

OUR HERITAGE



M. P. York

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>PAGE</u>	<u>ITEM</u>
ii	Acknowledgements
1	Early History
3	Medieval
7	The Early Modern Period
14	The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries
30	Religious Houses
35	Bibliography
	Tables in the Text:
20	Table I. Voters and Votes Cast, East Carlton and Cottingham-cum-Middleton, 1702-1831 and Numbers on Roll, 1835
35	Table II. Population Estimates and Censuses, East Carlton and Cottingham-cum-Middleton, 1086-1971.
	Facsimiles and Diagram:
Front Cover	Sketch of the Monument in East Carlton Church To Sir Geoffrey and Lady Margaret Palmer, 1673.
Facing 14	Account of the Overseer of the Poor for East Carlton for the year ending 16th. April, 1697.
Centre	Sheet from the Enumerator's Return for the Census of Middleton, 1871.
Facing 21	Cottingham-cum-Middleton Copyholders' Jury List for 1888.
Rear Cover	Extract from Cottingham School Log Book for 23rd. and 26th. November, 1888.

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I thank my wife for her delightful front cover design and the charming and appropriate title "Our Heritage". We have so much and it is a shame to lose it. We might take as our mentor the Princess Anna Komnena, who in the Preface to the Alexiad, her biography of her father, the Byzantine Emperor Alexius I, so rightly says:

"I, having realized the effects wrought by Time, desire now by means of my writings to give an account of my father's deeds, which do not deserve to be consigned to Forgetfulness nor to be swept away on the flood of Time into an ocean of Non-Remembrance; I wish to recall everything . . .". In our little communities we may not be playing the high politics of one who had to deal with the onslaught of Normans, Pechenegs, Turks, and the ramifications of the First Crusade. Nevertheless, what has happened here over the centuries is an important fraction in the sum of human experience.

This little work is only a recital of the more obvious and readily available data concerning our villages and it makes no pretence to be a study in depth. Much is omitted partly because the author is aware of other studies that may shortly be produced: he looks forward with pleasure to Mr. Lawrence Bailey's forthcoming work on the East Carlton Hospital and is himself working on the Middleton Jubilee Chronicle; partly because of lack of knowledge: when, as so often, asked why do you not produce a more modern work, the answer is that the materials are generally not available. Such a work must necessarily largely rely at this stage on living memory and there are so many better qualified residents in the villages in this respect.

I am grateful to Mr. John Burgess for the Cannam letters reproduced here, to Mr. Norman Needham for the Cooke document, to Mr. Fred Bradshaw for the extracts from the Copyholders' Accounts and to Corby Library and the Northants and Leicestershire Record Offices.

Spring brings the season of pleasure,
 Serene with sunny skies,
 Full Summer in richest measure
 Weaves the glamour of sweet surprise,
 And Autumn all of her treasure,
 Each Cottingham orchard fills,
 And the golden corn in the smiling morn
 Rolls far to the sunlit hills.

(Harrison, 1927)

EARLY HISTORY

Virtually nothing is known of the villages before the eleventh century. In Iron Age times a "summer way" is thought to have connected Aynho with Cottingham, entering the vicinity at Desborough and following the ridge of the Northamptonshire Heights.

Evidence of Roman remains have been found in Bury Close, on the boundary of Cottingham and Middleton, during the construction there of the new estate in the 1960's, but they were not sufficient to specify a particular kind of settlement. However, they must be sited near the course of the Roman road (sometimes called the "Via Devana") which probably connected Leicester to Godmanchester and Colchester. This ran along the Welland Valley from Ashley and climbed the scarp face via the Cottingham gap to gain the high ground around Corby. From the top of Corby Road, Cottingham, it follows roughly the course of the present A427 into the town.

After the Roman evacuation in the fifth century the Saxons seem to have colonised the area, although the paucity of proven Saxon settlements between Stamford (Lincs.) and the Peatlings (Leics.) suggests the difficulties facing primitive agriculturists. Rockingham, Brighthurst, and Cottingham are the only sites in the immediate vicinity with definite Saxon origins and all three have strategic advantages in that they are relatively easy to defend and are conveniently placed for crossing the Welland. Cottingham derives its name from the Saxon "home of Cotti". There is no evidence to suggest the existence of Carlton or Middleton in the early Saxon period. With the Viking invasions of the eighth century much of Northamptonshire came under the Danelaw and Morton (1712) states:

"Cottingham, Addington and Elmington according to Ingulphus . . . these together with Wedlynburc were destroyed by the Danes".

Carlton probably owes its origins to these Danish conquerors since its name derives from "Karlatun" meaning farm or settlement of Scandinavian carls. They probably re-settled Cottingham too and it may be that Middleton had its origins during the Danish occupation of the following two centuries since it means "middle farm" and is sited between the two older settlements. However, there is scant evidence to suggest a separate existence for Middleton for many moons to come.

During the early tenth century the warrior king, Edward the Elder, re-conquered Northamptonshire for the West Saxons and in the mid-eleventh century when Edward the Confessor was King, Carlton was part of the estate of Leuric, who, says Baker (1822), "was a powerful thane and one of the most extensive Saxon proprietors in the County". Meanwhile Cottingham was given to the Abbey of Burgh by prince Alfer with (according to Bridges, 1791) "the Church of Cottingham, a mill and other appurtenances in Benrefeld, Driffeld, Middilton, and the forest".

Towards the end of the reign of Edward civil war stalked the land as pretenders fought for supremacy. The English Chronicle of 1065 records: "Morkrere's northern followers dealt with the country about Northampton as if it had been the country of an enemy. The blow was so severe that it was remembered even when one would have thought that that and all lesser wrongs would have been forgotten in the general overthrow of England." (I.e. the Norman Conquest.)

Hardly had this blow been averted and Harold emerged victorious when the Danes struck and Harold marched to defeat them at Stamford Bridge and then turn to meet the threat of William the Bastard and his own tragic death.

The lateness of local development is partly accounted for by the geological structure of Jurassic limestone and cornbrash, overlaid on the higher ground with boulder clay. This produces a heavily wooded region suitable for hunting and later for timber and

iron production and Morton (1712) suggests:

"'Tis likely (the Romans) clear'd the Countrey of Wood so far as to make themselves early and convenient Ways or Passages thorough: But the chief Destruction of our Woods seems to have been made afterwards by the Saxons; and this to supply Fewel for the great Number of Iron-Works which they set up in that part (Rockingham Forest) of the County".

MEDIEVAL

Leofric, the Abbott of Peterborough, was amongst those who fell at Hastings in 1066. Brand was elected as his successor and was invested by the English Aetheling, Edgar who was soon forced to flee and who with some of his followers found refuge in the Eastern Roman Empire as members of the renowned Varangian Guard in the capital, Constantinople (now Istanbul). Thus Cottingham and its outlier Middleton had a new overlord, as did Carlton, but for a different reason: Leurie was dispossessed of most of his estates by William the Conqueror and Carlton was amongst the manors granted to the Earl of Mortain.

During the century after the Norman Conquest there were three surveys of Northamptonshire of which records remain, all of which deny the existence of Middleton as a separate entity. At that time Cottingham and Carlton were part of "Stoc" (Stoke) Hundred, which was eventually absorbed into Corby Hundred during the reign of Edward I in 1196.

In the survey of c.1075 Stoke Hundred was assessed at a total of 42 hides for tax purposes, of which only $18\frac{1}{2}$ paid tax. Of the remainder $11\frac{1}{2}$ were exempt and 12 were waste. Stoke Hundred had suffered considerably in the warfare "at the end of King Edward's days" and a decade later this is still reflected in the large proportion of land exempt from taxes.

The next survey, Domesday, was undertaken after the threat of a Danish invasion when the old Saxon defence system had fallen into disuse and the king had to employ Norman and Breton mercenaries for defence (1085). This force was quartered on the natives and greatly oppressed them. The invasion did not materialise, but when the danger was over, William

held a Great Council to inquire into the state of the nation: thus Domesday (Domus Dei - Day of Judgement?). By 1086 recovery seems to have taken place:

"Hunfrid holds of the Earl of Mortain 3 virgates of land in Carlintone. There is land for 3 ploughs. In demesne there are 2, and 7 socmen, with 6 bordars, have 4 ploughs. There is a mill rendering 16d. and 8 acres of meadow. Wood 2 furlongs in length and half a furlong in breadth. It was worth ten shillings; now twenty shillings. Leuric held (it) freely."

and "Cotingeham" was part of the land of "St. Peter of Burg":

"There are 7 hides. There is land for 14 ploughs. In demesne are 2 and 4 serfs; and there are 29 villeins and 10 bordars with 10 ploughs. There is a mill rendering 40 pence, and 12 acres of meadow. It was worth ten shillings, now 60 shillings."

