

The English Midlands to Auckland, New Zealand

The Prices of Herefordshire

A rural family from Whyle in Pudleston Parish



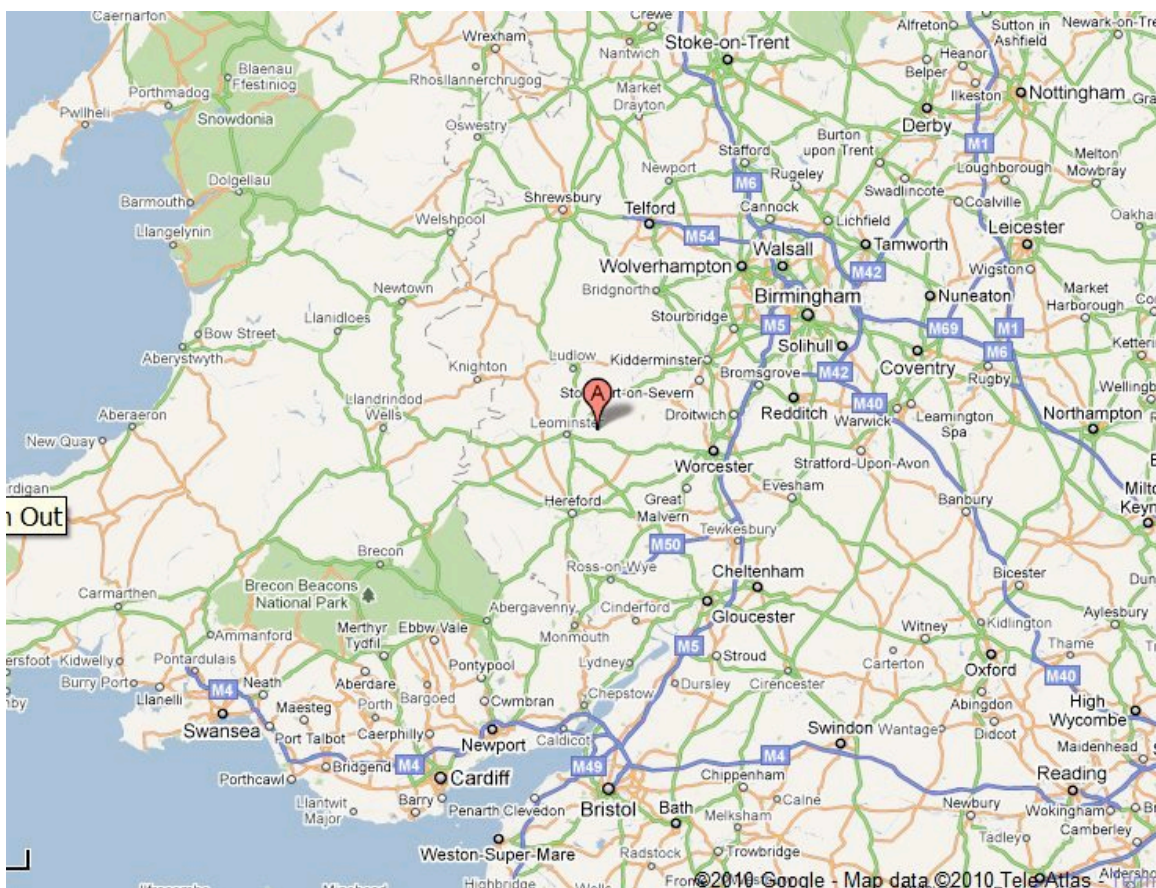
Rolling Herefordshire Countryside close to the Welsh border

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The Prices of Herefordshire

This is the family of my great, great grandmother **Susan** or **Susannah Price**, who married **Robert Adlington** and emigrated to Auckland, New Zealand, with their children in 1867. For generations they appear to have been agricultural labourers in the Pudleston–Whyle region of Herefordshire, a west Midlands county close to the Welsh borders.

Pudleston is in northern Herefordshire almost on the Worcestershire border about 6kms east of Leominster, north of the Worcester road and midway between Leominster and Worcester. Whyle is about 2kms north of Pudleston. Both today are still tiny hamlets in the middle of agricultural farmland. The red mark on the map below locates Pudleston. Both Pudleston and Whyle are part of the Pudleston parish that also includes Brockmanton.



