

The Martin family of Mellersh Farm

*This stone is placed upon hallowed ground in memory of Benjamin Martin
who died May 12th 1847 Aged 63 years*

*Also Ann his wife who died March 3rd 1859 aged 73 years
Also William their son who died May 11th 1838 aged 23 years*

[Memorial no. 64, Compton churchyard survey]

Ann Alexander was born in Puttenham and baptised in March 1787. She married Benjamin Martin at St Nicholas Church in Guildford in the summer of 1812. Neither the bride nor groom could write - they signed their wedding certificate with a cross as their marks - but this did not prevent either of them from running a successful business and holding important roles in the village in the ensuing years.



*Jesse Martin of Mellersh Farm with an older lady,
possibly his mother, Ann Martin.*

By the early 1820s the Martins were tenants of the Loseley estate and they lived at Mellersh Farm. This status gave Benjamin, unlike most of the male villagers, the right to have a vote. We can see from the tithe survey of 1841 that he farmed 182 acres in Compton. It was a mixed farm made up of pasture, arable and woodland.

Benjamin died in 1847 and Ann Martin ran the family business after she was widowed. In 1861 she was farming 134 acres and employing six agricultural labourers. She shared her home at that time with her daughter Eliza, sons Jesse and Thomas and two young labourers, who were probably her employees.

In the meantime, another of her sons, Henry, was farming at Worplesdon. He had married Sarah Jane Garton, the daughter of a gentleman, at Hale in 1850 but, by the time their children arrived, they were living at Ockham. It was here that their daughter, Sarah Ann, was baptised, but she only lived for five years. She is recorded on a memorial at Compton (no. 65 on the churchyard survey):

*In memory of
Sarah Ann daughter of
Henry & Sarah Jane Martin
Died July 6th 1859
Aged 5 years*

Ann Martin passed away at the age of 73, just a short while before her young granddaughter. She had held the reins at Mellersh Farm for twelve years. Another son, William, is buried with his parents. Most of his siblings stayed at Compton throughout their lives, but Jesse moved to Australia after his marriage, where he lived to the age of sixty (the age on the 1851 census is incorrect).

The photograph shows a young Jesse Martin with a much older lady. They are posed very closely to each other and his attitude appears to be supportive. This lady may therefore be his mother. She is smartly but sombrely dressed and was perhaps in mourning.

Sources (all at Surrey History Centre):

Parish registers of Puttenham, Compton and Guildford St Nicholas.

Electoral registers.

Tithe survey of Compton.

Census returns of 1851.

Compton churchyard survey.

Sally Gorton, May 2021.