The Forest of Dean Ancestors of Mary Evans who married Jonah Dalley

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1. Introduction

The parents of Mary Evans who married Jonah Dalley were William Evans and Mary Ann Miles. Both these families and their ancestors lived close to the Forest of Dean west of Gloucester and quite close to the Welsh border. Slightly north is Ross on Wye where the ancestors of Jonah Dalley who married Mary in New Zealand owned a butchers shop for two generations.

2. William Evans and Mary Ann Miles

William Evans was born on 14th June 1851 and lived with his parents at Mill Hill at the southern end of the Forest of Dean until the time of his marriage. Mary Ann Miles was born about September 1855 into a farming family and she also lived with her parents. In October 1873 when she was eighteen years old she had a daughter Mary who is our ancestor. The name of the father is not stated on the birth certificate. At the time Mary was staying with her Aunt Phoebe who was living on a small farm at Ore Pool, a kilometre south of Clearwell in the district of Coleford and not too far from Newland. The birth took place approximately two years before Mary Ann married William Evans so we do not have any proof that William is the father of Mary. However it is clear from subsequent census records that whether he was the natural father or not William certainly adopted Mary as his own daughter.

On 14 September 1875 the marriage of William Evans and Mary Ann Miles aged 20 took place in the Methodist Primitive Chapel at Monmouth so it seems likely the Miles were Primitive Methodists. William's occupation is a miner and both William and Mary Ann were living in Clearwell at the time. Just over a month after the marriage on 31st October 1875 Esther Ann was born.

In 1876 Mary Ann's parents emigrated to New Zealand and in 1879 William and Mary Ann decided to follow them. They departed on the sailing ship Hereford on 6 October 1879 and arrived in Christchurch on the 30 December. They are listed in the passenger list as follows:

William Evans - 27
Mary A. Evans - 23
Mary Evans (daughter) - 6
Esther Evans (daughter) - 3

There were other members of Mary Ann's family the Miles on board the Hereford. Mary Ann's younger unmarried sister Ann and her brother William Miles with his wife Mary Jane aged 25 and 27 respectively together with their four young children were all on the ship. Henry and Sarah Dalley and family were also on the same vessel and so even though they were only children at the time Mary (Flossie) would have first met her future husband Jonah on board the Hereford.

Charles William Evans was born in 1881. His name is stated to be William in Mary Ann's death certificate and it appears likely that the reason they called him William and not Charles was because their second New Zealand born son who arrived in March 1884 was also named Charles. His name was Charles Hubert and he appears as Charles in his mother's death certificate. Charles Hubert's birth certificate tells us that William was a labourer and both sons were born at Wheatstone. Wheatstone was a rural area a little way from Ashburton presumably where Wheatstone Road is today so it seems likely that William was working on a farm. Mary Jane Miles was the informant for the birth of Charles indicating Mary Ann was keeping in close touch with her brother and sister in law. It seems that William and Mary Ann ended up in Ashburton because when Mary Ann died only thirty years old in 1887 the funeral notice in the newspaper gives their home address as Moore Street, Ashburton. She left four children aged between 3 and 12. Mary Ann had been ill for many years. Aunty Alyce has told us that she believes Mary Ann had at least one leg amputated because of chronic ulcers. Her death certificate confirms her health problems reporting chronic ulceration and abscesses for eight years before eventually dying of exhaustion.

More challenges lay ahead for William as in 1889 son William ran into trouble with the law. The account as it appeared in the Ashburton times makes sad reading: 'William Evans, 8 years of age, was charged with larcency of a horse, saddle and bridle to the value of £15, the property of J. Black. Sergeant Folton said that the boy had taken five horses during the last few months. The lad when he got the opportunity took a horse and cart and rode about all over the country, turning the horses adrift when he had done with them. The police added that the boy's mother was dead, and his father had no time to look after him. They would ask that the criminal charge be withdrawn and the boy proceeded against as a neglected child. Evans Sen. said that beyond his penchant for stolen rides the boy was well behaved. He thought that the lad would now mend his ways. The Magistrate thought that it would be a pity to send the boy to Burnham if it could be avoided. He administered a sharp caution to young Evans and then allowed him to go, on the fathers promise to look well after him.'

William died a few years later on 27 October 1891 forty years old leaving the family of four children as orphans. He had what appears to be a most unpleasant condition called 'Suppuration of the sacrum' It may have been impossible for him to be nursed at home because a month before his death he was admitted to Sunnyside mental hospital where he died on 27 October 1891.

Mary Ann and William had short and challenging lives in New Zealand. With her mother afflicted with sickness a lot of responsibility for raising the family probably fell on the eldest daughter Mary (our Flossie). It seems likely Mary Ann's brother William who came to New Zealand and settled at Longbeach about 20 km south along the coast from Wheatstone and her sister Ann would have helped but it must have been tough for everyone.

