

George Henry Minter and Ellen Allen



Boxted Church, Essex, location of George's baptism and marriage

In common with his eldest son and namesake together with great grandfather Edward the Boxted farmer, George Henry Minter senior presents to the researcher again something of a controversial character. His life story when unravelled is one of fathering an illegitimate daughter then marrying another and it is one of his appearance at two separate court appearances for both speeding on a horse and cart then being drunk and disorderly in his local pub where he had intended to become the next licensee, and it is one where questions were raised about his character by his own contemporaries. Yet to his credit George Henry Minter succeeded in setting up a business and small farm on his own, and the fortunes of this branch of the Minter family were far better placed at the end of his life than where they had been at his birth due to his ambition and perseverance.

When and where born	Name, if any	Sex	Name and surname of father	Name, surname and maiden surname of mother	Occupation of father	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered
12 th January 1856 Boxted	George Henry	Boy	William Johnson Minter	Harriet Minter formerly Dobson	Agricultural Labourer	Harriet Minter Misses Boxted	Twelfth January 1856

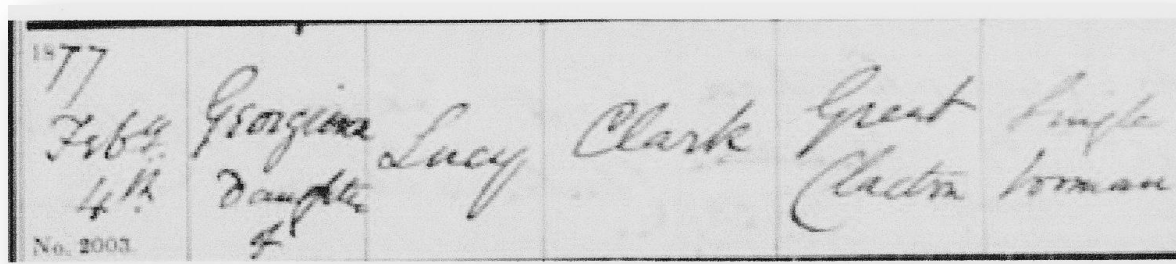
Birth Certificate of George Henry Minter

Born in the Essex village of Boxted on February 12th 1856, the son of William Johnson Minter and Harriet Dobson, George Henry Minter was the second child and eldest son of a family which was to grow to comprise of no fewer than thirteen children. George's father spent the vast majority of his life living in this rural village of around 800 inhabitants and left it only for a brief interlude after his marriage and at the end of his life. By the age of 14 George was already employed as an agricultural labourer but times became increasingly hard from 1874 when another depression hit agriculture both in Essex and nationwide. Hiring fairs increasingly became the order of the day as employment dried up in the locality. As such, in the long term only George's brother William was to stay in Boxted, with all his other siblings migrating away to search other avenues

of employment. Agriculture had been the way of life for the Minter family throughout the course of the century but now all this was to change.

Following the dire harvest of 1873 the whole agricultural community was plunged into a deep depression which was ultimately to last a generation. Prior to this regular local employment had been taken for granted during the mid-victorian age of “high farming”; during the subsequent depression this was now replaced by irregular seasonal labour, which very often consisted of searching for work through hiring fairs resulting in frequent relocation. Furthermore, steady advances in agricultural machinery had meant less demand for labour in a population growing at a rapid rate aided by a number of factors such as medical advances and the decrease in infant mortality. As such, demand for labour had been steadily moving away from agriculture for some time; the cheap importation of foreign food made possible by rapid developments in transport links served only to exacerbate matters for the farm labourer. Indeed, as early as 1851 it was discovered a higher percentage of the population were living in towns than in the country, with the industrial revolution making other avenues of employment open. During the hard times of the late victorian age more people than ever before were moving to the large towns in search of employment in an attempt to better their prospects with more opportunities opening up as the result of the 1870 Education Act enforcing universal schooling to the age of 13 throughout these isles. Prior to the last half of the nineteenth century much of the rural population tended to remain housed in the village they were born or within a few miles radius, for several generations at a time, a prevalent trend within the extended Minter family and the same is true of the Allens, his wife’s family.

