

Family EA

The Gamekeeper Jephcotes of Chilvers Coton

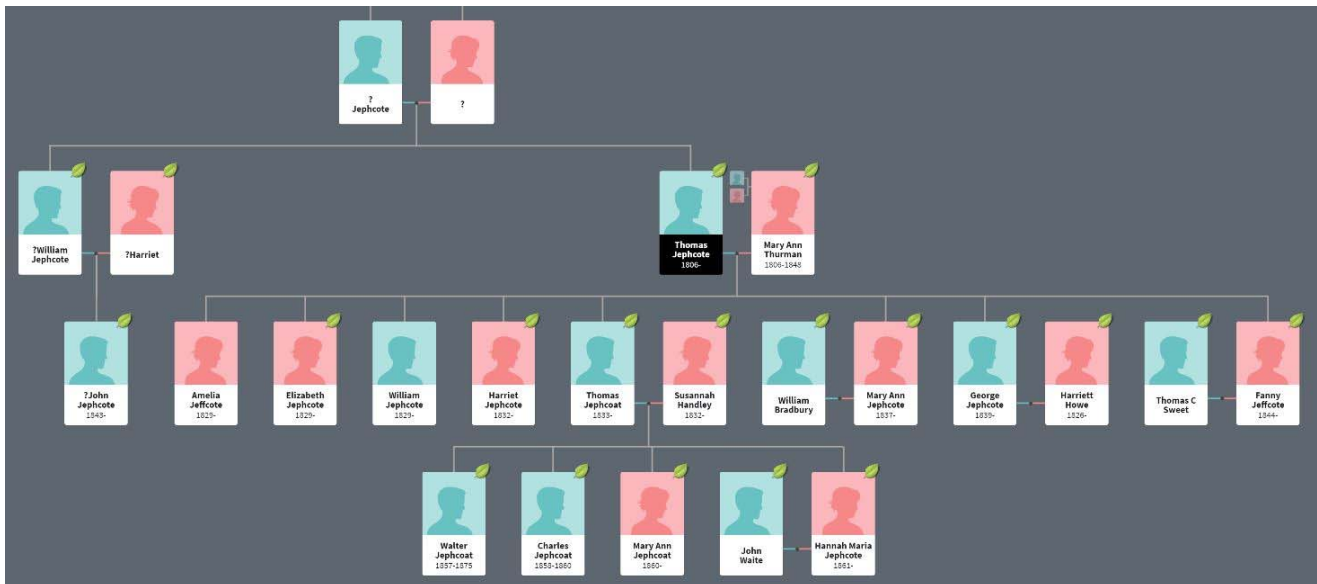
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6.EA.1 Introduction

Introduction

Our knowledge of this family came from birth entries connected with the mother's maiden name of Thurman, in our GRO listings. Mary Ann Thurman married Thomas Jephcote. On checking for baptisms, we found the family in Chilvers Coton, Warwickshire in the 1820s through to the 1840s. We then found the Handley children in the same way. This is one of the many SC (Stockingford Circle) families that we have attempted to understand and present, with great difficulty. So many Thomas, William, Johns, Mary, Elizabeth, Hannahs, etc. If only we knew how they were all connected.

Taking the Thomas and Mary Ann side of the tree, this is what we have.



Looking at baptisms and marriages, we learned that:

In 1827, Thomas was a ribbon weaver, when the first Amelia was baptised.

In 1836, Thomas was a weaver, when Mary Ann was baptised.

In 1841, Thomas was an agricultural labourer.

In 1842, Thomas was a gamekeeper, when George and Fanny were baptised – Thurman.

In 1856, Thomas was a toll gate keeper, when Walter was baptised.

In 1867 Thomas was a publican, when his daughter Fanny, married.

Thomas' wife Mary Anne died at the age of 42 years in 1848, with the 1851 census showing Thomas to be a widower.

When George and Fanny were baptised, the clerk gave Thomas's profession as gamekeeper. Also on that same page in the parish book, there was another gamekeeper named William, married to Harriet, with their son John and from family BY. Two gamekeepers, both surnames the same spelling. Could they have been brothers? We checked this and the answer seems to be no.

It seems likely that this William and Harriet (maiden name Flowers) belong to family BY, so we are left with a coincidence, or a possible close connection. Nehemiah and Ann also appear in the baptism records, as well as other J couples.

Here follows another mystery. Three of Thomas and Mary Ann's children baptised within two weeks of each other – assuming that there was only one Thomas and Mary Ann, weaver, family. Why would they do that?

