Wileman, the pledge is not to the District Meeting, but to the General Committee in London, and their formal acceptance of the pledge is duly pasted into the Minutes.

The final possible candidate is William Hipkins. His father, Frederick Hipkins had been put on plan as exhorter in 1840 and was Circuit Steward from 1847-1872. The son was thought likely material for the ministry, made prayer leader in '66, exhorter in '67, put on trial that September, found preaching Great Hale's Chapel Anniversary in 1871 then (apparently after either training or work in another circuit) in March 1872 he is "put on Plan at no. 4, his credentials having been received". There were 370 members in the circuit at that time but, so far as is known, only two ministers, so the early promise does not yet seem to have been fulfilled.

XI HOME ECONOMICS

"Do you see this book?" asked Robert Browning of the yellow small quarto vellum, paged volume he picked up for a lira in Florence in 1869.¹ This one too is yellowish. It certainly would not stand tossing and twirling as Browning did his, but it could like his be described as "crude, pure fact". It is an exercise book containing 60 years of Trust accounts, the only local record we have for 1906 to 1966.

Its first set of facts is related to collections for the annual Trust service. Until 1920 this is the Chapel Anniversary and then onwards the Harvest Festival² with exceptional single anniversary services in 1935 and 36. These services comprise a Sunday afternoon and evening and weeknight (again with an exception of one additional morning service in 1921). Until 1930 the norm is a little more than £2, though from 1919 to 1924 it exceeds £3 and only in 1912 and 1925 drops below £2. Then from 1931 to 1940 it is about £1.10. Over the next 10 years it slowly climbs to the previous level and from 1953 to 1966 rises from £4.9.4 to £27.10.6. This crude graph seems to run with the general economic trends.

The second regular feature of income comes from seat rents, really a disguised form of annual subscription by regular supporters. This brings in much the same sort of figure as the collections at first, about £3.10s.0, then from 1922 falls away to end altogether at a final 4s.0d in 1935. This seems to suggest a decline in the general congregation to the point where this method of funding had no purpose.

The other regular item, on both sides of the accounts, is provided by church teas. In 1906, 62 tickets were sold at 10d each and a further 18s 6d taken at the tables. In 1921, 30 tickets were sold (at the same price). The following year they only raised 18s 0d, and in 1923 £1.1s 6d. Thereafter the inner man is still catered for with the occasional coffee supper, children's tea, or Good Friday tea, and the social side of the Harvest seemed to be marked only by the sale of produce. In the earlier years the costs (though not the quantities) of pies, cakes, groceries and handbills are all listed. A profit of a few shillings is shown. One interesting expense is the shilling for washing cloths - coupled with 3d or 4d for boiling the meat in the copper.

Two world wars have left only two direct marks on these records: Aircraft Insurance for 1917 and 18, and the Blitzed Churches Fund in 1946. Insurance of the property begins at a premium of 3s 0d in 1906, rises to 4s 0d in 1924, includes the cleaner in 1926 and then, as a Combined Insurance of 13s. 0, rises to £2.14.6.

Heating and lighting also have been economical over the years. It would be a complex operation to add the costs of wood, coal, coke and paraffin and allow for the occasional replacement and repair of the stove, but actual fuels seem to run at about £2.10s0 in the early years, dropping to £2 and even under in the 20's and early 30's. Electricity for lighting was installed in 1937 and the oil lamps sold for 8s0d the following year. Electricity at first cost £2.6s0d each year then dropped to £1.17.0, £1.15.6d, even 15s.0 in the war years. Presumably we had gone to daylight services and were only paying for the meter. Then in 1952 electric heaters were installed. The bill leaped to £12.16.0. The stove was soon back on duty and the bills back to £4 or £5 a year.

