

THE SILL FAMILY OF CARTMEL A LANDOWNER and A SEAMAN



The Sill Family

From the gravestone outside Cartmel Priory, directly below the East window, on the stone lying flat are the names of:

John Sill, died 1797, and his wife Elizabeth, died 1810 of The Hill, Cartmel.

Below them is the name of John Sill, their son, died 1845 of The Hill.

Below him are the names of John Sill, (cousin of the second John Sill above) died 1863 and his wife Elizabeth Sill, died 1863 of Tewit Moss.

JOHN SILL (1760 – 1845) LANDOWNER

John Sill of The Hill who died in 1845 left a will, dated 1835 (Probate record Preston John Sill W/RW/F/R395a/37 17 March 1845) which described 6 parcels of premises and land and the people to whom he was leaving these parcels.

- 1) The first piece of land was described as ... *My newly erected messuage, cottage or dwelling house and barn, stable, cowhouse and buildings with the appurtenances and close called New Field containing by Advancement 2 statute acres and that any parcel of land lately fenced in containing by advancement 10 acres and 30 perches statute measure or thereabouts all situate and being on Overidge Fell....* This was Tewit Moss and it was left to John Sill, his cousin who was already living at Tewit Moss and he was also left the clothes of his cousin John Sill.

- 2) The second parcel was ... *messuage, cottage or dwelling house commonly called High House (tenant occupied) and the garden behind the same and the outhouses, rooms and buildings thereto adjoining situate at the Hill... together with the barn and outhousing standing a little to the north of the same cottage and all those my closes or parcels of land... commonly known by the respective names of the Paddock, the Wood, near Whait, Far Whait, Round Platt, Round Platt Wood, Boww Woods, James Field, Far Field, Langdale and near Burns Meadow continuing altogether the Homestead and Garden on the site or ground of the said last mentioned cottage garden and outhouses rooms, buildings, barns and outhousing according to a late Advancement and plan thereof made by Captain John Swainson 41 acres, 3 roods and 11 perches as also the allotment of commons on the east side of Nook Bank.*

This parcel of land was left to George Rigg, son of George Rigg of Witherslack, farmer and Mary (Sill, John Sill's daughter). Therefore George was John's grandson and in the 1841 census he was working as a farm labourer at The Hill.

- 3) The third parcel was...*All that messuage and dwelling house commonly called The Lower House situate at The Hill at present in the occupation of Thomas Bigland with barn, stable, cowhouse, peathouse and other outhouses and buildings thereto belonging standing a little to the south of same dwellinghouse and all and every building, closes and parcels of land thereto belonging to...*

This land was left to John Rigg, brother to the above George Rigg and therefore grandson to John Sill.

- 4) Fourth parcel ...*all that ancient cottage or dwellinghouse and the court and gardens therein to adjoining and belonging at present in my own occupation situate and being in Cartmel Church Town on the west side of the street or highway there leading from thence towards Headless Cross together with the stable, carthouse and hayloft over the said stable situate and being on the eastside of the street and opposite the last mentioned cottage and also my two closes of parcels of land commonly so called the Cross Closes and joining each other and lying in the township of lower Allithwaite in the parish of Cartmel aforesaid now in my own possession with their appurtenances.*

This was given to Agnes Nelson, wife of Edward Nelson of Cumberland and was John Sill's natural daughter.

- 5) Fifth parcel... *All that newly erected messuage, cottage or dwellinghouse with the schoolroom under the same now in the occupation of Joseph Robinson and the privy thereunto belonging situate in Cartmel Churchtown aforesaid on the eastside of the above named street or highway there with the Appurtenances. On condition that she (the inheritor)and they do permit and suffer Joseph Robinson to occupy and enjoy the said school room so long as he shall teach children in the said schoolroom English, Writing and Arithmetic and shall also hold and permit to be holding meetings for the purpose of*

divine worship in the said schoolroom on the evenings of the Sabbath or any other day and shall and do pay yearly and every year the rent of 5 shillings to Jane Jackson (inheritor) which rent I only wish him to pay and my will and wish is that she or they are not to refuse permission for the Sect or Class from Tottlebank? At any time or times to preach in the schoolroom otherwise this devise to cease and in the event of the said Jane Jackson dying to go to issue with same intents and purposes.

This was left to Jane Jackson, daughter of James Jackson of Cark, labourer, the husband of John Sill's cousin Betty, otherwise Elizabeth Jackson.

- 6) Sixth Parcel... *Turberry, moss ground from Ellerside Moss plus all the enclosure or parcel of common land forming part of Overridge Fell at present in occupation of Joshua Wardley as tenant.*

This was left to his 2 grandsons, George and John Rigg.

