

Newfound Particulars of Blake's
Patrons, Thomas and Elizabeth Butts,
1767–1806

BY MARY LYNN JOHNSON

MARY LYNN JOHNSON (mary-grant@uiowa.edu), a retired special assistant in the University of Iowa president's office, has written several essays on Blake's biblical watercolors for Thomas Butts. For help in working through her recent archival findings, she thanks G. E. Bentley, Jr., Joseph Viscomi, Keri Davies, Morton Paley, Morris Eaves, and Sarah Jones.

1 AS friendly benefactors of William and Catherine Blake, the clerk Thomas Butts (1759–1845) and his schoolmistress wife, née Elizabeth Mary Cooper

(1754–1825), merit an occasional spotlight in the background of Blake studies.¹ To published profiles of the couple may now be added details of their occupations, possessions, finances, and other circumstances from previously unexplored materials in the London Metropolitan Archives, the National Archives, parish records, and miscellaneous publications of the time. Corrections of earlier errors, along with additions to core facts about Butts's family history and Methodist heritage, are noted here.²

Particulars of Elizabeth Mary Cooper (Butts),
1767–1801

- 2 Elizabeth Mary Cooper, having served a seven-year apprenticeship to a schoolmistress (1767–74), later supervised five apprentices for overlapping terms (1782–95) in her own school, beginning with her sister Elyn, and among her pupils were at least two whose parents were not married. Elizabeth's carver-gilder father, Joseph Cooper, and her mother, Elizabeth, née Yardley (daughter of silversmith George Yardley and Winifred, née Nash), who were married in the bride's parish of St. Olave, Silver Street (17 July 1750), baptized their two sons and four elder daughters in that parish (1751–64) and their two younger daughters

1. The pioneering discoveries of G. E. Bentley, Jr., "Thomas Butts, White Collar Maecenas," *PMLA* 71 (1956): 1052–66, updated in Bentley, *Blake Records*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), and in annual addenda to *Blake Records*, were expanded by Joseph Viscomi, "William Blake's 'The Phoenix / to Mrs Butts' Redux," *Blake* 29.1 (summer 1995): 12–15, "Blake in the Marketplace 1852: Thomas Butts, Jr. and Other Unknown Nineteenth-Century Blake Collectors," *Blake* 29.2 (fall 1995): 40–68, and "A 'Green House' for Butts? New Information on Thomas Butts, His Residences, and Family," *Blake* 30.1 (summer 1996): 4–21. Further information (see corrections in note 2) appears in Mary Lynn Johnson, "More on Blake's (and Bentley's) 'White Collar Maecenas': Thomas Butts, His Wife's Family of Artisans, and the Methodist Withams of St. Bartholomew the Great," *Blake in Our Time: Essays in Honour of G. E. Bentley Jr.*, ed. Karen Mulhallen (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010) 131–64, said to contain "the most exhaustive research yielding the slimmest conclusions" (Clint Stevens, "Honoring G. E. Bentley, Jr.," *Eighteenth Century* 53.4 [winter 2012]: 515).

2. Elizabeth Mary Cooper Butts's dates should be 1754–1825, not 1753–1826 (see newfound records in note 3). Regrettably, I mistyped Thomas Butts's death year (1845) as 1844 and disassociated the identity of his father (of the same name) from that of John Wesley's "book steward," "a compiler and publisher of hymnals" (Johnson, "More ..." 160n49).