Other items include "a new place to put the tables" - a hut costing £2.4.0 in 1909 and sold for 7s6d in 1935, and an organ bought for £7.7.6 in 1938 only to be sold for £3.0.0 five years later. There is no reference to a new hut, believed to be the one still in use and to have cost £32; but in 1957 hut repairs of £13.17.6 occur. Special efforts have included New Year Services of Song, Concert Parties from Sleaford and Scopwick, Garden Parties in 1913, 1921 and 1945, one or two lectures, and an occasional Rummage Sale. Special donations have gone to Sleaford's New Chapel (1907),

the Million Shilling Fund (1921) and the Hartley Memorial Fund (1924) and a Timepiece for Miss Hutchinson (1928). In most years throughout the period something was put aside for the New Building Fund, or as hopes of this faded, just banked for emergencies. In the worst years a debit balance was borne by the treasurer, though the position was restored always within two years.

It might tax even Robert Browning's skills to turn this little yellow book into poetry, but there is certainly poetry in the sixty years of giving and serving and rejoicing behind its pages.

XII METHODIST UNION AND BEYOND

It says much for the steady flow of church life under the sometimes troubled surface of events that the accounts, which took little enough note of two world wars, show no sign at all of an event more deeply affecting the church itself. The Quarterly Meeting Minutes of March 1932 do however resolve "That we share in local arrangements to celebrate Union". The September meeting closed on a warmer note:

"We give thanks to God who has brought us to this day gathered for the last time as Primitive Methodists to do the business of our church.

"The business of this day has closed with a meeting crowned by God's presence and made particularly to be remembered by addresses every way fitting to the occasion given by our three oldest local preachers: W. Winter of Great Hale, C.W. Claydon of Ewerby and W. Wilson of Ewerby.

"We pray for strength to witness in the wider church of which we are to become a part."

Hopes of a closer coming together of these two strands of Methodism's three traditions were not speedily realised. Not until the 1960's when the two Sleaford churches of Westgate and Northgate joined together were their attendant circuits (with some redrawing of boundaries) made one.

Today with 507 members, that circuit is stronger than the Primitive Methodist Circuit of 1900 (406) but only somewhat over half the strength of the Wesleyan Circuit of 1932 (907). But by 1938 the P.M. membership had fallen to

238. If Union failed to provide the forward surge for which so many hoped it was perhaps because the talk had gone on too long and by the time it was established the acids of secularism and the pounding traffic of a motorised society had strongly attacked the structure of the church.

Over this particular corner of the field hangs the irony that the last 30 years, which have seen some belated recognition of the agricultural community's just needs, have seen the most drastic reduction of that same community and the urbanisation of its villages. The tide of new building which has enlarged Heckington and Great Hale has not reached this smaller corner. Yet it is at Great Hale that both Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist Chapels have closed.

At Little Hale the Day School closed in 1969. The Sunday School with the removal of its last scholars in 1986. Yet the Church continues, still the scene of village support at Harvest, and a focus of village worship on Christmas Eve. Its membership is still more than the four with which its story began, though only just over half the eleven recorded when the church was built. But it survives.

Survival in the desert is said to be a matter of reducing the body's metabolism to minimise its demands on the environment. In some ways the analogy holds good for churches. Small buildings, low running costs, few demands in labour - these are not to be despised. But if survival of itself is not enough, if for us, as for our forebears in the faith, the object of the exercise is to glorify God by the sharing of faith, then something more adventurous, more costly, infinitely risky, may be the only way to safeguard the future.

Again and again in the course of this story we are told of places where the work failed and all had to be done again by "backmissioning" from a new centre. So with Derby, Grantham, Lynn, to name but a few of the nearer and larger. Today the backmissioning of the countryside itself is as urgent as the missioning of the inner cities. It is vain to look to the past for weapons or tactics. But strategy is more enduring. At this time when Methodism is looking afresh at the Ministry of the Whole People of God, it is right that we lay hold of those elements in our tradition which emphasise flexibility, local leadership, a variety of ministry in worship, and pastoral care, as well as in evangelism. But we need to do so with breadth of vision.