Warwickshire, England, Church of England Baptisms, 1813-1910 for Amelia Jephcote
Stockingford > 1825 - 1849

BAPTISMS solemnized in the Parish of <i>Hamlet of Stockingford</i> in the County of <i>Warwick</i> in the Year 1829						
When Baptised.	Child's Christian Name.	Parent's Name.		Abode.	Quality, Trade, or Profession. *	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
		Christian.	Surname.			
25. No. 197.	Elizabeth	Thomas & Mary Ann	Jephcote	Stockingford	Weaver	J. E. Jones
25. No. 198.	Amelia	Thomas & Mary Ann	Jephcote	Stockingford	Weaver	J. E. Jones
July 5. No. 199.	William	John & Martha	Whetstone	Stockingford	Weaver	J. E. Jones
5 No. 200.	William	Thomas & Mary Ann	Jephcote	Stockingford	Weaver	J. E. Jones

Then we have the baptismal record of three of the children of our two gamekeepers. How might they have been related, if at all? William was recorded as having the profession 'keeper' in 1836, when his daughter Hannah was baptised. Did he encourage Thomas, then a weaver, to become a gamekeeper too?

Warwickshire, England, Church of England Baptisms, 1813-1910

Chilvers Coton > 1825 - 1849

BAPTISMS solemnized in the Parish of <i>Chilvers Coton</i> in the County of <i>Warwick</i> in the Year 1843						
When Baptised.	Child's Christian Name.	Parent's Name.		Abode.	Quality, Trade, or Profession.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
		Christian.	Surname.			
1843 July 13	Samuel					
August 113 No. 780.	John	William & Harriet	Jephcott	North Lodge	Game-keeper	H. Hake
August 113 No. 781.	James	William & Mary	Flood	Coton	Game-keeper	H. Hake
August 113	Thomas	William & Martha	Whitlock	Coton	Labourer	H. Hake

BAPTISMS solemnized in the Parish of <i>Chilvers Coton</i> in the County of <i>Warwick</i> in the Year 1842						
When Baptised.	Child's Christian Name.	Parent's Name.		Abode.	Quality, Trade, or Profession.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
		Christian.	Surname.			
1842 Sept. 10 No. 788.	Henry	Thomas & Mary Ann	Jephcott	Lawe	Game-keeper	H. Hake
Sept. 10 No. 789.	George	Thomas & Mary Ann	Jephcott	Lawe	Game-keeper	H. Hake
Sept. 10	Thomas	Thomas & Mary Ann	Lawe	Lawe	Labourer	H. Hake

It may be, but unlikely we think, that these two gamekeepers moved away to Leicestershire, we started to see newspaper articles appearing in the 1860s that mention two gamekeepers, Thomas and William Jeffcote. The newspaper articles mainly involved the apprehension of poachers, and the legal process to punish them. Did our two men get 'head-hunted' by a Lord of the Manor, to go and tackle a local poaching problem? Regrettably, we cannot find them in the 1861 or 1871 censuses, so they may have been living under aliases, to avoid reprisals. In one court case, William testifies about getting a severe beating, which might well have cost him his life. Some of the details are shown below – although we cannot be sure that these are the same William and Thomas. Interesting nevertheless. Some further research might just answer our questions.

MARKET BOSWORTH.

THE LATE POACHING AFFRAY IN THE PARISH OF NAILSTONE.

The **gamekeeper**, William **Jeffcote**, who was so brutally beaten in the affray on the 24th of July, still remains in a very precarious state, and is not yet able to be removed from his home, in consequence of which, on Saturday last, the Hon. and Rev. A. Byron, and Sir A. B. C. Dixie, Bart., sat at his house, at Merrylees, and the prisoner Joan Atkins, collier, of Ibstock, who has been in custody since the 24th of July, was brought from the police-station at Bosworth, and was charged with brutally assaulting Wm. **Jeffcote** in the parish of Nailstone, on the 24th of July last. The depositions were taken in full, and prisoner was committed to take his trial at the next assizes. It will be remembered that in the affray there were three keepers and a dog on the one side and four poachers on the other, who armed themselves with gun barrels. **Jeffcote** had his jaw and one arm broken, and his skull fractured; Vann and Hunt, the other keepers, received serious injuries, and the dog was shot at, but the charge went between his legs. Three of the poachers absconded the same morning, and have not as yet been apprehended. The prisoner was apprehended by P.C. M. Briggs, at Ibstock, about two the same day.

Mr Harrison, from the office of Messrs Miles, Gregory, and Boukell, prosecuted, and Mr Chamberlain, of Leicester, appeared for the prisoner.

