

Who was Josiah Lamball? following the signs - or The Great Untangling

Before we get to Josiah, let's begin at the beginning. Ann Lamball was my 3x great-grandmother twice over. She became part of my ancestry when she married 3x great grandfather, James Seear, as his second wife. The marriage took place at St. Olave Old Jewry in London on 30th January 1813 'with consent of parents'.ⁱ James was born in 1788ⁱⁱ so this implies that Ann was under twenty-one at the time and that at least one of her parents was still alive. She may also have been newly pregnant.ⁱⁱⁱ James and Ann went on to produce nine children including my great great grandfather Frederick Seear and my great great grandmother Eliza Seer (it is probably best not to enquire too closely).^{iv}



St. Olave Old Jewry
Mark C Grant via
Wikimedia Commons

Ann, bless her, was beautifully consistent when giving information about herself but was not necessarily accurate. The 1851 and 1861 censuses agree that she was born in Bampton, Oxfordshire.^v The 1841 census^{vi} also gives a precise age, rather than the usual rounded down age, for Ann. Taken together, her age in the censuses and on her death certificate suggests a date of birth between July 1789 and April 1790.^{vii} If however she was indeed under twenty-one when she married, she would have been born after 30th January 1792.^{viii}

The only baptism of an Ann Lamball (and variants) with ten miles of Bampton between 1786 and 1796 is on the 27th of August 1791 in Bampton itself. Although the printed register has a space for date of birth, this is not filled in.^{ix} There is no way of knowing if Ann was an infant or toddler at the time but this was more than

five years after the baptism of her next oldest older sibling and only sixteen months before the baptism of the next and youngest child,^x so the baptisms were not evenly spaced, suggesting that Ann was possibly slightly older than a newborn. In either case, she would not have been under twenty-one in January 1813, so it is not clear why the marriage record stated 'with consent of parents'.

Ann therefore was the fourth of five children of Josiah and Mary Lamball née Godfrey who married in Milton, Berkshire on the 26th of October 1778.^{xi} Am I confident that this is the right parents and that their daughter was my ancestor? Yes I am. Ann went on to witness the marriages of her brother John^{xii} and sister Mary^{xiii} and the signature is consistent with that on her own marriage entry.^{xiv}



St. Mary the Virgin, Bampton



St. Blaise, Milton

Ann's mother, Mary, was buried in Milton in 1795^{xv} but what of Josiah? Between 1807 and 1813, three of Josiah and Mary's children married within three miles of each other in London,^{xvi} suggesting that they may have moved there as a family after their mother died. Josiah Lamball, unusual name, easy you'd think, can't be many of them about; how wrong you are. Let's take the name. You'd expect it to end up with variations such as Lambale, Lambell or Lamboll and with one or two Ls at the end. Transcribers sometimes can't read an upper case L, so the initial letter becomes indexed as S or T, or even I or J. Really, you are only safe to use *mb*I*. Or are you? What about when Lamball becomes Lambert or Lambeth, either in the original or in transcription?^{xvii} You are not even secure with Josiah, which ends up as Josias or Joshua, or even occasionally Joseph or James.

All these Josiahs have an annoying habit of marrying women called Mary or Sarah. They also live close to the Oxfordshire and Berkshire borders, so their vital events nip back and forth between counties; of course they do, what more would you expect? Hardly surprising then, that almost every online family tree has confused what are almost certainly seven^{xviii} different Josiah Lambells who pepper the records in this area and are born between 1692 and 1792. If you descend from a Josiah Lambell, ignore the works of fiction that you find on online trees (that is general advice that applies to any family of course but particularly in this case where the whole world and his wife has, I believe, got it wrong). The saving grace is that some members of the family do leave wills, which helps with the untangling. I could do with a few more wills to be honest, oh and family members bothering to baptise their children and maybe getting married in a place where records survive would be useful but why make it easy?

