



# *Knight Gregson*



DONALD R. FALKENBURG



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# Dedication



I dedicate this book to my mom *Jessie Knight Gregson*. Although mom knew very little of the history of her family, she was always proud of her English and Scottish roots; her mom was Scots-Irish and her dad was English. Mom loved the poetry of Robert Burns. I also recall her talking in near reverent terms about Bonnie Prince Charlie. Mom knew that Charles Edward Stuart was a hero to the Scots, but I am almost certain that if she could read this *History of the Knight Gregon family*, she would be surprised to find that her English ancestors embraced the return of Bonnie Prince Charlie in his effort to reinstate the Stuart Dynasty to the thrones of England and Scotland.

*Donald R. Falkenburg, 2016*

## BONNIE PRINCE CHARLIE

by Robert Burns

*A wee bird cam' tae our ha' door,*

*He warbled sweet and clarely,*

*And aye the o'ercomin' o' his song,*

*Was, Wae be tae prince Charlie!*

*Oh, when I heard the bonny, bonny bird*

*The tears cam' droppin' rarely,*

*I took my bonnet off my head,*

*For weel I lo'ed prince Charlie*



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# Forward

This story of the Knight Gregson family is rooted in the history of the British Isles. Little is known about the earliest Gregsons, and this book presents one possible theory regarding the emergence of the family. We have reasonable genealogical data for the Gregson family beginning at the dawn of the seventeenth century. In the nineteenth century, the joining of the *Knight family* with the *Gregson family*, created our current *Knight Gregson family*.

This book contains several interactive features. At the end of the book there is a list of references. These are marked with square brackets. Many of the references cited in this manuscript are hot-linked to internet resources. In this case, the text contains a hyperlink to a webpage. When you see a photo gallery, it will display the first of several pictures. You can access the next image by using the multi-touch swipe.

As the story moves toward my generation of Knight Gregsons, I focus on my own family. My apology to my many cousins who are not mentioned in this work. The Knight Gregsons are a large family. Henry Knight Gregson is the paterfamilias of the Knight Gregson family; Henry and wife Eliza Mary had fourteen children!

I hope you enjoy reading my account of our Knight Gregson family.

Don Falkenburg 2016



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# Knights Gregson



*The Knight Gregson family is a branch of the English Gregson family. In this book I trace the Gregsons back to John Gregson of Murton who was born in 1537. The emergence of the Gregson family is likely rooted in the Norman conquest of England by William the Conqueror in 1066. The Knight Gregson branch of the family was created when, in 1831, Henry Knight inherited the Gregson family estate Lowlynn from his cousin Anthony Gregson.*

# The Origin of the Gregsons

## The Norman Invasion

The emergence of the Gregson family is likely rooted in the Norman conquest of England by William the Conqueror in 1066. Power struggles and mergers of royal families were common across Europe. The stage for the invasion was set



*King Edward depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry*

when King Edward the Confessor died on 5 JAN 1066. Edward, son of Æthelred the Unready and Emma of Normandy, was born in Oxfordshire in 1003 and came to power as King of England in 1042. In a soap opera-like plot, Edward's father Æthelred died and his half-brother Edmund Ironside ascended the throne in Normandy. Edmund engaged in battle against the Viking warrior Canute. Through the Treaty of Olney, Edmund ceded the English midlands to Canute. Edmund died shortly after that and Canute became the first Viking king of England. In 1017, Canute married Æthelred's

widow Emma and bore two sons, Harthacnut and Gunhild. He also had two sons, Harald and Svein, by his English mistress Aelfifu. Canute consolidated his power after the death of his brother the King of Denmark. By the latter part of the decade of 1020, Canute claimed to be the king of all England, Scotland, Denmark, Norway, and part of Sweden. Canute died at a relatively young age in 1035. None of Canute's sons were made of the same mettle as their father, so the throne of England went to stepson Edward. When Edward died in 1066 without an heir, the stage was set for conflict. Harold Godwinson, advisor to Edward and brother-in-law to the king claimed the throne. On the other side of the English Channel, William Duke of Normandy also made a claim to the throne by virtue of a blood relation (though distant) to Edward. The third rival in this conflict was Harald Hadrada, the King of Norway and grandson of Viking King Canute of England. Both William, Duke of Normandy, and Harald Hadrada invaded England. Harada



struck first landing on the coast of northern England. The Norsemen sacked a few coastal villages and headed toward the city of York. King Harold (Godwinson) defeated the invading armies at the Battle of Stamford Bridge outside York. William of Normandy struck from the south on 14 OCT 1066 at Hastings. Unlike the northern invasion, Harold's troops were not able to prevail over the Norman invaders. King Harold was defeated and William's victory was completed when he was crowned King of England in Westminster Abbey (built by Edward the Confessor) on Christmas day 1066. [1]

## Family de Normanton

The History of the Family of Gregson of Whalley, Lancashire [2] provides a detailed genealogy of the family from the time of the Norman invasion. According to the author of this document, the family that was to become Gregson identified themselves using a territorial surname designating the ownership of land. They lived in Normanton on the River Calder in the West Riding of Yorkshire, hence the name de Normanton. The first record of a person from this family was named John. He was born about 1090 and lived in the Manor of Normanton. John was likely a son of one of the knights who was a part of William's invading force. In the eleventh century, Normanton (originally called Normantune) was surrounded by a moat. Such a settlement was likely chosen for its strategic view of the surrounding area. An area known as Haw (or How) Hill was a likely observation point.

The author of the aforementioned history states: "The position of the de Normantons was evidently one of much consequence, for alliances were freely made with the best families of Lancashire". Thomasyne Bolland who married (I.) John was descended from the Earls of Delamere. Isabel Bradley who married (II.) Arthur was the daughter of Sir Francis Bradley, Knight, Lord of Bradley Demesne. Margaret Knowles who married (III.) George was the daughter of Sir John Knowles, Knight and Feudal Lord of Chepin. (IV.) Arthur married Ann the daughter of Sir James, Knight of Tunstall and Thurland.

Generation (V.) Gregory de Normanton is a particularly noteworthy member of this family.



*“In 1189 Richard I (Coeur de Lion) came to the throne, and with that monarch came the age of the Crusades against Palestine. In order to raise funds he sold all the Crown Lands and offices of State he could, and for 10,000 marks he restored the Vassalage of Scotland. It was at that time an essential part of the education of the heir in every family of importance to be trained to fill a military career, and such would therefore have been the education of Gregory de Normanton. He was born at a period of religious fervor which overspread the whole of Europe, and into which the principal families of England entered with such zeal that many of them utterly impoverished themselves to find funds to support the Crusades, or to found Abbeys. Gregory himself appears to have parted with the Manor of Normanton, for his son Arthur, who was born about 1240, abandoned the strictly territorial name ‘de Normanton’ and became known as Arthurus filius Gregorii”.* [3]

Although the author of this Gregson history refers to Richard the Lionheart and the Crusades, King Richard I. died in 1199, almost a decade before the birth of Gregory. If Gregory distinguished himself in the Crusades, it would have been in the Seventh Crusade (1248 - 1254) which was led by Louis IX of France, the brother-in-law of King Henry III, reigning monarch of England during Gregory’s early life. Whether in the Crusades, or as a consequence of another campaign, we are reasonably sure that Gregory distinguished himself on the battlefield. His heraldic shield was enhanced with a canton.<sup>1</sup> — an azure and gold chequy (chessboard) indicating valor on the battlefield. Gregory de Normanton would have been created Knight Banneret. Clark in his Concise History of Knighthood describes the ceremony for conferring Knight Banneret:

*“The King, or his General, at the head of his army, drawn up in order of battle after a victory, under the royal standard displayed, attended by all the officers and nobility present, receives the Knight, led between two Knights, carrying his pennon [pennant] of arms in hand, the Heralds walking before him, who proclaim his valiant achievement, for which he has deserved to be made a Knight Banneret, and to display his banner in the field... The words the Herald says to the King are these: ... this Gentleman hath shewed himself valiant in the field, and for so doing deserveth to advance to the degree of Knight Banneret, as worthy henceforth to bear a banner in the war.”* [4]

**1** A canton is a corner decoration on the flag or arms.

## Arthur Gregorysonne

In about 1240 Sir Gregory de Normanton married Isabel, daughter of Sir William Singleton, Knight. Gregory's heir was son Arthur. Likely because of the fame of his father and the fact that Gregory had sold the estate at Normanton, Gregory assumed a patronymic designation for the family—in Latin this was written as *Arthurus filius Gregorii* or from the family's Norman heritage, Gregorysonne. In subsequent generations the surname would be shortened to Gregsonne, and finally, Gregson.

The family now lived in Whalley in Lancashire, about a 42 miles from Normanton. Whalley was the site of a Cistercian Abbey whose construction was begun in 1270. It is believed that Gregory and his descendants contributed to the construction of Whalley Abby. “Whalley must be taken as the true centre or nodal point of the Gregson family. Benedictus de Normanton was one of its earliest Abbots; the family arms were in the Abbey and are now in Whalley Church.” [\[5\]](#)

Whalley Abbey was closed in 1537 as part of the dissolution of the monasteries ordered by Henry VIII when he broke with Rome. Abbot Paslew, who was in charge of Whalley at the time, was executed for high treason for his involvement in protests over the formation of the English Church. The Abbey became the private estate of Richard Assheton who was likely related to Alice wife of Arthur Gregorysonne. Today, Whalley Abbey is a ruin with one intact building used as a conference center for the Church of England.





*Key Places in the History of the Early Gregson Family*



# Gregsons of Durham and Northumberland

## John Gregson of Murton

We have substantial documentation that our branch of the Gregson family flows through (I) John Gregson of Murton.<sup>2</sup> Although we cannot link Arthur Gregorysonne to John of Murton with strong genealogical evidence, we believe this to be the case. The arms of Gregson of Murton are described by Burke [6] and includes the same canton, chequy of gold and azure, awarded to Gregory de Normananton for his valor on the battlefield. A reasonable argument for this connection is given in Appendix A at the end of this book.

