

Ashton and Sale History Society

**‘NOT HAVING THE FEAR OF GOD
BEFORE HER EYES’**

*The Scandals and Quarrels of the Masseys of Sale,
and Their Descendants*



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Contents

The Manor of Sale from the Middle Ages to the 1600s	3
The Masseys of Sale 1600-1706	3
Mistress Margaret Massey of Sale and Altrincham: The black ewe of the family	6
Reverend Ralph Stirrop, James Massey and the Quarrel Over Sale Hall Pew, 1635-1639	11
Richard Massey and Sir William Brereton's Duck Decoy	12
James and Richard Massey in the English Civil Wars	13
The Reverend Hugh Hobson's Marriage to Mary Massey in 1663	14
The Last Massey Esquire at Sale Old Hall	15
The Massey Family and Their Descendants 1660-1760	16
What Happened to the Massey Estate in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries?	19
Sale New Hall	20
Bibliography	22
Index	24

THE MANOR OF SALE FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO THE 1600S

The landholding of the manor of Sale was divided into two halves or moieties, both held of William FitzNigel in the mid-to-late twelfth century. By the late twelfth century one moiety was held by Richard de Massey. He came from a junior branch of the Masseys of Dunham Massey. (George Ormerod, *History of the County Palatine and City of Chester*, published on CD by the Family History Society of Cheshire and Cheshire Local History Association.)

The other half was held by Thomas de Sale. He was succeeded by his daughter Ellen and her husband John Holt at the end of the fourteenth century. (Norman Swain, *A History of Sale from earliest times to the present day*, Sigma Press, 1987; Ormerod)

The Holts were still a family of substantial landholding and standing in Sale by the seventeenth century, but Thomas Holt, then living in Whittleswick, in the parish of Barton-on-Irwell, Lancashire, and his son and heir, Randle Holt of Timperley, had sold twelve tenements or smallholdings to the Booths of Dunham Massey, in 1604-1606. (Papers of the Grey Family, Earls of Stamford, Estate Papers from Altrincham Estate Office, EGR1/1/3/22-22e.)

EGR1/1/3/22a lists the twelve tenants in 1604 as: James Renshaw, John Barlow, Oliver Barlow, John Renshaw, Richard Chorlton, James Moores, John Moores, Hamnet Dickenson, Robert Devias, Edmund Hughes, Hamnet Massey and John Dean/Daine. The land included as well as the twelve tenements, six cottages, 100 acres of land, 40 acres of meadow, 100 acres of pasture, 6 acres of woodland, 300 acres of heath, and 8d rent in Sale, Ashton-on-Mersey and Northenden. It amounted to a small estate of 540 acres, for which the Booths seem to have paid £280, when the deal was finally concluded in January 1606.

The Masseys, on the other hand, had retained most of theirs. The difference could be seen in the fact that the Holts were only minor local gentry, whereas the Masseys were esquires and therefore members of the county elite. (*A History of Sale.*)

THE MASSEYS OF SALE 1600-1706

How did the Masseys of Sale compare with other local county elite families? The Masseys were not as political as the Booths of Dunham Massey. They were only local county aristocracy, not minor national aristocracy as the Booths were. The Masseys were more like their neighbours to the east (the Tattons of Wythenshawe) and to the south (the Leighs of Baguley). They were all esquires in 1600 and in 1700, except that by then the Masseys and the Leighs had died out. In 1700 the Tattons were still around, but deep in debt. By 1760, they

inherited Tatton (and other manors) near Knutsford from the Egertons and became first barons and then earls.

Were the Masseys a local aristocratic family in decline like the Leighs or might they have risen like the Tattons, into the realms of the national aristocracy, if Richard Massey (died 1685) had not had only daughters surviving him or had been allowed to entail the main lands to his brother William?

The Masseys, the Leighs and the Tattons were not just neighbours, they were also closely related. William Tatton (died 1607) and James Massey (1592-1649) married two sisters, Katherine and Mary Leicester, daughters of George Leicester of Toft, near Knutsford. Edward Leigh of Baguley was married to William Tatton's daughter Frances. In addition, the Tattons were related to the Booths of Dunham Massey – William Tatton senior's mother was Dorothy Booth.

Both the Masseys and the Tattons experienced the main inheritance of manors and other large landholdings skipping at least one generation in the early seventeenth century. For the Masseys this was because James Massey (died 1601) died before his father Richard (died 1603) and so James's son James inherited. But for the Tattons, a rift – a deep chasm – had opened between the elderly William Tatton (d.1611) and his only surviving child Robert (1563-1623), with the result that in 1602 William senior made Robert's son seventeen-year-old William (died 1617) his main heir. In the same year William Tatton senior married his grandson to the heiress Katherine Leicester. At the time, Robert Tatton was living with his family in London. He had been living in London off and on for about a decade. Possibly the amount of money needed to keep Robert in London, and his lack of preferment at the court of Elizabeth I and then James I was the source of the rift. Whatever the cause was, it was played out in public in Star Chamber with accusation and counter-accusation. Occasionally, it also erupted into fighting between Robert and his son William. It had repercussions for the Tatton family for many years to come. When William senior died in 1611, the twin manors of Northenden and Etchells went to William junior. Robert was all but cut out of his father's will. (Jill Groves, 'A Family Feud: William Tatton of Wythenshawe, esquire, and his only son Robert', *Ashton and Sale Newsletter* 24.)

Unfortunately, William junior died in 1617. He drowned after trying to cross the Mersey by ferry in wintertime, leaving his only son Robert as heir. The boy was immediately made a ward of court, with all the cost implications that had for the family (the guardian taking all the profits of the two manors and other lands the family held). Robert Tatton remained a ward of court well into the 1620s. Normally, his grandfather, Robert senior, who was still living, would have been made the boy's guardian, but, as was typical of the Tatton males at the time, Robert and his son had quarrelled too many times, so he was barred. Besides Robert was then living in Southwark. (*Ashton and Sale Newsletter* 24.)

At least young James Massey had none of this family acrimony, even if he was also made a ward of court. His guardian was George Leicester of Toft, soon to be his father-in-law. James also got on well with his eldest son Richard.

They didn't fight, at least not with each other, and James didn't cut off Richard from most of his inheritance. Although, as will be mentioned elsewhere, young Richard could be a bit of hothead.

The standing of local families like the Masseys had can be seen from the marriages they made. The Masseys, like the Leighs and Tattons, married into Lancashire and Cheshire families of a similar status. The Leighs married the Tattons, the Tattons married the Leicesters of Tabley and the Breretons of Ashley. The Masseys married the Duttons of Dutton (Cheshire), the Shakerleys of Shakerley (Lancashire) and also the Leicesters of Tabley. But in 1636 Richard Massey married Barbara Gleave, daughter of Robert Gleave of Pulford, yeoman. The marriage of an esquire's son to the daughter of a yeoman looks like a downgrade in status. But was it? Robert Gleave was probably a son of a gentleman. Still a step down in status. On the other hand, a sizeable portion of Sale manor was settled on Richard and Barbara at their marriage, with £10 a year as her dower. Did the Masseys suffer a drop in status in the 1630s? Or was Robert Gleave a very wealthy yeoman? The prenuptial settlement was worth £800, a considerable sum in the 1630s. (Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies (CALs), DDX640/2, 2 January 1635/36.)