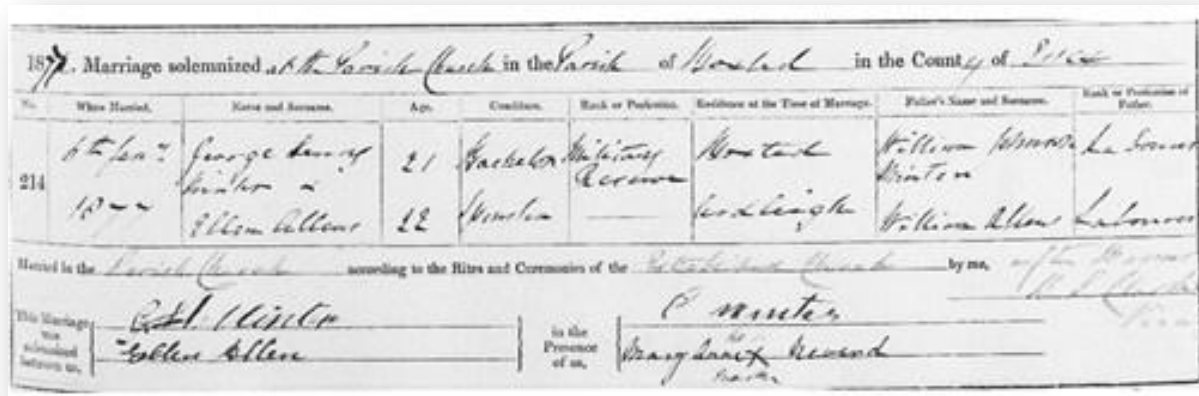
George’s early life prior to his marriage at the age of twenty must be one of conjecture: a newspaper report written some thirty years after the events they described noted he joined, in common with his brother Thomas, the regular army and served 6 years, being given a rating of “good” and was subsequently put on the army reserve in 1875. However, were these true he would have started his career in the army in 1869 aged just thirteen when the 1871 census lists him as an agricultural labourer. His marriage certificate, however gives “army reserve” as his occupation. Consequently the truth is difficult to ascertain. Cardwell’s army enlistment act of 1870 enabled recruits to opt to serve as a reserve after an initial period of service rather than serve continuously the full duration of 21 years. This involved being paid fourpence a day in return for taking training courses each year and being under obligation to serve with the regular army if required. Consequently, he would have been free to undertake additional employment to assist in bringing up his family.



Baptismal Register for Lucy Clark, Great Clacton February 4th 1877

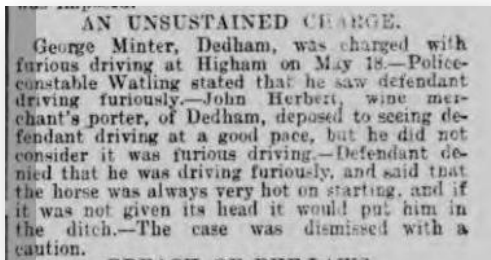
It was during this time he got Clacton girl Lucy Clark pregnant. However, he soon was to enter into a relationship with Ellen Allen, a domestic servant originally from Ardleigh. George and Ellen were married on 6th January 1877 in Boxted, less than a month before Georgiana Clark, George’s newly born baby was christened. George initially appears to have shared custody of his child as she is living with him and Ellen at the time of the 1881 census whilst she is living with Lucy and her new husband William Adams whom she had married in 1881 ten years later, although George’s subsequent move to London may have had a contributing factor in custody arrangements. As the census merely provides a snapshot of where people were living on a given night it is all but impossible to determine whether George and Lucy shared custody of their child or whether her time with the Minters in 1881 was a brief visit.

