

## Ruth Raymond 1782-1845

### We salute you, Ruth... It was worth a try!

Prior to the introduction of The Married Women's Property Act 1870, married women could not hold assets in their own name. Upon marriage, the husband and wife became one person under law, the property of the wife was surrendered to her husband and her rights ceased to exist. Any personal property acquired by the wife before or during the marriage, unless specified that it was for her own separate use, went automatically to her husband.

If a married woman wanted to leave money rather than property to, for example, her unmarried daughters for them to retain for their own use once married, she could stipulate this in her will. Here is an example:

*'And it is my will and meaning and I do hereby declare and direct that the said annuities shall be paid and payable to my said daughter Ann and Joanna for their own sole and separate use and not to the use or subject to the notional debts or engagements of their present or any after taken husband in any manner whatsoever but to be paid and payable to my said daughters Ann and Joanna only...'*

A married woman was unable to draft a will or dispose of any property without her husband's consent. As a result, wills made by married women at this time are unusual.

So the will of Ruth Raymond is particularly intriguing... She died at the end of May 1845 aged 63 and was buried in the churchyard at St John's on 3<sup>rd</sup> June (we have not been able to identify the grave). You will see that Ruth was trying to leave all her property to her son, James...

*The Will of Ruth Raymond of Milborne Port 26/4/1845  
to John my beloved husband 6s per week in his lifetime  
to daughter Ann Stickland 1s per week  
to daughter Susan Warry 4s per week*

***Son James Raymond now of Milborne Port Baker sole executor, all lands, messuages and tenements by him freely to be possessed and enjoyed together with all my household goods, debts and moveable effects all to be raised out of my estate, but not to come into operation until two years after my decease in consequence of difficulties in which my property is at present involved***

*witnesses Joseph B\_\_k\_ and James Abbott*

The writing of this will raises a number of questions:

- 1) Why did she do this when she must have known that her will would have no legal standing?
- 2) Where did 'her' property - 'lands, messuages and tenements' - come from in the first place if she considered them her own rather than her husband's? Records show

that she was illegitimate... Could she have inherited it from her father during her marriage? If so, it might have been for her use during her lifetime but reverted to John at her death.

3) If she was working on the assumption that her wishes would be respected, what were the pre-existing 'difficulties' which influenced her to request a two year delay? She wrote her will less than two months before her death so these 'difficulties' are likely to have still existed at the time of her death.

Four years later, we learn that Ruth was, inevitably, not successful. We assume that the courts would not validate any aspect of the will as a matter of course... But why would this have taken four years to resolve? Did the children make some sort of legal case that then slowed down the processing of the will?

*On the 22/2/1849 with the will annexed of the goods chattels and receipts of Ruth Raymond (wife of John Raymond) late of the parish of Milborne Port in the county of Somerset deceased was \_ \_ to James the son the sole executor having been first duly sworn duly to administer the said **John Raymond the lawful husband of the said deceased and as such the sole person entitled to the personal estate and effects over which she has no disposing power and concerning which she is dead intestate** having \_ \_ as by right of court appeared.*

She was considered 'dead intestate'... The whole will was null and void, including the bequests to her daughters because those assets were to be raised from the property.

## **Ruth and John's background**

St John's, Milborne Port

15/4/1770 Henry **Raymond** married Elizabeth Curtis witnessed by William Huffman and Samuel Ford

1770 bpt George son of Eliz and Henry

1773 bpt **John** son of Eliz and Henry

1775 bpt Henry son of Eliz and Henry

1781 bpt Elizabeth dau of Eliz and Henry

Elizabeth, wife of Henry pauper buried 15/11/1785

15/4/1787 Henry **Raymond** widower married Avice Williams witnessed by Betty Abbott

1788 Robert son of Avice and Henry (poor)

1790 Rebecca dau of Avice and Henry (poor)

1793 James son of Avice and Henry (poor)

1796 Mary dau of Avice and Henry

1796 Ruth dau of Avice and Henry

1799 Morris son of Avice and Henry

21/11/1805 **Ruth** Hunt married **John** Raymond (weaver) witnessed by Robert Toogood and Samuel Frost

1808 Ann Hunt dau of John and Ruth  
1810 **Susanna** dau of John and Ruth  
1819 **James** son of John and Ruth

1841 census  
North Street, Milborne Port  
**John** Raymond 55 shopkeeper  
Ruth 55  
Ann Stickland 30 straw bonnet maker

1841 census  
Kingsbury  
John Warry 35 baker  
**Susanna** 30  
Louisa 3  
James 1

1841/1851/1861 census  
Crosier Street, Lambeth, London  
**James** Raymond, Baker b Milborne Port  
1843 **James** Raymond, son of Sarah and **James**, baker of Kingsbury Regis bpt  
Milborne Port  
1845 Juliet Raymond, dau of Sarah and **James**, baker of Kingsbury Regis bpt  
Milborne Port 1845  
1848 Ernest Raymond, son of Sarah and James, born Milborne Port  
1850 Walter Raymond, son of Sarah and James, born Lambeth  
1853 Ruth Raymond, son of Sarah and James, born Lambeth  
1857 Harry Raymond, son of Sarah and James, born Lambeth

1871 Walcot Square, Lambeth, London  
**James** Raymond 28 Parliamentary clerk b Kingsbury

You will see from these census entries that Ruth's son, **James**, had moved to London by 1841 as a baker. His son, **James**, did very well for himself! A parliamentary clerk, living in what would have been a desirable location at the time (and now!) In 1911, he was living alone in Tooting, a widower; the census entry shows how important his roots were to him, as he makes a point of stating his birthplace as Kingsbury.

We were delighted to find two photographs of Ruth's granddaughter, also Ruth!  
Here she is with her daughter, Laretta Best, taken in Australia, where she died in  
1924, aged 71.



Valerie Jackson and Nathalie Hetherington  
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