Other references to the Sill family at The Hill prior to 1797 are:

1735 the christening of John Sill (the first John Sill on the gravestone)

his father stated as Thomas Sill

1782 the marriage of William Sill, aged 24 to Jane Seatle, aged 23

TEWIT MOSS (described as the first parcel of land in the above will)

1841 John Sill (1773 – 1863, cousin to John Sill of the Hill who died 1845)

1851 John Sill (same as above, was left Tewit Moss in will of his cousin)

1861 John Sill (12 acres) (same as above, name on headstone laying down)

1871 Thomas Sill (1825 – 1878, son of above) Name on standing headstone.

1881 John Robinson (30 acres)

1891 John Dixon

1901 'Not in occupation stated' on the Census

1911 Not on the Census



(1893 OS map)

Tewit Moss is situated between Stribers and Overedge and is described in John Sill's 1835 Will as *...my newly erected message...* which means that it was built in the early 19th century, probably resulting from the Cartmel Parliamentary Enclosure. By the beginning of the 20th century it was not occupied and appears to have never been occupied again as it is not in the 1911 census and disappears off the OS map. It is now a ruin.

Ian Whyte in his book, "Transforming Fell and Valley" (2003) which looks at Parliamentary Enclosure in North West England states that *New farmsteads were a common feature of parliamentary-enclosure landscapes.* (p.83) He goes on to say that though many were successful, some of them... *have failed to survive the late nineteenth century agricultural depression and twentieth-century farm amalgamation.* (p.84) Tewit Moss did not survive and although the agricultural depression may have had some negative effect on its survival its decline was probably due more to the fact that the land only comprised of 12 acres and this was poor, boggy land.

ADAM SILL (1830 – 1878)

The gravestone standing has the names of Thomas Sill who died in Dalton in 1878, aged 53 and underneath that of Adam Sill who died at Ulverston in 1878 aged 48 and buried at Holy Trinity Church, Ulverston. They were brothers and the sons of John Sill of Tewit Moss

Thomas took over the farm when his father died in 1863 and was there in 1871. It appeared that he had no family.

Adam Sill was born about 1830 at Tewit Moss.

Adam was the son of John and Elizabeth Sill and had 2 brothers and 3 sisters. We know that his father John was living at Tewit Moss in 1841 and lived there until he died in 1863.

Adam, stated as aged 13, but would have been 11 in 1841, was employed as an agricultural labourer at Stribers Farm, about ½ mile from his home and ten years later in 1851 he was a farm labourer at Howbarrow Farm, about 1 ½ miles from his home.

But by 1861 his life had totally changed. From a small farming area he had spent over 20 years working in, he is now to be found at Woolwich Dockyard in the Royal Marine Barrack Infirmary as a Private. So what happened in the intervening 10 years? The Crimean War had taken place between 1853 – 1856, so was he involved in that?

(The Rosarios' First Commission 1862 – 1866, was in the West Indies, North America and Canada, was Adam on this voyage?)

By the 1871 census he is a Private on The Rosario, an 11 gun screw sloop of the Royal Navy anchored off Somerset, Cape York Peninsula in Queensland, Australia. He is one of 18 privates/gunners on a ship of 130 men. The Rosario on her second commission (1867 – 1875) sailed from Woolwich to Australia for the suppression of the South Seas labour trade. They were looking for the ships and crews involved in “blackbirding”, the illegal recruitment (including enslavement) of indigenous populations of nearby Pacific islands or northern Queensland. In one incident in early 1872 the Rosario visited the island of Nukapu where the ship was initially attacked by natives with arrows. The Rosario’s crew landed on the island and engaged the natives with small arms. The estimate was that between 20 to 30 natives were killed with one Corporal fatally injured from the ship. Presumably Adam Sill would have been one of the crew involved in this battle. The reason that the Rosario visited the island was to inquire into the murder of Bishop Patteson on the island. But the fear of and violence towards white men (Bishops and Royal Navy seamen included) from the Islanders was as a result of the aggressive attacks on the Islanders from the slavers and pirates.

In April 1872 the Rosario visited Wellington, Otago and Auckland in New Zealand and later in the year she visited the Solomon Islands. In the summer of 1874 the ship visited Fiji, the Marshall Islands, the Ellis Islands and the Gilbert Islands searching for William Hayes, notorious for slaving and piracy.

It is interesting to note here that in 1870 a team from the Rosario played the first New Zealand International Rugby Union match against a side from Wellington. S. Todd *Sporting Records of New Zealand* (1976) Auckland: Moe Publications

In October 1875 the Rosario was paid off at Sheerness.

Adam Sill died in 1878, aged 48, in Ulverston Workhouse from phthisis, a common disease amongst seamen. He is buried at Holy Trinity Church in Ulverston, but his name is on the standing headstone in Cartmel Priory churchyard.

Adam and Thomas Sill had a nephew, John Sill (1851 – 1924) and he had 6 daughters whose descendants mostly still live in the area but others live overseas, some in Australia.



Census 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911

Latter Day Saints Genealogy

Transforming Fell and Valley Landscape and Parliamentary Enclosure in North West England by Ian Whyte, published by Centre for North-West Regional Studies, University of Lancaster, 2003

HMS Rosario (1860) - Wikipedia