



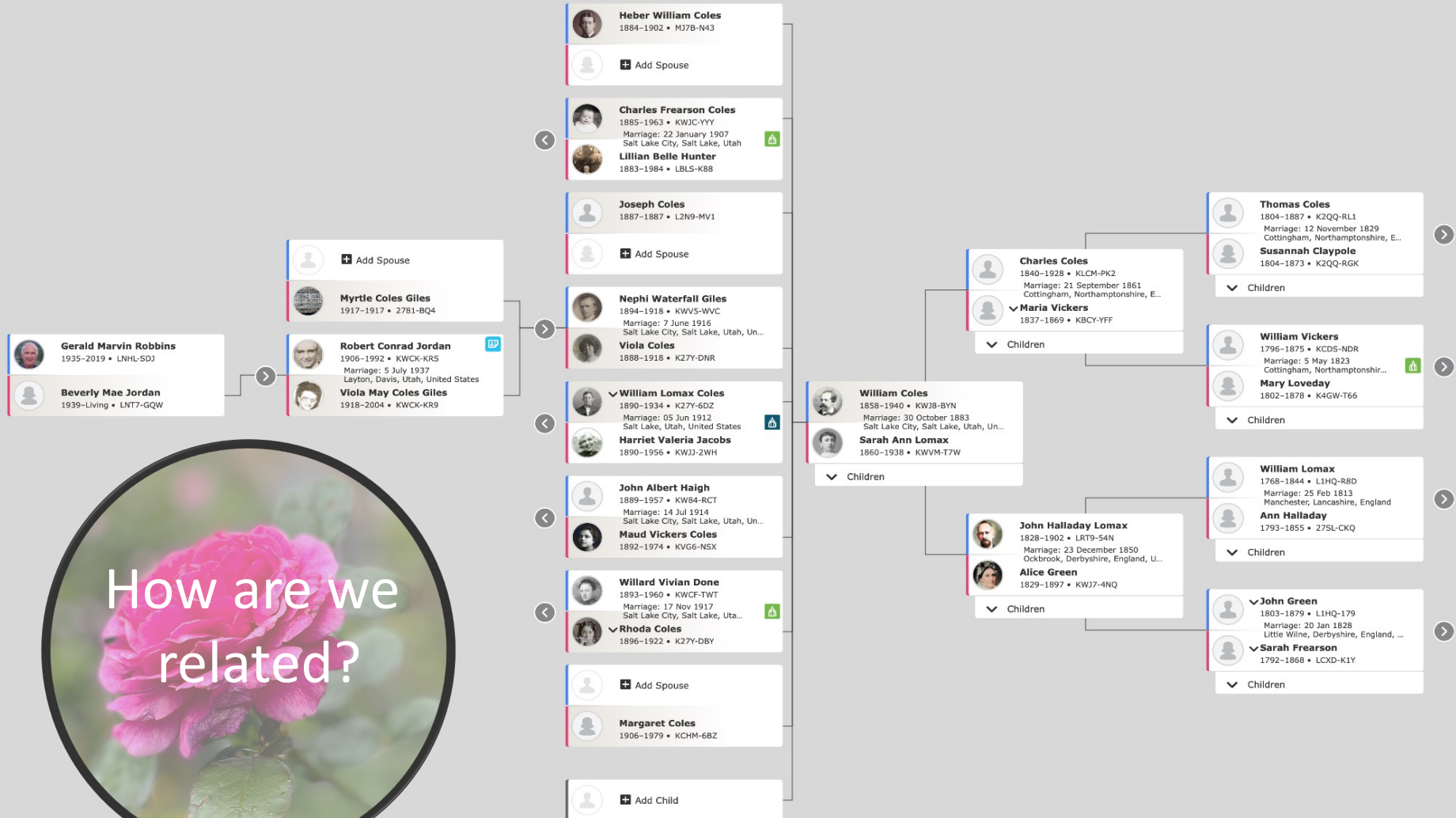
# Cottingham, Northamptonshire, England

Village home of William Coles

Ancestral homeland of Coles, Claypole, Vickers and Loveday families

Roses from the St. Mary Magdalene church yard.

