THE SKYDMORES OF WESTERLEIGH, THEIR LIVES AND TIMES, WITH THEIR PROBATES AND A GOOD MANY OTHER SOURCES.

by Warren Skidmore

A great many years ago I collected negative white on black photostat copies of most of the Skidmore probates in the British counties before their civil war. This was an amusement, and I did brief abstracts of all of them. Those from Gloucestershire were used in 1966 for the first typed edition of my Skidmore family history.¹ Now in 2010 I have finally done full transcripts of this part and added notes about the testators from some of the other records that survive for that same period of the county. All of this is intended to fully supplement the last revision of my book on Thomas Skidmore (Scudamore) of Westerleigh and his posterity. Most readers may prefer the story found in the book and not these rather daunting technical evidences which produced it.

Most of the Skydmores and their associates noticed in this long piece lived in the totally different times of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, the great Gloriana. All of these people grew up knowing what class they had been born into, and they gave deference to their social superiors and expected similar respect from their inferiors. The sovereign was superior to every other person in her realm, and at the bottom of the hierarchy were the endless number of landless paupers and vagrants who also had next to nothing when it came to personal property.

In a rural parish like Westerleigh, the order ascended upward from the cottagers who had a small house and perhaps an acre or two of land. The husbandmen might have ten acres or more to raise a crop and support his beasts, held by a lease or copyhold from the lord of the manor. Next above them were the yeoman, a smaller but significant middle class. Yeoman, in the time of the Tudors, usually held their land by freehold and had an income of at least 40 shillings by the year. They had considerable local status as they tended to be the churchwardens (or sideman) in the church, and also saw that the business of the local manor was properly tended to by the bailiff or steward. The yeomanry also might improve their lot by a second trade in addition to husbandry. At Westerleigh some of the more ambitious families supported themselves as clothiers or by the weaving of cloth often a cottage industry in the Cotswolds. All these people were subservient to the lord of the manor, the local gentry or nobility (if any), and to the incumbent clergyman.

Women of any class inherited a status commensurate to that of their husbands or their fathers. The husbands might turn out to be disagreeable and marriage was seldom a romantic affair. A daughter was expected to provide some kind of dowry from the family to take to her husband, and this hopefully would mean that she might continue to enjoy the kind of life that she had known while

she had lived at home. If her husband proved to be disappointing as a provider she had no recourse, and if she survived her husband his will usually ended her support from his estate if she remarried. Medieval records of men other than the great magnates are hard to find. Robert Skyddemore of Westerleigh probably found and asked for the possession of a stray colt that he found in the parish in 1463. We know a bit more about his presumptive grandson Richard Skydmore who is found there in a military survey taken for the whole of England in 1522. This survey was an ambitious scheme to collect statistics on both the military strength of England and the wealth of its more important residents. The musters in 1522 listed only those men who were largely freeholders and Parliament demanded 2sh for every £1 they were worth. Richard Skydmore had lands and goods valued at £4, and possessed splints and a sword that could be used in the defense of the realm. This muster was followed promptly by a crafty new lay subsidy to tax these same freeman. The subsidy has not been seen, but it has now (2010) been announced for publication.

All the residents of a rural parish at this period were born into membership of the Catholic church, and the incumbent there in 1522 was the curate William Weston. After the time of Henry VIII those who still true to the old Catholic faith concealed their religious sentiments as they would be classified as recusants if they failed to attend the local Protestant service on Easter or refused to accept the new faith. They were also expected to tithe, to celebrate the feast days properly, and to see their children properly christened and their kinfolk buried. Any sort of village gossip about moral transgressions might find it way to the religious “bawdy court” and a citation ordered the offenders to appear before the court. A particular problem was illegitimate children who had to be supported by the parish unless the father was known.

The same religious Consistory Court had the responsibility for the handling of wills and probates. In Gloucestershire it has been estimated that only about 10% of the diocese left a proper will. Happily it can be shown that the Skydmores exceeded that estimate. The administration on an intestate required that an inventory be first made of his property and submitted to the court. Alas, all of these seem to have been lost before 1670 in the county but do survive for the Bristol diocese. If the deceased owned property outside the diocese where they resided then the probate had to be sent up to the Principal Probate Registry of Canterbury. Primogeniture was the general rule, and the bulk of a man’s estate (after the widow had been provided for and his debts paid) went to the eldest son. Younger sons by necessity sometimes managed to marry well or find a wealthy patron, or had been apprenticed by their father or elder brother to learn a really useful trade.

The importance of the lords of the manor can not be overlooked. Looking back again to 1522 we find that Thomas Wolsey (who went on to bigger things) was the bishop of Bath and Wells and was the lord of the manor of Westerleigh. Sir Amyas Paulet (1457-1538) of Hinton St. George, Somerset had secured in 1493 the influential post of High Steward of the estates belonging to the

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²R. W. Hoyle, The military survey of Gloucestershire, 1522. (Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, 1993. Most counties have been lost, but that of Gloucestershire happily survives at Berkeley Castle (not at the Public Record Office) which has the largest collection of medieval manuscripts in the county.
³A splint was armour for the outer arm, sometimes extending down to the back of the hand. John Rogers, Skydmore’s friend and neighbor at Mayshill, was worth £5 and owned a sallet and a gorget.
⁴Forthcoming as The Bristol and Gloucestershire Lay Subsidy of 1523-1527, edited by M. A. Faraday (Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, volume 23).
bishopric. For many years thereafter Paulet (and later his son) visited all of the bishop’s manors on rotation where he held periodic courts. All of the men in the manor (which was then commensurate with the parish) were expected to attend the “views of frankpledge” courts or be amerced (fined) for not appearing. Decisions were made at the court for the common good of all of the residents but sometimes these actions were to the detriment of an individual tenant.

It has been said that one the most common offenses presented at manorial courts were matters of drainage. A swamps or pool had to be drained and ditches had to “scoured” to divert a stream that flooded another man’s house or crops. If a tenant put an unfair number of his cattle or sheep out to pasture on the common this had to be remedied. Paulet (and his successors or deputies) adjudicated all these problems and the petty crime in the manor, but his most important duty was to find tenants when there was vacant land, and then collect the income from it the tenants owed to the bishop.\(^5\) John Skydmore (born about 1510 and described as an “able archer” in 1542) was probably one of the unnamed free tenants who paid £2 13sh 10d in rent at Westerleigh in 1552. He is probably also the John Skydmore who was buried at the Abbey Church of St. Peter and St. Paul at Bath on 20 October 1570 since the abbey was also in the care of the same bishop of Bath and Wells who was the lord of Westerleigh.

Gloucestershire (and Bristol) are favored when you look at an inventory of their surviving local records.\(^6\) There is an account roll taken in 1510/1 by a reeve of Westerleigh (not seen) bound with the accounts of a part of the manors held by the Adrian de Castello, then the bishop of Bath and Wells.\(^7\) Of even greater value Gloucestershire societies have done printed copies of lay subsidies and the splendid muster of able bodied men in 1608 that survives for the entire county. That part for the parish of Westerleigh of this muster is printed below amounted to a virtual census for every adult male living there in 1608. They men are listed with their occupations and made to fit into several categories, firstly of age (about 20, about 40, or 50 to 60). Then there are four categories of stature, tallest, middle, lower, or meanest. They are then described by what their stature would best fit them to do, “to make a pykeman,” “to make a musketyer”, “to serve with a calyver,” (and lastly of the meanest) “fit for a pyoner or of little other use.”

Finally in 1608 it was shown which men were “trained soldiers” or “subsidy men.” Some of the trained soldiers probably had served the late Queen Elizabeth on her efforts to put down the rebellion in Ireland. These men (and boys) were paid, but we never have a record of their names except for the royal commanders. The subsidy men were the adults who paid the tax [subsidy] when

\(^5\)The leases were usually valid for three lives (customarily the last survivor of a man, his wife, and his eldest son) or for 99 years.

