

THE TICEHURST FAMILY



The Ticehursts were notable contributors to Battle and its environs for over a century. They were printers and stationers, postmasters, clerks to banks and public bodies, photographers, surveyors and electricity pioneers, and their descendants have become well-known in various professions.

ORIGINS

When the Ticehursts began at Battle is obscure. One researcher states that Joseph Ticehurst was born about 1660, place not stated, and had a son Thomas who lived at Almonry Farm between 1692 and 1696, Thomas in turn having a son Joseph (1730-1795), and his son was William, with whom this account begins to take shape.¹

In fact the parish records tell a slightly different story. The only Joseph recorded as having married in Sussex who could be the man born about 1660 was married in Ashburnham on 16 February 1707, to Ann Vigor. Ann could therefore not be mother of a Thomas who lived at Battle in the 1690s, though Joseph cannot be ruled out as there may have been an earlier, unrecorded marriage for one of that name. The name Joseph is significant because it reappears in the later genealogy: it is present in the two generations immediately preceding William (c1767-1852).

William's father Joseph (baptised 4 March 1726 and buried on 8 July 1795) married Mary Lidwell on 30 November 1762, having at least five children of whom William was probably the second. This Joseph was the third child of James (who was buried on 4 August 1763) and his wife Mary (Lidwell). Neither their marriage nor their births are in the Battle church records, which are fairly reliable. The only relevant marriage recorded is on 30 March 1719, when Joseph Ticehurst married Mary Tutt at Hellingly. In accordance with usual practice this would have been the bride's parish, so it is possible that James was the son of a Thomas of Almonry Farm. This would not be the Thomas recorded (as Tishurst) baptised at Battle on 26 November 1710, the son of Thomas (not of Joseph) and Mercy Perry of Mountfield; but the Almonry man might have been Thomas Tiseherst, yeoman, who appears in the probate records for 1709.² This seems likely. No earlier Ticehursts are recorded at Battle.

Nevertheless the family name Joseph must have come from somewhere, so despite the surviving parish records the suspicion must remain that the account of that name in about 1660 is the right one.

In either case, at this point we have a line that without doubt begins early in the eighteenth century and ends, as far as a direct and local line is concerned, with the death of a first world war veteran and his wife in the last half of the twentieth century. Of the three brothers who fought in 1914-18 Frederic had already emigrated to Canada and John later left town, but Arthur died at Battle in 1968, having married but without issue. When his widow Dorothy died at Battle late in 1975 that was the end of the name, at least in so far as William's descendants were concerned.

WILLIAM TICEHURST (c1769-1852)

The first Ticehurst to be substantially noticed was William, baptised at Battle on 18 January 1769. The register of baptisms gives his parents as Joseph and Mary *Tishurst*. On 25 September 1793 he married Sophia Darby at Battle, both of them 'of this parish'; between them they produced four children. After her death in 1801 he quickly married Ann Clark; the witness was one James Ticehurst, a grocer of Lewes; this may have been his brother James, baptised on 15 June 1776. Ann had been born in Middlesex. Her father, a sailor, had been drowned in the famous sinking of the *Royal George* at Portsmouth in 1782. When launched in 1756 this ship had been the biggest in the world and by 1782 had seen much service. She capsized while undergoing routine maintenance just outside Portsmouth, with the loss of about 900 lives. Before her marriage Ann was a governess with the Hicks family at Battle. William and Ann had nine children, five sons and four daughters.

William is described in records as a schoolmaster, and it is postulated that he took up this occupation in Battle in 1806,³ being in charge of the school founded from Elizabeth Langton's will dated 8 December 1791 (though there were some less permanent schools in the town before then). He is reported as being a schoolmaster at Battle in 1791, however, and again in 1823 and 1832,⁴ at a different school.⁵

It is therefore probable that William came from an educated family, suggesting some financial comfort, or perhaps he was 'noticed' as a bright boy by one of the gentry. However, there was a John Ticehurst, who may have been his uncle, who is described in the burial register as 'church clerk', which clearly means literacy and probably more (he was buried on 8 October 1782). Somehow, through inheritance or otherwise, William established himself in the town. He came to be appointed High Constable during the Napoleonic Wars of 1802-15, when he was responsible for billeting soldiers in local pubs (some 6900 of them during the war) and for preparing for the expected invasion.

William lived at Langton House, which he bought from John Roberts⁶ in 1829; the family was to keep it until 1935. This property appears to have been the home of the parish poorhouse for more than a century when it was sold in 1809 for £1315 (a very large sum of money for those days; twenty years later William can scarcely have paid less). William lived until 1852, by which time he had a large number of grandchildren.