The other local family, the Booths, of course rose in the status of their marriages. At the end of the sixteenth century they married local esquire families like the Tattons. By the 1620s, Old Sir George's heir William married Vere, daughter of Lord Thomas Egerton of Tatton, and one of his daughters, Susannah, married another local baronet, Sir William Brereton of Handforth. William Booth's son, another George Booth, married first the daughter of the Earl of Lincoln, then Elizabeth Grey, the daughter of the Earl of Stamford. The Booths were on the way up, marrying beyond their status.

MISTRESS MARGARET MASSEY OF SALE AND ALTRINCHAM

The black ewe of the family

In the mid-1620s a young woman from Sale and a young man from Ashley met and fell in love. The affair was very intense and soon progressed to being physical with the inevitable result – a pregnancy. So far, so commonplace. Normally, this would have led quickly to a marriage. But not in this case, and the woman died unmarried in her fifties, three decades later.

This too would have been commonplace, but for two things – the status of the young woman and the lifelong regard/love she had for the young man and it seems that he had for her. The young woman was Margaret Massey, one of the younger daughters of James Massey of Sale, gentleman (died 1601). The young man, William Leather of Ashley, was a member of respectable yeoman farming family from the Hale/Ashley border.

Margaret, the daughter of a gentleman, granddaughter and sister of an esquire and lord of the manor of Sale, was herself a gentlewoman in status. Not as high up the social scale as the daughters of Sir George Booth of Dunham Massey, but amongst the minor aristocracy Cheshire. Her lover William was of lower social status, but not so low that he couldn't aspire to her hand in marriage, given enough freehold land and cash.

So why didn't they marry? There could be many reasons. Lack of sufficient land and cash on William's part for Margaret's dowry; Margaret's stiff-necked brother James (possibly thinking he was still her legal guardian) vetoing the marriage because of William's lack of social status; or, the oldest reason in the book – William was already married. This latter is a possibility, although there is no concrete evidence. There was a marriage of a William Leather to a Margery Jenkinson in 1620 at Lymm, but this William Leather does seem to be part of a family who were well-established in Lymm in the early seventeenth century. And why would 'our' William Leather marry at Lymm when in 1620 he could marry without censure at Bowdon, Rostherne or Wilmslow. It is possible that William, like Margaret, never married, although that is unlikely.

Whatever the impediment to their marriage, the result of the affair made his appearance in July 1627. A few days later, William proudly had his illegitimate son George Leather alias Massey baptised with his name at Wilmslow Parish Church on 22 July 1627. Margaret's name was also on the register as George's mother. Because his parents were not married, George was known as Leather otherwise Massey and his legitimate children would also be given that name. (FamilySearch.org.)

There is another aspect to this story of star-crossed lovers. Margaret and William were both friendly with a notorious Puritan, John Goulden of Hale. (Notorious at least to John Bridgeman, Bishop of Chester, who tried to clamp down on Puritans in Cheshire in the 1630s.) It could be that Margaret and William met through John Goulden and perhaps the puritan curate of Bowdon Thomas Paget (another of Bishop Bridgeman's puritan headaches). John Goulden came from a tanner family in Ringway, Hale. Ringway was an area known for its radical Puritanism. It was about the 1620s to the 1630s that the little chapel-of-ease at Ringway came under the influence of John Goulden and other local Puritans. William Leather had cousins close to Ringway, and it would be natural for him to ride out on a Sunday to Ringway Chapel, rather than undertake the longer journey to Bowdon Church. (Ashley was then in the parish of Bowdon.) Perhaps, Margaret, who should have worshipped at Ashton-on-Mersey, preferred the preaching at Ringway.

And this might be another reason for her brother James, as head of the family and as a staunch Anglican, although not a Laudian Anglican, to veto the marriage. (Archbishop Laud introduced reforms on the interiors of churches and the way the service was performed that even many staunch Anglicans as James Massey regarded as too Roman Catholic.)

If William was free to marry Margaret why didn't they tell the world and brother James Massey especially, to go hang and run off to a parish priest and get

married by licence? This is what a member of Margaret's family did nearly forty years later. Margaret seems to have been a woman of strong enough character to do this. Witness her friendship with Puritan John Goulden. In later life she lived with her 'bachelor kinsman' George Birch of Two Yates, Oldfield, Altrincham, without any scandal seeming to be attached to either. (More of George Birch later.) Perhaps people thought she and George Birch, one at least in her fifties and the other in his seventies, were too old for that sort of thing. Margaret would have been in her late twenties or early thirties in 1627, an age at which she should have been beyond her brother's control. In any case, James didn't mind about social status nine years later when he married his eldest son Richard to Barbara Gleave, the daughter of a yeoman – albeit one with wealth and a brother who was a gentleman.

So, yes, it does look as though William Leather was a married man, although there is no concrete evidence of his marriage.

What happened to the result of this affair, little George? He survived long enough to marry a woman called Margery at least and was still alive at the time of his mother's death in October 1652. He probably spent the first years of his life with his mother, possibly even at Sale Old Hall with his uncle and cousins. Then he may have gone to live with his father William. Margaret still kept in touch with him and his father. However, there is a slight question mark about the quality of the relationship between mother and son. Margaret left the largest single sum of money to George (£20), but she did it through the medium of his wife Margery. Which is strange for the period. Did Margaret think her son a spendthrift who couldn't manage very well financially? Her kinsman George Birch didn't think so when he left the young man £2 10s in his will in September 1652. Or had George broken with his mother, blaming her for the circumstances of his birth and his lack of status in the eyes of the world? And so she decided to give the money to George's wife, whom she trusted to give the money to her son. (*Altrincham Wills: wills and probate inventories from a Cheshire township, Part 2 1641-1680*, edited by Jill Groves, NWA Publications – not yet published.)

There is a third possible reason. George may have been away from home serving as a soldier in the Parliamentarian New Model Army. Again, there is no evidence for this and Margaret says nothing about her son's occupation in her will.

What was Margaret's relationship with her brother James and her sisters after the birth of George? Margaret's will in October 1652 gives no clue as to her relationship with James because he had died three years earlier, but, for reasons which will be discussed later, it was likely to have been cool in the last few years. However, Margaret's relationship with her married sisters seems to have been very good. Her sister Jane, married to Thomas Martin of Lees Hall, Derbyshire, together with her daughters Dorothy, Sarah and Jane, was bequeathed more in Margaret's Will than Margaret's son. Jane the sister got a 'suit of clothes' (the full set of linen underclothes, as well as a petticoat, woollen kirtle and gown). Jane the youngest daughter and Dorothy her eldest sister got £5. Sarah, Jane's second daughter, was especially favoured with a bequest of £10

(£8,000 today). It is possible that Margaret spent a lot of time in the 1630s and 1640s at Lees Hall. Perhaps she even stayed there with her little son. And perhaps Sarah Martin helped to look after him and so became a favourite niece. A favourite nephew was Thomas Bothams, the young son of Henry Bothams and Margaret's sister Mary (who may have lived around the Mottram-in-Longdendale and Macclesfield areas). Margaret left a petticoat and waistcoat (then a woman's item of dress as well as a man's). Young Thomas was left £5 towards his apprenticeship in a trade. Even the sons of gentry had to go into trade. Perhaps Margaret also spent time with the Bothams. If she spent time with her sister Dorothy Robinson it wasn't long. Margaret only left her a pair of linen sheets and a pillow beer. But perhaps Dorothy was a widow with no surviving children. (*Altrincham Wills: Part 2.*)