How are we related?



## William Coles (1858-1940)

Some might wonder why I chose to follow William Coles path back to his homeland. My curiosity about his life stems from the unique way his life has impacted mine.

William Coles and his wife, Viola, raised my grandmother, Viola May Coles. Her parents died in the flu epidemic of 1918. According to the family story, William insisted that he and his wife raise May after his daughter passed away. At that time, William was 60 years-old and Sarah was 58. This decision makes a little bit of sense given the uncertainty of his own parentage.

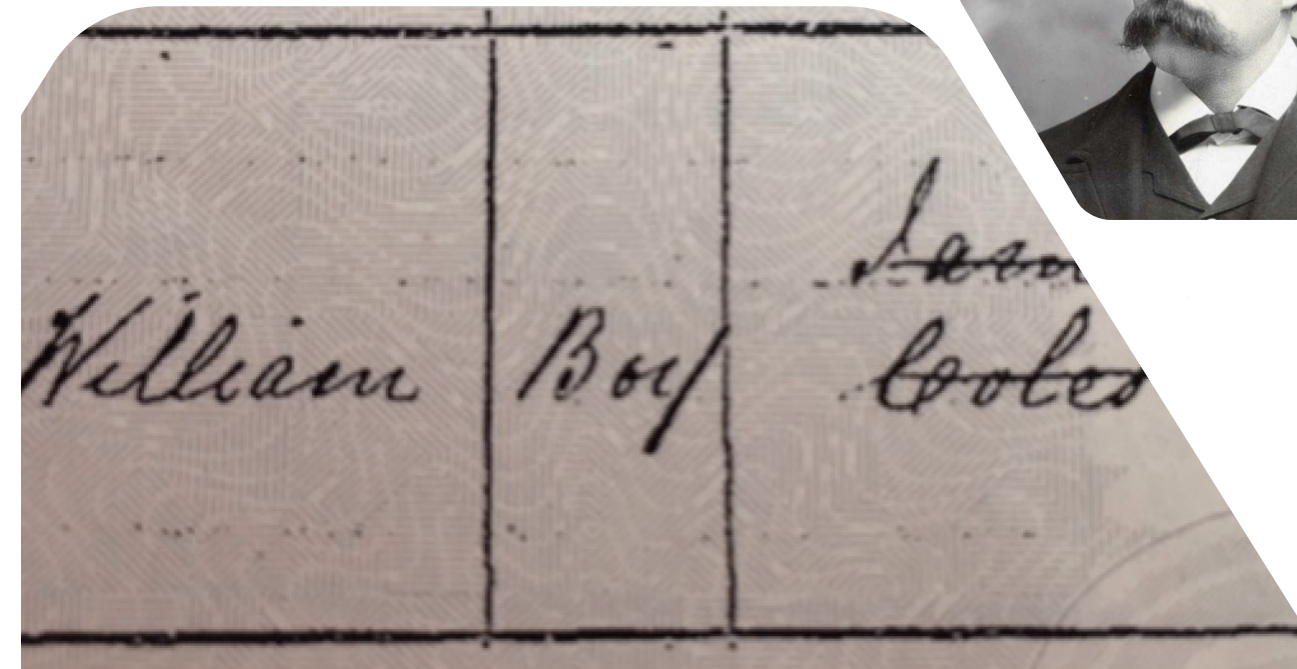
The 1861 census (upper left) lists William Coles, age 3, living with his mother, mother's siblings and parents on Church Street. On the census William's name is William Vickers, age 3, nephew. Since William's age in 1861 corresponds with his 1858 birth year, it is thought that this was actually William Coles and assumed that he was illegitimate. His mother, Maria Vickers, later married Charles Coles and William was given his surname. Of interest is that fact that William Coles birth certificate (lower left) actually gives the name "James Coles" as his birth father, but the name has been crossed out. It is unsure why the certificate is written this way. Sadly, at age 11, William's mother, Maria passed away.