So who is 'my' Josiah? The records are not very forthcoming. When he married in 1778^{xix} he was of Black Bourton in Oxfordshire and his first two children were baptised there before he moved to Bampton.^{xx} He was

presumably still in Bampton when his wife died 'of Bampton' in 1795.^{xxi} Their marriage had been by licence but associated documents do not survive. The marriage record does not specify marital status but Josiah does have a distinctive signature, which could potentially be useful.^{xxii}



St. Mary's, Black Bourton

Bampton at this time. Was a prosperous market town, with an agricultural hinterland and a thriving leather industry. The Lamballs and their neighbours would have gathered at the weekly Wednesday market and probably enjoyed the annual two-day horse fair at the end of August, which would have attracted people from a wider area. The turnpike road, constructed in 1771 made travel to places like Witney and Clanfield much easier and by the 1790s, the markets in Oxford and London markets were more accessible.

It is highly likely that 'my' Josiah was in London by 1807 when his son, John, married.^{xxiii} He was presumably alive and able to give consent when Ann married in London in 1813.^{xxiv} Great you'd think, he will be buried late enough for his age to appear in the burial registers but which burial registers?

So who are the seven^{xxv} Josiah Lamball's that I have unearthed? Let's start with the most recent:-

1. Josiah (1) was baptised in 1792 in Bampton, Oxfordshire,^{xxvi} the son of 'my' Josiah Lamball (3) and Mary née Godfrey. There are no more firm sightings of this Josiah (1). Three of his siblings can be

found in London. There is a burial of a Josh Lambale in St. Anne's Soho in 1832 but he was allegedly born in 1799;^{xxvii} this nonetheless remains a possibility.

2. Josiah Lambald (2) born c.1760/1,^{xxviii} was paying rates in Portsea, Hampshire in 1800 and 1801 as Lamball^{xxix} and was buried in Portsea, of the poor house, in 1818.^{xxx} There is a Sarah Lambald also buried in Portsea, of the poor house, in 1819, born c.1783/4^{xxxi} who would be a close fit for Sarah daughter of Josiah (3) but this would make Josiah (3) seventeen or eighteen on marriage; not impossible but unlikely.^{xxxii} Although, of course, the age at burial could be inaccurate. There is also a Josiah Elias (or possibly a Josiah Chas.) buried in Portsea in 1802,^{xxxiii} could this be Josiah (1)? I can find no past for Josiah (2), unless he is Josiah (3).
3. Josiah (3) was 'of Black Bourton', Berkshire when he married Mary Gregory in Milton, Berkshire in 1778.^{xxxiv} He was definitely alive in 1795, when Mary died as 'wife of...'.^{xxxv} He was probably alive in 1813.^{xxxvi} He is definitely the father of Josiah (1) and is possibly Josiah (2).
4. Josiah (4) was baptised 11 February 1738/9, in Milton, Berkshire, the son of Josiah (5) and Sarah Lamball née Looker.^{xxxvii} He is commonly confused with Josiah (3). He married Mary Bradfield 14 November 1765 in Milton^{xxxviii} and was buried there in 1781.^{xxxix} His wife was buried in 1787^{xl} and can be distinguished from Mary née Gregory as Mary née Bradfield left a will, in which she leaves her estate to her sister Anne Bradfield.^{xli} There is no evidence to suggest that Josiah (4) had any children. Josiah (4) is mentioned in the will of his great-uncle John.^{xlii}
5. Josiah (5) was baptised 7 December 1713, in Shipton under Wyckwood, Oxfordshire, the son of Josiah (7) and Mary née Johnson.^{xliii} He first married Sarah Looker in Milton 1 May 1737^{xliv} and they had four children including Josiah (4).^{xlv} Sarah died in 1769^{xlvi} and Josiah (5) married his second wife, Sarah Rose, 25

