SKIDMORE STOVE GRATE MAKERS, TOKEN MAKERS AND JEWELLERS OF BIRMINGHAM, LONDON AND COVENTRY

by Linda Moffatt © 2016

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This was originally part of the book Skidmore Families of the Black Country and Birmingham 1600-1900 by Linda Moffatt, published in 2004.

For an Introduction to this branch of the family and an account of the first five generations of this branch, see Skidmore Families Of The Black Country, the first five generations on the website www.skidmorefamilyhistory.com.
This account begins at Generation 6, denoted by superscript 6 next to the name of the head of household.

DATES
- Prior to 1752 the year began on 25 March (Lady Day). In order to avoid confusion, a date which in the modern calendar would be written 2 February 1714 is written 2 February 1713/4 - i.e. the baptism, marriage or burial occurred in the 3 months (January, February and the first 3 weeks of March) of 1713 which 'rolled over' into what in a modern calendar would be 1714.
- Civil registration was introduced in England and Wales in 1837 and records were archived quarterly; hence, for example, 'born in 1840Q1' the author here uses to mean that the birth took place in January, February or March of 1840. For an individual born after 1837, where only a baptism date is given assume the birth was registered in the same quarter but the exact date of birth is presently unknown.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES AND DEATHS
Databases of all known Skidmore and Scudamore bmds can be found at www.skidmorefamilyhistory.com

PROBATE
A list of all known Skidmore and Scudamore wills - many with full transcription or an abstract of its contents - can be found at www.skidmorefamilyhistory.com in the file Skidmore/Scudamore One-Name Study Probate.

PRIVACY
The Skidmore/Scudamore One-Name Study does not, as a matter of course, publish any biographical detail from the last 100 years, unless with permission of descendants.
The Thomas Skidmore [1745-1799] and John Skidmore [c.1750-1823], described first below, were included with the Black Country families in my 2004 book. I now suggest that they are brothers and probable sons of Thomas Skidmore [60]. They both had children baptised in Dudley, Worcestershire, before moving to the Clerkenwell and Holborn areas of London in the 1770s. John, with his sons Meremoth and Gamaliel, became very successful stove grate manufacturers in London. A further son Paul Skidmore was a token maker in Holborn.

The descendants of Francis Skidmore [c.1740-1797] are also included in this account, beginning on p.15. He was an earthenware dealer of Birmingham and grandfather of Francis Alfred Skidmore, the famous silversmith and art metal worker of Coventry. Francis Skidmore was described in my 2004 book but, unlike Thomas Skidmore and John Skidmore referred to above, was not included with the Black Country families.

I put the following circumstantial evidence that the said Thomas and John Skidmore are related to this Francis Skidmore. John Skidmore's son Gamaliel Skidmore [1779-1822] had a son, also called Gamaliel and born 9 July 1814, whose birth was recorded at Dr Williams’ Library, Redcross Street, near Cripplegate in the Protestant Dissenters’ Registry (for Baptists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians). Present at his birth in High Holborn in the parish of St George’s, Bloomsbury, were Robert Whitfield and Flora Skidmore. I have found only one Flora Skidmore living at this time. She was the Flora Hedger who married in 1811 Francis Skidmore, silversmith and jeweller of London and later Coventry, son of Francis Skidmore the elder, earthenware dealer of Birmingham.

It is also worth noting that Thomas Skidmore [1773-1820], the eldest son of Francis Skidmore the elder, moved from Birmingham to London after the death of his children (and perhaps also that of his wife Martha) and was buried in 1820 in Spa Fields Burial Ground, as were members of the family of John Skidmore.

It would be very helpful to obtain DNA genealogical tests from descendants of Francis Skidmore, since there are well-established DNA profiles of several Skidmore lines, including that of the Black Country Skidmores.
120. **THOMAS**

**SKIDMORE**, bachelor, married Sarah Jukes on 13 September 1772 at St Thomas’, Dudley, the marriage being witnessed by Oliver Foley. Names given to his children suggest that Thomas was the son of Thomas [60] and Ann (Green) Skidmore, baptised 24 August 1745 at St Mary’s, Kingswinford. Two of Thomas and Sarah’s sons were named Daniel Green Skidmore; the first died in infancy in Dudley in 1773, the second in Bowling Green Lane, Clerkenwell, London in 1780 at the age of four. Thomas is almost certainly closely related to, and I suggest the brother of, John Skidmore [121] who moved from Dudley to Clerkenwell around 1775 - they were both living in Saffron Hill or Saffron Court in Clerkenwell in the years either side of 1780.


Thomas Skidmore of Bloomsbury died at the age of 53 and was buried at the Spa Fields Chapel, Clerkenwell on 21 June 1799. His wife was perhaps the Sarah Skidmore buried at St James, Clerkenwell on 17 April 1796.

![Spa Fields Chapel](http://www.islington.gov.uk/publicrecords/documents/LeisureandCulture/Pdf/lhcwalks_ec1)

**The children of Thomas and Sarah (Jukes) Skidmore, baptised at St Thomas’, Dudley,**

i. Dan Green, baptised 25 December 1772 and buried as Daniel Skidmore at St Thomas’, Dudley 9 March 1773.

ii. Nancy, baptised 2 October 1774. No burial found.

iii. Nancy, baptised 21 May 1775.

iv. Daniel Green, baptised 20 October 1776. He was buried on 29 November 1780 aged 4 at St James’ in Clerkenwell, London.

v. Martha, baptised 12 October 1777.

vi. Thomas, baptised 14 March 1779.

vii. Benjamin, baptised 8 August 1781.

and in London,

viii. Mary, baptised 13 January 1782 at St Andrew’s, Holborn, daughter of Thomas and Sarah Skidmore of Saffron Hill.

ix. [perhaps] Tom Skidmore, infant of Coppice Row, buried 7 March 1787 in the Middle Ground of St James’, Clerkenwell.

246. x. [perhaps] JOHN.

**246. JOHN**

**SKIDMORE** was a brassfounder and stove grate maker of various addresses in Clerkenwell, London. Although he shared the same occupation and resided in the same area of London as John Skidmore [121], described below, he was not his son. The sons of John [121], Meremoth Skidmore and Gamaliel Skidmore are mentioned extensively in indentures of lease⁴ and also in John Skidmore’s will of 1822. It seems


³ Drawing from [http://www.islington.gov.uk/publicrecords/documents/LeisureandCulture/Pdf/lhcwalks_ec1](http://www.islington.gov.uk/publicrecords/documents/LeisureandCulture/Pdf/lhcwalks_ec1).

Spa Fields Chapel was erected in 1777 by the Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon. In 1739 she joined the first Methodist society in Fetter Lane, London …… George Whitefield became her personal chaplain, and, with his assistance, following problems put in her path by the Anglican clergy from whom she had preferred not to separate, she founded the ‘Countess of Huntingdon’s Connexion’ …… She was responsible for the founding of sixty-four chapels …… insisting that they should all subscribe to the doctrines of the Church of England and use only the Book of Common Prayer. Amongst these were …… a small number in London including founding one adjacent to her London home at Spa Fields, Clerkenwell/Finsbury. [Wikipedia].

likely that the younger John Skidmore was the elder John Skidmore's nephew, a son (whose baptism in London in the 1780s has not been found) of Thomas Skidmore [120] of Dudley and Clerkenwell.

John Skidmore married Martha Hastings on 28 September 1812 at St Mary’s, Islington, London. They are easily confused with John Skidmore, jeweller of Birmingham and Clerkenwell, and his wife Martha Cook, described below. John and Martha (Hastings) Skidmore lived at 40 Turnmill Street in 1814, Red Lion Street in 1815, Coppice Row, Clerkenwell in 1817 and in Crawford Passage, Clerkenwell between 1819 and at least 1823.

A John Skidmore who might be the husband of Martha Hastings died aged 39 in 1828. He was buried at St James’, Clerkenwell, on 10 August 1828. He died in 'embarrassed circumstances' and an inquest into the unfortunate circumstances of his death were reported in The Times of 7 August. He was a brassfounder resident in lodgings in Kirby Street, St Andrew's and 'in the employ of Mr Brant lamp manufacturer of Charles Street'.

If this man were indeed the husband of Martha Hastings, it would have left his widow and their 11-year old son William in need of some assistance. I have not been able to discover Martha Skidmore's death or remarriage but their son William was by the time of the 1841 census assistant to a general dealer in Birmingham and from this base he built his own successful business.

The children of John and Martha (Hastings) Skidmore, born in Clerkenwell,

i. Eliza, born 1813, baptised 25 December 1814 at St Andrew’s, Holborn. She died aged 18 months and was buried at Spa Fields on 5 February 1815.

ii. John, born 29 June 1815, baptised 25 December at St James’, Clerkenwell. Died aged 4, buried at Clerkenwell on 7 July 1819, of Crawford Passage.

iii. WILLIAM, baptised on 30 June 1817, of whom more below.

iv. Thomas, baptised 21 May 1820 at Clerkenwell. Probably the infant Skidmore of Crawford Passage buried on 16 February 1823.

WILLIAM SKIDMORE, baptised on 30 June 1817 at Holborn, was the son of John [246] and Martha (Hastings) Skidmore. He was a general merchant and hardwareman of Bethnal Green in London, and of Birmingham and Leeds. William is first found in the 1841 census, an assistant to Thomas Allen of Edgbaston Street, a general dealer (aged 55-59) and his wife Sarah Allen (aged 55-59). It is not clear whether there was a family connection to the Allens or whether an apprenticeship agreement took place.

