



SCALEHOUSE IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.



SCALEHOUSE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

QUAKER SKETCHES.

H. R. HONGSON.

SCALEHOUSE.

Within the Craven dales of Yorkshire the message of the early pioneers of the Society of Friends found ready acceptance, particularly amongst the yeoman stock, and resulted in the settling of many groups in that area.

There is to be found within easy reach of Skipton perhaps as large a number of centres of 17th Century Quaker interest as will be found anywhere. I have referred to most of these in my record of *The Society of Friends in Bradford* published recently. One of the earliest was at Scalehouse on the Grassington Road some two miles from Skipton. Here was the home of Wm. Watkinson. He, along with his brothers, Edward of Bradley, near Skipton, and George of Scotton near Knaresbro' received and entertained the Quaker preachers and the three homes became centres from which the message of the Inner Light was proclaimed. They were all men of good position and joined the new movement about 1652 and they of course soon found themselves objects of persecution.

George Watkinson and his wife were imprisoned at York in 1656 for riding to a meeting on the first day of the week. The three brothers in 1660 were imprisoned along with some 220 others for refusing to take the oath and goods were taken by distress for the charges of taking them to gaol.

George Watkinson died in 1670, leaving £600 to the Society of Friends but this was confiscated by order of the King. We read in 'State Papers'—

"There dyed lately one of their Sect who had been a Captain of Horse in Lillborns* Regt. His name was Wattkinson, who I heare was an excellent good officer of horse and died riche. He left £600 to the Friends and they have a bank of money."

He was laid to rest in the ground which he provided at Scorton where many well known members of the Society have found a resting place including Boswell Middleton and John Fothergill.

Edward Watkinson set apart a plot of land at Bradley for a burial place and a stone to his memory can still be seen there but dwelling houses are now built on the site. A barn adjoining in which meetings were held has the initials of his son William and the date 1686 over the door.

Scalehouse has a special interest as it was the scene in 1658 of the first national gathering of members of the Society of Friends known as the 'Yearly Meeting.' At first these Annual Gatherings consisted of preachers or 'Public Friends' and were held, with occasional intermissions probably due to persecution, until 1673, when the first representative Yearly Meeting was held in London. There followed an unbroken record of Meetings in London down to 1904, since when the gatherings have been held in the provinces or in London.

It was a visit from Wm. Dewsbury, Richard Farnsworth, Thomas Stubbs, Miles Halhead and James Naylor about 1652 which led to the group at Scalehouse being established. On the occasion of this visit Richard Scothrop, a persecutor, became a convert and an able minister and himself suffered persecution for his faith.

* Robert Lilburne (1613-1665) was M.P. for East Riding of Yorkshire and entered the Army of Parliament. His brother, Lt.-Col. John Lilburne (1618-1657), 'Freeborn John', was often imprisoned in the Tower of London and other places for libel. His writings are very numerous. In 1656, whilst in Dover Castle he came under the influence of Luke Howard, a well-known Quaker Minister, and joined the Society of Friends.

In 1675 John Watkinson, son of William took over Scalehouse from his father when he married Ann Coates of Kildwick Grange. There is every appearance that John did not follow the faith of his father; indeed the prominent position he occupied as a magistrate caused his name to be associated with later persecution of Friends. In that year (1675) this group of Friends moved to Rylston, a mile or two away, where some years later in 1712 a Meeting House was built adjoining the burial ground at Rylston Reakes. This ground dates from 1657 and was without doubt the gift of Wm. Watkinson. The property was sold in 1813 and the building is now a cattle shed. It stands back in a field being known as Fox House Barn.

Ann Watkinson, widow of John Watkinson, evidently moved to London and she sold Scalehouse in 1704. It had been acquired by a Wm. Watkinson of Thorlby, near Skipton, in 1609 from the Earl of Cumberland and Sir Robert Applebye and was therefore in the Watkinson family nearly 100 years. The first illustration shews the house as it was in the days of the Watkinsons. Captain Blake seen in the picture lived there about 1860. He was steward to the Earl of Burlington, an office held by a member of the Society of Friends, George Myers of Farfield, near Bolton Abbey, in 1682.