March 1780 in Besselsleigh, Berkshire.^{xlvii} Josiah (5) was of Grove in Milton and he left a will mentioning his second wife, his daughter Sarah and her children (his other children pre-deceased him), his sister Anna Maria, brother Thomas, uncle Benjamin, an 'Aunt Lamball' and grandson John Dew. He does name his father as Joseph but it is clear that his father was normally called Josiah (7).^{xlviii} In turn, Josiah (5) is mentioned in the wills of his father, Josiah (7) and his uncle John and is administrator to the will of his son Josiah (4).^{xlix}

6. Josiah (6) was baptised 1712 in Bampton, Oxfordshire, the son of James and Mary née Irving.ⁱ There are no further sightings of this Josiah. It is likely that he and Josiah (5) were 3rd cousins, both descendants of Nicholas and Sarah Lamball née Knipe of Wantage. Given that Josiah (3) was having children in 1792 and was almost certainly alive in 1813, I don't believe this is Josiah (3), although it could be his father or, less likely, his grandfather.
7. Josiah (7) was baptised 29 January 1681/2 in Wantage, Berkshire, the son of John and Mary Lamball née Varney.ⁱⁱ He was a yeoman of Grove in Wantage, which he leaves to his son Josiah (5) along with property in Witney and Sutton Courtney. His will also mentions, his sons Hezekiah and Thomas, who were left property in Witney and his wife Ann was also provided for. Land in the manor of Charlbury, Oxfordshire was bequeathed to his daughter Jane Baylis. The children of his son Thomas but not children of Hezekiah,ⁱⁱⁱ even though Hezekiah definitely had some at this point.^{liii}
8. There is also a Josiah Lambeth, let's make him Josiah (8), since he was discovered after I'd numbered them all neatly in reverse chronological order. Josiah (8) was baptised in 1792 in Oddington, Gloucestershire in 1792, aged 22, so born c.1771, son of Ambrose and Catherine.^{liv} He is the nephew of Josiah (6) and probably moved to South London.^{lv}

Josiah's 4/5/7 have a complete story (baptism, marriage and burial)
Josiah 1 is Josiah 3's son, Josiah's 2 & 3 could be the same person.
Josiah's 6 and 8 are connected. It seems very likely that all the Josiahs descend from Nicholas and Sarah Lamball née Knipe of Wantage but it does not resolve exactly how 'my' Josiah, Josiah (3), fits in or where and when he died.

Unfortunately we don't have a definite baptism for his wife either but she was probably baptised in the 1750s. It is likely that Josiah (3) was born between 1730 and 1760. In the absence of a baptism, who were potential fathers? The family of Josiahs 4/5/7, needs to be looked at and Josiah 6 is certainly a person of interest.

Potential fathers of Josiah (3)

1. Josiah (6) baptised in 1712 in Bampton.^{lvi} There are no further sightings of this Josiah. There is a Bampton connection. It is unlikely that Josiah (6) went on to become 'my' Josiah (3) himself as he would have been in his sixties on marriage, which is unlikely but possible however he would not have been able to give consent to Ann's marriage in 1813. He could be the father or grandfather of Josiah (3).
2. Benjamin, the brother of Josiah (7) and son of John and Mary née Varney would probably have been born about 1698. He is not mentioned in will of his grandmother in 1709, whereas her other grandchildren are.^{lvii} He is mentioned in the will of his father in 1740^{lviii} but not in the will of his brother John in 1754.^{lix} He is referred to rather strangely in will of Josiah (5) who mentions land in Charlton 'given by my grandfather to his son Benjamin'. Apart from references in wills, Benjamin cannot be found in any other document. Is he actually Benjamin Varney, son of Thomas, baptised in 1703 in Stanford in the Vale, Berkshire,^{lx} who is mentioned as Varney in will of his grandmother Joan Varney in 1709?^{lxi} If so, his

father, Thomas, died in 1708/9.^{lxii} Was Benjamin Varney brought up by his aunt Mary and her husband John Lambell? This would explain the rather odd wording in Josiah (5)'s will. He died as Varney in 1737.^{lxiii}