The post of High Constable was probably less important in Battle than in most parishes. He – of course it was always a he – was responsible for police services over the whole Hundred of Battle. A hundred was usually a large area but in Sussex it was a subdivision of the Rape of Hastings and therefore smaller than places with the same name elsewhere. The Hundred included only the two parishes of Battle and Whatlington, each of which would have had one or more officers known by the term Petty Constable. The High Constable was responsible to the magistrates for them and for what police actions were needed: the keeping of public order, the investigation of crimes and the arrest of suspected criminals, the bringing to court of those likely to be subjected to paternity orders, and so on. It is likely that in the Napoleonic period there would have been a greater call for his services because of the presence of numbers of soldiers at the barracks off Whatlington Road, who being young men away from home were less likely to keep good order than the existing inhabitants. We do not know when he ceased to be High Constable, and it may have been before the major

disturbances of 1829. By the time that high constables ceased to exist, under an 1842 Act, a professional police force had already come into being in eastern Sussex. William was appointed postmaster in 1822 and chairman of the Board of Guardians in 1837; he was also parish clerk.

His appointments may constitute the first contribution of the family to local administration. Being a postmaster has always been a responsible job, and before the institution of the penny post in 1840 it would have involved receiving and costing articles to be posted, ensuring that they went by the appropriate coach if not locally delivered, and delivering post arriving at his office from elsewhere. As to the parish council or vestry, in the early nineteenth century there was almost no other local administration. The vestry appointed the overseers of the poor law and looked after road maintenance in so far as this was done, and it set the rates. It lost any turnpike roads as they were built and then, in 1834, the poor law.

Two of the four children of William and Sophia were females who are now difficult to trace. One son died an infant. The eldest son, William (1794-1860), became a sea captain with the East India Company and did not return to Battle, finally retiring to Oswestry. He married Sarah Darby, who may have been a cousin on his mother's side, and by the time that he died he had at least seven grandchildren. Augusta went to Scotland as a governess, to the family of the wife of the then Dean of Battle. Sophia married a London jeweller named John Carter. The 1851 census records two children living with them at Barking. Later census information is not entirely helpful, but it is possible that Sophia, by then a widow, died at Walthamstow on 6 April 1874.

Of the nine children of William's second marriage the four daughters all moved away. Ann, the eldest (born 1808) married a farmer's son by the name of Simms and they emigrated to north America. Elenor or Ellen (born 1809) married William Head, an East Grinstead solicitor, and they had nine children; she died at East Grinstead in 1879, in the same year as her husband. Jane Frances (born 1816) died unmarried in 1836. Emily (born 1819) may have married one of the Aldertons of Battle, who worked for the Laurences at Powdermills, but official records have so far concealed any convincing evidence. The man appears to have been William Sibson Alderton (1817-51) but the records do not attest to it; it may also be that after his death in New York she married Count Karcheski there.

THE FURTHER DESCENDANTS OF WILLIAM TICEHURST (c1769-1852)

As so often in former centuries, it was the male children (in this case of the second marriage) who had the most obvious effect on Battle.

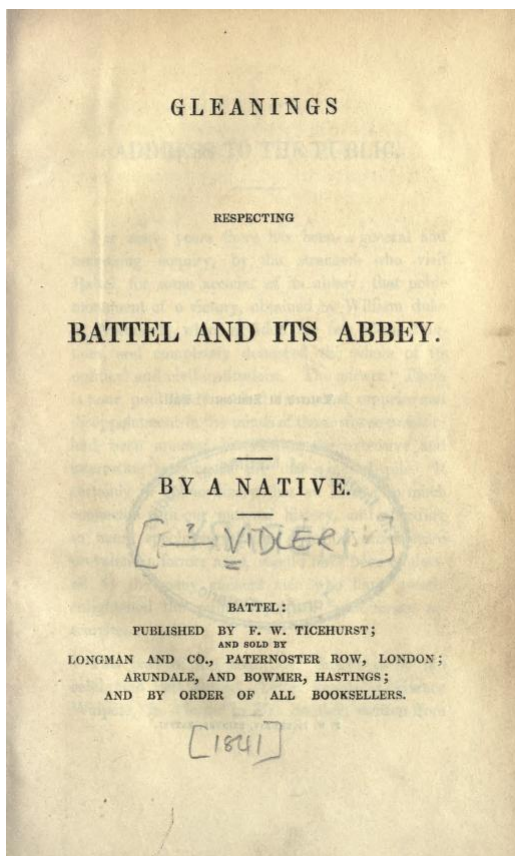
The first son was Thomas, born in 1803, who was at first a banker's clerk for the Savings Bank for the Rape of Hastings, and then in Hastings. He became a surveyor and by 1839 he was the first Clerk to the Battle Union, gently (one hopes) pointing out that emigration to New South Wales was available to certain families.⁷

The second was Frederic (1810-77), who became a surgeon and the founder of a long line of medical practitioners, and in due course mayor of Hastings. He and his wife Mary Ann (1810-63) had nine children, all born at Hastings or St Leonards. One, Augustus Rowland (1845-1916), followed his father into medicine, and three of the surviving sons of Augustus followed him; the line of medics continues today. All of them practised at Hastings. Norman

