

THE LOCK KEEPERS OF BASWICH

JOHN GALLAMORE: 1839/1840 to 1842 & possibly until 1849

Researched and written by

David Jones

This is the story of John Gallamore and his Family. And do you think they all lived happily ever after? After all, this is Victorian England. Look out for the occasional premature death, and those kindly institutions, the Workhouse and the County Lunatic Asylum. Beware the demon drink. We even have an Inquest, and the Stafford Road will never be the same again, you will remember. Not too harrowing? Try not to worry, all these events happened a long long time ago.

John Gallamore was the Lock Keeper from about 1839 to 1842 and possibly until 1849. It is likely that he was appointed by the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Company soon after they took over the Lease in 1838. On some documents his surname appears as "Gallimore".

He was the son of Joseph Gallamore and Margaret Hill. They had married at St Mary & All Saints Church¹, Bradley by Stafford, on 23 July 1807. John was born in Ranton, a small village about four miles west of Stafford, a couple of miles northeast of Gnosall. He was baptised at St Editha's Church² at Church Eaton on 20 September 1807.

John married **Mary Johnson**. She was born around 1813, so was about six years younger than John. It is probable that Mary was from the Wolverhampton area, possibly Oxley; however, Census information is inconsistent about where she was born. Over the years John was variously described as a labourer, an agricultural/farm labourer, general labourer or a wagoner.

The couple had at least seven children, four boys and three girls.

The eldest was **John**. He was most likely born at Haughton, near Gnosall, in 1836 or 1837.

The family moved to the Lock House about 1839/1840 and lived there for possibly between three and ten years. We don't know what his duties as Lock Keeper were. What is known is that stop planks were stored at the Lock in case of accidents and that "someone was needed to take care of the paddles".

Their second child, **Thomas**, was born at the Lock House on 28 October 1840. His Birth Certificate⁶ records that his father, John, was an agricultural labourer. Thomas was baptised at Holy Trinity Church Baswich³ on 22 November 1840 and the Church Register confirms that John was a labourer of Baswich.

The 1841 Census, taken on 6 June, shows the Family living at the Lock House, Baswich; John (33) and Mary (28) with their children John (4) and Thomas (7 months). The Census states that John is an agricultural labourer.

The next two children were possibly born at the Lock House and they were baptised at Holy Trinity Church Baswich – **Elizabeth** on 5 March 1843 and **Jane** on 21 September 1845. The Church Register records that they were the daughters of John and Mary Gallimore of Radford (rather than Baswich) and that their father was a labourer. However, John was recorded as being a wagoner, of Radford, on their Birth Certificates.

When their next child **Joseph** was born, the Family had moved to Lapley. He was baptised at All Saints Church, Lapley, on 10 March 1850.

At the time of the 1851 Census (30 March), John (41) and Mary (38) were living at Longnor Lane, Lapley, with their children; John (15), Thomas (10), Elizabeth (8), Jane (5) and Joseph (1). The record states that John was a farm labourer.

John and Mary had two other children, **Charles** and **Mary**. Charles was baptised at Lapley on 19 February 1854 and Mary on 24 August 1856.

Sadly, Charles died on 12 January 1857 of dysentery. He was a month short of his third birthday. The informant was Harriet Perry, also of Longnor. John's occupation was again stated as a wagoner.

In the 1861 Census (7 April), John (52) and Mary (48) were living in Lapley Lane, and he was an agricultural labourer. Children Elizabeth (18), Jane (15), Joseph (11) and Mary (4) were still at home.

Sons John and Thomas had left home.

Eldest son John (a labourer) had married Ellen Johnson at St Michael & All Angels Church⁵ (Penkridge) on 30 December 1858. Neither could write their name so they signed the Register with an "X". Both gave their address as Whiston, Penkridge. John's father was named as John Gallimore, a labourer but Ellen's father was not given, suggesting she was illegitimate. In 1861, John (27) and Ellen (26) were living at Edgeland (Lapley) with their infant son, William Charles Gallamore (1). The couple had another child, Lydia, a few weeks after the Census was taken. Sadly, his wife Ellen died aged 39 of peritonitis on 23 September 1870 at 2 Spring Head in Wednesbury, and in the 1871 Census her husband and children were boarders in the home of John and Ann Bardell at 17 Addison Street, Wednesbury. After this Census, widower John Gallamore appears to disappear from the records.

