

Family History Group

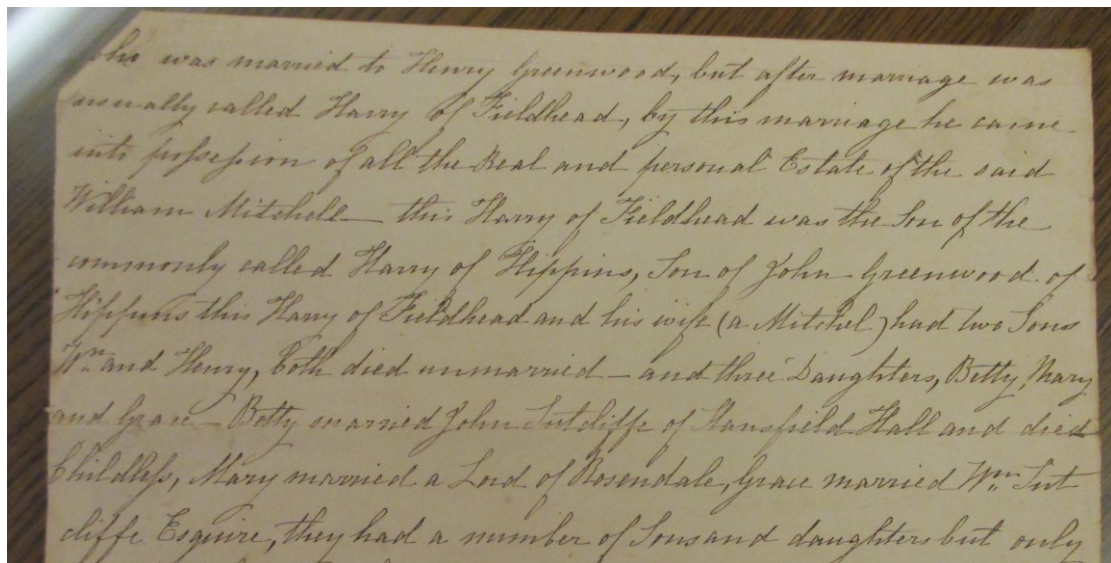
Greenwoods and Sutcliffes

Every year we have several queries regarding the history of Calderdale families and usually somewhere in most local family trees we will come across a Greenwood or a Sutcliffe. These two names originated in the area, Greenwood from families living at or near Greenwood Lee in Heptonstall; Sutcliffe from South Cliffe near Brighouse, though for some reason the Sutcliffe name is more prominent here in the Upper Valley. This was also noticeable when we were transcribing the graves in Heptonstall Churchyard where Greenwood and Sutcliffe graves outnumbered those of other surnames.

We are slowly gathering more information about many of these families. There are so many different branches scattered around the valley but sometimes we are able to follow other links.

Our first and most important tool is a family's knowledge of its own ancestry

Here is an excerpt from one family's archives written in 1839. This sort of evidence is not only helpful to the family historian but also shows the importance in the past of Family identity.



She was married to Henry Greenwood but after marriage was usually called Harry of Fieldhead..... this Harry of Fieldhead was the son of the normally called Harry of Hippines, son of John Greenwood of Hippines. This Harry of Fieldhead and his wife (a Mitchell) had two sons, Wm and Henry, both died unmarried...and three daughters, Betty, Mary and Grace. Betty married John Sutcliffe of Stansfield Hall and died childless, Mary married a Lord of Rossendale and Grace married Wm. Sutcliffe Esq. and they had a number of sons and daughters but

As you can see, it mentions both Greenwoods and Sutcliffes but also shows that many were known more by where they lived to distinguish them from others of the same surname.

Our next line of reference is written documents and especially Parish Registers. Luckily for researchers, the Heptonstall registers for births marriages and burials usually mention the township in which the family resided, there being five such townships within this part of the Parish, and often even the specific place (e.g. Hippins), where the family lived.

Our third source of evidence is to be found in the churchyard and this is why the task of transcribing the graves is so important to the family historian. Here in the upper Calder Valley it became the custom for families to include their place of residence on the inscription. This probably is associated with the abundance of families with the same surname and the custom of by-names generally in use.

So, although we tend to sigh when queries arrive involving these two surnames, the Local Family History group are building up an archive of these families so we can cross reference when we have new enquiries. Obviously, we would welcome any more contributions to this collection.