Frederick, the eldest (1873-1969) was awarded the OBE for his work at Normanhurst Military Hospital in the First World War. The other two, Gerald (1878-1943) and Claude (1881-1941), both served with the RAMC as captains in the First World War. The military records of the time were seriously damaged during the following war, and from them we know only that Gerald was sent to France on 27 September 1916. Both Norman and Claude were keen ornithologists, the latter being a colleague of Hugh Whistler of Battle (1889-1943) who wrote extensively on birds, particularly with reference to India.⁸

More obviously for Battle itself there was Francis William (1811-1902); there is a memorial plaque to him and his wife Jane in St Mary's church. His occupations are set out in the various censuses as:

1841	stationer
1851	bookseller
1861	head postmaster, registrar of BMD
1871	stationer, printer
1881	clerk to Guardians
1891	printer, stationer, bookseller
1901	printer, stationer



This may be filled out a little. He was registrar until 1878, when his son Frederic succeeded him. He succeeded his brother Thomas as clerk to the Guardians in 1844, remaining in that post until 1884, when again Frederic succeeded him. His term as postmaster ended at about the same time. He was involved in gypsum exploitation from 1870, and Stowell's map of Battle Abbey lands (1901) shows him as owning land along the south side of Uckham Lane, where the nurseries now stand. When he died he left the comfortable sum of £11124. He published (presumably having written) the first guidebook to Battle: *Ticehurst's Hand-book to Battle Abbey etc etc*, a rare find today. It is undated but evidence suggests that it predates the departure of the Websters late in the 1850s. He may already have written *Gleanings respecting Battle and its Abbey*, reprints of which are available.

<https://archive.org/details/gelaningsrespect00ticeuoft>

The authorship and date added to the cover have not been confirmed.

Francis married Jane Gorham in 1838, and they had eleven children before her death forty years later. The female children were generally unfortunate. Jane (born 1839) married John Thorpe, a prosperous miller of Battle but died within the year, without children. Ellen (born 1842) married Henry Plantagenet Weston of Sedlescombe, recorded in the 1871 census as a wine and spirit merchant. When his bankruptcy proceedings began in 1873 Weston was described as a gentleman; the business was at Penge in Surrey. But after 1871 Ellen falls completely out of the formal records. Weston remarried in 1880 and died in Brussels in

1898. This suggests that Ellen died in the 1870s but no record has yet been found to demonstrate this. Emily (born 1855) died unmarried at 36. Kate (born 1857) married George Thorpe but died childless within three years. Of the two other females, Elizabeth (born 1851) married but died childless at 37. Clara (born 1854) lived to 68 and did not marry. Of the sons, George died at the age of 11 and Arthur at 14. The three who lived longest were

Francis (1841-1891), who moved to Warwickshire with his wife from Kent Frances (Cheesman), who pre-deceased him. Initially employed at the Powermills gunpowder mill, he became a gunpowder agent and cartridge maker. None of their eight children have connections with Battle.

Frederic Gorham (1849-1922), who is described below.

Charles (1853-1925), who married Emma Yexley and stayed in Battle, a printer, dying at 72, but his family and their descendants are recorded as living at Hastings.

Frederic married Caroline Pitcher in the Hailsham area in 1876 and they had three sons. The censuses report him as:

1871	practical electrician
1881	superintendent registrar, telegraph engineer
1891	clerk to Guardians
1901	clerk to Guardians
1911	superintendent registrar, clerk to Guardians.

By 1870 Frederic had joined with a Mr Sparks to form the firm of Ticehurst & Sparks, described as "*coal, coke & lime merchants*" in a local trade directory. This was Joseph Sparks of St Mary's Villas. Frederic was also a photographer, early for Battle.



<http://www.photohistory-sussex.co.uk/BattlePhotographers.htm>

This was taken after the restoration by William Butterfield in 1867-69. It will be noted that part of the land in front of the large central tomb is now the pavement of Upper Lake following changes made in 1947.

In addition to succeeding his father as shown above he was also a churchwarden at St Mary's and clerk to the Rural District Council established in 1894. As an electrician he was a founder member of the Institute of Electrical Engineers, and installed a generator at 76-77 High Street as well as one of the first telephones in the town.

Frederic's eldest son was also named Frederic Gorham, born in 1877 as local birth records and the 1881 and 1901 censuses confirm (there are no discovered entries for him in 1891 and 1911); for reasons that must remain unclear his Canadian army records state that he was born in 1881, though the other family information in them is correct. There was indeed a Frederick (sic) Ticehurst born at Battle in 1880, but not of the same family, and he died in 1889. In 1891 Frederic was described as a law student, but the Canadians have him as an

electrician and a former Territorial. That an F G Ticehurst of the right age who left Liverpool for Quebec on SS Canada on 25 February 1904 is described in the marine records as a farm hand just adds to the confusion. Frederic was sent to France in August 1915 and survived the experience, presumably thereafter returning to Saskatchewan. (His father having been a 'practical electrician', presumably the younger man learned his trade with him.)

