

Archives relating to Laxton

Introduction

There is a wealth of original material relating to Laxton, but it is held in a number of different archive offices, libraries and museums.

A large amount of material can be found in the Manvers Collection (Ma), held at The University of Nottingham. The Pierrepont family of Thoresby (later Earls Manvers) were owners of the manor and most of the land in Laxton from 1640 to 1952. Material relating to Laxton can be found in each of the seven main sections of the Manvers Collection.

The other main collections at The University of Nottingham containing Laxton material are the Tallents collection (TL) and the Denison collection (De). Further material relating to Laxton can be found at Nottinghamshire Archives, the British Library, and other locations as noted below.

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Maps and Surveys

The Manvers Collection contains two main sequences of surveys of Laxton and Moorhouse, dated 1728 to the early 20th century (Ma 4891-4926 and Ma 3S 7-18). The main sequence of maps in the Manvers Collection date from c.1789-1906 (Ma 5411-5437). However, there are surveys and maps in other parts of the Manvers Collection, and elsewhere.

Mark Pierce's 1635 plan

The original 1635 plan of Laxton by Mark Pierce is held at the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford (reference: MS. C17:48 (9)). The original map is accompanied by a terrier or survey, naming all the people who farmed each strip of land, and is also held at the Bodleian Library. The map and survey have been digitised. From the Digital Bodleian homepage (<http://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/>), scroll down and click on 'Bringing Laxton to Life' to begin browsing the images of the two items.

The University of Nottingham holds a 20th-century black and white copy of the 1635 plan (MS 280).

The map and terrier were published by C.S. and C.S. Orwin in the first edition of their book *The Open Fields* in 1938. (King's Meadow Campus East Midlands Collection Not 254.P3 ORW)

Copies of Mark Pierce's map are also held at Nottinghamshire Archives (LX 1 L, LX 2 L, LX 3 L and LX 4 L)

Diocesan terriers

Diocesan terriers for Laxton (listing land owned by the church), are held in Nottinghamshire Archives (DR 1/3/2/1/110/1-13). They date from 1714, 1726, 1743, 1748, 1759, 1764, 1770, 1777, 1781, 1786, 1809, 1817 and 1825.

Full surveys and estate maps

There are a number of full surveys of the whole parish of Laxton and Moorhouse, and some of the Pierrepont family's holdings there (which were always the majority). They date from the mid-18th to the early-19th centuries. These surveys use the same field numbers as those in Mark Pierce's 1635 map:

- 1736. The first full survey of the Duke of Kingston's estate and the manor of Laxton (Ma 4893).
- 1740-1741. A survey of rectorial tithes, listing every piece of land in Laxton and Moorhouse assessed for tithes (Ma 4895).
- Mid-18th century. This survey of the manor of Laxton is undated but dates from the period 1740-1789. The survey is in two parts – a numerical schedule by field number, and a schedule of tenures detailing the same land but arranging it by the name of the occupier. (Ma 4897-Ma 4898).
- 1726-1751, and 1784-1807. Two further undated numerical surveys of land in Laxton (Ma 4905-4906).
- 1803. Survey and valuation of Viscount Newark's estate in Laxton, by Richard Clark junior. (Ma 3S 12).

There are also two other undated surveys, using different field numbers:

- Early 19th century, c.1806-1825. Survey and valuation of Earl Manvers' estate in Laxton, Laxton Moorhouse and Ossington, in two parts. The two parts had become separated (Ma 4914 and Ma 3S 16).
- Mid-19th century, c.1840-1860. Book of tenures listing all owners and occupiers in Laxton and the number of Common Rights associated with particular holdings. (Ma 4922).

From the late 18th century to the mid-19th century there are five detailed Pierrepont estate plans, each with accompanying surveys:

- 1789. By William Sanday. The first Manvers estate plan is dated 1789 (Ma 5411). It only gives the names of the furlongs and does not show individual strips. There is a numerical schedule accompanying this map (Ma 4900) and a book of tenures (Ma 4899, with an earlier draft at Ma 3S 7). Again, the field numbers are the same as Mark Pierce's 1635 plan.

