Birth, parentage, marriage and death of

John Blockley the Younger

This brief evidences the details of the birth, parentage, marriage and death of John Blockley the Younger.

Those details are –

> John was baptised on 13th January 1776 in Claybrooke Parva,[1] Leicestershire. His parents were John and Ann Blockley of Ullesthorpe.
>
> John married Ann Varnam in Claybrooke on 11th January 1797.
>
> He was buried in Claybrooke, Leicestershire on 2nd September 1828.

John Blockley the Younger was the last in a line of four successive John Blockleys. Accordingly, he has been designated John Blockley the Younger, a title given him in an historical record below, to distinguish him from the preceding John Blockleys, being John Blockley Senior (born c.1663), John Blockley of Great Claybrooke (bap.1701), and John Blockley the Elder (bap.1737).

The research for this brief was principally conducted in about August 2026.

John's marriage

As is demonstrated in the brief relating to Sophia Ludlam nee Blockley:

1. Sophia was born in Ullesthorpe, Leicestershire on 9th April 1801 to parents John and Ann Blockley.
2. They baptised her in nearby Claybrooke, Leicestershire on 5th July 1801.
3. The record of Sophia's marriage in Leicester in 1832 named Betsy Blockley as a witness.
4. A newspaper announcement of the marriage in the *Leicester Herald* of 31st October 1832[2] named Sophia as the second daughter of Mr John Blockley, of Ullesthorpe.
5. Each of the 1851, 1861 and 1871 English Census records for Sophia state that she was born in Ullesthorpe.
6. In a letter to his daughter Dorothy Shields dated 2nd December 1942, Alfred Charles John Ludlam (the son of Albert John Ludlam, see the brief relating to Alfred Charles John Ludlam) stated that his grandmother's maiden name was Blockley Ball, and she was from Claybrook, Leicestershire.

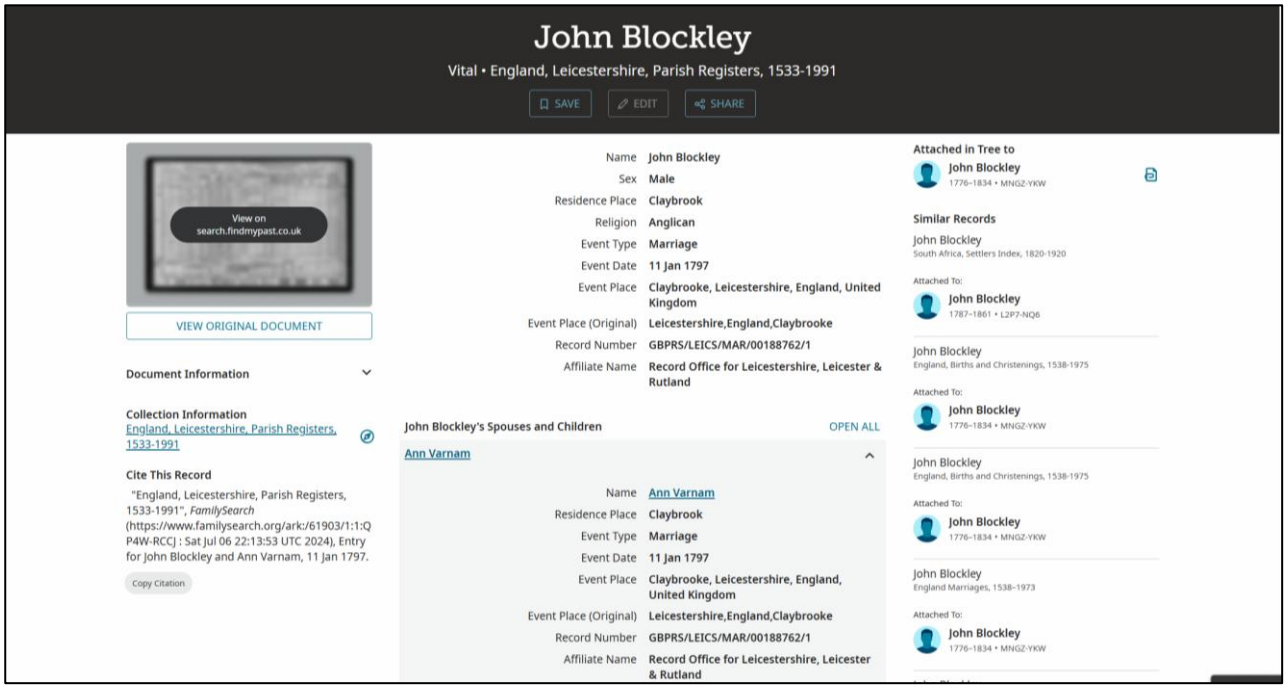
Ullesthorpe in Leicestershire adjoins the twin villages of Claybrooke Magna and Claybrooke Parva. All three villages are less than a mile apart. The fact that Sophia was the daughter of John Blockley of Ullesthorpe and was baptised in Claybrooke, as noted above, thus correlates with Alfred's information in his 1942 letter that his grandmother came from Claybrook, Leicestershire.

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[1] Parva is Latin for "little". Claybrooke Magna (Latin for "greater"), or Great Claybrooke, adjoins Claybrooke Parva. They run into each other.
[2] See page 3 at https://www.findmypast.com/image-viewer?issue=BL%2F0002151%2F18321031&page=3.

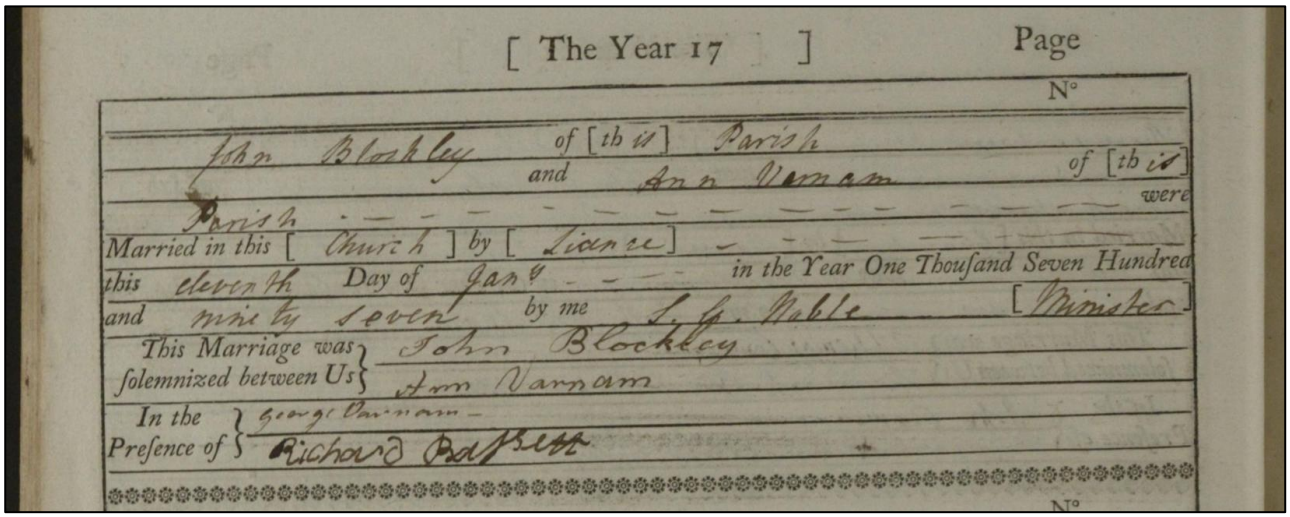
The Family Search record for Sophia's 1801 birth links through to John Blockley's person record at https://www.familysearch.org/en/tree/person/details/MNGZ-YKW.[3] That person record states that John married an Ann in Claybrooke Parva on 11th January 1797. It also records that the couple had children John, Ann and Betsy prior to Sophia (on 6th March 1797, 14th May 1798 and 1st September 1799 respectively, see below). That is, John Blockley's person record in Family Search gives Sophia as his fourth child, and his third (not second) daughter,[4] and also gives Sophia an older sister named Betsy.

The sources linked to John's person record include a record of the marriage referred to, being to an Ann Varnam, said to then be a resident of Claybrook, see https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QP4W-RCCJ:



The original parish record in the "Claybrook Marriage Register" is to be found in FindMyPast at https://search.findmypast.com/record/browse?id=S2/GBPRS/LEICS/102197543/00061:

[3] URLs of Family Search records linked herein include "61903", presumably a specific member number, and likely need adapting to function.
[4] It is possible that Sophia's sister Ann died before Sophia's 1832 marriage. An Ann Blockley married a John Wright in Claybrooke in 1826, see https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QP47-YNZG?lang=en, but there was a marriage licence for the wedding, see https://search.findmypast.com/record?id=S2%2FGBPRS%2FLEICS%2F007900514%2F00574, which revealed that Ann to be the 19 year old daughter of a Thomas Blockley. Searches for Ann Blockley events in Claybrooke from 1798 to 1832 returned no relevant death records either in Family Search or FindMyPast. Her baptism record does not indicate any danger to life, on the contrary, it confirms she was baptised on 4th January 1799 some 8 months after birth, see https://search.findmypast.com/record?id=S2%2FGBPRS%2FLEICS%2F102197542%2F00042.



[The Year 17] Page

N°

John Blockley of [this] Parish
and Ann Varnam of [this] Parish were
Married in this [Church] by [Licence]
this eleventh Day of Jany in the Year One Thousand Seven Hundred
and ninety seven by me L. G. Noble [Minister]
This Marriage was solemnized between Us } John Blockley
Ann Varnam
In the Presence of } George Varnam
Richard Bassett

N°

The record notes that marriage was by licence, and the transcript of the licence is to be found in FindMyPast at https://www.findmypast.com/transcript?id=GBPRS%2FLEICS%2FMARRLICENCE%2F00020134%2F1&tab=this:

Family tree | Search | Newspapers | 1921 Census | My research | Help & more

John Blockley in 1797

Leicestershire Marriage Licences, 1604-1891

Ullesthorpe, Leicestershire, England

View original record | Save to workspace | Create a tree | Print | More actions

Transcript of John's record — Copy to clipboard

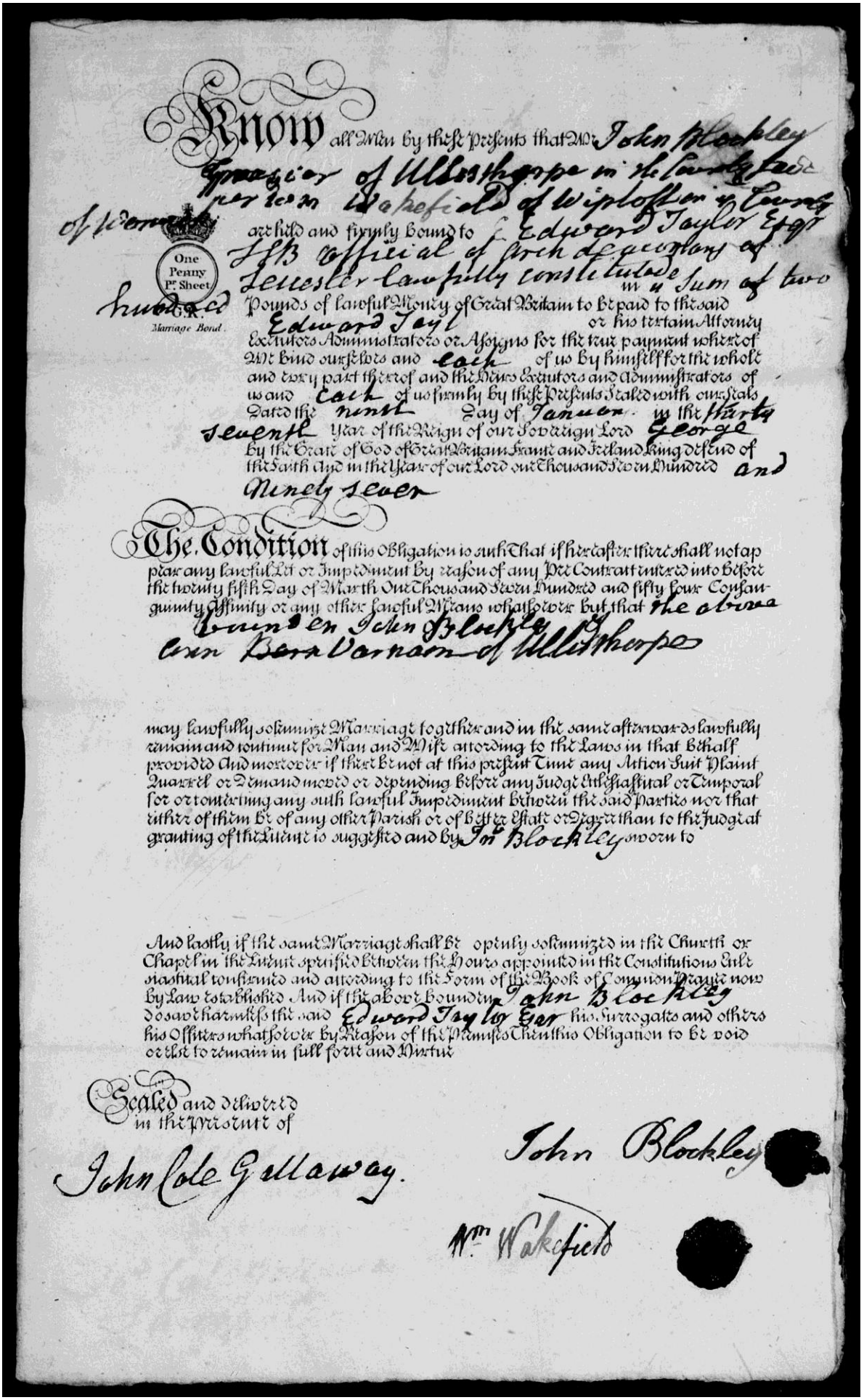
First name(s)	John	**Spouse's age**	18
Last name	Blockley	**Spouse's birth year**	1779
Age	21	**Spouse's marital status**	Single
Birth year	1776	**Spouse's residence**	Ullsthorpe
Marital Status	Bachelor	**Spouse's residence county**	Leicestershire
Residence	Ullsthorpe	**Denomination**	Anglican
Residence county	Leicestershire	**County**	Leicestershire
Licence year	1797	**Country**	England
Licence date	09 Jan 1797	**Archive**	Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland
Parish	Ullesthorpe	**Record set**	Leicestershire Marriage Licences, 1604-1891
Marriage place 1	Ullesthorpe	**Category**	Birth, Marriage & Death (Parish Registers)
Spouse's first name(s)	Ann	**Subcategory**	Parish Marriages
Spouse's last name	Varnam	**Collections from**	England, Great Britain

