

CHAPTER 5

Tithe Surveys around 1840

The years around 1840 are well recorded thanks to the 'Tithe Surveys & Apportionments' which noted ownership, occupation, value and usage of each parcel of ground. This period also serves as a good 'watershed' from the historic rural setting towards the residential suburbia we know today. The chapter analyses the Upton Tithe survey with reference to those of Bache and the northern parts of Newton. Census records and Bagshaw's 1850 Directory cast further light on picturing this period. The remaining source is the Upton Township Minute book.

The 1839 Upton Tithe Survey Map



as held by the Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies Service (EDT407)

From an 1801 Upton population of 173, by 1821 the figure had reached 206. Of the 30 families, 28 were chiefly employed in agriculture and only 2 in trade. By 1831, the population had increased to 289 but this was largely attributed to the new asylum. Of the 43 families, in 39 dwellings, only 33 were engaged

chiefly in agriculture. The 1839 Tithe Survey records 62 dwellings – up 50% in a decade. The 1841 census records 274 for Upton, 18 for Bache Township and 163 in the asylum. There was new labouring work with the railway and access to and from Upton was improving.

Upton Township in 1839 included some of what we know today as The Bache. It bordered onto the Townships of Bache, Moston, Caughall, Picton and Newton. Upton contained 1106 acres of which over half was owned by Baronet Sir Philip Egerton whose family line Brock/Egerton had been ‘Lord of the Manor’ since Elizabethan times. Other major landowners were Land Agent Samuel Brittain, Lloyd & Henry Bamford (they owned land bordering Newton and may have held Newton’s Manor) and Charles Potts of a long-established Chester family. The Earl of Kilmorey still held most of Upton and the 1839 Tithe Apportionment recorded his dues from each land plot.

There were two main clusters of dwellings

- **Upton Heath** – cottages around the triangle we know today as adjoining Flag Lane South
- **Upton Village** – mainly farm houses/yards but some cottages – the area we know today as Church Ln / Upton Ln / Demage Ln junction near the Golf Clubhouse.

and two smaller clusters

- Bache – around the Egerton Arms
- Upton Hall / Frog Hall / smithy – the area we know today as the Liverpool Road / Upton Lane junction.

and a few individual or pairs of dwellings.

Most farmers were tenant farmers leasing fields which were not always adjacent and changed hands according to demand. Hence ‘farms’ couldn’t be defined as specific single entities. People recorded on the census as ‘farmers’ occupied land from only two acres up to a few hundred acres. Clearly farmers often occupy fields outside of their own township and so a full understanding of Upton’s farm land requires investigation of all the surrounding township tithes. This has not been done and so no reference is given to land outside Upton farmed by Upton farmers.

At this time, Upton had no school or church or shops. Dwellings however sold the products of their occupier’s trade. The asylum had been recently built (the 1829 building) on a site of a few acres – known as the asylum gardens with a lodge and tree lined drive – all in the ownership of the County Magistrates. There was only one ‘gentleman’s estate’, that of Charles Potts who owned the building where the Golf Clubhouse now stands. There are some references to this having been the old ‘Upper Upton Hall’ but any suggestion of this being another historic manorial hall are unsubstantiated as yet. The Chester & Birkenhead railway had only recently acquired ownership of the route cutting north to south through the western part of the township. This split many fields in two and ran very close to the manorial hall of Upton Hall.

Working the land

This section should be read in conjunction with the double spread coloured map on pages 50 / 51. To help the reader associate the map with the known layout of today's Upton, a 1936 map has been used as the background with coloured overlays relating to the use of the land at the time of the 1839 Tithe Survey – that is a century earlier. Only the main Upton farmers and nurserymen have been given coloured overlays. The fields without a coloured overlay were occupied either by farms from outside Upton or by local smallholders.

The text and the map are intended to be indicative only. For a more definitive picture the reader should refer to the 1839 Upton Tithe Survey & Apportionments (EDT 401/1&2), held by the Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies.

Tenant farmer - Thomas Seacome occupied Upton Hall – with most of the fields to the west of the railway line but also much of the Bache pool area and part of the golf course. Arable use seemed to dominate rather than pasture.

