

## *Liffiton Family History*

### ***LIFFITONS of LITTLEHAM 1781 – 1881 (Part 1)***



Littleham Village on a card postmarked 1906. Littleham Parish Church is center, and Liffiton cottage is far left. Artist: H. B. Wimbush

The earliest evidence of the Liffiton name is at Kingswear, Devonshire, England. However, it is at the village of Littleham near the seacoast town of Exmouth that the historical record fills in more details of the early Liffiton story. In Littleham Richard Liffiton married and started a family that lived in and around Littleham for one hundred years.

After Richard's baptism in 1756 at Kingswear, about twenty miles southwest of Littleham, the record is silent until July 1, 8, and 15, 1781. Banns were called for Richard and 21-year old Mary Copp, at Littleham Parish. They married on September 17, 1781 at the Littleham Parish Church, known as the Church of St. Margaret and St. Andrew.

A rural farming community in the 1780s, Littleham Village was located a mile east of the seacoast town of Exmouth and less than a mile north of the English Channel. It was thirteen miles southeast of Exeter, the largest city in the county. Although today Littleham retains some of its rural characteristics, it is a residential suburb of Exmouth.

Following their marriage Richard and Mary Liffiton were tenant farmers, growing corn (the English word for wheat, barley, and oats), grain, pulses, and hay. They had seven children, five baptized at Littleham Parish: John in 1782, Richard in 1784, Arthur in 1787, Elizabeth in 1795, and a first William who was born and died in 1797. A second William was born about 1801, and George was born in 1803. In addition to the first William, Arthur died early-at age 25 in 1812.

Village life included the parish paying one shilling in 1793 “to Farmer Richd. Liffiton for killing a fox.” In 1804 as a farmer of Brains Ground he took on an indentured apprentice, Richard Collins, and in 1809 the parish paid “Farmer Liffiton three shillings three pence for viol strings.” From June 3, 1817 to June 5, 1820, Richard Liffiton, Sr. served as tax collector for the parish. Mary Liffiton, widow of Munday, in 1822 took on an indentured apprentice, Robert Brooks, age 13.

The amount of land Richard and his family worked expanded gradually over time, but it was always small compared to the 600 acres of an average 18th Century English farm. In 1787, in addition to the Moors, Richard paid taxes on and occupied a house at Bowmans, land known as Brains Ground, and other estates owned by a Mr. Hooper.

Between 1789 and Richard Sr.’s death in 1821, the family occupied and worked various properties around Littleham Village including Munday, part of Pearsons, and Hoopers. In 1822 Mary Liffiton paid taxes on four properties, and at her death in 1830, the tenancy went to sons Richard and William.

Richard Liffiton was 65 when he died, and Mary Liffiton was 70 when she died. They were buried in the Littleham Parish churchyard. Four of their children remained and raised families in Littleham and Exmouth. Part Two of Liffitons of Littleham will examine Richard and Mary’s first descendants, the families of John, Richard, Elizabeth, and William.

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