

## Chapter five

### AMOS TYTE 1790-1857

My great-great-greatgrandfather Amos Tyte was the eldest of seven surviving children. He was baptised in Litton Church on 14 March 1790 two months after his parents' marriage. George III was on the throne. The country was governed by the Tories under Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger. William Bligh arrived back in Britain that year with the first report of the mutiny on the *Bounty*. Public protests over the price of bread were rife. Three years later one of the worst massacres of the eighteenth century took place during the nearby Bristol Bridge Riot when eleven people were killed and forty-five injured in a protest against tolls.

On 22 October 1812 when he was twenty-two Amos married Ann Cook, sometimes known as Nancy, from Chew Stoke five miles north of Litton. Like some of his siblings, they married in Bristol. Nancy was baptised in Chew Stoke on 15 August 1790 to parents Partridge and Betty.

The couple lived in a cottage in Litton where they brought up nine children. Under the terms of his father's will Amos and his disabled sister Betty inherited a joint lifetime interest in Sherbourne Cottage, the family home. Betty lived in the house for twenty years after her father died. Unless the land owned by his grandfather had been enclosed, in 1828 Amos and his sister Betty would have inherited the messuage and tenements connected with the family home. There is no way of knowing its extent but it is doubtful that it entitled Amos to vote.

In the mid-1830s when Amos was in his forties he was employed as a gamekeeper on the Earl of Waldegrave's nearby Chewton Mendip and Harptree estates. His name appears in a list published in the *Bristol Mercury* in 1834 of those who had been granted a game certificate.

Before 1831 the shooting of deer and game birds, including wild birds, had been restricted to those of the aristocracy who owned large estates. The 1831 Game Act allowed them to be shot by landowners in possession of a certificate issued by the local magistrates. A close season was introduced when game could not be taken at all.

Amos would have been responsible for the welfare of the animals and the birds on the estate and for shooting game for the table when needed. Poaching was common in times of hardship. Statutory penalties included transportation for repeat offenders. Some landowners were more tolerant of the odd loss than others. It would have been Amos' job to catch and prosecute offenders on behalf of his employer.



Harptree court

*M. H. Harrison*

# The Bristol Mercury,

NONMOUTHSHIRE, SOUTH WALES, AND WEST OF ENGLAND ADVERTISER.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY H. B. GARDNER, AT AN OFFICIAL PRINTING OFFICE, IN BRISTOL-STREET, BRISTOL.

---

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1834. [Price 10pence]

---

## GAME LISTS.—County of Somerset.

**PERSONS** who have obtained **GAME CERTIFICATES** for the Year 1834.

**List (9) GAME KEEPERS** being Assessed Servants, at £1. 5s. each.

Toogood, Stephen .....by Mrs. Rogers, for Farlington, Galkampton and lands in Bratton.

Tyte, Amos .....by the Earl of Waldegrave, for Chewton Mendip and Harptree.

Weeks, Robert .....by Isaac Elton, Esq., for Whitestaunton.

Webber, Samuel .....by Robert Matlock, Esq., for Tuxton Dean and Apselough.

Woolford, James .....by James Bethell, Esq. (on behalf of Col. Gore Langton), for Pilton.

Woodruffe, Thomas...by Sir John Smith, Bart., and William Gore Langton, Esq., for Long Ashton and Redminster.

Made up to the 1st of September, 1834.  
By Order of the Board,  
**CHARLES PRESSLY,**

Above: List of those granted a Game Certificate in 1834. Amos' name is second on the list. Below: Extract from the *Court Journal* of 10 October 1835 with apologies for the quality of reproduction for which I was not responsible. There is a transcription of the text on page 16.

**THE COURT JOURNAL:**

*Gazette of the Fashionable World.*

No. 331. SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1835. PAGE 14.

THIS JOURNAL, BEING STATIONED, CIRCULATES FREE OF CHARGE TO ALL PARTS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

---

**NOTES ON NOVELTIES.**

**PRO-DIGROSS!**

It is a humiliating reflection, or rather a disgraceful fact, resting a stigma upon the English character—that there are millions of people in this country who have never yet visited Chewton Mendip. So much for the "mark of intellect," ever marching in the wrong direction! How many years have elapsed since useful knowledge first took unto itself a Society? Say, ten. Well, there are at least ten millions of enlightened subjects, who are this moment totally unacquainted with the precise locality of Chewton Mendip. And yet what sights are to be seen there! What a world of wonders is there concentrated! We trust that "Chewton Mendip" will be the title of the next romance that appears, every page of it recording a prodigy. The last miracle that happened there consists in an extraordinary optical illusion. Mr Childe's performances are child's play to it. It occurred—the very nick of time is noted down, and therefore the fact is indisputable—"on Sunday evening at/naight, between six and seven o'clock." A phenomenon in the heavens was at that time distinctly visible to everybody who happened to see it; it was clearly discerned by all who witnessed it. It was no less than "the appearance of a Regiment of Horse, with swords drawn, every trooper being distinctly visible, and the whole performing their evolutions as in the field of battle; both horses and soldiers appearing perfectly black." Of course the Chewton Mendip coaches have ever since been conveying more passengers than they could carry, and at a rate much faster than they could travel at. But the illusion was not for vulgar eyes, for the impertinent gaze of strangers. It was "got up" by Nature for the exclusive enjoyment of the enlightened few of Chewton Mendip. The select saw it—for a considerable time. It was witnessed by thirty or forty individuals; "one of whom," says the phenomenon's historian, "named Tyte, gamekeeper to Anthony Blagrave, Esq., of Harptree court, instantly descended the hill into Chewton, under considerable agitation of feelings." The appearance of the phenomenon is thus confirmed, and fully accounted for. The fact, that Mr Blagrave's gamekeeper, named Tyte, instantly descended the hill into Chewton, is evidence before which scepticism vanishes. Testimony no less striking is furnished by the fact that a woman of the village was so terrified by the spectacle (which she examined through a pair) that "she has not recovered from the fright to the present moment, and is really seriously indisposed." No shaming! The Doctor has a female patient in Chewton; a gamekeeper descended a hill; and therefore a regiment of horses all black, with swords drawn, performing evolutions as on a field of battle, was visible in that portion of the heavens that has the happiness of looking down upon Chewton. We have not lately seen anything more satisfactorily demonstrated. One fact, however, has been indecently suppressed; that the Colonel was not paying the least attention to the shadowy evolutions of his air-drawn troops, but sat on his apparition of a horse, reading the ghost of a COURT JOURNAL.