To her Massey nephews and nieces, including brother James's eldest son Richard, now the lord of the manor of Sale, Margaret left £1 each. This shows that relations between Margaret and her family at Sale Old Hall were slightly strained. (*Altrincham Wills: Part 2.*)

She also left £1 to her unmarried sister Katherine and 10s to her half-brother Henry 'Balgye' (her mother Dorothy had remarried to a Mr 'Balgye' after the death of Margaret's father James in 1601). (*Altrincham Wills: Part 2.*)

The strain may not have been entirely due to her affair with William Leather and the birth of George. It more likely to be due to the fact that Margaret chose to support the opposite side in the English Civil Wars to her family at Sale Old Hall. James and his son Richard were staunch Royalists, although they neither actually fought in the English Civil Wars. But Richard may have sent a company of men to fight at the Battle of Worcester in September 1651. Certainly, he left money in his will to a widow of one of those soldiers, Mary Moores of Sale. (*Ashton and Sale Wills* – not yet published.)

Margaret, from her choice of friends, supported the Parliamentary side. But she wasn't as staunch a Parliamentary as her friend John Goulden. She was probably a moderate like her friend and kinsman George Birch. The latter was friends with William Worrall, son-in-law to William Rowcroft, steward to Old Sir George Booth of Dunham Massey, and himself the manager of the Booth estate in Wilmslow. Most of the Booth servants, especially William Worrall's father Hugh, were moderate puritans and Presbyterians. (*Dunham Massey Wills: wills and probate inventories from a Cheshire township, Part 2 1641-1680*, edited by Jill Groves, NWAS Publications, 2007.)

Why was Margaret Massey living with George Birch at Two Yates Farm, Oldfield, Altrincham in the last few years of her life? One reason might be that they more in common than kinship and friendship. They both had illegitimate sons whom they loved and who were their only living direct descendants. In George's case he could have married the mother of his son, but didn't because the status gulf between a well-to-do yeoman farmer and a member of the Awen family of Altrincham was even larger than the one between Margaret and William Leather. George probably had his son John Birch alias Awen and his family living with him at Two Yates. Either that, or they were living a mile down

the road at another farm he leased from the Booths of Dunham Massey called Broadheath House (later called Birch's House). (*Altrincham Wills: Part 2.*)

George Birch left the tenancy of Broadheath House and £40 to his son and gave money to his four Birch alias Awen grandchildren. Two of his three grandsons (George and Christopher) and his granddaughter (Joan/Jane) went to London, the two boys going into the Royal Navy by the 1660s. The granddaughter kept house for her brothers. Joan later reappeared in Altrincham after the deaths of her brothers in 1666, transformed by the prospect of money and property into a gentlewoman in the eyes of Altrincham people. Perhaps the same happened to Margaret's son. (*Altrincham Wills: Part 2.*)

Margaret Massey comes across in her will and that of her friend and kinsman George Birch of Altrincham as a woman of strong character, but kind. She left money in her will to all four of George Birch's servants, equivalent to three months' wages. (George himself had only left money to three of them. What George Broome had done to be left out is unknown.) She was also capable, trusted and respected by her friends.

Margaret was one of George Birch's executors and as such he left her £3 for her personal use, plus undisclosed property and money on which George had given her and his other executor William Worrall private instructions. Margaret left George's legacy to her to her executors, her ex-lover William Leather and her friend John Goulden.

Margaret had been through a lot in her life, but at the end there was her friend John Goulden praying with her and reading the bible, which was probably a good comfort for this moderate Puritan gentlewoman. He also wrote Margaret's will for her, even though he didn't sign as a witness. The preamble is in John Goulden's own very distinctive phraseology. Praying and reading the Bible with the sick is what John Goulden was often called upon to do in Ringway, Hale, Altrincham and even Ashton-on-Mersey. He had been doing it for over thirty years and would continue until his own death in c.1658. In the 1620s, 1630s and 1640s he wrote and witnessed more wills than anyone else, most of them in Hale.

There are a couple of telling phrases in Margaret's Will. In one she described her son George as 'Sonne or reputed Sonne of William Lether of Ashley in the Countie of Chester yeoman and of me the sayd Margaret Massie'. William Leather had openly acknowledged George as his son a long time ago in Wilmslow Parish Registers, but John Goulden the will writer wanted to put in the usual proprieties of 'reputed son'. Nevertheless, Margaret also wanted to record openly that she was George's mother. (*Altrincham Wills: Part 2.*)

The other telling little phrase comes at the beginning of the will – 'one of the sisters of James Massie late of Sale Esquire'. Whatever life had thrown at her, Margaret wished her gentlewoman status to be recorded for posterity. (*Altrincham Wills: Part 2.*)

REVEREND RALPH STIRROP, JAMES MASSEY AND THE QUARREL OVER SALE HALL PEW, 1635-1639

The quarrel between James Massey and the Reverend Ralph Stirrop really began in 1628 with the owner of the advowson or right to appoint the rector of St. Martin's, Sir William Brereton of Handforth, when the Massey family pew was moved during the 'unification' of the parish church, St. Martin's Ashton-on-Mersey, and the floor of the church was paved and the pews placed 'chancel wise'. The 'unification' was the taking away of the chancel screen or rood screen to allow the congregation an uninterrupted view of the chancel and altar. But in doing that many pews were moved. The Massey family pew was one of those moved into the chancel it appears. James Massey (died 1649) and his wife Mary (daughter of George Leicester of Toft, esquire) did not object to the moving of the pew, but the new rector, Ralph Stirrop, did object to Mary Massey sitting in it, saying no woman had ever been allowed to sit in a chancel. In those days, and into the nineteenth century, pews were leased by families. Like any seventeenth century lease, a pew lease could be for a long number of years. (CALs, DDX 208/20, 8 February 1627/28 and Consistory Court, EDC, Ashton-on-Mersey 121 (1635).)

The row really blew up in 1635 and reached the church Consistory Court in Chester. James and Mary insisted in taking their places. Ralph Stirrop strongly objected and took them to the Consistory Court. James and Mary retaliated by taking Mr Stirrop to the Consistory Court in turn, saying that they had a title to their pew, the Sale Hall pew, on the north chancel of the church, 'near to the crosse marked on the wall'. The dispute rumbled on for at least another year, James taking the Reverend Stirrop to the Consistory Court again, pointing out that his family's coat-of-arms was in the east window 'with other gentleman's arms'. (CALs, Consistory Court, EDC, Ashton-on-Mersey, 121 (1635), 42 (1637) and 88 (1638).)

In the end, the Consistory Court found in favour of James Massey and also confirmed his family right to burial in the chancel.

Ralph Stirrop died in 1639. His will was written all in Latin, which was highly unusual for the period. Possibly it was written at the College of Wardens in Manchester (now Chetham's Library); all the witnesses are clergymen. Possibly this points to the Reverend Stirrop being a very staunch follower of Archbishop Laud, and therefore anti-puritan, which should have made the relationship between him and James Massey better than it was. But it also points to a man who was more interested in following Laudian dictates than in taking account of local custom and making local friends. (*Ashton and Sale Wills: wills and probate inventories from two Cheshire townships, 1600-1760*, edited by Jill Groves, NWAS Publications, revised edownload edition – not yet published.)