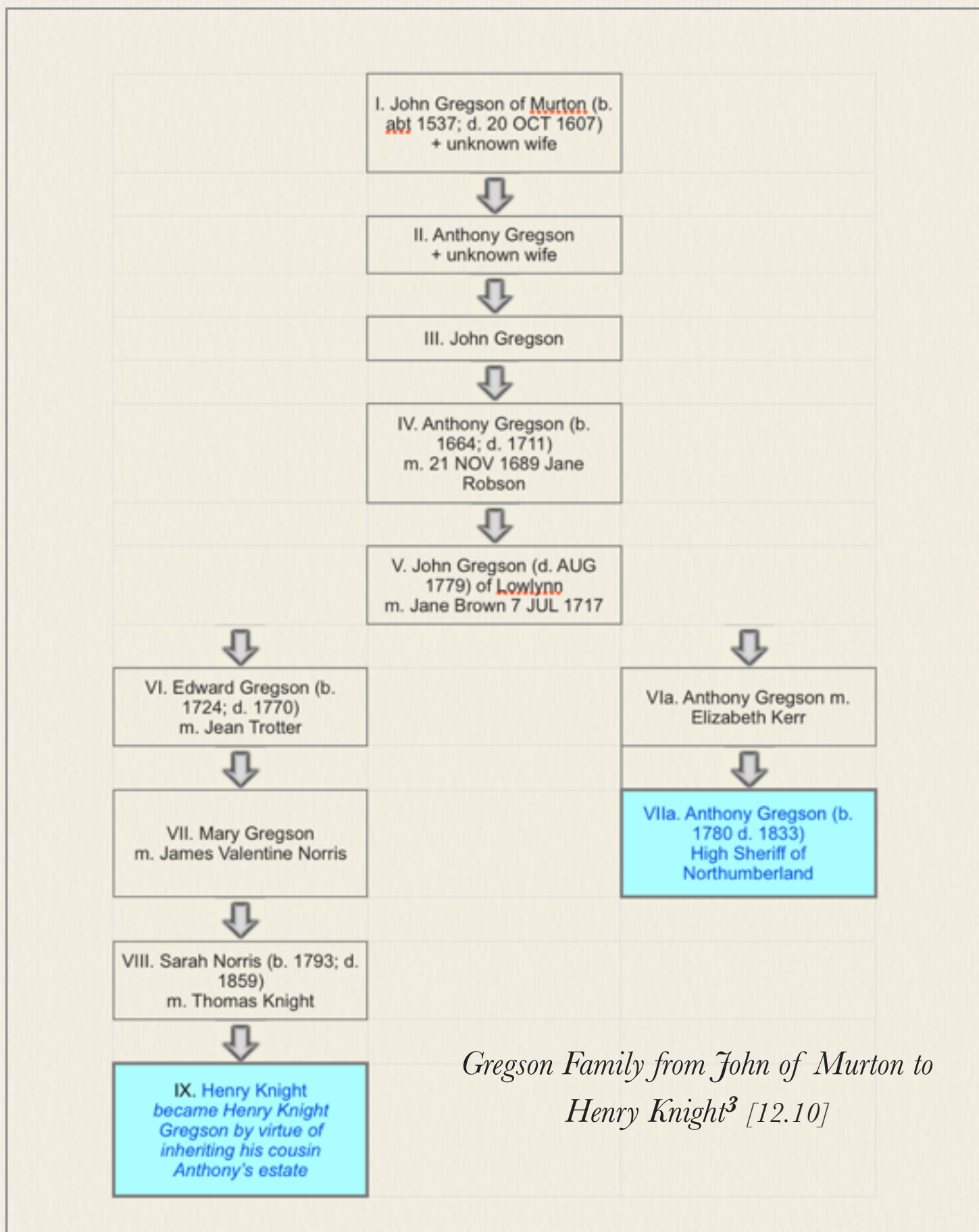
According to Burke, John Gregson came from Lincolnshire; he purchased the Estate of Murton (Durham Co.) in 1566 from Lord Lumley. The Gregsons were an important force in St. Andrews Parish Dalton-le-Dale which was adjacent to the family estate in Murton. St. Andrew's dates from the 12th and 13th century, but there is evidence of artifacts from the late 8th and early 9th century. A 2011 Archaeological investigation and report provides evidence of the involvement of John Gregson of Murton and his descendants in the life of the parish. [7]

In his Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Landed Gentry of Great Britain [8] Sir Bernard Burke lists the male descendants of John Gregson. Richard, first born son, entered holy orders. He served the Parish of Westcott Barton, Oxfordshire for fifty-six years. [9] Because his vocation as priest would not allow Richard to manage the estate, Thomas, the second born son, inherited Murton. Third born son Anthony from whom our family descends did not receive an inheritance. By his will, dated 23 JUL 1629 Thomas devised all his estates to his nephew John, son of his elder brother Richard, who would have inherited the estate by primogenital rule. On the page following our Gregson ancestor chart is a photograph of a plaque in the parish church at Dalton-le-Dale listing the Gregsons who inherited the Estate at Murton. The only ancestor in our direct line of descent memorial-

**2**     *The numbers (I), (II)... (IX) reference the chart on the next page which displays nine generations of Gregsons from John Gregson of Murton to Henry Knight Gregson of Lowlynn.*



ized on this plaque is John of Murton (died 1607). We will pick up the story with (V.) John Gegson of Lowlynn, a 2nd grandson of this John Gregson of Murton.



**3** *John and Anthony were very common names in the family as can be seen in both the plaque in St. Andrews and the descendants of Anthony, son of John of Murton (d. 1607).*



***Plaque from the Wall of St. Andrews Church, Dalton-le-Dale***

*John Gregson of Murton died 30 October 1607*

*Thomas Gregson of Murton died 1629*

*John Gregson of Murton buried 11 March 1674*

*John Gregson buried 28 February 1713*

*Thomas Gregson of Murton buried 26 June 1713*

*John of Murton and Burdon buried 26 February 1742*

*John of Murton and Burdon died 20 February 1786*

*Rain of Murton and Burdon died 19 November 1807*

## John Gregson of Lowlynn

Anthony Gregson (IV)<sup>4</sup> and Jane Robson were married in Pittington 21 NOV 1689. [11] Their first-born son John was baptized at Pittington parish on 23 SEP 1691. Pittington is located about five miles distant from the estate in Murton established by John's 2nd great grandfather. An article published in the History of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club<sup>5</sup> gives insight into this (V.) John Gregson. Here we find a record of Mr. John Gregson, who was a tenant farmer on lands owned by the Earl of Tankerville in Wark. Quoting from the article:

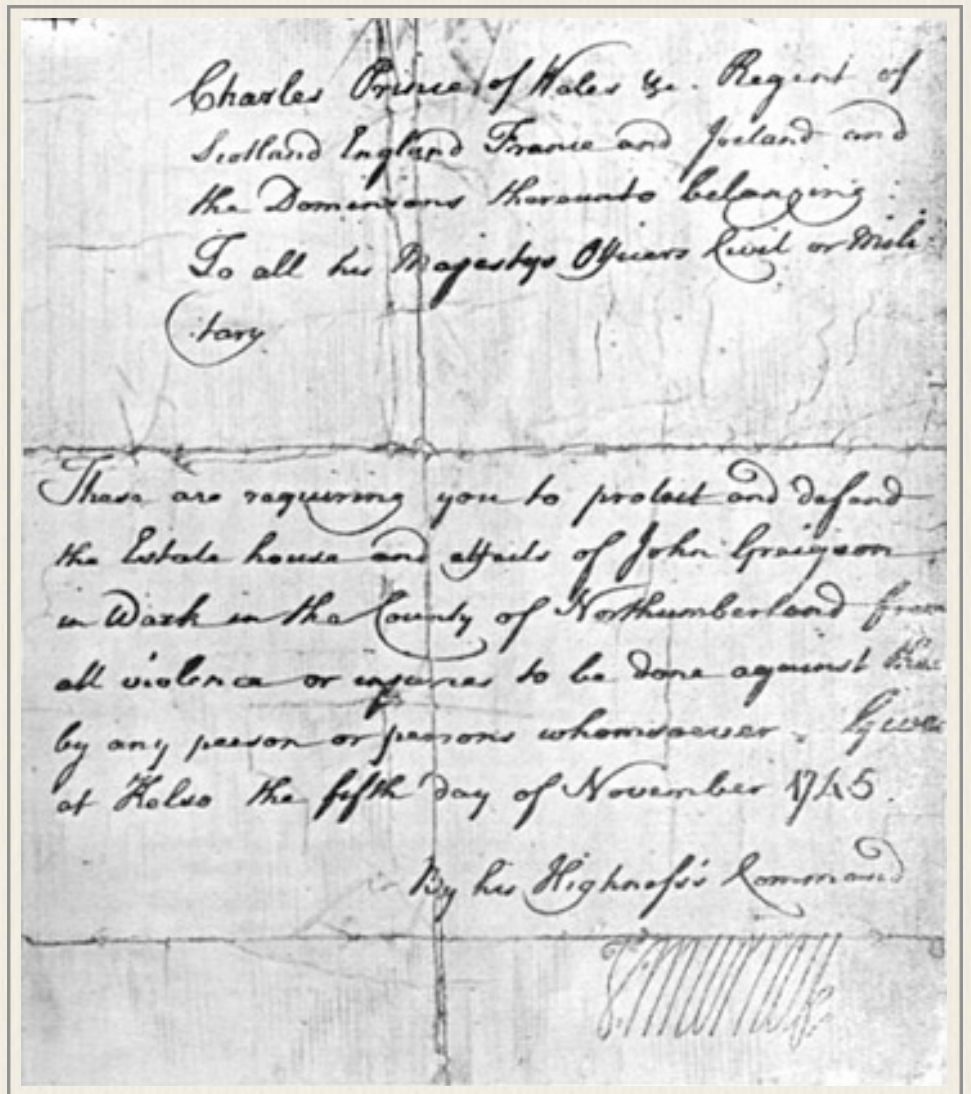
*“Mr. Gregson was an honest, hospitable, kind man, and much respected by all his neighbours, and so much esteemed by his landlord, the then Earl of Tankerville, that his lordship would often come and spend a fortnight or three weeks’ time at Wark, where he drank good claret, and all things as if he had been at home. One day after he tasted some of Mr. Gregson’s claret, he asked his tenant from whence he had that wine, he was told from Leith; ‘John,’ returned his lordship, ‘you must order me a stock of the same sort to my house near London’, which Mr. Gregson accordingly did. Upon his return thither, he invited several of the nobility and gentry to dine with him, and the Leith wine was not forgot, and being greatly liked by the whole company” The guests were astounded to learn the source of the fine wine. From “a tenant of yours, my lord, and drink claret? At Tweedside too?” [13]*

<sup>4</sup> Great grandson of John of Murton (d. 1607)

<sup>5</sup> The Berwickshire Naturalists' Club was formed in 1831 by “gentlemen who interested themselves in natural history, and were anxious to do their best to aid one another in their pursuits, and to diffuse a taste for them among others.” [12]



In 1745 John Gregson entered into a Warrant of Protection signed by John Murray, Secretary to Charles Edward Stuart, the so-called Young Pretender to the Throne of Scotland, England, and Ireland. This was in the midst of the Forty-Five Jacobite Rising. Bonnie Prince Charlie had returned to Scotland and was planning an invasion of England.