## WALDEGRAVE FAMILY

The estates at Chewton Mendip and Harptree were granted to the Waldegraves by Queen Mary in the sixteenth century. The family seat was Chewton House. Harptree Court was built not long after Amos was born. The estate owner in the 1830s was the 6th earl John James Waldegrave who commanded the 54th Regiment of Foot at the Battle of Waterloo. On his return home, he married his longtime lover, Anne King, an army chaplain's daughter. Accounts differ as to the number of children they had both before and after their marriage. The couple married for a second time, just to be on the safe side perhaps, shortly after the birth of their first legitimate son George Edward. The family lived in London at Strawberry Hill in Twickenham, the home left to John James by his mother, a grand-niece of Horace Walpole.

John James died in 1835. His eldest son John, who was married to Frances, the daughter of the noted tenor John Braham, was born the wrong side of his father's marriage and therefore not eligible to succeed to the title. George Edward Waldegrave became the seventh earl. John died shortly afterwards and George Edward married his widow Frances. They had to marry at Gretna Green where it was legal to marry one's sister-in-law.

George Edward was soon in trouble with the police. In 1841 he was convicted of riotous behaviour after, the worse for drink, assaulting a policeman in Kingston. He was committed to Newgate prison for six months. Frances and his servants joined him there in a comfortable apartment. They returned to Strawberry Hill in November 1841. Heavily in debt and tired of Twickenham, he sold Walpole's treasures in 1842 and he and his wife travelled abroad before settling at Harptree Court in 1844. George Edward died two years later.

He was succeeded as the eighth earl by his uncle William a retired rear-admiral who died in 1859. I do not know which or how many of those Waldegraves employed Amos as a gamekeeper.

It was common for landowners to let their estates, particularly if they had several, to wealthy families for years at a time. Between the mid-1830s and the mid-1840s the Blagraves, an army family who owned land in Berkshire, leased Harptree Court.

In 1835 a satirical piece appeared in the weekly *Court Journal*, the self-styled 'gazette of the fashionable world'. It reported that a man named Tyte, gamekeeper to Anthony Blgrave Esquire of Harptree Court, had 'instantly descended the hill into Chewton, under considerable agitation of feelings' having been one of thirty or forty people who witnessed 'a phenomenon in the heavens'. This was described as 'a Regiment of Horse with swords drawn every trooper being distinctly visible and the whole performing their evolutions as in the field of battle; both horses and soldiers appearing perfectly black'. The man was Amos.

Five or so years later when Amos was fifty-one he and his daughter Margaret lived in the hamlet of Widcombe near East Harptree. His wife Ann was in Sancreed near Penzance with four of their children. There is no simple explanation of why she might have been living in Cornwall. Her daughter Elizabeth married and settled there seven years later but she does not appear to have been there at the same time as her mother. Elizabeth was probably the mother of Henry who was born in 1840 in London and brought up as her younger brother. By 1851 Ann had taken her children, including Henry, back to live with Amos in Sherborne Cottage which his sister Betty had vacated.

I do not know whether he was still employed as a gamekeeper. Litton Parish Council records note payments to him for killing sparrows: 5*d.* in September 1852, October 1853 and February 1853. This might be an indication that the family was short of money or it may be that he liked to be useful in the community.

Amos died from a diseased liver in 1857 at the age of sixty-seven. Ann seems to have divided her time between her children. First she went to live with her daughter Sarah and her family in Timsbury. When she was eighty-one she lived with her son Henry and his family. She died nine months later in the home of her daughter Margaret in Bath.

TRANSCRIPT OF COURT JOURNAL REPRODUCTION SATURDAY OCTOBER 10TH 1835

## NOTES ON NOVELTIES.

### PRO-DIGIOUS !

It is a humiliating reflection, or rather a disgraceful fact, resting a stigma upon the English character-that there are millions of people in this country who have never yet visited Chewton Mendip. So much for the "mark of intellect," ever marching in the wrong direction! How many years have elapsed since useful knowledge first took unto itself a Society? Say, ten. Well, there are at least ten millions of enlightened subjects, who are this moment totally unacquainted with the precise locality of Chewton Mendip. And yet what sights are to be seen there! What a world of wonders is there concentrated! We trust that "Chewton Mendip" will be the title of the next romance that appears, every page of it recording a prodigy. The last miracle that happened there consists in an extraordinary optical illusion. Mr Childe's performances are child's play to it. It occurred-the very nick of time is noted down and therefore the fact is indisputable- "on Sunday evening se'nnight, between six and seven o'clock." A phenomenon in the heavens was at that time distinctly visible to everybody who happened to see it; it was clearly discerned by all who witnessed it. It was no less than "the appearance of a Regiment of Horse, with swords drawn, every trooper being distinctly visible, and the whole performing their evolutions as in the field of battle; both horses and soldiers appearing perfectly black." Of course the Chewton Mendip coaches have ever since been conveying more passengers than they could carry, and at a rate much faster than they could travel at. But the illusion was not for vulgar eyes, for the impertinent gaze of strangers. It was "got up" by Nature for the exclusive enjoyment of the enlightened few of Chewton Mendip. The select saw it-for a considerable time. It was witnessed by thirty or forty individuals "one of whom," says the phenomenon's historian, "named Tyte, gamekeeper to Anthony Blagrave, Esq., of Harptree court, *instantly descended the hill into Chewton*, under considerable agitation of feelings." The appearance of the phenomenon is thus confirmed, and fully accounted for. The fact, that Mr Blagrave's gamekeeper, named Tyte, *instantly descended the hill into Chewton*, is evidence before which scepticism vanishes. Testimony no less striking is furnished by that fact that a woman of the village was so terrified by the spectacle (which she examined through a pair) that "she has not recovered from the fright to the present moment, and is *really* seriously indisposed." No shaming! The Doctor has a female patient in Chewton; a gamekeeper descended a hill; and therefore a regiment of horses all black, with swords drawn, performing evolutions as on a field of battle, was visible in that portion of the heavens that has the happiness of looking down upon Chewton. We have not lately seen anything more satisfactorily demonstrated. One fact, however, has been indecently suppressed; that the Colonel was not paying the least attention to the shadowy evolutions of his air-drawn troops, but sat on his apparition of a horse, reading the ghost of a COURT JOURNAL.