3. William Evans' Family

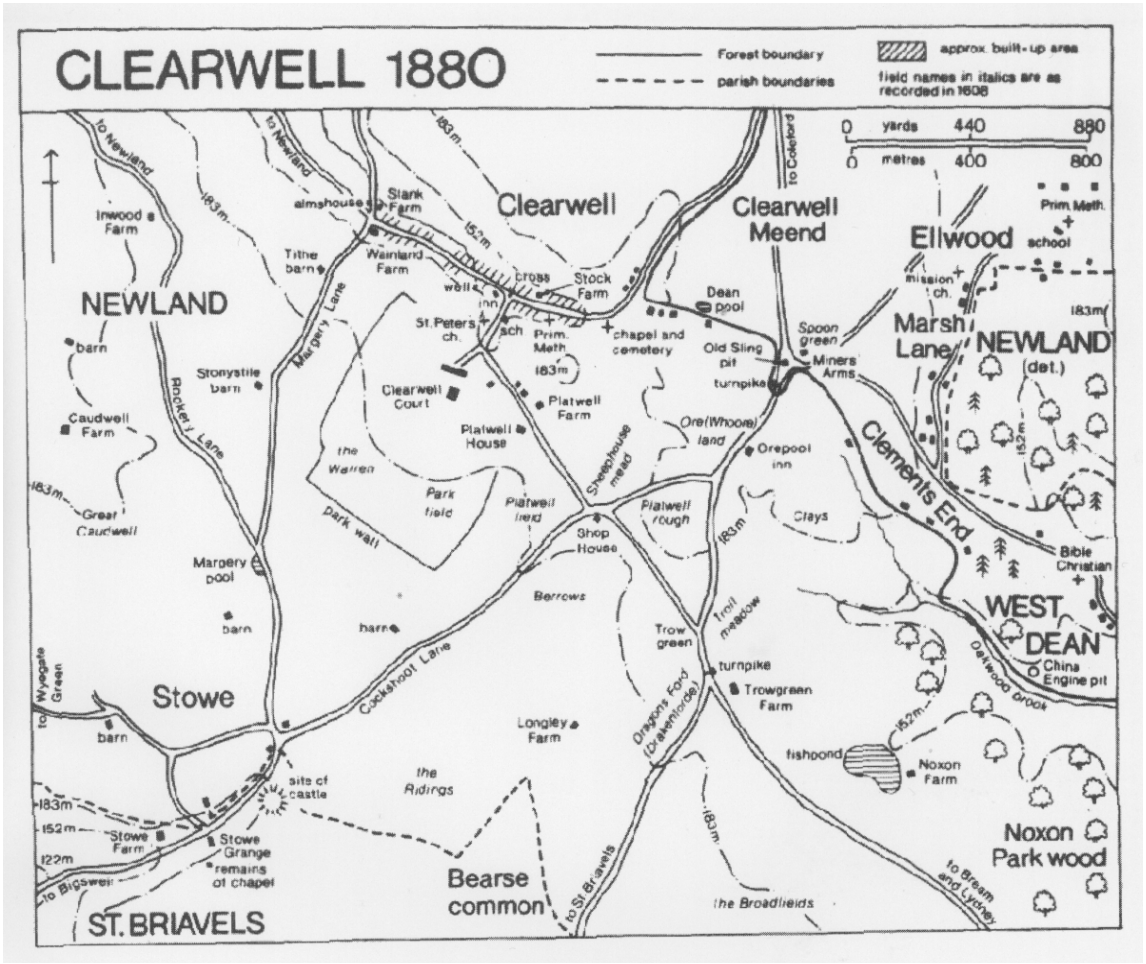
3.1 William Evans parents Charles Evans and Mary Ann Price.

William Evans' parents were Charles Evans and Mary Ann Price. Charles was born on Jan 25 1824 at Redbrook near Newland on the Welsh border. He was the third son of William Evans Sen. and his wife Hannah. Charles, a labourer married Mary Ann a minor in the Parish Church of Newland in Gloucestershire on 17th August 1850. Charles' father was an agricultural labourer, and Mary Anne's father Edward Price was a collier. At the time of the marriage Charles was living at Oakwood Mill and Mary Ann at Mill Hill on the northern side of Bream on the southern edge of the Forest of Dean.



At the time of the 1851 census the young couple are staying with Mary Ann's parents at Mill Hill. By this time Mary Ann would have been about 6 months pregnant with William our ancestor. William was born at Mill Hill in 1851 and baptised at the Parkend Church pictured on the left. Thereafter children continued to arrive at about two yearly intervals - George was next in 1853, Ann in 1855 and Martha followed in 1857. Henry was baptised in 1859, Elizabeth Jane in 1863, another Martha in 1865, and Ruth in 1867. Twin boys Edward and Charles were born in 1869, and then a gap of about four years before the final child Mary Anne arrived in 1873. There were eleven children altogether and all except the first Martha and Henry, who died as infants, survived into adulthood. The large family must have placed quite a strain on the family budget. Most of the family left home when they were old enough but their last child Mary Ann aged 26 and unmarried was still living with her parents in 1901. All the children received some education although, if the census record is to be believed, it was rather variable. In 1861 William, George and Ann aged 9, 7 and 5 were all scholars but in 1871 William and George were miners and the four girls were not at school. Things changed in 1881 by which time all the two children remaining at home being Edward and Charles aged 11 and Mary A 7 were scholars.

Charles and Mary always lived in the south west part of the Forest of Dean. They lived at Mill Hill for the first few years of their married life and their first children were baptised at the Parkend Chapel. By 1857 they had shifted to Clearwell south of Coleford probably because this was close to the iron mine where Charles worked. Most of their children were baptised in Clearwell. The exact location of their house is hard to determine but it appears to be a little west of Clearwell. In both the 1871, 1881 and 1891 census their residence is stated to be Marsh Lane and this road is clearly shown on the map. Today Marsh Lane passes through rural land east of Sling towards Ellwood. Their final move was to Milkwall just a few kilometres north of Sling. The map shows most of the places where Charles and Mary lived – Clearwell Meend, Clements End, and Marsh Lane.