3. Hezekiah Lambell aka Lambert, son of Josiah (7), of Leafield, Shipton under Wychwood c.1715-1789. He is known to have had children, as he refused to give consent for the marriage of his daughter Hannah.^{lxiv} It is likely that he had five other daughters but there are no baptism records for any of them. Although baptised and buried in Shipton under Wychwood,^{lxv} in the 1750s, along with a Thomas Lamball, who was almost certainly his brother, Hezekiah appears in the manorial court rolls for West Challow, twenty seven miles away.^{lxvi} It is odd that Hezekiah's children are the only grandchildren not mentioned in John's will.^{lxvii} Interestingly, The Vale of the White Horse, of which this area is part, had a strong Quaker presence, including in Chellow. Some members of the Lamball family were leaders in the Quaker community. Although they cannot be linked to any of the Josiah Lamballs, it does perhaps provide a possible reason for the lack of baptism records.
4. John Lamball baptised 1730 in Wantage, son of Thomas. He is mentioned in wills of both his grandfather John in 1739 and uncle John in 1754.^{lxviii} It seems likely that he married in 1760 in Wantage.^{lxix} Only one daughter is baptised there.^{lxx} There's a probable burial for John in Wantage in 1781.^{lxxi}
5. The unbaptised, illegitimate son of a female Lamball.
6. Someone else entirely.



**St. Mary's, Shipton
under Wychwood**

I would lean towards the first of these options, however Josiah (6) had two brothers and four half-brothers, one of whom, Ambrose, fathered Josiah (8). Even if we ignore Ambrose and a Thomas who died young, that leaves four more brothers as potential ancestors. The two full brothers, in particular, have no discernable future.

Where does it leave my Lamball ancestry? In the absence of further documentation, back where I started. My 3x great grandfather is Josiah Lamball, who lived in Black Bourton and Bampton, is of uncertain ancestry and is buried who knows where, possibly Portsea. I am not giving up. One day I will find the record that will complete my untangling.

ⁱ Marriage registers of St. Olave Old Jewry, Middlesex, held at London Archives, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.

ⁱⁱ Baptism registers of St. Mary's, Stoke Newington, Middlesex, held at London Archives.

ⁱⁱⁱ Their eldest child was born eight months after the wedding.

^{iv} Family Bible in the possession of the late David Seear. Baptism registers of St. Mary's Stoke Newington. Middlesex, St. John's, Hackney, Middlesex and St. James' West Hackney, Middlesex, all held at London Archives.

^v 1851 census for 9 Buckingham Road, West Hackney, Middlesex HO107 1504 folio 286. 1861 census for 3 Buckingham Road, West Hackney, Middlesex RG9 155 folio 164.

^{vi} 1841 census for 5 Prospect Place, Kingsland Road, Hackney, Middlesex HO107 700/7 folio 45.

^{vii} 1851 census for 9 Buckingham Road, West Hackney, Middlesex HO107 1504 folio 286. 1861 census for 3 Buckingham Road, West Hackney, Middlesex RG9 155 folio 164. The death certificate of Ann Seear, 1867 from the General Registrar.

^{viii} Marriage registers of St. Olave Old Jewry, Middlesex, held at London Archives, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.

^{ix} Baptism registers of St. Mary the Virgin, Bampton, Oxfordshire, held at Oxfordshire History Centre, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.

^x Baptism registers of St. Mary's Black Bourton, Oxfordshire, held at Oxfordshire History Centre, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk. Baptism registers of St. Mary the Virgin, Bampton, Oxfordshire, held at Oxfordshire History Centre, accessed via www.ancestry.com.

^{xi} Marriage registers of St. Blaise, Milton, Berkshire, held at The Royal Berkshire Archives.

^{xii} Marriage registers of St. Bride's Fleet Street, Middlesex, held at London Archives, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.

