

IV LOCAL FAMILIES OF INFLUENCE IN THE EARLY C19th

By 1811 John Turner had died as his awards of land on Caistor Moor, and later in 1818 in Grasby, were made over to his devisees, George Tennyson (his son-in-law) and Philip Skipworth. The lord of the manor in Grasby and Caistor Moor in 1811 was Philip Skipworth, as he still was in 1818. Documents dating from the late C18th suggest that John Turner and George Tennyson were acquiring land in the parish before enclosure, for instance about 100 acres from William Carey “estate owner in Grasby” in 1785.

Philip Skipworth was a member of a wealthy Wolds farming family. In 1802 he joined with George Tennyson and others in the speculative purchase of the lordship of South Kelsey, an estate comprising 4,500 acres. His intention was to found a new “County” family. By 1808 he had acquired sole interest in the estate and he moved into a new house built on the estate in 1816, Moortown House, on the south side of what is now the B1434, opposite to the end of Smithfield Road. When Philip died in 1825 he left the bulk of his estates in Ashby, Burringham and Yaddlethorpe with further lands in Clixby, Grasby, Ashby-cum-Fenby, North Kelsey, Caistor and the manor of South Kelsey, to his third son George (George Tennyson was also an example of a favoured younger son to inherit) who had taken up residence in 1824 after he married Amelia Dixon (sister of Marmaduke Dixon). George Skipworth had been sent to Oxford for his education, as part of the scheme to enhance the family’s social status. He farmed some of the estate himself and some was farmed by his brother, William, Philip’s fourth son, who lived at the newly built South Kelsey Hall (later called Hall Farm). George died in 1859 and the estate was taken over by his only surviving son George Borman who, although he moved with his family to Moortown House, finally lost the estate in 1888 when he failed to pay his creditors £120,999.13s.6d. Two of his sons, however, were still at Moortown House as tenant farmers in 1904. The Skipworth male line finally died out with their deaths.

Thomas John Dixon, from Holton-le-Moor, was the brother of Marmaduke Dixon (coroner and clerk to the commissioner of taxes in Caistor) inherited land from his father in 1824, married a Roadley heiress, developed a successful farming business and greatly enlarged the estate. He built Holton Hall in 1785.

One can see, therefore, that the Turners, Tennysons, Skipworths and the Dixons are all connected through business and family links. Their struggle, however, to achieve acceptance in the higher echelons of society is well illustrated by the contents of a letter from Rev. William Cooper to Lord Brownlow when Thomas and George were considered for the positions of magistrate. The Rev. Cooper described both George Skipworth and his brother-in-law Thomas John Dixon as “highly respected very opulent *yeomen*. Their education has not fitted them completely for magisterial duties.” They both did succeed, however, in becoming magistrates. George later became Lincolnshire’s Deputy Lieutenant and also High Sheriff.



North Lincolnshire 1836