The first page of the original marriage licence is to be found in FindMyPast at https://search.findmypast.com/record/browse?id=s2%2fgbprs%2fleics%2f007900489%2f00799, with a second page at https://search.findmypast.com/record/browse?id=s2%2fgbprs%2fleics%2f007900489%2f00800 (see the next two pages).

The first page of the licence is dated 9th January 1797, and notes that John Blockley, from Ullesthorpe, is to marry Ann Varnam, also of Ullesthorpe. It names John's occupation as a "Grazier". A William Wakefield of Wibtoft[5] countersigns the bond in favour of an official of the Archdeaconry of Leicester.

The second page of the licence states that John was 21,[6] and Ann was 19. It notes that the Claybrooke parish church is "the mother church to Ullesthorpe", that is, that Ullesthorpe is in the Claybrooke parish, and it states that William Wakefield "made oath that Ann Varnam the lawful mother of the said minor is consenting to the said marriage being unable to appear personally on acct. of sickness".

[5] The first page appears to state that he is from "Wiploft" in the "County of Warwick". The second page appears to write it as "Wiptoft". There is no village, town or manor named either "Wiploft" or "Wiptoft" in Warwickshire, nor in Leicestershire. There is a Wibtoft in Warwickshire one mile south-west of Claybrooke Magna, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wibtoft. No doubt that was his residence.
[6] John was baptised on 13th January 1776 in Claybrooke, see below, and no doubt born shortly prior to that date, so he had just turned 21 as at the date of the licence, which may indicate that his parents were refusing consent for him to marry Ann. At the time, any person in England under the age of 21 legally required parental consent to marry by licence under the *Clandestine Marriages Act 1753*, which also allowed a parent of a minor to forbid a marriage by banns, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clandestine_Marriages_Act_1753.



Know all Men by these Presents that We John Blockley Grazier of Ullesthorpe in the County aforesaid and Thomas Wakefield of Wigston Magna in the County of Leicester are held and firmly bound to the Right Worshipful Edward Taylor Esqr Official of the Archdeaconry of Leicester lawfully constituted in the Sum of two hundred Pounds of lawful Money of Great Britain to be paid to the said Edward Taylor Esqr or his certain Attorney Executors Administrators or Assigns for the true payment whereof We bind ourselves and each of us by himself for the whole and every part thereof and the Heirs Executors and Administrators of us and each of us firmly by these Presents Sealed with our Seals Dated the ninth Day of January in the thirty seventh Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George by the Grace of God of Great Britain France and Ireland King Defender of the Faith and in the Year of our Lord one Thousand Seven Hundred and Ninety seven

One Penny Pr. Sheet

Marriage Bond.

The Condition of this Obligation is such That if hereafter there shall not appear any lawful Let or Impediment by reason of any Pre Contract entered into before the twenty fifth Day of March One Thousand Seven Hundred and fifty four Consanguinity Affinity or any other lawful Means whatsoever but that the above bounden John Blockley and Sara Varnam of Ullesthorpe may lawfully solemnize Marriage together and in the same afterwards lawfully remain and continue for Man and Wife according to the Laws in that Behalf provided And moreover if there be not at this present Time any Action Suit Plaint Quarrel or Demand moved or depending before any Judge Ecclesiastical or Temporal for or concerning any such lawful Impediment between the said Parties nor that either of them be of any other Parish or of better Estate or Degree than to the Judge at granting of the Allegation is suggested and by Jn Blockley sworn to

And lastly if the same Marriage shall be openly solemnized in the Church or Chapel in the Time of Service between the Hours appointed in the Constitutions Ecclesiastical in force and according to the Form of the Book of Common Prayer now by Law established And if the above bounden John Blockley do save harmless the said Edward Taylor Esqr his Surrogate and others his Officers whatsoever by Reason of the Premises Then this Obligation to be void or else to remain in full force and Virtue

Sealed and delivered in the Presence of

John Cole Galloway.

John Blockley

Wm Wakefield

On the ninth day of January

in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety seven

Appeared personally John Blockley

and made oath that he is of

the Parish of Ullsthorpe

in the county of Leicester aged twenty

one years and a Batchelour and intendeth

to marry with Ann Varnam

aged 20 years years and a Spinster

And that he knoweth of no lawful impediment by reason of any pre-contract, consanguinity, affinity, or any other lawful means whatever, to hinder the said intended marriage, and prayed a Licence to solemnize the same in the Parish Church of Clay

brooke the Mother Church to Ullsthorpe

And further made oath, that the usual place of abode of the said John

Blockley

hath been in the said Parish of Ullsthorpe

for the space of four weeks last past.

John Blockley

of the same time com. Wakefield of Wyst[illegible] aforesaid

made oath that Ann Varnam the lawful Mother of

the said Minor p consenting to the said marriage being

unable to appear personally on

Sworn before me Acct of Sickness

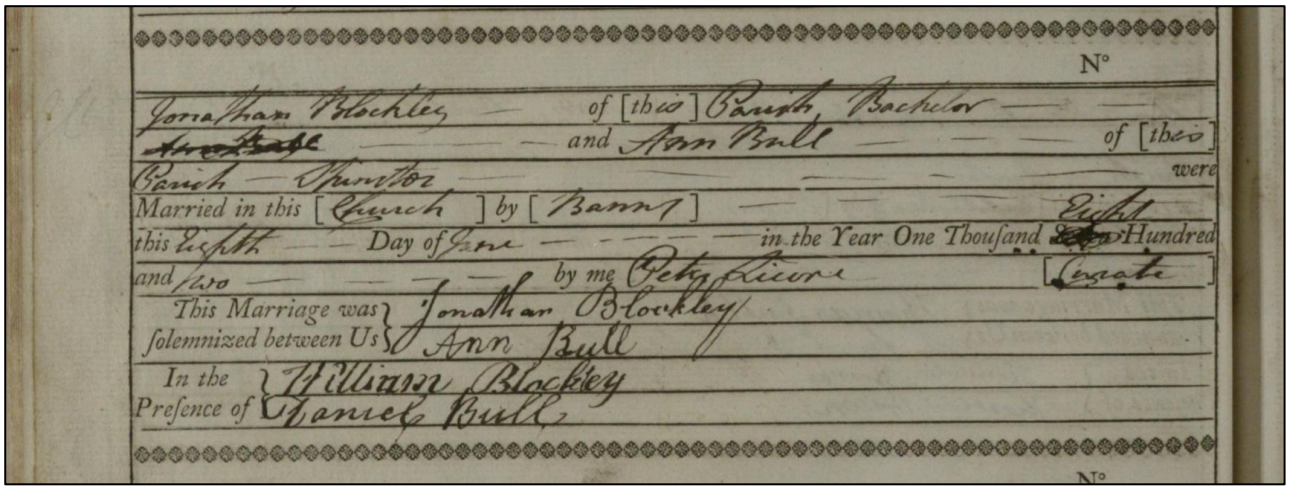
In° Col Galloway

Surrogate

W.m Wakefield

The John Blockley person record in Family Search referred to above also notes another marriage in Claybrooke, on 8th June 1802, of a John Blockley to an Anne Bull, but the linked record of it at https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:NK6T-K92?lang=en proved to be for a "Jonathan" Blockley,[7] not a "John" Blockley, as Sophia's father was specifically named in her birth/baptism record, and also in her marriage notice in the *Leicester Herald*.[8]

The original parish record of this 1802 marriage confirms the groom's first name was "Jonathan",[9] see https://search.findmypast.com/record/browse?id=S2/GBPRS/LEICS/102197543/00071:



The fact that the marriage postdated Sophia's birth on 9th April 1801, and also the birth of Sophia's known sister Betsy on 1st September 1799 (see below), also strongly tends to rule out this couple married in June 1802 as Sophia's parents.[10]

Jonathan and Ann Blockley were also demonstrably a separate family in Claybrooke from John and Ann Blockley, given that –

(a) there were children born in Claybrooke to parents specifically named as Jonathan and Ann Blockley, namely a Mary born on 11th March 1803, see https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:JW8S-336?lang=en, a Thomas born on 9th February 1807, see https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:JQYF-DHK?lang=en, and an Elizabeth who died at age 28 days and was buried on 27th June 1808 (and thus born late May of 1808), see https://search.findmypast.com/record?id=S2%2FGBPRS%2FLEICS%2F15-0818-GB-LEC-CLAYBROOKE-DE732-8-BAPTISMS--BURIALS-1806-1812%2F00007 (the last record also specifically names the mother as Anne Bull, who obviously died in or from the childbirth, see below)

(b) from about February to late May 1808, Anne Bull was pregnant with Elizabeth whilst Ann Varnam was pregnant with Caroline, the latter being born to John Blockley and Anne Varnam on 18th October 1808, see https://search.findmypast.com/record?id=S2%2FGBPRS%2FLEICS%2F15-0818-GB-LEC-CLAYBROOKE-DE732-8-BAPTISMS--BURIALS-1806-1812%2F00016

[7] The link to the Ann Bull marriage was made by Family Search in 2014. As Google AI Overview states: "FamilySearch uses computers to suggest record matches. These links are hints only. They are not final facts. You must check the data yourself to see if the match is true." Family Search itself warns: "Not every record hint is a match. Before you attach a record and change information, it is up to you to look carefully at the record ..." (see https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/record-hints-how-to).

[8] The person record also notes another marriage of a John Blockley to an Amelia Varnum, but this occurred on 2nd February 1820, and might be the marriage of John's son John (born 1797). In any case, it could not be John, especially as the record says Amelia was born in 1799.

[9] As does the couple's banns record at https://search.findmypast.com/record/browse?id=S2/GBPRS/LEICS/102197543/00140.

[10] Further, the link to Ann Bull in John's person record states that she died in Claybrooke in 1808, but the relevant source record also notes that this was Anne Blockley, nee Bull, the wife of Jonathan Blockley, see https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QP4Q-Q6XL?lang=en. The 1808 death, and the source record for it, was added by a Family Search contributor in 2022, no doubt influenced by Family Search's prior "match" of John Blockley with Anne Bull, as to which, see the footnote above.