The next son was Arthur Cecil (1880-1968). His army record describes him as an electrical engineer of Langton House, and he joined the Royal Engineers in 1914. Sent to France that December, he was wounded in the following July and came home; but he returned to the war and was awarded the MC in January 1917. His final rank was Major. In 1918 he married Dorothy Jerrard Thurman at Hove; no children are recorded. Arthur died at Battle in January 1968, and Dorothy in 1975; she appears to be the last of the family in the town. Arthur's occupation in the cemetery record states 'retired Major'.

The third was John William (1885-1964), who also became a Major in the Royal Engineers. In 1916, presumably on home leave, he married Muriel Kilby of Bisham by Marlow, and thereafter all his connections were with the Thames Valley. They had one son.

Sources

This article is sourced from official records, supplemented by family information publicly available. The latter may not be wholly reliable. Use has also been made of a summary of the family, by Lewis Pyke, held by the Battle Museum which lists three possible ancestors of the first William Ticehurst (c1767-1852) and contains some information that cannot be confirmed by recourse to official records. This document is referenced as BMLH notes.

Family, migration and military records at www.ancestry.co.uk

See endnotes

GENEALOGY

A genealogy of the Battle Ticehursts follows, in outline:

Table 1A	William Ticehurst (c1768-1852) – first marriage
Table 1B	William Ticehurst (c1768-1852) – second marriage
Table 1B1	William Ticehurst (c1768-1852) – second marriage, continued
Table 2	Thomas Ticehurst (1800-1876)
Table 3	Francis William Ticehurst (1811-1902)
Table 3A	Francis William Ticehurst (1811-1902), continued
Table 4	Francis William Ticehurst (1841-1891)

Notes:

In so far as information is available, each cell is arranged as follows:

Full name followed by place of birth, date of birth, date of death, place of death (bp = baptism, bu = burial)

Comma, followed by marriage information: place of marriage, date of marriage, name of spouse, place of spouse's birth, date, date of spouse's death, place.

Main person's occupation.

Quarters of the year are A = January to March (and so on). Places cited may be registration districts if not more closely known.