*Warrant of Protection in Favor of John Greigson,  
in Wark, Northumberland*

The warrant reads:

*“Charles Prince of Wales, &c., Regent of Scotland, England, France and Ireland, and the Dominions thereunto belonging: To all his Majesty's Officers, Civil or Military.*

*These are requiring you to protect and defend the Estate house and effects of John Greigson in Wark, in the Country of Northumberland, from all violence or injuries to be done against them by any person or persons whomsoever. Given at Kelso the fifth day of November 1745.” [14]*

The article continues, “Many of the prominent lairds on both sides of the Borders openly sympathized with the Pretender’s cause when the Prince was at Kelso, and no doubt Mr. Gregson was of pronounced Jacobite leanings.” For more information on the Jacobite Rising, see *Appendix B* at the end of this book.

John Gregson was no ordinary farmer. He had tended farms at Sunnilaws from 1717 to 1729. While at Sunnilaws,<sup>6</sup> John married Jane Brown of East Chivington. The service took place at the parish church of St. Lawrence, Warkworth on 7 JUL 1717. [15] John took a lease at Wark in 1729 and remained until 1771. We learn that John Gregson was quite an agricultural innovator. He was the first to demonstrate the usefulness of growing turnips to supply feed for cattle and sheep during the winter months. John Gregson died in AUG 1779. His obituary in the Newcastle Chronicle, stated: “...by his attention and efforts in husbandry he had acquired, with the best of characters, a very large fortune. With this fortune he purchased the estate of Lowlynn near Kyloe in Northumberland” [12].

Lowlynn,<sup>7</sup> the Gregson estate, is located about twelve kilometers south of Berwick-Upon-Tweed between the towns of West Kyloe and Lowick. In a 1992 book on architecture, Lowlynn was described:

*“Low Lynn, c. 1.5 m. NW [Kyloe]. A ruined house, probably built for John Gregson, who died in 1774. Mid-c 18, in fine beige ashlar, five bays wide, with architrave surrounds to all the windows. The middle window on the first floor has an eared and shouldered architrave surround. Extended to the l. in the early c19, using delicate pink ashlar.”* [16]

John and Jane (Brown) Gregson had seven children, four sons and three daughters. When John Gregson died in 1779, the estate of Lowlynn passed to his eldest son Anthony. (VI a.) Anthony Gregson married Elizabeth Kerr and lived at the Lowlynn estate. The only child of Anthony and Elizabeth was also named (VIIa.) Anthony, born 1 JUN 1780. Elizabeth died the same month that Anthony was born, likely a result of childbirth. Young Anthony Gregson inherited Lowlynn and was appointed High Sheriff<sup>8</sup> of Northumberland. Anthony never married and upon his death in 1833, there were no sons to inherit Lowlynn. In addition, Anthony had no siblings. Since Anthony’s father was first born to John of Lowlynn,

**6** *Alternately known as Sunne-lands.*

**7** *Alternate spellings include: Low Lynn, Lowlin, Lowlinn and Lowlyn.*

**8** *According to the Association of High Sheriffs of England and Wales: “The Office of High Sheriff is at least 1,000 years old having its roots in Saxon times before the Norman Conquest. It is the oldest continuous secular Office under the Crown. Originally the Office held many of the powers now vested in Lord Lieutenants, High Court Judges, Magistrates, Local Authorities, Coroners and even the Inland Revenue.”* [18]



and there were no other male heirs in Anthony's own line, he decided to pass the estate to a descendant of his father's brother Edward who was the second born son of John of Lowlynn. The only other son of John of Lowlynn was John Gregson of Holy Island who died unmarried in 1810. Anthony Gregson's will dated 7 OCT 1831 states:

*"I give and devise All my Real Estate of which I die possessed of unto ...The Reverend Thomas Knight of Ford Rectory... Upon Trust to receive the rents issues and profits thereof until Henry Knight the eldest son of the said Thomas Knight attains his age of twenty one years... [Henry Knight] shall be in possession of the same Estate and for ever thereafter Assume and take upon himself and continue to use the Surname of Gregson only and no other Surname and bear the Coat Of Arms of that family..."* [17]

(VI.) Edward Gregson (b. 1724) son of John who built Lowlynn followed his father's love of agriculture and animal husbandry. In the Annals of Agriculture we learn that Edward Gregson was responsible for introducing the threshing machine to Northumberland.

*"Threshing machines are now becoming general in the northern parts of the country; they are all upon the principle of the flax mill; which principle was first introduced into this county, for threshing corn, by Mr. Edward Gregson..."* [19]

Edward married Jean Trotter, daughter of George Trotter of Belchester in Berwick County. The eldest child of Edward and Jean Gregson was (VII.) Mary, baptized 29 OCT 1760. Mary first married David Pratt. Married fewer than two months, David died 10 OCT 1777 leaving Mary a widow. Mary Pratt remarried James Valentine Norris 10 AUG 1780. Together Mary and James had a very large family of fourteen children. In 1793, Sarah C. Norris was born. (VIII.) Sarah Norris married Thomas Knight and it was their first born son (IX.) Henry Knight who inherited the Lowlynn estate from Anthony Gregson.

# Knight Gregson Family

## Thomas Knight

Thomas Knight was the son of William Henry Knight (b. 1767) and Jane Young (b. 1770). Thomas Knight was a graduate of Peterhouse College, the oldest and smallest of the colleges that comprise Cambridge University, receiving his B.A. in 1817. [20] Thomas was ordained to the diaconate in 1818 and served at Houghton-le-Spring School in County Durham. A year later, Knight was ordained a priest and was called to St. Michaels and All Angels, Ford where he served as rector for fifty three years. Shortly after assuming responsibility for the parish church at Ford, Thomas Knight married Sarah Crowther Norris on 23 JUN 1820. Sarah was the daughter of James Valentine and Mary (Gregson) Norris, daughter of Edward Gregson of Lowlynn. The circumstance of his appointment to Rector of St. Michael and All Angels is of some interest.

Ford is the location of a medieval castle, dating from about 1278. Tradition suggests the town's name arose from a shallow crossing (or ford) of the River Till, which passes just west of town. In 1385 the castle was captured by the Scots and dismantled. Sir Francis Blake of Oxfordshire built a Tudor style mansion within the castle in 1694, and in 1723 Francis Blake Delaval inherited the castle. Ownership passed to John Delaval, Member of Parliament<sup>9</sup> for Berwick upon Tweed. John Delaval was created a Baronet, of Seaton Delaval in the County of Northumberland, in the Baronetage of Great Britain in 1761, and in 1783 he was raised to the Peerage of Ireland as Baron Delaval, of Redford in the County of Wicklow.



*Ford Castle*

<sup>9</sup> *tenure: 1754–1761, 1765–1774 and 1780–1786*



There was a strong relationship between the Knight family and John Delaval. Thomas Knight's father William Henry Knight was a sometime salt officer <sup>10</sup> in the employ of John Lord Delaval. William Henry Knight's sister Susanna Elizabeth Knight (more generally known as Charlotte) was born 26 NOV 1762 to Thomas Knight and Susan Thomson (grandparents of the Rev. Thomas Knight). Charlotte worked some 20 years as a housekeeper for Lord Delaval and his wife Lady Susannah. Lady Susannah (Robinson) Delaval died in 1783. Some twenty years later on 5 JAN 1803, seventy-four year old John Lord Delaval married his housekeeper Susanna Elizabeth Knight, now given status as Lady Susanna, Baroness Delaval. [20]

The Parish Church of St. Michael and All Angels is at the southeast corner of the grounds of Ford Castle. Throughout history there has been close articulation between the parish church at Ford and the Lord of the Manor, which included the right to appoint the rector of the parish. In 1811, John James was “appointed to



*The Rev. Thomas Knight, Rector  
St. Michaels and All Angels, Ford*

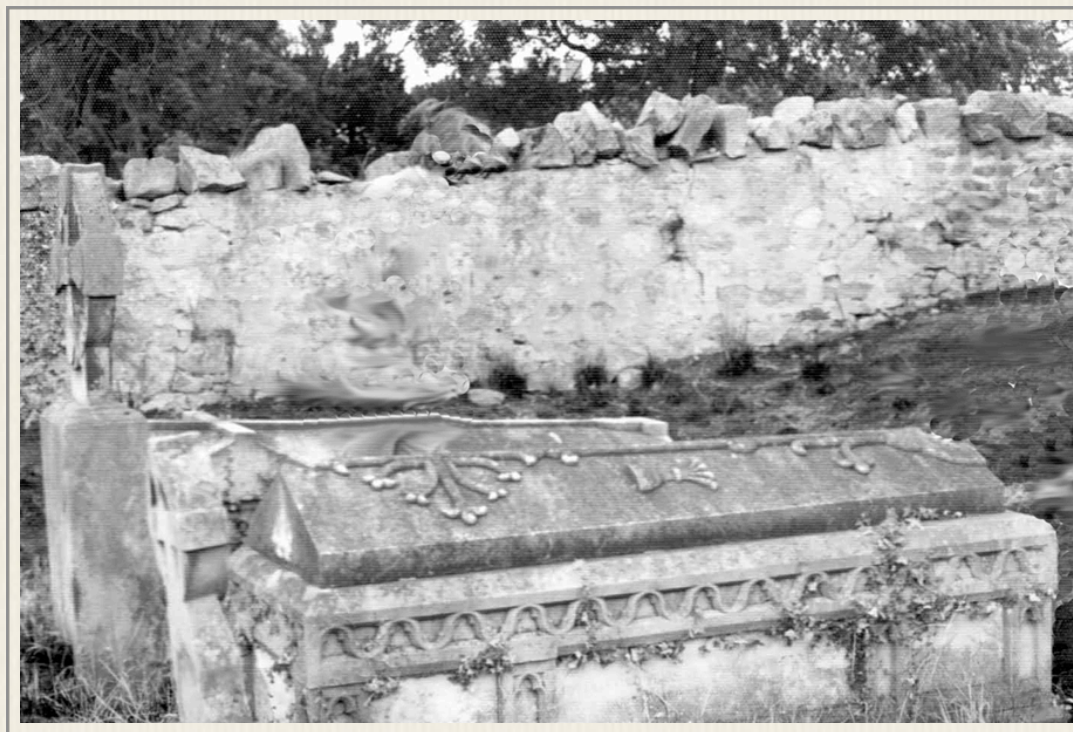


*St Michael and All Angels, Ford  
Northumberland, England*

**10** *Salt was a very important commodity used to preserve food. The near costal community provided an opportunity to harvest salt from seawater.*

the living of Ford, vacant by the death of William Warkman by Susanna Elizabeth, baroness Devalal. He agreed to resign upon request to the intent that Lady Devalal might present therto either Thomas Knight, then of Houghton-le Spring School, or John Knight of the same, sons of Mr. Henry Knight of Ford Cottage. On September 25th, 1819 he was called on to do so.” [21]

Thomas Knight served the parish at Ford for over fifty years. Over 500 people attended the festival celebration of his jubilee on 29 SEP 1869. Knight asked that any gift to memorialize this event be made to the entire congregation. Six hundred people donated to a fund which was used to purchase an organ for the church and a silver timepiece and inkstand for Thomas Knight. The items were inscribed : *“Presented to the Rev. Thomas Knight, together with an organ for his parish church, on his completing his fiftieth year as Rector of Ford, with the respectful and affectionate regard of 500 of his parishioners and his friends”*



*Grave of Thomas Knight in the Churchyard at St. Michael and All Angels, Ford. His gravestone has the inscription : Here lies the body of the Reverend Thomas Knight for fifty two years the revered and beloved Rector of this parish, who departed unto the mercy of God on Good Friday AD 1872, aged seventy six years. To the blessed memory of their father, this tomb is erected by his children.*

The beloved rector of St. Michael and All Angels died during the fifty-third year of his incumbency at Ford. His obituary is recorded by the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club was a member and served as President in 1839.