(c) "Anne; Wife of Jonathan Blockley, late Ann Bull Spinster", and aged 30 years, was buried in Claybrooke on 31st May 1808 (see https://search.findmypast.com/record?id=S2%2FGBPRS%2FLEICS%2F15-0818-GB-LEC-CLAYBROOKE-DE732-8-BAPTISMS--BURIALS-1806-1812%2F00007), but John Blockley and Ann Varnam had Caroline thereafter, and they continued to have more children in Claybrooke, starting with Charlotte on 7th September 1810, see https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:JW8S-QSZ?lang=en

(d) an examination of Claybrooke's parish baptism register from 1796 to 1807[11] reveals that John and Ann of Ullesthorpe baptised John junior, Ann, Betsy and Sophia there (on the dates given below), and Jonathan and Ann of Greater Claybrooke baptised Mary there on 6th July 1803,[12] and Thomas on 12th July 1807. No other Blockleys were baptised there between 1796 and 1807. It is unlikely that the curate would have mixed up John and Ann with Jonathan and Ann. In other words, they were plainly two separate couples

(e) "Jonathan Blockley a Widower" of Claybrook, and with his occupation given as Surveyor, obtained a marriage licence dated 29th January 1820[13] to re-marry to an Amelia Varnam,[14] and a "John Blockley of Ullesthorpe … Grazier" countersigned the bond. That description as a "Grazier" of Ullesthorpe matches that in John Blockley's own 1797 marriage licence, see above. The licence thus verifies that the John and Jonathan having children in Claybrooke parish between 1796 and 1807, being the only Blockleys doing so, were different persons[15]

(f) given also that Sophia's marriage notice in the *Leicester Herald* specifically named her father as John Blockley of Ullesthorpe, it is obvious that, of those two different persons, he was her father.

(An interesting aside is that, as noted above, Alfred Ludlam stated in his 1942 letter to his daughter Dorothy Shields that his grandmother's maiden name was "Blockley Ball". In the above parish marriage record for Jonathan and Ann Blockley, the curate writes the bride's surname almost as "Ball", although she clearly signs it as "Bull". Given the inaccurate and interchangeable spellings of names of the time, as well as their phonetic similarity, "Ball" and "Bull" are a possible match in any event, so the question remains whether Alfred Ludlam's reference to "Blockley Ball" points towards this couple as his grandmother's parents. The question is to be answered in the negative, not just for the reasons above, but also because no daughter to them named Sophia was encountered in researches, nor in specific Family Search and FindMyPast searches for her as a child to them).[16]

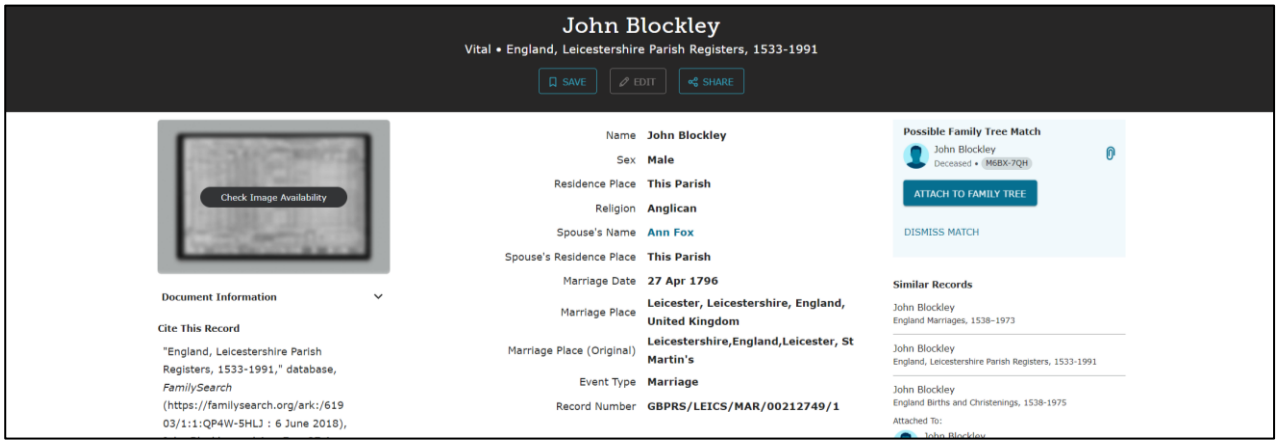
A search of the Family Search collection "England Marriages 1538-1973" for a John Blockley marrying an Ann in Leicestershire between 1790 and 1800 returns 13 entries for either John Blockley or J. Blockley.[17] The searches

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[11] Commencing from https://search.findmypast.com/record/browse?id=S2/GBPRS/LEICS/102197542/00040 and going to https://search.findmypast.com/record/browse?id=S2/GBPRS/LEICS/102197542/00052. (Some pages have been photographed twice).
[12] The entry notes that she was born on 11th March 1803.
[13] The marriage licence is at https://search.findmypast.com/record?id=S2%2FGBPRS%2FLEICS%2F007900501%2F00136&parentid=GBPRS%2FLEICS%2FMARRLICENCE%2F00024673%2F1 and the preceding page.
[14] Amelia is stated in the licence as aged 20 and from Great Claybrook. George Varnam, presumably her father, a "Farmer and Grazier" of Little Claybrook, provided the consent. Jonathan Blockley swore the marriage allegation, and signed his first name "Jon^{n}", clearly signifying Jonathan and not John. The marriage took place on 2nd February 1820, see https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:NK6T-23D?lang=en, and the couple had a number of children in Claybrooke thereafter, see https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QPWB-J3Z9?lang=en (George), https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QPWB-134F?lang=en (Charles), https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QPWB-VD3B?lang=en (Elizabeth), https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:NPWZ-H9H?lang=en (Ann), https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:JQYF-6WB?lang=en (Henry) and https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:NYRY-BPV?lang=en (John).
[15] John's support for Jonathan in countersigning the £100 bond also tends to suggest that they were related, and possibly brothers given they married in 1797 and 1802 respectively.
[16] The Family Search search being for a Sophia Blockley born to a Jonathan (or similar name) in Leicestershire between 1790 and 1815, see https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/record/results?count=20&q.birthLikeDate.from=1790&q.birthLikeDate.to=1815&q.birthLikePlace=Leicestershire%2C%20England%2C%20United%20Kingdom&q.fatherGivenName=Jonathan&q.givenName=Sophia&q.surname=Blockley&q.surname.exact=on, and the FindMyPast search being for a Sophia Blockley born in England between 1792 and 1812, see https://www.findmypast.com/search/results?sid=100&firstname=sophia&firstname_variants=true&lastname=blockley&yearofbirth=1802&yearofbirth_offset=10&keywordsplace_proximity=5&sourcecountry=england.
[17] See https://www.familysearch.org/search/record/results?count=20&q.givenName=John&q.marriageLikeDate.from=1790&q.marriageLikeDate.to=1800&q.marriageLikePlace=Leicestershire&q.spouseGivenName=Ann&q.surname=Blockley&f.collectionId=1473015. Changing "Ann" to "Anne" in the search yields the exact same results.

returned include the above 1797 marriage, and only one other possible candidate, a John Blockley who married an Anne Fox at St Martins in Leicester on 27th April 1796.

The Family Search record for that marriage is at https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QP4W-5HLJ:

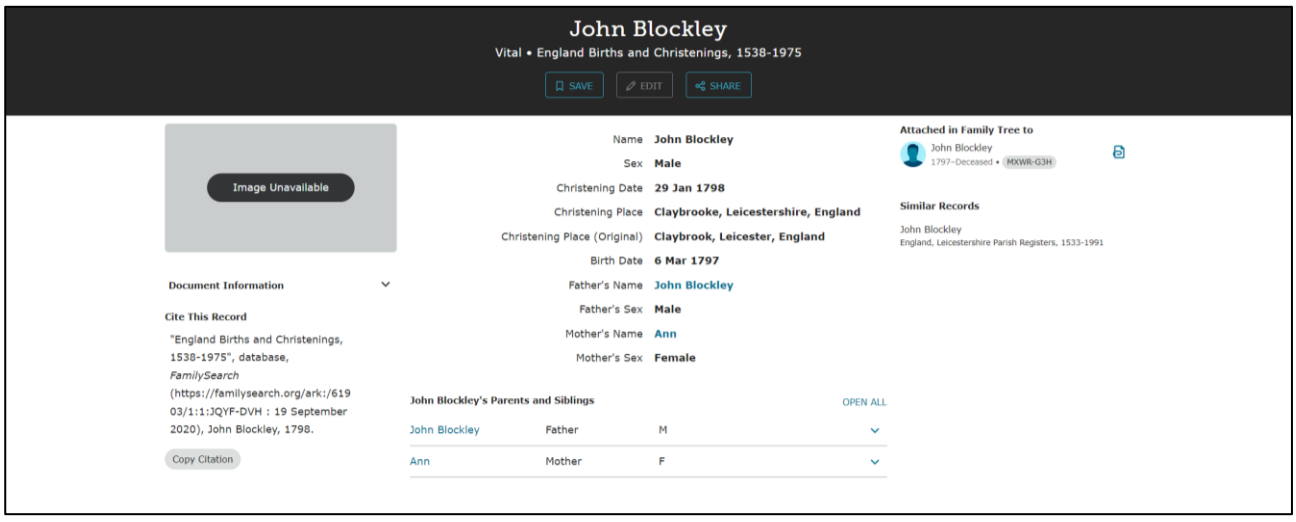


The record states that both John Blockley and Anne Fox were residents of "this parish" i.e. St Martins in Leicester, and not John's known abode of Ullesthorpe near Claybrooke. Further, St Martins is 11½ miles north-north-east of Claybrooke. Accordingly, the Claybrooke John Blockley marriage is far more likely to be that of Sophia's father.

Additionally, as noted above, Betsy Blockley was named as a witness in Sophia's marriage record. Having the same surname, it may be inferred that Betsy was Sophia's relative.

As stated above, the Family Search person record for the Claybrooke John Blockley recorded that three children were born to him prior to the birth of his child Sophia. It linked source records for those births as follows.

Firstly, a record for the birth of a John, to a John and Ann Blockley, on 6th March 1797, and baptised in Claybrooke on 29th January 1798, see https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:JQYF-DVH?from=lynx1UIV8&treeref=MXWR-G3H:[18]

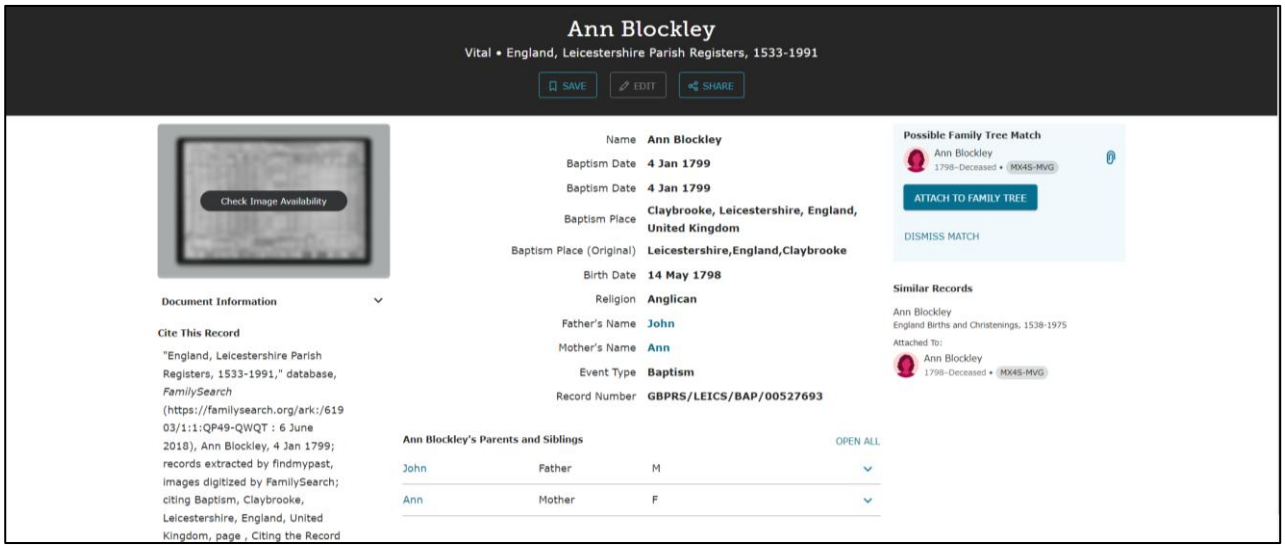


A birth in Claybrooke in March 1797 to certain named parents suggests that an immediately preceding marriage in January 1797 in the same place (Claybrooke), and of persons with the same names, is likely to be the marriage

