

THE JACKSON FAMILY

As a work of reference, *Jacksons Oxford Journal* newspaper must have been studied by thousands of people who wished to find out about Oxford's history, its people, or their families. During the century or more that it was in publication it had amassed a wealth of information that was of help to many; but what do we know about its founder, William Jackson?

William and his family were members of The Society of Friends (Quakers) who lived in and around Leeds in West Yorkshire. The earliest record seems to be of William's maternal grandparents, John and Sarah North. Their daughter, also Sarah, married William Jackson senior at the friends meeting house in Gildersome, Yorkshire on 13 November 1709. William and Sarah had eight children: John (b.1710), Joshua (1712–1790), Elizabeth (b.1714), Sarah (1716–1804), George (1718–1736), William (1721–1795), Benjamin (1723–1748) and Samuel (1726–1746). Sarah married Aaron Grimshaw (1722–1777), a schoolmaster, on 10 November 1759 but had no children. None of William and Sarah's other children married; consequently they had no descendants.

Before William senior married Sarah North, he had been married to a Rachel Morecroft (1682–1707) and had a daughter, Rachel (b.1707), by her.

In 1754 William Jackson junior's half-sister Rachel married a Leeds printer, James Lister (1710–1753). The children of Rachel and James were: James (1735–1791), John (b.1736), Francis (1738–1785), William (b.1740), and Thomas (b.1744). We know about son James, but very little about the rest of them, except that John must have been married because he had a daughter named Rachel. Son James left Yorkshire and travelled to London to set up in business as a printer in Hounslow, Middlesex. While there, he got to know Elizabeth Franklin (1740–1771) and came to Oxford to marry her at St Michael at-the-North-Gate church on 30 October 1764. How and where people meet is sometimes difficult to fathom, but it could be that Elizabeth had been visiting her relations, the Devalls, in Hounslow.

James and Elizabeth had three children: Catherine (1768–68), James (1769–1796) and William (1770–1843); but, with William barely a year old, Elizabeth died. It would seem likely that Elizabeth's mother travelled to London for her daughter's funeral and then returned to Oxford with the boys so that they could be looked after, possibly, in the company of the boy's father. They were certainly all in Oxford, a few years later, when William Jackson made out his first will.

It seems remarkable how intertwined Oxford business families were at that time. Elizabeth's Franklins parents were John Franklin (d.1748) and Elizabeth Devall (1707–1779). Her paternal grandparents were Jeremiah Franklin (1670–1748) (Oxford carpenter and twice mayor) and Catherine Townsend (b.1674) the daughter of John Townsend (1648–1728), once mayor of Oxford, and sister to William Townsend the well-known Oxford stonemason). Her maternal grandparents were George Devall (1680–1743) and Elizabeth Mist (b.1676). Grandfather George and his brother John who had left Eynsham to take up apprenticeships in London were both were to become rich and famous. In Oxford, George is remembered as the plumber on the Radcliffe Camera. When John Franklin and Elizabeth Devall married they received a marriage settlement from their parents of property in central Oxford, in Headington, and in Eynsham.

With the Franklins and the Lister/Jacksons in Oxford, we have the dying embers of two well-known Oxford families together in one place. John Franklin (d.1748) didn't live long enough to succeed his father or for him to establish a reputation of his own and, since he fathered only girls, Elizabeth (1740–1771) and Catherine (d.1785), the family line wasn't going to progress further, particularly as, at that time, girls didn't count for much. With Elizabeth's death, unmarried Catherine was the last of the Franklins. Catherine's will left the Franklin properties in Eynsham to the two Lister boys and also requested that she be interred beside her mother in the Devall family vault in Eynsham – not surprisingly, William Jackson was to administer the will. (It would be nice if someone could locate this vault.)

In the first draft of William Jackson's will of 1775 he lists those of his relations who, one must presume, were the only ones still alive. Heading the list are his sister Sarah and his brother Joshua. Following on from them were Rachel, the daughter of his nephew John, then his nephew James and James's two sons James and William. Nephew James was to get £300 and the other £50 each.

James Lister Junior was described as an innkeeper who married Widow Ann King at St Giles in Oxford on 19 April 1791 and William Lister as a draper who married Elizabeth Early (1769–1847) at Witney St Mary on 19 July 1791. In Elizabeth's day, blanket-weaving in Witney was still a cottage industry. It was up to Elizabeth's uncle John and his sons to start the Earlys on the road to dominate the blanket trade. It wasn't long after getting married that the Lister boys sold the Eynsham properties to John Rushton for £1,660: £855 went to James and £805 to William.

William Lister and Elizabeth had eight children, four boys and four girls. Of these children only three of the girls reached adulthood. All three girls married, but only the two oldest had children.

At the time of William Jackson's death, only two of those listed in Will A were still alive: Sister Sarah and William Lister. Sarah was to get William's working premises in Oxford's High Street but, what was a wealthy aged widow living in Leeds going to do with it? Clearly she wasn't interested and passed it to Mary Jones. What of William Lister? Somehow, I get the impression that he wasn't capable of running the Jackson printing business. Mary Jones had worked alongside William Jackson as a business partner for so long that she probably knew all of its workings and finished up as the logical choice to inherit.

The following appeared under deaths in *Jackson's Oxford Journal* on Saturday 22 Sep 1804:

Thursday 6th last, aged upward of 80 at her seat at Wellclose House near Leeds Yorkshire Mrs. Sarah Grimshaw, widow, sister of the late Mr. W. Jackson proprietor of this newspaper. Her death will be sincerely regretted by all who had the happiness of her friendship, as well as by a numerous circle of relatives, and the poor in the neighbourhood of her hospitable Mansion will have to lament the loss of a valuable friend.

Sarah Grimshaw left most of her fortune to her mother's family, the Norths, (£8,500, with £2,000 of that going to her cousin Benjamin North). William Lister was to inherit £400.

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