^{xiii} Marriage registers of St. James' Picadilly, Middlesex, held at London Archives, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.

^{xiv} Marriage registers of St. Olave Old Jewry, Middlesex, held at London Archives, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.

^{xv} Burial registers of St. Mary the Virgin, Bampton, Oxfordshire, held at Oxfordshire History Centre, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.

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- xvi Marriage registers of St. Bride's Fleet Street, Middlesex, held at London Archives, accessed via www.ancestry.com. Marriage registers of St. James' Picadilly, Middlesex, held at London Archives, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk. Marriage registers of St. Olave Old Jewry, Middlesex, held at London Archives, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.
- xvii For example, Ann's baptism appeared as Lambeth in the indexes on FindmyPast but is clearly Lambell in the original baptism registers of St. Mary the Virgin, Bampton, Oxfordshire, held at Oxfordshire History Centre, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.
- xviii In fact there were eight Josiah's, as we will see.
- xix Marriage registers of St. Blaise, Milton, Berkshire, held at The Royal Berkshire Archives.
- xx Baptism registers of St. Mary's Black Bourton, Oxfordshire, held at Oxfordshire History Centre, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk. Baptism registers of St. Mary the Virgin, Bampton, Oxfordshire, held at Oxfordshire History Centre, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.
- xxi Burial registers of St. Mary the Virgin, Bampton, Oxfordshire, held at Oxfordshire History Centre, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.
- xxii Marriage registers of St. Blaise, Milton, Berkshire, held at The Royal Berkshire Archives.
- xxiii Marriage registers of St. Bride's Fleet Street, Middlesex, held at London Archives, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.
- xxiv Marriage registers of St. Olave Old Jewry, Middlesex, held at London Archives, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.
- xxv There is an eight Josiah to come and there are other, later, Josiahs, who we need not concern ourselves with here.
- xxvi Baptism registers of St. Mary the Virgin, Bampton, Oxfordshire, held at Oxfordshire History Centre, accessed via www.ancestry.com.
- xxvii Index to the burials at St. Anne's, Soho. Middlesex, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.
- xxviii Burial registers for St. Mary's, Portsea Hampshire, held at Portsmouth History Centre, accessed via www.findmypast.co.uk.
- xxix Portsea ratebooks, held at Portsmouth History Centre, accessed via www.findmypast.co.uk.
- xxx Burial registers for St. Mary's, Portsea Hampshire, held at Portsmouth History Centre, accessed via www.findmypast.co.uk.
- xxxi Burial registers for St. Mary's, Portsea Hampshire, held at Portsmouth History Centre, accessed via www.findmypast.co.uk.
- xxxii Marriage registers of St. Blaise, Milton, Berkshire, held at The Royal Berkshire Archives.
- xxxiii Burial registers for St. Mary's, Portsea Hampshire, held at Portsmouth History Centre, accessed via www.findmypast.co.uk.
- xxxiv Marriage registers of St. Blaise, Milton, Berkshire, held at The Royal Berkshire Archives.
- xxxv Burial registers of St. Mary the Virgin, Bampton, Oxfordshire, held at Oxfordshire History Centre, accessed via www.ancestry.com.
- xxxvi Marriage registers of St. Olave Old Jewry, Middlesex, held at London Archives, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.
- xxxvii Index to baptism registers of St. Blaise, Milton, Berkshire, accessed via www.findmypast.co.uk.
- xxxviii Marriage registers of St. Blaise, Milton, Berkshire, held at The Royal Berkshire Archives.
- xxxix Index to burial registers of St. Blaise, Milton, Berkshire, accessed via www.findmypast.co.uk.
- xl Burial registers of St. Mary the Virgin, Bampton, Oxfordshire, held at Oxfordshire History Centre, accessed via www.ancestry.com.
- xli The will of Mary Lamball née Godfrey, written 1786, proved 1787, held at The Royal Berkshire Archives.