Closing his Vice-President's address at the final Primitive Methodist Conference of 1932 Victor Murray wrote:

"Today .. other churches other groups can give and are giving what we also give. And so our work as a separate body comes to an end. Churches like individuals, must die if they would continue to live. We drop the name "Primitive". May our influence in the united church soon lead also to the dropping of the name 'Methodist'. And may the day rapidly come when the single name 'Christian' will be sufficient to designate those who love our Lord in sincerity and in truth."

That day has not come yet, though the spirit of working together is far stronger than it was. Indeed this readiness to work with partners in the other boats - rather than wait until we are all in the same boat - is surely one of the most hopeful signs of our times.

The story of Primitive Methodism points to an enduring tension of church life, that between missionary enthusiasm, which can lead to disregard of due discipline, and pastoral concern for edification, which can lead to institutionalism. It also points to an enduring need, that of the church to be close to the world it exists to serve.

History has greatly changed the social culture to which the church must address itself today. Television above all provides the market places and the crossroads where voices need to make themselves heard for Christ as the Ranters were once heard above the clamour - or even breaking the peace - of their day.

The local chapel is needed too, the small neat place open to the people who live there, open also to the far corners of the world village, but open above all to the eternities, to the imperative of the love that will not let us go.

All honour then to those who in this generation and in this small corner still tend the altar flame lit one hundred and fifty years ago at Little Hale.

NOTES

I BEGINNINGS - A CORNER CALLED HALE

1. Eilert Ekwall: Concise Dictionary of Place Names, 4th edition (Oxford 1959). The derivation from HALL is suggested by G.S. Steefield: Lincolnshire and the Danes (London 1884)
2. M.W. Barley: Lincolnshire and the Fens
3. C.W. Forster and I. Langley: The Lincolnshire Domesday and Lindsey Survey (Horncastle 1924). For a modern presentation see Domesday (Gen.Ed. P. Morgan - Chichester 1986 vol. 31 Lincolnshire
4. Inter-commoning disputes. In 1610 Sargeant at Law, Robert Callis represented his Little Hale relations and others at court against rival claimants from Swineshead. See Olive Holmes: Seventeenth Century Lincolnshire
5. Bishop Grosseteste: Collected Acts, Anno Quarto. Licence for Chapel at Little Hale. "No bells, no baptisms, no memorial services" might be a loose rendering of one phrase. See also D.M. Owen: Church and Society in Mediaeval Lincolnshire (Lincoln 1981) p.14 for Sir Simon's thank-offering of two 2lb candles to Great Hale church
6. Rev. R. Rose: Brief Notes on Hale Magna Church. 1976
7. Ibid

II NEW CROPS - PREPARING THE LAND

1. D.M. Owen op cit p.66 for a table showing the output of Religious Houses in woolsacks c. 1300 A.D. with Swineshead at 6; Haverholme, Stixwold and Bardney at 15; Barlings & Sempringham 25 and the Kirkstead Group 60
2. M.W. Barley op cit
3. C. Brears: Lincolnshire in the C17 and C18 (London, 1940) p.11
4. Ibid p.12
5. Ibid p.13
6. D. Grigg: The Agricultural Revolution in South Lincolnshire (Cambridge 1966) p.29
7. For the warring philosophies and especially the emergence of Deism as an attempt to formulate an alternative to Christianity see J.H.S. Kent: The End of the Line? The Development of Christian Theology in the Last Two Hundred Years (London 1978) p.6 and pp.20-22
8. For the crisis of the old order in England see W.R. Ward: Religion and Society in England 1790-1850 (London 1972) pp.47ff
9. Ibid pp.48ff
10. See D. Hempton: Methodism & Politics in British Society. 1750-1850 (London 1984) pp.55ff
11. See W.R. Ward p.9
12. Ibid. For the magistracy see R.J. Olney: Rural Society and County Government in Nineteenth Century Lincolnshire (Lincoln 1979) pp.98ff. His table (p.102) shows that in Kesteven in 1807 the clergy formed 90% of the magistracy, in 1842 39%, in 1872 26% and in 1900 5%
13. Ward op cit p.50
14. Ibid p.52 and Hempton op cit p.77
15. Ibid p.100f
16. Ibid p.71
17. Ibid pp.104ff and W.R. Ward p.87
18. Ibid pp.97f