He was a warehouseman of Lee Terrace, Birmingham, when he married Elizabeth Pierson Stevens of Bishop Street, Birmingham (born about 1821, daughter of John Stevens, office clerk) on 25 December 1843 at St Philip’s. Their marriage was witnessed by Sarah Stevens and Thomas Stevens.

William and Elizabeth’s first two children were born in Bethnal Green, London in 1844 and 1845. The family then moved back to Birmingham and were living in Cambrian Road there in April 1848. William returned to Edgbaston Street, Birmingham from 1850, where he was in partnership with Charles Peverelle of Italy. William appears in Slater’s Directory of Birmingham for 1852/53 at 70 Edgbaston Street. The advertisement at the back of this Directory describes him as an ‘importer of French and German goods, pipes, tobacco boxes, etc. and dealer in all kinds of hair and cloth brushes, combs, silk and cotton purses, braces, accordions, congreve matches, etc.’ Merchants, shopkeepers and travellers were supplied at his wholesale warehouses in London, Birmingham and Sheffield ‘at the lowest prices’.

Elizabeth Skidmore died in Birmingham on 21 January 1864 aged 43. William married secondly Mrs Mary Suffield (born about 1819), in Leeds in 1866Q2. They lived in Armley in Leeds where William died on 30 January 1872 aged 54. He was buried with his first wife and four of his children in Warstone Lane Cemetery, Birmingham. William Skidmore left a will, proved at Wakefield on 25 March 1872 by his son-in-law John Warrillow of 101 Great Hampton Street, Birmingham, paper dealer, Henry Stevens of 101 Newhall Street, Birmingham, attorney’s clerk, and Thomas Bruce Cornock of Park Place, Leeds, teazle merchant.

Mary Skidmore died on 3 July 1876 aged 57 at Hill Top, Armley. Administration of her estate was granted on 22 July 1876 to Frederick Walter Suffield (born about 1838 in Kidderminster, Worcestershire) of 58 David Street, Manchester Road, Bradford, toy and fancy goods dealer, the son and only next of kin. Frederick Walter Suffield was living with his wife Charlotte at 31 Belgrave Street in Leeds.
The children of William and Elizabeth Pierson (Stevens) Skidmore, baptised at St Matthew’s, Bethnal Green, London,


ii. Elizabeth, born 15 December 1845, baptised with her brother. She married John Warrillow, a colour paper maker (born 6 June 1843 in London) on 7 March 1866 at Edgbaston, Birmingham. In 1881 they were living at 7 Weston Road, Handsworth, Staffordshire. At this time John employed two men and 25 women in his paper making business. John Warrillow died on 1 February 1901 aged 57. Elizabeth died in Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, on 13 October 1935 in her ninetieth year. Their daughter Edith Amy Warrillow married Francis Henry Pepper, grandparents to Mrs Phoebe Kemp, who kindly supplied information on this family.

iii. Louisa Emma, born 12 April (baptised 3 May) 1848. She married Thomas Tabberner, a drysalter of Ashted Row, Birmingham (born about 1839 in Yardley, Worcestershire) in 1874Q4 in the Solihull registration district. They are found in the census of 1881 (enumerated as Tabbriner) at 216 Ashted Row in Aston. Thomas was then a druggist and grocer.

iv. JOHN, baptised 9 December 1850. He appears to be the 10 year old boy, born in Birmingham, found in 1861 at Amblecote Training School in Holloway End. This was on the corner opposite Holy Trinity Church in Amblecote, opposite the present Stourbridge Memorial Ground, roughly where the Royal Oak pub now stands.

John became a hardware and fancy goods salesman. His marriage to Mary Stagg, second daughter of George Stagg of Manchester, was reported in the Manchester Times. They married on 18 November 1875 at St Albans, Cheetham, Manchester.

He lived with his family in Cheetham into the 1890s but by the time of the 1901 census was living at 4 York Road, Handsworth, Birmingham. John died at the age of 54 in 1905 and was buried on 5 October at St Mary’s, Handsworth. Mary Skidmore ran a boarding house at 108 Brunswick Road, Handsworth.

The children of John and Mary (Stagg) Skidmore, born in Manchester,


ii. GEORGE SIDNEY, born 1878Q3. He married Fanny Anscombe (born 1883 in Birmingham) in 1908Q4. He was an electro plate worker at the time of the 1911 census, when he was living with his wife and daughter at 3 Alma Street, Aston Manor, Birmingham. He later ran a newsagent’s at Sixways, Birmingham. He died in 1948 aged 69.

Children of George Sidney and Fanny (Anscombe) Skidmore,

i. Marjorie Mavis, born 1909Q2.


iii. WILLIAM ERNEST, born 1880Q4. He married Bertha Snelson (born 1885 in Monks Coppenhall, Cheshire, daughter of Frederick Snelson) on 23 February 1910 at Christ Church, Crewe. He ran F. Whiston & Co., a toy firm in Crewe. This involved him in frequent trips to Germany in search of the best toys made at that time.

The children of William Ernest and Bertha (Snelson) Skidmore,

i. Madelaine, born 6 November 1910 in Crewe. She married Stanley Halford.

ii. FREDERICK ERNEST, born 22 February 1912 at Wistaston near Nantwich in Cheshire. A son James who kindly supplied information on the family of John and Mary (Stagg) Skidmore.

iii. Doris M., born 1914Q1.

iv. Leslie G., born 1916Q1. Mr Skidmore died at the age of 22 in 1938. He worked at Jay’s of Leicester, a furniture shop.


v. Jane, born 1854Q3 and baptised 26 January 1857. She lived with her sister Elizabeth Warrillow in Handsworth in 1881. Miss Skidmore spent the later years of her life in a hospital in Warwick. She died on 31 January 1929 aged 74.

vi. Emily, born and died in 1857Q1.

vii. Albert, born 1858Q2, died 1859Q1.

Skidmore/Scudamore One-Name Study

121. **JOHN**[^5] SKIDMORE, whose baptism has not been found, married Nancy Jones at Kingswinford, Staffordshire on 25 March 1771, the wedding witnessed by Thomas Skidmore. John's wife could be Nancy the daughter of Joseph and Mary Jones, baptised at Oldswinford on 24 November 1751 or possibly Ann the daughter of Isaac and Susanna (Marsh) Jones, baptised at Kingswinford on 1 November 1752.

They lived in the parish of Dudley, Worcestershire in the early years of their marriage before moving to London. The baptism register of St Andrew's, Holborn shows that John and Nancy were living in Saffron Hill in 1778 and Onslow Street in 1779. John Skidmore was a fender maker of St James, Clerkenwell when he took on apprentices Thomas Wilkinson and Charles Bennett early in 1781. In April 1785, Charles Cook became apprenticed to John Skidmore of the same parish, stove grate maker[^5].

Interestingly, Nancy Skidmore witnessed on 11 September 1785 the marriage at St Andrew's, Holborn of Elizabeth Skidmore to William Thickbroom. Elizabeth's connection, if any, to John Skidmore is not presently known. The Morning Chronicle announced the death on 'Friday morning, [4 June 1803] Mrs N. Skidmore, wife of John Skidmore of High Holborn ironmonger to His Majesty's Honourable Board of Ordinance, in the 54th year of her age'.[^6]

John Skidmore had his stove grate factory in Coppice Row, Clerkenwell, and is listed there in Bailey's Directory of 1784. He is presumably the John Skidmore of St Helena Precinct who paid £8 in Land Tax in 1786. In June of 1786 the premises at which he ran his business were sold, presumably to John himself.

'To be sold, ..... on the 1st of November next, between Five and Six in the Afternoon, Two Freehold Houses situate in Coppice-row, Clerkenwell, in the County of Middlesex, late belonging to John Sawell, of the same Place, Cooper, deceased, consisting of a large House, with several Work-shops and other Out-offices, wherein a Manufactory is carried on for Stoves, in the Possession of John Skidmore, Stove-grate-maker, and another House in the Possession of Simon Yates'.[^7]

In 1789 John Skidmore opened his warehouse at 123 High Holborn. He advertised regularly in *The Times* and on 10 May 1790 appeared the following advertisement:

J. SKIDMORE,
Stove Grate Maker to his Majesty's Honourable Board of Ordnance [which role he maintained for some years]
At His Manufactory, Coppice Row, Clerkenwell, and at his Ware Rooms, No. 123, High Holborn, near Bloomsbury-Square,
Begs Leave to return his most grateful thanks, to the Nobility and Gentry for their generous Patronage and Support, and also to inform them, that the uncommon success he has met with for the small time since he has opened his Ware Room as above, hath induced him to extend them further to the same size upstairs, as they are below, and which is now completely fitted up, and regularly supplied from his Manufactory, with every article in the furnishing branch, particularly his fine Steel and other Stoves, elegant Patent Chimney-Pieces and Patent Register Stoves, which are warranted not to fail, lose their lustre, or want cleaning, great variety of Kitchen Ranges, with his much improved perpetual Ovens, Boilers, Stewing and Ironing Stoves, &c. Pedestal and other Warming Stoves, in great variety, a large and elegant Temple Stove, the best ever offered to the Public for warming Churches and large Rooms, an elegant and extensive assortment of Cutlery in Table and Desert Setts, &c. &c. of the best Manufactory, warranted every article in Kitchen Furniture in strong planished Copper, Block Tin, Hammered and Cast Iron, with every article in the furnishing branch.

