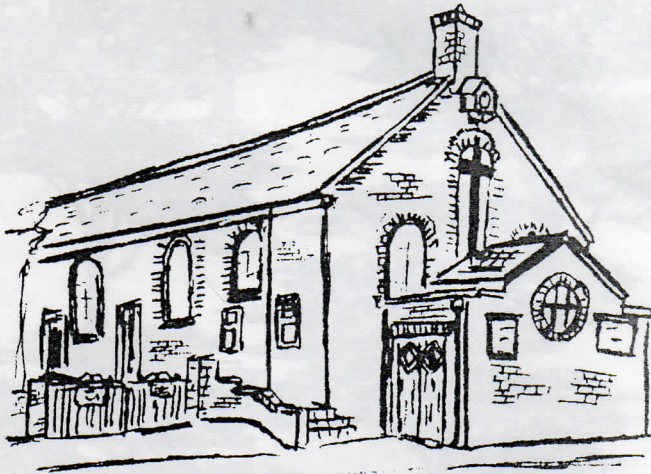
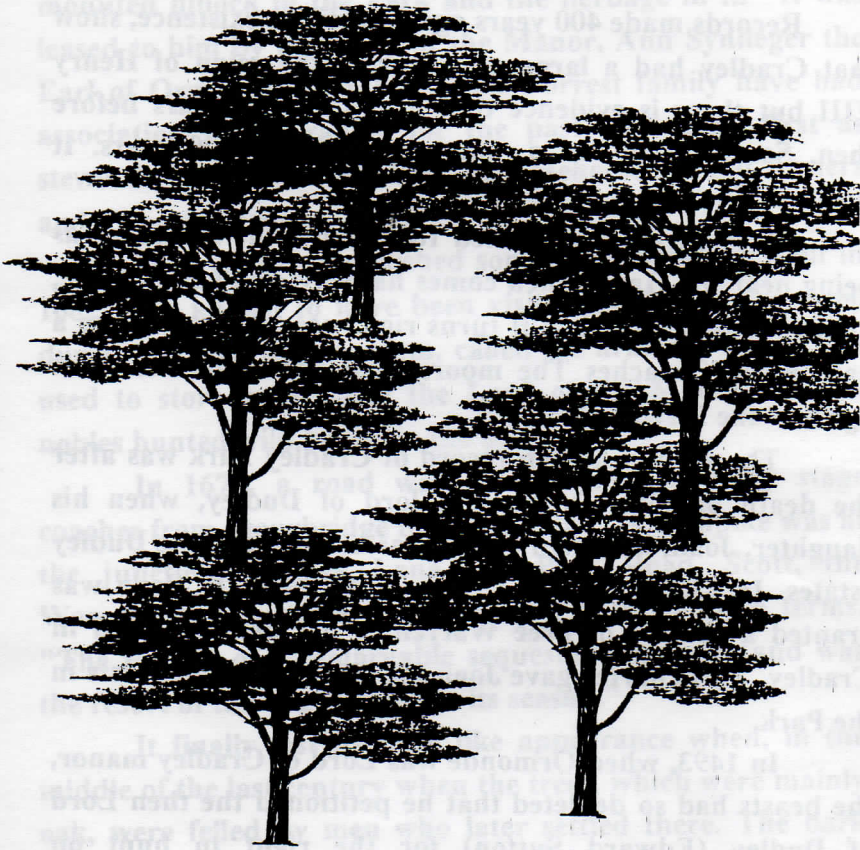


Two Gates
Ragged School



CRADLEY

PARK



CRADLEY

PARK

CRADLEY PARK

Records made 400 years ago and still in existence, show that Cradley had a large park during the reign of Henry VIII but there is evidence that it existed 400 years before then. So the park has a known history of 700 years. It covered 150 acres.

A study of a map dated 1826 shows the boundary as being near the Hayes, then comes halfway along Park Lane, up Tanhouse Lane, then it turns right near the top, along a path until it reaches The moors then right again to meet again at the Hayes.

The earliest known record of Cradley Park was after the death of John De Someri, lord of Dudley, when his daughter, Joan, inherited Cradley as her share of the Dudley estates. In 1335 during the reign of Edward III, Joan was granted a charter of Free Warren in her demesne land in Cradley. This charter gave Joan the right to all the beasts in the Park.

In 1493, when Ormonde was Lord of Cradley manor, the beasts had so depleted that he petitioned the then Lord of Dudley (Edward Sutton) for the right to hunt on Pennsnett Chase. The charter was granted, but, it included in it the right of John Bere, to share in the charter. This John Bere must have been a man of some importance in Cradley, as he had his own amorial bearings and ensigns. These embodied three bakers heads and spades.

Again, in the reign of Henry VIII, the park was

shared out. John Forrest "Had the lease of a mansion on a mounted hillock in the Park and the herbage in it." It was leased to him by the Lady of the Manor, Ann Synileger the Earl of Ormondes daughter. This Forrest family have had association with Cradley for the past 450 years, first as stewards of the Manor, later as leaseholders, land owners and Church wardens.

Park House, demolished some years ago, was built in 1682. It is known to have been visited by Oliver Cromwell during the civil war. A room, called the armoury room, was used to store guns when the Lord of the Manor and his nobles hunted wild beasts in the park.

In 1672, a road was cut through to carry stage coaches from Stourbridge to Birmingham. A turnpike was at the junction of Park Lane and Park Road. Scott, the Worcestershire historian wrote of the Park in these terms, "The Park is of a remarkable sequestered character and was the resort of the nightingale in its season."

It finally lost its park like appearance when, in the middle of the last century when the trees, which were mainly oak, were felled by men who later settled there. The bark from the trees was used for tanning and it was about this time that the tannery in Tanhouse Lane, from which it gets its name, was started, by two men named Bishop and Patshall.