In fact, the patron's father (son of "Thomas Butts of Wap[ping] Apothecary [d. 1727/28] & Elizabeth" [née Eads, married 1 Apr. 1714])—that is, the baby who was baptized in St. Dunstan's, Stepney (14 Aug. 1719), who was left fatherless and impoverished at eight, and who grew up to marry Hannah Witham, 19 May 1746—is frequently mentioned in papers of John and Charles Wesley. He and William Briggs were appointed to run Wesley's publishing enterprise in 1753, a date also proposed for the earliest edition of his influential compilation *Harmonia-Sacra: or, A Choice Collection of Psalm and Hymn Tunes ...* (John Rylands Library, Methodist Printed Collections). In 1754 he joined other Wesley associates who protected the controversial young kidnapping victim and convicted perjurer Elizabeth Canning in prison. Under questioning, he identified himself as "one of his Majesty's Landwaiters" at his Ratcliffe Row address (spelled variously), confirming a descendant's note on his work in the "Customs House" (Viscomi, "A 'Green House' for Butts?" 5), where his official title was "Deputy King's Waiter." On 20 June 1766 he co-signed an appeal for funds to clear a debt of "upwards" of £1400 incurred by the Reformation Society. On 25 Aug. 1767, now identified as a "watch-spring-maker" (although Christ's Hospital school had apprenticed him, at almost fifteen, to a linen draper in 1734), Butts reappears as a bankrupt. An auction (advertised 3 Oct. 1767) "at his house, No. 14, in Radcliff-row" featured "his fine collection of prints, and some valuable pictures; his large and well-chosen library of books," and his organ, harpsichord, and music collection. In the same year, the father of Blake's eight-year-old future patron married Ann Cook (Viscomi, "A 'Green House' for Butts?" 6) and moved to Hackney. In 1769, in a payment of dividends to his creditors, he is again identified as "Watch-spring Maker, Dealer and Chapman" at his old address. But after his death, when his three life insurance policies were paid on 8 July 1779, he is listed as "Exchange Broker," "heretofore of Ratcliffe-row, near St. Luke's, Old-Street, but late of Homerton"—another town in Hackney. He was "struck off" the list of brokers by a Court of Aldermen on 2 Oct. 1771 but "sworn broker" in the same court on 26 Jan. 1773. As "T.B.," he may also be the author of *A Letter from a Private Person to His Pastor, concerning the People Called Methodists* (c. 1743), Gale doc. no. CW123344497, *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* [hereafter ECCO].

An unrelated correction: in "Catalogue of Some of Blake's Pictures at 'The Salterns': Captain Butts as Exhibitor, Litigator, and Co-heir (with His Sister Blanche)," *UTQ* 80.4 (fall 2011): 893–917, I mistyped Butts the patron's 1759 birth date as 1739 (abstract and opening paragraph).

in St. Mary, Islington (1768–70), almost two miles north.³ On 3 October 1767, Mary Blackstone “of S^t Mary Islington Midd^x School Mistress” took thirteen-year-old “Eliz. Cooper” as her apprentice for a seven-year term that began on 7 September 1767, paying a stamp duty of 0/10/6 on a premium of £21, presumably supplied by Elizabeth’s father.⁴ After completing her term in September 1774, Elizabeth was qualified for employment in a school or a private home.⁵

- 3 On 18 July 1782, in her own establishment, “Elizth Cooper[,] South Moulton St Co of Middlesex School Mistress” accepted her sister Elyn, not quite fourteen, as her first apprentice for a premium of £70, on which she paid a £1 duty (only on the amount above £50; see note 4) at term’s end on “Tues. 21 July 1789.” On 6 September 1784, establishing a pattern of two-year intervals, she accepted Augusta Johnson for a seven-year term under an indenture of £71, for which both “Elizth & Tho^s Butts[,] South Molton S^t. C^o. of Midd^x” paid a £1/1/0 duty on 16 July 1789. On 28 September 1787, “Eliz. Butts[,] S^t George Hanover Square School Mistress” paid 15s. on £30 for two indentures for Elizabeth Parker, whose seven-year apprenticeship had begun on 13 August 1786. Running concurrently with Elyn’s, Augusta’s, and Elizabeth’s terms was the three-year apprenticeship of Margaret Barker, 27 May 1784 to May 1787, for which Elizabeth Butts had paid £1/5/0 on £50 for two in-

dentures (23 July 1785). And finally, on 9 June 1789, “Elizth Butts[,] St Jame’s [sic] ... School Mistress,” in the parish of her post-1788 school and family home on Great Marlborough Street, paid a duty of 15s. on £30 for Lydia Pitman’s two indentures for a seven-year term, 16 May 1788 to May 1795.⁶

