

## E1a – SWILLING HILL POTTERY,

Potovens Road, off Keighley Road, Causeway Foot

also known as SOIL HILL pottery, SWILL HILL pottery, and SWILLING END pottery

SE 0736 3138 – Yorks. (W.R.) CCXV.12

1784 -1898

1784-1807	<b>Jonathan Catherall</b>	potter
1807-c1810	<b>Samuel, John, Stephen and Thomas Catherall</b>	potters
c1810-c1812	<b>John, Stephen and Thomas Catherall</b>	potters
c1812-1820s	<b>Stephen and Thomas Catherall</b>	potters
1820s-1859	<b>John Catherall</b>	earthenware potter
1859-1869	<b>Rachel Catherall</b>	earthenware potter
1869-1871	John Greenwood	potter
1871-c1880	<b>Jonas and Ellis Crabtree</b>	potters
c1880-c1881	George Wilcock	potter
c1882-1883	closed (poultry farm)	
1883-1885	<b>John Kitson</b>	potter
1886-1897	<b>Hannah Kitson</b>	potter
1897-1898	<b>Isaac Button</b>	potter

In 1784 Jonathan moved his operation from his pottery at Keelham<sup>1</sup> to a new pottery he built at Swilling Hill End, Causeway Foot<sup>2</sup> with easier access to better clay.<sup>3</sup> The clay had previously been worked for pipe clay.<sup>4</sup> In 1797 the pottery had an annual rental valuation of £1.0s.0d.<sup>5</sup> whilst the house and land were assessed at £3.0s.0d. Jonathan also owned coal mines which were assessed at £2.5s.0d.<sup>6</sup> On the 11 August 1807 Jonathan Catherall died aged 67.<sup>7</sup> (see **Figure 1 – Catherall Family Tree**) The pottery passed to his sons, Samuel, John, Thomas and Stephen.<sup>8</sup> Around 1810 Samuel Catherall, Jonathan's eldest son left Swilling Hill to set up a new pottery at Denholme.<sup>9</sup> (see **E1d – Denholme Pottery**) Then around 1812 John, Jonathan's second son set up Small Clews Pottery with James Robinson.<sup>10</sup> (see **F4a – Small Clews Pottery**) This left the pottery with the two younger brothers, Stephen and Thomas. The house built by the Catheralls was called Whistle Hall because it was built with the profits from hawking pot whistles and taws from the back of a donkey.<sup>11</sup>

By 1830 the pottery had passed to John Catherall.<sup>12</sup> Around 1830 Samuel and Jonathan Catherall, the original Jonathan's grandsons, set up a pottery at Bradshaw Head but it was not a success and closed after about two years.<sup>13</sup> (see **F5a – Bradshaw Head Pottery**) After this Samuel returned to work at Swilling Hill Pottery. John Catherall continued running the pottery being listed in 1838,<sup>14</sup> 1842,<sup>15</sup> and 1851,<sup>16</sup> when he was also given as a brickmaker at Long Causeway. (see **Figure 2 – 1849 Map of Swilling Hill Area**) In 1857 the pottery was sold to James Robinson,<sup>17</sup> John's brother-in-law, who also ran Small Clews Pottery. However, John Catherall continued to run the pottery at Swilling Hill<sup>18</sup> until his death in 1859,<sup>19</sup> when his wife, Rachel took over<sup>20</sup> until her death on 21 December 1869.<sup>21</sup> Following James Robinson's death in 1861,<sup>22</sup> his interests had passed to John Greenwood,<sup>23</sup> who then took over ownership of the pottery until 1871, when it was sold to George Wilcock<sup>24</sup> who brought in Jonas and Ellis Crabtree to work the pottery.<sup>25</sup> Around 1880 George Wilcock tried to work the pottery himself<sup>26</sup> without success, so he closed it and converted it to a poultry farm<sup>27</sup> with equal lack of success. In 1883 John Kitson, from Elland, acquired the pottery and started operating from there.<sup>28</sup> In 1884 and 1885 John Kitson's pot ovens had an annual rental value of £12.0s.0d.<sup>29</sup> John must have died around this time for in 1886 the pottery was being operated by his widow Hannah<sup>30</sup> with the help of her son Albert and daughter when the potworks, together with other buildings and five acres of land had an annual rental value of £24.10s.0d. (see **Figure 3 – 1892 Plan of Swilling Hill Pottery**) Hannah was Enos Morton's daughter from Salendine Nook.<sup>31</sup> In 1895 the pot ovens were valued at £10.0s.0d.<sup>32</sup> when the estate comprised – farm house, barn, potworks and over 5 acres of land, as shown on the accompanying plan. A year later in 1896 Hannah's daughter, Annie, died aged just 23 years old.<sup>33</sup> This may have influenced Hannah as she only continued to