Table 1A THE ANTECEDENTS OF WILLIAM TICEHURST (1769-1852), AND HIS FIRST MARRIAGE

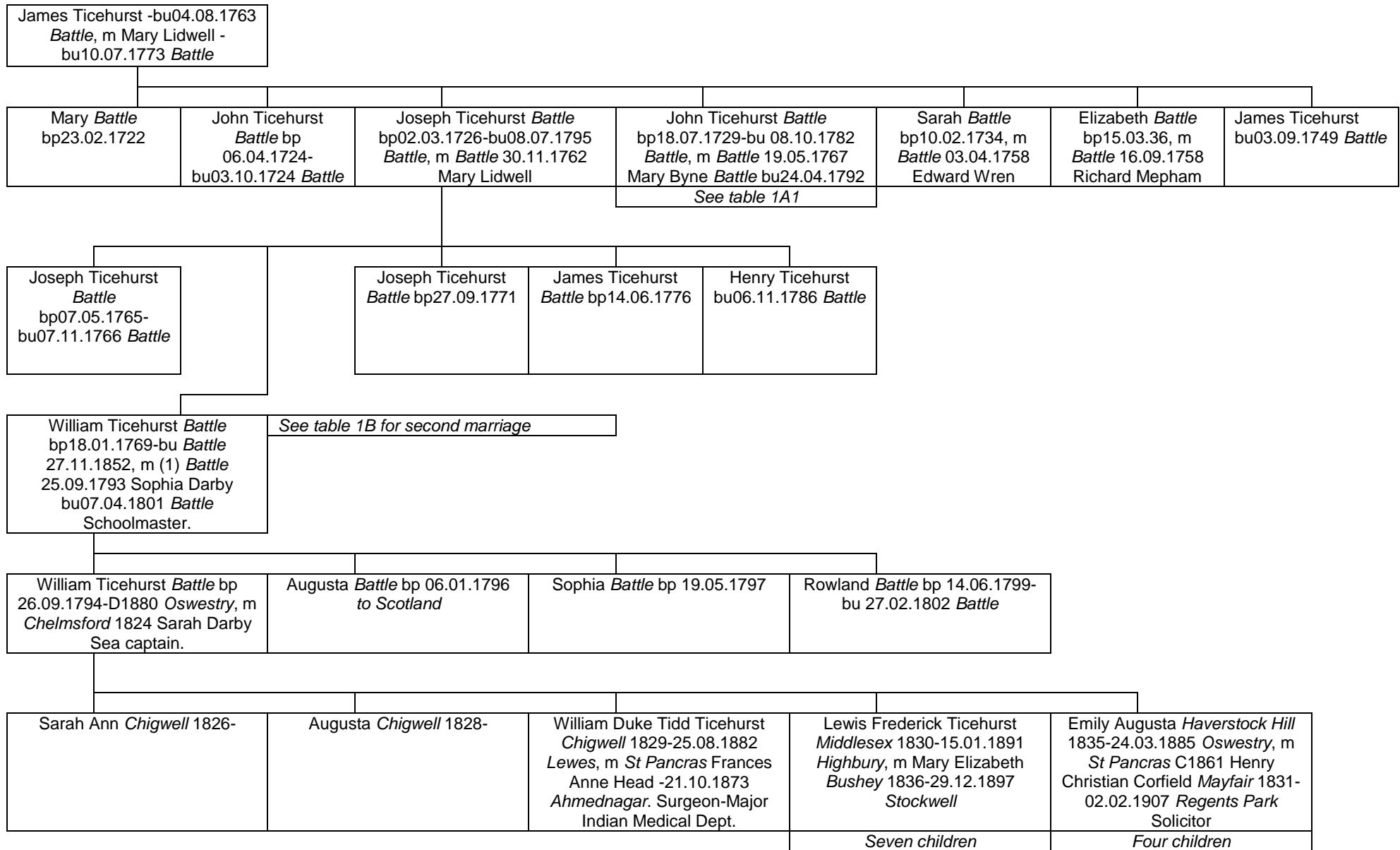


TABLE 1A1 JOHN TICEHURST (1729-1782) AND HIS CHILDREN

John Ticehurst <i>Battle</i> bp18.07.1729-bu 06.10.1782 <i>Battle</i> , m <i>Battle</i> 19.05.1767 Mary Byne –bu24.04.1792 <i>Battle</i>		see table 1		
Ruth <i>Battle</i> bp21.03.1768-, m <i>Battle</i> 23.01.1793 John King	Mary <i>Battle</i> bp03.11.1769-	Elizabeth <i>Battle</i> bp25.09.1775-	John Ticehurst <i>Battle</i> bp01.12.1775-	James Ticehurst <i>Battle</i> bp 14.06.1776-