- 4 The only two pupils in Mrs. Butts’s school presently identifiable by name, as recorded in their fathers’ wills, were acknowledged daughters of unmarried mothers. Captain James Denty’s “natural Daughter Elizabeth Denty ... about seven years of age now at Mrs. Butts Boarding School in South Molton Street” (1790) was to receive £600 on her twenty-first birthday (Johnson, “More ...” 148, 164n64). And in an 1801 codicil to his 1796 will, the bachelor Benjamin Charles Collins (d. 1808) named as sole beneficiary of the residue of his estate “Maria Castle (so called) at M^{rs} Butts Ladies School, Great Marlbro [sic] Street, Carnaby Market the said Maria to be a ward of Chancery.” Maria’s mother was presumably Mary Elizabeth Goodenge, “calling herself Mary Castle now residing with me at No. 40 New Road in the parish of St Mary le Bone Middlesex.”⁷

3. Baptismal dates of the young Coopers later mentioned in the will of their father, Joseph Cooper “of Noble Street Foster Lane” (probated 20 Apr. 1801 [Johnson, “More ...” 146]) are George Yardley, 10 June 1751; Elizabeth Mary, 23 Jan. 1754; Anne, 4 July 1755; Joseph [Jr.], 22 Nov. 1756; Frances, 4 Aug. 1762; Winifred Nash, 27 July 1764 (all at St. Olave, Silver Street); Ellin [“Elyn,” in her father’s will], 12 Aug. 1768; Sarah, 15 June 1770 (both at St. Mary, Islington); see London Metropolitan Archives [hereafter LMA], P69/OLA3/A/001/MS06534, *London, England, Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1538–1812* (Provo: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010 [hereafter ancestry.com]).

Elizabeth, born and christened on 23 Jan. 1754, was a few months younger than had been derived from the age “72” recorded at her burial on 4 Apr. 1825 in St. Bartholomew the Great, her husband’s ancestral parish (Johnson, “More ...” 161n55; see image 2 [of 6] for 1825 in LMA, *St. Bartholomew the Great, Register of Burials, 1813–1843*, P69/BAT3/A/011/MS06781, item 003, in *London, England, Deaths and Burials, 1813–1980*, ancestry.com). For the parish record of Butts’s burial beside his wife on 1 May 1845 (d. 25 Apr.), see this church’s *Register of Burials, 1843–1853*, P69/BAT3/A/011/MS06781, item 004, in *London, England, Deaths and Burials, 1813–1980*, ancestry.com.

4. Extracted from the Commissioner of Stamps’ *Register of Duties Paid for Apprentices’ Indentures, 1710–1811* (National Archives, via ancestry.com), IR 1, piece 25, p. 105, images 490-91 of 1893, cited hereafter by piece, page, and image/set numbers. Arranged by payment dates (regardless of location) in two-page spreads often lacking column headers, the registry shows names of masters and apprentices, occupations, addresses, number of indentures, term lengths, and premiums received by masters. As duties could be paid at any time from the beginning of an indenture until a year after its completion, dates of masters’ payments and apprentices’ terms may be at considerable variance. Premiums received for indentures up to and including £50 were taxed at sixpence to the pound (2.5%), or £1/5/0 on £50; for any portion above £50, the rate was a shilling to the pound (5%), although in some ledgers the five-percent rate is applied to the entire amount, and in others the lower-tier portion is simply ignored.

5. Probably in anticipation of Elizabeth’s departure, schoolmistress Blackstone took on Sarah Pennington for a premium of £31/10/0 for a seven-year apprenticeship beginning 20 Oct. 1773, paying a duty of 0/15/9 on 19 Nov. 1773 (piece 28, p. 3, images 701-02/1930). The location of Blackstone’s school on “The Upper Street,” one of the two main streets in the hilltop village of Islington, may be derived from her 1767 payment of land tax of £1/15/0 on rent of £15 at that address. In the same year, Elizabeth’s father paid £1/12/8 on rent of £14 on “Well’s Ron,” another (unmapped?) street in Islington.

