

My Lobley ancestors - a brief summary

My Lobley family are all from Essex in England. The earliest proven Lobley ancestor I have is William Lobley, who married Hannah Sexton in 1764 in the little village church of South Hanningfield. They had three known children, the eldest, also named William, was baptised in the same parish a year later in 1765. He married Mary Pickett in the nearby village of Nevendon. The eldest of their eight children, yet another William, married Sarah Cage in Nevendon in 1818.

William and Sarah's fourth child, Jacob, baptised in the parish church of Pitsea in 1825 was my great, great grandfather. He and several of his seven brothers and sisters, moved away from the immediate neighbourhood, seeking work elsewhere. Jacob moved to Epping, in the west of Essex, obtaining work, like all his ancestors, as an agricultural labourer. He later became a farm bailiff at Netteswell, near Epping.

Jacob, and his wife Ann, had a large family of twelve children. In 1887, their eighth child, Arthur, married a girl from Yorkshire, Annie Schofield, the daughter of a canal boat family, in the far south west of Essex at Stratford, before moving back east to West Thurrock on the Thames to get a job in the growing cement industry. Arthur and Annie had nine children.

Arthur and Annie's fifth child, Sidney James Lobley, was born in 1896, married Minnie Elizabeth (Lizzie) Cliften in 1922, having three boys, the eldest of whom was my father, Norman Sidney Lobley.

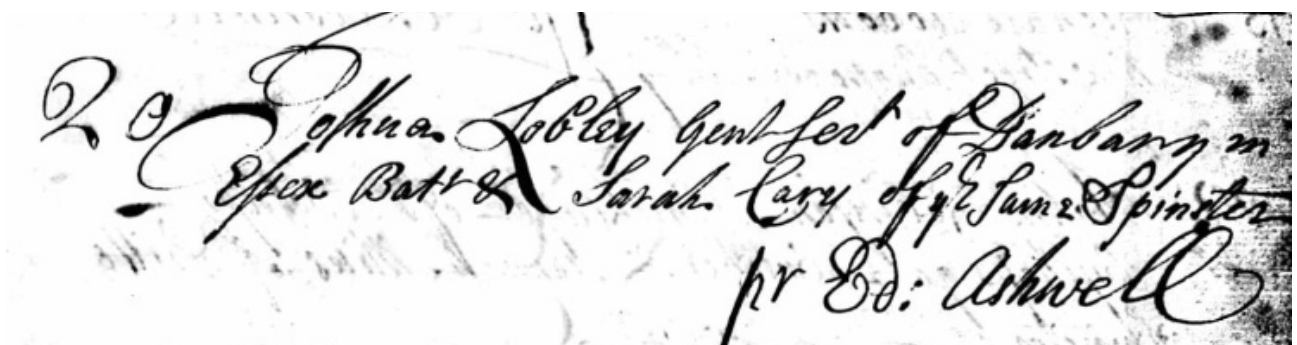
In 1950, my father married Barbara Halls at St John's church in Little Thurrock and three years later they had their only child - me.

Possible earlier ancestors

Although I know when William Lobley, my 5x great grandfather, married (in 1764), I have so far been unable to track down his baptism. After many years with no further progress in tracing my paternal line, in 2013 I may have made a small breakthrough.

Ancestry made available the records of 'Irregular' or 'Clandestine' Marriages and Baptisms in the Fleet Prison, King's Bench Prison, the Mint and the May Fair Chapel in London for the period 1667-1754. Couples underwent these 'marriages' for a variety of reasons: to overcome residency and age restrictions, as a matter of necessity or simply for convenience. Many such marriages were performed by clerics who were imprisoned for debt, in need of easy money and who were prepared to flout regulations. Many lived outside the prison walls and conducted the ceremonies in pubs or shops. At its height, 6,000 marriages a year were taking place in the Fleet area, compared with 47,000 in England as a whole. One estimate suggests that there were between 70 and 100 clergymen working in the Fleet area between 1700 and 1753.

I found a number of Lobley references in these records. One that excited me was a marriage held on the 20th September 1734 of Joshua Lobley Gent[leman's] Serv[ant] of Danbury in Essex Bat[chelor] & Sarah Cary of the same, Spinster.



The image shows a handwritten entry from a church register. The text is written in a cursive script and reads: "20 Joshua Lobley Gent of Danbury in Essex Bat & Sarah Cary of the same Spinster pr Ed: Ashwell". The entry is dated 20th September 1734.

The ceremony was performed by Edward Ashwell "a most notorious rogue and imposter".

Danbury is less than ten miles from West Hanningfield, where my William married, so I followed up this lead with a search of the Danbury registers. I hoped to discover new information on Joshua and Sarah, and to find the baptismal records of at least two children - my William and a possible brother a Joshua Loblely who married Abigail Summers in the nearby village of Great Baddow in 1761).

I discovered the pauper burials of both Joshua (1794) and Sarah (1784) in Danbury, but no trace of any children.

As is common in family history research, one discovery raises more questions than it answers. To what 'gentleman' was Joshua Loblely a servant? Did that gentleman own property in both Danbury and London? Did Joshua come from Essex or just move there with his master? If they are indeed the parents of William (and Joshua), where were the children of Joshua and Sarah baptised?

Phil Loblely
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