New Invented Patent Bell Hanging, which for ease, neatness and direction, far excels every other principle.

In 1791 a similar piece included the 'Public in general' in his thanks and described

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[^5]: Register of Duties Paid for Apprentices' Indentures, 1710-1811, online at Ancestry.co.uk.
[^7]: London Gazetteer Issue 12795 published on the 14 October 1786.
'every kind of Stove Grates and Register Stoves in fine diamond cut polished steel, richly engraved and ornamented, or plain; also japanned Register Stoves of various colours and devices, as well as richly inlaid, with his Patent 'Jewellery'; Gentlemens' Kitchens completely fitted up with his much-approved Kitchen Ranges, with or without his improved Perpetual Ovens, Broiling Plates, Hot Closets. Smoak or Wind-up Cheeks with a new-invented addition for dangling any number of joints or fowls, as well as working the spits as usual, at the same time, and every other article of Kitchen Furniture, Japanned Ware and Cutlery in great variety, elegantly mounted with ivory, silver &c. &c. Ironing Stoves, of various new constructions and sizes, also his much approved incomparable Compound for preserving polished Steel from rust, at 2s. 6d. the box, and likewise Brunswick Black for blacking Stoves, Hearths, Chimneys, &c. 3s. 6d. a quart bottle and brush included.

By 1792 he had added to his range the 'much admired Mile's Patent Agitable Lamps, which are of so great a saving in expence as well as cleanliness, the oil not being able to spill even if they lay down, and being the Manufacture of the Patentee himself, may be relied on not to be counterfieted. J.S. flatters himself any person will instantly see the great advantage that will arise from their applying to him, he being the sed Manufacturer, of which they may be convinced by applying to his Manufactory and Iron Foundry, No. 15, Coppice Row, Cold Bath Fields'.

In 1792, as reported in The Times of 20 June, he was elected a member of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce. In June 1793 he completed a new 'Book of Patterns' called 'The Stove Grate-maker's Directory; or, Nobleman and Gentleman's compleat Choice for Stove Grates, &c.' Price 1s. 6d. half bound. In 1794 he advertised 'smoaky chimneys perfectly cured' by 'Skidmore's Patent Rarified Air-Grates', the 'only and truly valuable Invention, for a certain Cure of that obnoxious nuisance, and which may be added to any Grate, or Kitchen Range, either new or old'. And 'Journeymen Stove-grate-makers, Jobbing Smiths and Bell-hangers, Pattern-ring-makers, Nailors and Brass-founders wanted'.

After his son Gamaliel's involvement in the company, they also began to produce artists' supplies. The Morning Chronicle of 21 June 1799 advertised 'Superfine Water Colours. John Skidmore & Son, Stove Grate Ware Rooms, beg leave to inform Surveyors, Artists and every person dealing in or using Colours, &c. for Drawing, that they have obtained the art of making superfine Colours, Liquids, &c. of the very best quality'.

He is usually described as a stove grate maker, though entries in the Alphabetical Index of Patentees of Inventions 1617-1852 also describe interests in china and earthenware and decoration with jewellery. Patent number 1552 dated 5 August 1796 lists 'Ornamental stove-grates, fire-irons, chimney-pieces, and panels, the interior of houses and ships, the outside of coaches and other carriages, cabinets and furniture, japan, china and earthenware, with foil, stones, paste, glass and compositions used in the jewellery trade', and number 2337 dated 8 August 1799 'Making and casting with cast-iron, brass or mixed metal, naves and stocks for carriage-wheels'. Prosser, writing in 1881, mentions John Skidmore of Coppice Row, Clerkenwell in the section on decorating articles with pearl inlaying. John Skidmore is credited 'nearly a century ago', i.e. the mid-1780s, with inventing a method to ornament 'all sorts of japan ware, all kind of cabinets and furniture ... with Bristol Stones, paste and all sort of pinched glass, sapped glass, and every other stone glass and composition used in or applicable to the jewellery trade'. Prosser speculates on John Skidmore's identity ' ... who, we cannot help thinking, must have been a progenitor of Skidmore of Coventry...'. This refers to Francis Alfred Skidmore of Coventry, the grandson of Francis Skidmore, earthenware dealer of Bull Street, Birmingham.

On 10 April 1793 John Skidmore testified at the Old Bailey that he was a stove grate maker of Holborn in the case against George Beardmore who stole 12 case knives with ivory handles from John Skidmore. Gamaliel Skidmore testified for his father, stating "I am fourteen this month".

In 1792 John Skidmore of High Holborn, London had purchased from John Wade of Green in the parish of St

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8 Said in an advertisement in The Times of 3 November 1829 to have been the invention of Gamaliel Skidmore.
9 From the website of the National Portrait Gallery and the section on Artists' Suppliers. www.npg.org.uk
11 On 15 December 1786 he was a juror in the trial of three men for murder in Holborn.
Giles, Camberwell, Surrey, a house and lands at Munn Green [Nun Green, Peckham], next to Thomas Greenfield. He appears to have retired there some time before 1812 when his sons Meremoth and Gamaliel Skidmore appear in trades directories at the Clerkenwell and Holborn premises. After Gamaliel’s death, Gamaliel’s wife appears similarly in 1824 as Susan Skidmore and Son. John Skidmore died at Nun Green Park, Peckham, Surrey and was buried at St Giles’, Clerkenwell, on 6 March 1823, though his stated age of 64 years old is wrong. His will (dated 11 August 1822 and proved at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury on 19 March 1823) reveals that he had various illnesses and was nursed by his servant Mrs Sarah Brown or Braunard. Meremoth Skidmore, his son, received all his poor wearing apparel and linen. He was entrusted to collect rents from John Skidmore’s freeholds - referred to as ‘small houses’ - and pay these over to his sister the wife of Henry Ashley Keeble, and after her death to Meremoth’s two sons, John Skidmore and Arthur Wellington Skidmore. If either of them attained twenty one years the freeholds were to be sold and the money divided amongst the children of Sarah Keeble his daughter and of his late son Gamaliel. [The Middlesex Deeds dated September 1792 and 1802 describe three messuages and tenement dwellings ‘on the south side of Falcon Court or Falcon Place formerly called Dutch Furlong otherwise Codpiece Row but now called Coppice Row in St James, Clerkenwell, a piece of land behind the houses, and three other houses on the North side of Coppice Row’. This property was passed to Meremoth Skidmore in April 1807, and in 1843 to Meremoth’s son Arthur Wellington Skidmore. John appears also to have had property in High Holborn. In 1799 he and his wife Nancy leased property on the north side of Holborn, Bloomsbury, to William Kesteven, cutler of Sheffield. John Skidmore of Coppice Row was taxed in June 1799 on two horses for husbandry or trade, one house dog and one cart. A house on the south side of Nun Green, Peckham, went to the children of Gamaliel and other houses there to Sarah Keeble and her only child. The children of John and Nancy (Jones) Skidmore, baptised at St Thomas’, Dudley, 247. i. M**EREMOTH**, baptised 23 February 177213. He was apprenticed on 3 July 1786 to John Rice of the Founders’ Company of London. He was partner with his father and brother Gamaliel in the manufacture of stove grates and other items in Coppice Row, Clerkenwell and at their showrooms in High Holborn. He was said to be of 123 High Holborn in May 1799 when he witnessed the lease of property belonging to his father in High Holborn. He is described as an ironfounder of Coppice Row in an indenture of lease dated April 1807. His father granted him No.1 Falcon Place [Coppice Row], including all cellars and shops, then in the possession of Squire Lawton or his undertenants. In 1809 he was still at Coppice Row when he was a trustee named in the transfer of a large parcel of land in Islington.

He married Mary Carr, after a licence dated 20 June 1797 and granted by the Archdeaconry of Norwich. The licence shows that they intended to marry at the church in Rackheath, Norfolk.

Meremoth was styled a gentleman of Calthorpe, Norfolk, when he made his will (dated 6 October 1835, proved at Norwich on 30 October 1841). His houses and land were shared equally between his two sons John Skidmore and Arthur Wellington Skidmore, his wife presumably having died before the making of the will. He died aged 66 at Calthorpe and was buried at Marsham on 1 August 1838.

The children of Meremoth and Mary Skidmore, baptised at St George’s, Bloomsbury, Holborn,

i. Paul Breese, born 21 July (baptised 16 August) 1798. He was buried at Spa Fields, Clerkenwell14 on August 26 aged 1 month 5 days.

ii. William Gamaliel, born 24 October (baptised 22 November) 1799. Called an agent at 5 Camden Terrace, Peckham, Surrey, in the will of his grandfather John Skidmore in 1822. He died before 1835.

iii. Meremoth, born 29 September (baptised 28 October) 1802. He died at 1 year 2 months and was buried from Spa Fields Chapel on 2 December 1803.