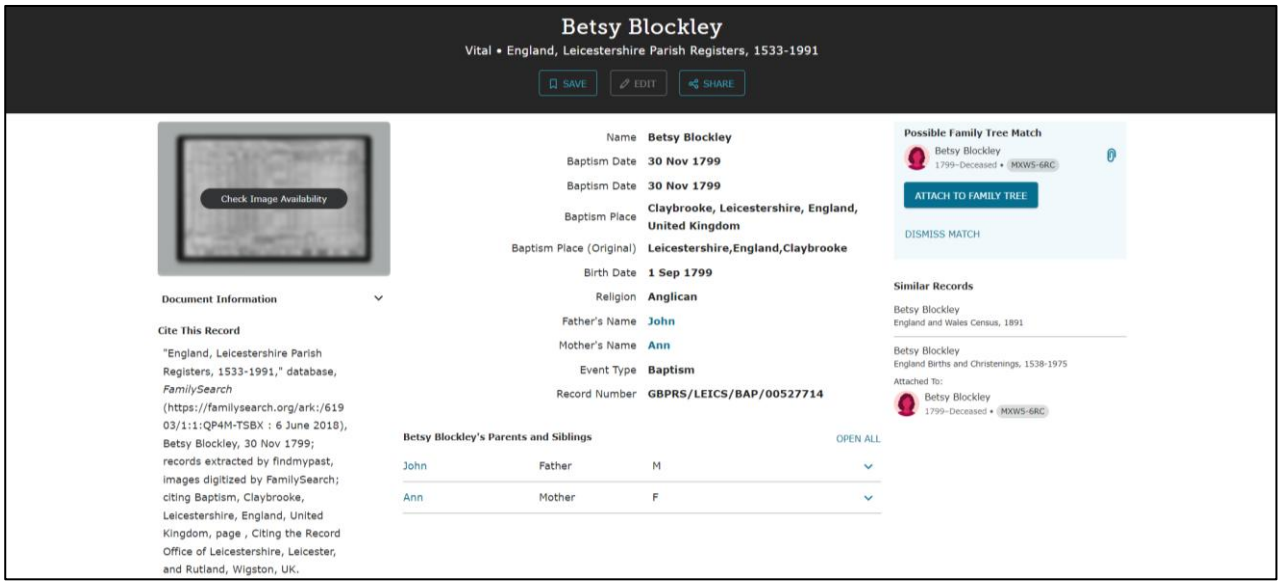
[18] The original parish record is at https://search.findmypast.com/record?id=S2%2FGBPRS%2FLEICS%2F102197542%2F00041.

of those parents. Indeed, the fact that the marriage was by licence reinforces that conclusion – the couple needed to marry in haste given Ann's advanced pregnancy.[19]

Secondly, a record for the birth of an Ann, to a John and Ann Blockley, on 14th May 1798, and baptised in Claybrooke on 4th January 1799, see https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:JQYF-D57?from=lynx1UIV8&treeref=MX4S-MVG:[20]



And thirdly, a record for the birth of a Betsy, to a John and Ann Blockley, on 1st September 1799, and baptised in Claybrooke on 30th November 1799, see https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:J3C6-GLR?from=lynx1UIV8&treeref=MXW5-6RC:[21]



[19] In the absence of a marriage licence, the law required an intending couple to give 7 days notice of the marriage, and then banns being called on three separate Sundays. The banns procedure is explained at https://www.regencyhistory.net/blog/marriage-licences-banns-regency-history-guide. That webpage also explains the marriage licence procedure: "Sometimes it was not convenient to wait for the banns to be read, for example if the bride was pregnant, and it was possible to get married more quickly by applying for a common licence. This was available from a bishop or archbishop and their offices. Before the licence could be issued, one of the couple or someone acting on their behalf had to submit a sworn statement or allegation that there was no impediment of kindred or alliance to the marriage … There was also a requirement for the groom or someone acting on his behalf to enter a bond where a substantial amount of money would be forfeited if an impediment existed."

[20] The original parish record is at https://search.findmypast.com/record/browse?id=S2/GBPRS/LEICS/102197542/00042.

[21] The original parish record is at https://search.findmypast.com/record/browse?id=S2/GBPRS/LEICS/102197542/00042.

Sophia was then born to John and Ann Blockley in Ullesthorpe on 9th April 1801.

It is almost certain that this is a progression of siblings born in Claybrooke to the same John and Ann Blockley. In particular, the lack of other Blockley baptisms in Claybrooke in the period 1796 to 1807, as referred to above, except to Jonathan and Ann Blockley, who are shown above to be a separate couple, verifies that John junior, Mary, Betsy and Sophia were siblings. Betsy being the name of one of them, and a Betsy Blockley having witnessed Sophia's marriage in Leicester in 1832, it is almost certain that they were sisters, and hence that this John and Ann Blockley were Sophia's parents, and not John Blockley and Anne Fox, or any other couple.

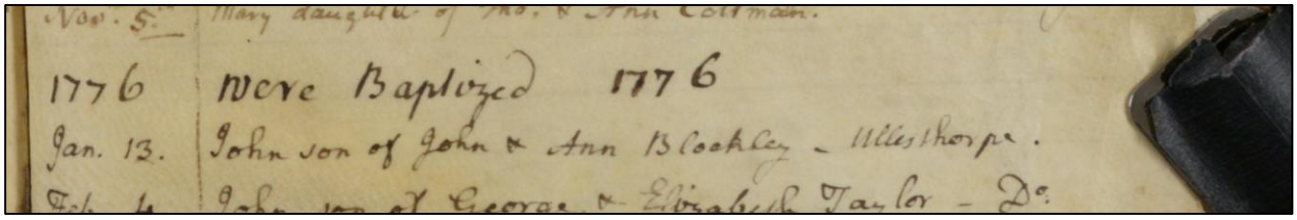
Further, the Claybrooke marriage of John Blockley and Ann Varnam on 11th January 1797, immediately preceding, as it does, the sequence of children born including Sophia, and indeed, immediately preceding the birth of a John as the first child in that sequence, is almost certainly that of Sophia's parents.

Accordingly, Sophia's parents were John Blockley and Ann Varnam, both of Ullesthorpe, and they were married in Claybrooke on 11th January 1797.

John's birth

John's above marriage licence states that he was aged 21. The licence being dated 9th January 1797, that implies that he was born between 10th January 1775 and 9th January 1776.

John's person record in Family Search referred to above gives his baptism date and place as 13th January 1776 in Claybrooke Parva, Leicestershire, and indeed a John Blockley was so baptised, and to a John and Ann Blockley of Ullesthorpe, see https://search.findmypast.com/record?id=S2%2FGBPRS%2FLEICS%2F15-0818-GB-LEC-CLAYBRO-DE732-6-BAPTISMS-MARRIAGES--BURIALS-1737-1776%2F00045:



A Family Search search for a John Blockley baptism in Leicestershire between 1770 and 1782[22] returned the above 1776 baptism, and also one other possible candidate,[23] a John Blockley baptised on 18th February 1776 in Broughton Astley, 3½ miles north-east of Claybrooke, and to a "Jos" (presumably Joseph) and Ann Blockley, see https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QPWB-SM1Y?lang=en.[24]

Since John Blockley and Ann Varnam, who were both residents of Ullesthorpe when married, have been shown above to be Sophia's parents, to accept that her father was this 1776 Broughton Astley candidate rather than the 1776 Ullesthorpe candidate would require accepting that he moved from Broughton Astley to Ullesthorpe by

[22] See https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/record/results?count=20&q.birthLikeDate.exact=on&q.birthLikeDate.from=1770&q.birthLikeDate.to=1782&q.birthLikePlace=Leicestershire%2C%20England&q.givenName=John&q.surname=Blockley. No further potential candidate baptisms were returned on a Family Search search for a John Blockley baptism at Claybrooke between 1770 and 1782, see https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/record/results?count=20&q.birthLikeDate.from=1770&q.birthLikeDate.to=1782&q.birthLikePlace=Claybrooke&q.givenName=John&q.surname=Blockley. Only the town name was used, as Family Search gives its county as Warwickshire.

[23] A baptism in Earl Shilton in 1777, and a baptism in Peckleton in 1773, were disregarded, those locations being 6 and 8 miles north of Claybrooke respectively.

[24] The original parish record of this Broughton Astley baptism gives no further details, see https://search.findmypast.com/record?id=S2%2FGBPRS%2FLEICS%2F15-0818-GB-LEC-BROUGH-DE3319-3-BAPTISMS-BURIALS--MARRIAGES-1715-1786%2F00034.

about age 20 at the latest. This goes against the strong place attachment which inhered in the late 1770s in rural England.[25]

Further, a John Blockley, a Miller aged 24, and with an abode of Broughton Astley, obtained a licence dated 8th February 1800 to marry Mary Sewell of Broughton Astley in the parish church of that place.[26] That couple also buried a son Jonathan in Broughton Astley on 9th March 1801.[27] Despite the proximity of Ullesthorpe to Broughton Astley, given the strong rural areas place attachment of the times, as just referred to, it seems highly likely that this husband and father was the John Blockley baptised in Broughton Astley in 1776.

Conversely, place attachment also makes it highly likely that the John Blockley baptised in Claybrooke in 1776 to parents from Ullesthorpe was Sophia's father because, as noted above, that John Blockley, as well as his bride Ann Varnam, were both residents of Ullesthorpe when they married, and they married in the "Parish Church of Claybrooke the Mother Church to Ullesthorpe", and subsequently baptised a number of children there.

Further, a John Blockley, Grazier of Ullesthorpe, made a 1795 will, see the Appendix, under which he left all his land and tenements at Ullesthorpe to his wife Ann for life, and then to his son John Blockley. Sophia's father John's stated occupation in his 1797 marriage licence, and in the bond he countersigned for Jonathan Blockley in 1820, was that of a Grazier in Ullesthorpe. He is therefore almost certainly the John Blockley who inherited under the 1795 will. That is, the testator was his father, and hence his father's name was John, not Joseph, being the name of the father of the Broughton Astley John Blockley.

Further, given John's father's stated abode in his 1795 will, as well as the Ullesthorpe location of John's father's land and tenements, which John's father himself would have inherited under the system of male-preference primogeniture which predominated in rural England at the time,[28] it follows that John's father would almost certainly have been living in Ullesthorpe and not Broughton Astley in 1776.

A FindMyPast search for a John Blockley birth within 5 miles of Claybrooke, and between 1764 and 1784,[29] returned no additional candidates.

Accordingly, John was baptised on 13th January 1776 in Claybrooke Parva, Leicestershire, to John and Ann Blockley of Ullesthorpe.

John's death

John's person record in Family Search referred to above gives his burial date and place as 21st September 1834 in Claybrooke Magna, Leicestershire, but this proved to be the burial of Jonathan Blockley of Great Claybrook, see https://search.findmypast.com/record?id=S2%2FGBPRS%2FLEICS%2F15-0818-GB-LEC-CLAYBROOKE-DE732-13-BURIALS-1813-1848%2F00059:

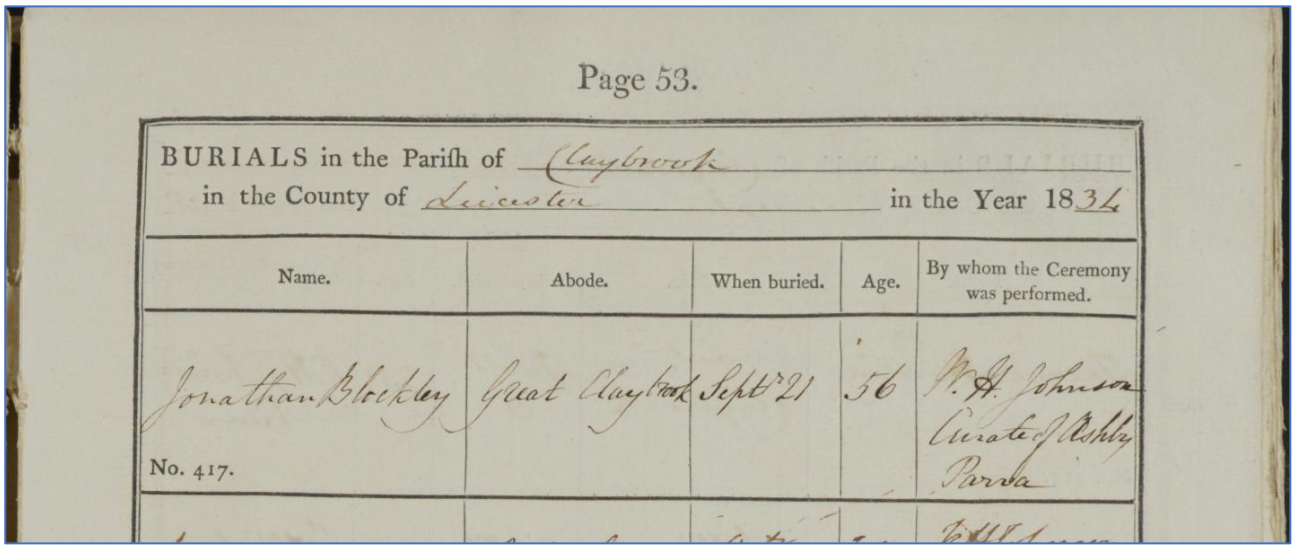
[25] Google AI Overview states: "In the late 1770s in rural England, place attachment was deeply rooted in traditional agrarian life, local community networks, and the land. People felt a strong sense of belonging to their native villages, parishes, and ancestral fields. This bond was shaped by shared communal labor, common land use, and generational ties, though it was soon disrupted by early industrialization and the enclosure acts." As to the *Inclosure Act 1773*, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inclosure_Act_1773. Place attachment theory is explained in Section 2 (pages 1-2) of "Towards a Developmental Theory of Place Attachment", Paul Morgan, March 2010, available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/222246966_Towards_a_Developmental_Theory_of_Place_Attachment.