- 1812. By Henry de Bruyn. The plan (Ma 4P 15) shows each individual strip and piece of land. There is an accompanying survey (Ma S 7). A numerical schedule of similar date (Ma 4911) may be a companion volume to the survey. There is also a survey and valuation of the small Tithes, also by Henry de Bruyn, dated 11 Jan. 1812 (Ma 5438).
- 1820. By Francis Wharton. The plan (Ma 5415), showing each individual strip and piece of land, is accompanied by a numerical survey (Ma 4919). A book of tenures to this plan does not appear to have survived.
- 1834. By Francis Wharton. The plan (Ma 5416), showing each individual strip and piece of land, is accompanied by a book of tenures, in two parts, undated but c.1833-1834 (Ma 4916-4917). The plan is coloured to show the holdings of Earl Manvers, the Earl of Scarborough, and J.E. Denison. There is also a plan of lands belonging to the Church in Laxton (Ma 2P 94), copied from the 1834 estate plan, with references from Francis Wharton's 1820 terrier.
- 1862. By Thomas Huskinson. There are two copies of the map – a straightforward map showing all the strips and pieces of land (Ma 5421), and a duplicate version which has been colour-coded to show the holdings of each of Earl Manvers' tenants (Ma 5420). The accompanying survey is a book of tenures, arranged by occupier, and including remarks and recommendation by Thomas Huskinson on each of the holdings (Ma S 16).

The Manvers and Denison collections also include surveys of land in Laxton and Moorhouse not owned at the time by members of the Pierrepont family, but subsequently purchased by them. They include the following:

- 1732. Survey of freeholds at Laxton and Laxton Moorhouse, by Mr Roos (Ma 4892)
- 1740-1741. Survey of freeholds at Laxton and Laxton Moorhouse (Ma 4894)
- 1790. Survey and valuation of Laxton and Moorhouse, for tithes – estates owned by the Hon. Richard Lumley Savile and others. (Ma 4901 and Ma 3S 8-11)
- 1795-1796. Surveys of an estate belonging to the Hon. Richard Lumley Savile at Laxton (Ma 4902-4903)
- 1803. Survey of freeholds at Laxton and Laxton Moorhouse, in two parts (Ma 4909-4910)
- 1806. Valuation book concerning the estates of John Denison in places including Laxton and Moorhouse (De B 21)
- 1784-1807, probably early 19th Century. Survey of freeholders' tithes at Laxton and Laxton Moorhouse, in two parts (Ma 4912-4913)
- 1820. Survey or Terrier of the estate of the Hon. Rev J. Lumley Savile at Laxton (Ma 4918)
- 1866. Numerical schedule and book of tenures of the Savile estate in the parish of Laxton (Ma 4923-4924)
- 1866. Order of Exchange, with plan, of lands in Laxton and Moorhouse exchanged between Earl Manvers and J E Denison (Ma 5426).

- 1867. Particulars of an estate at Laxton given in exchange by Henry Savile to Earl Manvers (Ma 4S 1 and Ma 4S 3)
- 1867. Copy Award and plan of an exchange of lands in Laxton, Edwinstowe, Kersall, Kirton, Kneesall, Ollerton and Ompton, Nottinghamshire, between Earl Manvers and Henry Savile (Ma 2P 96).

For the Laxton Tithe Apportionment of 1839-1845, see the 'Tithe' section below.

Enclosure

The hamlet of Moorhouse was enclosed in 1860. The Manvers collection contains a copy of the enclosure award and plan (Ma 2P 100).

There is an earlier plan of Moorhouse Open Field, showing its strips (Ma 5412), which is quite fragile, and a plan of Moorhouse as surveyed for the enclosure, 1851 (Ma 5418).

Plans of Moorhouse, dated 1861 and 1863, also exist, showing the hamlet after the enclosure (Ma 2P 101 and Ma 5422).

Later 19th century surveys and plans

A plan of Laxton and Moorhouse in 5 parts was drawn up in 1861 and coloured to show the holdings of Earl Manvers, the Earl of Scarborough, and J.E. Denison (Ma 2P 95 for parts 1-4; Ma 5423 for part 5, which is fragile). The plans were revised in 1864 for a plan in 6 parts. There are two copies of the new Part 6 of 6 (Ma 5424-5425).

There is an undated 19th century plan of Laxton and Moorhouse, large scale (3 chains = 1 inch), showing individual strips, in two parts (Ma 5427 and Ma 5428).

There are 6" Ordnance Survey maps of Laxton from the period 1882-1922 (Ma 2P 144-160/6), and 25" Ordnance Survey maps from the late 19th century (Ma 2P 168/1-2 and Ma 2P 169/1-2) and 1900 (Ma 5P 64).

There are maps of land in Laxton bought by Earl Manvers from the Church, dated 1889-1890 (Ma 5432-5434).

A numerical survey of Laxton, with plot numbers based on the Ordnance Survey map, was made in 1891 (Ma 2S 4). This survey has been added to with amendments up to 1906.