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- xlii The will of John Lamball, written 1754, proved 1761, held at The Royal Berkshire Archives.
- xliii Baptism registers of St. Mary's, Shipton under Wychwood, Oxfordshire, held at Oxfordshire History Centre, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.
- xliv Marriage registers of St. Blaise, Milton, Berkshire, held at The Royal Berkshire Archives.
- xlvi Index to baptism registers of St. Blaise, Milton, Berkshire, accessed via www.findmypast.co.uk.
- xlvii Index to burial registers of St. Blaise, Milton, Berkshire, accessed via www.findmypast.co.uk.
- xlviii Index to marriage registers of St. Lawrence, Besselsleigh, Berkshire, accessed via www.findmypast.co.uk.
- xlviii The will of Josiah Lamball, written 1794, proved 1797, held at The Royal Berkshire Archives.
- xlix The will of John Lamball, written 1754, proved 1761, held at The Royal Berkshire Archives. The will of Josiah Lamball, written 1760, proved 1760, held at The Royal Berkshire Archives. Letter of Administration for Josiah Lamball, 1782, held at The Royal Berkshire Archives.
- i Baptism registers of St. Mary the Virgin, Bampton, Oxfordshire, held at Oxfordshire History Centre, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.
- ii Index to baptism registers of St. Peter and St. Paul, Wantage, Berkshire, accessed via www.findmypast.co.uk.
- iii The will of John Lamball, written 1754, proved 1761, held at The Royal Berkshire Archives.
- liii The will of Josiah Lamball, written 1760, proved 1760, held at The Royal Berkshire Archives.
- liv Baptism registers for St. Nicholas, Oddington, Gloucestershire, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.
- lv Baptism records of St. Giles, Camberwell, Surrey, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.
- lvi Baptism registers of St. Mary the Virgin, Bampton, Oxfordshire, held at Oxfordshire History Centre, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.
- lvii The will and inventory of Joan Varney, written in 1709, proved 1710, held at Wiltshire and Swindon Archives, reference P23/321, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.
- lviii The will of John Lamball, written 1739, proved 1740, held at The Royal Berkshire Archives.
- lix The will of John Lamball, written 1754, proved 1761, held at The Royal Berkshire Archives.
- lx Index to baptism register of St. Denys, Stanford in the Vale, Berkshire, accessed via www.findmypast.co.uk.
- lxi The will and inventory of Joan Varney, written in 1709, proved 1710, held at Wiltshire and Swindon Archives, reference P23/321, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.
- lxii Index to burial register of St. Denys, Stanford in the Vale, Berkshire, accessed via www.findmypast.co.uk.
- lxiii Index to burial register of St. Denys, Stanford in the Vale, Berkshire, accessed via www.findmypast.co.uk.
- lxiv Baptism, marriage and burial registers of St. Mary's, Shipton under Wychwood, Oxfordshire, held at Oxfordshire History Centre, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.
- lxv Baptism and burial registers of St. Mary's, Shipton under Wychwood, Oxfordshire, held at Oxfordshire History Centre, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.
- lxvi Manorial Roll for West Challow, Berkshire 1752, accessed via www.familysearch.org.
- lxvii The will of John Lamball, written 1739, proved 1740, held at The Royal Berkshire Archives.
- lxviii The will of John Lamball, written 1739, proved 1740, held at The Royal Berkshire Archives. The will of John Lamball, written 1754, proved 1761, held at The Royal Berkshire Archives.

lxi Index to marriage registers of St. Peter and St. Paul, Wantage, Berkshire, accessed via www.findmypast.co.uk.

lxx Index to baptism registers of St. Peter and St. Paul, Wantage, Berkshire, accessed via www.findmypast.co.uk.

lxxi Index to burial registers of St. Peter and St. Paul, Wantage, Berkshire, accessed via www.findmypast.co.uk.