Scalehouse was for some years owned by Josias Morley of Beamsley Hall and afterwards by his son James, hence is found a lead spout bearing the initials and date: I M A 1758. In 1850 Robert Henderson inherited it from his cousin Richard Waddilove of Burnsall and it eventually passed to his grandson. Considerable alterations were made about this time by the addition of two wings and three towers to the old building, the entrance door being moved to the side. The fine gate posts were moved to the entrance to the drive on the road side.

5, 14, 25
by Capt.
Blake

From notes in my possession:

Notes compiled by Patricia F.L.Wood. Typed here on 10th September, 1993.

Re: The Manor House, Rilston (Rylstone), Yks. and the Blake Family.

William Blake lived in The Manor House from 1816 to time of his death in 1844. He is my direct line ancestor being my Gt.Gt.Gt.Gt.Grandfather on the line of my maternal grandfather.

From Rilston Parish Register (1813-1897). BLAKES.

1816. Thomas Metcalfe, batchelor and Jane Blake, spinster, Wed in Oct. by Rich. Withnell in the presence of Elizabeth Burnaby and John Moorhouse.
(I am descended from this marriage/my Gt.Gt.Gt.Grandparents).
1824. William Blake, Junior, aged 26, son of William Blake of (Rilston Manor House) Rilston buried Jan 29th by Rich. Withnell.
1825. John Moorhouse of Gargrave, Gentleman, and Martha Blake Wed. Feb. 9th by Stephen Bland. (Martha sister of above mentioned Jane).
1824. John Williamson of Keighley, Gent., and Elizabeth Blake, spinster, Wed. 25th Jan. by Richd. Withnell. (Elizabeth, sister of above mentioned Jane).
1844. Mr. William Blake aged 77 of (The Manor House), Rilston buried 20th Feb. by Wm. Bury.
1869. Henry Blake aged 49 years of Scale House buried Sept. 24th. by Wm. Bury. (See stained glass window in Rylstone Church).

N.B. See in Rylstone Church see also Brass Memorial Plaque to William Blake Snr. and William Blake, Jnr.

See also stained glass window in Rylstone Church in memory of Harriet Blake, daughter of William Blake, Snr. and sister of above mentioned Henry Blake. Harriet died 1898 and lived in the house by the pond at Rylstone.

Rilston Tithe Award 1840. William Blake, Snr. was the occupier of Rilston Manor House and farm with about 800 acres. The landowner was the Duke of Devonshire.

I have the 1841 census information and William Blake Snr. had a grandson William with him at The Manor House as an apprentice/trainee - estate management.

SCALE HOUSE.

1854. William Airton aged 57 yrs. of Scale House buried May 20th by Wm. Bury.
c.1865/6 Scale House purchased by Henry Blake. My copy photograph taken of Henry and his dog outside Scale House before he started renovation/alteration work in 1866 when he added the towers, etc. Henry died in 1869.

1885. Monica, daughter of Joseph and Mary Henrietta Henderson of Scale House Rylstone, Gent. Baptised June 3rd by J. (?Decketh).

1894. Edith, daughter of John William and Mary Ann Standeven of Scale House, Gent. baptised Feb. 24. by Rev. C. Lowe.

1894. Annie, daughter of John William and Mary Ann Standeven Bapt. Feb. 24th also.

1894. John, son of John William and Mary Ann Standeven of Scale House bapt. Oct. 8th. by C. Lowe.

N.B. From my copy-notes - an asterisk against John/1894 and note stating (quote): "My grandfather and his 2 sisters - my Gt. Grandfather was a very strong methodist at one time - Rev. C. Lowe must have had some influence because all 3 were christened in same year.?" unquote.