Tenant farmer - Thomas Ithell (a father and son both Thomas – aged 59 and 23 in 1839) occupied the farmhouse & yard in Upton Village (north of Upton Lane by the sandpit) with some surrounding fields to the north. They also had fields west of Grange farm and west/north of the Demage cottages. The 1851 census records the Ithells as farming 267 acres – at a quarter of Upton's land area - theirs was the largest 'farm' although they only owned some 4 acres in 1839.

George Rolison – born 1801 - (he signed Rolison but many records show Rolinson) occupied the Egerton Arms public house and a few acres to the north of Mill Lane from Liverpool Rd to the Mill Lane rise. He also had hay fields (now Wealstone Lane playing fields) and part of the golf course. He is recorded in the 1851 census as a farmer of 40 acres but in Bagshaw's directory as the victualler of the Egerton arms.

Tenant farmers – George & Martha Denson occupied the house where the Grange was later built (opposite the house now named Upton Farm). The survey records this property as having a walled garden. The Tithe survey records the occupation in the name of Martha. She is recorded as occupying much of central Upton bordered by Church Ln /Heath Rd/ A41/Demage Ln. as well as Marl Heyes and much of the land between Flag Ln Nth. and just beyond Caughall Rd. By the 1851 census and Bagshaw's 1850 directory the Densons are no longer mentioned even though they would have only been in their early 60s. William Beecroft is named in the 1851 census – aged 34 years – and farming 140 acres. It appears that he took over this main 'central Upton' farm since the 1874 Directory lists him as farming Upton Green – which from the Ordnance survey we know was the former name of The Grange. When the buildings on this south side of Upton Lane ceased being a farm house and farm buildings is not known but it appears that the buildings on the north side expanded and, to this day, they have retained the name of 'Upton Farm'.

Tenant farmer - Samuel Thomason occupied the moated farm Upton Grange and surrounding fields. Besides his tenancy, he also owned the field, that was later, the site of Upton High school & its playing fields. In the 1851 census he is recorded as aged 50 and unmarried; farming 165 acres. Today, this is Upton's only working farm with a spread of fields very little changed from 160 years ago.

Tenant farmer - Joseph Jones occupied a house on the corner of Church Ln (later the site of the Lodge serving The Grange – now Nield Court) His fields were fairly scattered - around the Westlea school area, around Caughall Rd and going towards Duttons Ln. He also farmed the SW of the golf course, the Church Hall/Vicarage site and the Alraham Cres / Cross Green area.

Tenant farmer Joseph Lloyd occupied the farmhouse by Upton Mill and occupied the Mill orchard and nearby fields. These some fifteen years later became the new residential development of Upton Park.

James Sadler – occupied the Acres farmhouse/yard and adjacent fields.

William Carter was the tenant miller & farmer of Upton Mill occupying only two fields – off Wealstone Lane near Newton and the other NE of Long Lane.

Nurserymen Francis & James Dickson owned and occupied Upton Villa (later known as Upton House & Stanton House) within large grounds. They also owned and used fields on the southern boundary with Newton and Bache. Presumably, these were nursery ground, with one field contained a building that may have been the working centre of the nursery business. They also rented a field between the Mill and Upton Cross. See page 152 for more on Dicksons Nursery.

Charles Potts (Solicitor & Chester Borough County Clerk - of a long-established Chester family) owned the orchard homestead along with fields – all now part of the golfcourse. He also owned an isolated field between the mill and Wealstone Lane. (see page 92)

Edward Evans owned and occupied some fields that latter became Plas Newton.

The following occupied other fields in Upton but resided outside the township.

- Henry Hesketh - on the Newton boundary
- William Fox - Cornwall Rd area
- John Dinwoodie - in the far NW of Upton may have farmed in Moston – even from Moston Hall.
- Richard Massey had two fields to the south of the Moston boundary. One between the railway and the main road, and the other, the plantation.
- James Price had a small field just north of Newton.
- Charles Billington had two fields just north of Newton
- Robert Rolison had a meadow on the western boundary – possibly with more land further west beyond Upton.
- Isaac David Jacques occupied a field on the border with Picton – possibly with other fields in Picton.