As I have pondered William's decision to raise my grandmother, I wondered if in his heart he just wanted to be sure that she had family. He knew what it felt like to be an orphan. I think he wanted to be sure she was raised by her own family.

By age 23, William joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and immigrated to the United States. His life impacted the life of my grandmother and ultimately who I am today.



City or Municipal Borough of		Municipal Ward of	Parliamentary Borough of	Town of	Hamlet or Tything, &c., of	
USES Un- sub- scribed (C.), or Building (B.)	Name and Surname of each Person	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age of		Rank, Profession, or Occupation
				Male	Female	
	William Vickers	Head	Mar	65		Gardener
	Mary	Wife	Mar	59		Laundress
	Maria	Daughter	Un	11		Ag Lab
	Frances	Daughter	Un	11		Laundress
	Emma	Granddaughter	Un	3		General Serv
	William Vickers	Nephew		3		





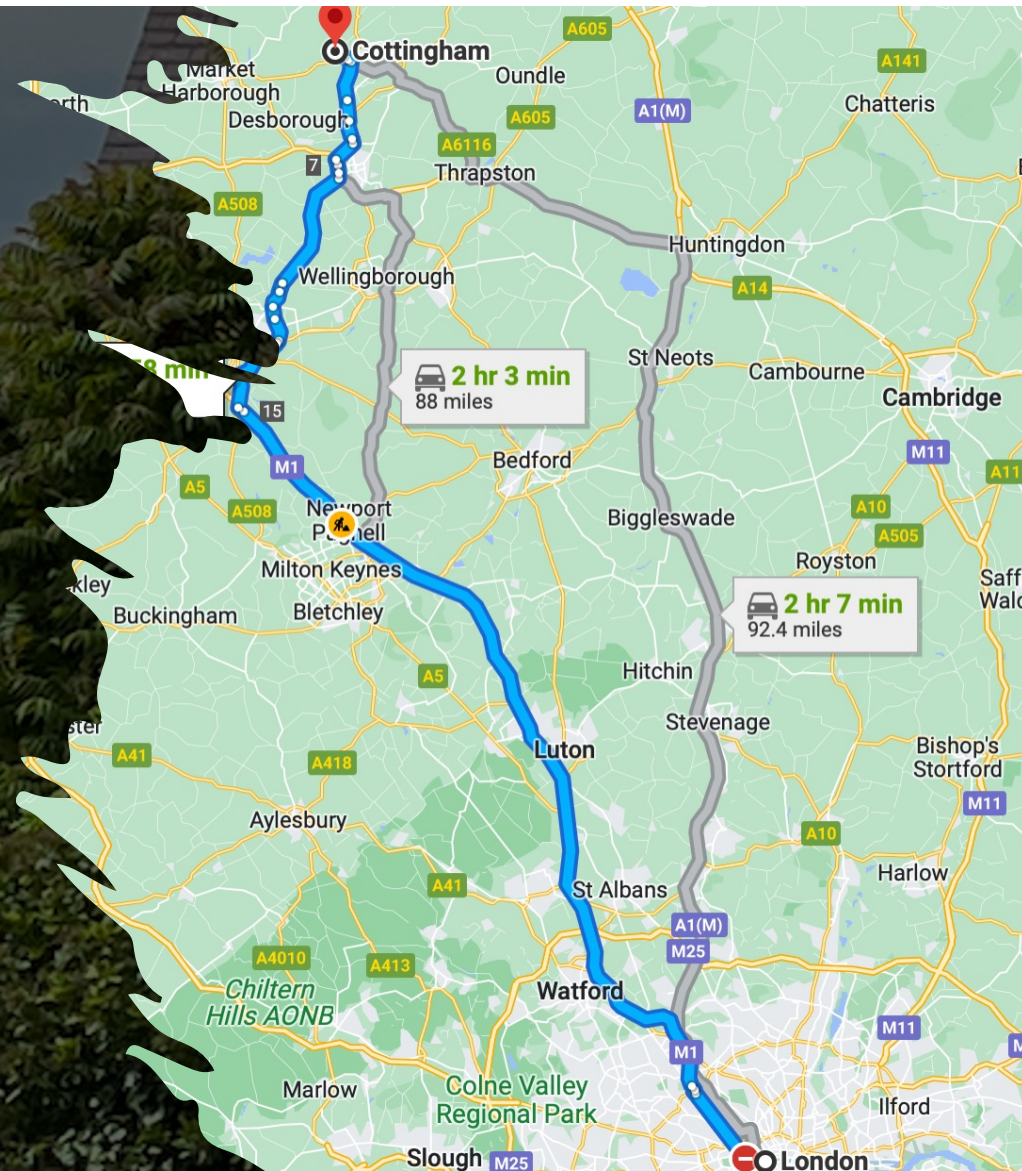
During my research, I reached out to Chris Blenkarn, the owner [cottinghamsoldiers.org.uk](http://cottinghamsoldiers.org.uk), a site dedicated to World War 1 military personnel, specifically those who died in battle. It turns out that she is a distant cousin. Chris has been an amazing resource. She was raised in Cottingham. She sent me these photos from her early years. (Two photos above left) The photo on the right above is of Jeff walking down Church Street. William Coles lived with his family on Church Street in 1861. His family lines can be traced to this small village through the 1600s.