work the pottery until 1897 when it was sold to Isaac Button,<sup>34</sup> reputedly for £800.<sup>35</sup> Isaac Button had Fountain Pottery at Liversedge, which he had started in 1866.<sup>36</sup> He had originally been a brickmaker, like his father, Francis, probably until he moved to Dewsbury around 1880.<sup>37</sup> Whilst he purchased the pottery at Swilling Hill he remained at Fountain Pottery until his death in 1905, putting in his sons to run his new acquisition.<sup>38</sup> Isaac was obviously not happy with the existing pottery, which was very rundown,<sup>39</sup> because he did not keep Swilling Hill Pottery going for long.<sup>40</sup> **(see E1c – Soil Hill Pottery)** It is thought that he did not use his new acquisition much as a pottery, but reverted to his previous occupation as a master brickmaker, using it to make bricks, which were clamp fired and used to build the new pottery slightly lower down the hill at Soil Hill to which he transferred his operation in the following year.<sup>41</sup>

## References

- 1 William Redman, whose wife was Jonathan Catherall's great-great grand-daughter in a letter in *Yorkshire Weekly Post*, 12 April 1911. James Walton, 'Some Decadent Local Industries part 1: Pottery', in *Transactions*, Halifax Antiquarian Society, Halifax, 1938, p. 25, which quotes Nicholas Taylor, a potter who worked at various local potteries including Swilling Hill. He states that Jonathan went to Keelham around 1765, but he also gives dates for Denholme Pottery, **(see E1d – Denholme Pottery)** which he operated, that do not hold true, and so I feel his dates are unreliable and have consequently dismissed them. T. W. Hanson, 'Ovenden Heights', in *Transactions*, Halifax Antiquarian Society, Halifax, 1913, p. 268, gives 1784 as the date that Jonathan Catherall became the tenant at Swill Hill End.
- 2 William Redman, whose wife was Jonathan Catherall's great-great grand-daughter in a letter in *Yorkshire Weekly Post*, 12 April 1911.
- 3 *Halifax Courier*, 2 August 1919.
- 4 James Walton, 'Some Decadent Local Industries part 1: Pottery', in *Transactions*, Halifax Antiquarian Society, Halifax, 1938, p. 26.
- 5 James Walton, 'Some Decadent Local Industries part 1: Pottery', in *Transactions*, Halifax Antiquarian Society, Halifax, 1938, p. 26, quoting 1797 Ovenden Poor Rate Book.
- 6 James Walton, 'Some Decadent Local Industries part 1: Pottery', in *Transactions*, Halifax Antiquarian Society, Halifax, 1938, p. 26, quoting 1797 Ovenden Poor Rate Book.