## *Chapter six*

### AMOS'S SIBLINGS

#### MARIA CANNARD

Maria, the second child, was born about 1791. She married farm worker William Cannard, who was baptised in August 1792 in St Mary's Church, in July 1817 when she was about twenty-six. They lived in Litton village all their lives. She was about thirty-seven when her father died and bequeathed her his second-best bedstead, two blankets, a bolster and case and a quilt. Maria died in 1847 when she was about fifty-seven. William lived to be eighty-seven and was buried in St Mary's churchyard in March 1879. I have not traced any children but that does not mean they did not have any.

#### WILLIAM TYTE

Amos' brother William was the third child. He was born in 1796. He married Ann Kennard from Chew Stoke in St Nicholas Church in Bristol when they were both sixteen. They lived in Litton. He was the only child not to be mentioned in his father's will so he, and possibly his wife, might have been dead by 1828 when the will was written. William and Ann had at least two sons: Philip and William. I can find no trace of William junior in official records.

William's son Philip Tyte was born in 1813. Like his aunt Betty he was profoundly deaf from birth. He was a farm labourer. He married Ann Millard from East Harptree when he was twenty-six. They lived in a tied cottage in Sherborne Road in Litton. He too was paid by the parish for killing sparrows at the same time as Amos. He also lit the church stoves throughout 1853 for which he received one pound ten shillings. Philip and Ann had ten children. The family must have struggled. Philip was a regular beneficiary of charitable payments distributed each year by the parish to six poor people. Litton's 1856 Poor Relief Book shows him to have paid tuppence, about sixty pence, towards parish rates. This is not particularly indicative since the well-off tended to pay their poor rates in one lump sum while the poor paid what and when they could.

Philip was killed in 1873 when felling a tree. He was sixty. The coroner at his inquest attributed the accident to his deafness. His son William who had been working and boarding on a farm ten miles away returned home and he and his mother moved into a cottage on Litton Farm. She earned her keep by taking in washing. She also took in Harriet Ada, the illegitimate daughter of her daughter Sarah Ann. Ten years later when her daughter Eliza died her children were temporarily redistributed among the family. Eleven-year-old Henry Harris moved in with Ann at her then home in Whitehouse Lane. Ann died the following year when she was seventy-one. In a letter written shortly before her death the Rector of Litton noted her poor state of health. Her death certificate recorded the cause of her death as exhaustion. Ann's life was not easy. Having a deaf husband would have created difficulties. She lost the right to live in her home after his death. Her youngest son died in infancy. Her eldest son was an alcoholic. She brought up the illegitimate child of one of her daughters. Another daughter had a tragic life and her children were sent to an orphanage. It is perhaps not surprising that Ann died of exhaustion.

The anecdotes about Philip and his family were passed on to me by Philip's descendants.



**Philip Tyte probably taken in the late 1860s**

## ELIZABETH TYTE

Amos's sister Elizabeth, known as Betty, was the fourth child. She was born in Litton in 1799. She was deaf from birth as was her nephew Philip. Her father died when she was twenty-nine. She and Amos inherited a life interest in Sherborne Cottage which, on her death, was to revert to her brother and his two eldest sons. The executors were instructed to ensure she was 'civilly treated within the premises', failing which the house should be sold to the equal benefit of Amos and Betty. Her father also bequeathed her his best feather bed bolster and bolster case, two best large blankets, a quilt and his pole bedstead.

Betty took possession of the house. From the age of thirty-six she received Poor Relief because of her infirmity. It was the equivalent of about seven pounds a week. Litton Parish Council records show that Betty was also paid threepence-halfpenny, perhaps for killing sparrows, in 1852 and again in February and October of 1853. When she was in her early forties Thomas and Betty Brooks, a local couple in their late sixties, lived with her. By the time she was fifty she had moved to a house in Litton Street in the village. Her lodger was forty-year-old Sarah York, a widow from Chewton Mendip described as a pauper, who was probably a relation of her sister Mary's husband. When she was sixty-two she lived alone and the census recorded her as both deaf and dumb. Her deafness probably made it difficult for her to communicate with the census enumerator. Ten years later she was living in a house in the grounds of Litton Rectory. The census describes her as an imbecile but she may just not have been interested in communicating with the enumerator. She died three years later in 1874 when she was seventy-five.

## MARY YORK

Amos' sister Mary was the fifth child. She was born in the parish of Litton in about 1803. She married blacksmith Thomas York when she was about eighteen. They began their married life in Hinton Blewett, two miles north of Litton, where their four children were born. Later they moved to Compton Martin and lived there for the rest of their lives. Mary was twenty-five when her father died. He left her his thirty-hour case clock and the bedstead that had belonged to her mother. Thomas died early in 1862 when he was sixty-two. Mary was about seventy-one when she died in 1874.