Ellen Allen, the woman who married George and whom potentially aided in rearing his infant daughter came from a very similar background: born in Ardleigh, and baptised there on June 3rd, 1855 she was the third of six children of William Allen and Rhoda Ward. William was, in common with George’s father an agricultural labourer who in later life was forced to turn his hand to cabinet making after suffering unemployment due to the agricultural depression. Prior to her marriage Ellen had been employed in domestic service.



Marriage certificate of George Henry Minter and Ellen Allen

George and Ellen commenced their married life not in Boxted but in the village of Feering where their children George and Albert were born before moving to Great Tey by 1881; a year later and the family had moved to London where the family grew to include Ellen, Alice and Charles. Little is known of his life in London or, indeed, as to what he was employed during his residence there yet, as is the case with so many of his contemporaries employment itself was in all probability the motivating factor. By 1891 the family were back in Essex, resident in Langham, where a further two children, Bertie and May were born.



article from the Ipswich Journal, 3 June 1898 detailing George's case for "furious driving" in Higham

In or around 1896 George and his family relocated once more to Dedham, where he set up in business as a general dealer, and later was to diversify into the pig and poultry market in addition to becoming a dairyman and ultimately farmer, and resided at Long Road. As can be seen time and again in these case studies many people were engaged in more than one venture throughout their adult lives, very often concurrently. Grace Minter, the couple's last child was born in Dedham in 1896. It would be relatively simple to look at the facts and to consider George the dedicated family man, setting up his own business providing financial support for his growing band of dependants yet this idyllic view can be readily dismissed in the light of local newspaper reports

from the *Ipswich Chronicle*. On May 18th 1898 he was spotted by a local policeman in the village of Higham, two miles west of Dedham "driving furiously" in his horse and cart; in other words, for our modern parlance, speeding. At the Stanford petty sessions George denied the offence, claiming his animal was unreliable when it commenced a journey, in his own words stating it was "very hot in starting" and "liable to put him in a ditch". For the defence another witness merely stated George had been "driving at good pace". A caution was issued for this comparatively minor misdemeanour but worse was to follow just two years later and can, perhaps, be used to view the man from perspective to the kind of man he really was but, as ever, extreme caution must be used when making sweeping statements on a man who has departed this life these hundred years.

By the turn of the century George developed an avid interest in taking over the licence of local Dedham pub The Anchor, currently run by James Downes and his wife. This interest, it would appear, arose when the pub came on the market when it became apparent the Downes were unable to keep the pub properly and were unable to keep their customers under control and had been given three months notice to quit their tenancy. It may come as no surprise, therefore to find them hostile towards George when he approached the Cobbold chain, based in Ipswich, who owned the pub, expressing an interest in taking over the licence of the Anchor.

It was Ellen Downes who headed the opposition towards George to an even greater extent than her husband. When the case later came to court it was claimed it had nothing to do with the fact it was a "Dedham man" who would be potentially replacing them as licencees but drew serious claims upon Minter as to his character. Ellen claimed "she had got very respectable customers since the defendant had left off coming, and had alleged that she had caught the gentleman gambling in the house". These rumours soon reached the brewery who sent George a letter and asked him to provide references "in contradiction to the rumours which were present in the village as to his character".

On September 18th George called at the Anchor with his own wife Ellen and informed the Downeses he had hired the Anchor and was pertinently asked the question where he would get money and references from. Ellen Minter later testified to the court hearing on oath that Mrs Downes had stated she would "all she could to stop him" in his ambitions.

DEDHAM.