III ANOTHER CORNER - PRIMITIVE ROOTSTOCK

1. H.B. Kendall: Origins and History of the Primitive Methodist Church (London 1905) 2 volumes. For a very readable modern account see Julia Stewart Werner: The Primitive Methodist Connexion and its Background (Wisconsin 1984)
2. Ibid p.46. For the origin of Camp Meetings in religious services for the Swedish army in C18 Europe see Hempton op cit p.23. For descriptions of Camp Meetings in action and the importance of the Norton Camp Meeting in particular see John Kent: Holding the Fort (London 1978) the first two chapters, particularly pp.50ff
3. R.W. Ward op cit p.82
4. The Journals of William Clowes (London 1844) for his wages p.87 for the first plan p.97
5. Kendall 1.174 ff. George Herod: Biographical Sketches of some of those Preachers whose labours contributed to the origination and early extension of the Primitive Methodist Connexion (London 1857) p.275 for Benton's "uncouth manner of address" making him judged unsuitable for the Wesleyan plan
6. Ibid 1.147, 94ff, 202
7. Ibid 1.208
8. Ibid 1.307

IV LINCOLNSHIRE INTAKE

1. G. Herod op cit p.300 "In one year and nine months 75 towns or villages have been missioned and regular worship established and not less than 25 Local Preachers or exhorters raised up and their talents brought into operation"
2. Kendall op cit p.235
3. Ibid p.267
4. G. Herod p.415
5. Rolf Vernon: Newark Before Victoria (Nottingham 1984)
6. Kendall op cit p.361
7. Ibid p.362
8. Ibid p.365
9. Ibid p.370
10. Ibid p.264
11. G. Herod op cit p.364 for the Harrisons at Wellingore, Navenby, Lincoln in 1819
12. R.W. Ambley: Social Change and Religious Experience; aspects of rural society in South Lincolnshire with specific reference to Primitive Methodism 1815-1875 (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis for Hull University 1984) Copy available Lincoln Local History Collection, Central Library p.169, 179 and 173
13. Kendall op cit 1.269
14. Fulbeck (later Sleaford) Quarterly Meeting Accounts 1833-37; Minutes 1833 and 1837-1872. Referred to as Fulbeck Minutes. (Lincolnshire and Antiquarian joined the Lincoln Circuit in 1833.)
15. Licences of places of worship - Sleaford Circuit Records
16. Fulbeck Minutes
17. Joseph Harrison was born at Northwith. He was converted into Wesleyan Methodism in 1812 and became a P.M. Travelling Preacher in 1824 at Inghill but ceased to travel in 1849 having become disillusioned with the fashionable Primitive Methodists of Brighton where he had last been stationed. See J.S. Werner p.168 quoting his obituary from the P.M. Magazine 1870 no.51
18. Ministry Records: being Rules, Regulations & Reports made and published by the Primitive Methodist Connexion 11 1831-4 (Leeds 1852). (1854 entry from MSS notes in private hands.)
19. T. Fawcett: A History of the Free Churches in Sleaford. The author's uncle also Thomas Fawcett was the leading pioneer of Methodism in Sleaford where services were first held in the Paper Mills in 1796. Two successive chapels were built in West Street (1807 and 1823) and the first North Street chapel in 1848

20. The Minutes of a Special Circuit Committee held on May 20th 1853 "in accordance with the recommendation of the District Committee we offer this Sleaford Circuit as a Branch of the Lincoln Circuit". If acceptable to Lincoln the union was to take place that July. The heading of the March Quarterly Meeting in 1854 are very clearly headed "Sleaford Branch". Thereafter, though there is no direct reference to the matter, circuit status seems to be assumed. The Circuit Membership which had dropped to 160 in March 1853 was reported as only 130 that December but by March 1858 was back at 192 "an increase of 12 in the year". In June 1857 a special resolution thanked the Superintendent Minister (Neal) for the hard work of the past two years