### Where is this place?

That is a good question. In fact, our first attempts to find Cottingham failed. Our taxi driver took us to the wrong location.

Cottingham is a tiny village about 90 miles north of London. The area is surrounded by small villages, rolling hills, and farmland. Each village has a beautiful church nestled among quaint brick homes that date back to the 1800s.

To get Cottingham we took the West Midland Train to Market Harborough or Kettering, then took a taxi to Cottingham.





## The Royal George

Our first stop was The Royal George, a small pub and inn that dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. According to The Royal George website, wood from the trusses were tested and found to have been felled in 1262. Notice that these wood beams have an irregular shape like a tree branch. When we arrived, the new owners served us fish and chips and a wonderful welcome. In medieval times, this bed and breakfast might not have looked so polished but must have been a welcomed shelter for a weary traveler.

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## The Churches of Cottingham

Upon returning home, I learned several things about the two churches we saw in Cottingham. The church on the far right with the red door is the Methodist Church. It was built in 1808, but sadly, at the time of our visit was closed to visitors and currently for sale. Chris Blenkarn informed me that she found Maria Vicker's (William's mother) name on the Methodist Sunday School rolls. She would have attended here.

The second church is the St. Mary Magdalene Church. Similar church buildings can be found in every little village in the area. This building houses The Church of England and was the parish church. Maria Vickers and Charles Coles would have been married here. We were thrilled when a resident of the village saw us looking around and escorted us, helping us enter this lovely building. The flags that can be seen throughout were part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee that was being celebrated the weekend we were there.





The beautiful church yard of St. Mary Magdalene over-looks farmland and grazing livestock. Parts of the cemetery seemed untouched after a chilly winter, while other areas were cleared and readied for spring. Beautiful roses were in full bloom in the front gardens. We wandered through the cemetery taking pictures of any headstones with surnames that matched my family lines.

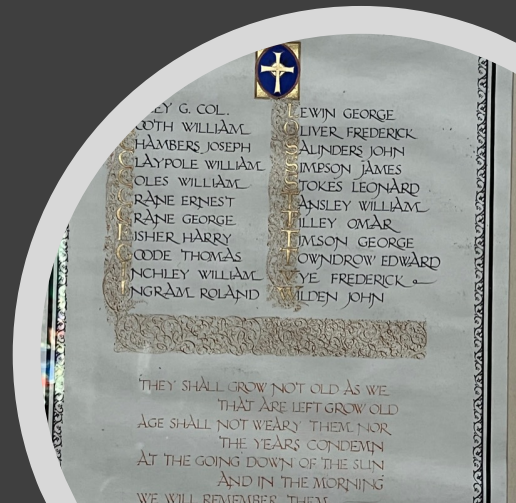
Upon returning home, I was delighted to add a William Vickers (1853-1925) to his family in Family Search. Somehow William had been left off. I found that his wife Elizabeth was currently connected to her biological family but there was nothing that connected her to William. With a few clicks, William and Elizabeth and children, Herbert and Edith, were connected because of one photo (left). Although these individuals are not directly related to me, I am sure somewhere down the road, I will find our connection.