RICHARD MASSEY AND SIR WILLIAM BRERETON'S DUCK DECOY

In 1631, Sir William Brereton of Handforth built a duck decoy on Saltney Marshes near Chester. This duck decoy was a star-shaped body of water with netting along the arms of the star (called a pipe) and hurdles with gaps. Dogs were put in between the hurdles and the netting pipe. The ducks, being curious and wanting to keep an eye on a potential predator, would follow the dog along the water as it got narrower and narrower. The ducks would then be trapped and killed at the end of the trap. This duck decoy was intended to supply wild fowl to Cheshire and Lancashire markets.

Sir William had seen such duck decoys in the Netherlands and Norfolk, and thought it would be a profitable business. His then father-in-law, Old Sir George Booth of Dunham Massey, agreed with him and invested in the decoy. Sir George persuaded other Cheshire aristocracy that this enterprise was a good idea too. Sixty-nine of them signed a certificate saying that the duck decoy:

"be a common good and verie advantagious to the Countrie, by reason that divers of us and our markitts about us have since the erection thereof beene furnished with better store of fowles and att easier rates than formerlie, and those unblemished and unbruised. And wee cannott observe or find that it hath beene any destruction of wild fowle but that the Countrie is as well furnished theerewith and in as plentifull manner as heeretofore". (EGR4/1/12/14/2, 22 January 1632/33.)

Unfortunately, for Sir William Brereton, not all of the county aristocracy and gentry were in favour. The decoy had wrecked the sport of many gentlemen. Chief among the objectors was James Stanley, then Lord Strange (later the Earl of Derby). With his encouragement and that of Sir Richard Trevor, some gentlemen shot wild fowl in the decoy. When Brereton's keepers tried to stop them, the keepers were assaulted. (Calendar of State Papers Domestic, 1633-1634, April 1633.)

Sir William and Old Sir George Booth had already been granted a warrant by Charles I, allowing them to seize dogs, guns, and nets within five miles of the decoy.

"there are many dissolute idle persons, who make it their continuall practise to shoote with Gunns and use other unlawfull meanes for destroying those wild fowle". (EGR4/1/12/14/1, 1632.)

John Morrill in *Cheshire 1630-1660: County Government and Society During the English Revolution* comments that those in favour of the decoy and those against it more or less divided along lines that would later be Parliamentarians

and Royalists. The Parliamentarians were in favour and the Royalists against. The great and good of Chester, later a Royalist city, were also against the decoy, which led to a long legal dispute. Sir William and Sir George also took Richard Langford of Burton, Denbighshire and his friends to court for damaging the decoy and attacking the keepers with guns, pistols and staves. The parish constable, Richard Finlay, managed to disarm one of the attackers, but the pistol was grabbed back and fired twice to scare off the wildfowl. The attackers swore they would burn the decoy and kill anyone who tried to take their guns. (*The Booths of Dunham Massey*, David Eastwood, Churnet Books, 2004.)

Richard Massey of Sale, being a hotheaded young man following Lord Strange, was one of those who objected to the decoy. The Masseys, like most gentry families, had a house in Chester, and would have enjoyed wild fowling on the Dee near Saltney Marshes.

How far Richard took his objections is not clear, but he used 'provoking words and gestures' to Sir William himself. Later Richard was forced to sign an abject apology before witnesses. That would have rankled with the young man. No surprise that he later became a Royalist, albeit not one that fought.

When Charles I first entered Chester in late 1642, his soldiers destroyed the decoy. This is usually seen as the king not being able to control his army, but the decoy was unpopular. However, most of the county aristocracy were unhappy about this, including some moderates who had been sympathetic to the king. This action cost Charles I their support. (*Cheshire 1630-1660: County Government and Society During the English Revolution* by John Morrill, Oxford University Press, 1974.)

JAMES AND RICHARD MASSEY IN THE ENGLISH CIVIL WARS

As has been mentioned earlier, whilst the Massey family didn't really take part in national politics, it was not adverse to taking part in shire politics, especially against annoying neighbours such as Sir William Brereton, who also owned much of Ashton-on-Mersey.

James Massey of Sale and his son Richard were classified as Royalists. But were they Royalist? James stood up to the Laudian Rector of Ashton-on-Mersey, Ralph Stirrop, but this was not a sign that the Masseys were Parliamentarians. It could mean that the Massey family wanted to make sure the rector knew who was the power in the parish, just as Charles I wanted to make Parliament realise he was the power in the land. The Masseys were Royalist, but not fanatics. They did not supply men to the Royalist Robert Tatton of Wythenshawe when he garrisoned his hall against a siege by a company of Parliamentarian soldiers under Colonel Robert Duckenfield of Dukenfield (near Stockport). (*The Impact of Civil War on a Local Community: Northenden and*

Etchells, Cheshire, 1642-1660, Jill Groves, NWAAS Publications, revised edownload version September 2017.)

But James Massey did travel into Wales, possibly to the Royalist garrison at Denbigh. He compounded on 21 February 1646, but couldn't travel to London to do it 'by reason of corpulence, poverty and old age'. A few months later he was fined £40 and a further £12 on land he had improved and a £12 annuity. James died in 1649. In 1652 Richard, still as much a hothead as he had been in the 1630s, refused to take the Oath of Abjuration. The Committee for Compounding sequestered two-thirds of his lands. (*Retribution: The Cheshire Royalists who suffered under the Commonwealth 1646-1660* by David Eastwood, Altrincham History Society Occasional Paper 14.)

THE REVEREND HUGH HOBSON'S MARRIAGE TO MARY MASSEY IN 1663

The Reverend Hugh Hobson married Mary Massey, the daughter of Richard Massey of Sale, esquire, by licence at St. Peter's, Chester, on 3 December 1663. (FamilySearch.org.)

The marriage caused a furore in the Massey family, according to the depositions and allegations to the will of Mary's father Richard in 1667. The story of the marriage came out because Mary Hobson claimed that her father had not given her full child's portion. Her mother Barbara and uncle John Gleave, gentleman, said that Mary had been a disobedient daughter in marrying Hugh Hobson and, moreover had had her child's portion, along with bequests from her Gleave grandparents. Mary claimed, via her proctor (Church lawyer) George Wilson, the marriage was approved by her father. (*Ashton and Sale Wills*.)

Barbara Massey and her brother John Gleave said that when Hugh Hobson first began to court Mary her father Richard was very annoyed. Perhaps this was because Mr Hobson was sympathetic to Presbyterianism and Richard Massey was an Anglican. To get Mary away from Hugh, she was sent to her uncle's house at Pulford near Chester. When she returned some time later, she and Hugh began courting again. To persuade her father to consent to her marriage, Mary:

'not haveing the feare of god before her eys [eyes] often sayd before Credible wittnesses that if shee did not marry Mr the s[ai]d Hobson shee would drowne or make her selfe away'. (*Ashton and Sale Wills*.)

