

□ Documentary evidence

The village of Onley is not mentioned in documents until 1272 (PRO C133/2), and it was presumably included under Barby in all the national taxation records.

- The 1272 document records that George de Cantelupe held Onley, together with the manor of Barby. At Onley were '13 virgates in villeinage, value 9s per annum'.
- In 1345, a documentary reference is made to 'tenements in Onle' .
- In 1484 William Catesby leased the manors of Barby and Onley.
- In the early 17th century, the manors of Barby and Onley were bought by Giles Isham, whose brother Zaccheus Isham died in 1651 at Onley.
- John Bridges (C1720) described Onley as 'a hamlet of 7 shepherds' houses,' (J. Bridges, *History of Northamptonshire*, Vol I [1791], 24)
- A canal map of 1791 shows 'Onley Lodges' as 5 scattered farms.

A much greater level of detail was extracted by surveying available wills and inventories for Barby cum Onley, during the period 1500-1700, together with any leases, indentures and land-transfer deeds that have survived in the records of the estates of landed gentry; also the records of Patent Rolls and Calendar Rolls, and later records (for instance, of C18th-C19th bankruptcy sales) that appeared in newspapers and gazettes. One or two wills from adjoining villages (notably Barby, Kilsby and Crick) also throw additional light on some of the key yeoman families with long-term involvement at Onley.

This exercise produced a considerable harvest of documentary data for Onley, with 44 documents in all, including:

- 23 wills of Onley inhabitants, between 1544 and 1673.
- 14 leases, conveyances, deeds and abstracts of title, between 1583 and 1719.
- An abstract of title dated 1839, reciting details of previous C18th ownership.
- 2 land sale announcements, 1716 and 1851.
- An extract from the Patent Rolls dated 1549, providing useful details of the extent of the lordship of Barby cum Onley at that date.
- Reports on enclosures in neighbouring Hillmorton, from the early 1600s.
- A report in 1610 on prosecutions for depopulation in 1607 in Northamptonshire.
- A legal deposition by an Onley inhabitant dated 1650.
- An inventory for one of the Onley farmsteads, dated 1666.

This relatively large body of documents provided a wealth of detail, about the land itself, the people who owned the land, and the locals who lived on it and worked it.