PUBLICAN v. CUSTOMER.—At Laxden and Win-stree Sessions on Saturday, George Minter, Ded-ham, was charged with being drunk and dis-orderly and refusing to quit Dedham Anchor Inn on October 15th.—Jas. Downes, landlord, said defendant went to his house several times on the day named. In the afternoon defendant used bad language, and witness ordered him to quit. Minter returned in the evening in-toxicated. Witness ordered him out, but de-fendant refused, and remained till closing time.—In answer to Mr. Asher Prior, who defended, witness said he had occupied the house three years. He had received notice to quit, as it was said the house was not properly conducted, and that he had not proper control over his cus-tomers.—Prosecutor's wife gave corroborative evidence, adding that the defendant called her a "dishonest woman" eight times in a quarter of an hour. She ordered him to quit four times during the evening.—Thomas White spoke to hearing the language complained of.—Defend-ant called witness "none too good." (Laugh-ter).—George Moore said the defendant did not use very grand language to the landlord and his wife.—Mr. Prior, for the defence, said that defendant left the army, after six years' ser-vice, in 1875, and was given a character of "very good." He then lived five years at Lang-ham, afterwards going to London, but for the last few years had been carrying on business as a general dealer in Dedham.—Fredk. Balls spoke to seeing Minter about nine o'clock on the 13th inst. in the Anchor. Defendant was quiet until ordered to leave by the landlord.—Defendant was fined 2s. 6d.; costs remitted. The Bench considered that he received consid-erable provocation.

Abridged version of court hearing of Minter v Downes as reported in the Ipswich Journal 27 October 1900

However, in due course George was successful in obtaining from four respectable residents of Dedham to provide him with the references he needed and, on the morning of October 15th at the request of the brewery, called to inform the Downses he had managed to hire the house who did not take too kindly, with George being jeered at because one of his references had been from a woman with James Downes then winking at George resulting in him using bad language and insulting his wife. After being told to be quiet and leave George obliged but returned at 8.15 pm on the same evening the worse for drink. This time, however, he "used very bad language (and) refused to go out, saying that he would stop as long as he liked, and that nobody was going to put him out" and remained until closing time and, despite being requested to leave several times he refused on each occasion, using "filthy language" towards Ellen Downes.

The Downses subsequently prosecuted George for being "drunk, quarrelsome, disorderly, and refusing to quit the Anchor Inn" and the case was heard at Colchester police court before John Bateman, the leading magistrate on October 20th, 1900. George declared he had been "scandalised" by Mrs Downes "...until he was ashamed to go about anywhere" After a number of interruptions during the hearing Ellen was eventually asked to leave the court. The court, on hearing both sides of the case, considered George "did a very foolish thing in going to the house when he knew the landlord and landlady were not friendly to him" and "could not believe..the defendant (had) let his tongue loose to such an extent" and fined him half a crown, the costs being remitted as they considered George had received "considerable provocation".



Ellen Allen (1855-1943)

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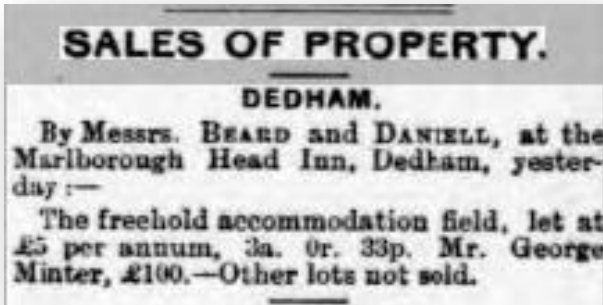
The undermentioned Houses are situate within the boundaries of the

Ecclesiastical Parish *Parish of Dedham* County, Borough, Municipal Borough, or Urban District of *Dedham* Ward of Municipal Borough or of Urban District of *Dedham* Rural District *Parish of Dedham* Parliamentary Borough or Division *Parish of Dedham* Town or Village or Hamlet of *Dedham*