Mr Harrison having briefly stated the case, then examined Wm. Jeffcote, who said, I am a **gamekeeper** living at Merrylees; on Sunday, the 24th July, between one and two o'clock, myself, John Vann, and Hunt, went to watch the game in the parish of Bagworth. I heard one shot fired towards three o'clock. This was fired towards Bagworth-lane, and we went in the direction of it; when we got there I looked down the road and saw four men standing against the gate in the lane. Two had guns, and the prisoner was one of them. They were walking along the road, and occasionally stopped against the gate. They were in the lane a long while; they came close past us. Myself, Vann, and Hunt were concealed. They went down the bridle-road to Nailstone, and we followed them. I heard a gun go off, and also heard a hare cry near to where the prisoner and the other men were. We then followed up towards them. They saw us and then ran away directly. They then ran on the foot-road towards Nailstone, and picked up stones as they went along. I cannot say whether the prisoner picked up the stones. I went up to them; Vann was close to them. When I got near to them prisoner pointed the gun at my breast, and said, "Stand back or else I shall give it you." I had not up to that time spoken to them. When he held up his gun at me, I said, you must not do so. It was a single-barrel gun; I had a dog with me which was close by my side. The dog went close to his legs; it did not snap at him, because he is not good enough yet; he has never yet been set at any one. He never attempted to bite him, nor to fly at any one. He turned the gun from my breast and shot at the dog. He did not kill it; I don't

The Leicester Mercury 17th September 1864

think he touched it. We were all in the field at this time. He had got off the foot-road. We were all about twenty yards from the foot-road when it happened; this was in Nailstone parish. I looked round to see if the dog was shot, and the prisoner took the barrel out of the stock. I went to try to take hold of him, and he then struck me with the gun barrel on the right side of the head; I then struck him with my walking-stick on the left side of his head. He then struck me with the barrel on both sides of my head with both hands. I then became insensible. When I came to myself again I found myself in the same field, and lying down in the same spot. I never saw anything more of the prisoner until he was shown to me on the 29th July last, in the room where I am now lying. Vann and Hunt were also in the field. I walked home; they did not help me home. Hunt went with me all the way, but no one rendered me any assistance. Mr Wright, of Markfield, was sent for to attend me, when I got home. He came the same morning. I was then lying on the sofa, and was afterwards taken to bed, where I have been ever since, and have been attended all the time. I have since been suffering from injuries on the head. My skull was broken right in, and a piece of my hat was sent in with it. My jaw is broken; my arm is broken, and three of my teeth were knocked out. The cap produced is the one I wore, and the hole in the cap corresponds with the piece knocked in my head. I only struck him once, and I never saw him again; I am quite sure he is the man. I'll swear it. I had not seen him before. I distinctly saw him on the morning; I had him in my eye. I described him to P.C. Briggs. I have not seen the other three men since. I did not know them. —Cross-examined: I had no right to take care of the game in the field where the affray took place. I had where the hare was shot. I am not certain whether I should know the other prisoners if I saw them. I followed for the purpose of identifying him.

Jno. Vann, **gamekeeper** living at Newbold Verdon, and Henry Hunt, wagoner, corroborated the testimony of W. Jeffcote.

Police-constable Briggs, and Sergeant Parkes having given evidence,

John Wright, surgeon, Markfield, described the serious wound received by Jeffcote, and added:—I dressed the wound, and he was in a most dangerous state. He is still keeping his bed. I despaired of his life for some time, and I do not by any means consider him out of danger now.

Prisoner was committed for trial at the assizes. Bail refused.

We learned from later reports that William recovered sufficiently, to continue his duties, as would appear to be the case from further altercations that were reported in the newspapers about poaching and trespass prosecutions. We know that Thomas later became a publican, so presumably William stuck with his tenacious pursuits of 'nere-do-wells' in his Lordship's manor. Note the following newscutting where William states he lived in Glenfield (near Leicester). That was some 20 miles away from his 'patch'.

Leicester Journal - 21st January 1870

Some were on the foot road, and some in the fields beating. He then went up towards where they were, and saw the defendant, who was on the foot road, call and beckon to the men that were in the field. Witness then went up to the defendant, and charged him with having been trespassing in search of game on Mr. Tebbs' land. Defendant's dog came up, which was one of those that had been beating the fields.—William Jeffcote said he lived at Glenfield, and was employed by Captain Pares as a gamekeeper. On the 9th instant he was fetched by the last witness to assist in catching some poachers who were on Mr. Tebbs' land. By the time he got there a number of the men had gone on to the foot road, but two men were in the field with two dogs. He saw the defendant amongst the party with a dog. Mr. Haxby contended that although the defendant was there and had a dog, that he was not amongst the men, and had nothing to do with them. The dog, he admitted, was there, and went in the field and followed the rabbit, but that was contrary to the wish of its owner.—P.C. Bancroft said he belonged to the borough constabulary. On Sunday, the 9th instant, he was on duty on the

We have other instances of gamekeepers in family AR, and perhaps others too. One assumes that the pay was good for the successful ones.