I do not know what became of their eldest child Mira after she went into service. Her brother Cornelius, a blacksmith, emigrated to Australia when he was twenty-three. He married there and soon afterwards moved on to Kentucky where he lived in Covington City for the rest of his life. He died of consumption when he was fifty-eight in 1884. Mary's youngest child Alfred was another blacksmith. He died in 1860 when he was twenty-seven.

Temperance, the third child, went into service in Bristol with her older sister Mira. She married grocer James Baker when she was twenty-six. A little over ten years later they opened a dairy. Within another ten years James had become a builder. The couple retired when they were in their early sixties and their son Alfred took over the dairy. James died in 1902 when he was eighty. Temperance died when she was seventy-three two years later.


Temperance and James had four children. Henry Cornelius Baker, the eldest, was a builder. He married twenty-nine-year-old Sarah Fisher when he was thirty-nine. Her father was an importer of foreign goods who was born in Birmingham. Henry turned his attention to speculative building. He died in Clifton in 1925 when he was sixty-seven. His estate was valued at the equivalent of one-and-a-quarter million pounds. Sarah died eight years later when she was sixty-five. Her estate was valued at about a million pounds.

Alfred James Baker, the second son, started a business as a provision merchant while still living at home. He married twenty-five-year-old Ada Uglow, an assistant in the dairy and a boarder in the family home, when he was in his forties. Her father was a customs officer in Stoke Damerel. Alfred died in Clifton in 1930 when he was seventy-one leaving an estate valued at eight hundred and thirty-five thousand pounds. Ada died nine years later when she was sixty-three. Their eldest son, Alfred Leslie, became an agriculturalist which I believe is an upmarket name for a farmer. He lived in Trinidad for a while. His permanent address was the Rodney Hotel in Clifton. He died in 1959 when he was fifty-seven leaving nearly half a million pounds. His brother Leonard York became a civil engineer. He died in Hastings in 1989 when he was eighty-six.

Temperance and James' third child Mira Emily Elizabeth married Louis Bennett from Westbury on Severn when she was twenty-three. His father farmed 230 acres and employed eighteen labourers. The 1871 census describes him, rather outdatedly, as a yeoman and his wife, rather pretentiously, as a gentlewoman. There were five children in the family and they had a live-in governess. Louis became a corn merchant and then a grain broker. He was admitted into the Company of Tallowmakers, a City of London Livery Company, in August 1884. Mira died at the age of seventy-three in 1940. Louis died seven years later when he was eighty-five. His estate was valued at over a million pounds in today's terms. They had one child, Denis Asgill Bennett who followed his father into the Company of Tallowmakers in 1919. He died in 1982 when he was eighty-six.

Howard Ernest, Temperance and James' youngest child, went into business as a nurseryman in Albert Road in Keynsham. His assistant in the nursery was his boarder Sidney Burgess. Ten years later they had become fruitgrowers at the Dapps Hill Nursery.

8171



Chamber of London, 3<sup>rd</sup> day of July 1919,  
 Born Without the Liberty of the City, to  
 wit, at 14, East Shrubbery, Redland, Bristol  
 Denis Asgill Bennett  
 Son of Louis Charles Bennett.  
 Citizen and Tallow-chandler of London,  
 came before the Chamberlain, the day and year afore-  
 said, and desired to be admitted into the Freedom of  
 this City by Patrimony, in the said Company of  
 Tallow-chandlers  
 because he is legitimate, and was born after the  
 admission of his Father into the said Freedom.  
 The Admission of the Father is entered in the Book  
 marked with the Letter \_\_\_\_\_ and bears date the \_\_\_\_\_  
 day of August in the \_\_\_\_\_ Year of  
 the Reign of \_\_\_\_\_  
 and in the Year of our Lord 1884.  
 Born 1895. 22<sup>nd</sup> Oct.

Presented by \_\_\_\_\_ Warden.

#### FREDERICK TYTE

Amos's brother Frederick, the sixth child, was born in 1804. He was a cordwainer. The term meant a leather-worker and was usually used to describe a shoemaker. He lodged with another cordwainer and his family in the house next door to his sister Maria Cannard. When he was twenty-four his father died. He did not marry. He died when he was sixty-four in 1868.

Amos had three more siblings. Ann was born in February 1791 and died before she was a month old. Nothing is known about Philip. When his father wrote his will in May 1828 he bequeathed Philip all the wearing apparel that he died possessed of. It was the last in the list of bequests to his children which might suggest he was born after his brother Frederick between 1805 and 1807. The youngest child in the family was John Sperring who was stillborn in 1808.

## *Chapter seven*

### PHILIP TYTE'S DESCENDANTS

Philip and Ann's eldest child Edwin Tyte was born in 1841. He began his working life as an agricultural labourer then became a railway packer in Frome. Mary Crane says Edwin was an alcoholic. In later life he lived for a time in Litton with his brother William and sister-in-law Elizabeth before being admitted to the Poor Law Infirmary at Clutton. He died there aged seventy-eight in 1919. His brother Harry refused to help with the funeral costs which fell to William who had to bury his wife later the same year.



**James Tyte**

His sister Sarah Ann was born in 1843. By the time she was twenty-eight she had moved to London and gone into service in Hampstead. She lost that position when it was known she was pregnant. She gave birth to a daughter and probably went to live with her father's cousin Phoebe Benwell, Amos' daughter, in Tower Hamlets where the child's birth was registered. Fifteen years later, when she was forty-eight, Sarah married Litton-born widower and dairyman Henry Sherborne whose father John had kept the Bell Inn in Litton. They lived in Bristol with four children from Henry's previous marriage and Sarah's daughter Harriet Ada. Sarah died in 1902 when she was fifty-nine. Henry died in 1918 when he was seventy-eight.

Harriet Ada, known as Ada, was brought up by her grandmother. She lived with her mother and step-father after they were married. She worked in the boot trade, possibly for her Uncle Harry. She married her cousin Adolphus Taylor, the son of Elizabeth Tyte and John Brain Taylor when she was twenty-eight. Adolphus, who had been a brickyard labourer, got a job in the Wills tobacco factory which he kept all his working life. Ada died in 1938 when she was sixty-three. Adolphus died in 1962 when he was eighty-eight. They had two children: Percy Adolphus and Phyllis Maud.