[26] See https://search.findmypast.com/record/browse?id=S2/GBPRS/LEICS/007900491/00450 and the preceding image. The couple married on 10th February 1800, see https://www.findmypast.com/transcript?id=GBPRS%2FLEICS%2FMAR%2F00327466%2F1&tab=this.

[27] See https://www.findmypast.com/transcript?id=GBPRS%2FLEICS%2FBUR%2F00736252&tab=this.

[28] See https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/learning/medievalwomen/theme2/inheritance.aspx and https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9781118430873.est0290. The system was designed to keep landed estates intact, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primogeniture: "The effect of English primogeniture was to keep estates undivided wherever possible". The system in operation is exemplified by the 1795 will itself, as well as the 1782 will of John's grandfather, see the Appendix.

[29] See https://www.findmypast.com/search/results?sid=100&firstname=john&lastname=blockley&lastname_variants=true&yearofbirth=1774&yearofbirth_offset=10&keywordsplace=claybrooke+magna%2c+leicestershire%2c+england&keywordsplace_proximity=5&sourcecountry=england.

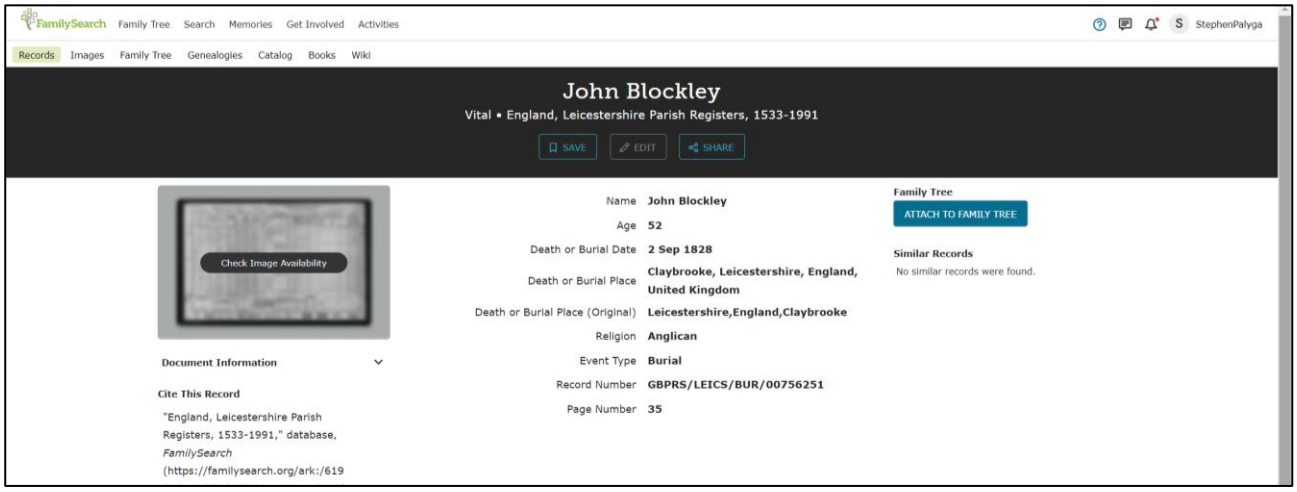


Page 53.

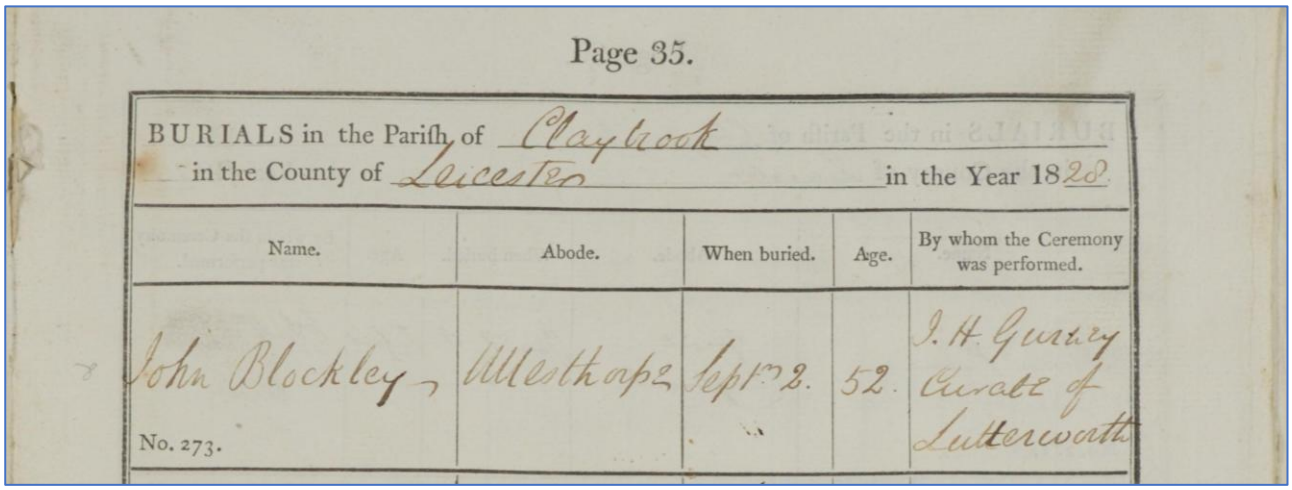
BURIALS in the Parish of Claybrook
in the County of Leicester in the Year 1834

Name.	Abode.	When buried.	Age.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
Jonathan Blockley No. 417.	Great Claybrook	Sept^r 21	56	W. H. Johnson Curate of Ashby Parva

A Family Search search located another burial in Claybrooke on 2nd September 1828, and he was a John Blockley of Ullesthorpe, see https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QP4Q-CM4S:



This is the original Claybrooke parish record of the burial, and which confirms the abode of Ullesthorpe, see https://search.findmypast.com/record?id=S2%2FGBPRS%2FLEICS%2F15-0818-GB-LEC-CLAYBROOKE-DE732-13-BURIALS-1813-1848%2F00041:



Page 35.

BURIALS in the Parish of Claybrook
in the County of Leicester in the Year 1828

Name.	Abode.	When buried.	Age.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
John Blockley No. 273.	Ullesthorpe	Sept^r 2.	52.	J. H. Gurney Curate of Lutterworth

The age given of 52 exactly matches the age of John the father of Sophia, given he was baptised on 13th January 1776. The abode given of Ullesthorpe also matches John's parents' abode given in his above baptism record, John's abode given in his above 1797 marriage licence, the place of Sophia's birth in 1801 (see above), John's abode given in the bond he countersigned for Jonathan Blockley in 1820, and also John's abode noted in his daughter Sophia's 1832 marriage notice in the *Leicester Herald* (see above).

It is also noted that the above burial was in Claybrooke, which John's marriage licence declared was the "mother church" for Ullesthorpe, that is, Ullesthorpe was in the parish of Claybrooke. It is less than a mile away.

However, the said 1832 marriage announcement names Sophia as the "daughter of Mr. John Blockley, of Ullesthorpe". It could be seen as unusual that John was named in the notice if he was dead, or, at the least, that he was not named as "the late Mr. John Blockley".

A Family Search search for the death of a John Blockley in Claybrooke from 1820 (when John countersigned the bond for Jonathan Blockley's marriage licence) to 1860 returned no other relevant record.[30] Since Family Search searches using the location of Claybrooke call up "Claybrooke, Warwickshire",[31] a search was also made of records for Leicestershire for the death of a John Blockley between 1820 and 1860, with "Claybrooke" as a key word,[32] and also a search of records for Leicestershire for the death of a John Blockley between 1800 and 1880 without any key words,[33] but these searches also returned no other relevant record.

A search in FindMyPast[34] for John Blockley deaths between 1820 and 1860 in Claybrooke or within 5 miles likewise returned no other relevant record. As with the Family Search searches, this search did return a number of John Blockley deaths or burials in Lutterworth, a larger town 4 miles south-east of Claybrooke. There were obviously numbers of Blockleys there. However, the fact that John's known life events all occurred at Claybrooke and adjacent Ullesthorpe, and the fact that he held tenements in Ullesthorpe, make a burial at Claybrooke (the parish church for Ullesthorpe) far more likely.

A FreeBMD search for the death of a John Blockley in Leicestershire between 1st July 1837 (when civil death registration commenced)[35] and 1880 returned no Ullesthorpe or Claybrooke deaths. Again, a number of John Blockley deaths at Lutterworth were returned, as to which, see the comment in the preceding paragraph.

The FindMyPast search last mentioned did not return any will postdating 1800 which might be for John Blockley the father of Sophia. A separate John Blockley search of the FindMyPast collection of "Leicester Wills and Probate Records 1500-1939"[36] also did not locate one.

(The Appendix sets out various wills, probate and estate administration documents involving a John Blockley which were found in the course of searches for this brief).

The University of Leicester has "Special Collections online" which include 19th century directories and gazetteers for Leicestershire. A search of the Collections for "John Blockley" returned a number of hits, but

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[30] See https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/record/results?count=20&q.deathLikeDate.from=1820&q.deathLikeDate.to=1860&q.deathLikePlace=Claybrooke%2C%20Warwickshire%2C%20England%2C%20United%20Kingdom&q.givenName=John&q.surname=Blockley.

[31] Although it is in Leicestershire, Claybrooke is very close to the Warwickshire county line, and less than a mile east of that line.

[32] See https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/record/results?count=20&q.deathLikeDate.from=1820&q.deathLikeDate.to=1860&q.deathLikePlace=Leicestershire%2C%20England%2C%20United%20Kingdom&q.givenName=John&q.miscKeyword=Claybrooke&q.surname=Blockley. Changing "Claybrooke" to "Claybrook" returned the exact same results.

[33] See https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/record/results?count=20&q.deathLikeDate.from=1800&q.deathLikeDate.to=1880&q.deathLikePlace=Leicestershire%2C%20England%2C%20United%20Kingdom&q.deathLikePlace.exact=on&q.givenName=John&q.surname=Blockley.

[34] See https://www.findmypast.com/search/results?sid=100&firstname=john&lastname=blockley&yearofdeath=1840&yearofdeath_offset=20&keywordsplace=claybrooke+magna%2c+leicestershire%2c+england&keywordsplace_proximity=5&sourcecountry=england.

[35] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Register_Office_for_England_and_Wales.

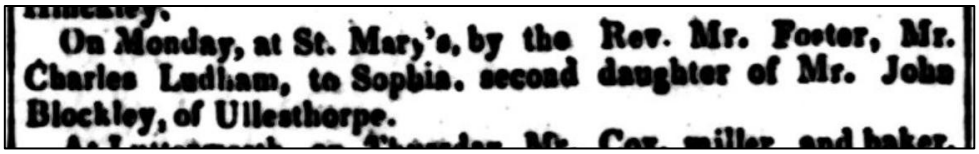
[36] See https://www.findmypast.com/search/results?datasetname=leicestershire+wills+and+probate+records%2c+1500-1939&sid=103&firstname=john&firstname_variants=true&lastname=blockley&lastname_variants=true&eventyear=1840&eventyear_offset=40. One of the returned records, letters of administration issued in 1802, did involve John Blockley, the father of Sophia, as he countersigned the bond required for the letters to issue, see the Appendix. For further analysis of the records returned on the search, see the Appendix.

none which were discernibly for the father of Sophia.[37] In particular, none of the John Blockleys listed in the oldest directory which returned a hit, "Pigot's Directory of Leicestershire, 1822", was possibly for the father of Sophia.

Nothing relating to John Blockley of Ullesthorpe was returned in searches for newspaper articles between 1800 and 1899 relating to him in eight Leicester newspapers, and two rural Leicestershire newspapers.[38]

Accordingly, the only viable candidate located for John Blockley's burial is the 1828 Claybrooke burial, and, as noted above, the place of that burial and the age of the deceased exactly match John's abode and age.

Returning then to the 1832 Leicester newspaper notice referring to him, this is it:[39]


On Monday, at St. Mary's, by the Rev. Mr. Foster, Mr. Charles Ludlam, to Sophia, second daughter of Mr. John Blockley, of Ullesthorpe.