\(^6\)M. F. Richards, *Gloucestershire Family History* (Gloucestershire County Council, 3rd edition revised by David J. H. Smith, 1991). This is still in print, and is a useful and inexpensive guide for the genealogist.

\(^7\)Somerset Record Office, reference DD\BR\su27. It includes the borough of Wells, Wookey, Cheddar, Bewell (Banwell), Compton [Bishop], Westbury, Huish [Episcopi], Cranmore [East], Westelerleigh, and perhaps Doulton. All of these manors are now parishes in Somerset except for Westerleigh in Gloucestershire. More can le learned about all of them in Phyllis M. Hembry’s *The Bishops of Bath and Wells, 1540-1640, Social and Economic Problems* (London, 1967). Pucklechurch (which then included two later parishes of Westerleighh and Wyke formed from it) were acquired from the monks of Glastonbury in the reign of Henry I.
the crown demanded it from the substantial laymen of every town or parish. Lists of the subsidy men however were kept and forwarded onto the barons of the Exchequer where they sometimes survive but probably most were lost.

The subsidies collected in the time of the Tudors were not based on a subject’s income but rather largely on the value of his “unmoveable” possession of land with its houses, gardens, orchards or shops. They were also assessed on their “goods,” those visible moveables like brass pots, pewter, tableboards, or other furnishings within the house (where a bed was usually the most valuable possession). The “taxors,” who set down the sums owed, were usually a worthy man or two of the parish or hundred, and this did not allow very much property (moveable or not) of any value to be concealed.

A few other homely details of the period can be extracted from the records. Barley and apples were plentiful and this produced an enormous yearly supply of beer and hard cider, but diets were slim between early winter and late spring. We know a good deal more about their houses because Acton Court, the Tudor house remodeled by Sir Nicolas Poyntz (1535-1585) at Iron Acton, survives and has been subjected to a ten year project of conservation. Some of the timbers of the early range of the house were cored and tree-ring dating shows that they were felled as early as spring 1535. Sir Nicholas also acquired the manor of Westerleigh (worth £40 16sh 2d) from William Barlow, the bishop of Bath and Wells, on 8 December 1552. Poyntz later sold the manor to John Roberts (1520-1587), an Alderman and Mayor of Bristol, and the Court Book of Westerleigh in the Bristol Record Office has innumerable references to the Skidmore family. In addition Jane, the daughter of the same Sir Nicholas Poyntz, married Sir John Seymour (died 1599), who was lord of Frampton Cotterell but who also had 18 or 20 acres of pasture in Westerleigh which adjoins.

**MANORIAL ROLL, A VIEW OF FRANKPLEDGE, FOR PUCKLECHURCH HUNDRED, 1463**

A “view of frankpledge” was essentially a pledge by a group of men living in a tithing that collectively they would not participate in illegalities, and that they would band together to act on any civil or criminal presentments brought to the court. Thus it was set down (in severely contracted Latin) that at **Pokulchurche. Vicus ffranc[ipleg] cur[ia]**

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8The clerics were taxed separately on their possessions which were much the same as that of laymen.

9See *Occasional Paper, no. 17* which shows an ancient connection between Frampton Cotterell, Westerleigh, and Upton Scudamore in Wiltshire.

10Somerset Record Office, Taunton, Ref. DD/CC 131911a/8. This is a single membrane from a composite roll covering several other manors. There are two other rolls for Puckchurch Hundred (which included the tithing of Westerleigh) for courts held on the Tuesday, before the feast of St. Valentine, 26 Edward III (1357) Ref. DD/SAS BA 1, and 23 October, 13 Richard II (1394) Ref. DD/CC 131910/5, but neither mention a Skydmore. There are numerous other sections of composite rolls for the Wells Chapter between 1427 and 1640 which include Puckchurch entries but have not been seen. An extremely useful later Court Book for Westerleigh, 1625-1653, survives at the Bristol Record Office.


Westerleigh. [Extract] One stray colt, black in color, to remain until the next Sunday at the feast of Pentecost [Whitsunday] in the care of Robert Skydmore.

MILITARY MUSTER FOR THE TITHING OF WESTERLEIGH, 1542\(^\text{11}\)

The tethyng hath harnes [armour] ffurnished iiij men w^t^ ij archers & ij bylmen,

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<th>Archers able</th>
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<td>John Smyth</td>
<td>Thomas Jones</td>
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<td>Thomas Prygge</td>
<td>William Nashe</td>
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<td>Christopher Mell [Myles]</td>
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<td>William Organ</td>
<td>John Kydde</td>
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<td>William Lawrence</td>
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<td>Henry Ellyse [Ellis]</td>
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<td>Thomas Holaster</td>
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<td>Richard Peryman</td>
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<td>John Skydmore</td>
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<td>Thomas Nashe</td>
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<td>John Rogers Jun.</td>
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\(^{11}\)Public Record Office, E.101/58/24. This is taken from an old photostat copy for the whole of Pucklechurch Hundred which included the tithings of Pucklechurch, Syston, Coleaston, Wyck, and Westerley. Only Westerleigh parish has been transcribed here. Archers are self-explanatory, but Billmen were adjudged as able to fight with a halberd or broadsword. This muster listed men only between 16 and 60.
LAY SUBSIDY FOR WESTERLEIGH, 1581. 12

This subsidy is of considerable interest to the family, although Richard Skydmore was clearly not yet of subsidy rank in 1581 and his father (who might have been) had died ten years earlier. 13 Richard is first noticed two years later in 1583 when Joan Fowler of Wapley named him as one of the overseers of her will. She was assessed at Wapley in 1581 on £3 in goods for which she was assessed 5 shillings.

The two collectors for this southern part of the subsidy were Sir Thomas Porter and Thomas Thockmorton, esquire. It is interesting to find that the Thomas Thockmorton (1539-1607) of Tortworth was the maternal grandfather of the first viscount Scudamore. Moreover he was accused in 1589 of provoking a riot against Nicolas Poyntz [of Iron Acton] and Thockmorton was also then said to have used his position as a subsidy commissioner (and as the captain of a trained band) to impress men for the campaign in Ireland. It is impossible to know, but perhaps some of the Skydmores who were “trayned soldyers” in 1608 had gone out to Ireland as boys or young men at the insistence of Sir Thomas Thockmorton. 14

William LLEWELLIN, £5 in land, paid 13sh. 4d.
John BURNELL, 40 sh. in land, paid 5sh. 4d.
[Ten others, assessed only on goods]

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12 This subsidy (Select Roll 82) was set down on May 10th in the 23rd year of the reign of “the lady queen” (1581). A copy of the roll survives at Berkeley Castle but it includes only the six hundreds in the southwestern part of the county (Berkeley, Grumbold’s Ash, Thornbury, Henbury, Pucklechurch, and Barton). It was transcribed by volunteers, digitized by Dr. Ray Wilson, and is now posted (with the returns for the four other parishes of Pucklechurch, Cold Aston, Siston, and Wick in Puckechurch Hundred) on the website of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society.
13 Those with goods worth less than £3 were not taxed.
14 I have a photostat of the will of the very unhappy Dame Mary, wife of Sir James Scudamore and Thockmorton’s daughter, partly in her own hand which I hope to transcribe for an Occasional Paper.
John JOCHIM, £8 in goods, paid 13sh. 4d.
John ROE, £4 in goods, paid 6sh. 8d.
Joan ORGAN, £4 in goods, paid 6sh. 8d.
Richard COX, £5 in goods, paid 8sh. 4d.
Agnes COOKE, widow, £5 in goods, paid 8sh. 4d.
John HALLEYER, £5 in goods, paid 8sh. 4d.
Thomas PRIGG, £5 in goods, paid 8sh. 4d.
Ferdinand NAILER, £5 in goods, paid 8sh. 4d.
John ROGERS, £3 in goods, paid 5sh. 0d.
John MILLARD, £3 in goods, paid 5sh. 0d.

