

Dean House, Midgley

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PART III

Naturally Deans are listed in the two volumes of Halifax Wills by J. W. Clay and E. W. Crossley. Although I am not quoting them all and none in full, I mention parts which have numerous references to relationships. The values of the bequests, by the way, are not generally given in the wills. The spelling of names and places I give as used in the wills; sometimes names are spelled differently in the same will.

The first is of John Deyn of Halifax whose will is dated June 7, 1502. There are cited his wife Johanna, William Dyne, brother, and William's daughter Johanna; and two illegitimate children, Agnes and John. He left four pairs of cropping shears to his wife Johanna and his bastard son John, the shears to be taken according to their choice. Requesting burial in Halifax Parish Church he left 20s. "to the buying of organs to be used in the Church."

Robert Deyne, Parish of Halifax (April 22, 1521) left all to his wife Agnes, and William and Richard "my sons."

Gilberte Deyne the elder (Oct. 11, 1539), of the Parish of Halifax, made bequests to his brothers Robert, and Richard, of Migeley th' elder; to his daughter Margeret wife of Robert Halstead and other of his children, Gilberte, Richard, William, Agnes and Jennet, along with Margaret his wife. This will was witnessed by Percivale Deyne, Richard Saltonstall, and Edmund Deyne.

John Deane, of Haworth (April 22, 1545) requested to be buried at Haworth. To his son John the elder (two of them are named John) and William he left "my landes in Luddingden called Herbothilghe." He mentions "my four sonnes," that is, John the elder, John, William and Edward and a daughter Agnes to whom he left 6s. 8d. and "one chiste." Part of his effects were left to "Richarde, sonne of John Dene, of Heptonstall. To his two sons, John the elder and William he left his lands in Luddingden called Herbothilghe. A footnote to this will recalls the story of the duel, saying that the testator was possibly a son of Richard who fought the duel of 1526.

Richarde Deane, of Midgeley (Nov. 23, 1546) left a third part of all lands, etc., to his wife Margarete but does not say to whom the other parts had to go. Witnesses among others were Richarde Deane "th' elder," and Percivall Deane. Testator died a month later.

William Deyne, late of Warley (March 24, 1549) died intestate, and administration of his affairs was carried out by Gilbert Deyne, Robert Halstead, Margaret his wife, Thomas Brodley and Jennet his wife, Thomas Oldfelde and his wife Agnes — Margaret, Jennet and Agnes were sisters of the deceased.

I propose now to take glimpses of several Deans who were of some prominence. The Midgley and Upper Saltonstall Deans were evidently well to do people and one historian (Cox in his History of Heath Grammar School) says that some of them went to Oxford. There is early evidence that besides farming, the Deans were engaged in the cloth trade. The deeds of Dean House, although only going back to 1755, name two fulling mills on the estate which, though in existence at least before Watson wrote his history, are not included in his list.

The first 12 governors of Heath Grammar School, Halifax, included three Midgley men, John Lacy of Brearley, Esq.; Henry Farrer of Ewood, gentleman; and John Deane, of Deane House, yeoman. (There was also a William Deane of Exley, yeoman. This Henry Farrer bore the expense of petitioning for the school. John Deane had married a sister of John Lacy.

In telling this Cox says that the Deanes were "represented at Oxford." This John Deane must have been a man of substance to marry into the Lacy family, and must have had some interest in education to be concerned in founding Heath School. By the way, Robert Byrron, second headmaster of Heath Grammar School, married a Grace Deane, but as the Deans of Midgley, Oveden and Warley had eight daughters named Grace born in the 35 years before this marriage, one cannot say of which family she was a member.

In 1607 when some of the original governors of the school had died, a resolution to elect three more was proposed by a Robert Deane. In response to an appeal sent to incumbents in the Parish of Halifax to subscribe to the cost of the school, sent out by Dr. Favour, then vicar of Halifax, Midgley sent £3-16-4, which was well above the average in the list. In addition, small sums from Midgley produced £1-13-4. Cox says in his history that the Midgley Deanes "departed out of the vicarage and Parish of Halifax before January, 1607." Where the family went to is not stated, and I do not know. This reference must be only to the family at Dean House because there were Deans at near-by Saltonstall, and at Exley among other places in Halifax Parish after the above date. That the family left Midgley is borne out by the township records which exist from about 1740. In the scores of men who served in the township offices there is not a Dean among them, and had there been, they could not have avoided a term of service. To-day there is no Dean left in the district, the last whom I recall being the late William Henry Dean, and I do not know if he was descended from this old family.

(To be continued.)