As noted above, if John had died in 1828, it could be seen as unusual that John was named in this 1832 notice, or, at the least, that he was not named as "the late Mr. John Blockley". However, being in the *Leicester Herald*, the notice would have been placed by the Ludlam family, and it is understandable that they wished to specifically name John as the father of the bride, even if he was dead, as they would have been well pleased that Charles, described in the 1841 England Census as a Journeyman Painter (see the brief relating to Charles Ludlam), and thus a tradesman, was marrying the daughter of a landholder.

Whether referring to the bride's father as the "late" John Blockley was not thought needed, or was accidentally omitted, or even deliberately left out, possibly so as not to take the shine off the family's advancement (given that by 1832 Sophia was, in fact, no longer the daughter of an existing landholder), is unknown. Whatever the case, the anomaly is not significant enough to challenge the conclusion militated by the above researches.

Accordingly, John Blockley was buried in Claybrooke, Leicestershire on 2nd September 1828.

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[37] See https://leicester.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/search/searchterm/leicestershire!John%20Blockley/field/coveraa!all/mode/exact!all/conn/and!all.

[38] See https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.com/search-newspapers/results?keywords=ullesthorpe&names=john%20blockley&newspaper=leicester%20advertiser~leicester%20chronicle~leicester%20daily%20mercury~leicester%20daily%20post~leicester%20evening%20mail~leicester%20guardian~leicester%20herald~leicester%20journal~leicester%20mail~leicester%20pioneer&startdate=1800-01-01&enddate=1899-12-31&exactdate=true&sid=107 and https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.com/search-newspapers/results?names=john%20blockley&newspaper=hinckley%20guardian%20and%20south%20leicestershire%20advertiser~leicestershire%20mercury&page=2&sid=118. The searches obviously missed Sophia's 1832 marriage notice in the *Leicester Herald*. The British Newspaper Archive was created by FindMyPast digitising newspapers in the British Library collection, see https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.com/about-the-british-newspaper-archive.

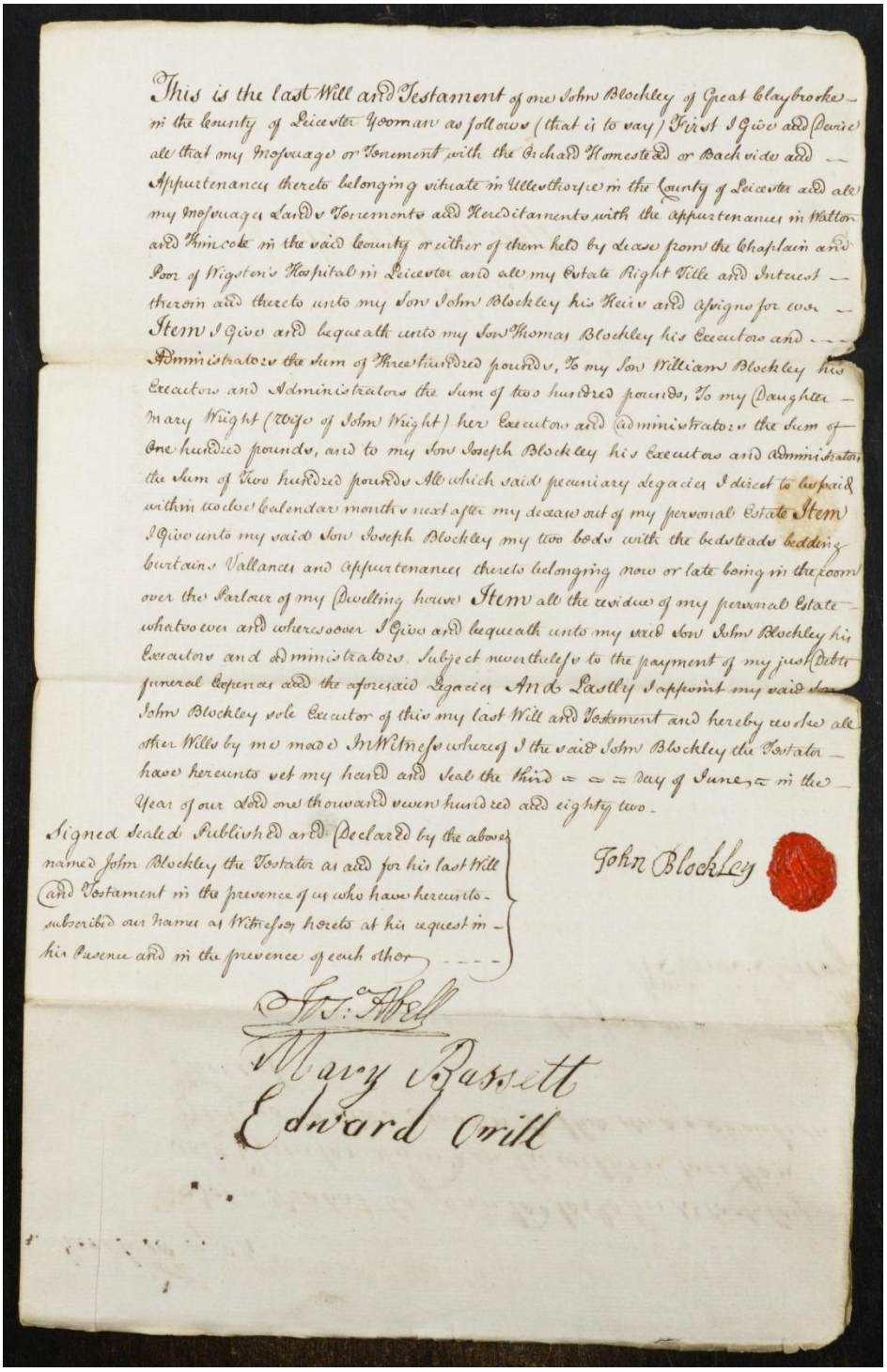
[39] See page 3 at https://www.findmypast.com/image-viewer?issue=BL%2F0002151%2F18321031&page=3.

Appendix

Wills, probate and estate administration documentation involving John Blockley

1782 will and 1784 probate

A John Blockley of Great Claybrooke, "Yeoman",[40] executed a will on 3rd June 1782, see https://search.findmypast.com/record/browse?id=S2/GBPRS/LEICS/102890533/00093 (the preceding image being the case file jacket):



This is the last Will and Testament of me John Blockley of Great Claybrooke in the County of Leicester Yeoman as follows (that is to say) First I Give and Devise all that my Messuage or Tenement with the Orchard Homestead or Backside and Appurtenances thereto belonging situate in Ullesthorpe in the County of Leicester and all my Messuages Lands Tenements and Hereditaments with the Appurtenances in Walton and Thincote in the said County or either of them held by Lease from the Chaplain and Poor of Wigston's Hospital in Leicester and all my Estate Right Title and Interest therein and thereto unto my Son John Blockley his Heirs and Assigns for ever Item I Give and bequeath unto my Son Thomas Blockley his Executors and Administrators the Sum of Three hundred pounds To my Son William Blockley his Executors and Administrators the Sum of two hundred pounds To my Daughter Mary Wright (Wife of John Wright) her Executors and Administrators the Sum of One hundred pounds and to my Son Joseph Blockley his Executors and Administrators the Sum of Two hundred pounds All which said pecuniary Legacies I direct to be paid within two Calendar months next after my decease out of my personal Estate Item I Give unto my said Son Joseph Blockley my two Beds with the Bedsteads Bedding Curtains Vallances and Appurtenances thereto belonging now or late being in the Room over the Parlour of my Dwelling House Item all the residue of my personal Estate whatsoever and wheresoever I Give and bequeath unto my said Son John Blockley his Executors and Administrators Subject nevertheless to the payment of my just Debts funeral Expences and the aforesaid Legacies And lastly I appoint my said Son John Blockley sole Executor of this my last Will and Testament and hereby revoke all other Wills by me made In Witness whereof I the said John Blockley the Testator have hereunto set my hand and Seal the third day of June in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty two.

Signed Sealed Published and Declared by the above named John Blockley the Testator as and for his last Will and Testament in the presence of us who have hereunto subscribed our Names as Witnesses hereto at his request in his Presence and in the presence of each other

John Blockley

Mary Bassett

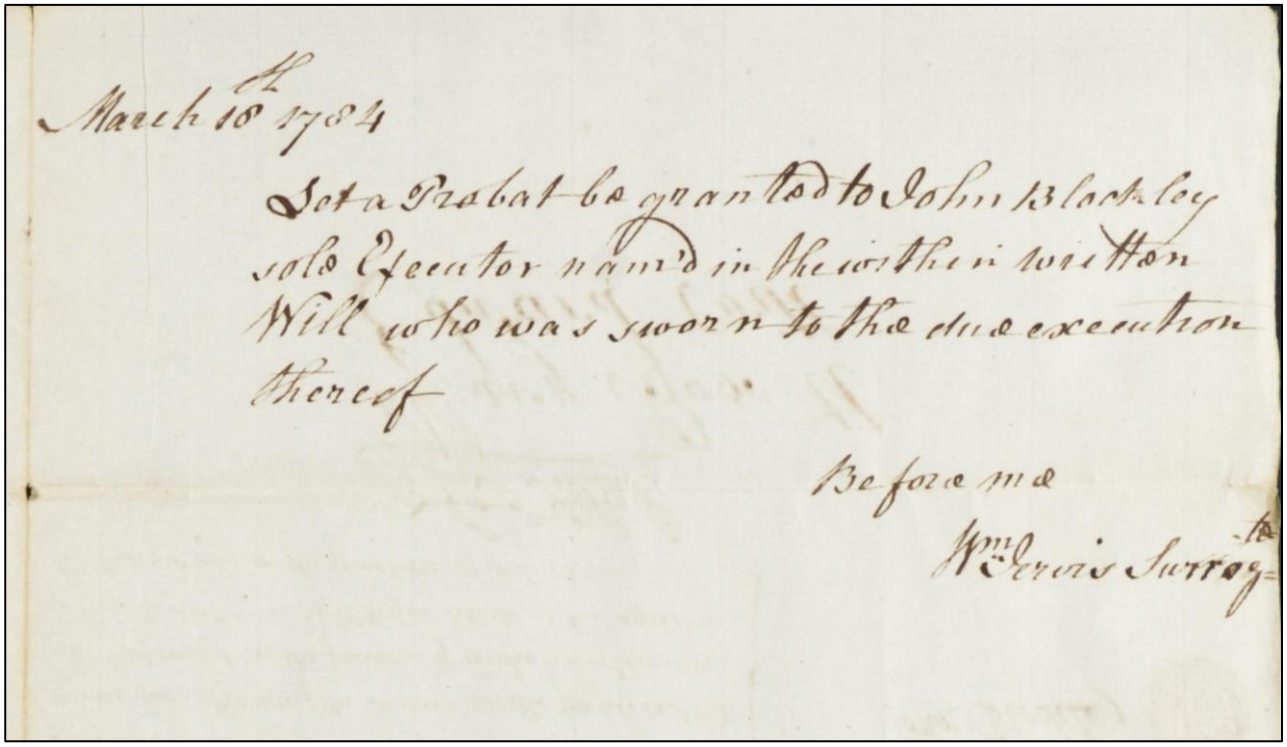
Edward Orill

[40] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yeoman.

John gave to his son John Blockley his "Tenement with the Orchard Homestead or Backside[41] and Appurtenances thereto" at Ullesthorpe, as well as all lands and appurtenances in Walton and Kimcote[42] "held by Lease from the Chaplain and Poor of Wigston's Hospital in Leicester".[43]

He gave pecuniary legacies totalling £800 to his other children Thomas Blockley, William Blockley, Mary Wright the wife of John Wright, and Joseph Blockley,[44] with the legacies to be paid out of his personal estate. Except for some bedding given to his son Joseph, his son John was also given the balance of his personal estate, and John was also appointed as sole executor.

Probate of the will was granted to the testator's executor, heir and son John Blockley on 18th March 1784, see https://search.findmypast.com/record/browse?id=S2/GBPRS/LEICS/102890533/00094:


March 18 1784

Sol a Probat be granted to John Blockley sole Executor nam'd in the within written Will who was sworn to the due execution thereof

Before me

Wm Ewins Surrog

1795 will and 1799 probate

A will (set out on the next page) was made on 20th April 1795 by "John Blockley the Elder of Ullesthorpe", see https://search.findmypast.com/record/browse?id=S2/GBPRS/LEICS/102909691/00048.

Under the will, John Blockley the Elder gave all his real estate "at Ullesthorpe aforesaid or elsewhere" to his wife Ann for her life, and then to his son John. He gave all his goods, chattels, stock, money and other personal estate to Ann, and he also appointed her as his sole executrix.