**Betsy Bridges**

Sarah Ann's brother James Tyte was born in 1845. When he was sixteen he lived in Chewton Mendip with a farmer for whom he worked as a carter. He married Betsy Bridges from nearby Timsbury when he was twenty-two. Their witnesses were his sister Eliza and one Albert Bartlett who eventually became Eliza's second husband. James became a coal miner. Betsy was from a large coal mining family. She already had a two-year-old illegitimate son called William Bridges. She and James had another ten children six of whom survived. Betsy died in 1897 aged fifty-one. Less than six months later fifty-two-year-old James married thirty-nine-year-old Clara Harris. Her early working life was spent in service. When she was in her twenties she moved to Batheaston, twelve miles away on the outskirts of Bath, where she became a nurse in the Bailbrook Asylum. She later became a midwife. James and Clara lived in his home with his youngest daughter Alice. Their only child James junior fell into a bath of boiling water before he was three and died as a result of the



**Clara Tyte**

burns he received.

Towards the end of his life James became a greengrocer. He died in 1930 when he was eighty-five. Clara lived to be one hundred years old and died in 1958.

Betsy's son William married Mary Jane French in 1895. They had five children. In 1911 he was a colliery labourer and the family lived in Peasedown St John in Bath. During the First World War William served in the Balkans with the 22nd (Wessex and Welsh) Battalion. He died on 27 June 1918 of dysentery and is buried in a Commonwealth War Grave in Salonika.

HERE James and Betsy's son George married Emily Coles. They had seven children. William, the eldest, was a policeman in Bath. He married Beatrice Heal. Their daughter Ruth, who was born in 1930, married Dick Burton. If it had not been for Ruth Tyte Burton's curiosity about her Litton heritage, this story would be merely a list of birth, death and marriage dates.

Philip and Ann's fourth child Elizabeth Tyte was born in 1847. She went into service when she was fourteen in the home of a farmer in Emborough. She married fifty-seven-year-old widower John Brain Taylor from Brislington when she was nineteen. John had been married twice before. He had a son from his first marriage and five grown-up children from his second. He was a Wesleyan minister. In his fifties he opened a printing shop in Bristol where he employed four of his five children.

Elizabeth and John Brain had seven children: Francis, Eugenie, Maud, Adolphus, Henrietta, George and Gerald. John died in 1886 when he was seventy-seven, a month before Gerald was born. Elizabeth and three of her children moved in with widowed barber Albert Cox and two of his children. She later left him and moved into her son Adolphus's home in Wellington Street. She died in the old isolation hospital known as Snowdon Buildings in Fishponds in 1929 when she was eighty-two.

Elizabeth's daughter Maud married forty-year-old Tom Savery when she was twenty-three. Tom worked in a timber yard while she sold fish from their home in Bedminster. They had four children. Tom died in 1903 when he was fifty. Three years later Maud married James Augustus Withers who had been a boarder in her brother Adolphus's home. They had two children: Frances and Sidney who was Mary Crane's father. There is a puzzle about her two youngest sons. George Alfred, the elder, married Isabel Amy Powell in 1913 who probated his will in 1960. An earlier marriage was recorded in Taunton in 1907 when soldier George Alfred Taylor and Beatrice Alice Summerhayes signed the register as such, witnessed by her father and her younger sister. However George's younger brother Gerald John Brain Taylor, a soldier at the time, lived as the husband of Beatrice Alice Summerhayes all his life. I can not think why he might have signed the marriage register in his brother's name.

Elizabeth's sister Eliza Tyte went into service in Bath. She married thirty-seven-year-old widower James Harris when she was twenty-three and already pregnant. James was a grocer from Widcombe. They lived at Kings Arms in Litton where they kept a small grocer's shop. Eliza's great-granddaughter Penny Deverill told Mary Crane how, the year after they married, James, a large fit man, accepted a wager to run the mile from East to West Harptree in four minutes. He won the bet but collapsed with exhaustion. He appeared to have recovered but he lost most of his sight. Eliza and James had nine children. Over the years James' mental condition slowly deteriorated and eventually he became deranged. After trying to murder Eliza he was committed to the Somerset and Bath Lunatic Asylum in 1888. He died there in 1890, seventeen years after the fateful bet.



**Maria Griffin (standing) with Elizabeth Taylor**

Six months later, forty-one-year-old Eliza married Albert Bartlett, a former local labourer recently returned home after serving twelve years in the army. He claimed to have had a short acquaintance with Eliza but he was the same Albert Bartlett who had been her co-witness at her brother's wedding twenty years previously.

Albert was born and brought up in Litton. When he was twenty-two he joined the Royal Artillery. He was posted to Ahmadabad in 1882 and spent the best part of eight years in India. On his return at the end of 1889 he was transferred to the Army Reserve. He was finally discharged in June 1891. Eliza's descendants say that Albert did not earn enough to support the family. Eliza was no longer eligible for parish relief after her marriage so they got into debt. Their financial situation worsened when their daughter Margaret was born in 1890. The census taken in April the following year records Eliza and Albert, who gave his occupation as a groom, living in the family home with five of her children and the baby Margaret. A sixth was staying with Eliza's brother Harry in Bristol and a seventh with his grandmother Ann Tyte. Ten days after the census Eliza died of bronchitis. She was forty-two. It is odd that Albert found it so difficult to support the



**William Tyte and his sister Maria**

family. Although he was employed as a groom his army records show that he was still in the Army Reserve and drew his army pay until his discharge two months after Eliza died.