- 7 James Walton, 'Some Decadent Local Industries part 1: Pottery', in *Transactions*, Halifax Antiquarian Society, Halifax, 1938, p. 26.
- 8 Heather Lawrence, *Yorkshire Pots and Potteries*, David & Charles, Newton Abbot, 1974, p. 186.
- 9 William Redman, whose wife was Jonathan Catherall's great-great grand-daughter in a letter in *Yorkshire Weekly Post*, 12 April 1911.
- 10 James Walton, 'Some Decadent Local Industries part 1: Pottery', in *Transactions*, Halifax Antiquarian Society, Halifax, 1938, p. 27.
- 11 James Walton, 'Some Decadent Local Industries part 1: Pottery', in *Transactions*, Halifax Antiquarian Society, Halifax, 1938, p. 26.
- 12 *Directory of Borough of Leeds and Clothing Districts of Yorkshire*, Parson & White, Sheffield, 1830.
- 13 William Redman, whose wife was Jonathan Catherall's great-great grand-daughter in a letter in *Yorkshire Weekly Post*, 12 April 1911.
- 14 *History, Gazetteer and Directory of West Riding Volume 2*, W. White, Sheffield, 1838.
- 15 *Directory of Borough of Leeds and Clothing Districts of Yorkshire*, W. White, Sheffield, 1842.
- 16 *1851 Census*, given on <http://www.ancestry.com>.
- 17 Heather Lawrence, *Yorkshire Pots and Potteries*, David & Charles, Newton Abbot, 1974, p. 186.
- 18 *Directory of borough of Leeds and Yorkshire Woollen Districts*, W. White, Sheffield, 1858.
- 19 Heather Lawrence, *Yorkshire Pots and Potteries*, David & Charles, Newton Abbot, 1974, p. 186, corrected by death records given on <http://www.ancestry.com>.
- 20 *Post Office Directory of West Riding of Yorkshire with City of York*, Kelly & Co., London, 1861.
- 21 *Halifax Courier*, 24 December 1869, p. 8.
- 22 Heather Lawrence, *Yorkshire Pots and Potteries*, David & Charles, Newton Abbot, 1974, p. 186.
- 23 Heather Lawrence, *Yorkshire Pots and Potteries*, David & Charles, Newton Abbot, 1974, p. 186.
- 24 Heather Lawrence, *Yorkshire Pots and Potteries*, David & Charles, Newton Abbot, 1974, p. 186.
- 25 Heather Lawrence, *Yorkshire Pots and Potteries*, David & Charles, Newton Abbot, 1974, pp. 186-187; verified by *Directory of Yorkshire*, Manchester, Slater, 1875; and *Post Office Directory of West Riding of Yorkshire Part 2*, Kelly & Co., London, 1877.
- 26 Heather Lawrence, *Yorkshire Pots and Potteries*, David & Charles, Newton Abbot, 1974, p. 187.
- 27 Heather Lawrence, *Yorkshire Pots and Potteries*, David & Charles, Newton Abbot, 1974, p. 187.

