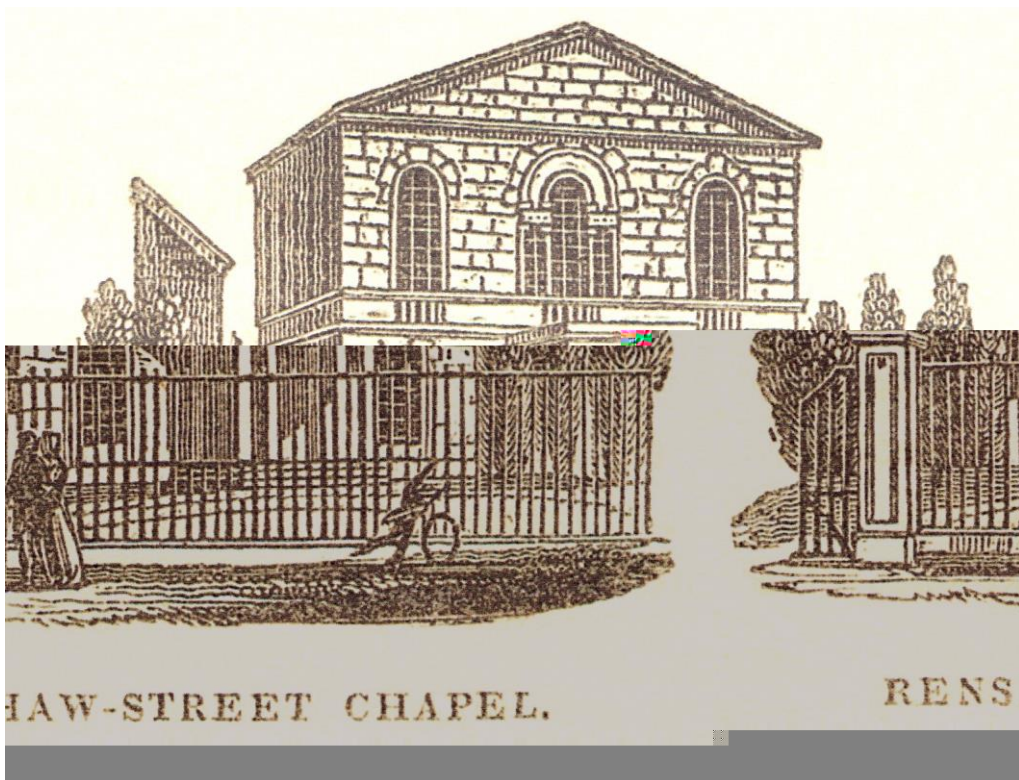


## Chapter 2.11

# THOMAS AND MARY GOFFEY

1783 - 1864



**The Newington Chapel, Renshaw Street, Liverpool.** Opened as an Independent Congregational Chapel called the Newington Chapel in 1777, it had become a Unitarian Chapel by 1835 when this engraving was made. Eighteen Goffey children were baptised here in the thirty years after 1777, fourteen of them boys including Arthur and Sophia's second son, Thomas, in 1783 and their grandson, James, in 1807.

## Chapter 2.11. Thomas and Mary Goffey.

For a couple whose lifetimes extended into the era of civil registration of births, marriages and deaths we do not seem to know much about Mary and virtually nothing about Thomas. Arthur and Sophia Goffey had two sons baptised in the name Thomas, one in 1777 and another in 1783; as stated in Chapter 2.10, the possibility of there being two couples called Arthur and Sophia has been considered too remote to be an explanation and an assumption has been made that the Thomas born in 1777 had died in infancy. Whatever the explanation, we know nothing of Thomas except his date of birth, 6th September, 1783, that he was baptised in the Newington Congregational Chapel in Liverpool a month later on 7th October and that he married Mary Wilson, the daughter of John and Alice Wilson, in St. Mary's Church, Walton-on-the-Hill, Liverpool, in 1806. The first available information about Mary is in the 1841 Census when Mary and her 31-year old daughter Martha are found living at 13, Head Street, Toxteth Park. As Mary is recorded as head of the family, there must be a strong presumption that Thomas, who would have been 58 years old in 1841, was already dead. Although civil registration of deaths started in 1838, no Thomas Goffey can be found between 1838 and 1870, so if he died in England we would have to search chapel records until we find the chapel where his funeral was held – not an easy task since he could have died any time between 1810 and 1838. Had Thomas been a mariner, which is quite a strong possibility, the chances are that he would have died at sea and unless he was wealthy enough to owe money to the Revenue it is unlikely any record could be found.

Whether Thomas ever lived at 13 Head Street we do not know. On the 1795 map of Liverpool (see Ch.2.10), Toxteth Park is shown as just that, a park; by 1807 some building has taken place as the map of that year (reproduced below) shows, and by 1848 large areas of the park had been built on. Head Street can be clearly seen on Bennison's 1848 map. There is thus a possibility that from local records we may be able to discover whether Thomas was the original owner of the house.