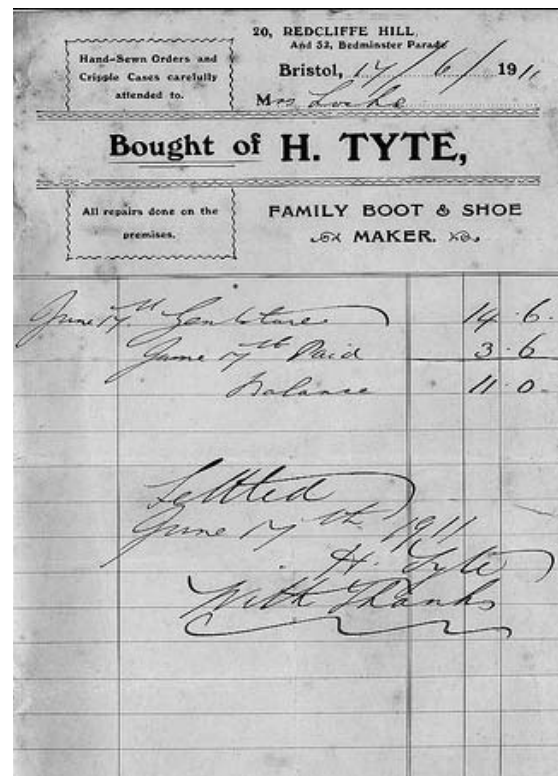
Following her death Albert was unable or unwilling to care for the younger children. An application was made for four of them to be admitted to the Miller Orphanage in Bristol. A letter written by the Rector of Litton listed the relatives who had agreed to take responsibility for the children should it be necessary to dismiss them from the orphanage: Maria Griffin, William Tyte, Harry Tyte and Sarah Sherborne. The following year Albert married Elizabeth Pearce. They lived at Litton Hill with his daughter Margaret and their three children.

Philip and Ann's son Philip George Tyte, known as George, was born in 1856. He was a farm worker. He died when he was twenty-seven in 1883.

His brother William Tyte, the seventh child, was born in 1857. When he was fourteen he lived with the family of a farmer about ten miles away in Charlton, south of Radstock where he was employed as an indoor farm servant. After his father's death in 1873 he returned home to live with his widowed mother, Ann. More than ten years later, when he was thirty-four, he married Elizabeth Brock who had a nine-year-old son

George Brock born in Chew Stoke. They all lived next door to William's mother Ann. Later they moved to Sherborne Lane and William became a road labourer for Clutton Rural District Council. They finally moved to the White House in Whitehouse Lane. William was promoted to foreman. They had four children: Olive, Henrietta, Philip and William.

Their daughter Henrietta, known as Etta, was courted in her teens by George, the son of Henry and Isabella Tyte. George was taken prisoner in France during the First World War. His family believed him to be dead and they held a memorial service in Litton Church. However, he escaped and was hidden until the war was over. Meanwhile, Etta became engaged to George Rendel, a railway signalman, whom she married when she was twenty-three in 1918.



Left: Bedminster Parade in the 1890s. Harry's shop was a few doors away. Right: A receipt from his second shop in Redcliffe Hill

Etta's brother Harry Tyte was born in 1860. When he was twenty-one he lived in Camely in Somerset where he was employed as a gardener. Later the same year Harry joined the Bristol Police Force at Bridewell Station. He was a policeman for six years. At the age of twenty-seven he married Ada Isobel Fox, left the force and became a boot and shoe maker. He and Ada had a shop at 32 Bedminster Parade. They supplied the Bristol Police Force with boots. They later opened a second shop at Redcliffe Hill.

Harry died at the age of sixty-five in 1925 leaving six hundred and seventy thousand pounds in today's terms to his son Philip and Isobel, his unmarried daughter who ran his shoe shops all her working life.

Harry's sister Maria Tyte was born in Litton in 1862. Like her sister Sarah Ann, she moved to London. When she was nineteen she worked as a servant in Croydon in Surrey. She married Nelson Douglas Griffin in Lambeth. Nelson was from West Horrington in Somerset. He drove a team of dray horses. Nelson died when he was sixty-one in 1923. Maria lived for another twenty years and died in 1944 when she was eighty-two.



Maria Tyte

## *Chapter eight*

### THE TIMES

As Grace Cooper noted in a piece she wrote for the Bristol local history society, the 1820s to the 1850s were hungry years for rural families and life was not easy in Somerset. The wellbeing of a family was dependent on the health of its members, the state of the harvest and the demand for labour. After money was found to pay for rent, fuel, clothing, boots, medicine, soap and candles there was not much left for food. Unless a rabbit was poached, the only meat available each week for the whole family was generally less than a pound (half a kilo) of pickled or salt pork. This was eaten for Sunday dinner when everyone ate together. If any was left the husband took it into the fields for weekday dinners, his wife and children subsisting on rye or barley bread and potatoes. Butter was too expensive so dripping was used as a cheaper substitute. Tea, sweetened with treacle, was often eked out with a burnt crust of bread to colour the boiling water and make it look a bit more like the real thing.

The farmland in the county would have been extensively enclosed during the time Amos Tyte was growing up. Unemployment and high prices drove many to poaching and, where possible, smuggling. Laws passed in the reign of Charles II, when game lived and bred in the wild largely upon its own inclination, entitled anyone to shoot it as long as they possessed a freehold estate of at least a hundred pounds a year or a leasehold estate of at least a hundred and fifty. Their sons or heirs-apparent, esquires and persons of higher degree were granted the same privilege. In the nineteenth century, as part of their increasingly luxurious life-style, the rich introduced pheasants to their estates. A Member of Parliament reported to the House of Commons in 1827: 'The woods are now packed with tame and docile birds whose gay feathers sparkle among the trees before the eyes of the half-starved labourers breaking stones on the road for the parish at half a crown a week'. In 1770 the penalty for unlawfully killing game was a public whipping and three to six months in prison with twelve months for a second offence. The over-twelves could be forced to serve in the army or navy. By 1816 anyone caught with a gun and a net with the intent of poaching was liable to seven years transportation. The law had to be repealed in 1828 because juries showed a reluctance to convict. But between 1827 and 1830 one in seven criminal convictions in the country was under the Game Code. Over eight thousand men, many under eighteen, were transported for seven years, fourteen years or for life. The length of the sentence made little difference because there was no scheme under which they could come back. In 1831 it became legal for any landowner to shoot game as long as he was granted a certificate by the local magistrate.

