

The Murrells of Wivenhoe – a family of Master Mariners.

Researching my family history has given me interesting insight into my forebears, their story and place in social history. Whilst members of the Murrell(s) family can be found in the vicinity of Wivenhoe much earlier I can trace a direct lineage from William Murrells (1730 – 1793), the spelling of the name changed with the dropping of the 's' at the end during 1830's and Frederick Murrell.

William Murrells (1730–1793) married Mary Copper in St Andrew's, Fingringhoe on 29th August 1758 and there are records of 2 children, William (1759–1760) & Mary who died in 1768. There are 2 Mary Murrells recorded in St Andrew's register as being buried in 1768 and the assumption is that both mother and daughter died in childbirth. William remarried on 27th May 1774 to Mary Goslin in St Ann & St Lawrence, Elmstead and they are recorded as having 7 children; William (1775–1810), Thomas (1775-?), Ambris (1779-1781), Mary (1781-?), Ambrose (1784-1793), Benjamin Gosling (b1787) and John (1791-1853). All were baptised in St Andrew's Fingringhoe. William died aged 63 and was buried in St Andrew's on 17th October 1793.

William Murrells (1775-1810) born on 13th March 1775 in Fingringhoe, William married Mary Appleby (1774-?) on the 15th November 1802 in St Mary's Wivenhoe, they are recorded as having 2 children, William (1805-1881) and Maria Sarah (1810-1866) Sarah married William Simmons on 26th October 1832 in St Mary's. Aged 35, William died on in April 1810 and was buried in St Mary's, Wivenhoe on 27th April. Mary died in October 1842 and is buried in St Mary's Wivenhoe.

There are records in the Colchester Shipping Registers (Custom House Registers) of *William* as Master of the *Industry* a 22 ton tuck stern smack from 30th December 1807 and then the *Ino*, a 94 ton tuck stern smack from 6th May 1809.

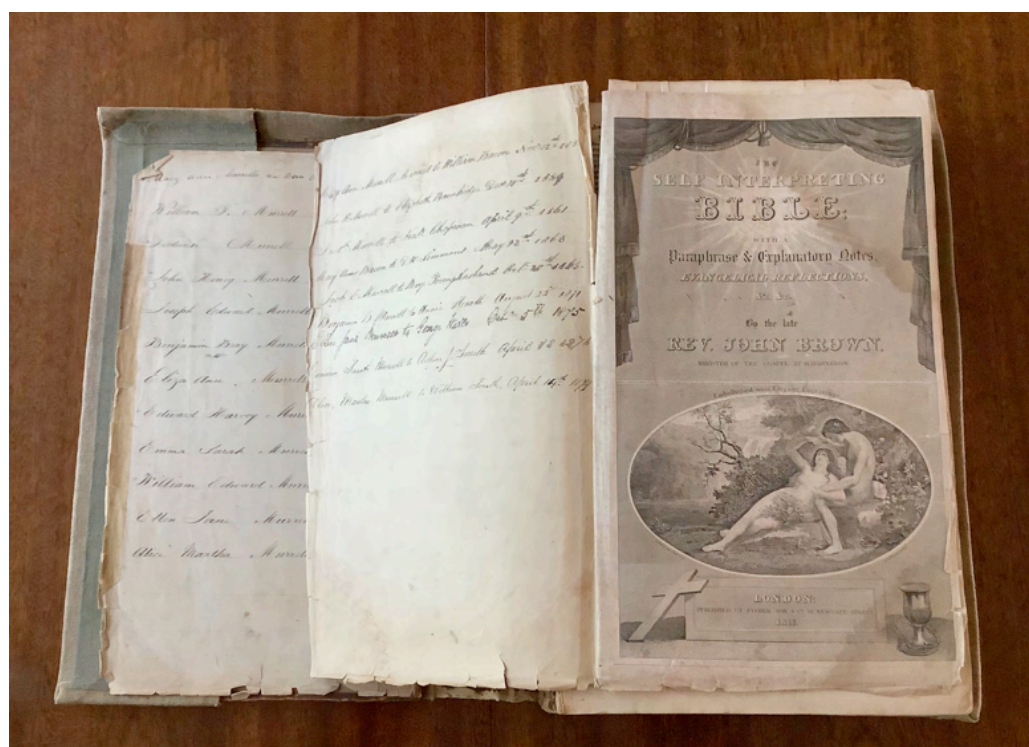
John Murrells (1791-1853) was married 3 times, Elizabeth Waters, Sarah Last and Peggy Laver Cant. The first marriage took place in Berechurch and the latter 2 in St Mary the Virgin, Wivenhoe. Records show John having 3 children by Elizabeth; Louisa (b1815), Matilda (b 1817) and Benjamin (b 1819), both the latter were baptised in the Baptist Church in Wivenhoe. Peggy's first husband Edward Cant had been a victualler and part owner in the sailing barge *William & Charlotte* in 1826.