6. For Elyn’s apprenticeship, see piece 34, p. 83, images 1941-42/2020. Oddly, premiums for seven-year terms ranged from £30 (for Elizabeth [33, 146-47, 1609-10/2020] and Lydia [32, 71, 1917-18/2020]) to £71 (for Augusta [34, 82, 1939-40/2020]), while Margaret’s three-year term fetched a premium of £50 (32, 181, 1224-25/2020).

7. PROB 11/1478/213, 6 May 1808; transcribed in Christine Y. Ferdinand, *Benjamin Collins and the Provincial Newspaper Trade in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) 221-24.

At thirty-four, Elizabeth Denty (b. 22 May 1782) married William Carter on 23 May 1816 in Islington, with her half-brother Col. H[enry] F[rançis] Denty as a witness (Linley and Jim Hooper’s family history site).

- 5 In 1786, when Thomas Butts lost a “Note of Hand,” or promissory note, for the large sum of £150, his advertised address, complete with street number, was that of his wife’s school:

LOST, between South Molton-street and Cavendish-square, a Note of Hand for 150*l*, drawn by Thos. Butts, No. 63, South Molton-street, payable to Edward Johns, on order, due 21st inst. and indorsed. As the note is paid, it will be of no use. Whoever will bring it to Messrs. Hercy, B[irch], and Hobbs, New Bond-street, shall receive One Guinea Reward.⁸

This address is in the parish of St. George, Hanover Square, where Elizabeth had lived before her marriage and where the Buttses’ first son, Joseph Edward, was baptized in 1784 (Johnson, “More ...” 146), before the family moved to Great Marlborough Street.

- 6 Butts’s occupation before his marriage to Elizabeth on 21 December 1782, while he was living across town in the parish of St. George the Martyr (Johnson, “More ...” 145) and not yet employed by the chief clerk in the office of the Commissary General of Musters in 1783 (Bentley, “Thomas Butts” 1053), remains unknown. Perhaps he was a coal merchant. Registers of the Sun Fire Office, which

record policy numbers and summarize the policies themselves, show that on 24 September 1792, “Thomas Butts N^o 9 Great Marlborough Street Coal Merchant” insured his “now dwelling House only Brick” for “Fifteen hundred pounds,” and his “Stable Coachhouse & Brewhouse adjoining in Blenheim Mews Brick” for “Two hundred pounds.” On “21 July 1796” this “Coal Merchant” paid 16*s*. to insure the family’s personal property for £750, itemized as “Household Goods” for £450, “Printed Books, Plate, & Pictures” for £150 at “Fifty pounds on each,” “Wearing Apparel” for £100, and “Prints Drawings & Needle Work” for £50.⁹ In a comprehensive investigation of the order in which Blake signed and sold his large color prints, Viscomi has proposed that Butts’s insured “Pictures” included three color prints by Blake, “*Hecate*, *Satan*, and *Pity*,” signed c. 1795–96, an acquisition leading up to his 1799 commission of the biblical tempera series.¹⁰

- 7 In 1788, when Butts and his associate William Woodman were jointly promoted to chief clerk, each earned £91/5/0; by 1797, Butts’s official salary had soared to a three-year average of £430/14/8 (Bentley, “Thomas Butts” 1053–54), not counting the sideline coal business, which is confirmed also in the 1807 will of Butts’s maternal uncle, Thomas Witham, and doubtless accounts for Butts’s later payments to Blake in coals (Johnson, “More ...” 138, 145).¹¹ The “Stable Coachhouse” insured in 1792 is a mark of affluence; perhaps the adjoining “Brewhouse” in Blenheim Mews, be-

8. *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser* 23 Mar. 1786, issue 4087 (Gale doc. no. Z2000954796, *17th–18th Century Burney Collection Newspapers*). This newly reported house number, with a rental value of £10 (reflected in Butts’s payment of poor rates for 1784; see “ratebook_151-15109” at <<http://www.londonlives.org/formRef.jsp>>), places the Buttses on the southeastern side of South Molton Street, near its diagonal intersection with Brook Street, toward New Bond Street. (When the Blakes moved to no. 17 in 1803, they were on the northwestern side, nearer Oxford Street.)