13 A biblical name but also a family name in Kent at this time, and possibly in 1710s and 1720s as Merrymouth in Southwark.
14 Spa Fields Burial Ground is located on Northampton Road, EC1, opposite the London Metropolitan Archives. Spa Fields is now a public garden. 91,232 burial records have been indexed and/or transcribed covering the period 1778 – 1849. Like Bunhill Fields on City Road, Islington, it was primarily, although not exclusively, a cemetery for Nonconformists (Christians who did not belong to the Church of England).
and at St James, Clerkenwell,

iv. John, born 28 April (baptised 24 May) 1805. At the time of the 1841 census he was a schoolmaster, living on the West Side of Hungate Street, Aylsham with Jane Skidmore, presumably his wife (born 1812-16 in Norfolk) and a pupil George Legg. John Skidmore died in 1844, having spent time in St Andrew's Hospital, Norwich, was buried on 30 October at Aylsham. Nothing more is presently known of Jane Skidmore.

v. Alfred, born 10 September 1807, baptised 9 February 1808. He died at 10 months and was buried from the Spa Fields Chapel on 22 July 1808.

vi. ARTHUR WELLINGTON, born 3 September 1809 and baptised 1 October at St James’, Clerkenwell. He married Mary Ann Sexton (born about 1811 in London) on 7 November 1834 at Banningham, Norfolk. They lived on the East Side of the Market Place in Aylsham, Norfolk, where he was listed in White's Directory in 1836 & 1845 as a glass & china dealer and iron mongers & brazier. Mr Skidmore died in 1851 and was buried at Aylsham on 21 May. His widow was schoolmistress in the village in 1861 and lived in Red Lion Street. She had retired with her unmarried daughters to Norwich Road by 1871 and was at Burgh Road in 1881. She died in Aylsham at the age of 70 and was buried there on 6 November 1883.

The children of Arthur Wellington and Mary Ann (Sexton) Skidmore, baptised at Aylsham, Norfolk,

i. Mary Ann, baptised 30 August 1835. She died at the age of 23 and was buried in Aylsham on 23 November 1858.

ii. Jane, born 1837Q4 and baptised 28 January 1838. She married Walter Mileham, a solicitor's managing clerk and County Court Bailiff (born about 1848 in Lambeth, London, fifth son of the late William Mileham of Aylsham) in Aylsham on 14 April 1880. They lived in Aylsham until at least 1891, later moving into Norwich. Mrs Mileham died there in 1920 aged 82. Apparently no offspring. Before her marriage, Jane had a daughter,

   i. Laura Roper, baptised at Aylsham on 10 June 1860. This child died at 9 months.

   iii. [presumably] Jane Elizabeth, born 1844Q3, died 1846Q2 in Aylsham.

iv. Maria Barbara, baptised 23 June 1847. She married George Probert Clarke, an ironmonger of Aylsham (born about 1853 in Thetford, Norfolk, son of James Clarke, grocer) at Aylsham on 1 November 1882 and lived in the Market Place there. She died in 1892Q4 aged 45. Apparently no offspring.

   ii. Sarah, baptised 26 January 1774. She married Henry Ashley Keeble on 9 May 1797 at Allhallows London Wall, London. He is presumably the Henry Ashley Keeble, son of Henry of Bermondsey, Surrey, ironmonger (deceased), who was apprenticed to George Gwilt of the Masons' Company on 2 October 1783. He was a surveyor, builder, dealer and chapman of Peckham, as revealed in a bankruptcy declaration (date unknown). His death was registered at Camberwell in 1840 and Sarah was living his widow at the time of the 1841 census at Nun Green, Peckham with Maria Keeble aged 40[-44], perhaps her daughter. Mrs Keeble died in 1846.

   iii. Paul, born 22 December 1775 and baptised on 4 February 1776 at St James’, Clerkenwell. He was apprenticed on 28 December 1789 to Samuel Gray of the Tylers’ and Bricklayers’ Company of London. He was responsible, with his (presumed) uncle Thomas Skidmore [120] for the production of tokens.

The use of tokens in Britain, the early American colonies and other areas, was a matter of necessity. The shortage of low value copper currency in the 17th century was so severe that trade was restricted, causing considerable concern to a variety of traders and customers. When

15 George Legg was said at the time of the 1841 to have been born in Norfolk about 1829 but he appears in the censuses of 1851 and 1861 in Aylsham Workhouse, when he was said to have been born in the parish of St James, London. He had no occupation and died in 1868 aged 41.

16 The Ipswich Journal 17 Apr 1880.
the government failed to take action and provide enough monies, businessmen and local authorities were obliged to mint their own copper coins in order to make change for their customers. Other issues owed their existence to the craze for collecting tokens which rapidly followed the original appearance of 'genuine trade tokens'. Tokens merged in function with medals struck to commemorate special events. This token of 1795 pictures two blacksmiths at work over an anvil. The picture is encircled by the inscription 'Manufactory & Iron-Foundry Clerkenwell'. The fire grate has the words 'No 123 High Holborn London' and, around the token's edge, 'Payable at Skidmores Furnishing Repository'.

Mention has been made above of the coin dealer Peter Kempson of Birmingham, who, with Thomas Skidmore, issued series of tokens depicting architectural studies of churches and public buildings. Peter Kempson had obtained in the mid-1790s a contract from a New York business to produce a large quantity of tokens. According to an online article concerning the token produced for the opening of the theatre at New York, which token dates from 1797 or 1798, its die maker was probably Benjamin Jacob of Welsh Cross in Birmingham. Jacob did most of his diemaking work, including the Theatre token and the London church series, for Paul Skidmore. Paul and Gamaliel Skidmore appear in the Bankruptcy Records of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, on a certificate of discharge. I have not seen the actual certificate but it was presumably issued before Paul's death in 1798.

I am grateful to David Dykes for pointing out the confusion caused by Anthony Durand in 1865 in attributing the forename 'Peter' to Paul Skidmore. It is made clear by Durand's contemporary collector Sarah Sophia Banks in her private catalogue that the 'PS' monogram on certain tokens referred to John Skidmore's son Paul. Paul Skidmore died in 1798 and was buried at the Spa Fields Chapel of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, [St James' parish], Clerkenwell.

Ann Sophia, baptised 14 January 1778 at St Andrew's, Holborn. She was buried there two months later on 8 March.

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19 Federal Court Records: A Select Catalog of National Archives Microfilm Publications (Part 3). Act of 1800 Bankruptcy Records of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, 1800-1809. M933. Roll 9, Case 109. The inclusive dates of this microfilm publication are the dates cases were filed and certificates of discharge were recorded, although there are individual documents dated as early as 1795 and as late as 1846. The certificates of discharge certified that the bankrupt has complied with all the requisites of the bankruptcy act, were signed by an appropriate number of creditors testifying their consent to the allowance of a certificate of discharge, and were allowed and confirmed by the district judge.
248. **GAMALIEL SKIDMORE**, born in Onslow Street, baptised on 23 May 1779 at St Andrew’s, Holborn, London. He was apprenticed on 6 October 1794 to his brother ‘Meremoth Skidmore Citizen and Founder of London’. He married Susannah Russell of the parish of St Giles, Camberwell (born about 1780 in Lambeth, Surrey, daughter of Edmund Russell) on 14 August 1802 at St George’s, Holborn, by licence. The marriage was witnessed by Capell Wall, Sarah Keeble, his sister, and Mary Ann Wall.

The births of their last two known children are found in the registers of St George’s, Bloomsbury, when the family lived in High Holborn. Gamaliel was in partnership as a furnishing ironmonger in High Holborn with his father and, after his father’s retirement, with his brother Meremoth.

On 27 December [1822?] G. Skidmore at 123 High Holborn advertised in *The Times* ‘Board and Lodging - There are two vacancies in an Establishment of the first respectability, adjoining Queen-square, where every attention is paid to the comfort and accommodation of the inmates. Two or three Gentlemen can also be received to dine and spend the evening. For cards of address apply at Spencer’s library, 27, Lamb’s Conduit-street, Brunswick-square; or to G. Skidmore, 123, High Holborn’.

In 1809 John Skidmore withdrew from his partnership with his sons, Meremoth (c.1772-1838) and Gamaliel Skidmore (b.abt.1779), and in 1815 the remaining partnership was dissolved (London Gazette 6 February 1810, 25 July 1815). The business continued as an ironmongery at 123 High Holborn until at least 1820, with insurance being taken out with the Sun Fire office in 1813 as Meremoth Skidmore and Co, and in 1817, 1818 and 1820 as Gamaliel Skidmore (Guildhall Library, Records of Sun Fire Office, vol.461 no.889232, vol.472 nos.929468, 944602, vol.480 no.966449).

He left a will (dated 26 January 1822, proved 12 April 1822) in which his wife received his Life Assurance of £500. Harriet Kearsley, so far not identified, was a witness. On 12 April 1822 Thomas Fleming of Dulwich made oath that he was well acquainted with Gamaliel Skidmore, and that the signature on the will was the proper handwriting and subscription. Gamaliel died aged 43 and was buried on 11 March 1822 in Bunhill Row Cemetery. Susannah Skidmore was living with her daughter Amelia Francis, in Penrith in 1851 and by 1861 in Paddington, London, and later at 53 Regent Street, London where she died on 7 May 1864.

The children of Gamaliel and Susannah (Russell) Skidmore, baptised at St George’s, Bloomsbury, Holborn,

i. Henrietta Nancy, born 17 May 1803, baptised 14 June at St Giles, Camberwell. On 22 August of that year Henrietta Ann Skidmore, an ‘infant of Holbourn’, was buried at St Saviour’s, Denmark Park, London.

ii. **EDMUND THOMAS**, born 21 December 1806 and baptised on 17 February 1807 at St George’s, Bloomsbury. A merchant of Elizabeth Street, Liverpool, he married Ann Drewry of Pembroke Place (born about 1817, daughter of John Drewry, a potter) at St Catherine’s, Liverpool on 6 December 1840. Thomas Drewry and John Wilkinson were witnesses to the marriage.