I have been unable to trace second son Thomas in the 1861 Census. However, on 29 October 1865 there was a double wedding in the family: son Thomas Gallamore (a wagoner) to Jane Perry (born in Gailey) and also daughter Elizabeth Gallamore to Henry Brotherton (a labourer). The marriages took place in St Peter's Church Wolverhampton. The witnesses to both weddings were the same and included sister Jane Gallamore. On the marriage certificates, none of the brides or grooms or the witness could write their name, and each simply put their mark "X".

At this point I should mention that this is the Henry Brotherton who was born at Blymhill on 14 February 1844 and baptised at St Andrew's Church, Shifnal, on 10 March 1844. William Roden registered the birth two days after the baptism and the informant was G.Bailey, Master of Shifnal Union (Workhouse). Henry's mother was Mary Ann Brotherton and the name of the father was left blank on the certificates. When the 1851 Census was taken, Henry (7) and his brothers John (10) and James (16) were living with their widowed "father" John Brotherton (75) at Blymhill Common. It is likely that the three boys had different mothers and possibly different fathers. The enumerator, James Thompson, unusually records that the boys were "Wild on the Common. Never seen a school in their lives." Does this bode well for the future?

Daughter Jane Gallamore married Thomas Micklewright (a farm labourer) in St Peter's Church Wolverhampton on 25 February 1867. Her sister, Elizabeth Brotherton was one of the witnesses. On the marriage certificate neither the bride nor groom nor Elizabeth could write their name and simply put their mark "X". The other witness was Theophilus Holding, the Parish Clerk of St Peter's.

They had two children: John and Mary Micklewright. John was baptised at St Luke's Church Cannock on 10 February 1868 and Mary on 20 November 1870. Sadly, the children's mother (Jane) died of phthisis (tuberculosis) within the month, on 17 December 1870, a few days before Christmas, at Millgreen (Cannock). The informant was Mary Titley, also of Millgreen.

When the 1871 Census was taken on 2 April, John (65) and Mary (58) were living at Leacroft (Cannock). He was again recorded as being a farm labourer. Living with them were several members of their family: daughter Elizabeth (28) and son-in law Henry Brotherton (28) – a farm labourer; unmarried son Joseph (21) – also a farm labourer - and daughter Mary (15); and two grandchildren, John Micklewright (3) and Mary Micklewright (about 9 months). The grandchildren's widowed father, Thomas Micklewright, appears to have disappeared from the records following the death of his wife, and the children were left to be brought up by their grandparents. Sadly little Mary Micklewright died later that year (16 August 1871) aged 15 months of marasmus, a type of severe malnutrition caused by lack of calories and protein. She was buried at St Luke's Church Cannock on 21 August 1871.

In 1871, son Thomas (31) and his wife Jane (28) were living in Bridgtown (Cannock). He was a labourer. However the 1881 Census records Thomas (39) living at Coven, Slade Heath, with his wife Virginia (36) – but I very much suspect the enumerator may have made an error and wrote Virginia instead of Jane. I also suspect that Thomas and Jane had no children.

The youngest of John's children, Mary Gallamore, married Joseph Turner (a labourer) on 20 October 1879 at St Luke's Church Cannock. She signed the Register but her husband and Lydia Gallamore (a witness) recorded their mark with an "X". Mary gave birth to a son, Henry, soon after the wedding and he was baptised on 18 December 1879. He was baptised on the same day his mother Mary died of puerperal (childbed) fever aged 24 years in John Street Cannock – she had been married less than two months. Her widower, Joseph Turner, was

a coal miner in the 1881 Census and was living with his parents and son Henry at Walsall Road, Cannock. He went on to marry Sarah Jane Cliffe in 1884.

According to the 1881 Census (3 April), John (75) and Mary (70) were living at Longford Lane (Cannock); his occupation was again given as a farm labourer. With them were several members of their family: daughter Elizabeth (Brotherton) (37) and son-in-law Henry Brotherton (37) a farm labourer; unmarried son Joseph Gallamore (28) a farm labourer – he appears to disappear from the records after this Census; grandson William (Charles) Gallamore (21) a coal miner; and another grandson, John Micklewright (13), a farmer's boy.

