CHAUNTRY MILLS – EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES

Wellington Whiffing - Finisher

Wellington Whiffing was born in Haverhill on 27th October, 1822 and baptised at St Mary's Church, on 17th November of that same year. His parents, weaver William Whiffing and Mary Jones Whiffing, had been married in Haverhill in 1820.



Wellington's parents and paternal grandparents were all born in Haverhill. Wellington was the eldest of nine children. Home was in Beggars Row (Queen Street).

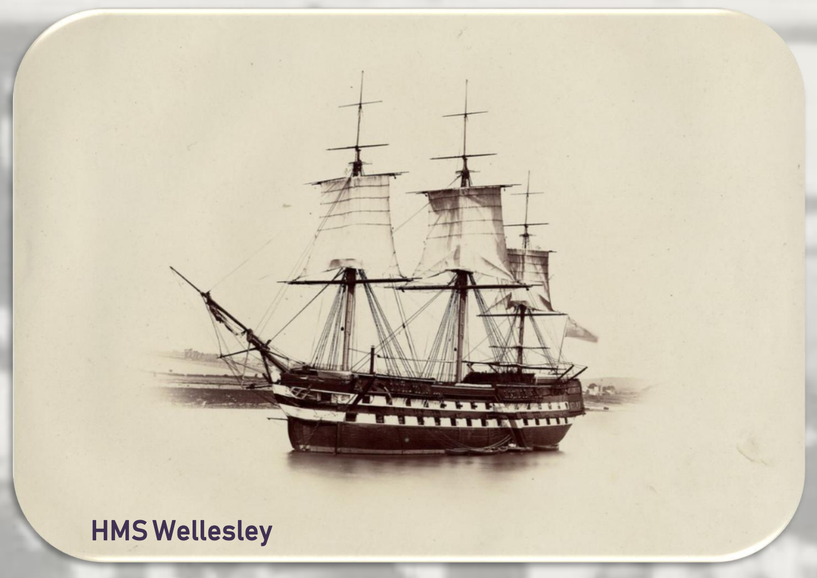
Britain passed the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act in 1807. This law introduced heavy fines for captains of slave ships, determined by the number of slaves transported. The Royal Navy established the West Africa Squadron, whose task was to suppress the Atlantic slave trade by patrolling the coast of West Africa. British pressure on other countries resulted in the abolition of the African slave trade in 1847.

By the age of 25 Wellington had enlisted in the Royal Navy. His Royal Navy Allotment Declaration, dated 1st January 1848, shows he was a Marine, 3rd class private, who requested that his 'allotment' be paid to his mother, and gave her address as 'near the Queen's Head, Haverhill'.



Wellington was posted to HMS Arab, a wooden hulled brig sloop built in 1847. In February 1848 HMS Arab left Chatham bound for Mozambique. The ship was tasked with looking for slave traders and any signs that the slave trade was continuing along the east African coast.

The 1851 census shows Wellington at the Royal Marine Barracks in Chatham where HMS Arab was undergoing repairs. Serving alongside him is Henry Webb also from Haverhill.
He also served on HMS Wellesley in 1961 this ship was moored in Chatham.

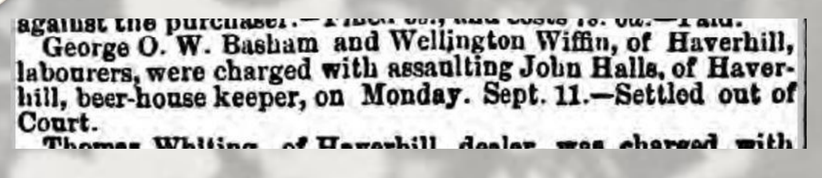

HMS Wellesley

After serving as a Marine, Wellington returned to Haverhill, finding employment at Chauntry Mills as a presser. On 10th April 1869, aged 47, he married Emma Bradford Sparks who was 20 years his junior at St Mary's Church.



1888 An eye witness account: 'After leaving the loom the material goes through various dressing processes; it is rolled between cylinders, it is tackled by revolving knives, it is plucked and pressed and heated and cooled and dyed and dried and measured off in a cleverly constructed machine which folds it in yards or any other required measure.'

On 3rd October, 1871, The Bury and Norwich Post reported that Wellington Whiffin, together with George O W Basham, both labourers, were charged with assaulting John Halls, a Haverhill beer house keeper on Monday 11 September 1871. The matter was settled out of court.


against the purchaser.—Paid.
George O. W. Basham and Wellington Wiffin, of Haverhill, labourers, were charged with assaulting John Halls, of Haverhill, beer-house keeper, on Monday. Sept. 11.—Settled out of Court.
Thomas Whiting, of Haverhill, dealer, was charged with

In 1871 Wellington and Emma were living in Chauntry Croft, with their son Albert (4 months) and Emma's daughters, Eliza Sparks (10) and Sarah Sparks (7). The family suffered a big loss when young Albert died. He was buried in Haverhill Cemetery on 11th February 1872. Wellington's occupation is shown as 'clothier presser'.

By 1881 there were three additions to the family (Susannah, Arthur and another son named Albert). They were now living in Croft Row. William, now a cutter and presser, and Emma were still working at the Mills as was Emma's daughter Sarah who was employed as a trousers machinist like her mother.

1888 An eye witness account: 'Various devices are adopted to give the peculiar Haverhill finish to the drabbet; in one machine, a huge box with a thick stone floor, passes backwards and forwards over the material, pressing it with an estimated weight of about 60 tons. In another machine of expensive construction and beautiful finish, the pressure is given by rollers.'

Wellington died in 1887 and was buried in Haverhill Cemetery on 10th September.

Wellington's brother John was the innkeeper at the Rising Sun, Little Wratting on the 1901 and 1911 census.

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