They were living at the time of the 1841 census in Pembroke Place, Liverpool with Thomas and Mary Drewry, perhaps Ann’s grandparents. At Lichfield on 8 March 1842 Edmund Thomas Skidmore of Clarence Buildings, Liverpool, accepted administration of the ‘goods and personal estate lying within the Diocese of Lichfield’ of his wife Ann Skidmore, who died on 21 November 1841.

At the Consistory Court of Chester in 1846 Susannah Skidmore his mother accepted probate of the wills of Edmund Thomas Skidmore, who died in Madeira on 25 August 1846, and his wife Annie Skidmore, both of Liverpool.

A child of Edmund Thomas and Ann (Drewry) Skidmore,

i. Thomas Drewry, born 1841Q4 in Liverpool. After the death of his parents he was cared for by his grandmother Susannah Skidmore. He died on 30 January 1861 when living in Kingskerswell, Devon. He left a will (not seen).

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21 His parents are given in error in the baptism register as John and Mary Skidmore.
23 Liverpool Mercury, 2 October 1846.
iii. Henry John, born 22 September (baptised 23 November) 1809. He is perhaps the Henry Skidmore, silversmith, of 3 Coldbath Square, Clerkenwell, found in Robson’s Directories of 1830 and 1837. He died in 1841Q2 (probably before the census on 6 June) in the Camberwell registration district.

iv. Amelia Sarah, born 2 July 1811 in Peckham, Surrey, baptised 27 May 1812 at St James, Clerkenwell. She married, by licence on 22 June 1850 at Peterham, Surrey, George Francis, a chemist and druggist (born about 1823 in Whitchurch, Shropshire, son of Ellis Francis). They were living at his home at the time of the 1851 census with Amelia’s mother at Ropers Place, Penrith, Cumberland, and by 1861 at 18 Lanark Villas, Paddington, London. Mrs Francis accepted probate of her mother’s will in 1864. No children known.

v. Gamaliel, born 9 July 1814. His birth, like his sister Susannah’s, was recorded at Dr Williams’s Library, Redcross Street, near Cripplegate, in the Protestant Dissenters’ Registry (for Baptists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians). Present at his birth in High Holborn in the parish of St George’s, Bloomsbury, were Robert Whitfield and Flora Skidmore, who appears to be the wife of Francis Skidmore, silversmith and jeweller of Coventry and London (son of Francis Skidmore [122], earthenware dealer of Burslem and Birmingham, described below). This is the only link between these seemingly unrelated families and perhaps points to a Black Country origin for Francis Skidmore of Birmingham.

Gamaliel was a master mariner at the time of his marriage and lived at Benets Place, Gracechurch Street, London. He married Eliza Musgrave Burford of 9 Queens Row (baptised 17 April 1807 at St George the Martyr, Southwark, daughter of William Burford, gent, and Mary Ann) by licence on 25 October 1849 at St Peter’s, Walworth. The witnesses were her brother Henry Buttonshaw Burford and Mary Eliza Kingcombe. Eliza died a widow aged 61 in 1870Q4. Her will mentions no offspring. The registration of Gamaliel’s death has not so far been located.

vi. Susannah Annette, born 27 December 1816, her birth witnessed by Sarah Hill and G. Fincham. At the time of the 1841 census she appears to have been the Susan Skidmore working in a school in Clifford Place, Denmark Road, Lambeth, her occupation entered as ‘Cl’ (clerk?). She married Thomas Richardson, a tanner (born about 1810 in Newcastle upon Tyne, son of Joseph Richardson, tanner) on 2 May
1843 at St George's Church Everton, Walton on the Hill, Lancashire. Her sister Amelia and brother Edmund were witnesses. It appears that Susannah died before 1851 when her husband was living alone, a tanner, in Hill Street, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. No children known.

vii. Elizabeth, born about 1822 in London. She married James Greaves Barton, a chemist of London Road, Liverpool on 14 September 1845 at St Philip’s, Liverpool, by licence. Edward Morris and Esther Morris were witnesses. Mr Barton was born about 1823 in Cartmel, Lancashire, son of James Greaves Barton, a solicitor of Southgate, Ulverston, Lancashire. He had his shop premises in the High Street, Dalton, Lancashire. His death was presumably that registered at Ulverston in 1863. Children, as known, Elizabeth Ann, Mary, James Henry and Roger Husketh Barton. Nothing known at present of Elizabeth and the children after 1861.

vi. John, born 13 March 1781, baptised 16 April at St James’, Clerkenwell. He is never mentioned in deeds of property transfer nor is he mentioned in his father’s will.
122. FRANCIS\(^6\) SKIDMORE was a dealer in Staffordshire earthenware, operating from Bull Street in Birmingham\(^{25}\). He was born probably in the early 1740s and is perhaps closely related to Thomas Skidmore and to John Skidmore the stove grate maker of Coppice Row, Clerkenwell, London, noticed above.\(^{26}\) He is first found in Pearson and Rollason's Birmingham Directory of 1777, a 'china man' of 91 Bull Street, and later in Pye's Birmingham Directory of 1791 with a 'Staffordshire Warehouse' in Bull Street and, finally, his widow Sarah appears in Chapman's Birmingham Directory of 1800, a dealer in Staffordshire Earthenware, Bull Street. An article written in *Edgbastonia* magazine of February 1892 talks of their home as 'a queer 16\(^{th}\) century, half-timbered residence, then, and for some half-century afterwards, known as 'The Lamb House' in Bull Street'.

Francis Skidmore appears to have married twice. His first wife was Sarah (surname unknown). Their (probably third) daughter Mary Maria was baptised at Burslem in the Potteries area of north Staffordshire, and it remains a possibility that Francis originated there (though no other Skidmores or Scudamores are known there at that time). It is perhaps more likely that he spent some time there in his early working life. In his *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Staffordshire*, William White in 1851 described Burslem as 'undoubtedly the most ancient seat of the earthenware manufacture in Staffordshire and is remarkable as the place where the first clod of that great national undertaking, the Trent & Mersey Canal, was cut by the eminent potter, the late Josiah Wedgwood, Esq. Nearly the whole of the land on which the town stands, as well as that which surrounds it, has at various places been deeply excavated for those valuable minerals coal, clay and ironstone, to the abundance and variety of which the Staffordshire Pottery owe nearly all their present importance.'

Francis Skidmore married secondly Sarah Stevington at Tanworth (in Arden), Warwickshire, on 11 February 1781. The register gives no indication of marital status of bride or groom but Sarah was presumably a spinster since her sister Ann Steventon is mentioned in her will. The only families I have managed to locate using the Stevington form of the surname (which appears to be a form of Stephenson/ Stevenson) in the first half of the eighteenth century were in Dudley, Worcestershire, and in fewer numbers in Dawley, Shropshire. The name is also found in this period as Steventon or Stephenton in Rowley Regis, Staffordshire, which adjoins Dudley. Sarah had a sister Ann, called Ann Steventon in Sarah's will, but so far it has not been possible to find the baptisms of these sisters. The burial of Ann Steventon in Birmingham when found might give her age and provide a clue not only to hers and Sarah's date and place of birth, but also those of Francis Skidmore. The witnesses to the marriage of Francis Skidmore and Sarah Stevington were Mary Robinson and Thomas Powell.

Sarah Stevington was said in the *Edgbastonia* article to be a Wesleyan Methodist. If *her husband* had been a member of a non-conformist congregation earlier in his life, this might explain the difficulty in finding the baptisms for his early children - these registers rarely survive from this period, the earliest in Burslem being the register of births of the Baptist Chapel 1791-1837. The Burslem Society of Methodists was established in around 1739 by potters returning from Bristol Docks and the first Wesleyan Chapel in Burslem was built in 1766\(^{27}\).

Francis Skidmore was buried at St Paul's, Birmingham, on 22 September 1797. Unfortunately, the burial register does not give his age. In his will, dated 8 August 1791 (and witnessed by his son-in-law William Allen), Francis left his estate and effects to his wife. Each of his children (who are not named) received one shilling, suggesting they were provided for during his lifetime. His widow in her will names all the children of both of his marriages.

Sarah Skidmore survived her husband and continued the earthenware dealership until her death on 15 September 1800, reported in Aris's Birmingham Gazette of 22 September 1800. Her will (dated 14 September 1800) appointed her 'esteemed friends' Mr John Carey bellows maker and Mr Thomas Vaughton huckster, both of Birmingham, as her executors and trustees. On 14 October 1800 John Cary, gentleman of Birmingham, took


\(^{26}\) To the author's knowledge (and she is more than willing to be proved wrong) the only occurrence at the right time of the name Francis is in the family originating in the Black Country. A son Francis was born about 1713 to John Skidmore [12] and his wife Penelope. No burial or marriage in Kingswinford or Oldswinford parishes has been found for this child. It is worth mentioning here a marriage at Quatford, Shropshire (a parish just south of Bridgnorth), on 3 March 1741/2 between Francis Skidmore and Ann Badger. Nothing further is known of this couple. The author points out these facts and emphasises that this link to Francis Skidmore, earthenware dealer of Birmingham, is NOT proven.