Charles occupation for most of his life was an iron miner although at the time of the 1891 and 1901 censuses he was working in a sand quarry. Perhaps he moved from underground iron mining to outside quarrying for health reasons. He appears to have continued to work well into his old age as in 1901 at the age is 77 he is still working. Mary Ann died aged 73 in 1903 and Charles died two years later in 1905 aged 79. Both were buried at the Clearwell Chapel.

Iron mining and smelting have a long history in the Forest of Dean going back to ancient times. At one time the Forest iron mines were the best known in England. There is an ancient mine open to public inspection in the Clearwell Caves and a little deeper in the Forest very close to where Charles and Mary Ann were living is Dark Hill, the site of a famous steel works where, it is alleged, the process for manufacturing steel was discovered.

3.2 Charles Evan's parents William Evans (Sen) and Hannah Thomas

Charles Evans' father was William Evans (Sen) and his birth place is stated to be Newland. William Evans married Hannah Thomas on 19 August 1813 at Newland. Hannah signed the register indicating that she may have been literate.:



The combined evidence of census and parish records suggests that Hannah and Charles had a least eight children although they may have had more. The marriage took place in 1813 and the first recorded baptism is of Charles in 1824. We know from the ages in the census record that George and James were born about 1818 and 1820 so there could well have been other children born between 1813 and 1818 who would have left home by the time of the 1841 census. Two of the children - Charles and the first Margaret probably died as children but I cannot find any burial record for them. Margaret must have died before she was seven as the second Margaret was baptised about seven years after the first Margaret was baptised. The photograph is of St. Peters church in Clearwell as it was when we visited in 2009. Nearly all the Evans baptisms took place here.

William worked on a farm all his life. After their marriage they lived for some years at Redbrook on the Welsh border where Charles was born but then shifted to Clearwell for the remainder of their lives. It appears that they lived very close to the parish church as the census record of 1861 lists St. Peters Church and their house on the same page of the census record. The area they lived in was very mixed and unlike many housing areas in the Forest of Dean was not dominated by mining families although some miners are present. It appears to be a mainly agricultural town with a mix of labourers, tradesmen and shopkeepers, and the odd professional. Hannah was buried on 5 March 1864 aged 71. There has to be a bit of a question mark over this record as both the residence and chapel are stated to be at Newnham. William died six years later aged 81. His occupation is once again a farm labourer. Both his residence and the burial location are stated to be Clearwell.

The reference to Redbrook as the birth place for Charles has provided the link back one further generation. A search of births in Redbrook reveals that rather surprisingly there appears to be only one family of Evans living there and the birth of a William Evans fits well with his know age from census records. What we have is baptismal record for five children of George and Mary Evans between 1784 and 1795.

Name	Date	Residence	Parish
John Bannister	27 June 1784	Redbrook	Newland
Mary	8 Oct 1786	Redbrook	Newland
William	15 Feb 1789	Redbrook	Newland
Henry	19 Feb 1791	Redbrook	Newland
Anne	30 June 1793	Redbrook	Newland
Elizabeth	6 Nov 1795	Redbrook	Newland

We have no further knowledge of this family.

3.3 Mary Ann Price's parents Edward Price and Mary Jones

Edward Price married Mary Jones on 7 October 1824 at Newland. They had five children between 1784 and 1795. They were –

Date	Name	Residence	Occupation	Chapel
25 December 1825	Caroline	Bream Woodside	Collier	Parkend
31 December 1827	James	Millhill	Coalminer	Parkend
12 August 1832	Mary Ann	Parkwood Hill	Collier	Parkend
1 April 1836	Edward	Mill Hill	Collier	Parkend
11 March 1838	Martha	Oakwood Hill	Collier	Parkend

Edward and Mary and most of their family lived in the Mill Hill on the northern edge of Bream in the Forest of Dean all their lives. Edward's occupation never changed. He is always stated to be collier or coal miner. We have visited Mill Hill. Today it is a pleasant, hilly, wooded area that probably bears no resemblance to the Mill Hill of one hundred and fifty years ago. Oakwood Close, which may well be close to Oakwood Hill where Edward was born and where Charles Evans was living at the time of his marriage to Mary Ann Price, is a small blind lane with one or two houses a few minutes walking distance from Mill Hill. Mill Hill was very much a coal mining area with most people working in coal mines. In 1841 Edward 51 and Mary 41 are living there with their five children. James, the oldest boy aged 13 is already working as a collier but no occupation is given for his two older sisters. By 1851 Caroline has left home but the other four children are still at home. Both James and Edward are coal miners but 13 year old Martha is a scholar. A new boarder has come to stay - Charles Evans, our ancestor, and his pregnant wife Mary Ann are staying with the Prices. Edward died of dropsy on July 2 1857 aged 69 years. In 1861 Mary, now a widow is still living at Mill Hill. She is described as a house and land proprietor and the head of the family. It seems likely that the house and land referred to is the property that she previously shared with her husband. She is sharing the house with her unmarried son Edward, who has left mining behind and is now a stone mason and her daughter Martha who is married to Elija Wintle, an Engineer and the Wintle's four small children. Next door is her son James with his wife and four small children. Moving a further ten years on to 1871 and the extended family is still all together at Mill Hill. By now Mary Ann aged 70 is no longer head but is described as the mother in law to Elija, an engine driver at the mine who is the head of the household. Both the Wintle family and James (Collier) next door have had three more children. Mary Ann died at the age 75 in September 1875. It is evident that the Prices were a very closely knit family living in close proximity to each other for nearly all of Mary Ann's life.

