



Case Subject: Cooper Family Line

Case Number:

Thank you for your research request. You asked that we clean up the Cooper line on your Cooper Family *Ancestry* Tree and expand it if possible.

You authorized five (5) hours to complete this research.

Research Report

Our clean up of your Cooper Family Tree focused on the Cooper line because this is the line that you have expressed interest in expanding in the future. We reviewed the profiles of William T. Cooper, John Cooper, and Mark Cooper and removed incorrect information and sources. What follows is a brief narrative history of the Cooper family in England and America and a discussion of places where more research needs to be done.

William T. Cooper was born on 29 September 1862 to John Cooper and Sarah Bell in Chandlerville, Cass County, Illinois. John and Sarah were both immigrants from England who arrived in 1857 and were married in 1858, though we were not able to find a record of their marriage. They eventually moved to Bath, Mason County, Illinois where they settled near John's parents and siblings who also had also made the trip. Little is known about Sarah Bell's origins and more research could be done to learn who her parents are and where in England they came from.

John's younger brother, Mark, was a prominent citizen of Mason County, Illinois and had a biography featured in *Portrait and Biographical Record of Tazewell and Mason Counties, Illinois* (1894). This biography stated that Mark was a native of Yorkshire, England and had immigrated in 1857 with his parents and nine siblings (which included John). Their father, Mark Cooper, was said to be of Scottish descent, and their mother, Jane Lascelles, was said to be of French ancestry.¹ Jane (Lascelles) Cooper's nephew, Thomas Lascelles, was also included in the publication. His biography says that his father and grandfather, John and Thomas, were also a native of Yorkshire and lived in the village of "Sherryhulton."²

¹ *Portrait and Biographical Record of Tazewell and Mason Counties, Illinois* (Chicago: Biographical Publishing Co., 1894) p. 563 **Attachments p. X**

² *Portrait and Biographical Record of Tazewell and Mason Counties, Illinois* (Chicago: Biographical Publishing Co., 1894) p. 640 **Attachments p. X**



With this information we were able to locate the marriage record of Mark Cooper and Jane Lascelles in the village of Sheriff Hutton, and the baptismal records of their children there, including Mark and John. We also found Jane's baptismal record there, confirming the information from her nephew's biography, even if the name of the town was butchered in the text.

However, we were unable to find the baptismal record of Mark Cooper and determine who his parents were. Other descendants of his have often cited his parents as Benjamin and Francis "Fanny" Cooper of Birlingham, Worcestershire as his parents and this information has been taken as fact by many members of *Ancestry*. However, information in the records we do have of Mark Cooper prior to his immigration and studying a map of England casts serious doubt on this information.

Mark Cooper and Jane Lascelles were married on 14 December 1831 at Sheriff Hutton by the vicar, Benjamin Sumley.³ The record says they were both "of this parish," meaning that they lived in Sheriff Hutton. We know that Jane was born there but no baptismal record for Mark is recorded in the town. Mark and Jane appear on both the 1841 and 1851 Census in Sheriff Hutton. The 1851 Census recorded where individuals were born. Jane's birthplace is reported as "Yorkshire, Sheriff Hutton," as we know is correct, and Mark's is recorded as "Yorkshire, Sheldon." There is no town or village called Sheldon in Yorkshire; the closest places by that name are south in Warwickshire and Derbyshire. A northward migration from Derbyshire to a small town outside of York is unlikely. This is why Birlingham, Worcestershire is also an unlikely birthplace. We can also see other members of the Sheriff Hutton community explicitly stating when they were born in another county so we must assume that Mark was born in Yorkshire even if the name of the town is unknown.

A search of the Yorkshire baptismal record turned up one real possibility. A Mark Cooper was born to Christopher and Mary Cooper of Aldwark, Yorkshire on 13 May 1811 and was baptized as Alne, Yorkshire on 2 June 1811.⁴ This makes him the right age to be the husband of Jane Lascelles and father of John and Mark Cooper. Aldwark and Alne are also very close to Sheriff Hutton and while there is a record of Christopher and Mary

³ Bishop's transcripts for Sheriff-Hutton, 1628-1856, FHL 918428, Marriages p. 52; database with digital images; *FamilySearch* (www.familysearch.org) **Attachments p. X**

⁴ *Peculiar of Alne & Tollerton Parish Registers Transcripts*, Alne 1800-1821, FHL 7587989; database with digital images; *FamilySearch* (www.familysearch.org) **Attachments p. X**



Cooper living there in 1841, there is no sign of there son Mark remaining there. There is also no record of Mark Cooper born in Alne on the 1851 Census. Therefore, it is possible that Christopher and Mary's son moved a few towns away and is the Mark Cooper who married Jane Lascelles.



We did not include Christopher on your tree because we believe more research should be done to connect him definitively to the Mark Cooper who married in Sheriff Hutton. A quick search of the Yorkshire probate records was all we had time for and it turned up no will for Christopher. We believe that future research should begin by exploring Mark Cooper's possible Aldwarke and Alne connections.



Best Practices for Online Family Tree Management

While reviewing your tree, we noticed three areas that you might want to address.

1. Surnames of married women
2. Attaching other family trees to your own tree, and using the trees as sources
3. Duplicate entries of individuals

Surnames

Women should always be consistently identified under the name in which they were born. When they marry, even though they may be listed on records under an alias, always keep them listed under their maiden name.

Citing other Trees as Sources

When pulling in information from other members' trees on *Ancestry*, it is best to evaluate each piece of evidence individually, rather than merging trees. Citing only other trees leads to the proliferation of bad information. So many people have added Benjamin and Fanny Cooper of Birlingham, England as the parents of Mark Cooper of Sheriff Hutton, Yorkshire that *Ancestry* automatically suggests them but as we discussed above critical look at the details brings it into serious question.

Duplicate Entries of Individuals

Often, duplicate entries occur when trees are merged as a whole, instead of attaching individual records to a specific profile. Avoiding citing other trees and fully reviewing all of the individuals mentioned in a record like the census when attaching records to an individual's profile should prevent this

Conclusion and Suggestions for Further Research

Christopher Cooper of Aldwark and Alne, Yorkshire is the most likely candidate for Mark Cooper's father. We recommend that the next round of research focus on either confirming or eliminating him as a possibility. We recommend examining the following records for any instance of Christopher and Mark:

- Court Records, 1737-1901 (Alne)
- Marriage Bonds, 1782-1865 (Alne)
- Bishop's Transcripts for Alne, 1600-1824 [the goal would be to find out if Christopher's son Mark might have married in Alne and moved elsewhere, removing the possibility that he moved to Sheriff Hutton and married Jane]



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- Court books of wills and administrations of the York District Registry, 1774-1852
- Deeds, wills, and conveyances, 1736-1876 (North Riding, Yorkshire)
- Probate records, 1316-1857 (Church of England, Archbishop of York, Chancery Court)

We recommend **15 hours** for this work.

The above report was prepared by Catherine Gaggioli a full-time researcher on the NEHGS Research Services team. If you have any questions or would like us to research this case further, please contact us at 617-226-1233 or research@nehgs.org.

Attachments for Case M121318C

	Page no.
<i>Portrait & Biographical Record of Tazewell and Mason Counties</i>	7-10
Mark Cooper & Jane Lascelles marriage record	11
Mark Cooper, baptismal record	12