The twelfth century survey known as the "Geld Roll" confirms that Cottingham is in the hands of the Abbey and that it remains at 7 hides. Carlton is already split, the Earl of Mortain having fallen into disfavour and losing much of his lands:

"In Carleton of the King's socage, half a hide and a small virgate and a half. There also William Daubeney half a hide and one small virgate and a half. There also Robert Fitz Hugh three great virgates and one small virgate and a half."

There is a problem here since there is a total of one hide and three small virgates unaccounted for in Domesday. Is this "natural increase" or an error in Domesday which assigns Ralf Payne two hides in Stoke Hundred without specifying the locality?

In the Liber Niger (Black Book) of Peterborough Abbey (1125-28) we find that the King has 5 hides and 1 virgate in his gift. Of these Robert of Olli holds one-third of a hide, Maiel the son of Osbert holds the Church and $\frac{3}{4}$ of a hide, a socman renders 12d., Godfrey holds a small virgate for which he renders 5 shillings, and Tohof holds one virgate for which he renders a silver mark. In addition there were 17 villeins. The abbey had seven bordars, the mill rendering 20 shillings and other "perks" such as 15 hens at Christmas and 300 eggs at Easter.

The impression one receives is of a thriving and developing community in Cottingham.

In 1146, whilst the Second Crusade was wending its weary and dangerous way to the futile siege of Damascus, there is an early mention of Middleton in the confirmation of it and Cottingham in the hands of the Abbey of Peterborough (Abbott Martin de Bec) by Pope Eugenius III. Middleton is mentioned again in the Feet of Finas of 1197.

Kelly (1910 et seq) alleges that a hospice for lepers existed in Cottingham during the reign of Henry III (1207-72) but any confirmation of this or evidence as to where it might have been situated, eludes the present writer and examination of the Church does not readily reveal the presence of a leper window, which one might expect if there was such a colony: it being usual medieval practice to provide lepers with the opportunity of listening to services without mingling with the congregations.

From the Assize Rolls of 1202 and 1203 we gather some interesting little snippets of Carlton society and its problems. Hawise accused Richard the parson of East Carlton and Eda his wife and William his man of wounding Hugh the builder, her husband. However, Hawise and Hugh did not complete the action, so possibly a mountain was being made of the molehill of a minor local quarrel.

A little later the Carte Nativorum mentions some of the residents of Cottingham (e.g. Robert Fauvel, villein, William and Hawise Prest, William Schelnak and Richard of the Hill whose "toft lay on the east by the Royal Road") and Middleton (e.g. Hugh Herberd, Constantine Reeve, Katherine Page, Stephen Sydrak and William Mayn - could he possibly be an ancestor of the Main family who were prominent here until the late C19?). An interesting extract is that concerning Bartholemew Smith and William of Anstey. In 1290 Bartholemew "fabro de Cotingeham" bought from William of Anstey, a freeman, a virgate of land (about 13 acres), 2 acres of meadow and a house. For all of this Bartholemew agreed to pay the Abbey an annual rent of 4 shillings, to plough on the demesne land twice a year with "as

many oxen as he shall yoke to the plough", to render one hen at Christmas and 10 eggs at Easter, to cut wood for one day of "Wodebene" with one man, to do "borough work" and to give a tallage at Michaelmas with his peers.

In the early fourteenth century the Northamptonshire Sessions Rolls tell us once more of trouble in Carlton and a murder, no less. In 1314 Reginald of the Cowhouse accused Robert the son of Henry the Skinner of "trespass against him in the vill of Carlton, but the case was dismissed. It seems to have been part of a larger issue for at about the same time we find:

"It is found by a jury of the country on which Robert, son of Henry the Skinner of Carlton, plaintiff, and John son of William Berner of Carlton, Henry de Lowick of Carlton, William le Berner, John son of Robert Johan, Reginald of the Cowhouse, Thomas Ploumcarte, Nigel son of Richard the Wheelwright and Robert Rakepas, defendants, put themselves, that the aforesaid defendant on the Monday before the Invention of the Holy Cross in the seventh year of the reign of the present king (Edward II, 29.4.1314) did not commit any trespass against the aforesaid Robert, son of Henry, against the peace, etc. Therefore it is awarded that the aforesaid John and the others go thereof without day, and the aforesaid Robert, son of Henry, take nothing by his suit but be in mercy for a false claim, etc."

One can only imagine the nature of the alleged trespass, but it would be no surprise if it concerned rights of common or encroachment on the strips of Robert in the open fields. At an inquest at Geddington in 1320 Hugh the Hosier of Kettering and Thomas le Walsche were accused of "thievishly and feloniously" killing Roger Chapman, merchant of Leicester in the wood of Hugh Prilli of Carlton. At the same time William the Reaper of Wilbarston "stole a mare in Carlton fields and is a common thief and also (brought) foreign thieves into the County".

Around this time Carlton was subdivided into several hands. Part of it came to Henry de Braybroc and his wife Christiana Ledet. In 1290 their daughter, Christiana Latimer, did homage for her moiety of their estates and when she died in 1292 she was seized of lands in Carlton

and other local villages. Her son and heir, Sir Thomas Latimer of Braybrook was confirmed in these possessions in 1329. On his death in 1334 he was succeeded by his son, Warine Latimer.

By 1315 the Lordship of the Manor was shared by John Hotot, Peter Prilli, Walter de Honby and Margery de Oseville. The two main parts were known as East and West Hall. The former, in 1335 was in the possession of the Warde family from whom it passed to William Palmer, Esq. who in 1407 married Anne (or Amy) second daughter of Nicholas Warde. Palmer already possessed West Hall, so that the estate was largely reunited under him and from that time until the present century the Palmers have been the dominant local influence and landowners.

Meanwhile, in 1296 the Abbott of Peterborough was certified to hold Cottingham and Middleton of the Crown in capite by unknown services. However, by 1370 Sir Henry Greene of Boughton, Chief Justice in the reign of Edward III, held them, presumably from the Abbey, and left them to his heir, Sir Thomas. In the fifteenth century, according to Bridges (1791), there was a manor of "Hill" in Middleton which was in the possession of William Palmer of Carlton. As the Middle Ages drew to their close, the villages were once more in the possession of the Abbey. In the survey of the possessions of the monasteries (1535) ordered by Henry VIII shortly before their dissolution, we find yearly revenues at Cottingham valued at £45.17. 4d. and profits from woods at £16. Of this £12 was deducted by the king for the guard at Rockingham Castle and £3. 1. 8d. for Robert Chapman, bailiff of Cottingham manor, who had the manor on lease for a period of 21 years in the mid-16th at a rental of £8 p.a.

THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD

Peterborough Abbey was dissolved in 1536 and its Abbott, John Chambers, was appointed Bishop-elect of the new Diocese of Peterborough and Warden of its property (previously, under the Taxatio of Pope Nicholas IV (1291), Cottigham was placed in the Deanery of Weldon in the Diocese of Lincoln. By

the beginning of this century, like Carlton, it was in Weldon 1st. Deanery, Oakham Archdeaconry, Diocese of Peterborough). At the time William Palmer of Carlton was bailiff of the Manor of Cottingham-cum-Desborough. There were no fewer than three mills at Cottingham: one water, one wind, and one horse valued at a total of £4. 3. 4d. In addition, details of the woods in the lordship of Cottingham are revealed: Kunalदेशaw 26 acres, Middleton Thickke 16, High Swinehaw ("swine enclosure") 44, Brodeangle 16, Yoake Wode ("wood used for making yokes") 13, Shere Tree 13, Littlehaugh 16, Blackfall 16; a total of 160 acres. Some of these names are still with us although most of the trees have long since disappeared.