Amos probably did not have the right to vote. At the 1820 general election William Dickinson and Thomas Buckler Lethbridge were re-elected in Somerset.

George IV was determined to obtain a divorce from his estranged wife, Caroline of Brunswick, from whom he had separated five years after they married and nine months after their daughter Princess Charlotte was born. Caroline left England and moved to Italy where she employed Bartolomeo Pergami as a servant. Soon he was her closest companion and it was widely assumed that they were lovers. In 1820 when George became king Caroline returned to Britain to assert her position as Queen. The Pains and Penalties Bill, which was introduced in parliament to annul the marriage, sparked opposition throughout the country. The extensive proceedings in the Lords took on the appearance of a state trial. Caroline became the figurehead of a popular reform movement that opposed the unpopular George. Eventually the bill was withdrawn and there were celebrations throughout the country. The towns and villages of Somerset 'with few exceptions' celebrated the news of the withdrawal of the bill with illuminations, fireworks, the burning of green bags (the written evidence against her had been delivered in green bags) and distributions of food and cider. In July 1821 Caroline fell ill after she was barred from the coronation on the orders of her husband. She died three weeks later.

In January 1821 there was a proposal that the magistrates attending the quarter sessions at Wells sign a loyal address to the king. It was dropped because of doubts about the advisability of such a collective act. Nevertheless it was claimed there had been considerable support for the principle of the address which sought to 'unite all who range on the side of order, morals and religion'. Lethbridge apparently refused to present a Frome address in support of the queen as he was convinced of her guilt. The occupiers of land presented a petition to the Commons for agricultural relief in 1821 and two petitions from those in occupation of nearly a hundred thousand acres were sent to the Lords. Early in 1822 a meeting to consider the unparalleled distress afflicting the agricultural interest was held at Taunton Castle, on the initiative of local magistrates of 'opposite politics'. The attendance of both county Members gave it much of the appearance of a county meeting.

A petition was moved drawing attention to the overwhelming burden of taxation which had 'brought the greater proportion of the independent yeomen to the brink of ruin' and calling for the 'strictest economy and retrenchment'. The Members were sympathetic to the petition but had no solutions to offer. They rejected the demand for radical reform, although Lethbridge seemed open-minded to a moderate measure. The petition was agreed and presented to the Commons by Dickinson. Several more were sent from various parts of the county during the session. In December a requisition signed by more than thirty magistrates was presented to the sheriff for a county meeting to consider measures to alleviate the distress of the landed interest. The attendance on an 'uncommonly cold' day was variously reported as between a thousand and eight thousand. The involvement of 'eminent country gentlemen' was said to be 'unusually great'. A petition was moved for relief through retrenchment, reduction in the poor and county rates and tithe commutation.

There was a strong petitioning movement from all parts of the county during the spring of 1824 for the abolition of slavery and inquiry into the prosecution in Demerara of the Methodist missionary John Smith. The previous year ten or twelve thousand slaves from plantations on the East Coast of the Demerara colony rebelled in the belief that their masters were concealing news of the slaves' emancipation. Smith was charged with promoting discontent and dissatisfaction in the minds of the slaves, exciting them to rebel and failing to notify the authorities that they intended to rebel. He was tried by court martial, found guilty of the principal charges and sentenced to death. He died in prison before his Royal reprieve arrived. His case, the news of the enormous size of the uprising and the brutal loss of African life, caused a great awakening in England strengthening the abolitionist cause which eventually succeeded in British territories worldwide in 1838. There were petitions from Somerset to the Commons for repeal of the house and window taxes in 1825 and against slavery in 1826.

At the 1826 election the radical Henry Hunt issued an address announcing his determination to challenge the sitting Members and urging the voters to return a representative 'unconnected with the magistrates of the county'. This was attributed by the local press to his 'personal hostility to the present Members' and desire to 'subject them to the heavy expense of a contest' rather than to any serious expectation of victory although he was believed to have some following among the smaller freeholders. On a tour of several of the main towns he made vituperative attacks on the 'total incompetency' of the Members who had supported every proposal for increased expenditure. He condemned the 'grasping landlords', magistrates, clergy and attorneys, singling out the county treasurer whom he accused of gross mismanagement of the county rate. The 'leading gentlemen of the county' prepared counter-measures on Dickinson and Lethbridge's behalf and arrangements were made in various parts of the county to bring 'a sufficient number of voters to the poll at proper periods' to secure their return 'with little or no expense to themselves'. Dickinson was reckoned to be safe but Lethbridge was thought to have lost his popularity among many of the freeholders owing to the inconsistency of his public conduct. The sheriff finally closed the poll after ten days and declared Dickinson and Lethbridge re-elected.

In November 1828 Lethbridge advised the opponents of Catholic emancipation to organise petitions at the parish level rather than calling a county meeting. This prompted a major petitioning movement early in 1829 although a significant number of pro-Catholic petitions were also presented to both Houses. His name was 'in everyone's mouth as a rat' and it was said that 'he had better get into another House as fast as he can'. In June he received a freeholders' requisition calling on him to vacate his seat as 'he who violates his promises and deserts the cause he was appointed to defend cannot be further trusted'. The Roman Catholic Relief Act was eventually passed by parliament in 1829.

Between 1827 and 1830 Canning, Goderich and Wellington led the Tory party in the Commons. The 1830 election, fought in the aftermath of the Swing Riots, saw electoral reform become a major issue in every county. Wellington experienced a high degree of personal and political unpopularity.