\(^{27}\) www.swanbank.org.uk/History. A Brief History of Swan Bank Methodist Chapel, Burslem.
an oath of administration at Lichfield, as one of the executors of Sarah Skidmore widow (who died before Francis' will had been proved). The executors were required to sell the freehold dwelling house then in her occupation with the 'coach house at the back thereof' and six leasehold dwelling houses in Bath Street in Birmingham, together with all the rest of her estate and effects and to divide the amount arising amongst her children, namely, Thomas, Isaac, Joseph, Francis, John, Sarah, Maria and Jane. Her sister Ann Steventon received ten pounds and granddaughters Ann Hexford and Sarah Fownes five pounds. Ann Hexford received her two best silk gowns and petticoats and one light cotton gown. The rest of her apparel was divided equally between her three daughters.

The children of Francis Skidmore and his first wife Sarah,

i. Frances. She married Nathaniel Heckford, a widower of St Philip’s parish, by licence on 10 January 1782 at St Philip’s. Mary Dentain and Samuel Jackson were witnesses. He was perhaps baptised on 3 December 1752 at St George in the East, Stepney, London, son of Nathaniel and Ann Heckford. Their daughter Ann Hexford (baptised Ann Heckford 14 May 1783 at St Philip’s) is remembered in the will of her grandmother Sarah Skidmore, though Frances Heckford had presumably died before 1800.

ii. Sarah. She married Thomas Fownes at Harborne on 11 October 1784. Their daughter Sarah Fownes is remembered in the will of her grandmother Sarah Skidmore. Two children of this marriage were baptised at St Martin’s in 1788 and 1793.

iii. Mary Maria, baptised 20 March 1768 at Burslem, Staffordshire. She married by licence William Allen, a druggist, on 9 December 1787 at St Martin’s. The witnesses were ___?___ (indecipherable) Sharratt and Elizabeth Sharratt were witnesses. There were a number of men called William Allen who had children baptised in Birmingham at this time, but the following children, all baptised at St Martin’s, can perhaps safely be assumed to be those of William and Mary Maria Allen; Sophia Allen 1788, Wedgwood Turner Skidmore Allen 1790, Mary Maria Allen 1791, Edward Allen 1794, William Allen 1796. I am grateful to Bernadette Siebert for information on this family.

and baptised at St Philip’s, Birmingham,

249. iv. THOMAS, baptised 3 August 1773. He married Martha Davies by licence on 2 December 1790 at St Philip’s. The witnesses were John Carr and Hannah Parsonage. Thomas Skidmore died in the parish of St Martin-in-the-Fields, London in 1820 aged 46 and was buried in the Spa Fields Burial Ground, Clerkenwell on 21 April. Martha Skidmore’s death or remarriage have not yet been found.

The children of Thomas and Martha (Davies) Skidmore, [perhaps others]

i. Charlotte, buried 7 February 1796 St Paul’s.

ii. James, buried 29 November 1801 St Paul’s.

v. Elizabeth, baptised 13 June 1775 at St Philip’s. Presumably died young.

255. vi. JOHN, baptised 9 December 1777 at St Philip’s. He married Martha Cook (born about 1779 in Birmingham) on 18 March 1799 at St Philip’s. Their marriage was witnessed by George Cook and Ann Powers. A George Cook was baptised at St Martin’s in 1773, son of Robert and Sarah Cook who also had three daughters baptised there in 1768, 1770 and 1783. He is a possible brother for Martha Cook.

This couple should not be confused with John Skidmore [246], brassfounder of Holborn, London, and Martha (Hastings) his wife, described above. John and Martha (Cook) Skidmore probably began their married life in Moor Street, Birmingham, but at some time between 1802 and 1805 moved to Clerkenwell Green in London, where John was a jeweller. He appears to be the John Skidmore, gold, gilt and pearl ornament manufacturer, found in 1809-1811 Holden Directories at 21 Clerkenwell Green. In 1808 F. Skidmore (presumably John’s brother Francis) and Joseph Parker were jewellers, gold and gilt ornament makers at nearby 18 Clerkenwell Green. It appears that the family returned to Birmingham for a period, their daughter Ann being baptised at St Martin’s in 1815.

John and Martha were living in 1841 at 126 St John Street, Clerkenwell and, by 1851 census, at 5 James Street, Finsbury, London. It is known from the will of his brother Francis [447d] that John lived in Spencer Street, Clerkenwell in 1858. Martha Skidmore died on 1 November 1855, John on 7 July 1861, both in Clerkenwell.
John’s will, dated 5 January 1861 at 17 Queen Street, Clerkenwell (the home of his daughter Martha Eliza and her husband Abraham Egleton) divides his monies, articles of household furniture and property left to him by his late brother Francis Skidmore, between his three daughters Ann Desbois, Ellen Matthews and Sarah Ann Skidmore, and his granddaughters Louisa Jane Bannister and Martha Eliza Egleton. The executors were John’s son-in-law Abraham Egleton and his grandson-in-law Charles Edwin Bannister. The will was witnessed by Daniel Desbois, John’s son-in-law, and by George Curryer (who married Ann Elizabeth Egleton, the sister of Abraham Egleton).

The children of John and Martha (Cook) Skidmore,

i. Mary Ann, baptised 28 May 1801 at St Philip’s.
ii. John, baptised 28 December 1802 at St Martin’s. He was buried at St Paul’s on 18 November 1807.
iii. Ellen was born 3 March 1805 and baptised on 29 August of that year at St James’, Clerkenwell, daughter of John and Martha Skidmore of Red Lion Street. She married firstly Luke Bannister, a butcher and farmer, on 13 July 1824 at St Philip’s. He was baptised on 12 January 1801 at St Michael’s, Tatenhill, Staffordshire, son of William Bannister, farmer of Tatenhill and Tutbury, Staffordshire, and his wife Elizabeth. Elizabeth Powers and Thomas Powers were witnesses. They had eight children and lived in Erdington village (where Luke died on 27 November 1847), in Aston Street, Birmingham and Dartmouth Street, Duddeston.

Their son Charles Edwin Bannister, an artist and frame maker of Highgate Hill (born about 1835 in Theale, Berkshire), married two of his first cousins (who were half-sisters), firstly Louisa Jane Bell (daughter of Ellen’s younger sister Martha Eliza Skidmore’s first marriage to John William Bell) and secondly Martha Eliza Egleton (daughter of Martha Eliza’s second marriage to Abraham Egleton). C.E. Bannister made the present frames for the family portraits shown here, believed to have been painted between 1841 and 1844, copies of which were kindly supplied by his great granddaughter Patricia Willmott.

Ellen Bannister married secondly James Matthews of Coleshill Street, Birmingham (born about 1819, son of Joseph Matthews, farmer), at St Luke’s on 11 July 1853. Ellen Matthews died 7 September 1884 at Lime Grove, Balsall Heath, Birmingham, and was buried on 12 September at Aston.
iv. Sarah Ann, baptised 27 December 1808 at St Andrew’s, Holborn, London. A servant in Middle Lane, Hornsey in 1841. Miss Skidmore died in 1893Q1 in the West Ham registration district aged 82.

v. Ann, born, according to the 1881 census in Clerkenwell, in May 1813 and baptised 6 January 1815 at St Martin’s in Birmingham. She married Daniel Desbois, goldsmith and jeweller of 11 Balwin, St Luke’s, London (born about 1811 in Shoreditch) on 13 May 1832 at St Mary’s, Islington. The witnesses were John Skidmore (presumably Ann’s father) and Frances Buckland. Six children of this marriage were baptised at St Leonard’s, Shoreditch, to 1849. St Luke’s is the area around St Luke’s Church, Old Street, from Shoreditch to Clerkenwell. Daniel and Ann Desbois are found in the 1841 and 1861 censuses in Islington. By 1881 they retired to the Goldsmith and Jewellers Annuity Institute at 4 Holcroft Road, Hackney, London. Ann died in 1890, said to be aged 79, her husband in 1893 aged 82.

vi. Martha Eliza, born 18 April 1817 in Birmingham and baptised 21 August 1831 at St John’s, Clerkenwell. She married firstly John William Bell, watch maker and jeweller of St John Square, Clerkenwell, on 29 June 1835 at St Andrew’s, Holborn. He was the son of Mrs Elizabeth Bell, a gold burnisher living in Smith Street, Clerkenwell in 1836 when J.W. Bell died. Her second husband was Abraham Egleton, bookbinder of 17 Queen Street, Clerkenwell (baptised 27 March 1808 at St Andrew’s, Holborn, son of Abraham and Ann Egleton). They were married on 30 May 1841 at St James’, Clerkenwell. She died in 1859Q2 and Abraham Egleton is found a widower in 1861 with his daughter Martha Eliza Egleton at 17 Queen Street and again 1881 at 8 Arlington Square, Islington, London.

vii. Jane, baptised 7 January 1780. She married firstly Joshua Tonks (perhaps the son of Samuel and Sarah (Harrison) Tonks, baptised 3 March 1778 at St Martin’s) at St Martin’s on 11 March 1797. William Mills and Elizabeth Mills were witnesses. Joshua and Jane Tonks had five children before his death in July 1813 (buried at St Paul’s). Jane married secondly Joseph Tonks, a widower (born about 1776, said to be Joshua’s cousin) on 24 July 1814 at St Philip’s. They had children baptised in Birmingham to 1826. My thanks to Anne Bullen, a descendant of Jane the daughter of Joseph and Jane (Skidmore) Tonks, for information on this family.

The children of Francis Skidmore by his second wife Sarah (Stevington or Steventon), baptised at St Philip’s, Birmingham,

viii. Isaac, baptised 11 July 1781. Mentioned in the administration of his mother’s estate in 1800 but otherwise not found.