MEN AND ARMOUR FOR WESTERLEIGH, 1608 15

“The names and Surnames of all the able and sufficient men in body fitt for his Ma’ties service in the warrs... with their ages, parsonable Statures and Armours viewed by the Right honorable Henry Lord Barkley Lord Lieutenant of the said County thereof by direction from his Ma’tie in the month of September, 1608. Annoq’ Sexto Regni Regis Jacobi Anglie &c. Wherin Observe viz. That

The figure (1.) sheweth the age of that man to bee about Twenty.
The figure (2.) sheweth the age of that man to bee about forty.
The figure (3.) Sheweth the age of that man to bee betwene fyfty and threescore.
The L’re (p.) sheweth the man to bee of the tallest stature fitt to make a pykeman.
The L’re (m.) sheweth the man to bee of middle stature fitt to make a musketyer.
The L’res (ca.) sheweth the man to bee of a lower stature fitt to servewith a Calyver.
The L’res (py.) sheweth the man to bee of the meanest stature either fit for a pyoner, or of little other use.
The L’res (tr.) sheweth that at the takiinge of this viewe, hee was then a trayned soldyer.
The L’res (sub.) sheweth that the said man was then a subsidy man.

At Westerleigh, Wherof John Roberts Esq’ is lord.
Robert Tyler husbandman. 1. ca.
Robert Legge husbandman. 1. ca.
William Moore weaver sonne of Edward. 1. ca.
John Hollister husbandman. 1. m. tr.
John Tyler husbandman. 2. m.
Thomas Ridge the yonger Taylor. 1. ca.
William Sifford the yonger husbandman. 1. ca.
Walter Organe husbandman. 1. p. tr.

15 John Smith, *The Names and Surnames of all the Able and Sufficient Men in Body fit for His Majesty’s Service in the Wars, within County of Gloucester* (London, 1902).
George Organe husbandman sonne of Will’m. 1. p.
Walter Ellary hatter. 2. py.
John Sanders Baker. 2. m.
James Gyfford Collyar. 2. ni.
James Lawrance. 1. ca.) Sonnes of Richard Lawrance husbandman.
John Lawrance. 1. ca. )
William Rogers husbandman sonne of John Rooers sen’. 1. m.
John Turner weaver. 1. ca.
Henry Turner Collier. 1. ca.
John Smyth husbandman. 2. py.
John Dobson yeoman. 3. m.
John Organe servant to John Debson. 1. m.
Henry Kedd husbandman. 2. p.
Henry Staunton weaver. 2. p.
John Carle husbandman. 2. m. tr.
Edward Havnes husbandman. 3. p. tr. sub.
Thomas Haynes Collier sonne of Edward. 1. m.
John ffrind freemason. 2. m.
William Packstaffe weaver. 2. m.
fferdinando Nichols badger. 2. m.
William Lewellin gent. 1. ca. sub.
Will’m Wilvellin gent. 1. ca.
ffrauncis Sifford Colliar. 2. m.
Thomas Hollister Collier. 2. m. tr.
Richard fferly Clothier. 2. m. sub.
Henry Tylie apprentice to Richard ferly. 1. m.
Arthur Roe. 3. p. tr. hath one Corslet furn’.
James Skidmore husbandman. 3. m. tr.
ffrauncis Nash warburner. 2. m.
John Hallier servant to ffrauncis Nashe. 1. m.
William Gayne husbandman. 1. m.
William Mabbot Collier. 2. m.
Will’m Sloune servant to Richard Swift husbandman. 1. m.
Thomas Powell husbandman. 1. ca.
William Hollister thelder yeoman. 3. m. sub.
William Hollister the yonger. 1. ca. sub.
John Walter servant to Will’m Hollister thelder. 1. m.
Xpopher Curnocke husbandman. 1. ca.
Thomas Hollister Carpenter. 2. ca. tr.
Nathaniell Cope Tanner. 2. m.
William Skidmore warburner. 2. m. tr. sub. 16

16 The occupation of the two warburners in Gloucestershire (both at Westerleigh) is unknown.
Henry Andras warburner. 1. ca.
John Dewse al's Nashe weaver. 1. m.
John Hodges servant to John Davys husbandman. 1. ca.
Edward Hollister husbandman. 1. p.
Thomas Peryman Smith. 2. m.
William Peryman Smith. 2. m.
Thomas Coxe Tanner. 2. m.
John Jones warburner. 1. m.
Barnabas Sanders servant to John Jones. 1. ca.
Richard Coxe husbandman. 1. p. tr.
Edmund Bossier servant to Richard Cox. 1. ca.
Edmond Weston Butcher. 2. p. tr.
Joseph Weston butcher. 1. ca.
Arthur Becke barber. 2. m.
Richard Bosser weaver. 2. p.
John Skidmore servant to Richard Bosser. 1. ca.
Jacob Hollister weaver. 2. m.
William Ruche weaver. 2. m.
Nicholas Tucker weaver. 1. ca.
George Rodmane weaver. 2. m.
Walter Coxe servant to Will'm Peccord husbandman. 1. ca.
Denys Deverise al's Borford Smith. 2. m.
Richard Cooke Smith. 1. p.
John Drewe Tanner. 1. m.
Robert Pene husbandman. 1. m. hath one musket and one Calyver furn'. sub.
Thomas Bissy servant to Robert Pene, 1. m.
Rowland Atwood husbandman. 2. m. tr. hath one musket furn'. sub.
John Love mason. 1. m.
William Joachim husbandman. 2. p. tr.
Thomas Joachim sonne of the said William. 1. p.
Thomas Tovy mason. 1. p.
Symon Tovy mason. 2. p.
Thomas Tyly Collier. 2. m.
John Powell weaver. 1. ca.
William Prigge husbandman. 2. ca. tr.
Thomas Prigge weaver. 1. p.
Edward ffry husbandman. 3. m.
Hugh Symons Taylor. 3. p. tr.
William Wickham husbandman. 3. m. sub.
John Wickham sonne of the said Will'm. 2. m.
Henry Parker Carpenter. 1. m.
William Lawrance Butcher. 1. m.
William Joachim Smith. 2. m.
Robert Shereman Taylor. 1. ca.
John Cooke Taylor. 1. ca.
Walter Rogers shoemaker. 2. m.
Xpopher Bossier shoemaker. 2. m.
Robert Peryman Taylor. 2. p. tr.
Thomas Campe Taylor. 1. ca.
Richard Shuren. 2. p. tr.
William White weaver. 1. m.
Thomas Wickam Smith. 1. ca.
Richard West badger. 2. p.
John Collimore husbandman. 1. p. tr.
William Skidmore Carpenter. 1. m.
Thomas Rudge thelder Taylor. 3. ca.
Richard Joachime husbandman sonne of John. 1. ca.
Gyles Ellats Clothier. 2. ca. tr. sub.
William Peccord husbandman. 2. m. tr.
Thomas Coxe husbandman. 3. ca. sub.
Thomas Prigge husbandman. 1. m.

Inhabitants Charged with the findinge of Armour not before mentioned.

William Hill yeoman unable in body bath one musket and one Calyver furn'. sub.
John ffrind aforesaid and others have one Corslet furn'.
Richard Swift husbandman unable in body hath one musket furnished.
Richard Skidmore unable in body bath one musket furn'.
Coxe widowe hath one Corslet furn'.
John Rogers unable in body hath one Corstet furn'. sub.
Alsoe the said Tythinge standeth chargd with the findinge of two Corslets with their furn'. ”

Notes. In addition to the Skidmores found at Westerleigh there were two men from that place working in adjoining parishes:

At Barkely Burrowe, John Skidmore, weaver, 2. ca.
At Wapley and Codrington, Thomas Skidmore, 1. m., servant to Symon Smith.

It is curious that no John Cooke is found at Westbury-upon-Trym although he married the widow Annes Skidmore there in the same month that the muster was set down.