V LAUNCHING THE VENTURE OF LITTLE HALE

- R.W. Ambler op cit also R.W. Ambler: From Ranters to Chapel Builders: Primitive Methodism in South Lincolnshire 1820-1875 in Voluntary Religion - papers read at the Ecclesiastical History Society 1985/6 p.321 for Francis Birch at Spalding in 1820
- H.B. Kendall op cit
- Donington Circuit Committee and Donington Branch Quarterly Meeting Minutes at The Gentlemen's Society, Spalding. Referred to as Donington Minutes
- Walcot Methodist Church Centenary Brochure by William Leary, 1969
- Conference Minutary Record 1822. That year the scale of salaries, which the first Annual Conference at Hull had reduced slightly from that of the previous year's Preparatory Conference, was virtually restored to the original figures, viz: Married preacher, £38 a year plus 1s 6d a week if children under eight; single man, £4 plus 6d a week lodging (commuted to a flat £4.10.0 plus board a few years later); Female £2.2.0 a quarter
- Donington Minutes and Ambler "From Ranters etc." p.325
- Church Deeds
- Donington Minutes
- Church Deeds. The 1841 Map shows an inn on a holding of Henry Green. See Map
- Donington Minutes
- Lincolnshire Record Society vol.72 The Lincolnshire Returns of the Census of Religious Worship, 1851 ed. R.W. Ambler. For Wm. Audiss see Appendix VI

VI A LOOK ROUND THE FIELDS

- R.W. Ambler op cit
- Plans of Sleaford Wesleyan Circuit 1839-1875 and 1907-1946. A collection in private hands. It is very rare for the Fulbeck Minutes to give times of meetings. Once however the time of the next Quarterly Meeting is given as 10.0 p.m. (sic) (Dec. '66) and once 10 o'clock (Sept. '70). That it was normally held in the morning with the Full Board after dinner is suggested by references to this meal in the early minutes and by the requirement for preachers' apologies to be presented by 12 o'clock (Sept. '64) or 2 o'clock (Dec. '69)
- W.R. Ward op cit p.135
- Fulbeck Minutes 1833
- R.W. Ambler op cit p.477 gives a full critique of various refinements of the simple division between "closed" and "open" villages with a I to IV scale of his own (p.50) expressing degrees, as it were of social control
- See the Tithe Awards Map of Little Hale Lordship 1841 in Lincolnshire Archives, a tracing of which, made by Miss S. Priestley, B.A., was shown to the present writer
- Census returns for Little Hale 1841, also copied and kindly lent by Miss Priestley

VII LITTLE HALE MOVES TO SLEAFORD

- Sleaford Gazette. 2nd June 1860
- H.B. Kendall op cit 2.360 & 368
- Sleaford Gazette 14 Dec. 1861
- For Protracted Meetings for Prayer see Fulbeck Minutes passim. For an increased sacramental observance see the request it be "arranged for all our chapels next quarter" Sept. 1865 resn. 12
- Fulbeck Minutes Sept. 1862 resn. 10. Sunday School Annual Meeting Minutes and Census Returns
- Sleaford Gazette 13 July, 5th and 19th Oct. 1861
- Ibid 12 July 1862 Fulbeck Minutes Sept. 1862 resn. 19

VIII THE CHANGING VILLAGE SCENE

- R.W. Ambler and R.J. Olney op cit

IX THE FAITH AND THE FIELD

- R.W. Ambler op cit
- N. Scotland: Methodism and the Revolt of the Field (Gloucester 1981) p.21
- Ibid p.36 Quoting Sir George Edwards 1850-1933 "From Crow Scarer to Westminister"
- Ibid p.12
- Ibid p.69 & 197
- R.J. Olney op cit
- N. Scotland op cit p.129
- Sleaford Gazette May 6th 1871. Also Fulbeck Minutes June 1871 and Helpringham Deeds 1884 which gives Audiss's address as Mandeville Magnette, Wisconsin County, U.S.A. Oral tradition thought they went to Canada. See also Sleaford Gazette for General advertisement of facilities for emigrants (5th March 1872 and following numbers). There was a Sleaford agent and sailings from Boston, with through booking to all parts of U.S.A. and Canada. Interviewed in 1930 John Parker still felt the blow keenly. In 1987 their departure is still remembered by one lady now living
- See Kendall op cit volume 2 passim for Overseas Missions