Sadly, John's wife Mary died on 20 February 1883 of "apoplexy" aged 70 at Walsall Road Cannock. Her death was reported to the Registrar by her daughter, Elizabeth Brotherton, two days later – she signed her mother's death certificate with an "X".

And it would seem that son Thomas (of Standeford/Slade Heath near Brewood) died aged 43 on 20 June 1884 from tetanus (lock jaw) caused by a blow to the head given by Charles Walter Clarkson (a draper and tailor) with the butt end of a whip. Thomas was a waggoner employed by Richard Oakley of the Laches Farm, Coven, and was returning home from Wolverhampton along the Stafford Road on 5 June 1884 with a waggon and horses when he met Clarkson at about five o'clock at Cross Green Bridge. It appears that Thomas, who had been drinking, accused Clarkson of telling his employer that he "was drunk when in charge of the waggon". Thomas took off his coat and hat, and attacked Clarkson – missing his head but striking him heavily on the chest. Clarkson then defended himself and struck Thomas on the left side of his head with the whip which knocked him to the ground. There was blood everywhere. Clarkson then started towards Laches Farm and Thomas got up and returned to the waggon and horses. Clarkson started proceedings against Thomas for assault and there was a cross summons by Thomas. The cases went before the Bench at Penkridge on Monday 16 June and the Bench dismissed both cases, each party having to pay their own expenses. After this hearing Thomas' health deteriorated rapidly, lock jaw set in and he died on the Friday. Clarkson was remanded on bail. An Inquest held on Monday 23 June in the evening at the *Harrows Inn*⁴, Standeford, before the coroner, Mr W H Phillips, established what was alleged to have happened; a post mortem was held the following day in the presence of Mr Worthington (a surgeon of Brewood) and the Inquest was resumed at the *Harrows Inn* on Saturday 28 June. Mr C D Duce, the doctor who had been treating Thomas, said he did not consider at the time that the wound was a serious one. It was concluded that death had resulted from "irritation to a nerve" resulting in lock jaw rather than the one and a half inch wound to the left side of the face which was "very superficial". The blow was considered to have been very slight and had caused no fracture. Charles Clarkson was discharged.

Sadly, on 26 December 1885, 18 year old grandson John Micklewright (a coal miner) died of diabetes and exhaustion. He was buried at St Luke's Church Cannock on 30 December 1885. His death was registered by his aunt (Elizabeth Brotherton) to the Registrar, Thomas Gripton, two days later.

Sadly, Thomas Gripton's services were needed by the family the following year. John's daughter Elizabeth (Brotherton) died from phthisis on 27 November 1886 at Old Fallow (Cannock). She was 41. Her death was registered the same day and the informant was her husband, Henry Brotherton, who made his mark with an "X" on the certificate. Poor Henry. Yes, poor Henry. I suspect that it was Elizabeth who had probably held the Family together, and with her gone what misfortunes lie ahead? Only continue if you are not of a delicate, sensitive nature.

When the 1891 Census (5 April) was taken, John (84) was a pauper inmate at the Cannock Union Workhouse (Wolverhampton Road, Cannock). His occupation was again given as a farm labourer. However, his birthplace was incorrectly stated as Great Wyrley – which was local to the Workhouse, and even his surname was misspelt (Gallemore). At the time, there were 198 pauper inmates in the Workhouse (135 males and 63 females) together with 21 vagrants (20 males and 1 female). The Workhouse had seven staff. In addition to Allan Gatward (40) and his wife Louisa (42), who were Master and Matron of the Workhouse respectively, there were five Officers: Emily Wilson (36) a widow who was the Industrial Trainer; Elizabeth West (24) single who was the Nurse; Mary Hood (42) a widow who was the General Assistant to the Matron; Ebenezer Field (54) a widower who was the Vagrant Attendant; and George Davis (72) a single man who was the Workhouse Carpenter.

John Gallamore died two years later, on 29 April 1893, aged 86 in the Workhouse of "senile gangrene" and "exhaustion". His death was reported to the Registrar, Ada Gripton, by the Master of the Workhouse, Allan Gatward, on 3 May.