The Upton Heath dwellings

Upton Heath – the Wheatsheaf area – had 6 cottages owned by Samuel Rushton and used by George Blake, John Smith, Miss Smith, Thomas Tasker (Agricultural labourer married aged 59 in 1851), George Taylor, Charles Williamson (Railway porter married aged 36 in 1851). On the Upton Ln / Heath Rd corner – a dwelling owned by Lloyd Bamford and occupied by Samuel Blake.

Upton Heath – the north side of Heath Rd heading up towards the pump - lived Mary Darlington. Next door - owned by Lloyd Bamford lived Mary Farrington (Charwoman married aged 57 in 1851) who also occupied a thin strip of land alongside Brook Av. Next door - owned by Lloyd Bamford lived William Parsonage who also had a garden in the triangle opposite the later site of the Wheatsheaf; and a field owned by the Cathedral now partly the site of the A41 between the traffic lights and Flag Ln. Next were three dwellings – owned by Sir Philip Egerton. One was occupied by John Jones who also occupied the field – the site of the current Baptist church. Another, John Reeves occupied a garden - part of the wedge between Flag Ln Sth and Heath Rd. The third, was occupied by James Speed. Another five dwellings were owned by Samuel Brittain and occupied by Isaac Blackman, Richard Challoner, John Pulford, George Reeves, James Roberts.

The Upton Village dwellings

Rose Cottage – owned by Samuel Brittain was occupied by Miss Whitelock. The two dwellings next door were owned by Egerton and occupied by Mary and John Hughes, who also occupied a small field by the Demage cottages. Mary Brooks and the Misses Hibbert occupied two cottages alongside the Upton Ln farm (later The Grange). Two cottages alongside Martha Denson's farmhouse were occupied by John Sauntley and John Tasker. The house later known as Upton Farm with a small croft (field) at the back was occupied by William Cardwell

The Bache dwellings (as part of Upton Township)

Two dwellings were occupied by Mary Dutton & Samuel Massey with a garden adjacent to the Bache pool.

Other dwellings

Upton Cross was owned by John Axe who occupied Sand Hole croft and the house and cottage and garden. John Dane tenanted either the house or the cottage. Frog Hall, also owned by John Axe, was recorded as five dwellings occupied by Matthew Fayle, Samuel Hignett, Joseph Johnson, Samuel Lloyd and Thomas Reeves. The public house (believed to be the Brewers Arms – part of Frog Hall) owned by Lloyd Bramford was occupied by Robert Jones and the cottage also owned by Lloyd Bramford was occupied by Jane Jones. The smithy on

the Liverpool Rd and field opposite, owned by Sir P Egerton, was occupied by William Darlington (blacksmith) and family. Demage Cottages - site of the future Demage Farm - were both owned by George Blake (of Upton Heath?) and occupied by Thomas Bennett (an agricultural labourer) and by Mary Jones. Surrounding fields were occupied by other farmers. Two dwellings just south of the plantation boundary with Moston were occupied by Game Keeper Moses Lanceley & George Wynne.

From the Upton Township Minutes

The following are recorded as Councillors for 1839 (although the Minutes do not use the the term 'Councillor').

- Sam Thomason (farmer at the moated Grange Farm)
- Francis Dickson (Nurseryman)
- Thomas Ithell (farming over 25% of the township)
- George Denson (village centre farmer)
- George Rolison(Egerton Arms & a land owning farmer)
- Thomas Seacombe (farmer at Upton Hall)
- Charles Potts (Chester gentleman of Upper Upton Hall estate)

By the 1850s, Ithell resided at Upton Hall - but this may have been Thomas's son Thomas. Thomason & Rolison were still Overseers but new names had appeared as follows -

- William Beecroft - farmer of 140 acres – employing 3
- William Evans - farming 80 acres from the village centre – employing 1
- William Carter - of Upton Mill
- William Hughes
- John Edward Norton
- Thomas Wilcoxon of Acres
- John Axe - property owner incl. Victoria Hotel (Upton Cross)

The Township Council was run by the farmers and two incomer business men – Francis Dickson and solicitor Charles Potts.