

Thomas Minter and Mary Ann Surrey

Thomas Minter, the eighth child and youngest son of Edward Minter and Mary Johnson was born in Boxted being baptised there on 15 November 1806. In contrast, however, to his father comparatively little is known of his life which was cut short by the age of forty.

By occupation an agricultural labourer in common with so many of his contemporaries, Thomas married the already widowed Elizabeth Downs on 28th August 1828. The fact both parties signed the marriage register indicates that he had received at least some basic education, in likelihood at least in part a result of being bequeathed a legacy of £100 from the will of his grandfather William Johnson. No issue of this marriage has yet been found and Elizabeth's untimely death in 1830 saw Thomas a widower until his second marriage to Mary Ann Surrey on 9 February 1832. Thomas's second wife proved something of an enigma until more extensive research showed the wider story. The first clue is the naming of "John Surry" as her father when she herself remarried after Thomas's own death, and this is confirmed in the parish register of West Bergholt, the village of her birth. Baptised here on 26 July 1812 alongside her two siblings Charlotte and John she is recorded as "Mary Ann, daughter of John Surry and Esther Gant". It appears this enigmatic John Surry and Esther Gant were never married, this fact being borne out that when further siblings William, Eliza and James were all again baptised together in 1827 they are recorded as children of "Esther Gant, pauper, deceased".

Esther Gant was buried on 3 March, 1821 aged just 31. The fact she is recorded as a pauper at her death would indicate either John Surry had failed to provide for her or had by this time already died, leaving as yet unanswered questions as to whom had brought up the young children, Mary Ann included.

As a matter of passing interest in August 1834 West Bergholt became the scene of a ignominious murder. A man with serious psychological issues named George Risbey became involved in a dispute over the drinking of his portion of beer with his six work colleagues at their afternoon refreshments break after he had fallen asleep. After being of a most "quarrelsome disposition" for a prolonged length of time one of the party requested Risbey get on with his work peacefully upon which he was struck twice by the latter, once on the chest and then on the chin. Risbey then attempted to strike the man with his scythe, fortunately missing. The man's name was John Gant. Given the two residents of Great Horkesley of

A handwritten marriage register entry for Thomas Minter and Elizabeth Downs. The document is dated August 28, 1828, and was solemnized in the parish of Boxted, Essex, by Robert Robertson, vicar. The bride, Elizabeth Downs, is noted as a widow. The ceremony took place in a church by licence with the consent of the parents. The witnesses are listed as Samuel Dickey and Elizabeth Downes.

Marriage register detailing Thomas's marriage to Elizabeth Downs in 1828

A handwritten marriage register entry for Thomas Minter and Mary Ann Surrey. The document is dated February 9, 1832, and was solemnized in the parish of Boxted, Essex, by Robert Robertson, vicar. The bride, Mary Ann Surrey, is noted as a spinster. The ceremony took place in a church by banns with the consent of the parents. The witnesses are listed as the Mark of John Surry and Sarah Minter.

Marriage register detailing Thomas's marriage to Mary Ann Surrey in 1830

NAMES of each Person who abode therein the preceding Night.	AGE and SEX		PROFESSION, TRADE, EMPLOYMENT, or of INDEPENDENT MEANS.	Where Born in same County
	Males	Females		
Thomas Minter	35		Agr. Lab.	✓
Mary do		30		✓
William do	8			✓
George do	7			✓
Mary do		1		✓

1841 census entry for the Minter family

that name were Mary Ann Surry's brother and uncle, it is highly probable that unless this Gant was from another village, that this incident refers to one of these men. Jurors at George Risbey's trial subsequently heard how John Gant and another man, named Lock grabbed hold of him and threw his scythe down on the ground. Upon releasing him, however, he grabbed another lying nearby and lunged at John Spooner, another member of the workforce, causing instantaneous death when "the dreadful weapon entered between the 4th and 5th ribs of the left side, almost dividing the heart, and producing an incision on the right side, between the 5th and 6th ribs, through which a portion of the small intestines had escaped". Convicted of wilful murder, Risbey was to serve over two decades in a mental institution.

1848. Marriage solemnized at <i>St. Martin's Parish Church in the Borough of Colchester</i> in the County of <i>Essex</i>								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
101	28 th May	James Minter	Full age	Bachelor	Laborer	St. Martin's	John Minter	Laborer
		Mary Ann Minter	Full age	Spinster	—	St. Martin's	John Lurry Minter	Butcher

Married in the *St. Martin's Parish Church* according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, *of England* by me, *Richard Corfield*

This Marriage was solemnized between us, { *James Minter* in the Presence of us, { *John Minter*
Mary Ann Minter's mark X *Elizabeth Seaborn's mark X*

Marriage certificate of Mary Ann Surrey and James Minter

Parish records and the census show that around 1835 the Gant family appear to have migrated to Boxted en masse where Charlotte married Edward Minter's grandson James Taylor on 31 December 1837. Thomas and Mary's first child William Johnson Minter was born on November 3 1832 , with George Thomas (1834), Charles (1837), Mary Ann (1839) and Henry Edward (1843) following in succession. All survived with the exception of Charles who was buried at Boxted as an infant. The children were all baptised at Colchester at the Wesleyan chapel, giving one more piece of scanty knowledge about Thomas, namely that he was a Methodist.

James Minter	Man	Mar	21	Ague Labourer	"	Essex
Mary Ann Minter	Wife	Mar	37	"	"	West Bezzell
William J. Minter	Son	"	10	"	"	Boxted
George J. G ^o	Son	"	16	"	"	Essex
Mary Ann G ^o	Daughter	"	11	Scholar	"	Essex
Henry G ^o	Son	"	12	Essex	"	Essex
Roseanna G ^o	Daughter	"	14	at Home	"	Essex
John G ^o	Son	"	1	Essex	"	Essex

1851 census entry for James Minter and Mary



Roseanna Minter

Thomas died aged just 39 in 1845. His widow gave birth to a daughter, Roseanna a year after her husband's death and it was to be a further two years before she was married to the child's father James Minter, none other than Thomas Minter's cousin on 28th May 1848 at St Martin's church, Colchester. The couple produced a further two children, John (b 1850) and James (b 1853) In 1879 Mary had the misfortune to discover the death by misadventure of her great nephew Josiah Gant who inadvertently hung himself when he attempted to emulate the execution of a woman in London he had read about in a newspaper and slipped.

Mary outlived Thomas Minter by 46 years before her own death which took place in Boxted aged 78 in 1891.

Children of Thomas Minter and Mary Ann Surry

NAME	BORN	OCCUPATION	MARRIED	DIED
William Johnson Minter	<i>3 Nov 1832 Boxted, Essex</i>	<i>Agricultural Labourer</i>	<u>Harriet Dobson</u>	<i>Q 1913 Lambeth Registration District, London</i>
George Thomas	<i>14 April 1834 Boxted, Essex</i>		Unmarried	<i>bd 12 Mar 1854 Boxted, Essex</i>
Charles Minter	<i>bp July 2 1837</i>		Unmarried	<i>bd 18 Feb 1838 Boxted, Essex</i>
Mary Ann Minter	<i>19 Dec 1839 Boxted, Essex</i>		<u>William George Nevard</u> 20 Mar 1863 Boxted, Essex	<i>Q4 1914 Colchester, Essex</i>
Henry Edward Minter	<i>1 Jan 1843 Boxted, Essex</i>	Farmer	<u>Alice Nevard</u> Q3 1883	<i>21 November 1925 Lexden Registration District</i>