When the Abbey was re-constituted as a Cathedral (4.9.1541) it lost much of its lands, including Cottingham which reverted to the Crown. On 28.2.1543 Henry VIII granted Cottingham Manor and Rectory to Sir William Parre, Lord Parre of Horton, father of Henry's last wife, Queen Katherine. Sir William and his male heirs were to hold the manor by the service of one-twentieth part of a knight's fee. When he died in September 1546 his widow, Mary, was left in occupation of Cottingham. In August 1547 the reversion was granted to his nephew William Parre, Earl of Essex, who was advanced to the rank of Marquess of Northampton. He was attainted in August 1553 for supporting the attempt to prevent Mary Tudor from acceding to the throne by installing Lady Jane Grey. All his honours and estates were forfeited. He was restored in blood in May 1554, but apparently did not recover Cottingham. During the reign of Mary Tudor (1553-58) the manor was part of the royal estate and was valued at £51.10. 7d., the rise since the previous valuation probably reflecting the inflation of the Tudor period rather than a real increase.

In 1560 "the vill of Cottingham and Middleton which is a hamlet of the same vill" were confirmed in the hands of Queen Elizabeth I who granted them in fee in 1582 to her Lord Chancellor, Sir Christopher Hatton, of Holdenby and Kirby. He was responsible in 1586 for the appointment of Richard Bancroft, the future

Archbishop of Canterbury, to the living of Cottingham. Hatton "died in the thirty-fourth year of this reign (1592), seized of the scite and demesne lands of Cottingham manor, and of three mills with their appurtenances, all held of the crown . . . in free socage, and was succeeded by Sir William Hatton, alias Newport, Kt. son and heir of John Newport and Dorothy his wife, the sister of the said Christopher Hatton" (Bridges, 1791).

Traditionally there has been a certain amount of animosity between the three villages which even to-day is reflected in occasional back-biting. Perhaps it is a declining trait as old quarrels become forgotten and as the population structure changes with the influx of large numbers of people who have no knowledge of, nor interest in, such affairs. However, it is interesting to seek some answers to the question why should communities so close to each other often act in such a parochial way. For example, at the time of local government re-organisation in the early 1970's this writer proposed that the three villages unite to form a "super-parish" so that we could do more for ourselves and better withstand the encroachments of Corby. But this idea met the Charybdis of "independence" and the Scylla of "non-identity of interests". There is no simple solution to this problem, but that many of the animosities had their roots in the open field system of agriculture, which appertained hereabouts from Saxon times until the early nineteenth century, is certain. Such problems were alluded to in page 6 above when considering the medieval law cases of Carlton. Kisby (1957) shows them rearing their ugly heads once more in the 1570's when he considers the stand made by Vincent Chapman, yeoman, of Cottingham, against Jeffery Palmer and his Middleton tenants. They were using the Cottingham Hay Close and Hay Leys all year for pasturing their cattle and sheep. These two meadows lay between the Great Berry Field and the river and were common land. The Great Berry Field was arable under the crop-cycle corn (wheat or barley), pease (peas or beans) and fallow. It was largely

unfenced and Chapman and his neighbours who had strips in the field must have found insufferable the destruction of their crops by animals wandering on to them. Chapman seems to have fought a lone battle against Jeffery Palmer, John and Thomas Peake, Edmund Allam, Robert and James Dexter, William Rowell, Thomas Newman, Robert Riddell, Simon Setchell, John Newsam, Richard Aldwinckle, John Salmon and others. By 1576 the argument had reached such a pitch that arbitratours were called in: William Saunders, Thomas Broke, Edward Watson, and John fflower were responsible for "quietinge, appeasinge, endinge and determynyng all . . . varyances, striffes, sutes, controversies and debates". The opposing parties bound themselves in the "some of one Hundred Pounds to stand, to abyde, obeye, pforme, fulfill, hold and kepe the Award, Arbytrament, order, rule, fynall determynation and Judgement". The arbitratours took evidence and after "duly advysedly and delyberately hearinge, prsing, examyninge and understandinge the matters and causes" delivered their judgement in January 1577. The outcome was that no-one should pasture their animals on the Hay Close and Hay Leys before 20th. August (unless the crop in the Berry Field was already taken in) and after the 30th. November (when it was sown with corn) or after 6th. January (when sown with pease).

From the sixteenth century onwards surnames appear in all kinds of documents such as wills, muster rolls and deeds, which remain down to the present century. Also the Parochial Registers provide detailed information for Cottingham and Middleton from 1574 onwards and for Carlton since 1625.

The Muster Roll - the register of men and materials available for the "home-guard" - of 1605 provides us with:

"The Names of all the Freeholders within the several Hundreds of the East Devision (of Northamptonshire) taken by the return of the Bayleaves in the seconde yeare of the Kinges Majestes raigne . . .

Cottingham-cum-Middleton:

Vincent Chapman

Henery Blunkley

Carlton:

Thomas Palmer, Esq.

Robert Smithe

Thomas Mooreton"

Could this be the same Vincent Chapman who fought that lone battle in the 1570's? If so, either he was a young hothead at that time or by 1605 he was getting-on even for home-guard service. In the same year we learn that in Cottingham Vincent Leake could provide one Corselet and John Brigg one Calliver, whilst in Carlton Richard Knowlt had one Corselet and Robert Ingram one Calliver. A Corselet, as its name implies, was a piece of body armour. A Calliver was a light musket which could be used without a rest. With powder flask and ball pouch, it cost 14/10d. in 1620.

In 1608, under the list of clergy appointed to find arms, Mr. Powell, parson of Cottingham had to provide one Calliver and Mr. Howes of Carlton had to find one then and again in 1613. In 1616 Cottingham was charged with one Musket, valued at 26/8d. Slightly more information emerges in 1617 when Cottingham-cum-Middleton possessed one Musket and one Corselet valued at 16 shillings, the Parson having one Calliver, John Phelps one Musket valued at 8 shillings, and there being three trained men: Edward Chapman, William Dexter and Richard Chapman. At Carlton, Thomas Palmer had a Musket, the Parson a Calliver, and the trained men were Christopher Semner and Henry Smith. The frequent mention of "the Parson" is due to the fact that the Parish arms were usually kept in the Church for safe-keeping and ease of access in an emergency.

Little is known of Cottingham-cum-Middleton during the Civil War and Cromwellian periods, but despite a set-back during the latter, the Palmers were moving from strength-to-strength during the seventeenth century. Thomas Palmer (d.1628) had his son Geoffrey (b.1598) trained in the law and he became M.P. for Stamford. In 1640 he was a manager of the evidence against king Charles I's favourite and commander in Ireland "Black Tom Tyrant" Wentworth, Earl of Strafford. With his policy of "Thorough" he had quelled the Irish and had hoped to do the same for his King in England: but he reckoned without knowing the real strength of Parliament and the Scots. He was impeached and the King was unable to save him from the block: a disaster for the royal cause since Wentworth probably had the ability

to win the ensuing Civil War for the King before the Parliamentary side really got going. As it was, the Puritan and Parliamentary attack on all our traditions caused a re-action in favour of the king and Palmer was amongst those who rallied to his support, only to suffer imprisonment in the Tower in 1655 for his pains. During the last war, in 1942, a Mortar of the Stuart period was found in the grounds of Carlton Park; one cannot help but wonder if it was part of a treasure sacked from the Hall by Cromwell's soldiers.

Little is known of the villages during this period, although Geoffrey Palmer was rewarded for his suffering at the Restoration of Charles II in 1660; he was created a Knight Baronet and appointed Attorney-General. Later he became Chief Justice of Chester. At that time Cottingham-cum-Middleton was in the hands of Sir William Newport who died in 1671. It then passed to Sir Christopher Hatton, grand-son of John Hatton of London, who enclosed Cottingham Woods, Middleton Thick and other coppices which had been granted to Christopher Hatton by Elizabeth I in 1572. In 1671 Andrew Colling, Walter Newman, Thomas Bowman, John Maydwell and others were seized jointly and separately in the manor of Cottingham and claimed common pasture of Driffild (80 acres), 150 acres of Rockingham **Waste**, and parcels of Cottingham manor with the privilege of heybote for their arable lands in Cottingham and Middleton, for which they pleaded prescription. This is presumably the origin of the Copyholders franchise which is still in being. In 1676 Christopher, Lord Hatton of Kirby sold the advowsan of Cottingham to the Principal and Fellows of Brasenose College, Oxford, who have selected latter day incumbents of the Parish.