Various loose sheets dated 1891-1932 contain surveys of fields at Laxton, giving names of tenants and details of acreage and cultivation (Ma 2B 65/1/35-39).

20th century surveys and plans

There is a book of 'Laxton Tenancies and Freeholds', which is a survey, arranged by occupier, with plot numbers based on the tithe map (Ma S 95). This was probably made in 1900-1901.

There is also survey of Laxton Poor Rates dated 1900-1901 (Ma X 18).

A 6" Ordnance Survey map of Laxton was marked up to show numbered strips in the open fields (but not elsewhere in the parish) in c.1900 (Ma 5429).

There are plans of Copthorne Farm in Laxton, c.1900 (Ma 2P 97-98)

There are maps of Little [East] Field and West Field after they were re-organised, dated 1904-1906 (Ma 5430-5431 and Ma 5435-5436). There is also a plan of Copthorn, Knapeney and Primrose Farms in Laxton, dated 1906 (Ma 5437).

The Manvers collection does not contain any other surveys or plans from later in the 20th century. However, the University of Nottingham does hold a plan of Laxton, colour-coded to show the holdings of each of Earl Manvers' tenants in c.1939 (MS 161).

After Earl Manvers' estate in Laxton was purchased by the Ministry of Agriculture in 1952, the Agricultural Land Commission undertook a survey of each of the farms there. The University of Nottingham has the original handwritten survey forms (MS 529).

Laxton was owned by the Government between 1952 and 1981, and material relating to the estate's management will be in The National Archives.

Tithe records

Tithe records are often in the form of surveys, and help to build up a picture of who was living in a parish, how much land they occupied and how valuable it was. Two types of tithes were payable: the 'rectorial' or 'great tithes' were paid out of the main crops, while the 'vicarial' or 'small tithes' were levied on livestock and sundry produce. All tithes in Laxton and Laxton Moorhouse were replaced by rent charges in 1839, under the provisions of the Tithe Commutation Act 1836.

The University of Nottingham holds a survey of rectorial tithes, listing every piece of land in Laxton and Moorhouse assessed for tithes, dated 1740-41 (Ma 4895).

Also dated 1741 is the 'Easter Book', a summary of Easter dues and small tithes payable to the vicar of Laxton (Ma B 165/49). There is a continuous run of tithe schedules dated 1760-1810 (Ma B 163-164).

In 1803 a survey of lands in Laxton and Moorhouse owned by freeholders other than the Pierrepont family was taken, giving details of the tithes paid on those lands to Viscount Newark (Ma 3S 13, with possible duplicates at Ma 4909-4910).

Another survey of freeholders' tithes at Laxton and Moorhouse is undated, but from the period 1784-1807, probably early 19th century (Ma 4912-4913).

There is also a survey of the Great and Small Tithes of Moorhouse, 1811 (Ma S 14). Henry de Bruyn, as part of his 1812 survey of Laxton, did a survey and valuation of the small tithes there (Ma 5438), arranged by occupier.

There is correspondence relating to the commutation of Laxton tithes, and agreement of landowners and tithe owners, 1838, in the Tallents solicitors collection at Nottinghamshire Archives (DD/T/124/44-49).

Unfortunately, Earl Manvers' copy of the Laxton tithe map, dated 1839 and supplemented in 1845, is unfit for production and requires conservation. (Ma 4P 16). There are three copies of the tithe apportionment which are in good condition (Ma 4925, Ma 5439 and Ma B 167/111). Further copies of the map and apportionment can be found at Nottinghamshire Archives.

The University of Nottingham holds a Boundary Award and plan of the boundaries of the parish of Laxton by the Tithe Commissioners, dated 1844 (Ma 5417).

There is a draft of a proposed Re-Appportionment of rent charges in lieu of Tithes in Moorhouse, Nottinghamshire, by Thomas Huskinson, 1851 (Ma 4926).

There are also general papers related to the Laxton Tithe rentcharges, 1888-1943. (Ma 5E 106-123).

Thoresby rentals and estate accounts

Material from the Thoresby estate is part of the Manvers Collection at The University of Nottingham.

Between 1678 and 1726 rentals and accounts were generally kept together.

- The earliest Laxton rentals are dated 1678-1681 (Ma 4196-4199, and Ma R 62/2-3).
- 'A Book of Rentals' dated Michaelmas 1684 is the first in a series of rentals and estate account books, 1684-1726 (Ma 4200-Ma 4320).
- There are also estate accounts during the period of the 2nd Duke's minority, 1723-1733 (Ma 4347-Ma 4637).

