

The Lobley name - a little history

- **The name:** It is difficult to be precise about the exact meaning of many surnames. However, I favour the theory that the name Lobley is a place name and is made up of two separate words: 'Lob' - meaning a wooded hillside, and 'Ley' - meaning a meadow
- **The place:** The reason I favour the above explanation is that I am almost certain that the origin of the name 'Lobley' lies in North Yorkshire, to the west of Masham, near a hamlet called 'Ilton cum Pott and at a place called 'Lobley Hall'. Lobley Hall is a Grade 2 listed, ruined 17th Century farmhouse and was built on land called 'Lobley'. This land has been identified by a local historian as having been a 'mother village for the area and dates back to Anglo-Saxon times. This is evidenced by the 'lynchets' or remains of ancient field markings on the hillside above the house. I have visited the site on a couple of occasions.
- **Families - an introduction:** I have not discovered any Lobley families that actually lived in Lobley Hall - perhaps any occupation of the site by families known by that name predates the earliest written records. However, they were certainly in evidence in the area in the late Middle Ages. All the earliest references I have to the name are restricted to North Yorkshire, around Wensleydale, from the earliest reference I have in the year 1313 up until the 16th Century.

By the time parish registers started in the mid 16th Century, some Lobley families had already moved away from North Yorkshire to other parts of Yorkshire and to Lancashire and Lincolnshire. A few families had even made it as far afield as London, Essex and Gloucestershire.

This pattern was repeated throughout the following centuries, with many families following work opportunities in the cities of Bradford and Leeds in West Yorkshire during the industrial revolution. In the 17th Century, the age of exploration took one Lobley to Jamaica, and the 18th Century saw one Lobley (probably a relative of mine) sentenced to be transported as a convict to the colonies in America. However, it was not until the 19th Century that Lobleys started to emigrate in any number. Families were established, and prospered, in the USA, Canada and Australia.