X RELIGION AND EDUCATION

- Sleaford Gazette May 5th 1860 for its 21st celebrations
- Sunday School Annual Meeting Minutes 1858-1897. In private hands. Membership figures 1878-1883 only
- Illustration in Kendall 1.60
- D. Hempton op cit
- White's Directory 1856 states the amounts set aside in the enclosure allotments for the schoolmaster
- Sleaford Gazette 9th Oct. and 4th Nov. 1865
- C. Ellis (ed): Mid-Victorian Sleaford. Lincoln 1981
- W. Fawcett, Bookseller, Stationer and Printer (Publisher of Sleaford Gazette)
- The Primitive Methodist Magazine 1857-59 contains many earnest discussions of the dangers of the spread of Sunday School outings and teas. The editor implores teachers "to think of the undying worm"
- Log Book, Little Hale Church of England School (County Archives)
- White's Directory 1856. The vicar resided at Gosport where he had had a living since 1790. In 1841 there was a curate in lodgings at Little Hale but at Great Hale in 1856
- The editorials of the Primitive Methodist Magazine back the school but depreciate the Institute - as had much opinion in Wesleyan Methodism when the suggestion was first made

- See Nigel Scotland p.46 for the social education implicit in Primitive Methodism

- An unidentified newspaper cutting in private hands describes a celebration in honour of his 65 years connection with the school held in 1930. The Fulbeck Minutes have references to him as a preacher in 1869, '71 and '72. He was born in 1851; began work at the age of 7 (for 4d a day); became a "clever hedge plasher and dyker" able to do any job on the farm; married Susan Skinner (daughter of Tom Skinner) in 1875; they had 4 sons and 5 daughters. His wife died in 1919 and he about 1935. See Appendix VI

XI HOME ECONOMICS

- The Ring and the Book
- For the beginning of Harvest Festivals at Little Hale see above Section VII and Note 6

XII UNION AND BEYOND

- Handbook - Primitive Methodist Church Final Conference at Middlesborough 1932. A recently discovered Sunday School Prize at Little Hale points the same way at some length with the story of John Wesley finding no Methodists in heaven - only Christians

A P P E N D I X I

LITTLE HALE TRUSTEES

<u>13.8.1836</u>	John Lawrence	Donington	Miller and Baker	Andrew Brumley*	Helpringham	Labourer
	John Barton*	Donington Fen	Groundkeeper	John Pell	Little Hale	Labourer
	John Cox	Helpringham	Labourer	John Baker*	Little Hale	Labourer
<u>14.5.1875</u>	John Pell (above)	now living at Doncaster		Thomas Skinner	Little Hale	Showmaker
	William Skinner	Little Hale	Shoemaker	Samuel Newton	Little Hale	Farmer
	John Parker*	Little Hale	Labourer	John Newton	Great Hale	Farmer
	Thomas Parker (jnr)	Little Hale	Labourer	John(?) Broughton	Newton Heckington Fen	Farmer
	John Parker (jnr)	Little Hale	Labourer	John Newton	Ruskington	Baker

21.8.1892

As above omitting John Pell and adding John Hutchinson, and reading James (or Jarvis?) Broughton Newton. No occupations or locations

1. 12.1904

John Parker (jnr)	Little Hale	Fellmonger	Charles Priestley	Little Hale	Builder
Samuel Newton	Bassingham	Farmer	Richard Pacey	Little Hale	Farmer
John Newton	Donington	Farmer	William Henry Buttler	Sleaford	Outfitter
Jarvis (sic) Broughton Newton	East Heckington		William Atkin	Little Hale Fen	Labourer
		Wheelwright	Frederick Atkin	Little Hale Fen	Groundkeeper
John Newton	Ruskington	Baker			
Joseph Woods	Little Hale	Fellmonger			