The pedestrian route from the Buttses’ home to Cavendish Square, north of Oxford Street, zigzags in the opposite direction from the New Bond Street addresses of Edward Johns, “ironmonger, brazier, and hardwareman,” at 141, and the banking firm of Hercy, Birch, and Hobbs (formerly Chambers) at 152 (F. G. Hilton Price, *A Handbook of London Bankers ...* [London: Chatto and Windus, 1876] 23). Johns’s advertised boast (single-sheet flier) that the superiority of his tin-lined copper kitchen vessels had been proved in “the ARMY & NAVY” invites speculation that the Musters office authorized Butts’s transaction (*Edward Johns, Ironmonger, Brazier, and Hardwareman, ... / Copper Kitchen Furniture / by His Majesty’s Royal Letters Patent* [London, 1780?], Gale doc. no. CW3305948953, ECCO).

Ironmonger Johns also sold the “New-invented SALISBURY PORTABLE KITCHEN,” in which “a joint may be roasted, and another boiled, with vegetables and puddings all at the same time, with less than two pennyworth of charcoal”; while still hot, it could bake “a loaf in one part, and pyes, tarts, cakes, rolls, or muffins in the other.” It was marketed “to those who have not proper convenience for cooking, and to Gentlemen at their country and hunting seats; also to merchants’ ships, and officers in camp ...” (*Morning Post and Daily Advertiser* 20 July 1780, issue 2414, Gale doc. no. Z2000943565, *17th–18th Century Burney Collection Newspapers*).

9. LMA, CLC/B/192/F/001/MS11936/389/605407 and CLC/B/192/F/001/MS11936/407/655896. See <<http://www.history.ac.uk/gh/fire.htm>>; J. H. Thomas, “Fire Insurance Policy Registers,” *History* 53 (Oct. 1968): 381–84, no. 19 in “Short Guides to Records,” ed. Lionel M. Munby (reprinted in *Short Guides to Records*, ed. Munby [1972]); H. A. L. Cockerell and Edwin Green, *The British Insurance Business: A Guide to Its History and Records*, 2nd ed. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994); L. D. Schwarz and L. J. Jones, “Wealth, Occupations, and Insurance in the Late Eighteenth Century: The Policy Registers of the Sun Fire Office,” *Economic History Review* 36.3 (Aug. 1983): 365–73.

The insured “Needle Work” brings to mind a piece attributed in part to Blake, the “Two Hares” embroidery by William Blake and Mrs. Butts (c. 1790–1800) (Fitzwilliam Museum).

10. “Signing Large Color Prints: The Significance of Blake’s Signatures,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* (forthcoming 2014).

11. Presumably Butts belonged to the “class of middle-men who are called in the trade ‘Brass-plate Coal-Merchants:’ ... who have no wharfs, but merely give their orders to some true coal-merchant,” thereby increasing consumers’ costs (Charles Babbage, *On the Economy of Machinery and Manufactures* [London: Charles Knight, 1832] 124).

hind the school's long back garden, brought in rent from a tenant. In 1799 Butts's estimated annual taxable income of about £468/13/0 from all sources gave him a foothold in the upper middle class.¹²

- 8 The promotion of Butts and Woodman was retroactive to 2 June 1788, the date their employer, "George Hesse, esq.," returned from gambling at the Phillimore Club "about two o'clock in the morning," went into the library of "his house in the Adelphi," wrote letters to his mother, his wife (née Gunthorp[e], daughter of a wealthy West India merchant), and to "Mr. Agar, Mr. Crawford, and Mr. Woodman," "charged very lightly one of his own travelling pistols," and shot himself through the mouth. "His pecuniary affairs, from deep play" had "sustained a shock of the most momentous nature."¹³ When the body was discovered six hours later, a "Coroner's Inquisition" was quickly convened, with Butts and Woodman among the deponents.
- 9 "Thomas Butt[s] late Clerk to Mr. Hesse, the Deced[ent]," appearing "before *Thomas Prickard*, Gentleman, Coroner of our said Lord the King ... on View of the Body of *George Adam Calcraft Hesse Esq'* then and there lying dead," "on