3.4 Edward Price's Ancestors

We have managed to track Edward Price's family back a further two generations using the parish records on the Forest of Dean website. An Edward Price was christened on 6 September 1789 at Newland and as this is a perfect fit with his age as recorded in the censuses and as there are no other Edward Price's born about this time we can be pretty confident he is our ancestor. Edward's parents were James and Susannah (Susan) Price. The marriage between Susannah Elway and James Price, both resident in Newland Parish took place on 31 December 1788. Between 1789 and 1806 the baptisms of seven children including one pair of twins are recorded. Throughout this time they were living in Bream which is described as Forest for two of the baptisms. As is usual with earlier Church records we do not have any information about the family except their names.

Going back a further generation we know that two James Prices were born in Bream to James and Hannah Price, one in 1766 and one in 1767. The marriages of the two couples in Newland are recorded. In 1744 James Price and Hannah Prichard were married in Newland parish and in 1763 a James Price and Hannah Kear were married in the same parish. It seems likely that James Price and Hannah Prichard are our ancestors but there is some doubt. Children belonging to James and Hannah Price start appearing in 1745 and by 1767 seven children had been born. The first James was born in 1747 but he is not our ancestor as his burial is recorded later that year. One of the children has been entered twice, once in Bream and once in Newland. A James was born in Dec 1766, and another in Jan 1767, and as these entries have the same form as the other duplicate entry but with slightly different dates it seems possible that there has been a transcription error and the two James are one and the same person. If James Price and Hannah Kear had been having children in Bream we would normally expect to see more than just one baptism after their marriage date of 1763 but the only births after that date are the two James. As no other children are recorded for James Price and Hannah Kear after their marriage date it seems they either shifted to another parish or had no children. Once again we don't know anything else about these families but on balance it does seem that our ancestors were James Price and Hannah Prichard

4. The family of Mary Ann Miles

Mary Evans' mother Mary Ann Miles parents were Thomas Miles and Ellen Hawkins

4.1 Thomas Miles and Ellen Hawkins

Thomas Miles married Ellen Hawkins at the Doward Independent Chapel on 15th April 1850. Ellen was 17 years old and Thomas was about 20. Both had lived with their parents in the Forest of Dean area near Coleford.

Thomas came from a family of farmers so it is not surprising that he continued the farming tradition of his father, mother and two brothers. In 1841 fourteen year old Thomas was living with his parents on Perry Grove Farm just south of Coleford. The miniature railway at Perry Grove today was once surrounded by this farm. In 1851, the year after his marriage, the census record tells us that it is now William and Ellen who are farming the 60 acre farm at Perrygrove. His father has died and his mother Phebe is living with her son Henry on a bigger farm north of Coleford

By 1861 Thomas and Ellen have moved to a larger 100 acre farm slightly north of Coleford located at Five Acres adjacent to Berry Hill. Their family consists of four children. William is aged 9, John 7, our ancestor Mary Ann 4 and there is a baby of 10 months called Ann Maria. They have two servants, a 36 year old dairy maid and a 46 year old carter. Ten years later in 1871 the family has shifted south again into a small village on the edge of the Forest of Dean called Ellwood. Thomas appears to have given up active farming as his occupation is now a farm bailiff in which capacity he was presumably acting on behalf of farm owners on farm management matters. The family are all still at home and a third daughter Lucy aged 7 has been born.

The next ten years were certainly eventful for the family. In 1873 Mary Ann had a baby out of wedlock.and in the same year Thomas and Ellen had a late addition to their own family when Howard was born. Both these births took place at Ore Pool close to Perrygrove. A photograph and further information about Ore Pool can be found under William and Phebe Miles. At the time of these births Thomas' sister Phebe Jun. was living on a small farm at Orepool so it appears that Phebe Jun. provided great help and support to Thomas and Ellen. In the same year 1873 their oldest child William married Mary Kear and children soon followed. It was 1875 when Mary Ann married William Evans.

For a time I had great difficulty in finding any further references for Thomas and Ellen in England but now the reason has become very clear because in April 1876 the family consisting of Thomas and Ellen and three children Anna M, Lucy and Howard departed on the Camperdown for New Zealand. Thomas and Ellen were old to make the trip and both understated their ages, probably because they were too old to be eligible for assisted passage. Thomas who was about 55 said he was 48 and Ellen who was about 52 is stated to be 39! Accompanying them were Alfred Bennett aged 21 and Mary Anne Hawkins. It seems highly likely that Mary Anne Hawkins was Ellen's niece. Both Anna M. Miles and Mary Anne Hawkins were dairymaids and they left the ship in Marlborough while Thomas, Ellen and Howard disembarked at Christchurch. On the same ship were William and Thomas Hawkins aged 26 and 22 respectively. They may well have been brothers of Mary Anne. It was a real family clan on board!