Table 1B

WILLIAM TICEHURST (c1768-1852) AND HIS SECOND MARRIAGE, PART 1

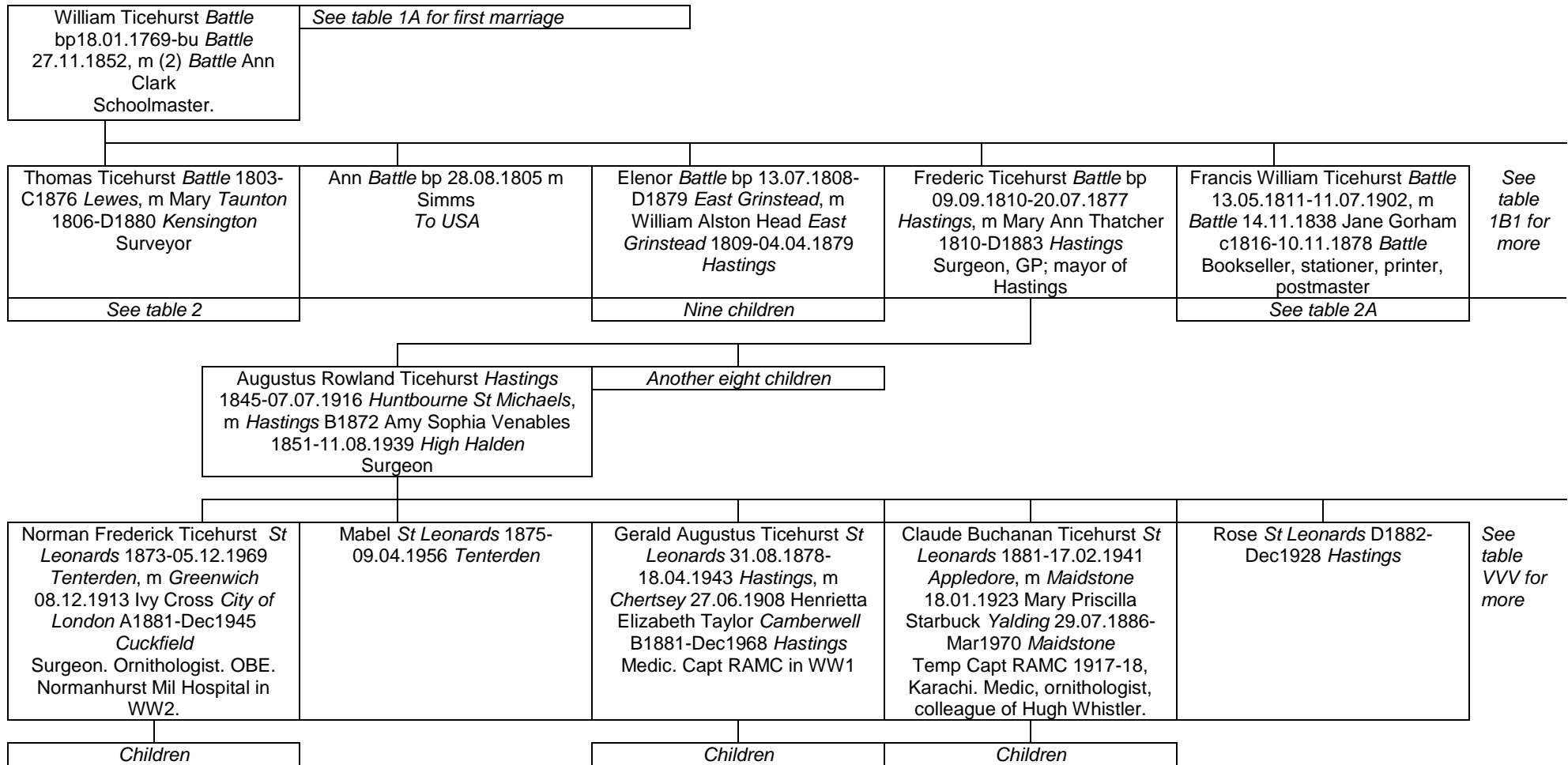


Table 1B1 WILLIAM TICEHURST (c1768-1852) AND HIS SECOND MARRIAGE, PART 2

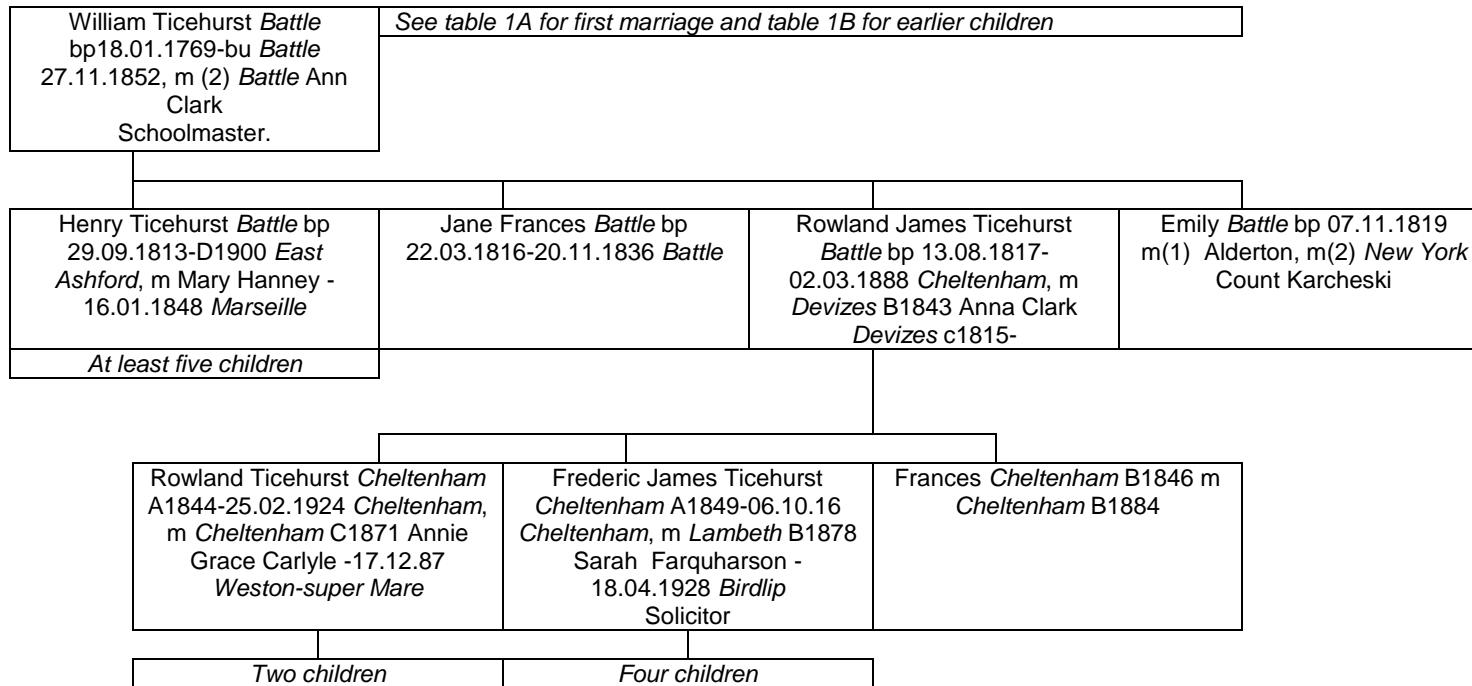


TABLE 2

THOMAS TICEHURST (1800-1876)

see Table 1A

William Ticehurst *Battle*
 bp18.01.1769-bu *Battle*
 27.11.1852, m (1) *Battle*
 25.09.1793 Sophia Darby
 bu07.04.1801 *Battle*
 Schoolmaster.