his Oath saith That he has lived with the Deced / almost five Years, Deced being Chief Clerk to the / Commissary General of Musters."¹⁴ Butts swore that Hesse "for about three Weeks last past has been / dejected and very low Spirited, and often in / Dep[onen]t.[s] hearing Said that he did not know what / he was doing, and Dep^t. saw him do things / that he did not intend to do And Dep^t. says / that the Deced was at times Disordered in / his Mind. Says that he Understood that / there were some [inserted above line] loose Papers and Letters / found in Deced's Parlour this Morning, but / none directed to this Dep^t. to his Knowledge." After Woodman's corroborating testimony, the jury reached a verdict: Hesse "being a Lunatick Shot himself with a Pistol Ball"

- 10 At probate hearings on "26th January 1790," Thomas Butts, "Coal Merchant," and Reuben Smith, "Wine Merchant" (also one of fifteen jurors at the inquest), "having frequently seen the said deceased write and also Subscribe his name," authenticated Hesse's handwritten one-sentence will, dated "1 June 1788 London." The will names Woodman as an administrator of the depleted estate, "which if it were Millions I bequeath to my most beloved and adorable Wife all &

12. The adjusted income of "Thos Butts, Esq., Gt Marlboro," taxed at ten percent (ignoring the complicated allowances for children of various ages), is derived from his payment of £46/17/4 recorded in "Individual Tax Payments, Income More Than 60 Pounds" (UK Data Archive, London; History Data Service Study no. 3785 by T. V. Jackson, compiled from E182/630 in the Public Record Office [now National Archives]; see "Additional Datasets > Income Tax Payments 1799–1802" at <<http://www.londonlives.org/formPersName.jsp>>; see also Jackson, "British Incomes circa 1800," *Economic History Review* 52.2 (May 1999): 257–83.

For this first-ever income tax, imposed on 9 Jan. 1799 under Pitt the Younger to pay for the oncoming Napoleonic Wars, incomes estimated below £60 were not taxed; between £60 and £200 the rates increased according to £5 increments in income; those in the highest bracket, above £200, were taxed at ten percent. Among Butts's neighbors on the same street, only one, Culpepper Conant, paid less: £6/15/0, indicating an income of only £145–50 or so, according to "Scale of Ascent from £60 to £200" in *Tax on Income. A Correct Abridgment of the Act for Imposing a Tax on All Income*, 5th ed. (London, 1799), Gale doc. no. CW3304852647, ECCO. Married women who owed taxes were listed separately (Jackson, "British Incomes" 272–73); the absence of an entry for schoolmistress Butts suggests that her adjusted income fell below the £60 threshold.

For a rough guide to Butts's purchasing power, see H. M. Boot, "Real Incomes of the British Middle Class, 1760–1850: The Experience of Clerks at the East India Company," *Economic History Review* 52.4 (Nov. 1999): 638–68, and, less technically, Edward Copeland, "Money," *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen*, ed. Edward Copeland and Juliet McMaster, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 127–43.

13. Almost verbatim accounts appeared in such papers as the *Times* (4 June 1788, with "Further Particulars" on 5 June), the *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser* (4 June 1788), and, quoted here, the June issue of *Gentleman's Magazine* (58, pt. 1 [1788]: 563–64).

Hesse also kept company with the Prince of Wales and with political satirist Caleb Whitefoord, who corresponded with Benjamin Franklin's grandson about extending hospitality to Mrs. Hesse on her 1783 visit to Paris (*The Whitefoord Papers ...* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898] 190–91; see also <<http://franklinpapers.org/franklin/framedNames.jsp>>). For a searching analysis of the case, with further citations of insiders' gossip in the *English Chronicle* (3 June 1788), *General Evening Post* (5 and 7 June 1788), and elsewhere, see Donna T. Andrew, *Aristocratic Vice: The Attack on Duelling, Suicide, Adultery, and Gambling in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013) 99–101.