John's early career was as a cordwainer in partnership with George Chamberlain, they are recorded in the Colchester Shipping Registers from 1827 as jointly owning the *Nancy*. In 1830 he bought the sailing barge '*John*' splitting the ownership

between him retaining 22 shares with George Chamberlain and Isaac Appleby; Isaac is described as a gardener from Boxted, each buying 21 shares; John sold his shareholding in 1840. He is then variously described as a ship owner, innkeeper and victualler with interests in the *William & Charlotte* and ships *Susan*, *Linnet* and *Effort*. The 1841 census has John recorded as an Inn Keeper on Hythe Street, Colchester (his brother Thomas and the 2 children appear living with them) and in the 1851 census as a retired victualler still living at Hythe Street. The Colchester Shipping Records show that he was a bankrupt in March 1851 with the assets of the *William & Charlotte* being sold to cover his debts. John died on the 7th November 1853 & Peggy died on the 27th March 1868, they are buried in St Leonards, Colchester.

William Murrells (1805-1881) born on 21st October 1805 in Wivenhoe, William married Eliza Harvey on 7th July 1830 in St Osyth and they had 12 children all born in Wivenhoe; Mary Ann (1830-1914), Frederick (1834-1909), John Henry (1837-1893), Joseph Edward (1838-1919) Benjamin Bray (1840-1920), Eliza Ann (1843-1868), Edward Harvey (1844-1845), William Edward (1848-1864), Emma Sarah (1849-1922), Ellen Jane (1850-1941) and Alice Martha (1854-1925).

William and Eliza recorded the births and deaths of her children in their family Bible, a Browns Self Interpreting Bible of 1826 that may well have been a wedding present, the recording was then continued by Frederick and Catherine Murrell through to the wedding of Wilfred Murrell and Mona Nicholls in 1918 and the Bible is still held in the family. The 's' of Murrells appears to have been dropped between the 1830 and 1834, the family Bible shows Mary Ann as 'Murrells' but the remainder of the family are shown as 'Murrell'.



The Murrell family Bible – detailed images are shown in a later chapter

William went to sea as a Lad on the *Joseph of Colchester* from March 1819 to November 1821. He then sailed on the *Ann of Colchester* as an Apprentice and Seaman from December 1821 to July 1828, transferring to the *Prince Regent of Colchester* as a Seaman from August 1828 to September 1830. He then sailed as Master on the *John of Colchester* a ship part owned by his brother John before purchasing the *Effort of Colchester* in 1835. He was Master of and half owner of the *Effort* with his uncle Isaac Appleby and sold his share to Isaac's son Charles in 1844. The *Ocean Queen of Colchester* was his next ship, which again he was a part owner and Master. After 32 years at sea he gained his Masters Certificate (CN43819) on 20th December 1850 having been the Master of the *Fanny of Colchester*, *Vedra of Colchester* and the *United of Colchester* between 1848 and 1876. Like most of his sea career these latter ships were involved in the Coastal and Baltic trade and are shown in Lloyds Register as being owned by Penny & Co, James Penny lived next door to William on The Quay in Wivenhoe and both of them are listed in Kelly's Directory as being ship owners, presumably William & James were in partnership on the *Vedra*, *Fanny* and *United*.

The 1841 census shows that William & Eliza were living on West Street, Wivenhoe and by 1851 they had moved to Bath Street, 1861 to High Street and by 1871 to The Quay. Its worth noting that in 1871 recorded as being on either side of the Murrell family on The Quay are George and Mary Ann Harvey (Coal & Oyster Merchant) and James & Elizabeth Penny (Ship owner). By 1881 they had moved to Park Street. Eliza died on the 5th August 1881 and William on the 31st December 1881. They are buried in St Mary's Wivenhoe under the same headstone as Eliza's Mother Sarah Last Harvey who had died on 19th Oct 1874.



The headstone in St Mary's Wivenhoe