- 28 Heather Lawrence, *Yorkshire Pots and Potteries*, David & Charles, Newton Abbot, 1974, p. 187; and James Walton, 'Some Decadent Local Industries part 1: Pottery', in *Transactions*, Halifax Antiquarian Society, Halifax, 1938, p. 26.
- 29 WYAS-C, HXT:348, *Ovenden Local Board General District Rate Book*, Halifax, 1884, and WYAS-C, HXT:352, *Ovenden Urbsn District Council General Rate Book*, Halifax, 1885.
- 30 WYAS-C, HXT:354, *Ovenden County Poor Rate Book*, Halifax, 1886.
- 31 Birth and marriage records given on <http://www.ancestry.com>.
- 32 WYAS-C, HXT:180, *Halifax Ovenden Ward Rating Valuation*, Halifax, 1895.
- 33 *Halifax Guardian*, 8 February 1896, p. 8.
- 34 James Walton, 'Some Decadent Local Industries part 1: Pottery', in *Transactions*, Halifax Antiquarian Society, Halifax, 1938, pp. 26-27.
- 35 Heather Lawrence, *Yorkshire Pots and Potteries*, David & Charles, Newton Abbot, 1974, p. 187, quoting WYAS-W, 1897 42 185 136, *Deed*, 1897.
- 36 Heather Lawrence, *Yorkshire Pots and Potteries*, David & Charles, Newton Abbot, 1974, p. 191, quoting WYAS-W, 1886 4 542 335, *Deed*, 1886; and WYAS-W, 1886 22 467, *Deed*, 1886.
- 37 Barbara Reardon, 'Isaac Button of Fountain Pottery in Roberttown and Soil Hill Pottery Halifax', in *Transactions Volume 17 (new series)*, Halifax Antiquarian Society, Halifax, 2009, p. 176; and 1881 Census given on <http://www.ancestry.com>, shows Isaac living in Dewsbury, having moved there from Barnsley since 1879, whilst 1891 Census given on <http://www.ancestry.com>, shows him at Fountain Pottery.
- 38 Barbara Reardon, 'Isaac Button of Fountain Pottery in Roberttown and Soil Hill Pottery Halifax', in *Transactions Volume 17 (new series)*, Halifax Antiquarian Society, Halifax, 2009, pp. 176 and 179; and 1901 Census, given on <http://www.ancestry.com>.
- 39 Andrew McGarva, *Country Pottery: Traditional Earthenware of Britain*, A. & C. Black, London, 2000, p. 65.
- 40 James Walton, 'Some Decadent Local Industries part 1: Pottery', in *Transactions*, Halifax Antiquarian Society, Halifax, 1938, pp. 26-27.
- 41 Andrew McGarva, *Country Pottery: Traditional Earthenware of Britain*, A. & C. Black, London, 2000, p. 65.

## Illustrations

- Figure 1** **Catherall Family Tree** – Birth, marriage, death and census records on <http://www.ancestry.com>.
- Figure 2** **1849 Map of Swilling Hill Area** – Ordnance Survey, *6 inch to 1 mile Series: Yorkshire Sheet 215*, Southampton, 1854, surveyed in 1849.
- Figure 3** **1892 Plan of Swilling Hill Pottery** – Ordnance Survey, *25 inch to 1 mile Series: Yorkshire (West Riding) Sheet CCXV.12*, Southampton, 1894, surveyed in 1892.

## Bibliography

- Peter C. D. Brears, *English Country Pottery: Its History and Techniques*, David & Charles, Newton Abbot, 1971.
- Oxley Grabham, *Yorkshire Potteries, Pots and Potters*, Yorkshire Philosophical Society, York, 1916.
- Heather Lawrence, *Yorkshire Pots and Potteries*, David & Charles, Newton Abbot, 1974.
- Andrew McGarva, *Country Pottery: Traditional Earthenware of Britain*, A. & C. Black, London, 2000.
- Barbara Reardon, 'Isaac Button of Fountain Pottery in Roberttown and Soil Hill Pottery Halifax', in *Transactions Volume 17 (new series)*, Halifax Antiquarian Society, Halifax, 2009.
- James Walton, 'Some Decadent Local Industries Part 1: Pottery', in *Transactions*, Halifax Antiquarian Society, Halifax, 1938.
- Graham Wilkinson, *History of Local Potteries*, Bradford Art Galleries and Museums, Bradford, 1981.
- Letter by William Redman in *Yorkshire Weekly Post*, 12 April 1911.

## Maps

- 6 inch to 1 mile – Ordnance Survey, *6 inch to 1 mile Series: Yorkshire Sheet 215*, Southampton, 1854, surveyed in 1849.
- 25 inch to 1 mile – Ordnance Survey, *25 inch to 1 mile Series: Yorkshire (West Riding) Sheet CCXV.12*, Southampton, 1894, surveyed in 1892.
- Ordnance Survey, *25 inch to 1 mile Series: Yorkshire (West Riding) Sheet CCXV.12*, Southampton, 1908, surveyed in 1905.