Mary said that her father knew of and approved of her marriage to Hugh and even wanted her to marry at Bowdon or close by, instead of marrying at

Chester. He even sent a servant to escort the couple to Chester and had them to dinner when they returned:

‘and was loveinge unto them, and the said Mary did behave herselfe dutiffully towards her father the said Richard untill ye time of his death and this is Comonly knowne and reported’. (*Ashton and Sale Wills.*)

The story of the marriage of Mary and Hugh and the rift in the Massey family it caused later became the basis of a local legend. In one version it was the daughter of the local rector being courted by the son of the lord of the manor; in another the young man was the son of a medieval de Trafford lord. She, poor girl, drowned herself in a well in the garden of the rectory – as Mary had threatened to do, according to her mother.

The rift had healed by the time of Barbara’s death in 1684. By then Hugh Hobson was also dead (d.1679), so that may have helped. Barbara left bequests to her Mary and her granddaughter Theodosia Hobson. Nothing more is known of Theodosia or her mother. (*Ashton and Sale Wills.*)

THE LAST MASSEY ESQUIRE AT SALE OLD HALL

William Massey, esquire, was the second son of Richard Massey of Sale (died 1666) and his wife Barbara (née Gleave). He was probably born in the 1640s.

William inherited a third of his father’s estate in 1666 and a share of the rent from Sale New Hall. He married the heiress, Ursula Domville of Lymm, by licence at Cheadle on 22 July 1675. (Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, *Chester Marriage Licence Index, Part 6.*)

Ursula Domville was the granddaughter of Thomas Gerrard of Riddings Hall, Timperley, and great-granddaughter of Ursula Gerrard (née Arderne of Stockport) as well as the heiress of her father, William Domville of Lymm. Through her, William Massey acquired land in Timperley, Rostherne, Lymm.

William and Ursula had five known children: Robert (died 1719), Anne, Barbara, Elizabeth and Susannah (born in 1693). They possibly lived at Lymm to begin with, then possibly at Sale Old Hall after the death of William’s elder brother Richard in 1685. William and Ursula inherited Lymm Hall from her father in 1697, and they may have returned there briefly, but by the time of William’s death they were living in Sale, more than likely at the Old Hall. They would have leased the Old Hall from William’s niece Katherine Malyn and her husband Robert.

Of all the children, only Anne seems to have married. She married Henry Taylor, a gentleman and merchant from Liverpool and Preston by licence at Ashton-on-Mersey, Bowdon or Northenden on 25 January 1698/99. She and Henry inherited the Lymm Hall and Riddings Hall estates from her mother.

Anne's and Henry's family, the Taylor-Hargreaves, owned the Riddings Hall estate, which included farms in Sale, until the 1930s. (FamilySearch.org; *Ashton and Sale Wills*.)

Anne's sisters Elizabeth and Barbara moved into Sale New Hall (now being used as a Massey family dower house). Later Elizabeth moved to Stockport, where she had probably inherited some Arderne land from her mother. She died there.

Barbara remained in Sale and never married. She died and was buried at St. Martin's on 8 November 1734.

Elizabeth died and was buried at St. Martin's, Ashton-on-Mersey, on 26 April 1731. In her will she left money to build a workhouse in Sale. It was built in 1732, sited on the corner of Marsland Road and what is now Brooklands Road. Today the site is a small sunken park. John Owen sketched the cottage in the mid-nineteenth century and noted its history. (Parish of St. Martin, Ashton-on-Mersey, County of Cheshire, Burials 26 April 1731 to 8 February 1890, North Cheshire FHS microfiche; Flickr.com, John Owen.)

Nothing more is known about Susannah.

Robert moved to Rostherne, Liverpool and then Stockport before he died in 1719. Robert married and had a son William Massey, who was living at Warburton Park at the time of his death in 1737. (Parish of St. Martin, Ashton-on-Mersey, County of Cheshire, Burials 26 April 1731 to 8 February 1890, North Cheshire FHS microfiche.)

THE MASSEY FAMILY AND THEIR DESCENDANTS 1660-1729

By the 1660s, the Masseys were marrying into esquires and gentry families again. Their fortunes were on the up. Some were not so local. Richard, eldest son of Richard Massey, married Anna-Prima Pearson, daughter of Bartholomew Pearson of Nottinghamshire, gentleman. His brother William married Ursula, daughter of William Domville of Lymm, esquire (and also the granddaughter and heiress of Thomas Gerrard of Riddings Hall, Timperley, esquire). Richard's sisters married gentlemen and clergymen. Jane and Barbara married into the Leech family, gentlemen and major landowners in Manchester. Barbara married Nathaniel Leech. Anne married a Liverpool gentleman and merchant, James Prescott. Elizabeth married a Massey cousin, William Massey of Moss, Denfield, Cheshire and Mary Massey married the local rector, Hugh Hobson (see above).

The surviving children of Richard and Anna-Prima were all daughters. Amy married a clergyman, Thomas Ellison, rector of Ashton-on-Mersey, died 1717. Anne Cliffe married a man called Cliffe and was given some land in Godley. Katherine, who married Robert Malyn, physician of Nottingham and Manches-

ter. Barbara Hockenhull married a man called Mr Hockenhull. There were also Mary, Elizabeth and Jane.

These daughters were their father's co-heirs and therefore the Massey land holdings were divided amongst them. Katherine got most of the manor of Sale. (1667 Poll Tax Roll for Sale; *Chester Marriage Licences, 1667-80, Part 6; Ashton and Sale Wills.*)

The Masseys, like many other local aristocrats, married for money as much as status. Even the Booths, now Earls of Warrington, had to marry for money. George, 2nd Earl of Warrington, married Mary Oldbury, daughter of a wealthy London merchant, for her expected dowry, although it wasn't as much as George was expecting. The English Civil Wars, the expense of involvement in national politics (Henry Booth of Dunham Massey, 1st Earl of Warrington), being wards of court all cost local aristocratic families a great deal of money. Like the Tattons, the Masseys probably mortgaged their landholdings to the hilt and made their tenants surrender their leases after only two lives, not the usual three, in order to get additional money through the entry fee for a new lease or turned the customary leases into leases for years at higher rents.

In 1684, the Masseys of Sale still owned most of the manor of Sale in 1684, as well as substantial landholdings in other parts of North-east Cheshire – half of the manor of Godley, a quarter of the manor of Matley, a sixth of the manor of Newton and some land in Hale, just as much as they had held in 1603 on the death of Richard Massey, 2xgreat-grandfather of the Richard Massey who died in 1684. (*A History of Sale.*)

The Reverend Massey Malyn, the eldest son of Katherine and Robert Malyn, was born in 1688. He entered Queen's College, Oxford in 1705. He gained a Masters Degree from Brazenose College, Oxford in 1718. (www.theclergydatabase.org.uk) On the death of his parents, the Reverend Malyn inherited the manor of Sale. In 1717, on the death of the Reverend Thomas Ellison, rector of Ashton-on-Mersey, erstwhile uncle by his first marriage to Massey Malyn's aunt Amy, the Reverend Malyn took over the parish.

The Reverend Malyn married Sarah Alexander, probably of Gorton, Lancashire, on 8 January 1722 at Gorton. There were no children of this marriage. (FamilySearch.org.)

Robert Malyn, the younger son, married a woman called Catherine, who died in 1716. They had only one known child, Elizabeth born in 1701, but who died in 1702. Robert died and was buried on 11 September 1727 at Ashton. This meant that when the Reverend Massey Malyn died in November 1729 without any surviving children, the manor of Sale was inherited by his sisters Katherine and Anne. Reverend Malyn's widow Sarah Malyn remarried to Robert Oldfield at Ashton on 2 November 1731 by licence. (Parish Registers of Ashton-on-Mersey, 1701-1760, Ashton and Sale History Society, microfiche; FamilySearch.org.)