LAY SUBSIDY FOR WESTERLEIGH

A short list of the prosperous inhabitants at Westerleigh is found in a Lay Subsidy taken for the Hundred of Pucklechurch between 1620-5.

Walter Dennys, *generosus* [gentleman]
Mrs. Ellender Dennys, *vid* [widow]
William Llewellinge
Anne Dobson, *vid* [widow]
William Hollister
Edward Haynes
Henry Rydoe
John Rogers
Robert Tyler
William Prigge
James Hollister
George Edmonds
Arthur Truman
John Wickham
Anne Hollister, *vid* [widow]

**NOTES.** It is strange not to find James Skidmore taxed at Westerleigh for he was almost certainly of what was known as “subsidy rank.” Possibly he was caught at Frampton Coterrell (which adjoins) where he left posterity.

**BISHOPS TRANSCRIPT FOR WESTERLEIGH. 1637**


**Christednings.**

ffranunces, the daughter of Thomas Rudge was baptized the 28 day of March.
Joane, the daughter of John Godden, was baptized the 11 day of April.
Jacob, the sonne of of William Hollester of Natridge Hill [in Westerleigh] was baptized the 12 day of May.
Elizabeth, the daughter of William Prigg, was baptized the 24 day of May.
John, the sonne of Thomas Joanes, was baptized the 6 day of August.
John, the sonne of John Parsons was baptized the 26 day of August.
Mary, the daughter of John Holder, was baptized the 17 day of September.
Anne, the daughter of John Atkins, was baptized the first day of October.
Sarah, the daughter of John Nichols, was baptized the 29 day of November.
Elizabeth, the daughter of Thomas Prickett, was baptized the 6 day of December.
Sarah, the daughter of Robert Wimbold, was baptized the 7 day of December.
Grace, the daughter of John Ellary, was baptized the 16 day of December.
Jane. the daughter of Richard Poole, was baptized the 26 day of December.
Daniel, the sonne of Robert Belcher, was baptized the 7 day of January [now 1638].
John, ther sonne of John Jefferies, was baptized the 20 day of January.
Anne, the daughter of Philipp Smith, was baptized the 24 day of January.
Mary, the daughter of John Coape, was baptized the 18 day of February
Hester, the daughter of James Webb, was baptized the 4 day of March.
ffraunces, the daughter of Hugh Parker, was baptized the 10 day of March.
**Richard, the son of Thomas Skidmore, was baptized the 11 day of March.**
Susanna, the daughter John Champnies, was baptized the 10 day of June [presumably 1638].

**Burials.**
Rebecca, the daughter of John Tovie, was buried the 28 day of March.
Alse Richards, widow, was buried the 30 day of March.
**Elizabeth [formerly Skidmore], the wife of William Crume, was buried 9 day of May.**
The children [unnamed] of William Holleston, was buried 14 day of May.
Elizabeth, the wife of William Holleston, was buried 17 May.
Elizabeth, the wife of Henry Daugham, was buried 16 August.
Annis Jocham, widow of Rodford [in Westerleigh], was buried the 28 September.
Sanuell, the sonne of Christpher Cournocke, was buried 22 November.

[Marriages.]
None found in 1637.

**Sa[muel]: Smyth, Curat**
William Prigg
Thomas Rudge} Church wardingers.

**NOTES.** Richard Skydmore, the infant baptized on 11 March 1637 went almost immediately with his mother to Boston, Massachusetts and died, a bachelor, by 1661 at Norwalk, Connecticut. William Prigg, who signed this transcript as a churchwarden, was perhaps his grandfather.

There is unfortunately a long eight year gap after 1629, the period when the younger sisters of this Richard were likely to have been born.

Transcripts survive for the years 1607/8, 1608/9, 1609/10, 1612/3, 1617/8, 1620/1, 1621/2, 1622/3, 1623/4, 1625/6, 1628/9, 1629/30, 1637/8 (above), 1640/1. Many of these years (from March 25th until the same date in the following year) are in poor condition. There is one undated list which is undoubtedly from about 1637 since Samuel Smyth signs as the curate while William Syford and William Musley are churchwardens, and William Prigge and Thomas Rudge appear as sidemen.
Modern map of the parishes in Southern Gloucestershire

SKYDMORE PROBATES ABOUT WESTERLEIGH

-13-
IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE

The text of the wills printed below has been transcribed as precisely as possible adding only an occasional bit of punctuation. There were no dictionaries and the spelling is phonetic by the clerks who never wasted expensive paper or vellum when a common word could be contracted or omitted.

In the name of god Amen. The second day of July in the fortyeth yere of the Queense Maties Reigne that now is et A[nn]o d[om]ini 1598. I JOHN SKIDMORE of the p[ar]ishe of Westerly in the Countie of Glouc[ester] husbandman being sicke in body but of good and perfe[c]t remembrance thankes be to god doe make this my last will and teastament in mannor and forme following. ffirst give and bequeathe my soule to almightie god my maker and redemer and my body to be buried in the Churche yearde of SS Westerley. It[e]m I give and bequeathe unto my brother JOHN SKIDMORE the younger, my sister JOYSE SKIDMORE, and my sister AGNES SKIDMORE my two kyne to be parted equally betwene them every one his equall portion. I give and bequeathe unto my brother JAMES childr[e]ne 1 s [hillig] apece to be payde out of the hire of the cowe w[ich] is now in his possession and the rest of the hire I geive unto him selfe. It[e]m I geive more to my sister JOYSE iii [qr]arter[s] of a yeard of Stamell cloathe. It[e]m I geive betwene my brother JOHN and my two sisters JOYSE and AGNES xiijs. w[ich] JOHN DEWES doth owe me for hire of my cowe in his hands. It[e]m I geive to my brother WILLIAM xiijs iiijd w[ich] LANGLEY doth owe me. It[e]rm I give and bequeathe unto my Co[u]sen MARY five sh illings. All the rest of my goods moveable and unmoveable I geive and bequeathe to my brother John whome I make my whole executor of this my last will and teastement. Witnesses JOHN HALLIER maior, CHISTOPHER FFOULER, and JOHN SKIDMORE..

NOTES. Proved on 1 November 1598 at Gloucester. JOHN HALLIER “major” was the elder man of his name. CHRISTOPHER FOWLER died at Wapley in 1616.

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In Dei nomine Amen. The xxiiiith Day of November Anno Dmi 1606 Anno Regio Jacobi Anglia iiiio Et Scotia xiimo I RICHARD SKIDMORE of Westbury Upon Trim in the County of Glouc carpenter being broke in body but of good & perfecte memory god therefore be praised doe make this testament conteyning herein my laste will in maner and forme followinge fyrste I commend my soule into the hands of Almighti god my maker & Redeamer & my body to the earthe from whence it came & my goodes I bequeathe as followeth. Imprimis I give and bequeathe to ANNES my wife the summe of xxxv of good English money w[ich] STEPHEN HIETT oweth me Item all the reste of my goods & chattells moveable and unmoveable whatsoe[er] my debts payde & funerall discharged I give & bequeathe to AGNES my wife and THOMAS my sonne equally to be divided betweene them and I appointe ANNES my wife to be my executrix to see this my laste will & testament p[er]formed. Witnesses to the makinge hereof [CHIST]OPHER TRUMPER curat[um] Alce Shepp[ar]de.

NOTES. Proved 12 September 1606 at Bristol. This will is in the familiar hand of Reverend Trumper (died 1636) found in the parish register and in the will of Richard Lawrence above. Alice Sheppard had been betrothed to Thomas Lawrence, the brother of Anne Skidmore, at the time of Lawrence’s burial on 27 April 1606.