[41] A backside is an old-fashioned or legal term for the yard or land directly behind a house, see https://www.law-dictionary.org/definitions-b/backside.
[42] Walton and Kimcote are adjoining villages 6 miles east of Claybrooke.
[43] Lands, including at Kimcote and Walton, were conveyed by the founder of the hospital (Wigston) to its trustees in 1521, and the rents were used to run the hospital, see https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/leics/vol4/pp398-410.
[44] Possibly the Joseph Blockley referred to above who baptised a John on 18th February 1776 in Broughton Astley.

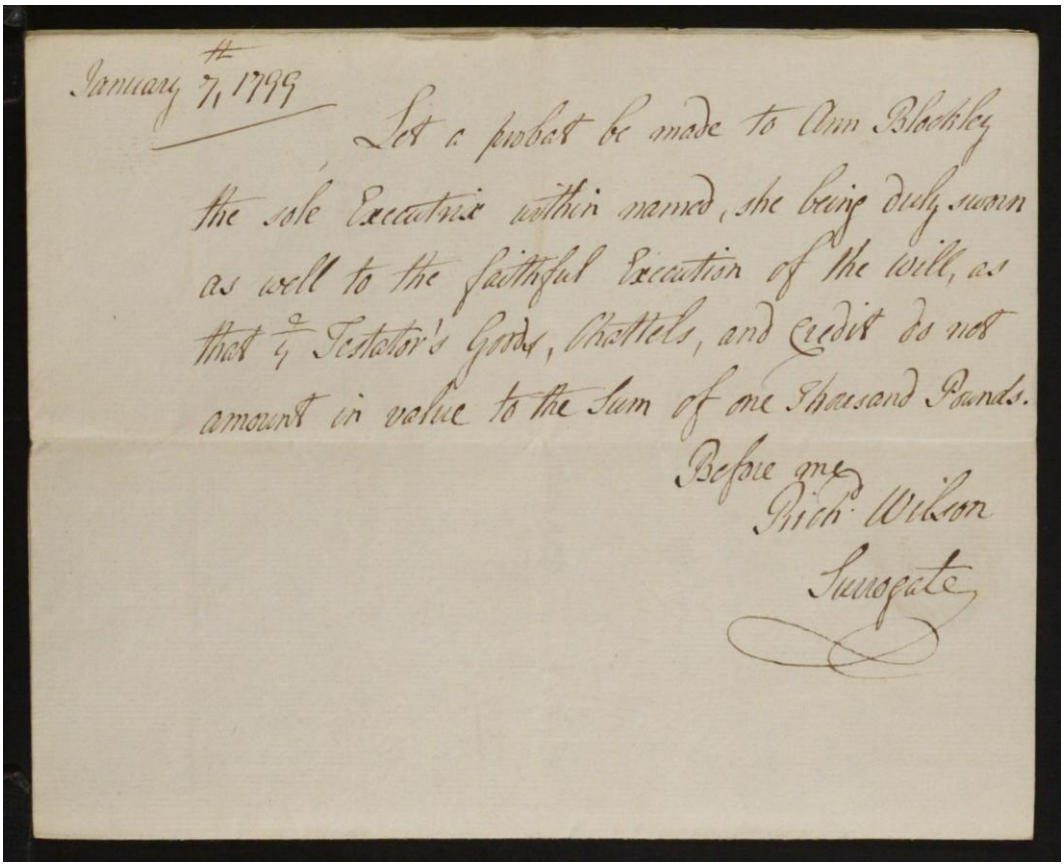
This is the last Will and Testament of me John Blockley the Elder of Ullesthorpe in the County of Leicester Grazier as follows First I Give and Devise all and singular my Messuages Cottages Close Lands Tenements and Hereditaments and all other my real Estate whatsoever situate at Ullesthorpe aforesaid or elsewhere Unto Ann my Wife and her Assigns for and during the term of her natural life and from and immediately after her decease I Give and Devise my said real Estate unto my Son John Blockley his Heirs and Assigns for ever I Give and bequeath all and singular my Household Goods Furniture and Implements of Household Goods Chattels Stock Ready money and securities for Money Effects and all other my personal Estate whatsoever and wheresoever Unto Ann my said Wife To and for her own use and benefit And Lastly I do appoint my said Wife sole Executrix of this my last Will and Testament hereby revoking all former Wills by me made In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my Hand and Seal the Twentieth day of April in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and Ninety five

John Blockley

Signed Sealed Published and Declared by the above named John Blockley the Testator as and for his last Will and Testament in the presence of us who at his request in his presence and in the presence of each other have subscribed our Names as Witnesses thereto

Fra. Burges.
Tho Chamberlain
William Murby

Probate of the will was granted to Ann on 7th January 1799, the estate's personalty not exceeding £1,000, see https://search.findmypast.com/record/browse?id=s2%2fgbprs%2fleics%2f102909691%2f00049:

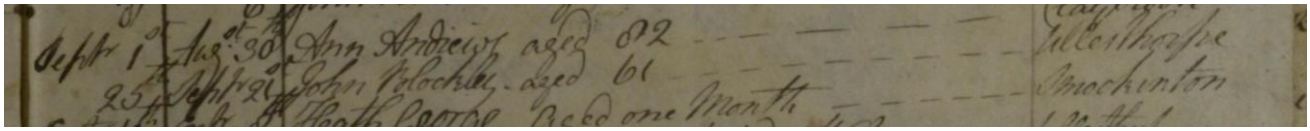


January 7, 1799

Let a probat be made to Ann Blockley the sole Executrix within named, she being duly sworn as well to the faithful Execution of the Will, as that the Testator's Goods, Chattels, and Credits do not amount in value to the Sum of one Thousand Pounds.

Before me
Rich: Wilson
Surrogate

No doubt this probate granted in January 1799 related to the John Blockley of Ullesthorpe who died aged 61 on 21st September 1798, and was buried on 25th September 1798 at Claybrooke, see https://search.findmypast.com/record?id=S2%2FGBPRS%2FLEICS%2F102197542%2F00018&parentid=GBPRS%2FLEICS%2FBUR%2F00338907:

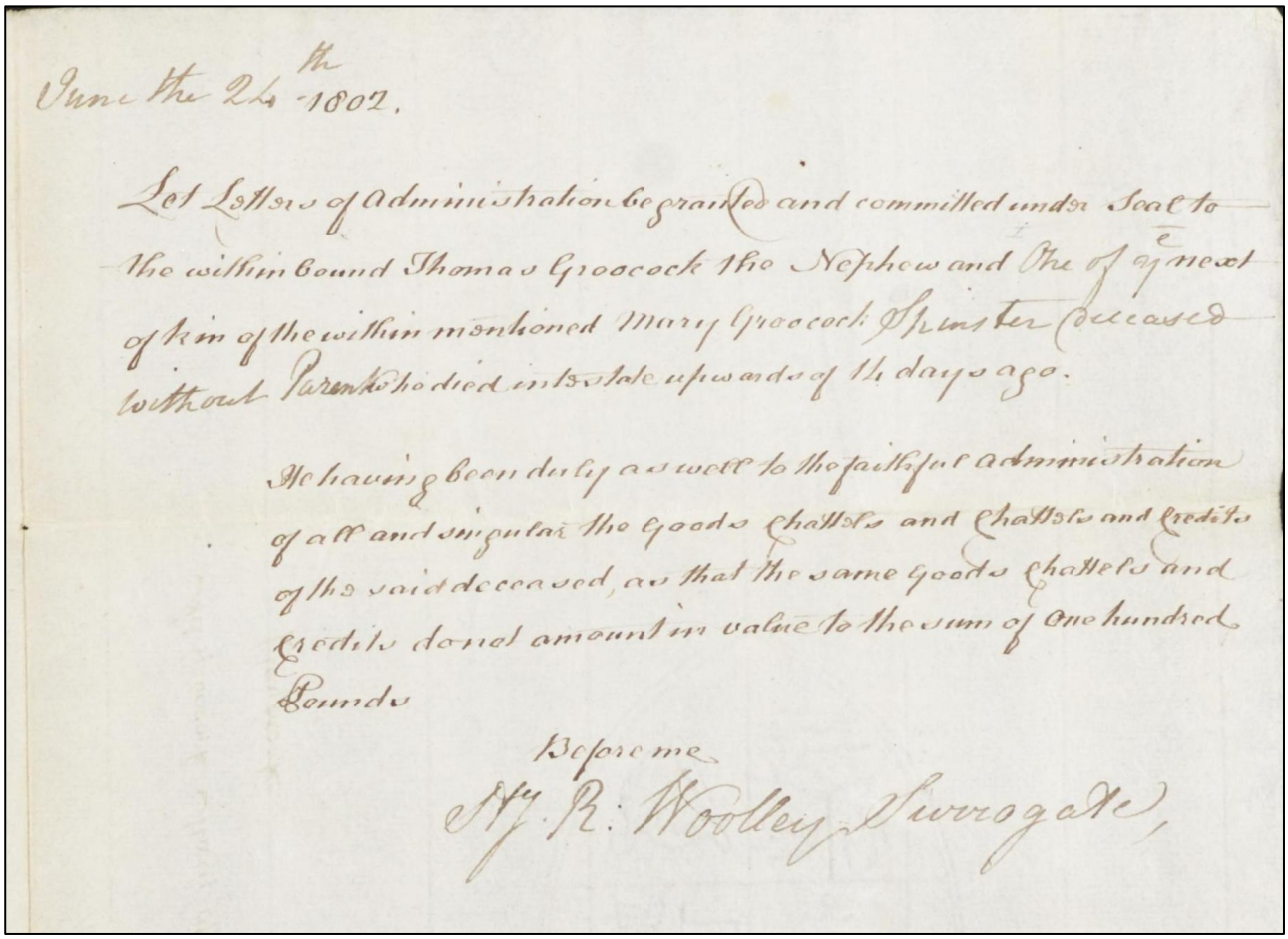


Hence, also, the 1795 will was his.

1802 letters of administration

On 24th June 1802, letters of administration were granted to Thomas Groocock, the nephew and one of the next of kin of Mary Groocock of Claybrooke,[45] whose personal estate did not exceed in value £1,000, see https://search.findmypast.com/record/browse?id=s2%2fgbprs%2fleics%2f102910324%2f00338:

[45] Her abode is given on the accompanying case file jacket for the letters of administration, see https://search.findmypast.com/record/browse?id=s2%2fgbprs%2fleics%2f102910324%2f00336.



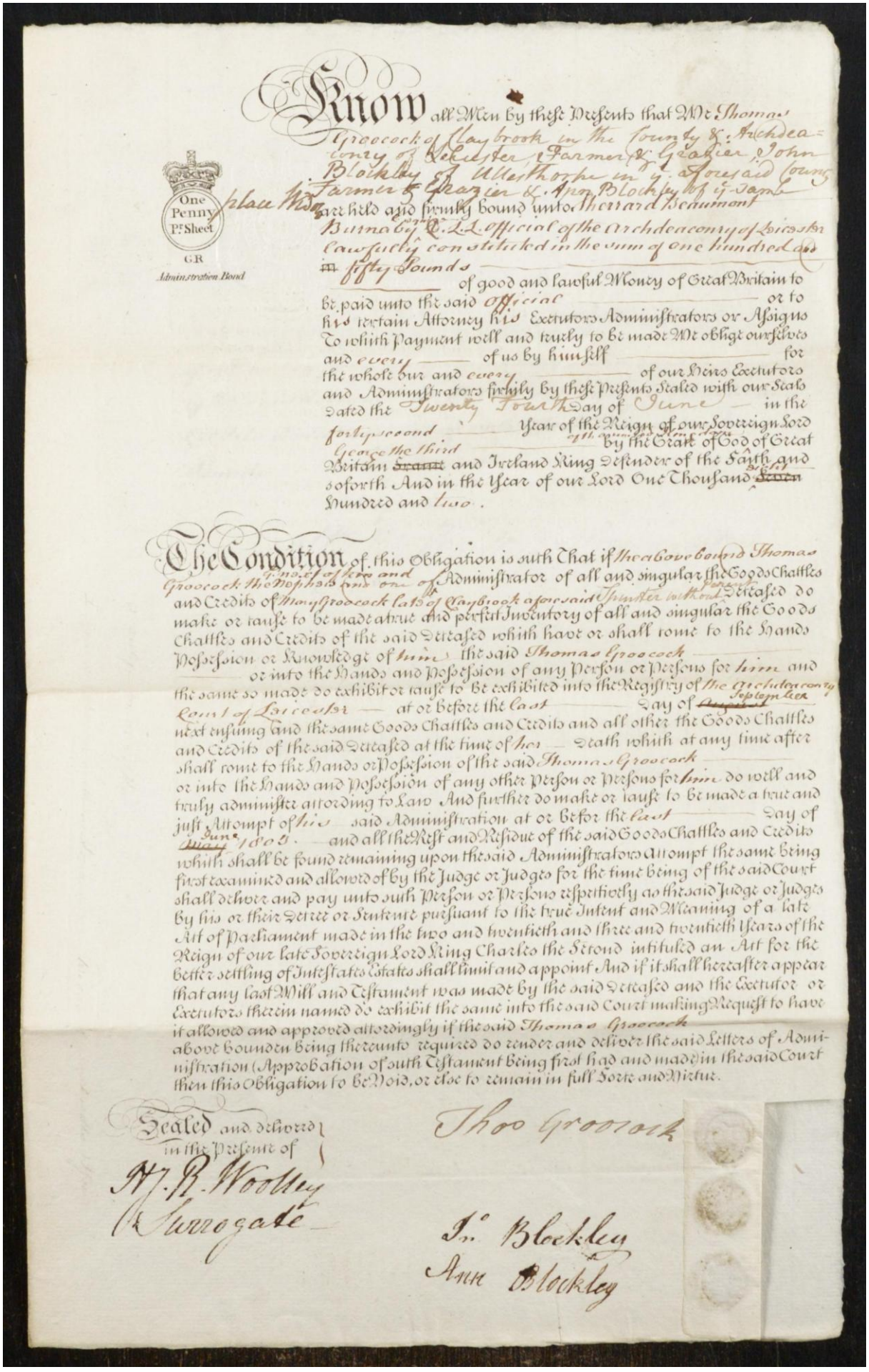
June the 24th 1802.