Thomas Ticehurst *Battle* 1803-
 C1876 *Lewes*, m *Mary Taunton*
 1806-D1880 *Kensington*
 Surveyor

<p>Emma Elizabeth <i>Battle</i> 1831- A1898 <i>Hendon</i></p>					<p>Emily <i>Battle</i> 1834-</p>	<p>Ann F <i>Battle</i> 1835-D1915 <i>Elham</i></p>	<p>Thomas C <i>Battle</i> 1836- Draper</p>	<p>William James Ticehurst <i>Battle</i> C1839- seaman</p>
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TABLE 3 FRANCIS WILLIAM TICEHURST (1811-1902)

see Table 1B

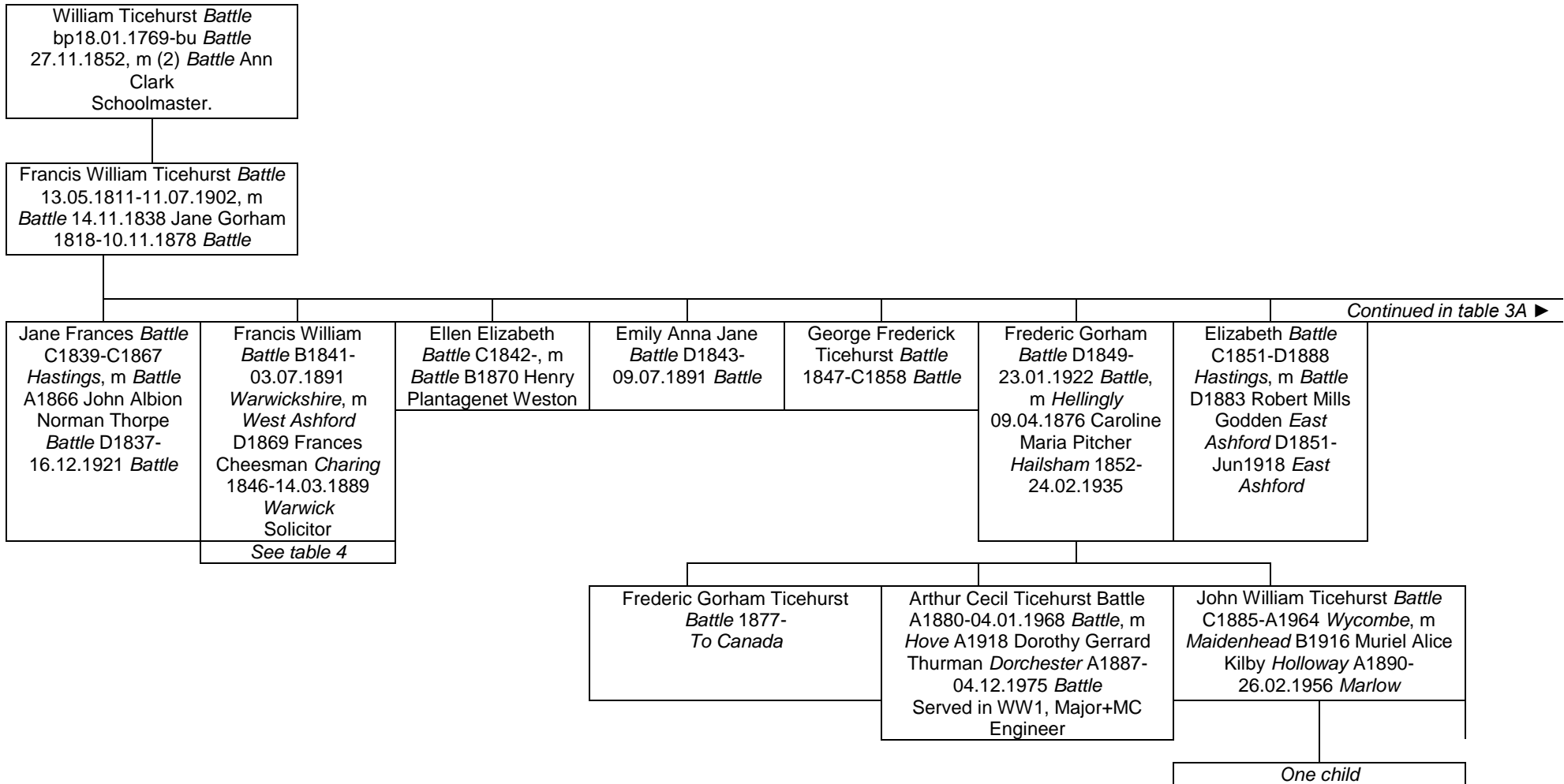


Table 3A FRANCIS WILLIAM TICEHURST (1811-1902) continued from Table 3

see Table 1B

William Ticehurst *Battle*
 bp18.01.1769-bu *Battle*
 27.11.1852, m (2) *Battle* Ann
 Clark
 Schoolmaster.