5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Sex	Married	Number of Births registered since 1st Dec 1900	Name and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	Condition as to Marriages	Age last Birthday of	PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION	Employer, Worker, or Own account	If Working at Home	WHERE BORN	(1) Deaf and Dumb (2) Blind (3) Lame (4) Imbecile, feeble-minded	
Male	Female											
			<i>George Minter</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>Pig & Poultry Dealer</i>	<i>General</i>		<i>Essex</i>	<i>West</i>	
			<i>Ellen D.</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>46</i>				<i>D.</i>	<i>West</i>	
			<i>Walter D.</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>W. Shaver</i>	<i>Trucker</i>		<i>D.</i>	<i>West</i>	
			<i>Walter D.</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>14</i>				<i>D.</i>	<i>West</i>	
			<i>Charles D.</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>Walter D. D.</i>	<i>D.</i>		<i>D.</i>	<i>East Ham</i>	
			<i>Walter D.</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>John D.</i>			<i>D.</i>	<i>Searham</i>	
			<i>May D.</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>John D.</i>			<i>D.</i>	<i>D.</i>	
			<i>Charles D.</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>John D.</i>			<i>D.</i>	<i>Dedham</i>	

1901 census entry for the Minter family

George's actions and subsequent appearance in front of Colchester magistrates were ultimately cost him more than half a crown: it proved ruinous for his pretensions to take over the licence of the Anchor and in December it is recorded the license was transferred, instead of to George, to William Bantoft, of Foxhall, on the condition the pub was "better conducted than it had been lately".



report from 17 May 1907 Chelmsford Chronicle detailing George's purchase of farm land

George's last appearance in the local press was on 16th May 1907 when he purchased 3 acres of freehold land by auction at the Marlborough Head public house in Dedham for £100 which he turned his hand to farming on a small scale in addition to his business as a dealer but his life was to be cut short on November 19th, 1910 in Dedham at the age of 54, the victim of heart failure and bronchopneumonia and it is, perhaps, something of an irony that he lived just long enough to see his eldest son set up as a publican in his native village at the Compasses although ultimately it appears to some

extent by the end he had achieved some measure of success in his own fortunes, leaving the sum of £761 17s 4d in his will.

No.	When and where died	Name and surname	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of death	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered
130	<i>Nineteenth November 1910 Dedham</i>	<i>George Henry Minter</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>54 years</i>	<i>General Dealer</i>	<i>Bronchopneumonia. Cardiac failure. Certified by James R. Roberts L.R.C.P.</i>	<i>Ellen Minter Widow of Deceased Present at Death Dedham</i>	<i>Twenty first November 1910</i>

Death certificate of George Henry Minter

It is to the credit of his widow Ellen that the running of his farm and pig and poultry business was passed down to both her and son Charles. Son Charles partially took over his business as a dealer and his father's dealer's horse and cart were bequeathed to him in his will. George's clothes, household furniture were and the running of the family farm were all given to Ellen. The census of the following year shows Ellen living in Long Road, Dedham, enumerated as "farmer and poultry dealer" with Charles as "fowl dealer" where he is still to be found living in the 1930s.

Ellen was to survive her husband by more than three decades, living on into the Second World War. She died aged 88 on 6th January 1943 in Dedham, leaving the administration of her estate to Charles, by now a fruit farm foreman. Married to Minnie May Johnson, Charles was the longest lived of the Minter clan and survived to 1975.

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.

Number of Schedule 130
(To be filled up by the Enumerator after enumeration)

Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink.

The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, as in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables.

NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family	AGE (last Birthday) and SEX	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE						PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Person aged ten years and upwards				BIRTHPLACE of every person	NATIONALITY of every Person born in a Foreign Country	INFIRMITY
			State, for each Married Woman entered on this Schedule, the number of—		Personal Occupation		Industry or Service with which worker is connected		Whether Employer, Worker, or Working on Own Account						
1 Ellen Minter	Wife	58	1	0	0	0	0	1	Publican			Essex	Essex		
2 Albert Minter	Son	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	Farm Labourer			Essex	Essex		
3 Charles Minter	Son	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	Coal Dealer			Essex	Essex		
4 Bertie Minter	Son	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	Farm Labourer			Essex	Essex		
5 May Minter	Daughter	16	0	0	0	0	0	0				Essex	Essex		
6 Fred Minter	Daughter	15	0	0	0	0	0	0				Essex	Essex		
7															
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(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)

I certify that—		Total	
(1) All the ages on this Schedule are entered in the proper sex column.	Males	Females	Persons
(2) I have entered the names and families in Column 3 and 4 separately, and have compared their ages with the total number of persons in the Schedule which appeared to be defective, and have corrected such as appeared to be erroneous.	3	3	6

(To be filled up by, or on behalf of, the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge, of this dwelling.)