Thomas and Ellen settled in Ashburton at Longbeach Road which is a country road which joins the main road south about 15 km from Ashburton and runs through rural countryside to the coast. Sadly about a year after their arrival in New Zealand on 25th July 1877 Ellen died at home and was buried at Ashburton Cemetery. It appears she may have had health problems for some time as the doctor states in her death certificate that she had epilepsy. It must have been an emotional reunion for Thomas when his daughter Mary Ann Evans and her husband William Miles arrived with their families in late 1879. Perhaps a desire to help their widowed father and the opportunity of starting life in a new country were the reason for their emigration. By now all Ellen and Thomas's family with the exception of John were living in New Zealand. It must have been most unusual for three generations of a family to all emigrate at about the same time. About ten years after Ellen's death in November 1886 Thomas died at the age of 65. His occupation was a coachman and he was buried in the Ashburton Cemetery.

4.2 Thomas Miles parents William Miles and Phoebe Playsted

Mary Evan's great grandparents and Thomas Miles parents were William and Phoebe Playsted. William was baptised in Coleford in 1774 the second of seven known children born to Henry Miles (Jun) and his wife Sarah. Phoebe was born in Westbury on Severn on the southern side of the Forest of Dean close to the Severn River in June 1783.

There are banns and a marriage record for a William Miles and Phebe Plaisted dated 1807 in London recorded in Pallots marriage index. This date is entirely consistent with their first child arriving in 1808 but the location of London makes the relevance of this record highly suspect. William and Phebe had eleven children, the first being Mary born in 1808. Thomas our ancestor was the eighth born about 1820. They appear to have lived near Coleford from 1808 to 1814 as that is where their first four children were born. They then shifted south to Hewelsfield Parish for some years where William was a farmer before shifting north to Perrygrove on what is now the southern outskirts of Coleford. I have not been able to find records of their later childrens births.

At the time of the 1841 census William's age is given as 60 and his occupation is a farmer. There are five children living with them – William aged 20, Phebe 15, Thomas our ancestor aged 13, Eliza aged 12 and John aged 4. John may well be a nephew as the John of similar age living with Phebe in the next two censuses is a nephew. There is also another 16 year old girl and two other small children named M. Ann Beach and Phebe Beach occupying the same house. It seems likely that with an unusual name like Phebe the two Beach children are related to William and Phebe Miles.



The 1840 tithe map for Newland Parish with its associated tithe schedule enables us to precisely locate the land they were farming. The boundaries of the farm are shown on the map. The tithe schedules give the rates payable to both the appropriator and the vicar. In Phoebe's case the total rates were about £10 with £2.50 going to the vicar. Phoebe Miles leased the land from Raymond Symons and brothers who were substantial land owners in the district. The lots included a house and garden, a cottage and garden, and sundry other gardens and yards, a total of 60 acres. The wood in the centre of the farm is called Perrygrove Wood in later survey maps. This wood,which is presently occupied by the Perrygrove miniature railway, was completely surrounded by the farm.



This photograph is of the Perrygrove miniature railway. The railway passes through the wood and has several stops where customers can dismount and picnic or undertake other activities. Some of the old farm buildings and the house are in use as part of the railway and they may well be the same buildings occupied by William and Phebe when they were living there.

William died in 1842 and the parish record says he was living at Perry Grove at the time. Thanks to Mary Crowley we have a copy of William's will. It reads as follows:
In the name of God Amen, I **William Miles** of **Perry Grove Farm** in the Parish of Newland and County of Gloucester, being weak of body, but sound in mind and memory do make and ordain this my last will and testament , that is to say I give and dispose of all my real and personal property in the following manner. First I give and bequeath to my beloved wife the whole of my real and personal property for the term of eight years to commence at my decease (and at the termination of eight years fifteen pounds a year during the term of her natural life. Secondly at the termination of the above stated eight years I bequeath to my beloved children the whole of my real and personal property to be equally divided between them making a reserve of fifteen pounds a year as above stated to be paid to my beloved wife but if my children should not agree to divide the property the whole to be sold and equally divided.

I further give and bequeath to my so loved sister, **Sarah Taylor** ten pounds for five years to commence at my decease the above sum to be paid by my beloved wife should Sarah Taylor not survive the five years the sum or sums unpaid to be paid to her daughter Theodosia during the unpaid time and I appoint Thomas Porter and Joseph Warder as my executors.In ?? whereof I hereunto ? my hand and seal this seventh day of may in the year of our lord one thousand eight hundred and forty two.

By the time of the 1851 census Phoebe is living with her two sons Henry and James and her daughter Phebe on a 1arger 155 acre farm called Court Farm at Clearwell about 2 km from Perrygrove. Henry and James are described as partners in the farm and Phoebe 65 years old and born at Hewelsfield is the housekeeper. Daughter Phebe is a dairy maid and John Miles, a nephew of Henry is also in the household helping on the farm. Running the farm has become a real family affair. The farm is close to Cleawell Castle and the dwellings next door are Court House and Court Lodge. Another farmer is living at Court Lodge and as his children are scholars it seems possible that they may have been the owner of Court Farm.

Phoebe must have been a resilient soul as in 1861 at the age of 76 she is back farming at Perry Grove with her 24 year old nephew John who she was previously living with at Court Farm and two young people, a girl who is a house servant and a boy a farm labourer. Rather surprisingly Phoebe's birthplace is stated to be Crickhowell, Breconshire which is about 40 km north west of the Forest of Dean in the Esk River valley whereas in all other census records her birth place is stated to be Gloucestershire. This is almost certainly an error. Another Playsted family did live in Crick but situated over the border in Wales and not in the Esk Valley.