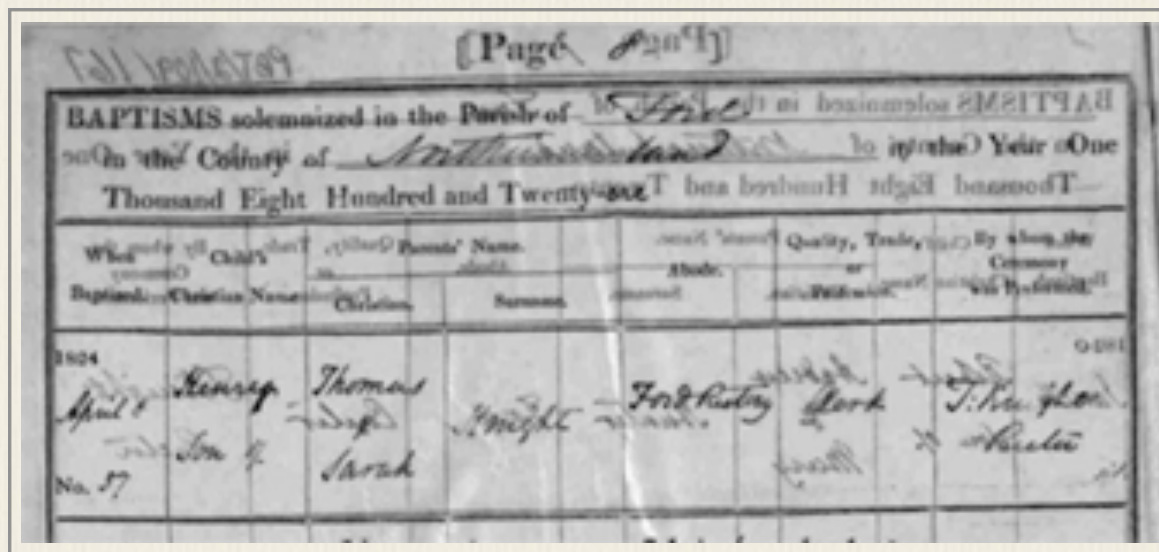


*“The Rev. Thomas Knight, the venerable and much beloved rector of Ford, departed this life on Good Friday, 29th March, 1872, after only a few weeks’ illness, at Lowlynn, the residence of his eldest son, Henry Gregson, Esq., in the 77th year of his age, and the 53rd of his incumbency as rector of the parish of Ford. Mr. Knight was a graduate of St. Peter’s College, Cambridge, where he took the degree of B.A., in 1817. He was ordained deacon in 1818, and priest in 1819; and was appointed to the rectory of Ford in the latter year...At his funeral all the neighbouring clergy and gentry, with the parishioners of many others, assembled to do honour to the memory of the deceased, who for many years had maintained a very high character as a minister and a man.” [22]*

<b>Thomas Knight</b> b: 1797 Northumberland, England d: 29 MAR 1872 <sup>a</sup>	
married: 23 JUN 1820 <sup>b</sup> Berwick-Upon-Tweed, Northumberland, England	
<b>Sarah Crowther Norris</b> b: 1796, Scotland <sup>c</sup> d: 1851. Sarah was the daughter of James Valentine Norris and Mary Gregson	
M	Henry Knight b: 4 APR 1821, d: 19 SEP 1885 Yorkshire, ENG
M	Valentine Knight b: 28 JAN 1824 (BAP)
F	Sarah Knight b: 1826
M	Thomas Knight b: 1827
M	Delaval Knight b: 1829
F	Harriet Mary Jane Knight b: 1831
M	Frederick Knight b: 1832
<b>Notes for this table</b>	
	All children of Thomas and Sarah Knight were born in Ford, Northumberland, ENG <sup>c</sup>
a	England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1861-1941 <a href="http://Ancestry.com">Ancestry.com</a>
b	England Marriages, 1538–1973 <a href="http://FamilySearch.org">FamilySearch.org</a>
c	1851 England Census <a href="http://Ancestry.com">Ancestry.com</a>
<i>The Family of Thomas Knight and Sarah Crowther Norris</i>	

## Henry Knight (Henry Knight Gregson)

Thomas and Sarah Knight had seven children, five boys and two girls. Henry Knight was the eldest. He was born 4 Apr 1821 at the Ford rectory. St. Michael and All Angels parish record reports Henry's baptism<sup>11</sup> on 8 APR 1821. Henry Knight was my 2<sup>nd</sup> great grandfather; he was the great grandson of Edward Gregson, and a 2<sup>nd</sup> great grandson of John Gregson of Lowlynn.



*Record of the Baptism of Henry Knight*

The record of the 1851 Census shows that Henry, eldest son of Thomas and Sarah (Norris) Knight, married Eliza Mary Donaldson Selby. The couple temporarily residing at the Rectory in Ford with Henry's parents Thomas and Sarah (Norris) Knight and ninety year-old grandma Mary (Gregson) Norris. Henry and his wife Eliza have four children.

In the census record both Henry and wife Eliza are listed with the surname *Gregson* and the four children are listed with the surname *Knight Gregson*. Where did the surname Gregson come from? Sarah Norris' mother Mary was born (1724) a Gregson. The answer is found in *The History of the Landed Gentry of Great Britain and Ireland*. [8]

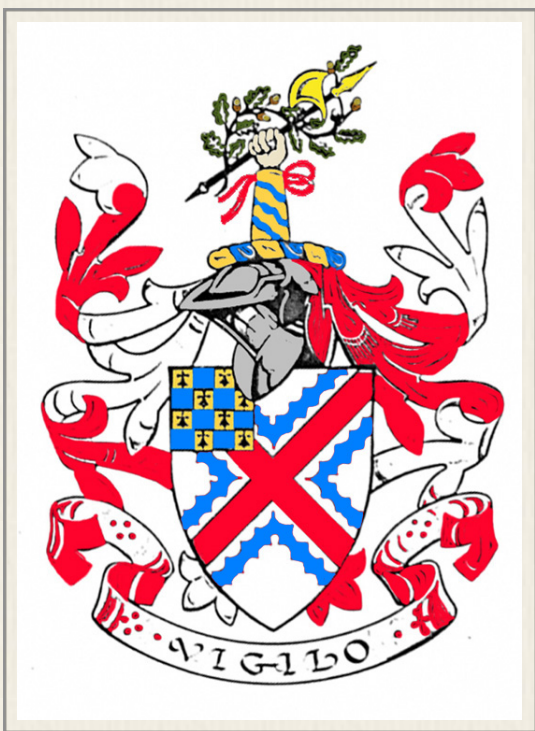
*"Anthony, father of John Gregson, and great-grandfather of John Gregson, who purchased the estate of Lowlynn in North Durham, and d. 1779: he was grandfather of Anthony Gregson, Esq. of Lowlynn, high sheriff of Northumberland 1825, who dying unm. 23 NOV 1833, devised his estate to his cousin, HENRY KNIGHT, Esq., eldest son of the*

**11** *The baptism record can be found on familysearch.org. The image shown in the figure above is no longer available on this site.*



*Rev. Henry [sic: Thomas]<sup>12</sup> Knight, rector of Ford, in Northumberland. Mr. Knight assumed in consequence the surname of Gregson, and became of Lowlynn, J.P. and D.L.<sup>14</sup> Northumberland: he m. 1844, Eliza-Mary, dau. of J. S. Donaldson Selby, Esq. of Cheswick ..."*

Anthony Gregson died at the age of 53 on 23 NOV 1833. His will dated 4 AUG 1831 specified that the Estate of Lowlynn would go his cousin<sup>13</sup> Henry Knight. His last will and testament required that Henry assume the surname Gregson, which is why we find the census records of 1851 listing the family with the surname Gregson. The transfer of property was delayed by legal issues involving several estates which Anthony owned. Finally, through an act of Parliament executed 4 AUG 1840, some seven years after the death of Anthony Gregson, the transfer was complete.



We have a record of the Arms of the Knight Gregsons. In 1977, Douglas Knight Gregson applied to the College of Arms in London to obtain the right to the Arms of the family Knight Gregson. As great grandson to Henry Knight Gregson, Douglas<sup>15</sup> was awarded the right to the armorial bearings assigned to Henry Knight Gregson. The arms are similar to the original arms awarded to those awarded to Arthur Gregorysonne, Knight Banneret, but are slightly embellished. The Latin motto *Vigilo* translates as: “to be awake, watch, be vigilant to keep vigil”.

*Knight Gregson Arms and Crest*

- 12** *Henry’s father was the Rev. Thomas Knight; his grandfather was Henry Knight.*
- 13** *Technically, Anthony was a first cousin two times removed. His maternal great grandfather and Anthony’s father were brothers.*
- 14** *The designation J.P. and D.L. mean Justice of the Peace and Deputy Lieutenant.*
- 15** *The citation declares that Douglas Knight-Gregson, of Whitehouse Crescent, Sutton Coldfield, co. Warwick, gentleman, is entitled by right of descent [these] armorial bearings... which Armorial Ensigns assigned to his great-grandfather Henry Gregson, formerly Henry Knight of Lowlynn by letters bearing the date twenty-sixth of August 1842, which Henry Gregson was the father of Charles Edward Knight Gregson, who was father of William Clarence Knight-Gregson, the father of said Douglas Knight-Gregson. (dated eighth day of August, 1977).*



*A Map of Lowlynn Estate in 1926 Sales Prospectus*



*Lowlynn House 1926, (South Aspect)*



The photographs of Henry Knight Gregson and his wife Eliza Mary Donaldson Selby (as well as other members of the family) are archived in the Allison family tree <sup>16</sup> on Ancestry.com. These were passed down within the family and are the property of the Allison family. While there is some uncertainty about the identity of some of the pictures in the family records, we believe the images on this page are of Henry and Eliza.