Before the 1830 election it was reported that 'a gentleman of extensive property' in the east of the county meant to offer in opposition to Lethbridge. This proved to be James Adam Gordon of Wraxall near Bristol who declared his intention at the Bridgwater assizes. He issued an address in August, describing himself as 'perfectly independent of any political party' and dedicated solely to maintaining 'our glorious constitution in church and state'. He embarked on a lengthy canvass in September and reportedly retained the services of '150 solicitors'. It was said that he had 'great promise of support from the northern and dense population'. Lethbridge remained publicly defiant but his refusal to attend a number of autumn public dinners was construed as an indication that he would not again offer himself as a candidate. Dickinson, by contrast, made a point of being present and at the Bristol Mansion House dinner where he expressed confidence in his return with 'a triumphant majority' at the next election.

Another contender staked his claim in late September when Edward Ayshford Sanford issued an address announcing his determination to offer at the dissolution. Anxious to be a truly independent Member, he thought it right to abstain from making any promises but added that he was 'firmly attached to our establishments in church and state' while favouring 'a wise economy and prudent retrenchment'. Lethbridge's supporters lamented the fact that 'solely in consequence of Lethbridge's indiscretion we shall be in hot water for a very indefinite period'.

At the dissolution in June 1830 Lethbridge announced his retirement citing ill health. Gordon was precluded from offering because he was the serving sheriff of the county. The way was left clear for Dickinson and Sanford enabling them to 'preserve in their pockets many thousands of pounds which a contested election would have called forth'. The adoption meeting noted some dissatisfaction at the prospect of two Whig Members being returned but some satisfaction that 'antiquated scruples had been done away with'. One newspaper believed it had been 'as short an election process as we ever witnessed'.

Dickinson, who had voted for Gascoyne's wrecking amendment, announced his retirement, expressing regret that a serious difference of opinion had arisen with his constituents. Sanford, who paired against Gascoyne's wrecking amendment, was confined to a dark room in London owing to an eye inflammation but he had already taken steps to promote the formation of 'committees of yeomen' all over the county and he emphasised that he would not retain any 'legal professional agents'. A meeting of his friends at Taunton formed a committee which resolved to return him free of expense. Arrangements were made to convey as many freeholders to Ilchester as possible and 'several professional men tendered their services gratuitously'. Canvassing undertaken on his behalf was said to have been 'successful in nearly every instance'.

In Bath one of Sanford's leading supporters, Henry Godwin, promoted a requisition with over '100 influential signatures' to the former Member, Gore Langton, inviting him to offer in the reform interest. Gore Langton's favourable reply, which stressed that his return 'must depend upon the spontaneous efforts of the independent freeholders', was conveyed to a public meeting at the White Lion when a committee was formed to secure his election free of expense.

Charles John Kemeys Tynte, the son of the Bridgwater Member, withdrew after his unwillingness to make any pledges raised doubts about his sincerity as a reformer. Gordon, now free of the shrievalty, was said to have 'money at command and is crazy enough to spend it all'. He came forward as an anti-reformer, while Thomas Northmore of Exeter, a friend of Hunt, offered as a wholehearted reformer identifying with 'the voice of the people'. The nomination meeting was held at Wells, where an estimated fifteen thousand people were present, many having travelled in vast processions from Bath and Taunton.

In the event Sanford and Gore Langton were elected unopposed. Shortly before the proceedings commenced at Ilchester Lord John Russell, on his way to London after his victory at Tavistock, passed through the town and was received with great enthusiasm. He heartily congratulated the reform candidates. Gore Langton immediately returned to Bath where his carriage was drawn into the city 'amidst the ringing of bells, the discharge of hand grenades and firearms and the huzzas of the multitude that rent the air'. Sanford's address rejoiced at 'the glorious and triumphant scene at Wells' on nomination day, when 'the largest body of freeholders I believe ever collected in one mass within this great county' had been present. He acknowledged his indebtedness to the freeholders for their free and self-directed exertions. Gore Langton likewise attributed his success to the spontaneous efforts of the freeholders. It was afterwards reported that Gore Langton's committee at Bath had settled its debts and declared a dividend of sixteen shillings in the pound to be returned to the subscribers.

Strong support for the reintroduced reform bill continued to be manifested in all parts of the county. Sanford presented petitions for abolition of the death penalty for offences against property and a Wells petition for tithe reform, in which 'I most cordially concur', and he argued that tradesmen's bills for repairs and alterations to Windsor Castle must be paid.

Under the terms of the 1832 Reform Act Somerset was divided into East and West. At the general election of 1832 Sanford offered for the new Western division so that he might 'support those future measures of reform in the institutions of our country which are so essential to their preservation, and which of necessity must arise where the people are truly represented'. Litton was then in the constituency of Somersetshire Eastern. William Gore Langdon and William Papwell Brigstocke were elected as its Members.

In 1835, 1837 and 1841 Viscount Melbourne led a Whig government at Westminster. In Somerset Eastern William Gore Langdon and Sir William Miles were elected. Miles was a staunch Tory, protectionist and anti-reformer. Among other things, Miles was a partner in his family's bank which later became part of the NatWest. He was Vice-President of the Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes which sought to improve housing for working families. It eventually became part of the Peabody Trust.

In 1841 Peel came to office during an economic recession which had seen a slump in world trade, a trade deficit and a budget deficit of over seven million pounds. Confidence in banks and businesses was low. His 1842 budget re-introduced Income Tax. The rate was *7d* in the pound or just under three per cent. The money raised allowed the reduction or removal of over twelve hundred tariffs on imports including the controversial sugar duties.

The most notable act of Peel's ministry was the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. The Tories won the general election of 1847 and 1852 under Lord Stanley who succeeded his father as the Earl of Derby. In Somersetshire Eastern Sir William Miles was re-elected with William Pinney in 1847 and with Tory William Knatchbull in 1852. The constituency became East Somerset in 1868 after the Second Reform Act.

Print here landscape  
Tyte II Bristol family tree