Francis William Ticehurst *Battle*
 13.05.1811-11.07.1902, m
Battle 14.11.1838 Jane Gorham
 c1816-10.11.1878 *Battle*

See table 3 for earlier children

Charles James
 Ticehurst *Battle*
 C1853-05.07.1925
Battle, m *Hastings*
 C1883 Emma
 Sarah Charlotte
 Yexley *Stepney* -
 27.12.1926 *Battle*
 Printer

Clara Charlotte
Battle C1855-
 Dec1922
 Eastbourne
 Milliner

Kate Maria *Battle*
 D1857-21.04.86
Hastings, m *Battle*
 D1883 George
 William Thorpe

Arthur John Gorham
 Ticehurst *Battle*
 D1861-21.09.1875
Tonbridge

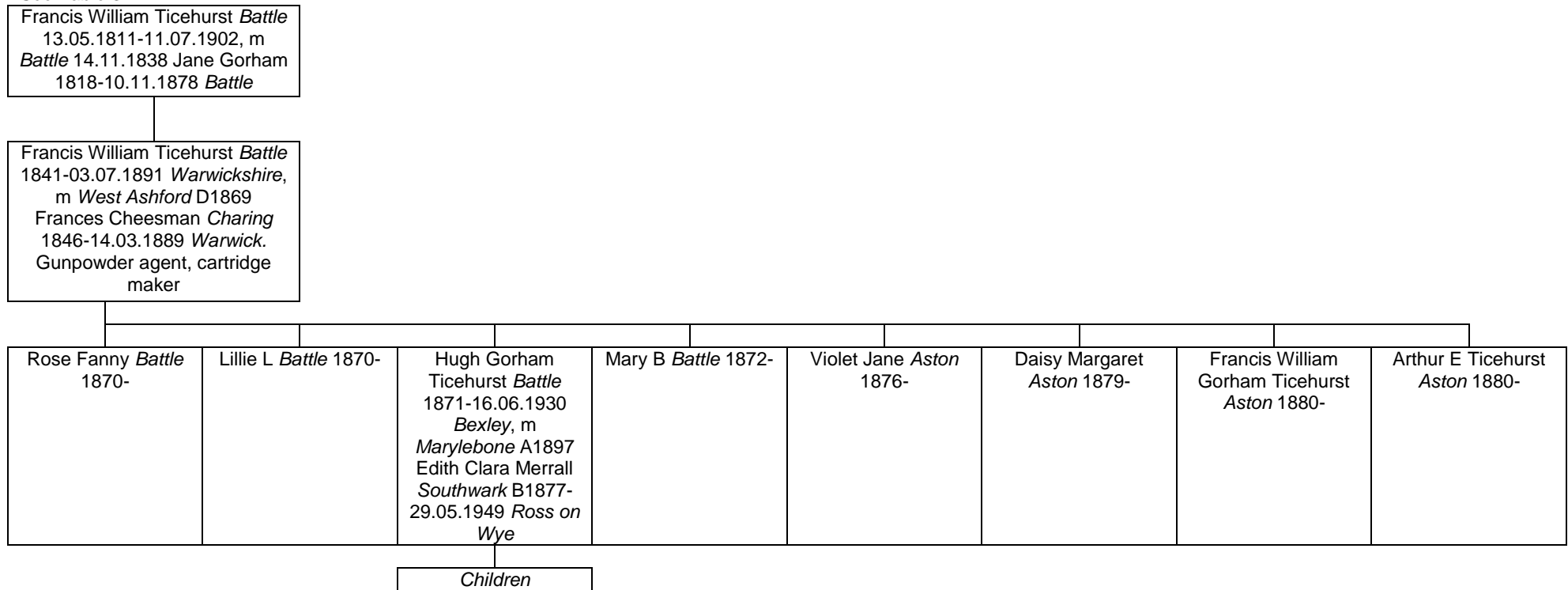
Basil Charles
 Yexley Ticehurst
Hastings B1884-
 01.01.1931
Walthamstow, m
Hastings C1909
 Evelyn Wildish

Gladys Mary Yexley
Hastings A1892-
 21.09.1950
Broxbourne, m
Westminster B1927
 Charles Brandon

Two daughters

Table 4 FRANCIS WILLIAM TICEHURST (1841-1891)

See Table 3



¹ BMLH notes.

² Elliott archive, BH14.01.

³ BMLH notes.

⁴ Universal Directory, 1791; Pigot's Directory for the other years.

⁵ Universal Directory for 1793.

⁶ BMLH notes.

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https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=pDBDAAAACAAJ&pg=PA33&lpg=PA33&dq=TICEHURST+FAMILY+BATTLE&source=bl&ots=54RZhYH0XH&sig=29qrK9ifg0h9XN8-iYCuc4CILzU&hl=en&sa=X&ei=B_sKVakIL4_B7Aa7joHoBQ&ved=0CEsQ6AEwBzgU#v=onepage&q=TICEHURST%20FAMILY%20BATTLE&f=false

⁸ See <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1474-919X.1970.tb00106.x/pdf>