That the perennial problems of the open field system were not solved by the dispute between Chapman and Palmer et al (page 9/10 above) is proven by examination of the records of the Court Leet and Court Baron of the Manor of Cottingham during the seventeenth century. Almost 40% of the fines imposed were for "surcharging the Common" with

beasts. The usual penalty was one shilling per animal and in 1664 Thomas Setchell was fined 5 shillings for 4 cows and a horse. Even the Rector of 1660-80 was not immune: "Jonathan Holleds, Dr. of Divinity, for often annoying the watercourse with his ducks contrary to order, one shilling". More serious for intra-village relationships: "Daniel Bruise for his wife gathering Pease upon John Sprigge his land without leave, one shilling" and "Thomas Aldwinckle for putting a stoned horse loose in the feildes contrary to order, ten shillings". And an act of downright irresponsibility in any day and age: "John Chapman for putting a diseased horse upon the Common, six shillings and eightpence". These fines may seem small enough to us, but at a time when the Carlton Poor Law authorities considered 40 shillings adequate to keep a child for a year and when money wages were of the order of 5 to 10 shillings a week, they can be seen to be relatively quite considerable.

The seventeenth century seems to see the growth of a social conscience on the part of the better-off for those less fortunate. By this time families were becoming well-established, perhaps, and felt they had a little to spare. John Aldwinckle seems to have set the ball rolling on his death in May 1661 when he left £10 to provide 12 penny loaves to be given to the poor on the first Sunday of each month. He was quickly followed by Sir Geoffrey Palmer who in 1668 endowed the Carlton Hospital for 5 poor people with £60 p.a. and William Downhall who in 1670 gave the Frett Meadows at Cottingham to be used to repair the Church and for a distribution to the poor each Christmas Day.

By the end of the seventeenth century names are recurring which suggest families settled in the villages for a long period already, many of which survive until the present century. One such is the Chapman family, another the Dexter. Two more old-established lines are mentioned in John Dexter's will of August, 1684: "John Dexter of Middleton in the Parish of Cottingham, taylor, grants Lucy Dexter of same, the widow . . . Sureties William Woodcock, Blacksmith and William Dexter of same, Fuller. Inventory £11. 8.10d. taken by Thomas Sturges and

OPPOSITE PAGE: Account of the Overseer of the Poor
for Carlton, 16th. April 1697

"The account then taken off William Briggs
Overseer off the poore and off Edward Stanyon
Churchwarden ffor ye last yeare ffor ye Towne
off Carleton"

Thomas Aldwinckle". Again, in the will of John Peake of Middleton dated May 1703, we find a grant to William Peake the Younger, of same, cordwainer and shoemaker. Sureties: Benjamin Scotney of Northampton, cordwainer and William Peake the elder of Middleton, victualler, father of the deceased who renounced administration in favour of his son, William, brother of the deceased. In 1706 Richard Richardson of Lamport, clerk, left £145.14.11²d. to John Richardson of Cottingham, miller, the nephew and next of kin whilst in 1708 Mary Caldecott of Cottingham, spinster, bequeathed her goods to Thomas Caldecott, Esq., of Cathorpe, Leics., her nephew.

By this time evidence of the inhabitants and occupational structure of the villages is beginning to flow thick and fast, first from the electoral poll books of 1702 et seq., then from the Militia lists of the later eighteenth century and from 1801 onwards via the decennial censuses and various commercial directories. The evidence suggests busy and thriving communities which reached a peak of prosperity in the late eighteenth century and then suffered the decline and poverty common to rural areas with the increasing mechanisation and urbanisation of what had been previously village crafts.

THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES

It is during the early eighteenth century that the following rhyme may have originated:

"Corby Cross, Cott'nham Key,
Oakley O, Gretton G."

and on the boundary between Cottingham and Corby on

April 8th 1877.
 The accounts then taken off William Briggs Over-
 seer off 3 years & off Edward Stanger Church-
 warden for 3 last years for J Towne off Carleton

Recd by a Lewis	—	—	—	6: 0: 0
J of last Overseer	—	12: 10		
& to 3 young people	—			
their weekly collection	—			
ending Saturday 5	—	4: 3: 2		
10 th of this instant April	—			
J in all	—	5: 16: 0		5: 16: 0

Soe due from J Overseer	—	0: 4: 0
now Towne	—	
paid for warrant 1 st & charges	—	
Soe due from J Overseer	—	0: 2: 0

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TEL EAST CARLTON 312

GROCEER

NEWSAGENT

POST OFFICE

what is now the A427 there stood a boundary stone of ironstone, 1'5" tall by 8" wide and by 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ " deep. On the Cottingham side was inscribed a key and on the Corby side a Greek Cross. The Stone and Rhyme are described in Markham (1901) who cannot decide which came first. Unfortunately, it now appears to be lost. It has been suggested that the key and the Cross may be explained by the connection with Peterborough Abbey. However, this pre-supposes memories of a connection which had ended nearly three centuries previously (St. Peter set his key on the boundary stone so that none might move his landmark). More likely, perhaps, is the suggestion that the marks in the rhyme were once used to distinguish the animals of the villages grubbing in the wastes around Rockingham Forest: a practice which continued until the completion of the enclosures during the first half of the nineteenth century.

An early eighteenth century letter to the Earl of Cardigan from his bailiff Daniel Eaton discloses some of the events of a day's work around the estates:

"Sat. 13 Nov. 1725

My Lord,

Master Brudenell is very well & Mr. Billinge is better than he has been. We was viewing in Bangroves yesterday with Lord Hatton's servants & wee agreed very well in our opinions, which we think was chiefly owing to the judgement and good nature of Mr. Bradshaw and Mr. Peak of Cottingham. We cannot view today because two of my Lord Hatton's keepers, who are persons imploy'd, and Mr. Bradshaw must kill does today, but on Munday we have appointed to meet at Dean Wood, for we all think that it will be better to view a day in one wood and then a day in the other rather than to finish one wood intirely before we begin the other

I am your Lordship's most humble and
most faithful Servant

Dan. Eaton"

One gets the impression from this letter that Eaton was a kind and modest man - certainly he seems prepared to give credit where it is due. Unfortunately the nature of the "expertise" which Bradshaw and Peak were

called upon to give is not made clear. Perhaps, because of the reference to Bradshaw killing does, it had something to do with culling the herds of deer which, like the domesticated animals, could play havoc with growing crops if they wandered into the great open fields.

An examination of the Northamptonshire Poll Books for the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries suggests communities of some wealth: the qualification for the vote in the counties was the possession of freehold land worth at least 40 shillings per year and usually the payment of taxes, rates, and tithes. The freehold qualification was widely defined to include copyholds, mortgages, annuities, and so on. In 1702 no fewer than 20 Carlton and 36 Cottingham-cum-Middleton men cast votes. In 1705 there were only 2 Carlton voters: Sir Lewis Palmer and the Rev. Thomas Chapman, but there were 44 Cottingham-cum-Middleton voters. At this time Cottingham-cum-Middleton appears to have had the largest number of electors in the whole of Corby Hundred: and doubtless there were others who could have voted, but did not. Perhaps it was inconvenient for them to travel to Northampton to cast their votes. That there was a high percentage turn-out in 1702 may have something to do with the following letter to Sir Justinian Isham, one of the two unsuccessful candidates:

"Kirby 22 June 1702.

As soon as I had seen your last letter, I sent to the freeholders not only of Cottingham and Middleton but likewise with Wilbarston and Stoake. Those I saw did perceive they had been of late tampered with but setting aside some few dissenters all the rest did assure me they would adhere firmly to yourself and Mr. Cartwright.

I shall ere long take opportunity again to remind them of their promise and I will do the same to others and neglect no occasion of expressing the respects of

Yours most humble servant,
L. Hatton." (N.R.O. 2938)

Here we see eighteenth century "influence" (probably accompanied by largesse) at work. In the case of a general election, each elector had two votes in order to elect two Knights of the Shire. In 1702 only two of Carlton's voters used theirs on behalf of the "opposition". One voter, Edward Lyne, appears to have had a grudge against Isham since he only used one of his votes and that for Isham's partner, Thomas Cartwright. The other 17 Carlton electors voted for Isham and Cartwright as a man. Despite Hatton's efforts, Cottingham and Middleton were more evenly divided: Isham received 16 votes, Cartwright 17, St. Andrew and St. John 20 and Lord Spencer 18.