Anne married Dr Peter Mainwaring of Manchester on 28 April 1731 at Ashton-on-Mersey by licence. At the same time her sister Katherine married Walter Noble of Longdon, near Lichfield, and moved to Lichfield. Anne moved

to Manchester with her husband. (Parish Registers of Ashton-on-Mersey; Ormerod.)

Dr Peter Mainwaring was born in 1694, the son of Peter Mainwaring of Wyburnbury, Cheshire. He went to school at Northwich and studied in medicine and science at Trinity College, Cambridge 1716-1720.

Dr Mainwaring moved to Manchester before 1725 where he set up in practice at 12 King Street (now 35 King Street).

Peter Mainwaring was one of the founders of the Manchester Royal Infirmary, originally at Daub Holes (Piccadilly Gardens) and was one of its physicians until his retirement in 1778. He was also physician at the Manchester House of Recovery. (John Rylands Library University of Manchester, Manchester Medical Collection: Biographical Files H-Q, Peter Mainwaring, [1696?]-1785.)

In addition to his medical interests, Dr Mainwaring was a Justice of the Peace. He and his wife Anne were friends with the Byrom family of Manchester, especially the poet John Byrom.

In 1745 Mainwaring and Byrom disagreed with each other over who was the rightful king of England. The doctor preferred George II, but the poet favoured James the Old Pretender, the father of Bonnie Prince Charlie. The latter visited Manchester with his army on his abortive march south on London. Dr Mainwaring rode around Manchester telling people to arm themselves with whatever weapons they had to repel the Jacobites as the latter retreated through the area after the failed attempt to march on London. Some Jacobites got into Manchester and the house on King Street was ransacked. Or, as John Byrom's daughter Elizabeth Byrom wrote in her diary the rebels had 'been a little rough'.

Dr Mainwaring was elected the first President of Manchester's Literary and Philosophical Society in 1782. He died on 30 December 1785, aged ninety-one. He was buried at St. John's, Manchester, the church founded by the Byrom family. Anne predeceased her husband in March 1760. She was buried at Ashton-on-Mersey on 19 March 1760. There were no surviving children. (www.ifthosewallscouldtalk.wordpress.com – Hidden Histories: 35 King Street, Manchester (Forgotten Georgian Heritage – Part 2); National Burial Index, 3rd Edition, Federation of Family History Societies.)

Not much is known about Walter Noble. He and Katherine had some surviving daughters and a son Westion who died in 1747. Katherine died in January 1748/1749 and was buried at the newly-built St. Bartholomew's, Farewell, Longdon, near Lichfield on 29 January 1748/49. In 1751 Walter remarried to Lydia Patton. He died three years later and was buried at St. Bartholomew's on 20 May 1754. (FamilySearch.org.)

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MASSEY ESTATE IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES?

The first half of the eighteenth century was a time when many local landowners, most of whom had just inherited their lands, took their estates by the scruff of the neck, modernised them and made them pay. The turbulent national and London politics of the late seventeenth century, whilst they had little impact on the daily lives of ordinary local people, had occupied the attention of some local landowners, especially the Booths of Dunham Massey, to the exclusion of looking after the lands which paid for their London political activities. The Tattons of Wythenshawe paid by remortgaging their estates in Northenden, Etchells and Sale twice in 1673 and 1699 – something akin to reorganising the national debt for the amount of paperwork it generated.

At the end of the seventeenth century the young George Booth, the new Earl of Warrington, found his estate nearly bankrupt. The Tattons too were still short of money. The Masseys' successors, the Reverend Massey Malyn, Dr Peter Mainwaring and Walter Noble, continued to sell off parts of their Sale estate. The Tattons and the Masseys were still suffering for their espousal of the Royalist cause in the English Civil Wars at the end of the seventeenth century. What was left of the Holt part of the manor of Sale was sold off soon after the death of Samuel Holt in 1686.

After the deaths of the two Malyn sisters and their husbands, almost all of the Massey estate in Sale was sold off. Walter's and Katherine's daughters sold their part of the manor of Sale to William Tatton-Egerton of Tatton and Wythenshawe (son of William Tatton and his wife Hester Egerton, heiress to the Tatton estate) in the 1760s. Anne and Peter Mainwaring bequeathed their part of the manor to the Leghs of High Legh, Cheshire. (*The Story of Sale: A 'House Detective' book* by John Newhill.)

George John Legh of High Legh was the largest landowner in Sale by 1806. In addition to the land bequeathed by the Mainwarings, he owned 202 acres jointly with William Tatton-Egerton, the acres bought from the Noble daughters. A year later this Noble part of the manor, including Sale Old Hall and Sale New Hall, had been sold to John Moore senior, who then called himself lord of the manor. His son John Moore junior sold Sale Old Hall to Mrs Mary Worthington in 1840. She started to restore it to some of its former glory. (*The Story of Sale.*)

George John Legh sold his remaining 154 acres to Samuel Brooks in 1847.

The renown White family, Dr Thomas and Dr Charles White, his son, after acquiring land in Ashton-on-Mersey, also bought Massey estate land in the mid-eighteenth century. In addition, they bought a small part of a large tenement or farm called Miry Gate from the Earls of Stamford. Dr Charles White built a house on the land and called it Priory Gate. (Papers of the Grey Family, Earls of Stamford, Estate Papers from the Altrincham Estate Office, EGR14/2/11/2.)

By the 1820s and 1830s Dr Charles White owned 356 acres in Sale, two-thirds of it ex-Massey lands. (*The Story of Sale.*)

SALE NEW HALL

Sale New Hall, built in the late 1680s, was sold to Dr Charles White and became a large farm of 77 acres in the late eighteenth century, rented out to a local farmer. By the mid-nineteenth century the size of Sale New Hall Farm had increased to 124½ acres. (*The Story of Sale.*)

Many sources, including Ormerod, put the date of building Sale New Hall to 1688. Norman Swain said that the New Hall was built for the William, second son of the Richard Massey (died 1666), who married Ursula Domville. Mike Nevell in his excellent *The Archaeology of Trafford* agrees with him. There was a datestone giving the date 1688. However, there is a reference in the Will of Richard Massey of Sale, 1666, which makes it seem that Sale New Hall was built some years earlier and was tenanted by Katherine Jackson, whose family also ran the nearby ferry over the Mersey (on the site now occupied by the Jackson's Boat pub on Rifle Road). (*The Archaeology of Trafford: Study of the Origins of Community in North West England* by Michael Nevell, Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council, 1997; *Ashton and Sale Wills.*)

'I have granted Conveyed and assured unto the said Edward Leigh and John Gleave and their heires All that Messuage or dwelling howse scituate lying and being in Sale aforesaid in the County of Chester formerly called and knowne by the name of the *Newhall* and then in the tenure holding and possession of one Katherine Jackson together w[ith] all howses edifices buildings orchards garden yarde[s] lande[s] Tenem[en]ts and hereditam[en]t thereunto belonging or in anywise app[ur]taining As alsoe all those severall Closes pastures and p[ar]cells of Land and Meadowing lying and being in Sale aforesaid and hereafter p[ar]ticularly menc[i]oned That is to say the Rough at the back of the *Newhall* the Round Rough, the Rushey field, the Hollin Heyes, the higher end of the Tomasin Hey, the Hall Meadow, The Hawthorne, the Bryery Acres, the Ash Lands, the Mare Heyes, the Crabtree Field, the Dog Field, the Kiln Field, The Furlongs the Moore Field by Mares Cottage.' (*Ashton and Sale Wills.*)

Interestingly, William Massey, the second son of James Massey, was living with his family in a separate household in 1667. It could be either that William was living in Sale New Hall or he was living in part of Sale Old Hall. However, some of the fields listed above were listed as part of the Sale Old Hall demesne in 1636. It could be that some of the demesne fields were given to the demesne of Sale New Hall. (1667 Poll Tax Roll for Sale; CALS, DDX640/2, 2 January 1635/36.)

