

The Clayton family in 17th and early 18th century Hallow



The Clayton family appear in the parish registers, the Bishop of Worcester's Manorial Rent Books (MRB) and Manor Court Rolls, plus the late 17th century Hallow Hearth Tax and wills. By cross referencing the MRB details of the properties and landholdings they occupied with the details in the later 1747 Doharty Terrier and accompanying map of the Bishop of Worcester's Manorial Estate at Hallow, it was possible to work out where they had lived.



One of the properties that the family lived in seems to have been divided later and one part was known in the 20th century as The Thatch, and the other part was at one time the Post Office. There were up to 3 families living there. It was on the main road, roughly opposite the entrance to the Crown Inn carpark and was demolished in the 1960's, subsequently two houses were built on the plot of land. John and Alice Clayton lived

there in the 17th century and when John died some time before 1662, their son John became the owner, he married Anne Saul (possibly Soule) at Hallow.

In 1663 widow Alice Clayton was living in the Western Hostiller one of the three properties known as Hostillers or Hospitallers situated just down Church Lane on the left (see the picture below). The early buildings no longer exist and some were replaced probably in the 1840's. The early buildings were occupied at various times by John Clayton Junior, Richard Clayton, John's brother in Middle Hostillers and Robert Clayton their cousin, in Eastern Hostillers. The name Hostillers may date from when the Priory held the Estate of Hallow Manor and its Grange. The Hostilarius or Hosteler's job was a most responsible one, his duties were to provide food and accommodation to important visitors to Worcester Priory "honourably as is seemly and fitting", and find food and lodgings for their servants and horses. So the Hostler's Houses at Hallow Grange, as it was then known, were possibly used to provide accommodation and stabling for the servants of the visitors to the monks at Hallow. The term Ostlers for grooms at an inn seems to be derived from the same word.



Robert Clayton also rented land in what is now known as Greenhill. He died in 1684 and was buried at Hallow. He left a will and there is an inventory of his goods and chattels. Family bequests totalled £19. Four grand-daughters were also to receive more practical bequests – his coverings, some bedding, kettles and pots. John Nott (farmer) of Shoulton as Overseer of his will was to receive 5s (25p) and a customary pair of gloves, as was Richard, his cousin and Executor, who was also to receive £7. The will closes with "I allot sixe pounds to bringe mee home". The will written in September 1683 names him as Robert Clayton of Hallow, but where was he living when he died? His son also, Robert, lived in Hereford.

The full Inventory of Robert's goods and chattels will be put on the Hallow History Group website. They were valued at £38 15s (£38.75p) of which £20 was money owed to him in bonds. The only perishables he had were two little flitches of bacon – 13s 4d (66p) and corn in the house - £3 10s (£3. 50p) and in the field - £1 6s 8d. (£1. 34p) The rest was mainly beds, bedding, a little furniture and some husbandry equipment. He may no longer have been living in the property, as no kitchen utensils were listed, which were shown in his will as bequests to his grand-daughters.

John Clayton Junior was living at what was later known as The Thatch and Post Office. The property had a few acres in the village and some attached to it. John was Robert's cousin, he died intestate in 1708 and was buried on 7th February at Hallow. A legal "Administration" was granted to his wife Anne. An Inventory of his goods and chattels was taken, so here are a few details. The total valuation was £10 4s 2d, so he was poor compared to Robert. He had clothing and money - £1 6s (£1.30p). Kitchen paraphernalia was listed and John did have 13 sheep which were appraised at £1 6s in total. He had 3 sheaves of corn on the property worth 9s (45p) and also stated in the Inventory was "the profit of the dead year" worth £2. The "dead year" was a Custom of Hallow Manor, when a tenant by copyhold, (similar to a modern day freehold) died, if it happened after Candlemas (2nd February) the executor could sow the crop of corn and receive the profit from it, so I am guessing the Appraisers included £2 for that anticipated profit as John was a copyholder.

The 1747 Doharty map showing The Thatch and other cottage as "U" and the Hostillers as "o" "p" and "q".



As a matter of interest John Clayton was described as a Labourer when his wife applied for Administration. I have now found reference to him in 1700 carrying out work for Edward Bull of Hallow Park. He was paid 6s (30p) for 7 days of gravel digging and cleansing the stables, and 2s (10p) for 2 days work cleaving the pales, i.e. for the wooden fence which went around the Park.

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