*Henry Knight Gregson*



*Eliza M. Donaldson-Selby  
Knight Gregson*

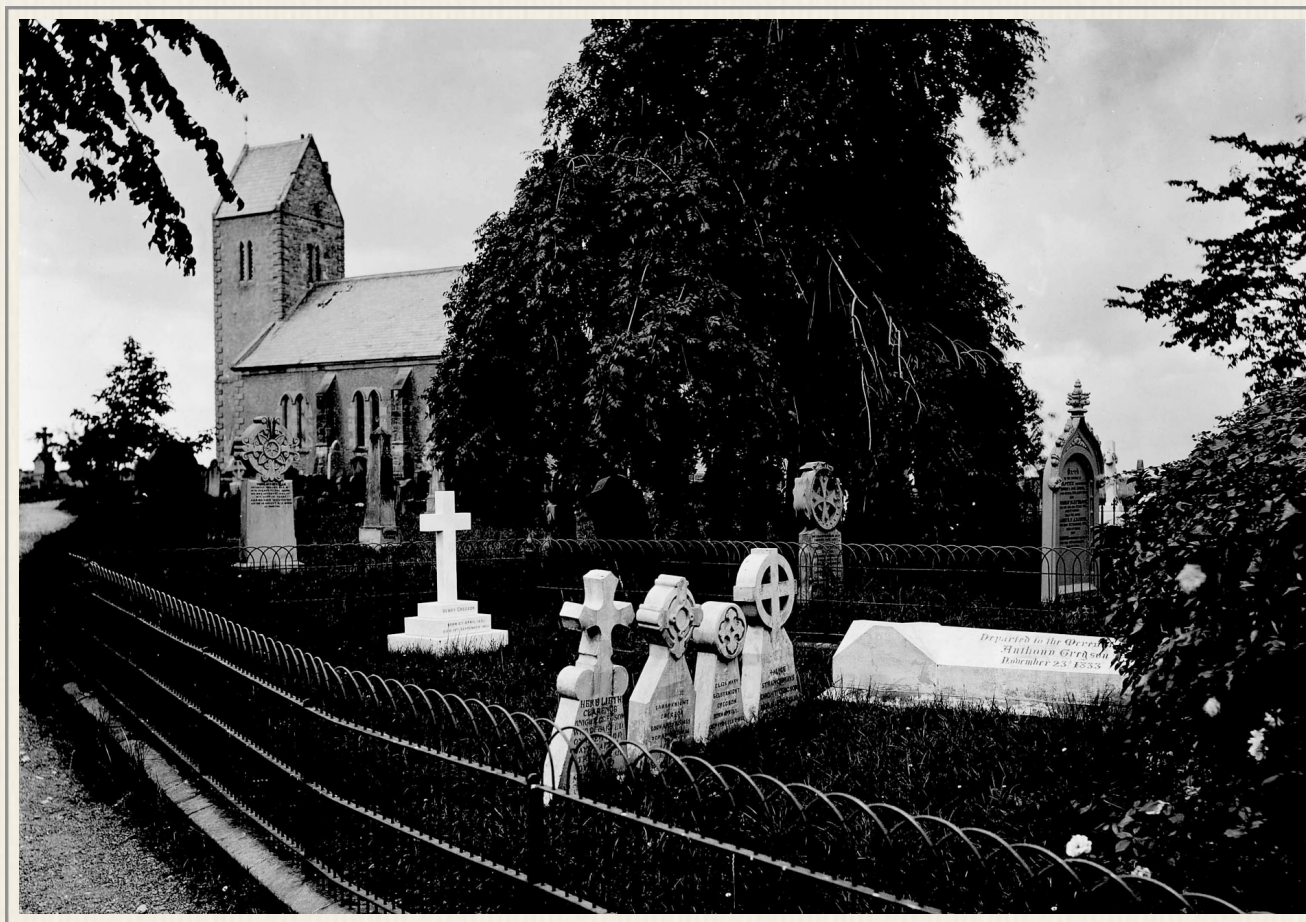
Eliza Mary Donaldson Selby was descended from prominent Northumberland families. Eliza's seven-greats grandfather was Roger Selby who in the early 16th century resided at Grindon Rigg.<sup>17</sup> Grindon is located south of the River Tweed at the Scottish border about seven miles southeast of Berwick-upon-Tweed. Eliza's uncle Henry Collingwood Selby (1749 – 1839) was a man of considerable wealth. He was a solicitor and served as an agent of the Duke of Northumberland, and became a steward of the duke's baronial courts. Henry was Clerk of the Peace for the county of Middlesex. Among others, his property included considerable holdings in Holy Island (or Lindisfarne) situated in the North Sea, about 1.5 miles

**16** link to ancestry.com <<http://trees.ancestry.com/tree/12224257/person/-309923744>>

**17** The word Rigg or Rig was the normal unit of ownership in the Scottish medieval and early modern town.).

from the Northumbrian coast. Holy Island is about 9 miles in circumference, and from east to west, it measures two miles. The island is connected to the mainland by a narrow isthmus. The bulk of Henry Collingwood's estate was split between John Strangeways Donaldson (Eliza Mary's father) and another nephew Prideaux John Selby, noted British ornithologist. [23] Eliza's mother is descended from the noble Grey family. Her ancestry connects Eliza with the Plantagenet kings of England (Appendix E).

Eliza's paternal grandfather was Captain Thomas Donaldson, magistrate and deputy-lieutenant for the counties of Durham and Northumberland, and for the borough of Berwick-upon-Tweed. He was deputy vice-admiral of the coast of Northumberland, from Bamburgh Castle to Berwick-on-Tweed. On 3 MAY 1839, John Strangeways Donaldson assumed (by royal license) the surname and arms of his mother's family, Selby, in addition to those of Donaldson. [24] Donaldson-Selby resided at Cheswick House which was in possession of the Donaldson family for four hundred years.



*The Knight Gregson Family Burial Plot, St John's Lowick*

Henry and Eliza Knight Gregson had seventeen children, ten boys and seven girls. Four of the children died in their youth and are memorialized in stained



glass windows in the parish church of St. John the Baptist, Lowick, Northumberland, England. Six of the male offspring married and had families that have carried the family name Knight Gregson, among them my great grandfather Charles Edward Knight Gregson. Four daughters and one son did not marry. Henry Knight Gregson II became a career officer in the Royal Navy. George Charles emigrated to Australia where he established a sheep ranch at Lowlyn Station NSW. Arthur was likely involved with shipping to Asia and spent time in San Francisco, Shanghai, and Australia. St John the Baptist Church was the final resting place for many in the Knight Gregson family.



***Stained Glass Windows in St. John the Baptist Church, Lowick.***

*(left) Eliza Mary Selby Knight Gregson Born April 1, 1857 Departed June 12th 1857 ✠ Alice Strangeways Knight Gregson Born January 8th 1859 Departed February 3rd 1863 ✠ Lord Make Them To Be Numbered With Thy Saints In Glory Everlasting (Right) Clarence Knight Gregson Born January 6th 1846 Departed April 3rd 1849 ✠ Sarah Knight Gregson Born April 28th 1855 Departed April 21st 1856 ✠ Lord Make Them To Be Numbered With Thy Saints in Glory Everlasting*



The Knight Gregson family appears to have had affiliation with another parish church in the area. St Nicholas Church is located in West Kylee, about one mile from the Lowlynn estate. St. Nicholas Church was built in 1792 on the site of an older twelfth century Norman Chapel. Today, the church has been deconsecrated and has been converted to a home. Careful architectural design and restoration have preserved many of the features of St. Nicholas Church. [26] In an Architectural Survey of Churches in the Archdeaconry of Lindisfarne, there is a description of a Baptismal Font which was a gift of Henry Knight Gregson, Esq, then High Sheriff of Northumberland. In the on-line brochure for St. Nicholas Church House, there is a picture of the (now repurposed) font.



*St Nicholas Church House (deconsecrated), Kylee and  
Baptismal Font a gift of Henry Knight Gregson [25]*



<b>Henry Knight Gregson</b> b: 4 APR 1821 Ford, Northumberland, ENG d: 19 SEP 1885 Yorkshire, ENG	
m: 16 JAN 1844	
<b>Eliza Mary Donaldson Selby</b> b: 1824 Ancroft, Northumberland, England d: 17 NOV 1904 Weymouth, Dorsetshire	
<b>M</b>	Alfred Knight Gregson 11 JAN 1845 († 09 Feb 1845); d: 22 JUN 1885 Kentish Town, Middlesex, ENG.
<b>M</b>	Clarence Knight Gregson b: 6 JAN 1846 († 08 Feb 1846); d: 3 APR 1849
<b>M</b>	Henry Knight Gregson b: 1847 († 1 AUG 1847) d: 28 NOV 1921, Middlesex, England
<b>M</b>	Charles Edward Knight Gregson b: 1848 († 03 Dec 1848) d: 1913, West Derby, Lancashire, ENG
<b>F</b>	Mary Jane Frederica Knight Gregson b: 1850 († 7 APR 1850); d: 27 NOV 1911 Dorset, ENG
<b>M</b>	George Charles Knight Gregson b: 1851 († 11 May 1851) d: 31 AUG 1928 Murrumburrah, New South Wales
<b>M</b>	Frederick Knight Gregson 21 Nov 1852 † ****
<b>M</b>	Arthur Knight Gregson b: 1854
<b>F</b>	Sarah Knight Gregson b: 28 APR 1855 d: 21 APR 1856
<b>M</b>	Delaval Knight Gregson, b: 1857 († 10 May 1857); d: 29 APR 1934 Berwick Upon Tweed, Northumberland, England
<b>F</b>	Eliza Mary Selby Knight Gregson b: 1 APR 1857 († 10 MAY 1857) d: 12 JUN 1857
<b>F</b>	Alice Strangeways Knight Gregson b: 8 JAN 1859 († 13 Feb 1858) d: 3 FEB 1863
<b>F</b>	Katherine Grey Knight Gregson b: 1861 († 18 Aug 1861) d: 24 APR 1936 Weymouth, Dorset, ENG
<b>F</b>	Frances Norris Knight Gregson b: 1862 († 14 Sep 1862); d: 1946 Weymouth, Dorset, ENG.
<b>M</b>	Francis Sitwell Knight Gregson b: JUL/SEP 1865 d: 26 MAY 1926, Oxfordshire, ENG
<b>M</b>	Harold Strangeways Knight Gregson b: 1867, d: 1938 Westminster, London,ENG
<b>F</b>	Constantina L. Knight Gregson b: 1866
<b>Notes for this table</b>	
†	Indicates Baptism date, England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index: 1837-1915 <a href="http://Ancestry.com">Ancestry.com</a>
All births of the Gregson children are at Lowlynn House, Lowick, Northumberland, ENG	
<i>The Family of Henry Knight Gregson and Eliza Mary Donaldson Selby</i>	

## Charles Edward Knight Gregson

Charles Edward Knight Gregson (my great grandfather) was born at Lowlynn House in 1848; he was baptized by his grandfather the Rev. Thomas Knight on 3 DEC 1848 at St. Michaels and All Angels, Ford. Charles Edward was the fourth son of Henry and Eliza Knight Gregson. In the 1861 Census of England, Charles is registered as a pupil aboard the school ship HMS Conway. The school was set up by the Mercantile Marine Service Association and was moored in Liverpool on the River Mersey. The Conway was a 205 ft., two-deck, 92-gun wooden battleship. The school intended not only to train young cadets in seamanship, but to provide a sound educational foundation for life. Af-



*HMS Conway, the school ship on which Charles Edward Knight Gregson was stationed*

ter completing his schooling aboard the Conway, Charles began a career in merchant trade. Charles' name appears on a list of crew and passengers aboard the ship British Duke after it arrived from London to Sydney, New South Wales [27]. The record lists Charles as First Mate. The Friday, 21 APR 1876 edition of the Sydney Morning Herald [28] reported that the British Duke continued its journey on 20 APR 1876 carrying 900 tons of coal to San Francisco, California.<sup>18</sup> Maritime records of the UK show that Charles was certified as Second Mate at age 19, First Mate at age 21, and Master Mariner at age 25. [29]

The next census in which I find Charles is 1881. He is listed in the civil parish of Walton on Hill, Lancashire, a village and township in the West Derby district. It is three miles north of Liverpool. Charles' profession is listed as a mariner. In 1871 the family consists of wife Mary Jane, three year-old Charles Henry Knight Gregson, one year-old Harold D. Knight Gregson and my grandfather, two

**18** *Australia was the primary source of coal for the needs of shipping on the west coast of the United States. It was impractical to haul coal to the south Atlantic, through the South Sea at the tip of South America.*



month-old Archibald Knight Gregson. All of the children were born in Liverpool; it is likely that this was home base for mariner Charles Edward Knight Gregson.