If Sale New Hall had been built before 1663, it could have been as a dower house for Richard's widowed mother Mary Massey, or as a home for Richard

and his family in the 1630s. Families of the status of the Masseys often had these second halls to house the eldest son when he married, later a widowed mother, widowed and spinster sisters, married brothers and, as time came full circle again, a married eldest son again. Use of these second halls by the family could fluctuate between full use, under use to empty. Peel Hall in Etchells was used by the Tattons of Wythenshawe in this fashion from 1600 onwards. From the 1630s to the late 1650s Peel Hall contained Robert Tatton's mother, Mrs Katherine Nicholls and her second husband, Dr William Nicholls, until his death in 1657. After the death of Dr Nicholls, the eldest grandson, William Tatton, moved to Peel Hall, along with his married elder sister Mary Wheeler and her husband Charles Wheeler. (*The Impact of Civil War on a Community.*)

1688 was probably the date when Sale New Hall was rebuilt. The next question is why was it rebuilt and who for? Norman Swain said it was built by William Massey, for his family. But Sale New Hall, although it was a good-sized farmhouse, was not large enough or possibly grand enough for William, his heiress wife Ursula and their family. It could have been rebuilt for Richard's eldest daughter Katherine and her husband Robert Malyn, but they lived in Manchester, where Robert had his practice. It could have been built for Katherine's as yet unmarried sisters, and her widowed mother, Anna-Prima, as a dower house. This is possible. But perhaps it was rebuilt as a plain farmhouse by the tenants.

The same happened to other local halls. Peel Hall, Etchells, the dower house of the Tattons of Wythenshawe, was a farmhouse by the 1730s. So too were Riddings Hall (owned then by the Taylor family, grandchildren of William and Ursula Massey) and Baguley Hall (owned by the Marquis of Allen and then by the Tatton family from the 1750s onwards). (JRLUM, Tatton of Wythenshawe Muniments, TW 341, Rent Book 1748-1760.)

Oldfield Hall, near Altrincham, had a brief period as a cross between a dower house and a luxury let, then a farm, when it was owned by the absentee George Meredith and his elder brother Sir William Meredith of Hanbury. In the 1750s it was sold to the Rigby family and inherited by the Lloyd family who rebuilt it as a Palladian mansion in the early nineteenth century. (*Altrincham Wills: wills and probate inventories from a Cheshire township, Part 3 1681-1720*, edited by Jill Groves, NWS Publications; Papers of the Grey Family, Earls of Stamford, Estate Papers from the Altrincham Estate Office, Altrincham leases; www.maps.cheshire.gov.uk/tithemaps.)

The plan of Sale New Hall in Mike Nevell's *The Archaeology of Trafford* shows a small hall with a porch in front, leading directly into the hall. The hall and the kitchen behind it form the central section, with four parlours, two on either side forming the cross wings. At least two of the parlours appear to have fireplaces. It is not grandiose in scale, but it is very comfortable looking, built for a household with modern ideas of comfort and privacy. No longer would all meals be taken in a great hall by all the household, family and servants at the same time. The kitchen being behind the hall meant that hot dishes would still be hot when they reached the table of the master or mistress, and not cool after

being carried throughout the house. One of the parlours could be served directly from the kitchen too and this is probably where the family ate when company was not present. One can imagine the parlours with fires in them in winter and carpets on the floors (instead of on the walls or on tables). Faced in brick, it would have been a warm house, something that was very necessary in the mini-ice age of the late seventeenth century. (*The Archaeology of Trafford*.)

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Index

- Allen, Marquis of, 21
Altrincham, 10
 Birch's House, 10
 Broadheath House, 10
 Oldfield Hall, 21
 Two Yates Farm, Oldfield, 9
Ashley, 6
Ashton-on-Mersey, 4, 7, 10, 13, 15-19
 St. Martin's, 11, 16
 Massey family pew, 11
Awen family of Altrincham, 9
- Baguley, Baguley Hall, 21
'Balgie', Henry, 9
 Mr, 9
Barlow, John, 4
 Oliver, 4
Battle of Worcester, 9
Birch alias Awen, Christopher, 10
 George, 10
 Joan/Jane, 10
 John, 9
Birch, George, 8-10
 George, of Two Yates, Oldfield,
 Altrincham, 8
Booths of Dunham Massey, 4-6, 10,
 17, 19
 Dorothy, 5
 George, Earl of Warrington, 19
 Old Sir George, 6, 7, 9, 12
 Susannah, 6
 William, 6
Bothams, Henry, 9
 Mary, 9
 Thomas, 9
Bowdon, 7, 14, 15
Bowdon Church, 7
Brazenose College, Oxford, 17
Brereton, Sir William, 6, 11-13
Bridgeman, John, Bishop of Chester,
 7
Brooks, Samuel, 19
Broome, George, 10
Byrom family of Manchester, 18
 Elizabeth, 18
 John, 18
- Charles I, 12-13
Charlie, Bonnie Prince, 18
Cheadle, 15
Chester, 10, 11, 13, 15, 20
 St. Peter's, 14
Chorlton, Richard, 4
Cliffe, Anne, 16
 Mr, 16
Committee for Compounding, 14
- Dean/Daine, John, 4
Denbigh, 14
Devias, Robert, 4
Dickenson, Hamnet, 4
Domville, Ursula, of Lymm, 15, 20
 William, of Lymm, 15, 16
Duck decoy on Saltney Marshes near
 Chester, 12
Duckenfield, Colonel Robert, of
 Dukenfield, 13

Egerton family, 5
 Hester, 19
 Lord Thomas, of Tatton, 6
 Vere, daughter of Lord Thomas
 Egerton of Tatton, 6
 Elizabeth I, 5
 Ellison, Reverend Thomas, rector of
 Ashton-on-Mersey, 16, 17
 English Civil Wars, 9, 17, 19
 Etchells, 5, 19
 Peel Hall, 21

 FitzNigel, William, 4

 George II, 18
 Gerrard, Thomas, of Riddings Hall,
 Timperley, 15, 16
 Ursula, (née Arderne of Stockport),
 15
 Gleave, Barbara, 6, 8
 John, 14, 20
 Robert, of Pulford, yeoman, 6
 Godley, Cheshire, 16, 17
 Goulden, John, 7-10
 Grey, Elizabeth, 6