Phebe made her last move to nearby Ore Pool (now Orepool) where she died of old age in January 1870. Today there is nothing at Orepool except an isolated country pub. According to the son of the present owner it was built in the 1640s but if so it has certainly not been in continuous use as an inn. At the time of the 1871 census Phebe's daughter also named Phebe is living at Orepool where she is a farmer of 8 acres. It appears highly likely that mother and daughter were living there prior to Phebe's death. There was certainly no inn operating at Orepool at the time. There were only two dwellings occupied in Orepool at the time of the census- the building Phebe Jun. is living in and the other occupied by a charwoman. It seems highly likely that Phebe being the farmer would be in the building that is now the Inn. Orepool was a significant location for some family events, but particularly as the birthplace for our ancestor Mary (Flossie) Miles who married Jonah Dalley. She was born there in 1873.



An old photograph of the Orepool Inn. Today it is still in operation and although the building has been altered the original Inn is still clearly discernable.

4.3. William Miles Ancestors Henry Miles and Sarah

The ancestral trail leading into the past for William Miles is not that well defined being entirely reliant on fairly sparse parish records. We cannot be certain that we have taken the right track but there is a good chance that we have the right people.

William's parents were Henry and Sarah Miles. The baptisms of seven children to Henry and Sarah are recorded as follows:

Mary	6 March 1770	Baptised Newland	Residence Coleford
William	5 February 1774	Baptised Newland	Residence Coleford
Sarah	27 February 1776	Baptised Newland	Residence Coleford
Elizabeth	Birth 19 July 1778	Baptised Newland	Residence Coleford
James	12 October 1782	Baptised Newland	Residence Coleford
John	28 September 1783	Baptised Coleford	Residence Coleford
Nancy	16 July 1786	Baptised Coleford	Residence Coleford

The fact that Henry and Sarah lived in the Coleford area where we know William was born and also that one of their children was named Sarah add authenticity to the record. Henry, resident at Whitecliff not far from Coleford was buried at Newland on 4 December 1819 aged 79 years. He left a will written in January 1819. In the will he mentions Sarah his wife and children William, James, Mary, Sarah and Elizabeth by name indicating that perhaps the youngest children John and Nancy have died. His will refers to dwelling houses, garden, stable, orchard and two pieces of land indicating he may well have been a farmer. Sarah died at the good age of 84 in 1824. She was still living at Whitecliff.

We are getting into fairly early church records for the next generation back. It appears likely that Henry's parents were also Henry and Sarah. They also lived in Coleford and the baptisms of five children are recoded between 1731 and 1740. They are-

Maria	Baptised 5 July 1731	Residence Coleford	Chapel Newland
Sarah	Baptised 21 January 1733	Residence Coleford	Chapel Newland
Ann	Baptised 6 July 1735	Residence Coleford	Chapel Newland
Henry	Baptised 20 January 1740	Residence Coleford	Chapel Newland
John	Baptised 2 March 1746	Not stated	Chapel Newland

We have no further information about this family but it can be seen that our Miles family lived in the Coleford area of the Forest of Dean for at least three generations.

4.4 Phoebe Playsted's parents Richard Playsted and Rachel Selwyn and grandfather John.

We have managed to track Phoebe's family back to 1745. Her son Thomas Miles' New Zealand death certificate tells us that her maiden name was Plasted and this record leads us to the baptismal record for a Phoebe Playsted in the Forest of Dean Church records on 9 July 1783. Her parents Richard and Rachel Playsted had no less than twelve children between 1772 and 1793 of whom Phoebe was the seventh. Richard was baptised in the Westbury on Severn Parish on 9 February 1746 and married Rachel Selwyn in 1771 at Newnham Parish Chapel. Richard signed indicating he had some literacy. The first two baptisms were at Westbury on Severn and the remainder with one exception were at Newnham. These are villages on the eastern side of the Forest of Dean quite close to the meandering path of the Severn River.

The family must have shifted to the Parish of Caerwent in Monmouthshire, probably after all the children had been born as Richard's will commences by stating that he is of the Parish of Caerwent. This parish is situated slightly west of Chepstow but still close to the northern bank of the River Severn. Confirmation that they have moved from the Newnham area is provided by the marriage record for daughter Rachel which states that she was resident in the Caerwent Parish in June 1809 at the time of her marriage to James Selwyn, Richard was buried at Westbury on Severn on 27 October 1809 aged 63 years. His will was proved on 13 Oct 1810.

Richard's will is very long and complicated and gives us some interesting insights into his life and times. The will mentions all of his children by name and confirms beyond doubt that he was indeed Phoebe's father. What has become evident is that Richard came from a middle class background. His Father John was a Yeoman who bequeathed his farm to him. Richard's occupation is never explicitly stated but it is evident that he was a relatively prosperous landowner with farming interests. All twelve of Richard and Rachel's children survived into adulthood. Son John received the bulk of the estate and Thomas and Richard also received significant bequests. The will treats all the girls basically the same but the boys receive varying distributions depending on their circumstances and age. It is evident that the three youngest sons Samuel, Daniel and Joseph are living with their mother Rachel in 1809 and they share farming and household chattels so long as they live together. Both Rachel and Richard's sister Mary Sullivan receive lump sums and ongoing pension payments and it seems possible that they may be living together. The provision for William who was 22 years old seems to suggest that he may have been handicapped in some way as he does not receive any land or lump sums but a weekly legacy of 2 shillings a week rising to 4/- when his mother died. Richards final legacy is a relatively small distribution to the poor. There are references in the will to no less than eight notes (contracts) on land many involving purchases from his brother John. His will leaves money for these notes to be paid. It is evident that Richard was relatively wealthy for his times. He certainly gave a great deal of thought to the way his estate was to be distributed.