At this time the Triennial Act was in force, so elections were called every three years. In 1705 the efforts of the Tories met with more local success: Cartwright and Isham received 26 votes each and St. Andrew and St. John, with his new partner Lord Mordant, 20 each (why the Carlton voters should be reduced to a mere 2 is not clear: Sir Lewis Palmer did not vote in 1702 when most of his people supported Isham and Cartwright, as he himself and the Rev. Chapman did in 1705, so one would assume that he would encourage his folk to do the same again. Unfortunately, the 1702 and 1705 Poll Returns do not distinguish between men domiciled in the villages and those who lived elsewhere but who had a vote because of their possessions within the parishes.).

The 1708 Poll Book seems to have been lost, but an interesting letter of 1707 suggests the wheels were already beginning to turn:

"Harborough November ye 20th. 1707.

To Sir Justinian Isham.

Sir,

This day I wated on Sr. Lewis Palmer he was much plesed to heare from you. Sr. Lewis desired that you may be acquainted that he hath ingaeged Middleton and Cottingham for your worship and Mr. Cartwright which I found to be true. Mr. Peake was not at home. Severall of the freehoulders that I spoke with are all your

Civil Rights for Forwarding of	City or Municipal Borough of	Municipal Ward of	Precinctary Borough of	Town of	Village or Hamlet, &c., of	Local Board, or if Overseers,
					<i>Middlebury</i>	

Total of Houses.	Total of Males and Females

friends. I went to Wilbarston I saw Mr. Humpreys this day he was with ye Lord Rockinghams stuard. Mr. Wintworth is expected in the contry this week, Mr. Humpreys doubt think Mr. Wintworth will disist and give your worship his Intrest. Sir Lewis Palmer is of the opinion that Mr. Wintworth will give his intrest unto Mr. Parcust.

Sr I am your most Humbele and Dutyfull
sarvant att command

John Dalawall." (N.R.O. IC2761)

The next Poll Return we have is for the 1730 by-election when the candidates were Isham and W. Hanbury. Carlton once more had only 2 voters (both cast for Isham); Sir Geoffrey Palmer and the Rev. George Fenwick. Cottingham-cum-Middleton had 48 of whom 12 were non-residents. Of these, only 15 voted for Isham and 33 for Hanbury. Obviously, Isham's interest was not well-protected locally, although he won the election.

There is another gap until the 1748 by-election between V. Knightley and W. Hanbury. Once more there were only 2 Carlton voters: Sir Thomas Palmer and the Rev. Lewis Palmer who bothe cast for Knightley. On this occasion only 13 Cottingham-cum-Middleton voters used their franchise, 3 of whom were non-residents. Of these only 3 voted for Knightley and 10 for Hanbury, although the latter was again unsuccessful. The reason for the fall in numbers of Cottingham-cum-Middleton voters is not clear since the villages were entering on their period of greatest prosperity and one would expect the number of men qualifying to increase. Perhaps it reflects the growing power of the aristocratic families, particularly the Whigs, to influence the outcome of elections and the growing expense thereof which made "arrangements" between the parties the rule rather than the exception. This may have had the effect of encouraging apathy amongst the voters - especially those for whom a two-day journey was involved in casting their vote and in the course of which they may very well be open to intimidation as the "rules" for the conduct of the 1767 election imply when Lords Northampton, Halifax, Spencer and others circulated a memorandum designed to discourage

"mob-rule":

19

"1. That Mobbing of all kinds shall be discontinued by the above Lords and Gentlemen - and all their friends from this time until the election shall be over"

7. That the damage done to the Window of the George Inn be repaired at a joint Expense"

(N.R.O. Y2Box56-23.10.1767)

Incidents of this kind might well have deterred our more staid local citizens from taking the trouble to vote.

By the time of the next election for which we have records, that of 1806, there were no Carlton voters and only 5 for Cottingham-cum-Middleton. Of these William Jacklin of Cottingham only used one of his votes which he cast for Lord Althorp (who won), whilst Edward Warmsley of Cottingham, and John Cannam, Charles Buswell and William Aldwinckle of Middleton voted for W. Cartwright (also successful) and Sir. W. Langham. At the time of the 1831 election, when Lord Grey and the Whigs were desperately trying to reform the electoral system and there was a revolutionary fever throughout the land, only 7 village voters (of whom 3 were non-residents) bothered to cast their votes. Of these, the Rev. Thomas Clayton and Thomas Reynolds, publican, of Cottingham voted for Cartwright and Knightley; John Aldwinckle, farmer. of Middleton for Althorp and Milton; John Cannam, gentleman, of Middleton for Althorp and Cartwright; and of the others, 3 for Althorp, 2 for Cartwright, and one for Milton. Althorp and Milton were elected: the former was Chancellor of the Exchequer and introduced the first effective Factory Act of 1833. Milton became unpopular with a large section of the farming community, as will be related below.

The Electoral Roll of 1835 gives the following men qualified to vote (subsequent to the 1832 Reform Act which made no significant change in the county voting qualification):

Carlton - Sir John Palmer, Rev. John Wetherall, Thomas and George Burditt, John Northern, John Maydwell and Thomas Scott.

Cottingham - Rev. Thomas Clayton, Henry Aldwinckle, Francis Cooke, Thomas Dean, Jonas Sarrington,

William Woodcock, John Peake, Charles Buswell, and John Eagle Maydwell.

Middleton - John and Thomas Aldwinckle, John Cannam, John Carter, Robert Humphrey, John Lambert Senior and Junior, and William Sculthorpe.

Of these, some lived in one of the other villages although their main qualification was land in that for which they are entered (e.g., the Burditts lived in Middleton). Omitted are those outsiders who qualified for their property in the three villages.

It is interesting to compare the numbers on the Roll of 1835 (Carlton 8, Cottingham 10, Middleton 13, including outsiders) with the small numbers who voted in 1806 and 1831 since those quoted in 1835 (or their forbears) must have had the relevant qualifications on the former occasions. Also it is notable that fewer men had the vote in 1835 than who used it between 1702 and 1730. This may well reflect the economic crisis of the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, so that fewer men met the county qualification in the early decades of the nineteenth century than had done so in the early eighteenth:

TABLE I. VOTERS AND VOTES CAST, EAST CARLTON AND COTTINGHAM-CUM-MIDDLETON COMBINED, 1702-1831 AND NUMBERS ON ROLL 1835

Year	Local Voters	Outsiders	Total	Votes Cast
1702	D.K.	D.K.	56	86
1705	D.K.	D.K.	46	92
1730	37	12	49	49
1748	12	3	15	15
1806	5	NIL	5	10
1831	4	3	7	14
1835	29	8	37	N/A

In 1791 a trust was created for the copyholders of the villages of Cottingham and Middleton to prevent their ownership of the manor from being destroyed. This was probably due to the growing economic hardships and moves on the part of prominent local land-owners to proceed with the enclosure of the land of the parishes: for Cottingham-cum-Middleton this was achieved by a private Act of Parliament in 1815 - the year in which Napoleon

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TRANSLATIONS.

Count down at Spruce Eagle Oct 4, 1888

July List 1888

C. J. Deater Foreman

W. Edwin Sizer

Case

3. bedwinckle

Cartier

A Chamberlain

Mr. J. P. Deakin

14 Beater

✓ ~~Mr~~ Cross absent

4 Brown

✓ J. Gusley absent

6/11/95

W. J. Baker

P. Schriber

7th July

James P. [illegible]

920

C. Simpson & Bailey
Jas. Ingram & Bailey

Gas Insurance & Wash

OPPOSITE PAGE: THE COPYHOLDERS' JURY LIST FOR 1888.