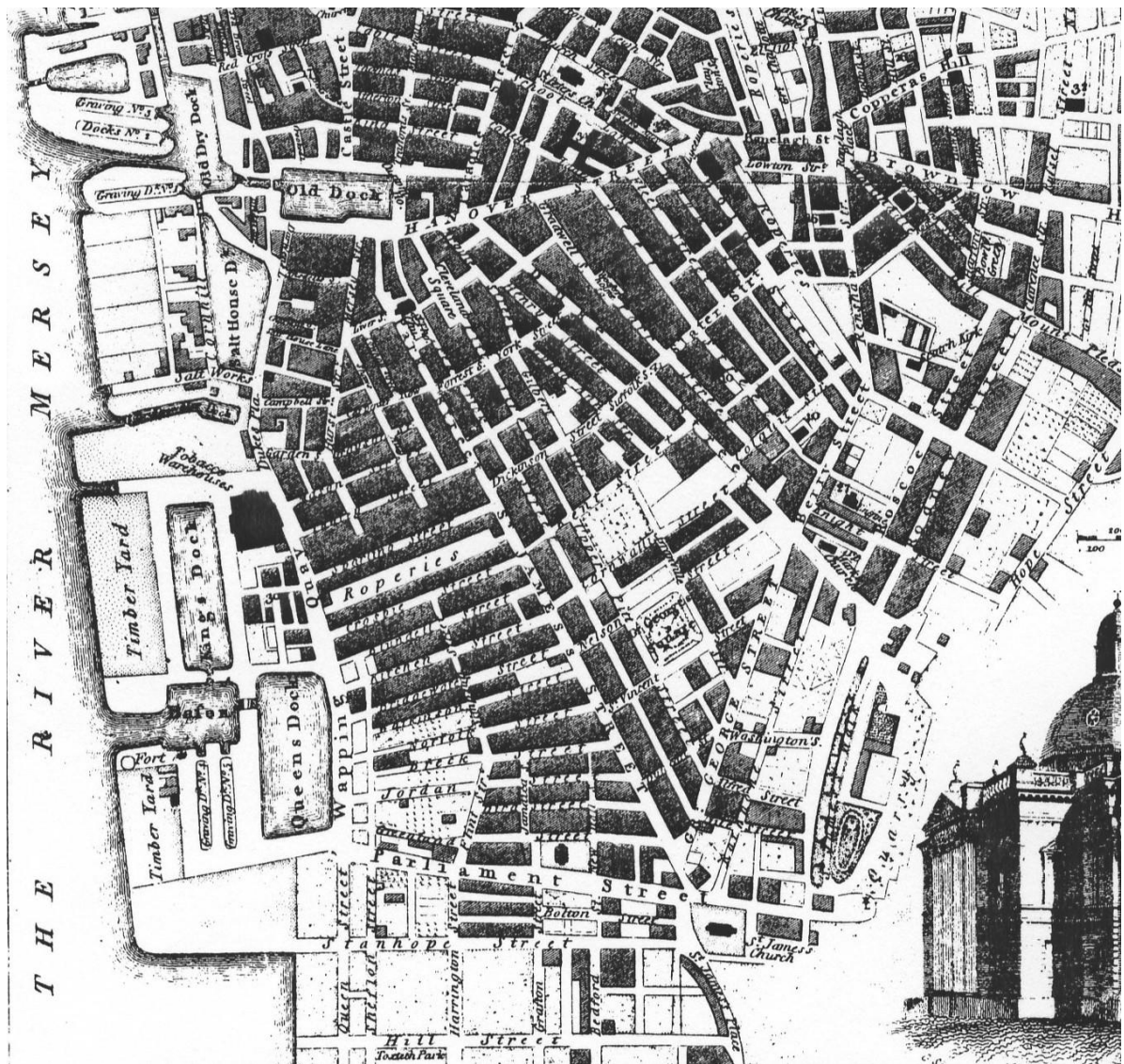
There is more information available concerning Mary, however. She appears in the Censuses of 1841, 1851 and 1861, always at the same house in Head Street with her daughter, Martha. The records of the Newington Congregational Chapel show her son, James, being baptised there on 20th March 1807. The page of the chapel register, reproduced at the end of this chapter, highlights the difficulties experienced with many such records; they are almost illegible, not always in chronological order, while Ministers at some impoverished churches covered their registers with records in the margins and in odd corners in an attempt to put off having to buy a new book. This particular page is of interest as records of the baptisms of several Goffey children can just be made out including a Sophia in September 1805, an Arthur in April 1806, another Arthur in May 1806, a John in August 1806 and James, Thomas and Mary's son, in March 1807. The reproduction (below) of this page is barely legible; the microfilm in the National Archives is better.

Mary died at the age of 80 on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1864 at 13, Head Street. Her will is dated 3rd May 1856, which would have been soon after the news of the death of her son James reached Liverpool. Witnessed by two of her neighbours from Head Street, the will suggests that in an age when there was no social security, Mary was not living in poverty despite

having no husband to support her since at least 1841. The house in Head Street, of which she owned the freehold, was left with its contents to Martha. The leasehold of 21, Newhall Street, the home of her son James and his family, was to be sold by the executors (daughter Martha and grandson Thomas) and the proceeds invested to provide an income for life for daughter-in-law Sarah. On the eventual death of Sarah, these funds were then to be shared between the five grandsons James, Thomas, William, Arthur and Alfred. The will was proved by Martha and Thomas on 6th July 1864 “*effects less than £450 including freeholds*”, having been extracted by *Thomas Goffey, solicitor, Liverpool*, Mary’s grandson.

The sale of the leasehold of the house in Newhall Street, and the investment of the proceeds, is slightly odd. In the 1851 census the family of James and Sarah is living at 21, Newhall Street, but in the 1861 census they are at 4, Blackburne Street. The oldest grandson, James, when he married in 1854 gave his address as 4, Blackburne Street, so even as the will was being written by Mary in 1856 the family had already moved out of Newhall Street two years previously. When Mary died in 1864 and the lease was sold, they had not lived in the house for at least ten years. One assumes that Mary had been renting out the Newhall Street house to provide herself with an income in her old age.





**Part of the 1877 Map of Liverpool**, showing the Newington Chapel, one block short of Lowton Street at the Brownlow Hill end of Renshaw Street. It also shows Newhall Street, the home of Thomas and Mary's son James and his family.