And what of Henry Brotherton? In the 1891 Census Henry was lodging with James and Rosanna Norton at John Street, Cannock). Henry was a coal miner (not a farm labourer) as was James Norton. Henry was recorded as a widower.

However, Henry's health was failing and he had to give up work sometime in 1892. He began to lose his faculties and began wandering around in an aimless fashion. He entered the Cannock Union Workhouse in May 1893 and appeared to be partially paralysed. His condition deteriorated and by November 1893 was confined to bed. By February 1894 he had become very noisy and violent, and had to be restrained in bed.

On 24 February 1894 Henry was admitted to the County Asylum at Burntwood., Cannock. The authorities were unsure of his age, thought he was single and had no known relatives or friends. Eventually James Norton was identified as a friend – Henry had lodged with his Family in 1891.

The Asylum Case Notes state that Henry was 5 feet 4 inches tall, had grey eyes and brown hair. He was diagnosed as suffering from dementia and general paralysis of the insane, a symptom of late-stage syphilis. He was considered to be homicidal. He had various bruises and bedsores, could hardly stand or move around, his speech was almost inarticulate and his tongue was tremulous. He had a restless expression. He did not appear to know what he was doing, and continued to be noisy and violent. He had bitten the wardsman and also his own finger. He was incontinent and his urine, which was usually voided in the bed,

had a whitish deposit containing pus cells, crystals of triple phosphate and swarms of bacteria.

He was put on a diet of mince and prescribed chloral and potassium bromide, and was strapped down in bed when necessary.

He had weekly visits from the doctor for the first month, then monthly.

On 5 May 1894 it is recorded that the authorities had identified Henry's mother (Mary Anslow nee Brotherton) and she was living at Bromstead near Newport, Shropshire. There is no record to say whether she travelled to the Asylum.

The next day Henry became more paralysed and his speech more rambling. By the following day he was almost unconscious and the left side of his mouth drooped; during the afternoon he had a convulsive seizure. On 8 May he continued to sink, his body temperature fell (his axilla or underarm temperature was 80°F rather than the normal of about 97°F). He died at 11.30 pm in the presence of Thomas Eel, an attendant. Dr J.Beveridge Spence, the Asylum's Medical Superintendent, confirmed the cause of death as "General Paralysis of the insane" and he notified the Registrar, A.E.Gilbert, of the death two weeks later, on 22 May.

The Asylum Case Notes contain a photograph of Henry Brotherton, taken on 30 April 1894, a few days before he died. Henry's face stares hauntingly out from the page, just as he has done for the last 120 years.



(1) St Mary & All Saints Church, Bradley by Stafford (2013)



(2) St Editha's Church, Church Eaton (2013)



(3) Holy Trinity Church, Baswich (2010)



(4) The Harrows Inn, Standeford (2013)



(5) St Michael & All Angels Church, Penkridge (2013)

CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF BIRTH



GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE

Application Number 2205674-6

REGISTRATION DISTRICT	STAFFORD UNION
1840 BIRTH in the Sub-district of Castle Church	in the County of Stafford

Columns:- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 No. When and where born Name, if any Sex Name and surname of father Name, surname and maiden surname of mother Occupation of father Signature, description and residence of informant When registered Signature of registrar Name entered after registration

297	Twenty eighth of Oct. 1840 at Lock House in the parish of Baswich	Thomas	Boy	John Gallamore	Mary Gallamore formerly Johnson	Agricultural Labourer	Mary Gallamore Mother Lock House	Second of December 1840	W. J. Pevin Registrar	
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CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a Register of Births in the District above mentioned.

Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, under the Seal of the said Office, the 6th day of April 2010

BXCE 468394

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(6) Copy of Thomas Gallamore's Birth Certificate: 28 October 1840

Sources of Information

- (a) Census Records 1841-1891, and other documents including
- (b) Birth, Marriage and Death Certificates (General Record Office),
- (c) Parish Records (Staffordshire Record Office),
- (d) County Asylum Registers and Casebooks (Staffordshire Record Office), and
- (e) *Staffordshire Advertiser* – June and July 1884 (William Salt Library).

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