NOTE. The widow Anne is called Anne in the parish register.
In the name of god amen. The Nine and Twentith day of August Anno Domini A thousand six hundred and nine. I RICHARD SKYDMORE of Westerly in the countie and diocese of Gloucester yeoman being in sound and perfect memory (prayed to god) doe institute and make this my Testament contayning therein my last will in forme following. ffirist I recommend my soule into the handes of Allmighty god my creator and redeemer. And my body to be buried in the church or churchyard of Westerley aforesayd. Inprimis I give to the poore of Westerly six shillings eyght pence. Item I give unto my sonne WILLIAM SKIDMORE all my debts at Newbery Hungerford. and that debt that JOHN SHOWELL of Cleeve and CHRISTOPHER HORNER of Bristoll doe owe me or any other man to be sued for at the costs and charges of my sonne WILLIAM. I confesse and acknowledge that I gave and delivered to my daughter AGNES SKYDMORE before the making and writing of this my will and Testament at two sundry tymes the somme of tenne pounds in money, viz eight poundes at one tyme and fortie shillings at an other which Tenn pounds my sonne WILLIAM borrowed of her and doth owe her. And also I gave and delivered to her eyght pounds of money which JOHN LOVE of Westerly doth owe her, and also fortie shillings of money more which THOMAS HOLLISTER doth owe her. I give to my godchildren twelve pence a piece. Item I give to my sayd daughter AGNES SKIDMORE six kyne half of all my househould stuff of every sort within doors unbequeathed. Item I give unto her half of my corne and half of my haye. Item I give unto to my daughter AGNES two calves with browne faces. Item I give unto MARY the daughter of CHRISTOPHER CORNOCK a sparked heyfor two yeares ould at Spring next. I give to MARY SKIDMORE my servannt a redd heyfer of two yeares old and the vantage and a sparked bull calf. Item I give unto JAMES SKIDMORES children a black yearling and a calf with a blemish in one eye to be sould and the money to be equally devided amongst them. Item I give unto my two sonnes viz JAMES SKIDMORE and JOHN SKIDMORE and to my daughter JOYCE nowe wife of CHRISTOPHER CORNOCK fortie shillings a piece to be payd by my Executrix hereafter named. Item I give to my sonne WILLIAM my greate crocke that standeth in the chamber where I lye. The rest of all and singular my goods catells and chattells moveable and unmoveable not before given nor bequeathed I whollie give and bequeathe unto MARY my wife, whom I make constitute ordayne and appoynt my sole Executrix of this my last will and Testament, my debts legacies and funeral charges by my sayd Executrix honestlye discharged and payd. And lastly I doe hereby revoke annihilate. and utterly make voyd all formerwilles gifts and legacies by me at any tyme or tymes heretofore made or caused or procured to be made or done. I appoint THOMAS HOLLISTERE and CHRISTOPHER CORNOCK my sonne in lawe my overseers of the my last will and Testament and for their paynes I give them three shillings four pence a piece. Witness here unto ROBERT HOOPER clerke parson of Iron Acton. The mark of RICHARD SKIDMORE Signum, THOMAS HOLLISTER testio.

NOTES. Since Richard Skidmore had property in more than one diocese his will was proved on 30 November 1609 at the superior Prerogative Court of Canterbury.

Muster of September 1608. Westerleigh, Richard Skidmore unable in body hath one musket furn[ished]. He was probably over 60 years of age and born before 1550.

If William Skidmore ever filed chancery suites to recover the money owed his father they have not been found indexed at the Public Record Offices.

***
The Administration of the goods of WILLIAM SCUDAMORE, late of Westerleigh in the diocese of Gloucester, deceased, was granted to JOHN SCUDAMORE, the natural son, and then to JAMES SCUDAMORE of Westerleigh, yeoman, and to JOSEPH WHITEWOOD of Mangotsfield, yeoman, 30 November 1615. Acquittance was given on 18 September 1617 to JOHN SCUDAMORE, of Bath in the diocese of Bath, of the administration on the goods of WILLIAM SCUDAMORE, deceased, late of Westerleigh in the diocese of Gloucester.

NOTES. This is the only administration found, and the only probate recorded as a Scudamore. His children were remembered in the will of his niece Elizabeth Skidmore, next below.

Muster of September 1608. Westerleigh. William Skidmore Warburner. [aged about 40] a trained subsidy man. What his uncommon occupation involved is unknown, but he may have been charcoal burner.

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In the name of God Amen. I ELIZABETH SKYDMORE of Morlewood in the county or Glouc\l Singlewoman being sick in body but of good & [per]fect memorie (Thanks be given to God) doe make & ordaine this my last Will and Testament in maner & forme ffollowing. ffirst I give & bequeath my Soule unto Allmighty god my maker & redeemer trusting by his merritts only to be saved & my bodie to the grave to be buried in the churchyard of Thornbury. Item. I give and f forgive unto WILLIAM [RIDER] of thornbury ffortie shillings wch he oweth me. Item. I give and bequeath unto RICHARD JOANES tenne shillings of the Thirtie shillings wch he oweth me. Item. I give & bequeath to the two yongest children of GEORGE BAKER of Thornbury Twentie shillings apeece wch their father oweth me wch I will shall be paid if I shall dye of this my sickness. Item. I give & bequeath unto ELLEN the wife of JOHN JOANES of Thornbury shoemaker & unto the nowe wife of THOMAS EDMONDS of Thornburie xx\s vizz Tenn shillings apeece to be paid if I dye of this sickness out of the thirtie shillings wch RICHARD JONES aforesaid oweth me. Item. I give onto WIDDOWE MERRICK Tenn shillings of the Twentie shillings wch she oweth me, And the other Tenne shillings I give to EDITH HOLBROOKE And RUTH PHILLIPS of Thornburie equallie beetweene them. Item. I give to WILLIAM SKIDMORES son of Mayes Hill fortie shillings of the sixe pounds wch the [said] WILLIAM his father oweth me, And the other ffower pounds I give & bequeath unto the two children /stuck out to be paid when they shall accomplish the age of twelve yeares/ of CHRISTOPHER CORNOCK wch he had by JOYCE the daughter of my brother RICHARD SKIDMORE. Item. I give unto [struck out. Ann] MARY LAWRENCE daughter of THOMAS LAWRENCE late of the [hacket] in the parish of Thornsbury, And unto MARY SKYDMORE of the same [hacket] Tenne pounds namely ffive pounds apeece. Item. I give unto THOMAS TAWYER & his wife & their three children & to the wife of FFRANCIS TAWYER Twelve pence apeece. Item. I give unto M\RIS DOROTHE WYNEARD Tenn shillings and to M\RIS DOROTHE STAFFORD the other Tenne shillings. Item. I give unto the poor of the towne of Thornburie ffortie shillings to be distributed at the tyme of my funerall. Item. I give & remitte unto THOMAS WISSE all such charges of suite in the Law wch he had beene att by reason of two bonds put in suite [against him] for my debte wch I refereth to MR. THOMAS MORSE to sett downe, And wch my will is shall be distributed out of the money wch he oweth me & shalbe paid if I shal happen to decease wch this my prnte sickness. [This provision struck out: Item. My will is that my Ladie Stafford my mtris shall give and distribute all my wearing apprarrell & my lynen and wollen according to her will and discretion. See notes/ Item. I give & bequeath unto JOHN HAWKSWORTH sonne of PEETER HAWKSWORTH,
gent. twentie shillings and if the same JOHN happen to decease before the same xx\(^1\) be paid then my will is the same shall remaine to JOHAN the daughter of the said PEETER HAWKSWORTH. Item. I give and bequeath unto ELLENOR WHITE the eldest daughter of EDWARD WHITE Tenne shillings which the said EDWARD WHITE oweth me. Item. I give to the MARY SKIDMORE my sister in law my best piece of redd cloth two new smocks one p[eece of new linen cloth]. Item. I give to M\(^R\)IS SUZAN STONHOUSE the next best piece of redd cloth. Item. I give the thirde p[eece of redd cloth to JOHAN MORRIS my fellow servant. Item. I give to ELIZABETH SKIDMORE & MARJORIE SKIDMORE daughters unto WILLIAM SKIDMORE my brother to each of them one petticoate of the best, And my best gowne and best hatt I give & bequeath unto the said MARGERI SKIDMORE. Item. I give to JOYCE my fellowe servant my worst gowne (saving one) one old hatt [my third-best smock] and a new rad wascote. Item. I give to ELLEN HARROLD widow my worst petticoate [worst gowne & old apron wollen] Item I give to ALICE MASON of the [Hacket] widow my worst petticoate saving one. Item. I give to [the said] ELIZABETH SKIDMORE one of my new p[aier] of shooes & the other paire of [new shooes] [and one apron white and blew coler] I give to my sister-in-law MARY SKIDMORE. Item. I give to ALICE HOLBROOK one Smock. Item. I give to ALICE LEWIS my blew cloth apron. Item I give to the wiffe of WILLIAM CROME of Westerleigh p[lar]ish my great coffer and all linen [which shall be here at the time of my decease] and my lesser coffer I give to MARY the daughter of WILLIAM SKIDMORE w[th] all the Linen which shalbe in yt at the time of my decease. Item. I give to M\(^R\)IS ANNE SHIRTLEY Tenne shillings. Item. I give to S\(^R\) JOHN STAFFORD my m[aste]\(^2\) the chest or coffer now in the chamber w\[th\]in the dayhouse all whatsoever is therein contained, and I do make and ordain my [sayd] m[aste]\(^2\) my full and whole executof this my last Will & testamente, And I doe alsoe constitute & ordayne THOMAS MORSE & WILLIAM RIDER, gent. my overseers of the same. In Wittness whereof I have hereunto put my hand & Seal the Eighteenth day of September Anno Dni: 1614. Signed & sealed in the presence of us, The marke of ELIZABETH SKYDMORE. THOMAS MORRIS, WM RIDER, PETER HAWKSWORTE