1. 12.1932

John Parker	Little Hale	Labourer	Clara Jane Jackson	Little Hale	Housewife
John William Atkin	Little Hale	Farmer	George Brown	Heckington	Insurance Agent
William Henry Buttler	Sleaford	Outfitter	Leslie Buttler	Sleaford	Outfitter
Frederick Atkin	Little Hale	Farmer	Charles Ernest Pollington	Sleaford	Motor Mechanic
James Butters Howard	Great Hale	Grocer & Baker	Arthur Buttler	Sleaford	Outfitter
Fred Nicholls	Great Hale	Labourer	Hedley Brown	Heckington	Grocers Assistant
Walter Tomlinson	Walcot Fen	Labourer	Arthur Priestley	Little Hale Fen	Farmer
William Albert Jackson	Little Hale	Labourer	Walter Scoggins	Little Hale Fen	Farmer

18.6.1964 - Continuing Trustees

Final List

James Butters Howard	Cornerways, Great Hale	Retired	Arthur Buttler	50 London Rd., Sleaford	
Walter Tomlinson	Westcliffe, Sleaford	Farmer			Outfitter
Leslie Buttler	52 London Road, Sleaford		Hedley Brown	117 High St., Heckington	Grocer
		Salesman	Arthur Priestley	Little Hale	Retired
		Clerk	Walter Scoggins	Little Hale	Retired

New Trustees

Charles Ernest Pollington	Lincoln		John Jarvis Heslam	Scredington	Builder
Charles Arthur Priestley	Carr Dyke Farm	Farmer	Mabel Priestley	Little Hale	Schoolteacher
Joan Margaret Priestley	Carr Dyke Farm	Married Woman	Ronald Charles Scoggins	Little Hale	Cashier
Walter Bailey	Helpringham	Insurance Agent			

LITTLE HALE CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AT 1986

Ronald Scoggins	Little Hale	Mabel Priestley	Little Hale
Arthur Priestley	Carr Dyke Farm	Elizabeth Lister	Little Hale
Joan Priestley	Carr Dyke Farm	Reginald Coaker	Little Hale
Susan Priestley	Bedford	Ann Coaker	Little Hale
Michael Priestley	Carr Dyke Farm	John Clarke	Great Hale
Mary Priestley	Little Hale	Joan Clarke	Great Hale

* = Making their marks

A P P E N D I X I I
HELPRINGHAM DEEDS - names and occupations

7th September 1840

1st John Thomlinson	gent of Latimer Hall	William Audiss	of Helpringham	Wheelwright	
2nd John Armstrong*	of Helpringham	Joseph Rich	"	Joiner	
William Gamble*	"	Labourer	John Newton	Little Hale Fen	Ploughman (?)
Andrew Bromley*	"	Labourer	John Lawrence	Donington	Malter & Baker
John Thorby	"	Harness maker	John Richards	Rippingale	Jobber

* = Making their marks
 George Wood witnessing. Consideration £10

June 1845

Mortgage witnessed by John Richards & Edward Morton. John Newton of Little Hale Fen Yeoman

Reconveyance 7th April 1884

William Audiss of Mandeville	Magnetite, County Wisconsin, U.S.A.	Labourer	Helpringham	Labourer	
John Richards	Rippingale	Jobber	Henry Harris	Helpringham	
William Hipkins	Sleaford	Outfitter	Josiah Buttler	Sleaford	Outfitter
George Garton	Helpringham	Farmer	Jarvis Broughton	Newton Heckington East	Wheelwright
George Lamley	Helpringham	Gardener	John Hutchinson	Little Hale Fen	Farmer
Thomas Harris	Helpringham	Labourer	Thomas Parker	Little Hale	Labourer
			George Bee	Heckington	Labourer