Richard Playsted was the son of John and Mary Playsted. Baptisms for three children have been found. These are Richard in1746, Mary in 1750 and John in 1752 all at Westbury on Severn. John died in 1759 leaving three children and Mary died four years later in 1763. The cemetery inscriptions state that John was 64 years old when he died and Mary 51 indicating that John would have been 48 and Mary 38 when eldest son Richard was born. It is therefore not surprising that they had only three children. We have once again been fortunate to find a will for John. The will is dated 1759 and states that John is a Yeoman. A Yeoman is a person who owns and cultivates his own land. Yeomen formed the basis for a rural middle class. John's will is relatively straight forward. When he dies all his real estate passes to his wife. After her death or remarriage Richard receives his "house, garden together with all lands and tenements, barns, stables and outhouses together with an orchard at Cleve" but paying to John when he is twenty one £30. The next part of the will is hard to understand but it seems that the bequest to Richard does not cover all his property as he bequeaths to John after the death of Mary "my herediments and premises that I recently purchased as one Bowman lying in the said parish of Westbury". He then goes on to leave to his wife his "stock of corn, grain, cattle, hay, implements of husbandry, household goods and all other personal estate". When she dies this personal estate is to be split between his son John and his daughter Mary.

Mary Sen. did not leave a will but we have legal documents which record that Mary and John, aged about 12 and 10 accepted their uncles (John Sen.'s brothers or brothers in law) Thomas Playsted and William Marshall to be their guardians and to administer the personal estate of their Mother until they reached the age of 21. Both uncles are stated to be Yeoman. They were required to lodge a bond of £500 with the Lord Bishop of Gloucester to ensure they compiled a full list of all the personal estate and realised it in a proper manner.

The Selwyns

Phoebe's mother Rachel Selwyn's parents were Samuel Selwyn resident in Westbury and Rachel Tyler who lived in Flaxley. They were married at Gloucester Cathedral on 31 July 1745

The baptisms of five children are recorded in the Westbury on Severn Parish records.:

John Selwin	16 October 1748
Rachel Selwyn	26 Decenber 1750
Sarah Selwyn	23 August 1752
William Selwyn	5 January 1755
Martha Selwyn	6 August 1757

There is only one other piece of information available for this family and it is an interesting one. On the altar tombs in the Church at Westbury there is the following inscription:

> In Memory of Samuel Selwyn, Yeoman, who died Jany 31 1760, Aged 64 years
> Also Martha, Daughter of Samuel Selwyn, by Rachel his wife , who died March 22, 1769 Aged XI years
> Rachel, daughter of Samuel Selwyn, by Deborah, his Wife, who died August 10, 1775, Aged 12 weeks
> Also Samuel, their Son, died May 17, 1776 Aged 10 days

So what can we deduce from these transcriptions. The biggest question mark is the status of Samuel who died 1760. Martha, who died 1769 is clearly the daughter of our Samuel and Rachel as her age and date of burial are entirely consistent with the date of her baptism. Samuel who married Deborah is Samuel and Rachel's daughter. Samuel Selwyn and Deborah Gough married at Westbury on Severn in 1771. So we have two generations of Selwyns identified but what about Samuel died 1760. To be in the same tomb they must be closely related. There is considerable doubt but it seems quite likely that he is the father of our Samuel who married Rachel. His estimated birth date of 1695 is entirely consistent with this hypothesis. Having the same first name also provides further support as many fathers in those days passed on their Christian names to their children. Unfortunately there is no other evidence that supports or denies this proposal but if it is correct we have found the second yeoman in our family. Phoebe had yeomen on bothe sides of her family. John Playsted her grandfather and Samuel Selwyn her grandfather are both yeomen.. Unfortunately I have not been able to unearth any further information about Samuel Selwyn Yeoman.

The Playsteds and the Selwyns must have known each other well as there was quite of lot of intermarriage, Richard and Rachel's daughter also Rachel married a James Selwyn in 1809 and in the same year that Richard and Rachel were married a John Selwyn married a Mary Playsted. They are very likely Rachel and Richards brother and sister.

4.5 Ellen Hawkins parents Thomas Hawkins and Mary Ann Roberts

Ellen's parents were Thomas Hawkins and Mary Ann Roberts. They were married in July 1822 at Walford which is close to Ruardean and half way between Ross on Wye and Whitchurch. Thomas was a collier and they appear to have moved south to Lane End near Coleford as this is the residence given on all their childrens baptismal certificates. Arabella was baptised November 1823 at the Christchurch Chapel. Thomas was born two years later in 1825. Nathaniel 1828, Ellen 1833 (our ancestor) and Henry's 1835 births were registered at the same time at Dr. William's Library for Protestant Dissenters in London.

It therefore seems that the Hawkins family at this time were not main stream members of the Church of England but were active in one of the independent protestant churches. This is confirmed by Ellen's subsequent marriage at the Dowland Independent Chapel in Whitchurch. We have the civil birth certificate for Emma who was born in 1838. At the time of the 1841 census record we find the whole family consisting of Thomas and Mary Hawkins both aged 40 to 45 living with their six children Arabella and Thomas both aged 15 - 20, Nathaniel 13, Ellen our ancestor 8, Henry 6 and Emma the youngest aged 2. They are living in the working class area of Coleford Meend, Park End Walk, Dean Forest. This is a similar location as Lane End in an area east of Coleford on the edge of the Forest of Dean. Not far away in the Forest is an area of intense coal mining which was at its peak at about this time There are a lot of coalminers in the locality and Thomas' occupation is stated to be a coalminer.