Western England, Herefordshire and Wales

For such a tiny place there are a surprisingly large number of old records for the village:

From The National Gazetteer (1868) edited:

The village, which is of small extent, is situated on the N. of the turnpike road from Leominster to Worcester. The inhabitants are chiefly engaged in agricultural pursuits. Hops are grown in the parish. The soil consists of clay and loam.

The church, dedicated to St. Peter, (earliest register 1560) has a tower containing four bells. The church has been thoroughly restored and enlarged. The parish includes the townships of Whyle and

Brockmanton. The living is a rectory with Whyle, in the diocese of Hereford, value £276. There is a National school for both sexes.

Littlebury's Directory and Gazetteer of Herefordshire, 1876-7 also gives an account of this part of the county, edited:

PUDLESTON, otherwise PUDDLESTONE, is a parish situated on the borders of Worcestershire, about 2 miles N. of the Leominster and Bromyard road, and distant 6 miles E. of Leominster, 6 S. of Tenbury, 8 W.N.W. of Bromyard, and 15 N.N.E. of Hereford; is in Wolpby hundred, Leominster union, petty sessional division, and county court district, and Docklow polling district.

Population

1861 - 349, 1871 - 292

Inhabited houses 72;

Families or separate occupiers 87;

Harry Chadwick: lord of the manor and principal landowner.

Other landholders: Septimus Holmes Godson and Mrs. Pateshall.

The soil is clay and loam, producing wheat, hops, beans, &c

Whyle is a township distant about 1 mile N. W. from Pudleston. In an orchard near Mr. Yapp's house is the site of a church, which at some remote period stood here. A bell from this church is now in the belfry of Pudleston church.



Leominster, Brierley, Pudleston and Whyle, Herefordshire

My great great grandmother Susan was born in Pudleston parish early in 1829. Her parents were **John Price**, a farm labourer and parish clerk and **Ann Oliver**, both born late in the 18th century who married in December 1824 in Pudleston parish church of St Peter. They had a large number of children between 1825 and 1841, many of whom may not have survived infancy.

The first records for a number of Price families in Pudleston are in the 1841 census when they lived in Whyle. A **James Price** and his wife **Elizabeth**, at the time close to 60, born in two neighbouring small villages in Worcestershire, Stanford on Teme and Thornbury, very close to Pudleston, with their unmarried son **James**, then 36, were recorded as agricultural labourers. James and Elizabeth were Susan's grandparents. They had been married in Pudleston in May 1801 and may have been related, as it appears Elizabeth's maiden name was also Price.



Pudleston cum Whyle parish church of St Peter and its old churchyard

Next door to them lived their eldest son, our John, with his wife Ann both about 40, and their seven children, one of whom was **Susan**, aged 12. Their eldest child **Martha**, 16, was a servant for Edward Miles, the local blacksmith in Whyle.

Another son of James and Elizabeth, **Joseph**, also lived in Pudleston with his wife Mary and son John then aged 7. Joseph and Mary were about 30. They appear to have worked on a farm called Gobbet(t) which occurs in all census records for several decades.

So in 1841, we have a Price family of parents James and Elizabeth, both born about 1780 and at least three sons, born between about 1802 and 1811, the eldest of whom, **John**, is our line, all living in farming villages around Pudleston, all of them agricultural labourers. There may have been a fourth son, **Edward**, born in about 1814, but I can't find anything more about him, and possibly also at least one sister, **Elizabeth**, who may not have married.

Ten years later at the time of the 1851 census nothing much had changed for the Prices. There are still several families in Pudleston parish, though obviously some of the children had grown up and married.

Susan's grandparents, James and Elizabeth, and her parents John and Ann were living exactly where they had 10 years before, maybe in tied cottages on the farms where they worked. Susan herself, now 21, was working as a kitchen maid just south of Leominster at Broadward Farm in Brierley for a widowed Mary Edwards. James and Elizabeth died before 1861, James probably in 1857. A tiny hamlet even in 1851, there were only about 10 houses and 40 people living in Broadward and Brierley, which consisted of one large farm – Broadwood – and two smaller ones..



Brierley farmhouse today: hedgerows along the lanes edging very large arable fields are all that now exists of Brierley hamlet, hops are still grown and sheep grazed

From following censuses it would appear that Susan's surviving older sister Martha married, but her two brothers Jonathan and Joseph and her sister Margaret did not. There are continuous records for them in the Puddlestone-Whyte-Leominster area through to at least the end of the century. Margaret had died in 1861 but both her brothers survived into the 20th century having scarcely moved from where they had been born. By 1901 both were residents of the Priory Poorhouse in Leominster. Our Puddlestone Price direct male line dies out with them.