There is a continuous series of estate accounts from 1726 to 1950:

- Account books and some rentals, 1726-1779 (Ma 4509-Ma 4639)
- Volumes of estate accounts, 1780-1950 (Ma 6A 2/1-163). Laxton was part of the 'Thoresby Collection' of estates.
- There are duplicates and copies of some of the accounts dated 1827-1859, 1860-1884, 1889, and 1890-1891 (Ma A 1-33b and Ma 2A 1-26).

There are also many general account books from the Thoresby estate from the 19th and 20th centuries, including labour and maintenance accounts (in series Ma 2A, Ma 2BV, and Ma 6A 11/1-12 – see the catalogue for further details). The contents will relate to particular farms or inhabitants of Laxton, among other places.

There is a continuous series of rentals from 1745-1950:

- Earlier rentals back to 1726 (in series Ma 4509-Ma 4639)
- Rentals from 1745-46, 1755, 1771-90, 1812, 1817-43, 1845-57 and 1885 (Ma R 1-62/1).
- A complementary series of rentals from 1773 and 1780-1816, filling some of the gaps (Ma 2R 2-41).
- Receiving rental books, 1859-1950 (Ma 6R 1/1-92)
- Audited rental books, 1858-1950 (Ma 6R 2/1-93)

Deeds and Estate Papers

Title deeds, estate papers, rentals, accounts and correspondence from the Thoresby estate (12th-19th centuries) were deposited in the British Library by the 6th Earl Manvers in 1942 together with personal papers of the Pierrepont family. They are in the Egerton collection (Eg Ch 2301-8836, and Eg MSS 3516-3660).

Other parts of the Thoresby estate archive were transferred to The University of Nottingham. The following items in the Manvers collection relate specifically to Laxton:

- Over 400 title deeds to premises bought and sold by the Pierrepont family, 1667-1949 (Ma 5440-5876)
- Printed and manuscript Rules for stocking the Open Fields, 1871-1908 (Ma 5838-5843)

- A large miscellaneous series of estate papers relating to Laxton, 17th-20th centuries (Ma B 163-226). Detailed descriptions of these items are now (from 2017) available on the Manuscripts Online Catalogue.
- Papers relating to estate matters at Moorhouse and Laxton, 1928-1933 (Ma 3E 2042-2046).
- Papers relating to leases, repairs, etc. at Laxton, 1933-1939 (Ma 3E 2047-2079).
- Papers relating to the extinction of Laxton Common Right, 1951-1953 (Ma 3E 2207-2376).
- Papers and correspondence as to boundary between Laxton and Egmanton, 1821-1950 (Ma 5E 91-105)
- Miscellaneous estate papers, tithe papers, plans and surveys, 1821-1952 and n.d. Includes schedules of open field land dating from the 20th century, papers relating to the outlying farms sold by Earl Manvers in 1950, and papers relating to war damage in Laxton, 1941. (Ma 5E 124-190)
- Agreement between Earl Manvers and occupiers of land in Little Field, Laxton, to enclose and extinguish common rights; 1903 (Ma 5E 141)
- Papers relating to the management of the Laxton estate, 1989-1961, but predominantly 1950s (Ma 9 E 1/1-9)
- Miscellaneous papers relating to Laxton within series Ma 9 E 2 and Ma 9 E 3.
- Tenancy agreements and leases for farm, house and cottage properties in Laxton, Nottinghamshire; 1893-1981 (Ma 9 E 3/59/1-33)
- Valuations of tenantry and fixtures for farms and other tenanted properties in Laxton; 1927-1957 (series Ma 9 E 3/62)
- Farm tenants' files containing correspondence with the agent about rents and improvements; 1947-1956 (series Ma 9 E 3/67)

There are also many papers relating to the Thoresby estate in Nottinghamshire in general. These papers may refer to Laxton, along with other places, but have not been catalogued in detail. Because these series are very extensive, it would be best to request this material only if a particular event was being investigated, or a restricted period of time:

- Bundles of estate papers relating to Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, 1745-1948 (Ma 2B 1-64). Arranged by date.
- Bundles of incoming correspondence relating to the Manvers estates, 1840-1846 and 1906-1939 (Ma 2C 1-88a). Arranged by date.
- Outgoing letter books relating to Nottinghamshire estates, 1874-1939 (Ma 2C 150-185/2). Arranged by date.
- Miscellaneous estate correspondence, mostly addressed to R Wordsworth (agent at Thoresby), 1913-1939 but mostly 1913-1918 (Ma 4E 1-2110).