 Hale, 6, 7, 10, 17
 Ringway, 7, 10
 Ringway Chapel, 7
 Hobson, Reverend Hugh, 14-16
 Mary, 14, 15
 Theodosia, 15
 Hockenhull, Barbara (née Massey), 17
 Mr, 17
 Holt family, 4
 Ellen, 4
 John, 4
 Randle, of Timperley, 4
 Samuel, of Sale, 19
 Thomas, of Whittleswick, Lanca-
 shire, 4
 Hughes, Edmund, 4

 Jackson, Katherine, of Jackson's
 Boat, Sale, 20

 Jacobites, 18
 James I, 5
 James the Old Pretender, 18
 Jenkinson, Margery, 7

 Langford, Richard, of Burton, Den-
 bighshire, 13
 Laud, Archbishop, 7, 11
 Leather alias Massey, George, 7-9
 Margery, 8
 Leather, William, of Ashley, 6-10
 Leech family of Manchester, 16
 Barbara (née Massey), 16
 Jane (née Massey), 16
 Lees Hall, Derbyshire, 9
 Legh family of High Legh, Cheshire,
 19
 George John, of High Legh, 19
 Leicester, George, of Toft, 5, 11
 Katherine, 5
 Mary, 5
 Leigh family of Baguley, 4-6
 Edward, of Baguley, 5, 20
 Lichfield, 17, 18
 Lincoln, Earl of, 6
 Liverpool, 15-16
 Lloyd family, 21
 London, 5, 10, 14, 17-19
 Longdon, Staffordshire, 17, 18
 St. Bartholomew's, Farewell, 18
 Lymm, 7, 15
 Lymm Hall, 15
 Lymm Hall estate, 15

 Macclesfield, 9
 Mainwaring family, 19
 Anne, of Manchester, 18, 19
 Dr Peter, of Manchester, 17-19
 Peter, of Wybunbury, Cheshire, 18
 Malyn, Anne, 17
 Catherine, 17
 Elizabeth, 17
 Katherine, 15, 17
 Katherine, junior, 17
 Reverend Massey, 17, 19

Robert, of Sale, 16-17
 Robert, physician of Nottingham and Manchester, 15, 17, 21
 Sarah, 17
 Manchester, 16, 18, 21
 Chetham's Library, 11
 College of Wardens, 11
 Daub Holes, 18
 King Street, 18
 Manchester House of Recovery, 18
 Manchester Royal Infirmary, 18
 Manchester's Literary and Philosophical Society, 18
 Piccadilly Gardens, 18
 St. John's, 18
 Martin, Dorothy, 8
 Jane, of Lees Hall, Derbyshire, 8
 Sarah, 8
 Thomas, of Lees Hall, Derbyshire, 8
 Massey family of Dunham Massey, 4
 Massey family of Sale, 4, 6, 11, 13-17, 21
 Amy, 16, 17
 Anne, 15, 16
 Barbara, 14-16
 Dorothy, 9
 Elizabeth, 15-16
 Hamnet, 4
 James, 5-11, 13, 14, 20
 Jane, 17
 Katherine, 9, 16
 Margaret, of Sale and Altrincham, 6-10
 Mary, 11, 14, 16, 20
 Richard, of Sale, esquire, 5-6, 9, 12-17, 20
 Richard de, 4
 Robert, 15, 16
 Susannah, 15, 16
 Ursula, 15, 21
 William, esquire, 15, 16, 20-21
 William, of Moss, Denfield, Cheshire, 16
 Matley, manor of, Cheshire, 17
 Meredith, George, 21
 Sir William, of Hanbury, 21
 Moore(s), James, 4
 John, 4
 John, junior, of Sale, 19
 John, senior, lord of the manor of Sale, 19
 Mary, of Sale, 9
 Mottram-in-Longdendale, 9
 Netherlands, 12
 Nevell, Mike, 20, 21
 New Model Army, 8
 Newton, manor of, 17
 Nicholls, Dr William, 21
 Mrs Katherine, 21
 Noble family of Longdon, near Lichfield, 19
 Katherine, 18, 19
 Walter, 17-19
 Westion, 18
 Norfolk, 12
 Northenden, 4, 5, 15, 19
 Northwich, 18
 Oath of Abjuration, 14
 Oldfield, Robert, 17
 Owen, John, 16
 Paget, Thomas, 7
 Parliamentarians, 12, 13
 Patton, Lydia, 18
 Pearson, Anna-Prima, 16
 Bartholomew, of Nottinghamshire, gentleman, 16
 Prescott, James, of Liverpool, merchant, 16
 Preston, 15
 Pulford near Chester, 14
 Queen's College, Oxford, 17
 Renshaw, James, 4
 John, 4
 Rigby family, 21
 River Mersey, 5, 11, 16-18, 20, 22-23

Robinson, Dorothy, 9
 Rostherne, 7, 15, 16
 Rowcroft, William, 9
 Royal Navy, 10
 Royalists, 9, 13-14, 19

 Sale, 4, 19
 Ash Lands, 20
 Brooklands Road, 16
 Bryery Acres, 20
 Crabtree Field, 20
 Dog Field, 20
 Furlongs, The, 20
 Hall Meadow, 20
 Hawthorne, The, 20
 Hollin Heyes, 20
 Jackson's Boat pub, Rifle Road, 20
 Kiln Field, 20
 Manor of, 4, 7, 9, 17, 19
 Mare Heyes, 20
 Mares Cottage, 20
 Marsland Road, 16
 Massey estate, 19
 Miry Gate, 19
 Moore Field, 20
 Priory Gate, 19
 Round Rough field, 20
 Rushey field, 20
 Sale New Hall, 15, 16, 19-21
 Sale Old Hall, 8-9, 15, 19-20
 Sale, Thomas de, 4
 Tomasin Hey, 20
 Saltney Marshes, 12, 13
 Stamford, Earls of, 6, 19
 Stanley, James, then Lord Strange
 (later the Earl of Derby), 12
 Star Chamber, 5
 Stirrop, Reverend Ralph, 11, 13
 Stockport, 13, 16
 Strange, Lord, 12, 13
 Swain, Norman, 20, 21

 Tatton estate, Northenden, 19
 Tatton family of Wythenshawe, 4-6,
 17, 19, 21

 Frances, 5
 Robert, of Wythenshawe, 5, 13, 21
 William, 5, 19, 21
 Tatton-Egerton, William, of Tatton and
 Wythenshawe, 19
 Tatton, near Knutsford, 5
 Taylor, Anne, 15
 Henry, of Liverpool and Preston, 15
 Taylor-Hargreaves family, 16
 Timperley, 15
 Riddings Hall, 15, 16, 21
 Riddings Hall estate, 15, 16
 Trafford, de, 15
 Trevor, Sir Richard, 12
 Trinity College, Cambridge, 18
 Wales, 14
 Warburton, Warburton Park, 16
 Wheeler, Charles, 21
 Mary (née Tatton of Wythenshawe),
 21
 White family of Ashton-on-Mersey, 19
 Dr Charles, 19-20
 Dr Thomas, 19
 Whittleswick, Barton-on-Irwell, Lanca-
 shire, 4
 Wilmslow, 7, 9, 10
 Parish Church, 7
 Wilson, George, 14
 Worrall, Hugh, of Dunham Massey, 9
 William, of Dunham Massey and
 Wilmslow, 9-10
 Worthington, Mrs Mary, 19
 Wythenshawe Hall, 13

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