Let Letters of Administration be granted and committed under Seal to the within bound Thomas Groocock the Nephew and the next of kin of the within mentioned Mary Groocock Spinster deceased without Parent who died intestate upwards of 14 days ago.

He having been duly sworn well to the faithful administration of all and singular the Goods Chattels and Chattels and Credits of the said deceased, and that the same Goods Chattels and Credits do not amount in value to the sum of One hundred Pounds

Before me
Wm. R. Woolley Surrogate

The supporting bond dated 24th June 1802, and given by Thomas Groocock, "Farmer & Grazier" of Claybrooke, was countersigned by John Blockley, "Farmer & Grazier" of Ullesthorpe and "Ann Blockley of the same place Widow", see https://search.findmypast.com/record/browse?id=s2%2fgbprs%2fleics%2f102910324%2f00337:



Know all Men by these Presents that We Thomas Groocock of Claybrook in the County & Archdeaconry of Leicester Farmer & Grazier & John Blockley of Ullesthorpe in y. aforesaid County Farmer & Grazier & Ann Blockley Wife of y. Same

One Penny Pr Sheet GR

Administration Bond

are held and firmly bound unto Theorard Beaumont Burnaby LL.D. Official of the Archdeaconry of Leicester lawfully constituted in the sum of one hundred and fifty Pounds of good and lawful Money of Great Britain to be paid unto the said Official or to his certain Attorney his Executors Administrators or Assigns To which Payment well and truly to be made We oblige ourselves and every of us by himself for the whole but and every of our Heirs Executors and Administrators firmly by these Presents Sealed with our Seals Dated the Twenty Fourth Day of June in the forty second Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George the third by the Grace of God of Great Britain France and Ireland King Defender of the Faith and so forth And in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and two.

The Condition of this Obligation is such That if the above bound Thomas Groocock the Nephew and one of Administrator of all and singular the Goods Chattles and Credits of Thos Groocock late of Claybrook aforesaid Spinster without Deceased do make or cause to be made a true and perfect Inventory of all and singular the Goods Chattles and Credits of the said Deceased which have or shall come to the Hands Possession or Knowledge of him the said Thomas Groocock or into the Hands and Possession of any Person or Persons for him and the same so made do exhibit or cause to be exhibited into the Registry of the Archdeaconry Court of Leicester at or before the last Day of September next ensuing and the same Goods Chattles and Credits and all other the Goods Chattles and Credits of the said Deceased at the time of her Death which at any time after shall come to the Hands or Possession of the said Thomas Groocock or into the Hands and Possession of any other Person or Persons for him do well and truly administer according to Law And further do make or cause to be made a true and just Attompt of his said Administration at or befor the last Day of May Jun. 1703. and all the Rest and Residue of the said Goods Chattles and Credits which shall be found remaining upon the said Administrators Attompt the same being first examined and allowed of by the Judge or Judges for the time being of the said Court shall deliver and pay unto such Person or Persons respectively as the said Judge or Judges by his or their Decree or Sentence pursuant to the true Intent and Meaning of a late Act of Parliament made in the two and twentieth and three and twentieth Years of the Reign of our late Sovereign Lord King Charles the Second intituled an Act for the better settling of Intestates Estates shall limit and appoint. And if it shall hereafter appear that any last Will and Testament was made by the said Deceased and the Executor or Executors therein named do exhibit the same into the said Court making Request to have it allowed and approved accordingly if the said Thomas Groocock above bounden being thereunto required do render and deliver the said Letters of Administration (Approbation of such Testament being first had and made in the said Court) then this Obligation to be Void, or else to remain in full Force and Vertue.

Sealed and delivered in the Presence of

Wm. R. Woolley
Surrogate

Thos Groocock

Jn. Blockley

Ann Blockley

A search of the Wills & Probate collection in FindMyPast for John Blockley records returned no other records for the period between 1750 to 1850 which possibly related to a John Blockley of Ullesthorpe, see https://www.findmypast.com/search/results?sourcecategory=life+events+%28bmds%29&collection=wills+%26+probate&sid=102&firstname=john&lastname=blockley.

Specifically in relation to the following records returned, they did not relate to John Blockley of Ullesthorpe for the following reasons:

(a) An 1818 death duties record returned on the search proved to relate to a John Blockley of Attleborough Hall, Nuneaton, 8 miles west of Claybrooke in Warwickshire.[46]

(b) An 1835 document returned on the search[47] proved to be letters of administration granted in respect of John Blockley, a schoolmaster of Narborough, which is just outside Leicester, and 6½ miles north-north-east of Claybrooke. The letters were granted to his widow, Betsy, "heretofore of Narborough but now of Primethorpe". Although that latter village happens to adjoin Broughton Astley, no land or tenements, whether at Ullesthorpe or elsewhere, are mentioned in the documents, which appear to relate to the administration of personal property only.

(c) An 1838 probate returned on the search proved to be for the will of a John Blockley of Newarke, Leicester,[48] a widower with a number of children including a John. The will refers to freehold land with a house "in Thornton Lane, situate near the White Bear", which was in the heart of Leicester where the Holiday Inn now sits,[49] and near to the Newarke. No other land or tenements, whether at Ullesthorpe or elsewhere, are mentioned in the will. The testator appointed "my two friends William Coleman … and William Smith" as executors.

(d) An 1838 death duties record returned on the search proved to relate to that same John Blockley of Leicester, as it names his executor as William Coleman.[50]

Curiously, the search did not return the above 1795 will and 1799 probate.

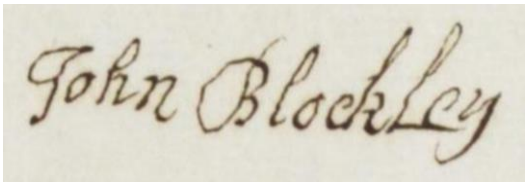
The search of FindMyPast's Wills & Probate collection was not specific to Leicestershire, and those returned for Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Staffordshire were also inspected (without locating a relevant record) given the proximity of Claybrooke to the Warwickshire border, less than a mile away, and given also this advice at https://heritage.warwickshire.gov.uk/talks-research-guides/tracing-warwickshire-ancestors/1: "Most wills made by Warwickshire people were proved at the Dioceses of Worcester or Lichfield and will be found either at Worcestershire Record Office or Staffordshire Record Office."

Analysis of the above wills, probate and estate administration documentation

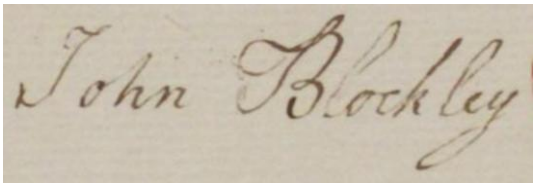
The John Blockley who signed the 1782 will was not alive in 1795, and the John Blockley who signed the 1795 will was not alive in 1802, but it is also the lack of any similarities between the signatures of John Blockley on the 1782 will, the 1795 will, and the 1802 bond, which verifies that they are those of three different persons.

[46] See https://search.findmypast.com/record?id=BMD%2FIR27%2F164%2F062&parentid=BMD%2FD%2FDDUTY%2F240754.
[47] See https://search.findmypast.com/record/browse?id=S2/GBPRS/LEICS/102956819/00136 (plus the preceding and subsequent images).
[48] See https://search.findmypast.com/record/browse?id=S2/GBPRS/LEICS/102976695/00097.
[49] See https://pubhistoryproject.co.uk/2022/03/31/white-bear-28-thornton-lane/.
[50] See https://search.findmypast.com/record?id=BMD%2FIR27%2F244%2F090&parentid=BMD%2FD%2FDDUTY%2F579874.

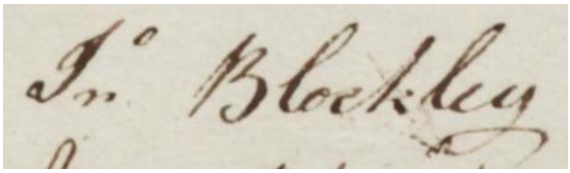
1782 will



1795 will



1802 bond



The 1782 will and the 1795 each confirms the testator's ownership of Ullesthorpe tenements, and, in each case, the testator gives them "unto my son John Blockley" (albeit after a life estate to his wife in the case of the latter will). The 1802 bond confirms that the signatory John Blockley was a "Farmer & Grazier" of Ullesthorpe, that is, a holder of tenements in Ullesthorpe.

The obvious inference of this chain of Ullesthorpe landholders, each with the same surname, and also each with the same forename, indicative of a family patronymic tradition, is that they form a line of direct patrilineal descent. That is, the John Blockley who signed the 1782 will and died by 1784 was the father of the "John Blockley the Elder" who signed the 1795 will and died by 1799, and that he in turn was the father of the John Blockley "Farmer & Grazier" of Ullesthorpe who signed the 1802 bond.

That each John Blockley holding Ullesthorpe tenements from time to time would have inherited them from his father is exactly what would be expected given the system of male-preference primogeniture referred to above, and the two wills make that explicit.

The only question remaining is whether there could possibly be a second descending line of John Blockleys in Ullesthorpe at the time, such that one or two of the 1782 will, the 1795 will and/or the 1802 bond relates to one such family, and the other one or two of them relates to the other family.

That would be a remarkable coincidence, and one which can be excluded in any event given that none of the numerous searches done for this brief uncovered any information to suggest that there might be such a second descending line of John Blockleys in Ullesthorpe at the time.

That means that John Blockley the father of Sophia countersigned the 1802 bond, and that fact leads to another obvious inference, which is that the Ann Blockley who also countersigned the bond was his mother. That inference is supported by the following facts.

(a) Having the same surname, and undertaking a joint obligation for the reasonably significant sum of £150, it may be expected that John and Ann had a family relationship.

The John Blockley and Ann Blockley named in the bond were both from Ullesthorpe, and John was named therein as a Farmer & Grazier. As verified above, he belonged to the only family of Blockleys holding land in Ullesthorpe at the time. She thus likely did also.

(b) The Ann who countersigned the bond was not John's wife Ann, given she owned no property which would support the bond under the English common law doctrine of coverture.[51]

[51] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coverture.

(c) As verified above, John Blockley's mother was an Ann Blockley.

(d) Also as verified above, John Blockley's father was John Blockley the Elder who signed a will in 1795. In that will, John Blockley the Elder names his wife as Ann Blockley.

(e) By 1799, John Blockley the Elder had died, and Ann had become a widow, and the Ann Blockley named in the 1802 bond was identified as a widow.

(f) Under his 1795 will, John Blockley the Elder gave all his Ullesthorpe tenements to his wife Ann for her life, and then to his son John. He also gave all his goods, chattels, stock, money and other personal estate to Ann. Ann may have had the means to support a bond for £150 on her own account if she still held sufficient personal estate in 1802, but that is not what happened.

John being the son of John Blockley the Elder, the fact that both he and an Ann Blockley countersigned the bond points to her being the wife of John Blockley the Elder, because they likely both signed the bond so they could together give proper security, given that, at the time of the bond, neither had a fully unencumbered estate in the Ullesthorpe tenements.

(g) The Ann Blockley who countersigned the 1802 bond did so to assist a Thomas Groocock of Claybrooke to obtain letters of administration of his aunt's personal estate. Ann Blockley would be unlikely to undertake such an obligation except for a relative, but it was in fact the case that Ann and Thomas were related, as Ann the wife of John Blockley the Elder was also a Groocock from Claybrooke, see the brief relating to Ann Blockley nee Groocock.