*Charles earned his certification as First Mate at the age of 21 on 12 FEB 1869*

*Charles earned his certification as Master Mariner at the age of 25 on 1 OCT 1873*

We have found a story written by my great-grandfather Charles Edward Knight Gregson which is a memorial to his grandfather Thomas Knight. Written later in his life, there are some memories he shares which are at odds with the historical record.<sup>19</sup> Notwithstanding some inaccuracies in the document, it is exciting to see the words written as Charles remembers his Granddad Thomas Knight. [30]

**19** *In particular, Charles' description of the inheritance of Lowlynn by his father contains historical errors.*

**Charles Edward Knight Gregson** b: 1848 ( † 03 Dec 1848) LowLynn, Kyloe, Northumberland, ENG d: 1913, West Derby, Lancashire, ENG. <sup>a</sup>

m: 1875

**Mary Jane Law** b: ABT 1853 Hulme, Lancashire, ENG d: 1926 West Derby, Lancashire, ENG<sup>b</sup>

M Charles Henry Knight Gregson b: ABT 1878 Liverpool, Lancashire, ENG

M Harold Dudley. Knight Gregson b: ABT 1880 Liverpool, Lancashire, ENG

M Archibald Knight Gregson † 20 Feb 1881 Liverpool, Lancashire, ENG<sup>c</sup>; d. 5 OCT 1917

M William Clarence Knight Gregson b: 11 OCT 1884 ( † 7 JUN 1885)<sup>e</sup>, d: 1953 Liverpool N. <sup>f</sup>

F Mary Beatrice Knight Gregson b: 22 Jun 1883 Liverpool, Lancashire, ENG († 30 Sep 1883 St Mary, Walton on the Hill)<sup>cg</sup> d: OCT/DEC 1883 <sup>d</sup>

#### Notes for this table

a England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index: 1837-1915 [Ancestry.com](#)

b England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index: 1837-1915 [Ancestry.com](#)

c [Baptisms at St Mary in the District of Walton on the Hill, Liverpool](#)

d England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index: 1837-1915 [Ancestry.com](#)

e [Baptisms at St Mary in the District of Walton on the Hill, Liverpool](#)

f England & Wales, Death Index: 1916-2005 [Ancestry.com](#)

<sup>cg</sup> [Baptisms at St Mary in the District of Walton on the Hill, Liverpool](#)

*The Family of Charles Edward Knight Gregson and Mary Jane Law*



# My Knight Gregson Family

## Archibald Knight Gregson

My grandfather, Archibald Knight Gregson, was born in Liverpool, England in 1881 to Charles Edward Knight Gregson and Mary Jane (Law) Gregson. The Scotland census of 1901 records a young 20 year-old living in in the Govan district of Glasgow. This is located in the area of Glasgow harbor on the River Clyde. Archie Gregson is listed as a brass finisher. On 13 DEC 1907, Archibald Gregson married Agnes Morrison, both age twenty-six. According to the marriage record, the couple was married according to the forms of the church of Scotland.

1907. MARRIAGES in the DISTRICT of GORBALS in the PARISH of GLASGOW								
No.	When, Where, and How Made.	Signatures of Parties (Full or Partial, with Date, Age, or Address, if necessary, of each.)	Age.	Usual Address.	Rank, Profession, and State or Position of Father.	Rank, Profession, and State or Position of Mother.	By what Authority, Signature of Minister, or of Clergyman, or of a Minister of the Gospel, or of a Minister of the Gospel.	When & Where Registered, and Signature of Registrar.
118	1907 on the Thirteenth day of December at 21 Abbottsford Place Glasgow.	(Signed) Archibald Knight Gregson.	26	25 Shieldo Road Glasgow.	Harold Edward Gregson (Searman, and Grassy Gregson Mrs. Law.	(Signed) Robt W. Mearns Minister of Whitburn Unit.	1907. December 16 GLASGOW.	
	After Publication according to the Form of the Church of Scotland.	(Signed) Agnes C. Morrison Fishing Lockett House (Aphinston).	26	24 Pratt Street Glasgow.	William James Morrison (Sergeant, Labourer, (Successor) and Glasgow Morrison. Mrs. J. Hamilton.	(Signed) James Glen Glasgow Elizabeth Leitch Witness	for 1907	

*Record of the Marriage of Archibald Gregson and Agnes Morrison  
in the district of Gorbals, Glasgow, Scotland.*

Agnes Curry Morrison Brodie Gregson was my maternal grandmother. She was born Agnes Curry Morrison to William James and Rose Jane (Hamilton) Morrison in 1881. According to the 1881 Scotland census, the young family lived in the civil parish of Greenock West in Renfrewshire, Scotland at 1 Bruce Street. Greenock is on the River Clyde about 16 miles from Glasgow toward the Firth of Clyde and the sea. James was born in about 1850 in Ireland and worked as a laborer in a sugarhouse. Sugarhouses or refineries dated to the early eighteenth century when imports from the West Indies began. In 1850 there were some fourteen sugar refineries making this port town a world leader in the sugar trade.

Sometime between 1881 and 1891 William died and Rose remarried David Brodie. In 1891 David and Rose Brodie lived at 20 Smith Street in the civil parish



*The Town of Greenock is located about 15 miles down river from Glasgow on the Firth of Clyde (1856 map of Glasgow)*

of Glasgow, Govan in the County of Lanarkshire, Scotland. This is about fourteen miles distant from Greenock. Agnes is the eldest of six children (Agnes 10, Maggie 8, David 5, James 4, George 2, and Rebecca, 10 months.) David Brodie's occupation is listed as carter, or one who works with a horse and cart. Most likely, he either moved goods from the factories in Glasgow, or delivered consumer goods. In the 1901 Census the family has grown to ten children; Agnes is unmarried and living with her parents. Living near the River Clyde, twenty-year-old Agnes is listed as a fish & tackle maker.

The first two children of Agnes and Archibald Gregson were born in Glasgow, Scotland; Rose Knight Gregson (born 1908) was named for her grandmother Rose Jane Hamilton and Charles Edward Knight Gregson (born 1910) was named after his grandfather. The family moved from Glasgow to Liverpool, England. My mother Jessie Knight Gregson was born in 1914 in the West Derby district of Lancashire. My grandfather Archibald died 5 OCT 1917 at the age of 36 years-old; my mother was only three years of age. Records indicate the cause of death was pulmonary tuberculosis. Rose, the eldest daughter, told the story that her mom



dyed sheets red, soaked them in Lysol, and hung them around the house. In the early 1900s, Lysol was used to prevent the spread of disease during the Spanish Flu epidemic. The red dye was likely a folk remedy that was hoped to improve the effectiveness of the treatment. The Encyclopedia of folk medicine states that “Certain colors are associated in folk medicine with healing. Red is one such color, perhaps because it is associated with heat... Patients suffering from smallpox were given red bed coverings.. red flannel worn around the neck was used to ward off whooping cough in the west of Scotland.” [31] My mother kept a brass letter opener which was made by her father, a journeyman brass finisher—perhaps this was the only object she had to connect to a lost memory. As a widow with three children, Agnes Gregson had a difficult time providing for her family. She moved the family from Liverpool, back to Glasgow, likely to be near her parents David and Rose Brodie. In 1919 David and Rose Brodie emigrated to the United



*A brass letter opener made by Archibald Gregson*

States.<sup>20</sup> Agnes and the three children were listed on the passenger manifest of a 15 MAY 1920 voyage of the ship Columbia sailing from Glasgow to New York City. The occupation of Agnes is listed as “NIL”. The duration of the stay in the United States was listed as PERMANENT. The names on the ship’s list were

**20** *They were living at 9 Nassau Parkway, Rockville Centre, New York. Some records show this as 9 Nassau Parkway, Rockville Centre while others show this as Oceanside, and one records Oceanside, Rockville Centre, New York. Oceanside and Rockville Centre are contiguous towns.*

crossed out. It is likely that the family was denied permission by US customs and immigration for status as permanent residents. The family rebooked passage on the next voyage of the Columbia which was 15 MAY 1920. The young Gregson family appears on the passenger manifest, but again, their names were crossed out [32].

According to my mother, Agnes Gregson went to work as a stewardess on the Cunard line to allow her family to come to the United States. This would give her the employment status she would need to enter the United States as a permanent resident. It is likely that my mother did not even know of the 1920 attempt to emigrate from Scotland, as she was three years-old at the time. My mother told me that she, her brother, and sister lived with an aunt and uncle in Liverpool while her mother worked as a stewardess. The immigration records show nine trips made by Agnes Gregson as a stewardess on the ship Carmania sailing between Liverpool and New York City between MAY 1922 and MAR 1923. Her last trip was 19 MAR 1923 when she was not only listed as stewardess but listed a final destination as the address of David Brodie in Rockville Centre, New York.

For a period of some 11 months Agnes prepared to bring her children to the United States. Finally, on 26 OCT 1923 the three children Rose (age 15) Charles (age 13) and Jessie (age 9) set sail from Southampton on the Majestic for New York [33]. The children made the voyage alone while their mother waited to greet them in New York. My mother told the story of a couple who were very concerned about the children and told my mother that they would adopt them. My mother responded that they could not do that as their mum was waiting for them in New York. That ship's manifest also identified a contact person in England who is likely the aunt who had cared for the children: Mrs. Sarah Gregson living at 45 Smeaton St., Liverpool. Sarah was the wife of William Clarence Knight Gregson, Archibald Gregson's brother.