The only certain marriage for any of Susan's sisters that can be confirmed is for **Ann** born about 1830 who married **Thomas Merrick** in 1851 in Puddlestone. He was a gamekeeper in Ribbesford, Worcestershire, north-west of Puddlestone near Kidderminster, but essentially in the same area as the rest of the family. They had at least five children between 1852 and 1860.

But in 1861 John also had their 11-year old grandson, William Mayhew, born in Birmingham and aged 11, living with them at Bell Stone Cottage. He must be the son of one of their daughters, but no Price/Mayhew marriage can be located, nor is there any birth registered in Warwickshire in or around 1850 for a William Mayhew.

John and Ann died before the 1881 census was taken. The last record for John is in the mid-1870s when he is recorded as still being the parish clerk and sexton for St Peter's church in Puddlestone, a position he had held since the 1850s. He and Ann lived at 1 Bell Lane Cottage, Upper Whyte, probably their home all their married lives. Also in Bell Lane lived John's younger brother Joseph, his wife and one remaining child and his son John, aged 27, with his family. John had stepped up and was a skilled tradesman – a carpenter and builder.

Today on Bell Lane, a short little street between two other lanes there is only a farmhouse where in 1861 and 1871 there would have been a number of cottages.



Aerial view of Whyle with about three farm-holdings. Bell Lane is the green tree-lined path between the two larger lanes, Whyle Lane the larger main road to the south

The Pudleston picture is of tight-knit family and community farming units with the same surnames re-occurring in extant records over decades, a stable local society that had seen little change for some centuries, barely affected by late 18th to mid-19th century agricultural and industrial upheaval. There are the farmers, large numbers of agricultural labourers, small tradesmen like blacksmiths, wheelwrights, masons, shoemakers, millers, the shopkeeper and tailor, the parson and the teacher; a small number of landed squires, the occasional lawyer.

However by the 1890s everything changes and you find the old families gone and new ones occupying the farms and villages. Some of the farmers moved east into Worcestershire, others disappeared having either left the land absolutely or emigrated.

Today rural Pudleston consists of only about four large farms and a small number of houses, no shops, no school and a church that has only occasional services. A typical example of farm consolidation and rural depopulation totally different from a snapshot of Pudleston parish from the 1851 census, when the community was still relatively stable, that shows that there were about 80 houses in the parish, including 66 in Pudleston and Brockmanton. The majority of the inhabitants were farm labourers and there were some six farms of various acreages, listed. The village also had the local school house, church and vicarage.

In Whyle at the top of the triangle that made up the three villages in the parish were another 16 dwellings and Whyle House, the only landed family holding in the village. There were two others in Pudleston, William Parsons at Pudleston Lodge and Elias Chadwick at Pudleston Court and farm, where the farmer was William Price born 1806 in Eye, who might be a relative.

And the Prices, apart from farmer William at Pudleston Court, were all farm labourers: in Whyle, Susan's parents, Pudleston-born John aged 49 and Ann aged 52, another John aged 30, Reuben labourer in Goldwell Field, Susan's grandparents, James Price, 76, born Stanford, Worcestershire and his wife Elizabeth, and with them a 28 year old visitor, another Elizabeth who had been born in Pudleston.

Brierley, where Susan was employed as a kitchen maid in 1851, is today another tidy little Herefordshire rural village with solid brick farmhouses and outbuildings some still dating back to the 19th century.

In October 1856 Susan married **Robert Adlington** in Fulford, which is just south of York, and a long way from Leominster. The question remains how she went from working as a

kitchen maid near Leominster to marrying a preacher from Lincolnshire in Yorkshire! And it is unlikely to be resolved, though has to be associated in some way with the spread of Methodism in the Midlands, mid-century. Susan was six or seven years older than Robert and may already have been pregnant with their first child **Sarah Ann**, born in Bassingham, Lincolnshire in May 1857, at the time of their marriage. Susan was my great great grandmother, her daughter Sarah Ann my great grandmother.

(Basic birth and marriage records come from the Adlington bible in my possession.)

The story continues in the Adlington and Marriott papers.



Two views of Whyle House farmhouse, sheep farmers and lamb producers of some renown. This farm is at the corner of Whyle and Bell Lanes, close to where the Prices lived in the 1850s and 1860s





Susan about 1914 in Auckland