NOTES. Elizabeth Skydmore was buried on 18 September 1614. No date of proof is shown on her will. Her unnamed mistress in 1614 was Susannah Wynward who had married Sir John Stafford as his second wife on 26 October 1607. Susannah was the daughter of George and Elizabeth (Gibson) Stonehouse of Little Peckham, Kent and Radley, Berkshire, and she was previously the widow of John Wynward. Her father was one of the Clerks of the Green Cloth to Queen Elizabeth, while her Wynward husband had been a Groom of the Chamber to the Queen. She died before Sir John, and was buried on 28 December 1621 at Thornbury. The Susan Stonhouse, who had a small gift of red cloth from Elizabeth Skidmore, was clearly a namesake and kinswoman of Lady Stafford. The two other young unmarried ladies remembered by Elizabeth Skidmore in her will were Dorothy Wynward (a daughter of John Wynward, the first husband of Lady Stafford), while Dorothy Stafford was a niece, a daughter of Sir John’s elder brother William Stafford (1554-1612). All of these people (including Sir John’s mother) undoubtedly stayed with the Staffords at Marlwood Park from time to time.\(^{18}\)

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\(^{18}\)See the Occasional Papers, no. 35, Elizabeth Skydmore who died in 1614, a spinster of Marlwood Park in Thornbury, Gloucestershire. This was paper was a postscript to the Occasional Paper, no. 29, Lady Mary Scudamore (c.1550-1603), courtier. This paper (no. 35) suggests that
Mary Skydmore was the widow of Elizabeth’s brother Richard Skidmore (died 1609), and Mary Lawrence was their daughter living at The Hacket in Thornbury. It is left blank in the copy but it was the place now “The Haggit” about a mile east of the town.

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In the name of god Amen the 14th daye of June An[n]o domyny 1629. I JAMES SKIDMORE of Westerleigh in the Counti of Glo[ouce]ster sicck of body but in perfeck Remember[ance] besed be my god. I considering [the] fraill weake estate of all mankind do caws this my last will and testament to bee mad in manor and form following. I do Bequeth my [bodi] soull into the hands of god my creator [and] redemer [and] my bodi to be buried in the church or churchyard of Westerlighh [and] as for my worldi goods as followeth first I give and bequeth to my sonne JOHN on[e] tabell bourd with all [the] benches and wainskot that is in my hall my coe bord onli aksepted wich I give to my daughter ELIZABETH CROME after my exseketrix shall dese[a]s. Item I give and bequeth all my Toolls of Iron as shou[e]lls [and] axes [and] other Implements about my hous wich shall be remain[in]g at the de[a]th or dese[a]s of my exseketrix to my sonne John [and] the] said tabell bourd benches [and] wainskot befor mentioned to be delived allso at [the] dese[a]s of my exseketrix [and] forther my will is that all [the] things mentioned shall remain after the dese[a]s of my sonne John unto [the] next survior of my nam[e] Insuing. Item. I give and bequeth to my sonne RICHARDS two daughters ESSEBELL [and] ANE one bonde wherein ROBERT HOBBS [the] younger is bound unto mee for payment of 5 pounds at [the] de[a]th of his father ROBERT HOBBS [the] ellder or ells at his own de[a]th wich shall hapen being daet[ed] the first of March 16:16. Item all the Rest of my goods chatells [and] catelle mouebell [and] unmouebell I give and bequeth unto AMY my wieff whom I maek my soell exsektrix of all my goods chatells [and][ catells mouebell [and] unmouebell [and] I do appoynt loving friends THOMAS ROACH of Nebli and THOMAS HOLLESTER of Natrig Hill overseers of this my last will [and] I do allow them 8 pens a peis for theyr peyns in witnes whereof I [the] said JAMES SKIDMORE hav herunto [set] my hand [and] seall [the] 14 day of June anodomyny 16:29. Singed se[all]led [and] delivred in [the] presens of us JOHN SKIDMORE [his] O marke, RICHARD SKIDMORE, GILBERT SKIDMORE. The marke of [the] said JAMES SKIDMORE JS

NOTES This will is miserably written and an exact transcript (including finally “tools of iron,”) took a considerable amount of time to transcribe. On the reverse side of this will is written in a better hand: “De[b]its owed by Mr. James Skidmore to Mr. Hobbs of Cowley in ye Countie of Somerset fouwerteene pounds.” No date of proof is shown.

Muster of September 1608. Westerleigh, James Skidmore husbandman, 3 [aged between 50 and 60] m.[of middle stature fitt to make a musketyre] a tr[ained soldier].

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Hear followeth the Last Will and Testament of me THOMAS SKIDMOOR of ffairfeild [Connecticut] and is as followeth: Imp’mis: I give my Soule to my mercefull Creator and preserver:

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Elizabeth Skidmore must have known the mother of Sir John Stafford who served Queen Elizabeth at court at the same time as Lady Mary Scudamore. Both papers are posted on the Skidmore family website (www.skidmoregenealogy.com).
Expecting Salvation only through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ my only Lord and
Saviour: and my body to the earth from whence it came to be decently Interred and for my Temporal
estate I dispose as followeth my Just debts and funeral Charges being first payd. I give and bequeath
unto my Loving Wife SARAH SKIDMORE all my estate of what kind or nature for ever: that I shall
dye possessed of: To be her owne proper estate and portion Shee paying such after legacies
mentioned in this my will: I say I give her all my estate for her Comfortable mayntenance while Shee
lives: and if god shall take her away befor Shee hath Spent all the said estate: then it is my will that
the one half of the estate she Shall dye possessed of: The one half shall be at her dispose: and the
other half I dispose the one half [of the sd half] to my Grand Child JOHN HIGBY that married my
wives daughter and the other half of the Said: Half to my Grand Child JOHN SKIDMORE my True
meaning Is that my Grand Children HIGBY and SKIDMORE shall equally divide between them the
one half of estate my wife shall dye possessed of: Item I give to all my grand Children twelve pence a
peece. I Contetute and appoint my Loving wife SARAH SKIDMORE to be sole executrix of this my
last will: and I appoint Liu' JOHN BANGS [BANKS] and WILLm HILL, Sen' to be overseers
thereof: That this is my Last Will and Testament I have hearunto set to my hand this 20 Aprill 1684:
Witnesses:

WILLm Hill Sen' CORNELIUS HULL, innner, Marke THOMAS T SKIDMORE.