Witness George Bromley, Minister, New Street, Sleaford

A P P E N D I X I I I
WORSHIPPERS AT LITTLE HALE 1860

20 Signatories to application for Marriage Licence with occupations (where known) from other sources.

B = Baptism Register D = Deeds M = Minutes W = White's Directory

Francis Hey	William Skinner	Shoemaker (D)
James Ingall		Society Steward 1862 (M)
John Hackett	William Hackett	Farmer (W)
Thomas Barnard	William Barrand	Shoemaker (W)
William Child	George Clark	Farmer (W)
Robert Roberts	Thomas Smith	Labourer (B)
Andrew Wakefield	John Newton	Labourer (B)
William Anderson	John Green	Grocer (W & B)
John Hillson	George Thompson	Farmer (W)
Jonathan Faulkner	Thomas Faulkner	Farmer (W)
	John Pell	Trustee (D) Labourer

A P P E N D I X I V

SOME CHANGES OF OCCUPATION OR LOCATION OF Worshippers or Trustees

John Pell, Little Hale. Labourer (1836 D) to Doncaster by 1875 (D)
 William Audiss, Helpringham. Wheelwright (Helpringham 1840 D) to USA by 1875 D
 John Newton, Little Hale Fen. Ploughman (?) (Hpm 1840 D) Labourer 1863 (B); Great Hale Farmer (1875 D)
 Donington. Farmer (1904 D)
 John Parker jnr., Little Hale. Labourer (1875 D) Fellmonger (1904) Labourer (1932 D)
 Thomas Skinner. Cordwainer (1875 B); Shoemaker (1875 D); Boot & Shoemaker (1878 B); Labourer (1880 B)
 Samuel Newton. Farmer at Great Hale (1875 D); at Bassingham (1904 D)
 John Hutchinson. Victualler (1856 W); Publican (1864 B); Farmer, Little Hale Fen (Hpm 1884 D); Farmer and
 John Green. Grocer (1864 B); Grocer & Draper (1856 W & 1865 B); Postmaster (1892 W) Landowner (W1892)

A P P E N D I X V

SOME FAMILY CHRISTENINGS

Children and Year of Baptism

Parents	
John & Elizabeth Newton	Matthew 1863 William 1869
Thomas & Jane Smith	James 1863 John 1864 John 1867 (sic)
John & Susan Parker	Susanah 1879 Elizabeth 1881 Sarah Ann 1883
John & Ann Green	Mary Ann 1864 Felix 1865 Alice Elizabeth 1869 John Richard 1875 (wife named Emily)
Bartholomew & Sarah Jane Stones	Bartholomew Samson 1872 Isaac 1873 Edward 1874
Thomas & Frances May Skinner	Rose Elizabeth 1875 Florence Susan 1878 Fanny Gertrude 1880

A P P E N D I X V I

SOME FAMILY NAMES FROM CENSUS RETURNS 1841 '51 '71 '81

AUDISS
 There were three William Audiss's:
 1. born 1786 m. Ann, 10 years older
 2. born 1822 m. Anne, 1 year younger
 3. born 1849

William 2 went to America in 1872. William 3 (b.1845) stayed and kept the family business going.
 Joseph the eldest child had married Mary Roberts and they were living with her parents.

SKINNER
 William Skinner (b.1819) m. Susannah (same age) Shoemaker. Their son Samuel was born 1845 and Thomas (b.1849)

John Skinner (born c1776) also had a son Samuel (b.1838)
 Edward Skinner (born 1826) m. Dinah (died between 1861-1871). Children include
 William (b.1850) and Susan (b.1856)
 Thomas Skinner (son of William) was father of the Susan who married John Parker.

PARKER
 John Parker (the younger) so described in the Deeds was 11 months old at the 1851 census.
 He became Society Steward and Sunday School Superintendent after the Audiss's emigration and died in his 80s.
 John Parker (the elder) - perhaps an uncle? appears to have been born in 1837 to
 Richard and Mary Parker (born 1811 & 1816).