256. ix. FRANCIS, OF WHOM MORE BELOW.

x. Elizabeth, baptised 30 March 1784 and buried at St Paul’s on 23 May 1786.

xi. Joseph, baptised 6 December 1785. Mentioned in the administration of his mother’s estate in 1800. He could be the man, born in Birmingham, who served in the 65th Foot Regiment from 1801 until his discharge aged 32 in 181928.

256. FRANCIS SKIDMORE, baptised 17 March 1783 at St Philip’s. A silversmith and jeweller in London and Coventry, he is found in the rate books in London between 1800 and 1810. In an 1808 Directory he is described with his partner Joseph Parker as jeweller and gold and gilt ornament maker at 18 Clerkenwell Green, London,

28 PRO Reference WO97/788/19.
though the partnership between John Skidmore, Francis Skidmore and Joseph Parker ‘of Clerkenwell-green, working jewellers’ had been dissolved on 23 December 180629.

He was described at the time of his son’s baptism in 1822 in Birmingham as a jeweller of Coventry. According to Jones and Wickham30 he moved to Coventry around 1822, perhaps to take advantage of the growing watchmaking trade. At first, the family were in Hertford Street but by 1828 had moved to Cross Cheaping. In May 1838 he took occupation (along with several others) of business properties in two adjacent closes at Radford in Coventry, one called Barrs Hill31. The partnership of ‘Francis Skidmore and Charles Powell, Coventry, watch manufacturers’ was dissolved in August 183832.

Francis Skidmore married firstly Flora Hedger at St Botolph without Aldersgate, London, on 14 February 1811. It was noted above that on 10 November 1814 a Flora Skidmore witnessed the naming at St George’s, High Holborn, of Gamaliel Skidmore, son of Gamaliel33. Flora Skidmore was buried in the London Road Civic Cemetery in Coventry on 7 January 1849 aged 68.

Francis’ second wife was Mrs Elizabeth Harding, born about 1794 in Yorkshire, a daughter of William Saunders, callenderer of Deritend, Birmingham. (A calenderer was a cloth presser and finisher who operated a machine with two rollers, called a calendar). Elizabeth Harding is found in the 1851 census at 22 Horse Fair in St Thomas’ ward of Birmingham, when her occupation was given as ‘feather dresser’. She was the widow of Henry Augustus Harding. Elizabeth and Francis were married on 13 September 1853 at SS Peter & Paul, Aston, Birmingham, the marriage being witnessed by Francis’ newly-married son and daughter-in-law Francis Alfred and Emma Skidmore. It appears that Elizabeth Skidmore died within a few months of her second marriage. A stone in the churchyard of St Mary’s, Whittall Street, Birmingham, commemorates George Higgins (died 1819 aged 57), his wife Elizabeth Higgins (died 1840 aged 78), Miss Mary Green (died 1844 aged 70), Henry Augustus Harding son-in-law of the above (died 27 November 1846 aged 60) and Elizabeth Skidmore relict [widow] of the above Henry Augustus Harding, who died 10 June 1854 aged 60 years.

Francis left a will dated 18 November 1858 in which he is styled a gentleman of Snape Street, Birmingham. He expressed the wish to be interred in the cemetery at Coventry in the same grave as his first wife Flora Skidmore. His executors were directed to sell nos. 34 and 35 Thorp Street, leasehold houses with five dwellings, outbuildings and offices at the back, and to divide the proceeds between Mrs Mary Mascele, wife of Mr Frederick Mascele, tailor of the Horse Fair, Birmingham, and Mrs Elizabeth Homer, wife of Mr Alfred Homer ‘late of the Horse Fair and now at Wolverhampton’. Also remembered were Francis’ niece Mrs Elizabeth Gow (found lodging at 71 Lambeth Walk in the 1861 census) widow of Alexander Taylor Gow, cabinet maker of Lambeth [London]; Francis’ brother John Skidmore, jeweller of Clerkenwell; his ‘faithful servant’ Harriet Greenway of Coventry, then living with her son; his grandson Francis Sydney Skidmore, and his son Francis Skidmore. The will was proved on 12 March 1860. Before his death on 15 January 1860 Francis was living at 2 Great Russell Street, Birmingham. He was buried in the London Road Civic Cemetery in Coventry.

A child of Francis and Flora (Hedger) Skidmore, 457. i. FRANCIS ALFRED, born February 1817 and baptised 13 September 1822 at St Martin’s. Francis was apprenticed to his father, learning jewellery and metalwork. On completing his seven year apprenticeship he was entitled to Freeman status, for which he registered in 1841. In 1845 Francis and his father were registered as silversmiths, in the name of F. Skidmore and Son. Examples of his work from this decade can be found in the book by Jones and Wickham33, including chalices made for St John the Baptist’s Church in Coventry, St Giles’, Exhall, St Alkmund’s, Sheffield, a paten for St Nicholas, Frankton, Warwickshire and a set of plate and a font cover for St Margaret’s, Whitnash. He was a member of both the Oxford Architectural Society and the Ecclesiological Society, two groups who did much to promote the use of the Gothic Style so favoured by Francis Skidmore. His most productive partnership with the leading architects and designers of the Gothic Revival was that with Sir Gilbert Scott.

30 Jones, H. & Wickham, A., Francis Skidmore, A Coventry Craftsman, Coventry Arts and Heritage 2003, p.3.
31 Coventry Archives ref.PA 202/7/3.
32 Liverpool Mercury, August 17, 1838; Issue 1423.
33 ibid, pp.3-6.
The Great Exhibition of 1851 made Francis nationally known. He displayed some pieces of church plate, including a chalice based on medieval design which was purchased by the Victoria and Albert Museum and can be seen there in the British Galleries. It was after this that as well as work in silver, he moved into general church furnishing using brass, iron and wood. His first known example of church screen work was completed at Cubbington Church, Warwickshire in 1852.

In 1853 the business in Cross Cheaping was sold and Francis (his father having by this time remarried and moved to Birmingham) set up in new premises in West Orchard, Coventry, where he employed 24 people. His residence was in White Street, Coventry at the time of his marriage in 1853 and his family was still there at the time of the 1861 census when he described himself as a manufacturer in gold, silver, brass and iron. Francis’ company is mentioned in London directories of 1861-62 as specialist art metal ironfounders, and architectural iron and brass workers. He had premises at 9 Conduit Street, Regent Street, London. Later Directory entries for 1876 show premises at 136 Queen Street, Cheapside and (1876,77,78) at 1 Adam Street, Adelphi Street. The records of Katherine Bayley’s charity school in Coventry contain indentures for apprenticeships to Skidmore & Co., art manufacturers. These include an iron fitter, a cabinet maker and a brass fitter and polisher, earning wages of 4/6 for years one to four, 5/- for year five and 6/- for years six and seven of their apprenticeships begun in 1867. In 1859 he moved to larger premises in Alma Street, Coventry. This extensive factory was later taken over by the Singer Cycle Company.

He is said to have made the chandelier lights and magnificent altar rail in Bath Abbey. Famous examples of his work include the canopy for the Albert Memorial in Hyde Park and the screens in Hereford and Salisbury cathedrals, now removed. His screen in Lichfield Cathedral is thankfully still in place. The guidebook for Salisbury Cathedral in 1994 included these words ‘About 1870 the first Sir Gilbert Scott undid all Wyatt’s work in the choir. George III’s organ was given to St Thomas’ Church [Salisbury] and Wyatt’s screen was replaced by Skidmore’s open metal screen’. The wrought iron screen originally in Hereford Cathedral was said by Pevsner to be ‘a High Victorian monument of the first order’. It was shown at the International Exhibition of 1862 before being installed in the cathedral in 1863. The cost of the Hereford screen was £3000 but the agreement with the chapter was for £1500 and the latter amount only was actually paid. Of the bronze figures The Times said ‘these figures are perfect studies in themselves. Everyone can understand them at a glance and from the centre figure of our Saviour to those of the praying angels, the fullness of their meaning may be felt without the aid of any inscriptions beneath the feet to set forth who or what they are’. The screen was composed of 11200 pounds of iron, 5000 pounds of copper and brass, 50 pieces of vitreous glass in the mosaic panels, and about 300 cut and polished stones. In 1967 the screen was removed from the cathedral and sent to the Herbert Art Gallery in Coventry. Unable to find a site to re-erect the screen, it was packed into 40 crates in 1982 and presented to the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, a bid from the US having been refused. Kenneth Powell, writing in the Sunday Telegraph in 1994 described the screen as ‘a melancholy sight’ laid out on the floor of one of the museum warehouse stores. The screen has now been painstakingly restored to its former glory and has been on show at the V & A since May 2001.

Francis Skidmore provided the ornamental ironwork screen to the Chantry of All Saints Church at Scholar Green in Cheshire. This church was built in 1863-64 from plans drawn up by Gilbert

34 ibid, p.7. The author has visited the V & A and viewed two pieces by Francis Alfred Skidmore (apart from the Hereford Screen):  
b. Model and Chalice – British Galleries level 4 room 123 case 11.  
35 ibid, p.4.  
36 Coventry Archives, PA368/ 127/ 92, 95 and 128/ 4.  
37 Sandford, Anne, Hereford as It Was, 1984.  
38 Powell, Kenneth, Cathedral’s Way to Rusty Death – why is a masterpiece of Victorian art lying in pieces in a London warehouse?
On 8 September 1864 Skidmore's Art Manufacturers Company of Coventry provided an estimate to a Miss Ryland for solid brass gates for the centre of the altar railing for Sherbourne Church (presumably the Sherbourne in Warwickshire). Various designs of Francis’ Company dated 1872 for candle stands for St Mary’s Church, Steeple Ashton, Wiltshire, exist at Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office.