An Inventory of the estate of Tho: Skidmore deceased taken by us whose names are underwritten
[crossed out: by us whose names are underwritten],

To his waring Clothes 3-17-6
To Pewter 2- 5-0
To brass & skellets 2-13-2
To a bell mettell potnet 0- 6-0
To 2 Iron pots & pothookes 1- 0-0
To Trammell tonges firepooles 0-12-0
To axe hooke & frying pan 0- 8-0
To a Sword Stafe & hoe 0-11-0
To wooden ware 2- 8-0
To salt [2 sh.] Indian corn [17 sh. 6d.] 0-19-6
To Porke veneson 3-10-0
To linnen 3- 0-0
To 2 Cheasts & a box 0-12-0
To Small things and hogsfat 0-10-0
To bed bedding Coverleds & od things 10- 0-0
To Smoothing Iron lamp & Tin pan 0- 5-0
To bags 0- 6-0
To wool 0- 1-6
To Sheep & glass bottle morter & pestle 1-10-0
To horse flesh 6- 0-0
To a booke & od things 0- 4-6
To debts due to the estate 22-17-0
To debts on his book unknowne [£] 64-00-2
[To debt]ts due from the estate unkowne
[Take]n by us the date abovesaid
To a grid Iron Chauendish, blanket & old Stilliards & pomp Irons & a Smal bason
JONOATHAN MORHOUSE
JOSEPH ROWLAN

SARAH SKIDMORE the widowe of THOMAS SKIDMORE makes oath that the Above Inventory is a true Inventory of her husbands estate: according To the best of her knowledg taken this 15 Novemb’ 1684. Before mee JOHN BURR Commisioner

Speciall Courts held att ffairfield the 8th Day of Decemb’ : 1684
The will and Inventory of THOMAS SKIDMOOR deceased was this Day exhibited to the Courts [and] the Court: approves thereof: and wheras the Said [a few words obliterated] Thomas by his Last [will] appointed his wife SARAH sole executrix of the sd will: and the said SARAH is also within a fortnight after her husbands decease: als Taken away by death whereby the estate is left destetute of an Administrator: this Court appoints ISAAC WHEELER and SAMUEL TREADWELL Administrators on the said estate: who ar to make it ther care to preserve the estate from Imbezlement and dammage: and they are to pay all Just Debts and Dues: out of the said estate: That is due from the estate: alse to Bill such Debts and Dues: That is any ways Due to the estate and they are to render an Ac’ of ther administration at the County Court held at ffairfeild the March next: that the Court then may proced to what shall be thought necessary concerning the said estate.

NOTES. These original documents survive and show that the will is in the hand of William Hill, while the later inventory was set down by Jonathan Morehouse. Although Thomas Skidmore was literate in happier days, his will at 79 is signed only with a large and tremulous “T” and he owned at least one book according this document in a day when they were seldom valued in inventories.

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THE LAWRENCE WILLS

In the name of god Amen The 24th day of December In the year of our lord 1603. I RYCHARDE LAWRENCE of Westbury uppon Trim in the County of Glouc[ester] mason beinge sick in body but of good and perfecte memory god therefore be praysed doe make this testament conteyninge hereinm my laste will in maner and forme followinge fflyrste I commend my soule undo almighty god my maker and redeemer and my body to the earthe from whence yt came and my goods I bequeath as followeth fflyrste I geve and bequeathe to JOAN my wife the bedsteede and the bed with the appurtances w’ch I had with her at the day of her marryage. Item I geve and bequeath to ROBERT my sonne the whole and entire summe of xxi poundes fourteene shillings fowre pence of good English money. Item I give and bequeathe to THOMAS my sonne the summe of twenti poundes sillage and the one halfe of my household stuffe. Item I geve and bequeath to ANNES my daughter the other halfe of my household stuffe and the whole and entire sum of thirteene poundes silleinges eight pence

19Richard Skidmore married soon after the Annes Lawrence remembered by her father in this will. She took to her husband £13 in money and household goods.
of good English money. Item I give to RICHARD HOWES the household stuffe that was his fathers. Item all the residue of my goodes & chattles moveable and unmoveable d whatsoever unbequeated my debtes payde and my funerall discharged I give and bequeathe to THOMAS my sonne whom I make and appoynt and ordeyn my sole executor to see this my last will and testament executed and performed accordingly. Wytnesses hereunto RICHARD HOWES, THOMAS LAWRENCE, CHRISTOPHER TRUMPER, curate.

NOTES. Richard Lawrence was buried on 25 December 1603 and probate was granted on 17 March 1603/4 at Bristol.

Extracts from the parish register of Westbury upon Trym:
Richard Lawrence, baptized 22 September 1560.
William, son of Richard Lawrence, buried 6 April 1590.
William Lawrence, buried 30 May 1591
Ales Lawrence, widow, buried 16 February 1593/4.
Richard Skidmore and Anne Lawrence, married 4 September 1604.
Thomas Lawrence, buried 27 April 1606. [Alice Sheppard had been betrothed to Thomas Lawrence, the brother of Anna Skidmore, at the time of Lawrence’s burial on 27 April 1606.]
Richard Skidmore buried 25 November 1606.
John Cooke and Anne Skidmore, married 27 September 1608.
Joan Lawrence, widow, buried 15 April 1616.

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Memorand[um] that about the Wednesdaie or Thursdaie before Lowe Easter Sondaie last THO[MAS]: LAWRENCE of Westbury upon Trim did declare and make his nuncupative will in manner and forme followinge vz he s[ai]d that ALICE SHEPPARD his contracted wiffe shoulde have the ad[it]nistration of his goods to paie his debts as farr as these goods will extend. Whatsoevr was left over and above should be hers. These words he spake in the p[pres]ence of his brother and sister in law and of ALICE SHEPPARD.

NOTES. He was buried on 27 April 1606 at Westbury upon Trym. Administration was then granted on 31 Oc tober 1606 at Bristol to Alice Shepharde.

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THE AGROVE WILL
In the name of god amen, the thirtith day May 1628, I RICHARD AGROVE of Sibland in the parishe of Thornbury in the County of Glouc’ husband’ sicke in bodie but of god and perfect mind and memorie doe make and ordain this my last will and Testament. I give and bequeath unto my welbeloved wife MARY my best fflock bedd, one paires of sheets, one paires of blanketts, twoe Coverledds, one bloster, one Coffer, one Brassse pan, one kettle, twoe crocks, sixe pieces of pewter, twoe Candlesticks, one pewter pott, one faire table bord with a frame, three gyne stooles, one faire Cupboard, one bedstead wch remayneth in the possessiom of THOMAS LAWRENCE my sonne in law. In give and bequeath unto my said wife MARY one Anuytie or yeerly rent of Sixe pounds of lawfull money, to be paid duriung e herr naturall life, and after her decease then to remaie to my Exectrix hereafter named, But if that yf my said wife shall not be Contented with that portion hereby given her, that my will ys that shee shallbee paid for her Anuytie, but onely the some of Three pounds of lawfull money by the yeere. I give and bequeath unto my kinswoman ELLEN
HICKS widowe the late wife of WILLIAM HICKS deceased the some of Tenne Pounds. I give and bequeath unto WILLIAM JONES my daughters sonne the some of Twentie pounds. All the rest of my goods, chattlles, Cattles, Creddits and rights whatsoever I give and bequeath unto my kinswoman JOHANE JONES whom I doe hereby make and ordain my full and whole executrix. And I do entreat my lovginge ffreynds JOHN JONES of Thornbury and RICHARD COLE of Buckover to bee overseers of this my last will and Testament. RICHARD x AGROVE his marke. In the presence of JAMES GOUGE, JOHN JONES, GEORG LYMELL.

