

The Southmead Family

The Southmeads are a very old family who lived at Wray in the 16th and 17th century.

The John Southmead (son of William) who succeeded to the estate in 1620 and died in 1650 was a leading puritan, who was an important influence in the town. He became the patron of St Andrews Church and appointed his son-in-law, Francis Whiddon, as Rector (Whiddon remained rector till his death in 1656; see [List of Rectors](#) and [Memorials](#) SA12).

This John had a son and grandson with the same name, and the family continued to hold Wray, while also acquiring land in Chagford, until 1833, though by the end of the period they lived in Chagford – the last Southmead christening in Moreton was in 1733. He had a brother who emigrated to North America before 1640, not long after the Pilgrim Fathers. **The family became important in Massachussetts, and have descendants today (called Southmayd) who still value their connection with Moretonhampstead.**

See also the History of [Wray Barton](#).

Abstract of Will of John Southmead

from the series of Wills in the WCSL (W929.3x, O.M. Collection 8/36), which is based on notes of historians collected together after the actual documents were lost. This is in typescript

John Southmead of Moretonhampstead, gent.

Will dated 1648, proved 2.7.51 by John Southmead.

To my grandchild John S., son of John S. the younger, all my one-third part of the land & inheritance of the Burgage or tenement called fford house.

To my grandchild Francis son of Francis Whiddon the third part of the land & inheritance of Churchmeadow.

To my grandchild John Nosworthie, third part of a message.

To my grandchild William son of William Laskey, the same.

To my grandchild John Dicks, the same.

I give 26/8 a year towards the buying of Bibles for the poor children of the parish of Moreton.

To my wife £13.6.8.

To all my other grandchildren not mentioned £10.

To my brother's children Richard, Matthew, Alice and Mary £5 apiece.

To the children of Ann Bond decd., 20/- apiece.

To my sister Isssate Wreyford's children 10/- apiece.

To the poor of Moreton £4.

Residue to my son John S, whom I make my exor.

Overseers, Francis Whiddon & Wm. Laskey.