- Estate agents' letter books, 1882-1931 (Ma 6C 1-2)

The Denison collection (De) at The University of Nottingham contains material relating to the Denison family's estates in Laxton and Moorhouse:

- Abstract of title of John Denison to lands in Moorhouse and Laxton, Nottinghamshire, c.1794 (De A 33/4)
- Articles of agreement between Peter Broughton and John Neale, concerning lands in Laxton, Nottinghamshire, 2 Feb. 1700 (De A 42/4)
- 13 boxes of title deeds and documents relating to land at Laxton, Nottinghamshire, 1589-1899 (De C). See the Manuscripts Online Catalogue for further details, as these documents have been described in detail. The documents include copies of wills and marriage settlements of some Laxton people whose lands were eventually purchased by the Denison family.

A few title deeds and estate papers relating to land in Laxton and Laxton Moorhouse can be found in the archive of Tallents and Company, solicitors, of Newark (Nottinghamshire Archives, DD/T)

There are a few references in the Savile of Rufford collection at Nottinghamshire Archives (DD/SR), although most of the 'Laxton' material relates to Laxton in Yorkshire.

Manorial records

Laxton Manor Court records dating from 1651 to 1820 are held at the British Library, as part of the Egerton papers (Eg 3631, 3632).

Other manorial records are found in the Tallents collection (TL) at The University of Nottingham:

- Court minutes from 1753 to 1956
- Presentment papers from 1754 to 1957
- Suit rolls 1744 to 1950.

There are also some papers in the Manvers Collection: a few stray minutes, presentment papers and estreats (Ma B 168/170-173, Ma B 203/44-47, Ma B 211/12, Ma B 270/3, Ma B 278/37); copies of the Gaits and Commons accounts, 1940-1951; abstracts of the Gaits and Commons accounts from 1908 to 1914; a list of syke grass and Commons areas in Laxton, 1914; and notes on a meeting dated 1907 (Ma 5E 73-87).

Parish records and local government

Most of the material relating to Laxton at Nottinghamshire Archives is within the Laxton parish records (ref: PR), covering the following:

- Baptism, marriage and burial registers, dating back to 1564
- Registers of banns and service registers
- Terriers
- Tithe valuation books
- Churchwardens accounts
- Faculties
- Vestry Meeting minute books
- Constables account books
- Parish account books

- Overseers of the Highway accounts
- Poor rate assessments (n.b. there is also one copy Poor rate assessment allowed to William Pinder, Overseer, in 1829, with copy Overseer's accounts dated 1818-1829, in the Manvers collection, Ma 3S 18)
- Settlement certificates, removal orders, settlement examinations and bastardy bonds
- Laxton and Moorhouse parish almanacks, 1875-1919

Nottinghamshire Archives also holds some notes made by Rev. C.B. Collinson, vicar of Laxton:

- "Sacred Memories from the Parish of Laxton" - detailed calendar of tomb-stone inscriptions by Rev. CB Collinson, 1910 (PR 4056-8)
- Notebook of Rev. Collinson containing letters relating to historical matters, and copies of documents from Chancery depositions etc. (PR 4144)
- Bundle of correspondence and notes relating to Laxton's history, addressed to or by Rev C.B. Collinson, c.1906-1917; plus a copy of Rev. Collinson's article on Laxton in *Country Life*, 19 May 1906 (PR 4807)

A later vicar of Laxton, Rev. Richard Camenisch, also wrote notes on the history of Laxton and its church. His notes include a list of vicars of Laxton and letters about the burial place of Robin Hood and the 'Eleanor' crosses, 1966-1967 (PR 29,682/30).

Museum collections

The Laxton Visitor Centre is based at the Dovecote Inn, Laxton. There is a display on the history of the village and the opportunity to watch a video about the open field farming system.

Newark and Sherwood Museum Service has material relating to Laxton in its collection of over 60,000 items and approximately 12,000 photographs relating to the history of the Newark and Sherwood District. The reserve collections and enquiry service are housed at the Resource Centre, Brunel Drive, Newark. Items relating to Laxton include:

- Archaeological items including a Neolithic axe head and fragments of Roman pottery, and a gunpowder scoop carved from bone
- Photographs including aerial views, photographs of the Jury, the Dovecote Inn, the parish church and Laxton Castle
- A variety of maps
- VHS Videotape on Laxton and its Field System
- Two pamphlet boxes in the Local History Reference Collections containing a wide variety of documents, reports, cuttings, sales particulars and books about Laxton.

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The Laxton: Living in an Open Field
Village pages on the website
(<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/mss/learning/laxton/>) include digitised images of original documents.

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