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature: Ellen Minter
Postal Address: Long Road, Dedham

1911 Census for Ellen Allen and her unmarried children

CHILDREN OF GEORGE HENRY MINTER AND ELLEN ALLEN

NAME	BORN	OCCUPATION	MARRIED	DIED
George Henry Minter	1 Feb 1878 Feering, Essex	Publican	i Rebecca Steed 9 Oct 1905 Dedham, Essex ii Betty Sutherland Mackie 10 Aug 1940 Greenwich Registry Office, London	1 Dec 1948 The White Swan, 22 The Village Charlton, London Brain Haemorrhage
Albert William Minter	Q4 1879 Feering, Essex	Agricultural Labourer	Unmarried	Q4 1924 Lexden Registration District, Essex
Ellen Selina Minter	1882 Barking, London	Wife of Agricultural Labourer	i Frank Edward Porter 28 June 1900 Dedham, Essex ii Stanley C Pudney Q4 1940 Colchester Registration District, Essex	Q2 1956 Colchester Registration District, Essex
Alice Maud Minter	Q1 1884 Barking, London		Thomas Totman Q1 1905 Lexden Registration District, Essex	26 November 1943 Colchester Registration District, Essex
Charles Herbert Minter	Q1 1889 East Ham, London		Minnie M Johnson Q2 1911 Lexden Registration District, Essex	Q1 1975 Colchester Registration District, Essex
Bertie Allen Minter	Q2 1891 Langham, Essex		Ethel Mary Bird Q4 1915 Tendring Registration District, Essex	Q4 1968 Colchester Registration District
May Ethel Minter	9 May 1894 Langham, Essex		William Frank H Bourne Q2 1912 Colchester Registration District, Essex	Q4 1971 Colchester Registration District, Essex
Grace Lily Minter	Q2 1896 Dedham, Essex		William Went Q4 1916 Colchester Registration District, Essex	Q4 1960 Colchester Registration District, Essex

Will of George Henry Minter, dealer and farmer of Dedham, 1910

executors
This is the last Will of me George Henry Minter of Dedham in the county of Essex Farmer and Dealer I appoint my wife Ellen Minter and my son Charles Herbert Minter Executors and Trustees of this my Will I bequeath to my said wife the sum of twenty pounds for mourning for herself and my unmarried daughters I bequeath to my said son Charles Herbert my horse and dealers cart I also bequeath to my said wife all my wearing apparel furniture and other household effects and also all my farming stock and stock in trade (except the horse and cart bequeathed to my said son) for her own absolute use and benefit and subject to the payment of my debts funeral and testamentary expenses I bequeath the residue of my personal estate unto and equally between all my children living at the time of my decease I devise all my real estate unto and to the use of my said wife during the term of her natural life provided she so long remains my widow and upon her death or marrying again I direct the Trustee or Trustees for the time being of this my Will to sell and dispose of my said real estate by public auction or private contract and I bequeath the net monies arising therefrom together with the rents and other income therefrom until sale unto and equally between all my children then living and the issue of any of them who may then be dead the issue of any deceased child (if more than one) to take equally between them their parents share only In witness whereof I hereunto set my hand this second day of May one thousand nine hundred and ten

Signed by the said George Henry Minter in our presence } G. H. Minter
and by us at the same time in his presence
Henry Mead Mistlej Essex
Margaret Mead Mistlej

Fol 11

A correct copy

On the 8th day of December 1910 Probate of this Will