The project closest to his heart, the pulpit in St Michael’s Church, Coventry – the old Cathedral – was destroyed in the Blitz in November 1940.

His work went across the Atlantic to the US to St James’ Church, Philadelphia, to a church in Valparaiso and to St George in Demerara.

He wrote from Coventry to The Times on Friday 2 September 1868 ‘Sir, in your interesting description of bronze and metalwork of the tower and spire of the Prince Consort Memorial a mistake was made in the name of the firm; it should have been “Skidmore” Art Manufacturing Co., Coventry’’ I should feel obliged by your correcting same.”

He married Emma Carlss of Ashwell Terrace, Coventry on 12 July 1853 at Holy Trinity, Coventry. She was baptised on 22 December 1830 at St Michael’s, Coventry, daughter of George Carlss, a watch gilder of Primrose Hill Street, and his wife Harriet (Shaw). The witnesses to the marriage were Alfred George Carlss (her brother), Thomas Robinson, Elizabeth Robinson and Emma Browett.

Francis moved away from Coventry in the late 1860s and the family is found in the village of Meriden in Warwickshire in the 1871 and 1881 censuses. He had sold his Coventry business in 1872 and set up a smaller concern in the Manor House at Meriden and at the time of the 1881 census was employing 11 men and 12 boys. In the 1880s this company was taken over by Winfield’s Ltd of Birmingham. By this time his eyesight was failing and he was disabled after being knocked down by a carriage. He moved back to Coventry and spent his later years in relative poverty in Eagle Street.

Francis’ skill was also his undoing, as his quest for perfection led him to throw away thousands of pounds of work he considered sub-standard. In The Times of 22 June 1894 a letter appeared from Rev. Canon Beaumont of Holy Trinity Vicarage, Coventry: ‘Many of your readers will regret to hear that Mr FA Skidmore well known as having produced some of the most beautiful artistic metal work of our century, is in very sore distress. Financial difficulties and failing health for many years have brought him to this deplorable position and at an advanced age (in his 79th year) he is in very great want. A committee has been formed (of which Sir Henry Acland and Mr Waterhouse RA are members) to raise a fund from which a monthly payment would be made sufficient to enable Mr Skidmore and wife to live in something like comfort. Mayor of Coventry has kindly consented to be Treasurer. Tis hoped some of those who appreciate his work may like to

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39 Private correspondence.
40 Warwickshire County Record Office ref.CR 2120/32/1,2.
41 ref.PR/Steeple Ashton St Mary/1547/24.
42 Jones, H. & Wickham, A., p.17.
contribute. Albert Memorial, New Museum at Oxford and many artistic works in our cathedrals, Foreign Office, Town Hall at Liverpool, Assize Court of Manchester bear witness to the rare skill and conscientious execution of Mr Skidmore’s work. Contributions can be sent to the Honourable Secretary Mr W Stone Booth, Coventry or Canon Beaumont.

In February 2000 a plaque was unveiled by Francis’ great granddaughter Rita Kenderdine, on the site of his former factory in Alma Street, Hillfields, on a site now owned by Coventry University.

At the time of the 1891 census Mr Skidmore, his wife and two youngest children were living in Hunter’s Lane, Aston Manor, Birmingham, though he died in Coventry in 1896Q4 aged 79 and was buried in the London Road Cemetery there. Mrs Skidmore and her daughter Evangeline were living at the time of the 1901 census at 27 Cromwell Street, Coventry. Emma Skidmore died in 1901Q2 aged 70.

The children of Francis Alfred and Emma (Carloss) Skidmore, born in Coventry, baptised at Holy Trinity, Coventry

842.  

i. FRANCIS SYDNEY, born 31 March (baptised 18 May) 1854. He was an artist and draughtsman and married Mary Holmes Thompson of Islington Place (born about 1855 in Meriden, daughter of John Holmes Thompson, a shoeing and jobbing smith of Meriden, and his wife Eliza) on 19 November 1881 at St Thomas’, Birmingham. They were living at the time of the 1891 census at 151 Stamford Road, Handsworth, Birmingham but by 1901 had moved to Manchester, where they used the surname Francis/ Francys for a time. Mr Skidmore died aged 57 in 1911Q1 in Manchester, his wife in 1919 aged 64.  

My thanks to Christine Bailey for information on the family of Francis Sydney Skidmore

Children of Francis Sydney and Mary Holmes (Thompson) Skidmore,

i. Frances Mary, born 1882Q2 in Arley, Warwickshire. A mantle maker in 1911.  

ii. FRANK BERNARD, born 1884Q1 in Arley. A draughtsman in constructional steelwork, he married Nellie Smith (born about 1884 in Manchester, daughter of James Smith, carver and guilder) on 12 September 1908 at St Oswald’s, Collyhurst. They were living in 1911 at 27 Springville Avenue, Moston, Manchester, having lost their first child. Mr Skidmore died in 1950 aged 67.  

Two daughters,  

i. Irene L., born 1914.  


iii. Gertrude, born 1886Q1 in Birmingham. She married Francis Kelly, a general labourer for an electrical engineer (born about 1877 in Punjab, India) in Manchester in 1910 and they were living at the time of the 1911 census with Mr Kelly’s widowed brother William John Bland (born in Dublin about 1863) in Trafford Park, Manchester.

born in Handsworth,

iv. John Anthony, born 1888Q1. A draughtsman for a constructional engineer. He was living in Eastleigh, Hampshire at the time of his death on 23 February 1962.  


ii. Una, baptised 10 September 1857, died at 4 months, buried at London Road Civic Cemetery, Coventry, on 8 December 1857.  

843. iii. CLEMENT, baptised 23 August 1859. He moved up to Govan, Glasgow and found work by 1881 as an iron turner in the local works. He married Eliza Thompson, a milliner, on 27 April 1882 at the parish church in Govan. She was born about 1860 in Meriden, daughter of John Holmes Thompson, a blacksmith, and his wife Eliza (Russell), and sister to the wife of his brother Francis.
They were living at 35 Meadow Street, Coventry by the time of the census of 1891. Clement’s death at the age of 33 was registered in Kings Norton in 1893Q2. His widow and children, together with her sister Hannah H. Thompson, were living by 1901 at 5 Mount Street, Coventry.

**Children of Clement and Eliza (Thompson) Skidmore,**

i. Edith Maud, born 1884 in Govan. An office girl in the watch trade by 1901. She married Herbert Welsby (born 1882Q2 in Coventry) in Coventry in 1906 and had, as known, four children. Mr Welsby was an engineer’s machine tool maker for Alfred Herbetts Ltd, tool manufacturer. They were living by 1911 at 62 High Street, Kenilworth, Warwickshire.

ii. Lizzie Eveline C., born 1886Q4 in Birmingham. Called Evelyn, she was an office worker in the watch trade. She married Edward H. Marston in 1911 in Coventry and had, as known 2 daughters and a son.

iii. Hilda Blanch H., born 1888Q4 in Birmingham. A typist for a silk manufacturer at the time of the census in April 1911. She married later that year in Brentford registration district, Middlesex, Norman J. Taft and had, as known, a daughter and a son.

iv. Flora Mildred, born 1892Q2 in Coventry. She married in 1915.

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844. iv. **BERNARD CARLOSS**, born 1862Q2, baptised 27 December 1862 at Holy Trinity, Coventry. He and his brother Clement were boarding in the home of the curate of Meriden in 1871. He was living in the home of his parents at the time of the 1881 census, called a ‘decorator’. He is said to have married and his wife bore three children (names not known) before he left for Australia. However, I have found no marriage in Britain for this man. He married in Victoria, Australia in 1887 Editha Rose Drummond Fenwick and a child Enid Hardy Skidmore was born that year. On 10 March 1913 Bernard Carloss Skidmore, jeweller of Springbrae, Beresford Street, Caulfield, Victoria, was a witness to the will of his wife Editha Rose Skidmore of Caulfield. She left to her daughter Enid Hardy Skidmore ‘the property in Nicholson Street, Footscray known as Fairhaven’.

**A child of Bernard Carloss and Editha Rose Drummond (Fenwick) Skidmore**

i. Enid Hardy, born in 1887 in Victoria. She married William Eyton Batten in 1915 in Victoria.

v. Evangeline, baptised 14 March 1865. Miss Skidmore was living with her widowed mother in Coventry in 1901. She is possibly the Miss E. Skidmore aged 41 who arrived in Melbourne in June 1907 on the *Orotava* as an Unassisted Immigrant. She died in Caulfield, Victoria in 1931.

vi. Kenneth Alfred, born 1866Q3, baptised 1 April 1869. He was living in 1891 at his parents’ home in Aston. He arrived in Melbourne on the *Orient* in November 1891 as an Unassisted Immigrant. Kenneth was listed in the 1903 Electoral Roll, a newsagent living at 233 Nicholson Street, Footscray, Melbourne. He died on 6 July 1943 at Blackburn, Victoria aged 77 and was buried at Brighton Cemetery.

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43 Australian Birth Index 1788-1922.