The family was reunited! One day after their arrival in the United States, the children were sent to school in Rockville Centre, New York. My mother tells the story of that first day. We stood to sing America<sup>21</sup> (My Country Tis of Thee). I looked at the other students and could not tell what was wrong with them. They were not singing the correct words, so I sang the more loudly, "...Happy and glori-



ous, Long to reign o'er us, God save the King". The class was amused and the teacher used this as a teaching opportunity. Mom's nick name became Scottie.

Agnes Gregson remarried William C. Peate who also worked aboard the Carmania during the time that Agnes worked as a stewardess. It is most likely that they met during the year in which Agnes sailed back and forth between New York and Liverpool. The census record shows that they were married before 1930. My grandparents lived with two of their children Charles and Jessie in Rockville Centre, New York. William worked as a janitor. They married before the children arrived in the United States.



*(Top Row Left to Right) Charles Gregson and wife Gerry, Rose (Gregson) Cole, Jessie (Gregson) Falkenburg and husband Ed, Agnes (Gregson) Peate; (Bottom Row Left to Right) Lois Gregson (daughter of Charles and Gerry) June Cole (daughter of Rose) and William Peate.*

**21** "My Country, 'Tis of Thee, also known as America, is an American patriotic song, whose lyrics were written by Samuel Francis Smith. The melody is that of the United Kingdom's national anthem, "God Save the King/Queen". the song was first performed in public on July 4, 1831, at a children's Independence Day celebration at Park Street Church in Boston. First publication of 'America" was in 1832."

[34]



*Rose Knight Gregson*



*Charles Edward Knight Gregson*



*Jessie Knight Gregson*

<b>Archibald Knight Gregson</b> b: 8 JAN 1881 <sup>a</sup> Liverpool, Lancashire, ENG d: 1917	
m: 13 DEC 1907 <sup>b</sup>	
<b>Agnes Curry Morrison Brodie</b> b: 1881, Greenock, Renfrewshire, Scotland	
F	Rose Knight Gregson b: ABT 1908, Scotland
M	Charles Edward Knight Gregson b: 24 APR 1910 Scotland d: 28 Jun 1976 Rockville Centre, NY
F	Jessie Knight Gregson b: 16 AUG 1914 Liverpool, ENG d: JAN 1988 Littleton, Douglas, CO
<b>Notes for this table</b>	
a	England Births and Christenings, 1538-1975 (England-EASy source film number: 2147930, reference number: item 5-111111) <a href="http://FamilySearch.org">FamilySearch.org</a>
b	Marriage Record from District of Gorbals in the Burgh of Glasgow, U.K.



# Final Thoughts

## Filling in the Blanks

For nearly one thousand years, the history of the Gregson family was firmly entrenched in the upper echelon of British society. From Arthur, son of Gregory de Normanton, Knight Banneret to my 2-greats grandfather Henry Knight Gregson, this was a family of considerable wealth and influence. Inheritance of the family estate was governed by primogeniture—the right of the firstborn to inherit the entire estate. While we may find this odd in today’s world, the custom made it possible to insure that the legacy of the family remained intact as the estate was passed down from generation to generation. Otherwise, the family assets would be divided among perhaps ten offspring, creating a situation in which no one would be able to maintain the estate and the glory of the family name.

Gentlemen John Gregson of Murton whom we meet early in this chapter belonged to a class referred to as landed gentry. This was a station below the aristocrats,<sup>22</sup> but above the yeomen and those who worked the fields and mines. Since the first-born son of John of Murton entered Holy Orders, the estate at Murton passed to John’s second son Thomas. Our family line which branches from third son Anthony had no inheritance of the Murton estate. As with others not in the primogenital stem, Anthony was on his own to create his fortune. We know few details about our branch of the family until this Anthony’s great grandson John. John had risen from a tenant farmer to a respected member of the community. John’s obituary in the Newcastle Chronicle, stated: “...by his attention and efforts in husbandry he had acquired, with the best of characters, a very large fortune. With this fortune he purchased the estate of Lowlynn near Kyoeloe in Northumberland”. Building this fortune from the land would set the foundation for another country house of the Gregsons, one that would be inherited by first-born sons for almost two hundred years. Anthony, the grandson of John of Lowlynn did not marry. Thus, there was no son, and the rules of primogeniture did not apply. An-

22 *At the top of the aristocratic ladder was the monarch and below were several orders of privilege bestowed by the monarch including: dukes, earls, barons and knights.*

thony devised to pass the estate of Lowlynn to his first cousin, two times removed.<sup>23</sup> This undoubtedly caused controversy among others more closely related family members. Anthony's will was honored and the estate of Lowlynn passed to Henry Knight, eldest son of the Rev. Thomas Knight of Ford. As a condition of the inheritance, Henry assumed the surname Gregson. This bound the estate to the Gregson name.

Assuredly, Lowlynn was a beehive of activity. In this house Henry and Eliza Mary raised a large family of seventeen children. We have an account printed in the *Berwick Advertiser* (July, 1876) describing a visit to Lowlynn of Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught and Strathearn. The prince was the seventh child and third son of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Arthur was commissioned as a lieutenant in the British Army, and served for some 40 years, seeing service in various parts of the British Empire. According to the article, one of the sons of Henry and Eliza Mary had accompanied His Royal Highness on a trip to India. It is most likely that this was Henry Knight Jr. who was a Lieutenant in the Royal Navy.

In the 1881 England Census, Henry and Eliza along with three unmarried daughters were living in Lowlynn House. The household staff included a cook, kitchen maid, laundry maid, two house maids, a service maid, a sewing maid, and a groom. These servants resided in the main house. There were others in employment whose duties involved the farms of Lowlynn.

The record shows that Henry Knight Gregson died 19 SEP 1885 at the Priory on Fulford Road, York. Henry had been ill and was staying in York for treatment. His death certificate indicates hepatic and renal disease. When Henry died, his estate was valued at £13,370. Although there are many methods of computing the time-value of money, one estimate of his estate at the turn of the millennium would place its valuation at about £600,000. Most likely the bulk of the money was tied up in the land and buildings of Lowlynn. After Henry's death, Eliza Mary went to live with her unmarried daughter Mary Jane Frederica in the south of England. Eliza died at the age of 80 on 17 NOV 1904.

**23**     *Henry's maternal great grandfather and Anthony's father were brothers.*



At the end of the nineteenth century the economics of running an estate the size of Lowlynn were rapidly changing, creating a situation that would be difficult for any heir of the property. Lowlynn generated income from agriculture and perhaps mining operations on other lands owned by the family. The income supported the staff required to serve the family and for maintenance of the estate.

Just a month before Henry's death, eldest son Alfred Knight Gregson committed suicide. Alfred was a mortgage broker, who had run into financial problems and filed for bankruptcy in 1883. Lowlynn passed to Clarence Knight Gregson, son of Alfred. Clarence lived in London and Lowlynn was leased. The 1891 census shows the family of Rowley R. Hill a retired Army Lieutenant Colonel living at Lowlynn House with his wife, three sons, two daughters, and nine servants. In 1901 the premises was occupied by the family of Thomas R. Marshall, and in 1911 Dr. Rutherford is documented as occupant of Lowlynn House. Lowlynn was put on the real estate market in 1926. Some of the pictures of the estate in this book are from a 1926 sales brochure. Clarence died 17 APR 1930. Clarence appointed his uncle Harold Strangeways Knight Gregson, youngest son of Henry and Eliza Mary, to be solicitor charged with settling the estate. Harold claimed Clarence left Lowlynn to him, not Clarence Anthony, only son of Clarence. Clarence Anthony sued for the title to the estate. The court records appear to imply that Harold Strangeways Knight Gregson changed the will of Clarence to leave the estate in trust to himself. A final settlement was made 14 MAY 1936 with an order from the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice. The matter was settled. A poem entitled A Song of Lowlynn (Appendix C) was inscribed to the Master of Lowlynn Clarence Anthony Knight-Gregson on his recapture, by action at law, of his ancestral estates was printed in the Eastbourne Herald, March 12th, 1932.



*The Ruin of Lowlynn House (2006)*

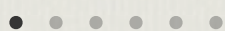


*Google Earth View of the Ruins of Lowlynn (2010)*

**GALLERY 1.1** *The pictures in this album were taken by Peter Taylor during a spring 2012 visit to Northumberland.*



**The Lodge.** This would have been the formal entrance to the estate. It is still intact and is currently used as a home.





What happened to Lowlynn House between 1926 and the description published in the Buildings of England: Northumberland? On the last page (left) is a picture of Lowlynn Estate was taken in 2006 by Lillian Caley. Describing the cause of the ruin, Ms. Caley states: *“I spoke to the couple who live next door in Lowlynn's old apple house, they have lived there since the late 60's and they told me that the house had the lead stolen off the roof and from then onwards the house suffered water damage and slowly started to collapse in on itself. The atrium glass roof section collapsed in the 70's, they heard it! It now has trees and all sorts of vegetation growing on the inside, such a shame.”*

It appears that the fate of Lowlynn was sealed during World War II. In 1938, the estate was requisitioned by the Royal Air Force, Coastal Command, and was later used to house POW German officers. After the war Lowlynn was never again occupied and began to deteriorate. The culmination was the collapse of the roof. Today, the house is a shell with nature reclaiming the once splendid home in which generations of Gregsons lived for nearly two hundred years.

## The Story Behind the Story

When I focused my research on my mother's ancestors, I had little information to begin my search. Since my mother was only three years of age when her father died, there were very few memories. When she spoke to us about her past it was about her immigration to America and of her mother's family. I did not even know the first name of my maternal grandfather.

My mother identified her maiden name as Gregson, and she carried the middle name Knight. She told me that it was bestowed on an ancestor who had been knighted by the king. My mother died before I began my quest to uncover family stories. I do not believe, however, that my mother had much understanding of her own ancestry or the genesis of her family name from the amalgamation of the Knight and Gregson families with her great grandfather Henry Knight Gregson.

The first break in understanding my Gregson family came when I received a message from Lilian Caley on my Ancestry.com account. I had entered my parents in my Ancestry.com family tree, and Lilian discovered the entry to Jessie Knight Gregson. In our initial discussions I learned that Lilian and I shared the same great grandfather Charles Edward Knight Gregson. And from her I found the name of my grandfather, Archibald. Shortly after that, I put my ancestry research on hold as I got involved in moving to the west coast of the United States. Established in my new home, I used the information from Lilian and discovered extensive documentation on my 2-greats grandfather Henry Knight Gregson, along with the story of the amalgamation of the Knight and Gregson family names. I discovered Lowlynn, the family estate, near Kyole in Northumberland and began a search to locate it. I had found a reference stating that Lowlynn House was a ruin. I found references to Lowlynn in a map resource and then explored that area with Google Earth. Yes, there it was! This was an exciting discovery.