At that time the Copyholders still had a fair income from rents of land and from the water supply that had been tapped since the 1840's to supply the village troughs and pumps. Some of the larger houses had their direct supply, for which a charge of one shilling per tap was made at this time. It is interesting to note the venue for the 1888 Court Dinner: the Copyholders seem to have divided their custom fairly evenly amongst the local hostelries.

met his Waterloo. - although the details were not worked out until 1825 and the woods were not enclosed until the 1830's as the following correspondence bears out:

"Mr. J. Lambert Middleton

Sir Arthur Brook wishes if convenient to see Mr. Lambert and one or two of the Cottingham and Middleton parishioners on the subject of the rates as also the Enclosure on Monday morning at 12 o'clock

Oakley Friday"

The question of the rates must have aggravated the local farmers at that time: the poor were getting poorer and everyone who owned property, especially land, was having to dig deeper in his pocket to maintain them. That the correspondence concerned the woods is born out by a second letter:

"Mr. Cannam Middleton

The Forest Commissioners have desired Sir Arthur to inform Mr. Cannam with their compts. that they request the favour of his attendance at Kettering at 11 o'clock on Friday morning as one of the Trustees of the Fret Meadows Charity.

Oakley Wednesday Evening

Sir Arthur has informed the other Trustees."

The Frett Meadows Charity was, of course, that of William Downhall, referred to on page 13 above.

There now comes an offer from Sir Arthur for Mr. Cannam's part of the woodland:

"As it is now certain that Mr. Cannam's allotment is in Mantle Wood, Sir Arthur will buy it if Mr. Cannam will

put in the price per acre according to the quality of the land. It is important to have it settled today as the Commissioners are now awaiting Sir Arthur's answers if he can get some land at a moderate price he will buy it in order to save Poyners wood and the adjoining waste; if he cannot do this, a different arrangement will be made by him tomorrow which will prevent his buying any land at all.

If Mr. Cannam is therefore desirous of selling this is a favourable opportunity & the only one as there is not likely to be a purchaser for Mantle except himself after tomorrow will be too late The Commissioners being now at a standstill on account of the Cottingham Assessments.

Oakley Thursday."

One wonders what Sir Arthur wanted to save Poyner's Wood for - and the waste near it. Did Mr. Cannam sell him Mantle Wood? Doubtless, the answers to these questions can be found if we search hard enough. Meanwhile an official meeting was held of all those who claimed common rights in Rockingham Forest:
 "NOTICE: Such person as claim rights of Common within Rockingham Forest are requested to meet at the offices of Messrs. Shuttleworth & Warthaby in Market Harborough to-morrow Tuesday the 10th. instant at 12 o'clock on Special business relating to the Inclosure of that Forest.

Market Harborough

Monday January 9, 1832."

Whilst all this urgency surrounded the local enclosures, Cannam still had time for correspondence. At about this period he received an interesting letter from his friend Mr. J. Braithwaite, late of Cottingham but then farming at Rickmansworth, Herts. It is he who calls Cannam's attention to Milton's activities referred to in passing on page 19 above:

". . . we have had a large meeting of farmers in order to get their opinion generally, as to the Corn Laws, and I believe it is an unanimous one to keep them as they are and not let Lord Milton's wild goose scheme be put in practice if he should bring it forward in the Commons. We hear here Mr. Jno. Tryon's reply to his Lordship which is highly approved of and many copies

distributed. Lord Chandos was at the head of the Company being member for Bucks. My landlord has been to see me but he does not interfere with my politics"

The letter contains all kinds of interesting details about contemporary farming in the Home Counties as well as the usual civilities. However, the punch seems to come in the extract quoted: quite obviously Braithwaite is encouraging Cannam to help rouse opposition to Milton's plan in his own area. Then, as now, the farming community was suffering, yet the Corn Law of 1815 as modified by Wellington's Sliding Scale of import duties of 1828, was seen as the back-bone of protection for British agriculture. Although it worked inefficiently, it was the hottest of political potatoes and any attempt to change it aroused fierce opposition from the farming community. When the younger Peel eventually repealed the Corn Law in 1846, it was at the expense of splitting his Conservative party down the middle and drove it into the political wilderness for the next two decades whilst it was slowly and painfully rebuilt by Disraeli.

As has been shown by York (1975) the third quarter of the eighteenth century was a time of great prosperity for the locality. This was due to the diversified economic structure in which many families had access to sufficient land to feed themselves and at the same time were engaged in village crafts, particularly the woollen industry. Fuller (1662) could claim that: "It is enough for Northamptonshire to sell their Wooll, whilst that other Countrys make Cloth thereof" and: "that the Manufacture of Cloathing hath been endeavoured effectually . . . in this County; and yet (though fine their Wooll) their Cloth ran so coarse, it could not be sold without loss". One wonders whether William Dexter referred to on page 13 above found difficulty in selling his products. His existence suggests that the woollen industry was already established locally, since there would be no point in establishing oneself as a fuller in an area which had no cloth manufacture. It may be, of course, that Dexter prepared local cloth for local

use in an era when almost every cottage was self-sufficient. Certainly, by the late eighteenth century weaving was well-established in the Kettering area and in these villages, as the Militia Returns vividly display. In the peak year, 1777, there were at least 35 local weavers: almost three times the number of farm labourers. Where there were weavers there were also ancillary workers like woolcombers (generally male) and spinsters (usually female). Since the Militia Returns give us only the occupations of males aged 18-45 years, there are large gaps in our knowledge, especially of female occupations. However, the evidence suggests that the economic structure of the villages from about 1760 to about 1790 was more favourable and well-balanced than it was ever to be again down to our own day. This is reflected, too, in the power and influence of the Cottingham-cum-Middleton Copyholders who, in addition to their extensive land-holdings and rights were also the leading craftsmen and shopkeepers of the district. That local weavers had learned to make fine cloth since Fuller's time is borne out by the most popular weaves of the Kettering area: tammies and shalloons, both light materials, the latter being used mainly for the lining of women's dresses. Serge is known to have been made in Corby, even in the seventeenth century, and the existence of a fuller in Middleton in the late years of that century suggest it might also have been made locally.

As Spinning and Weaving declined at the turn of the eighteenth century, partly because of its concentration in more favoured areas, partly because of the disruption of markets and the inflation caused by the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1793-1815), there was little for men to do but rely on agriculture, so that during the nineteenth century we find them depressed to the status of agricultural labourers, subsidised by their poor wages and lack of local opportunities, Britain's industrialisation. Meanwhile their womenfolk turned their attention to lacemaking, which for the first half of the nineteenth century offered an alternative to domestic labour. However,

by 1841 this was in decline and by 1871 it had virtually disappeared into the factories of Nottinghamshire.

Evidence of the growing dominance of agriculture as the mainstay of the population, combined with an evening out, even decline in numbers, is revealed by the decennial censuses of the nineteenth century. The growing poverty of the community, even allowing for inflation, is shown in the Cottingham Poor Law accounts for the last few years of the eighteenth century: between 1764 and 1768 the average amount disbursed to the poor was just under £65 p.a. In the period 1793-7 it was nearly £200 p.a. That the weavers were in financial straits in the 1790's is revealed by the accounts for 1795 when 6 were employed by the Overseers of the Poor for one month at a charge of £6.15. 0d. and another was given a week's work for 2/6d.

The growing problem of housing and providing work for the poor is suggested by the decision of Cottingham and Middleton, in 1796, to invest £175 in the construction of "a House and Barn at the N.W. end of the Town of Middleton . . . for Jointly accommodating and Employing their Poor together". At least the construction gave employment to local craftsmen and labourers: for example, James and Thomas Perkins constructed 679 yards of stone walling for the House and 71 yards for the Barn at a cost of £62. 9.10d., Robert Loveday and his son were paid £6. 9. 6d. for "3700 of Sawing", J. and H. Eagle laid the floors for £23.17. 2½d. and Henry Dexter provided the thatching cord for £1. 8. 0d.

Possibly the growing economic troubles of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth caused locally a religious revival of the kind we associate with Wesley and the Non-Conformists who seem to have taken more pains to bring religion to the "lower orders" than did the complacent established Church. Also, perhaps, the Church of England was associated in people's minds with national authority and shared the blame of the Government which seemed unable to cope with the tragic difficulties facing so many. Nevertheless, our longest serving Rector, the Rev. Thomas Clayton (1815-66) and his wife seem to have been genuinely concerned by the problems of the parishioners, as two early nineteenth

century letters from Mrs. Clayton to Mrs. Cannam confirm:

"Thursday morning.

My dear Mrs. Cannam,

I find from Mr. Greaves that Gibbons is in great want of Bed Linen, will you be good enough to empower the Parish to provide them with some immediately - yours truly,

M. Clayton"

and:

"Cottingham Rectory,
Thursday Afternoon.