I have been unable to find any credible record of Thomas and Mary and their unmarried children in the 1851 census in either England or Wales. Thomas married Emily Boxley in 1844, Arabella married William Whittington in 1847 and Ellen married Thomas Miles in 1850. Thomas Jun.'s parish marriage record states that his father was a coal merchant. Church records tell us that Mary Ann Hawkins was buried at Newland on 18 December 1853 and civil records confirm her death on 13 December. Both records give her residence as Coleford and confirm Thomas is her husband and her age is incorrectly said to be 60 and 63.

It was on 18 August 1857 that Thomas Hawkins, a 58 year old widower and coal merchant resident in Newland married Mary Lewton, a 46 year old spinster born in Cam, a tiny village still in Gloucestershire but on the southern side of the River Severn away from the Forest of Dean. Mary who was visiting friends in Ross on Wye at the time of the 1851 census is described as a dressmaker and her Father Thomas is a Clothier. By the time of the 1861 census Thomas and his new wife are living at Lower Coombe near Coleford. Thomas is now a coal proprietor. It is evident that Thomas did well in the mining industry as his occupation changed from a miner or collier to a collier master quarryman, then a coal merchant and finally a coal proprietor. This does not mean that he had a large mine. The advice I have received is that the mine may well have been a very small operation. Thomas died on 26 November 1868 aged 71, occupation colliery proprietor. His final address is given as Bakers Hill which is on the edge of Coleford. He was buried at Coleford Congregational Church. In 1871 Mary is staying with a friend from her home town of Cam near Cheltenham and in 1881 she is a lodger at Portland Road, Kensington in London.

Of Thomas's parents we know little. At the time of his second marriage his fathers name is stated to be Thomas as well and his occupation is also a coal merchant. There were two Thomas Hawkins with fathers named Thomas born in 1797 and 1798 and I cannot decide with certainty which Thomas is our ancestor.

4.6 Mary Anne Roberts parents William Roberts and Hannah Williams

We know more of Ellen Hawkins mother Mary Ann Roberts who married Thomas Hawkins. The baptismal certificates for Thomas and Mary Ann's children tell us that Mary Ann's father was William Roberts of Drybrook in the Forest of Dean, a lime burner. William Roberts married Hannah Williams in Newlands on 20 October 1790. We have records for the baptisms of eight children. Mary Ann our ancestor was baptised at Ruardean on 13 January 1799.

At the time of the 1841 census we find Thomas and his wife Hannah in their old age (both over 70) living at Hawthorns about half a kilometre north of the centre of Drybrook. Staying

with them is six year old Henry Roberts, probably their grandson, and nearby is son Theophilus and his family and also his daughter Sarah who married William Phillips. Our William is a lime burner. He owned a lime kiln which would have been used to manufacture quicklime by heating limestone to a high temperature. William died in December 1846 and was buried at Drybrook. At the time of the 1851 census Hannah is staying with her son Aaron and their family at Hope Mansell. She died in 1853 and was buried at Drybrook Chapel on 14 Feb aged 85 years.



We are fortunate to have a copy of William's will. It tells us that he owned a stone quarry as well as his house and a kiln. Perhaps the kiln was on the site of the quarry. In the will the major beneficiary is his son Theophilus but the garden on the northern side of his house which is occupied by his daughter Sarah Phillips and her family is bequeathed to her. His three daughters each receive a legacy of £5 each. For some reason son Aaron receives only one shilling Theophilus is the executor of the will.

The land survey map for East Dean dated 1856, a small part of which is shown here, enables us to locate exactly where his house and quarry were located.

Theophilus and has brother in law William Phillips are listed as the owners of adjacent pieces of land (Lots 406 and 407 in red) on the east side of the road about 400 m north of Drybrook. Theophilus' land is quite a reasonable size but William and Sarah Phillips' is much smaller and is clearly the garden bequeathed to him by William. Theophilus holding has a house, garden and old quarry and the Phillips is a cottage and garden. If William's quarry was situated on his own property it has clearly fallen into disrepair. Immediately south of the land William owned is another quarry – this one is owned by the 'South Road Commisioner.' Drybrook is not labelled but can be identified by the number of roads that branch away from the centre of the village.



Tinted photograph of Hawthorns taken about 1810. On the left hand side of the railway line in the middle distance is a quarry. It appears that the road is the Hawthorn Road of today.



These houses are in the area where William and Hannah Lived. I think the white house on the left is the older house very similar to one of the houses in the photograph and just possibly the house where Hannah and William lived.

We have managed to track the paternal line of William Roberts back a further two generations. All information has come from Ruardean Parish records. William's grandfather was another William Roberts born about 1714 and he married Mary Brain (Brayn in the church record) at Ruardean in 1735. They had seven children between 1735 and 1750 including our ancestor George who was the sixth child born in 1748. George married Betty Meek in 1767 once again at Ruardean and they had five children between 1768 and 1784. Our ancestor William was their first child born in 1768. We have no further information about these families.

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Ancestry Chart for
Mary (Florence) Evans