14. All quotations from these depositions are transcribed, via <<http://www.londonlives.org>>, from *City of Westminster Coroners: Coroners' Inquests into Suspicious Deaths*, 5 Jan. 1788–29 Dec. 1788, WACWIC652280332 [Butts's and Woodman's testimony, 2 June 1788] and WACWIC652280323 [jurors' names and verdict].

Hesse's name is inserted by hand into a printed form in which coroner Prickard's name appears in italics. Butts's oath that he "lived with" Hesse for "almost five Years" (1783–88), surely referring only to the workday, indicates that his clerkship had begun in the second half of 1783. Hesse's home at 1–2 Adam Street in "the Adelphi," designed by the Adam brothers, was about a mile from the Musters office at Horse Guards on Whitehall. Hesse was also "Computer of Off-reckonings," at £80, in the Office of Paymaster General (*London Calendar* [1788] 165), among several sinecures obtained through his well-connected father, John Adam Frederick Hesse (1716–83). The younger Hesse, "by his interest with the then paymasters-general of the forces, Lord North and Mr. Cooke, in whose office the elder Mr. H. held a situation of considerable emolument," received £600 a year after sixteen years there, augmented by the Musters appointment, "which, in time of war, has attached to it considerable advantages"; by 1788 his "official income amounted annually to the sum of 1500*l*," not counting the "liberal fortune" of his wife (*Gentleman's Magazine*; see note 13, above).

every thing in my power to give & grant I trust she will have both real and personal.”¹⁵

- 11 At some point, perhaps as a way of managing and dividing perquisites and emoluments after their joint elevation to Hesse’s vacated position, Butts and Woodman formed a private partnership. On 3 July 1802, as Woodman’s retirement approached, they terminated the agreement: “Notice is hereby given, that the Copartnership between William Woodman and Thomas Butts, of Whitehall, Westminster, Army and Half-Pay Agents, is this Day dissolved by mutual Consent. All Debts owing to or from the said partnership Concern will be received and paid by the said Thomas Butts only.”¹⁶ And at last, under “Monies paid by” in “An Account of the Income of the Consolidated Fund of Great Britain, for the year ended the 5th day / of January 1806,” “Thomas Butts, on Account of the late George Hesse, Esq.,” discharged what must have been Hesse’s final obligation of “£1,351/16/7.”¹⁷
- 12 As Bentley and Viscomi have shown, Thomas and Elizabeth Butts’s residences, occupations, and expenditures have a bearing on the formation of their Blake collection. The present collection of minutiae is offered in the hope that some oddly angled fact, spotted by a foraging scholar, will jibe with another fact at just the right point to nudge a worthy project forward, toward the general advancement of Blake studies.

15. National Archives, PROB 11/1188/88, 9 Feb. 1790. Butts’s purported signature on the probate document (apparently by a surrogate, as Hesse’s signature is also part of the record) lacks the distinctive “B” discussed in Viscomi, “A ‘Green House’ for Butts?” and visible on appointment papers of Thomas Higgins (29 Dec. 1804 [Johnson, “More ...” 152n11]) and George Collard (17 Oct. 1805 [lot 20, Bonhams auction 18847, 7 June 2011; <<http://www.bonhams.com/auctions/18847/lot/20>>]). Not seen: Butts’s signature on Evelyn P. Dormer’s appointment to captain, 6 June 1811, DR225/115, Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive, Stratford-upon-Avon.

16. *London Gazette*, issue 15494, p. 709. When the Musters office was abolished on 25 Sept. 1818, Woodman received a pension of £200, on the basis of fourteen years’ service (1788–1802), while Butts, having served thirty-five years (1783–1818), received £430, and his sons “1st Senior Clerk” Joseph Edward, appointed in 1799, and “3rd” clerk Thomas, appointed in 1803, received £140 and £99 (*Estimates and Accounts: Army; Navy; Ordnance; Civil List ... &c.* 11 [21 Apr.–23 Nov. 1820]: [203 (handwritten p. 195)]).

17. H.M. Stationery Office, *Journals of the House of Commons* 61 (1806 [46 Geo. III]): 650, in appendix no. 16, under a header spreading to p. 651.