My dear Mrs. Cannam,

I know from Mr. Greaves how very kind you are to the Woodcocks, but I have sent her a little tea, and Mr. Clayton has sent some Lime, which they should sprinkle in the different Parts of the House, particularly when the poor Boy's Bowels are opened - Pray do not expose yourself too much to infection through your extreme Goodness to them, which Mr. Greaves says is excessive indeed -

With our best regards to you, Mr.

and the Miss. Cannams

I remain yours very truly,

Mary Clayton."

Here we see nineteenth century village paternalism at work with the Rectory and the "Big House" of Middleton working hand-in-hand. Mrs. Cannam and Mrs. Clayton appear to have taken their roles seriously, and whilst the system was open to all kinds of anomalies and variations, the writer cannot help but think it was in many ways superior to the insipid, impersonal, unselective state "welfare" we know today.

That Mrs. Clayton had her own problems and knew with whom to share them is evidenced by the following note:

"My dear Mrs. Cannam,

Our dear little Mary has been very ill for the last week with a slow intermittent Fever, and roasted Apples are the only things she takes - Our Stock being finished this day, I venture to ask you, if you will be kind enough to send me a Few -

Yours truly, M. Clayton".

The local poor were serviced by the Middleton House until the establishment of the Kettering Poor Law Union subsequent to the passage of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act which was passed largely because the problem of poverty had become so widespread and the poor rates so high that individuals and corporations were being driven to bankruptcy (even the town of Kettering tried to have itself bankrupted in the 1820's, but this was not allowed).

There is a most interesting document in the deeds of the Rockingham Wheelers club, which occupies part of the Middleton Poor House. Obviously, care had not been taken to establish a written title (or it had been lost) when the House was built. After the establishment of the Kettering Union, the Parish wished to sell its property and had to rely on the following Declaration of possessory title, dated 22nd. December, 1837:

"I Francis Cooke of Cottingham in the county of Northampton Shopkeeper do solemnly and sincerely declare That I have resided in the Parish of Cottingham aforesaid adjoining the Hamlet of Middleton in the County of Northampton for the last sixty years and upwards. That the seventeen several messuages Cottages or tenements heridataments and premises situate in the Hamlet of Middleton aforesaid within the parish of Cottingham aforesaid and in the several tenures or occupations of John Crane Henry Dexter Francis Bamford Joseph Ralph Thomas Palmer William Grocock Robert Fletcher Sarah Hercock John Gibbins John Ford Thomas Nicholls John Craxford William Goode Benjamin Cursley Susannah Ward and John Claypole and one unoccupied belonging to the Hamlet of Middleton aforesaid and proposed to be sold under and by virtue of an act passed in the fifth and sixth years of the reign of King William the fourth intituled 'An Act to facilitate the Conveyance of Workhouses and other property of Parishes and of Incorporations or Unions of Parishes in England and Wales' by order of the Poor Law Commissioners for England and Wales with the sanction of the Guardians of the Kettering Union and consent of the Parishioners of Middleton aforesaid have been in the actual and undisputed seizin and possession of the Parish officers of Middleton

aforesaid as the absolute Owners thereof for the last forty years and upwards. And that the said Parish Officers have from time to time during that period exercised the exclusive right of letting the same premises for the benefit of the said Hamlet without any interruption claim or demand from or by any person or persons whomsoever. And I verily believe that no title Deeds relating to the same premises can be found. And I make this solemn Declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the Provisions of an Act made and passed in the fifth and sixth years of the reign of His late Majesty intituled "An Act to repeal an Act for the more effectual abolition of Oaths and affirmations taken and made in various departments of the State and to substitute Declarations in lieu thereof and for the more entire suppression of voluntary and extra-judicial Oaths and affirmations and to make other provisions for the abolition of unnecessary Oaths".

THIS Declaration was taken and made at Kettering in the County of Northampton aforesaid the twenty-second day of December One thousand Eight hundred and thirty seven.

Francis Cooke

By and before me

Tho. Marshal."

The Wheelers now own four of those original "messuages" and the rest have disappeared under Ashley House and its grounds, but there must be many residents of the villages who have such interesting information tucked up in their deed-bundles in banks, solicitors offices, etc. which could well do with examining and such interesting (essential) information be brought to light. The writer has been favoured by the sight of the deeds of several residents and they will doubtless recognise some of the results in this work.

Educational establishments in the villages stretch back at least to the early eighteenth century. Mrs. Catherine Palmer left £100 "to the poor of the parish of Cottingham an Middleton . . . as wanted, the interest . . . at 4%, and to a school-dame of character, to teach

10 girls of the said parish £100 at 4%, to read and knit at Wilbaston".

A more ambitious project commenced in February 1766 when the Copyholders as Lords of the Manor, found themselves with a profit of £160 and Norman Smith had a further £50 entrusted to him for "putting to school poor children of the towns of Cottingham and Middleton". It was agreed that this money should be placed in trust with Sir John Palmer and others and a dwelling-house for a schoolmaster and a school were erected on land belonging to Sir John Palmer in what is now Camsdale Walk (No. 7, which has the village bailiffs inscribed on it). The schoolmaster received £7 p.a. and instructed 10 boys as free-scholars in reading, writing and arithmetic. He made up his salary by taking-in fee paying scholars.

Another educational trust was that of William Riddell, dated 1727, which provides for the apprenticeship of poor boys. Several of the smaller village endowments have now been unified under the Riddell Charity and the Trustees have widened the scope to include students in further education who can now apply for grants.

In 1856 the National School Society - that of the Church of England developed the Middleton School, making a new building separate from the House. This was enlarged in 1869 and served the villages as a "senior" school until well into this century. With the passage of the 1870 Education Act and the encouragement of universal primary education, the School in 'Dag Lane', Cottingham, was built and served the community until the present building in Brighthurst Road was sufficiently developed to accommodate all our youngsters.

The School Log Books go back to the 1880's and are well worth a study in themselves - as the extract for 23rd. November, 1888, on the rear cover of this booklet illustrates so vividly. In them we find the continual battles the schoolmasters had to get children to school, see that they were reasonably clean, fed and dressed, that they did not lose too much time for harvesting and similar activities: all problems that some of us are still facing in these days of "compulsory" state education.

Gomme (1896) reports an interesting discovery in Cottingham in 1841 when a cabalistic gold ring was found on the top of a mole hill covered with short grass. Its sides were flat, its circular surface convex. It bore an inscription inside and out in fourteenth or fifteenth century characters. Inside it read:

"YDROS: ISDROS :: THEBAL +"

and outside:

GISTTV:GISTTA: MADRS: ADROS".

What these terms may mean and where the ring is now are unknown to the present writer, but it is interesting to speculate upon the witches coven which may well have been centred in Cottingham half a millenium ago!

RELIGIOUS HOUSES

For communities of their size, the villages are rich in religious monuments some, unfortunately, extinct others much reduced in the congregations for which they were originally constructed.

The Church of St. Peter at Carlton is obviously of ancient foundation, but in its present form dates only from 1788. In 1785 Sir John Palmer and the Rector, Matthias Slye petitioned the Bishop of Peterborough:

"That the Parish Church of Carlton is a very ancient building and (notwithstanding considerable sums of money have been laid out and expended from time to time in repairing same) through length of time is much decayed and become so ruinous that to repair it and render it a fit place for the exercise of religious worship would be a burden too heavy for the parishioners to bear and that the said Church in its present extent is very much larger than is necessary for the present Inhabitants of the Parish of Carlton aforesaid".

Sir John as Lord of the Manor and Patron of the Rectory was prepared to carry out the work of demolishing the side-aisles and re-building them on a smaller scale at his own expense. The Bishop

appointed a commission to investigate and this found in favour of the scheme. In April 1785 permission was granted to proceed with the work which was entrusted to the younger Wing. He used a serious Gothic style, including the tower, which has the quatrefoils beloved of eighteenth century gothicists. Robinson (c.1947) describes the bells of the church and North (1878) maintains that "this is one of the best ordered Bell Chambers in the County". Sir Thomas Palmer had the 5 bells re-cast in 1755 and added one of 28" diameter. In the nineteenth century it was the custom at funerals to toll the Death-knell three times for a male (in honour of the Holy Trinity) and twice for a female (in honour of our Saviour born of a Woman). These were struck on the tenor bell. On Sunday the treble bell was rung at 8.0 a.m. and for Divine Service the bells were chimed and the Sermon (tenor) bell afterwards rung.

