

## **Aaron Maston, resident in Stokesley Workhouse at the time of the 1851 Census**

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In the 1851 Census Aeron Maston was recorded as aged 66, married , and a schoolmaster. Who was Aaron? What was his family background? How did he come to be resident in Stokesley Workhouse?

We have searched Great Ayton Parish records including baptisms, marriages and burials; Great Ayton census data between 1841 and 1901; and Overseers of the Poor records between 1791 and 1798. These latter ones record persons receiving Parish relief and details how much and for how long, additionally they record the Maston family members who had official positions on the Overseers of the Poor committee.

The baptismal records of All Saints Church within Great Ayton village include several entries for Maston families covering the period 1743 to 1804. Additionally marriage and burial records yield additional data on these Maston families.

Our initial data indicate four Maston families within the village.

On Nov. 17<sup>th</sup> 1743 Richard Maston, OTP, married Ann Slumbers also OTP. Their children and baptismal dates were: Ann 10/11/1745; George 24/09/1747; Richard 19/02/1748; Daniel 30/06/1751; Isabel 01/09/1754; James 25/09/1791. The husband of this family was referred as Richard senior and his son Richard was known as Richard junior.

In 1778 Richard junior married Margaret Robinson of nearby Kirby. Their children and baptismal dates were: James Robinson 05/08/1783; Rachel 22/05/1791; Robinson 27/04/1793; Mary 25/07/1797; Margaret 13/10/1803. Richard junior was buried Aug. 1822 and his wife Margaret was buried May 1812.

Timothy Maston married Ann Calver on Sept. 29 1746 and had two children who were baptised within Ayton: John 24/09/1747; and Elizabeth 10/11/1750. Ann was buried in Sept. 1823 aged 75. The Overseers to the Poor records show that Ann had hit hard times and between 1795 and 1797 she received 63 week relief at 1s/6d per week plus coals and additional relief totalling £! 15s 6d.

The occupations of the three families shown above were described as Weavers. This contrasts with the the other Maston family within the village around this time who were John and Mary (formerly Taylerson married 18/12/1794 at All Saints Church). John and Mary had five children baptised within Ayton:

John 21/04/1796; Thomas 24/06/1798; Ann 24/11/1799; George 02/08/1801; and Mary 24/07/1804.

John was a local schoolmaster who received an annual salary of £10-6-0d, which was paid by the Overseers of the Poor.

Aaron was baptised on Oct 26 1784 and was referred to as Aaron son of Daniel, weaver, 4<sup>th</sup> child born to Richard senior and his wife Ann. Unfortunately grandfather Richard senior did not see his grandson Aaron as he died in June 1784, a few months before Aaron was born.

At present it is not clear how the weaver Maston families are linked to the family of John, the schoolmaster, and Mary. Generally the weavers struggled to make a decent living, even when the children were drafted into work. In contrast John the schoolmaster would be relatively affluent with an annual salary of £10-6-0d.

Ruth Gaudie in her booklet 'A visual history of Great Ayton' noted: "1830-1840. The effect of the Industrial Revolution was being felt in Great Ayton. Unemployment and distress amongst the many hand-loom weavers in the village when power driven machinery was used for weaving linen. This was their only skilled craft and they could do no other" The census data show that the number of weavers in the village was reducing. This was seen in two ways i) the number employed in weaving reduced from 11 1841 census, 3 weavers in 1851 census and from 1861 onwards no weavers were present in the village and ii) several previous weavers had moved out of the village and were not recorded in the 1861 census. In the 1851 census three previously employed weavers were listed as Paupers and one had changed trades from weaver to barber.

So how did Aaron finish his life in the Stokesley Workhouse? Assuming he was assisting his parents Daniel and Anne with their weaving business and he was an only child, then by the time the mechanised weaving looms were introduced (1830-1840). Daniel and his wife Anne would be between 80 and 90 (assuming they were still living). At

this stage Aaron would be between 50 and 60 and without any family support. Two factors need considering i) the 1851 census records it states that Aaron was married and ii) he was a schoolmaster.

We have not found any record of his marriage and from the family pedigree it would seem more likely that Aaron would be a weaver by trade. Whatever the truth of the marriage and occupation issues Aaron spent his last few years in the Stokesley Workhouse and he was buried in Stokesley