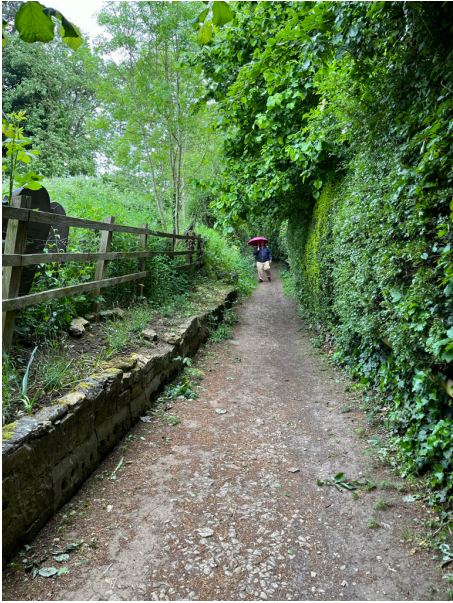






Inside St. Mary Magdalene we found a tidy, beautiful little church. I would have loved to have heard the stories around its furnishings. We were thrilled to find this framed tribute (right) to World War I citizens who lost their lives fighting for freedom. On the list we found distant relatives, William Claypole and William Coles.





## Unique Cottingham Places

A walking path in front of the church yard accentuates the beautiful greenery of spring.

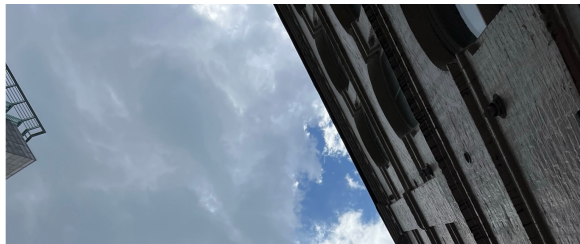
What can be done with thousands of red phone booths? Create a village Library, of course!

A natural spring oozes from behind the brick wall in the back of this photo. It is believed to be the reason why evidence of Roman and Anglo-Saxon settlements have been found in the area.

A few days before we left for Europe, Chris sent me a photo of her mother and grandmother standing on Church street in front of St. Mary Magdalene. As our time in Cottingham was coming to an end, I had Jeff grab a picture of me in the same location. There is something very sweet about walking in the footsteps of your ancestors. Dates and places on paper are meaningful but seeing these places first-hand has made me even more grateful for the lives they lived.



## The Queen's Platinum Jubilee



I would be remiss to describe our events in England June 2-5, without mentioning the incredible experience celebrating the Queen's Jubilee with thousands of Brits. We managed to land in the right place at the right time the entire weekend. The photo below was taken about 3 hours after landing in the UK. We scurried to Trafalgar Square to snap a photo of Kate Middleton and Camilla Parker Bowles in their carriage (above, look closely). We caught a glimpse of the flyover outside the pub where we were eating lunch. Late Thursday evening we decided to stroll back over to Buckingham Palace and were there when the Queen lit up the "tree of trees" followed by the projections on the Palace. On Saturday, we found Cottingham setting up for celebrations despite the rain. One sweet resident invited us to view her lovely garden and of course St. Mary Magdalene welcomed guests with Jubilee flags and flowers. We felt the excitement and fell in love with the culture.



I just had to leave a few more photos. Jeff and I both agree that Cottingham was a highlight of our trip. We hope to return someday but until then the memories are awesome!