The principal monument of the Church is that partly reproduced in Jacqueline York's sketch on the cover of this Booklet. It commemorates Sir Geoffrey and Lady Margaret Palmer and was completed in 1673. Pevsner(1971) quoting Gunnis attributes it to Joshua Marshall.

Markham (1894) describes the church Plate: a plain, closed foot silver Paten dated 1638; a plain flat silver Alms Dish dated 1683 with the sacred initials within glory on the upper surface and the inscription "the gift of Eliz. Lady Palmer"; a plain silver cover Paten and Cup dated 1721 and inscribed with the Palmer and Grantham arms and the words "the gift of Elizbth. Lady Palmer, Daughter and Heiress of the family of Granthams, in the County of Lincoln, 1722"; and a Silver Flagon and Glass Cruet mounted with silver-plate dated 1724. On the front of the Flagon are the sacred initials within glory and below is inscribed "the gift of Sr. Jeff. Palmer, Baronet, and Elizabeth his Wife, Daughter and Heiress of The. Grantham, by Frances, Daughter and Heiress of George Wentworth".

Tipper (1976) has described the Church of St. Mary Magdalene at Cottingham and he gives an explanation of its most interesting feature: two knights, a lady and a bishop: he suggests they represent "St. Mary

Magdalene, the Abbott of Peterborough and the Lords of the Manors of Cottingham and Middleton, symbolising the authority of the Church, the Parish and the two manors combined in the one capital that carries the most weight in the nave". Pevsner (1971) gives no explanation but considers "the exquisite Early English carving of the horizontally placed capitals . . . deserve to be better known".

The present writer suggests a somewhat fanciful but romantic solution. The "Song of Roland" was one of the greatest "propaganda" exercises of the early crusading period and it found its complement in religious carvings from Spain to Italy and France and Germany, but not, to current knowledge, in England. Could our carving conceivably represent Charlemagne's great "Count-Capitaine" Roland, his companion gallant Olivere, and the fighting Archbishop Turpin who all "fell" in that dreadful combat at Roncevalles?

"Through Gate of Spain Roland goes riding past
On Veillantif, his swiftly-running barb;
Well it becomes him to go equipped in arms,
Bravely he goes, and tosses up his lance,
High in the sky he lifts the lancehead far,
A milk-white pennon is fixed above the shaft
Whose falling fringes whip his hands on the haft.
Nobly he bears him, with open face he laughs;
And his companion behind him follows hard;
The Frenchmen all acclaim him their strong guard.
On Saracen he throws a haughty glance
But meek and mild looks on the men of France,
To whom he speaks out of a courteous heart:
"Now, my lord barons, at walking pace - advance!
Looking for trouble these Paynims ride at large -
A fine rich booty we'll have ere this day's past;
Never French king beheld the like by half."
E'en as he speaks, their battles join and charge.

But Roland was too proud to heed Oliver and recall the main army of Charlemagne, so "20,000 Frenchmen of France" found the paradise that day guaranteed to them by the doughty Archbishop who was amongst their number.

"Homeward from Spain the Emperor Charles has sped

And come to Aix, France's best citadel.
 Into his hall he climbs the palace steps;
 There comes to meet him Aude, a fair damozel.
 She asks the King: "Where is the captain dread?
 Say, where is Roland that promised me to wed?
 Then Carlon's heart is filled with heaviness,
 His eyes weep tears, his snowy beard he rends:
 "Sister, sweet lady, you ask me for the dead.
 A man yet nobler I'll give to you instead:
 Louis, I mean - what better can I else?
 He is my son and heir to all my realm."
 "To me," saith Aude, "these words are meaningless.
 God and His saints and angels now forbend
 I should live on when Roland's life is spent!"
 At Carlon's feet she falls, her hue is fled,
 She dies forthwith, God give her spirit rest!
 The French lords weep and grievously lament."
 (Sayers, 1957)

Is our lady this same Aude, sister of Oliver? Is our carving even more unique than we have so far thought? Perhaps we will never know but to speculate is fun!

In addition to the Established Church, Cottingham-cum-Middleton has been a Non-conformist centre for the past two centuries. In the late eighteenth century local people probably attended Methodist Preaching Camps and an unknown Meeting Place was established in Cottingham - this was soon outgrown and in the early nineteenth century "We are advised by many that wish well to the cause of Christ to erect a chapel". Funds were forthcoming and in 1808 the Trustees of the Methodists were "admitted Tenants of a cottage and yard together with a new building standing in the yard, which they planned to use as a Chapel. The tenancy was held by John and Mary Stretton who surrendered their Copyhold rights for £55, although they retained the privilege of mailing and fastening fruit Trees to such of the Walls of the said premises as adjoin the said John Stretton and his wife's garden and to gather fruit at all reasonable times" (Stedman, 1958). In October 1829 the Sunday School commenced with 6 classes and 106 pupils of whom 80 seem to have made a regular attendance - by 1849 when the first register ends, the roll was 98 of whom 87 attended regularly. In March 1861 the Chapel

was registered as a place of Meeting for Public Worship, by which time the congregation was beginning to outgrow it. The new Chapel was completed in 1879 at a cost of over £600. Towards the end of the century the Wesleyan Mission Band was formed which became an integral part of village festivals down to the second World War.

The Congregationalists soon followed the Methodists: the Cottingham Chapel was built in 1834 at a cost of £300 (but the writer cannot identify its site). By 1894 it was serviced by the Middleton Minister, assisted by lay preachers, and had 35 Sunday Scholars and 17 Communicants. The Middleton Chapel was built in 1844 at a cost of £300 also and was capable of seating 200 persons. In 1852 school rooms were added at a cost of £100 for 100 children. Middleton was one of the independent chapels which united with other denominations in the vicinity in order to supply preachers. For some years it was united with Great Easton under the auspices of the Home Missionary Society. The construction of the chapel was due to the efforts of Joseph Dear, who was Minister 1844-50. He was followed by Edward Toccock and he in turn, in 1854, by Charles Haddon. The last seems to have fallen foul of his flock for he was removed in 1860 and at that time Middleton severed its connection with Great Easton. It was served for the rest of the century by Messrs. Stafford, Bond, and Plommer. For many years Mr. Chamberlain acted in the capacity of deacon. When the Cottingham chapel closed is not clear: the writer even wonders if the independent church authors are not confusing Cottingham and Middleton -- it is easy enough to confuse 1834 with 1844, the initial amounts spent on construction are the same, the scholars and communicants are given as the same at different times, and so on: a case for rather more research. The Middleton Chapel survived until the late 1960's and for years one of our esteemed older residents, Mr. Arthur Claypole, was closely connected with it. On closure it came into the hands of Mr. Panter who is tastefully converting it into a dwelling house.

TABLE II. POPULATION ESTIMATE AND CENSUSES, EAST
CARLTON AND COTTINGHAM-CUM-MIDDLETON,
1086-1971.

&& DATE	SOURCE	CARLTON	COTTINGHAM	MIDDLETON	TOTAL
1086	Domesday	c.70		c.150	c.220
1524	Subsidy	c.200		c.400	c.600
1670	Hearth Tax	c.176		c.572	c.748
1720	Bridges	c.150		c.600	c.750
1762	Militia Return	c.101	c.355	c.278	c.734
1801	Census	82	471	411	970
1851	Census	64	688	392	1144
1901	Census	93	519	293	905
1931	Census	61	564	272	897
1951	Census	260	606	290	1156
1971	Census	263	730	249	1242

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888. Nov.

23rd week has diminished considerably. Many children away, Scarlet Fever having appeared in the village, & is spreading very rapidly. Each day the floor of the school has been watered with dilute Carbolic Acid & Condy's Fluid, & all necessary precautions have been taken in the schools, to prevent the spread of the disease. All children attending from infected houses have been sent home. Average 77%.

26th Dr Duke reported two cases. & Dr Adcock three fresh cases of Scarlet Fever today. Many children away suffering from bad colds & blotches upon face.

28th Illness of Attendance Officer