NOTES. Richard A Grove was buried tThornbury on 20 April 1634. His will proved at Gloucester on 25 September 1634. Richard Agrove and Mary Skydmore were married on 3 November 1614 at Thornbury. She was the widow of Richard Skidmore of Westerleigh, and was buried as Marie Grove at Thornbury on 10 February 1634/5.

Muster of September 1608. Moreton, Thornbury, Richard Agrove, Robert Longe and Robert Stones aforesaid have between them one corslet furnished.

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THE WHITEWOOD (WHITEHEAD) WILLS

Aprill the 21th 1629. In the name of god amen. I, JOSEPH WHITEWOOD of Wickewicke in the parish of ffampton Cotterell beinge sicke in bodie but of good perfecke memorie doe make this my laste Will and Testament in manner and forme followinge. I give and bequeth unto my three daughters ELIZABETH, ANNE and KATHERINE unto each of them the some of three pounds of current Englishe money to be paid unto them when they shall attaine unto the age of eightsene yeares and if eithedr of the said ELIZABETH, ANNE or KATHERINE dye before the[y] attaine to the age above said that their portion or portions shall remained to the survyor or survyvors of them. Further my will is that the rest of my goods not bequeathed I give unto my wife MARGERIE whom I make my full and whole executrix of this my last  will and Testament. I do appointe Mr. Wm KEMYS of Wickwick and my Cosen HENRIE BAMPTON of Mangotsfeild my overseers of this my last will &c. In the preence of us ARTHUR KEMYS, Wm KEMYS, JOHN BOALLOCK, AMYE x ATTWOOD her marke. Proved at Gloucester on 30 June 1629.

NOTES. Muster of September 1608. Frampton Cottrell, Joseph Whitwood 1[aged about 20] p[of tallest stature fitt to make a pykeman] and a servant to Arthur Kemis gent.

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In the name of god Amen. I, MARGERY WHITWOOD being sicke of body but of good and perfect memory doe make and ordayne this my last will and Testament in manner and forme followinge. Imprimis I give my soule unto almightie god, being redemed by the most pretious bluded of his sonne Jesus Christe my only Saviour, and my body to bee buried in the churchyarde of fframpton. I geve, bequeethe and assign my house, orchard, garden, etc., unto my sonne JOHNWHITWOOD. All my other goods and chattells I geve and bequeath unto my childrede JOHN, ELYZABET, ANNE, & KATHEREN too bee equally devided betwene them, but I desire that the cubbarte, great chest and table borde in the hall may be appoynted as part of that that shall happen unto JOHN. I will that my sayd goodes shall bee devided by Mr. WILLIAM KEMYS RICHARD ATTWOODE, by brother THOMAS SCIDMOR, and JOHN YOUNGE. I do intreat RICHARD ATTWOOD and my brother THOMAS SCIDMOR to be executors for my children. Dated this 6th June 1631. The mark of MARGERY x WHITWOODE. In the presence of ARTHUR KEMYS,
NOTES. Proved at Chipping Sodbury on 2 August 1631. Margery Whitwood was the daughter of William Skidmore of Westerleigh, and a niece of Elizabeth Skidmore of Thornbury. Margery Whitewood and her late husband were both buried at Frampton Cotterell as Whiteheads, Joseph on 23 April 1629 and Margery on 6 June 1631.

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THE PRIGG WILLS

In the name of God Amen, I WILLIAM PRIGG of Rodford in the parish of Westerleigh in the Countie of Glouc, yeoman, beeing sicke and weake in bodie but of good and p'fitt memorie, doe make and ordaine this my Last will and Testament this 22th day of March 1643. I give to the pore of Westerleigh 20s. to be distributed according to the discretion of my executor and overseers. I give to my son Samuell my lease of the house and orchard and garden that was THO: SKIDMORE, lying in Westerleigh streete during the whole term, but my will is that my wife ELIZABETH PRIGG shall have and injoy all and everie the fruits, rents, and profitts thereof during the term of her natural life. I give to my three younger daughters MARIE, ELIZABETH and HANNAH, my lease of Parker’s ground lying uppon Woottons Hill in Westerleigh, equally, but my wife shall have and enjoy all the fruits, rents and profitts of the said ground during her natural life and after her decease my son SAMUELL shall have and enjoy it during his natural life, and then to fall to my 3 daughters beforenamed. I give to my wife 4 kine, not of the best, nor worst, but as my overseers shall think most indifferent. I give to her two beds with therir furniture and all that whic was her oune when I married her and an anntyke bolster lately bought and a mare colt and 20 busheles of mashing wheatand rye and a third part of my puter and 2 coffers in the butterie and 2 joined stools. I give unto my 3 younger daughters MARIE, ELIZABETH and HANNAH £20 apeece when 21, a cowe and calfe apeece, to be bread and kept by my executor untill they come to have cauffes and then to be delivered unto them. I give to my 2 sons WILLI,' 20 s., and RICHARD 40 s. a yeare to be paid them by my executor for 4 yeares after my decease. The residue of all my goods, chattels and an asinement of one meadow (containing 7 aceers lying in Whaplie being part of RICHARD LARENC’S tenement lately deceased) and all other things not before given, I give to my sone THOMAS PRIGG whom I doe make the whole and sole executor of this my Last Will and Testament and I doe desire Mr. RICHARD FOWLER, Minister, ROBERT ALESOPE of Littleton, JOHN PRIGG of Frampton, and RICHARD HOLLISTER of Cophill in Westerleigh to be overseers of this my Last Will and Testament and I doe give them xi d. appece as a token of my love. WILLIAM x PRIGG, his marke. Witnesses to this will & testament ROBERT ALLSOP, JOHN PRIGG, RICHARD HOLLISTER, THOMAS x PRIGG.

NOTES. Proved at Painswick, 5 February 1645/6. William Prigg was aged about 40 in 1608, the son of a Thomas Prigg who died testate in 1599 leaving a widow Margaret. She left an imperfect will in 1616 leaving ten shilling each to two favored grandchildren William, son of Henry Allsop, and to Joan daughter of Thomas Prigg. All of her other grandchildren (unfortunately not named) were left six shillings, six pence. There were no witnesses, but Hugh Simons and Henry Allsop [clearly a son-in-law] were made overseers.

The parish register is missing, but ELLINOR, (“wife of William Prigg”), was buried on 24 July 1628 according to the bishop’s transcript for that year. She was the mother of his elder children. Thomas (bapt. 4 January 1617/8), William (bapt. 4 July 1621), and Richard (bapt. 22 February 1623/4). Elinor undoubtedly was also the mother of William’s still earlier children Samuel, Sarah and
probably Ellen (or Ellinor), born say 1605-10, who followed her husband Thomas Skidmore to Massachusetts. The earlier transcripts are largely missing and their christenings cannot be found. William Prigg’s younger daughter’s Elizabeth (bapt. 1637) and Hannah (bapt 2 August 1640) belong clearly to his later marriage to a second wife ELIZABETH, who survived him.

Ellen Skidmore, probably belonged to this Prigg family. The Priggs much later improved their lot at Westerleigh. Thomas Prigg in 1698 gave the church there a large silver flagon and plate, and on an oval table against the east wall of the chancel of the church is a monument to the memory of a Richard Prigg, Gentleman. He died in 1723 aged 63 bearing arms Argent, lion rampant regardant azure, between 3 Trefoils.

_Muster of September 1608._ Westerleigh, William Prigge, husbandman, 2 [aged about 40] ca [of lower stature fitt to serve with a calyver] tr[ained soldier].

An earlier William Prigg, living in the time of Bishop John Clerk (1523-1541), was a victim of the extortions of John Brugge who was, to the bishop’s great slander, the bailiff at Pucklechurch. This hundred then included Westerleigh parish where Brugge had seized sheep and cattle from William Hobbes and William Prigg worth 40 marks wrongly calling them escheats. This William Prigg may very well have been an ancestor to the descendants of Thomas Skidmore (1604-1684) of New England.

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