I continued my research on Ancestry.com and met Kate Allison. Kate is descended from another son of Henry and Eliza Mary. Kate provided a number of photographs of the family along with a copy of the sales brochure for Lowlynn from 1926. At about this time I reconnected with Lilian and also began corresponding with Valerie Edwards, another cousin descended from Charles Edward. These contacts with my English cousins provided me with a number of details about our family.

I was contacted by a group of Australian cousins who were descended from George Charles Knight Gregson. They were on a trip to Northumberland to seek their family roots. This group has broadened my understanding, and they have contributed data collected on their trip, including the story written by Charles Edward memorializing his grandfather Thomas Knight.



## Appendix A

# Connecting the Gregsons and the de Normanton family


While there are variations of the Gregson coat of arms for different branches of the family, the description for Knight Gregson of Lowlynn, Beal (28 JUL 1842) granted to Henry Knight Gregson by the College of Arms is described:

Argent, a saltire gules, recercellee, engrailed azure, a canton chequy erminois and of the last. Mantling gules and argent. Crest — On a wreath of the colours, a cubit arm couped argent, charged with a bendlet wavy azure between two others gules, tied round the wrist with a riband of the same colours and holding in the hand proper a battleaxe or, the staff sable, entwined with a wreath of oak fructed also proper.



*The Knight Gregson Arms  
and Crest*

The language of symbols<sup>24</sup> used in describing coats of arms and crests provides a textual description.

The Saltire  on the arms denotes resoluteness; gules is the color red befitting a warrior; and engrailed refers to the wavy outline of the cross. The background of the shield is argent which designates either silver or white.

**24** Boutell, Charles, *Handbook to English Heraldry*, A.C. Fox-Davies (London, 1914)  
< <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/23186/23186-h/23186-h.htm> >

According to *The History of the Family of Gregson of Whalley, Lancashire*<sup>25</sup> the arms of the de Normantons were “argent and saltire gules.” That is a simple St. Andrew’s Cross. With the bestowing of knighthood on Gregory de Normanton the shield was augmented with a canton displaying an azure and gold chequy. The author of the history goes on to describe the de Normanton crest which is the decoration above the shield:

“an arm couped at the elbow, vested charged with two bendlets wavy, argent and sable, holding the hand arg. two spurs sable; and the motto was *“Gannire e Usire meaning Win and Wear in Norman-French. The author continues “This Crest and motto remained unchanged in the family until about 1533, after which a battle-axe or a handle sable was substituted for the spurs.”*”

The coat of arms awarded to Henry Knight Gregson in 1842 is very similar to that of Gregory de Normanton. The reference to chequy erminois denotes a resemblance to ermine: black markings on a gold background, and the couped arm holds a battleaxe.

While the *History of the Family of Gregson of Whalley* describes many who were descendants of Arthur Gregorysonne, the genealogy is not complete and it does not contain a connection between Arthur Gregorysonne and John of Murton whom we know to be the ancestor of Henry Knight Gregson. However, the evidence provided in the armorial description of the family de Normanton and that of Henry Knight Gregson provide what appears to be evidence of a link.

**25** Reid, Robert M. *History of the family of Gregson of Whalley, Lancashire: "Gregson pedigree."* (Shoshone, Calif.: unknown, 1968). This is the normal citation of the work, but the author states “Reference is hereby made to “*History of the family of Gregson of Whalley*”, a document of thirty-two pages , purchased by me from *The College of Arms, ...London...*” Interesting that this document is also of the same name and length. I suspect that in large measure this is copied from the referenced document. Repository: *Ancestry.com* or *Don Falkenburg’s family web*.



## Appendix B: Religious Turbulence in the House of Stuart and the Jacobite Rising



Charles I of England, Scotland and Ireland was of the House of Stuart. Charles struggled with Parliament over the issue of Royal prerogative, and finally dissolved Parliament and ruled with an iron fist. Religious friction was rampant as William Laud, appointed by Charles to be Archbishop of Canterbury took action against reformers within the Church of England and a growing Puritan movement. The struggle culminated in the English Civil War in which forces loyal to the king battled against an army raised by Parliament. Under the leadership of Oliver Cromwell, Charles was defeated. He was tried and executed on 30 JAN 1649 for high treason. On 5 FEB 1649 The Parliament of Scotland proclaimed Charles' son, Charles II, King. The English Parliament, however, did not follow suit. England became a republic led by Oliver Cromwell. Cromwell's death in 1658 led to a crisis of leadership. Parliament asserted its right in the succession to the Crown, and invited Charles II, son of the slain king, to return to Britain from an exile in France—an act that reestablished the monarchy. Tension within the government and the Church of England continued with a tug-of-war between reformation and a return to an alliance with Rome. Charles brother James, who would be heir (James, Duke of York) was a Roman Catholic. There were plots to kill both Charles II and James. Finally, tired of conflict with Parliament, Charles dissolved the body and ruled until his death in 1685. The King converted to Roman Catholicism as he lay on his deathbed.

James succeeded his brother as King James II (England) and VII (Scotland). Religious tension crescendoed with a Roman Catholic monarch as sovereign over the island kingdoms. James was opposed by both religious and political factions. James had two daughters, Mary and Ann, by his first wife Anne Hyde, a Protestant. However, after Anne died, James married a Catholic, Mary of Modena. Mary produced a male heir, James Francis Edward Stuart, designated James, Prince of

Wales. Now concern mounted even further since this Catholic Prince would be heir to the throne, in essence establishing a Catholic dynasty. Protestant members of Parliament were determined to remedy this. They invited Mary and her Protestant husband William of Orange to take the throne. William was born in The Hague in the Dutch Republic, the son of William II, Prince of Orange. William's victory over James in the Battle of Boyne took place on the east coast of Ireland in the year 1690. This was a decisive battle in what came to be called the Glorious Revolution. James, concerned with his own survival, fled to France, thereby abdicating the throne. Mary, daughter of King James II and William of Orange ruled as joint regents of England, Scotland and Ireland. Important structural changes were occurring in government. Parliament passed the Act of Toleration in 1689 permitting non-conforming Protestant religions a freedom to worship according to their conscience. This, however, did not apply to either Roman Catholics or to Quakers. In addition, the Bill of Rights whose basic tenets had been established in the Magna Carta of 1215 (but diluted by the rule of many monarchs) was passed. This Bill prohibited the monarch from suspending the laws enacted by Parliament or levy taxes without the approval of Parliament. It also established rules for the succession to the Crown, including the prohibition of Roman Catholics and those who married Catholics to become monarch.

The Stuart Dynasty ended with Queen Anne who was crowned Queen of England, Scotland, and Ireland on 23 APR 1702. Under the Acts of Union of 1707, England and Scotland were unified into a single sovereign state. Before this time, England and Scotland were two separate states with different Parliaments, but the same monarch. Ann died at a young age, and left no children. According to the law established by Parliament, the Crown went to the nearest "non-Catholic" in the line of succession. Sophia, the wife of Ernest Augustus was declared heiress of the throne of Great Britain (England and Scotland). As a member of a Germanic royal dynasty, Anne was the eldest eligible Protestant descendant of James I of England. Some fifty-six Catholics in the line of succession had stronger ancestral claim to the throne, but they were excluded by their religious affiliation. Electress Sophia died at the age of 83 on 28 MAY 1714. Sophia's eldest son George



was next in line, and when Queen Anne died AUG 1714, he became George I of Great Britain.

Upon the death of his father James II in 1701, the young James III declared himself King. He was immediately recognized by France, Spain, and the Papal States. However, to the English, James was a pretender to the throne, hence the name 'Old Pretender'. James lived in relative luxury supported by Pope Clement XI. He married and bore two sons, Charles and Henry. Henry became a Cardinal in the Roman Catholic Church. Charles had the aspirations of his father to assume the throne of Scotland, England, and Ireland. He became known as the 'Young Pretender' and Bonnie Prince Charlie.

Several abortive attempts were made to reestablish James and his heir Bonnie Prince Charlie to the throne. Supporters of the movement were called Jacobites, after the latin name for James (Jacobus). The Rising of 1745 was an effort by Charles to reclaim the kingdom. Prince Charlie had landed in Scotland to begin his quest. The Prince and his supporters entered Edinburgh, and Charles set up court at the Palace of Holyroodhouse. With a victory against the government army at the Battle of Prestonpans, the campaign moved south crossing the English border near Kelso, about 10 miles up-river on the Tweed from Wark. Facing strong government resistance as they moved south, the Prince retreated back to Scotland. The Jacobite forces faced the loyalist army Culloden. The Battle turned into a massacre, and as it became obvious that a loss was on hand, Bonnie Prince Charlie abandoned his fighters and fled the battlefield.

# Appendix C: A Song of Lowlynn

## A SONG OF LOWLYNN

### *In Lowlynn Woods - any Spring since Prestonpans*

- I. *The beech trees are swaying  
In the lowlynn Wood:  
Each snowdrop is displaying  
Her white, her virginal hood;  
The rooks are soaring, cawing.  
And the stable-steeds are pawing,  
For the Spring rides hard to Lowlynn  
And her news is good.*
- II *The trumpets of the daffodil  
They call from Lickar Moor  
To winds on Holy Island shrill  
Which, joyous, leap ashore.  
O! one spurs fast to Lowlynn,  
A spirit rides to Lowlynn.  
And, leaping from the saddle,  
Is now at Lowlynn door.*
- III *The trout play in the South Low,  
The plover wheel and wail;  
On Bowsden see the daisies blow  
And the first primrose pale.  
See the whaups all wildly winging,  
Hear the storm-cock wildly singing,  
For the Spring comes up to Lowlynn  
O! the Spring of long ago!*
- IV *Spectral stands the old Hall  
In the murky night;  
Sudden flame the windows all  
With no earthly light;  
And the old pipes are skirling.  
And fair ghostly dancers whirling,  
And the cup and claymore lifted  
As the old troth they plight.*
- V. *O'er the Border, up the glen  
Through the heather and the gorse  
Comes the tramp of armed men -  
The soft thunder of the horse -  
And there rides in front, I ween,  
"Of the seed of Mary, Queen.  
One each Lowlynn man would fight for  
Till he lay a corse.*

### *In the Court of Chancery - Spring 1932*

- VI. *From Lowlynn Wood to London  
Is a weary way and far  
But lest all right be undone  
One riseth at a Bar.  
And there delivereth homily  
On words which Samuel Romilly  
Spake long ago to Eldon  
Whose name shines like a star.*
- VII. *In that Court where Eldon's glance  
Pierced through the souls of men  
Grave pleas for great deliverance  
Fall on man's ear again.  
And at the Bar, within that place,  
Stands one of Romilly's mien and race  
Who doth his deathless word retrace  
With noble voice and pen.*
- VII. *Then London called to Lowlynn -  
To the men beside Tweed's ford;  
Lands won by blade and bow-line  
Shall be kept - by Eldon's word.  
In this joyous bout and clench  
Never dolt on Throne or Bench  
Could turn aside the lightnings  
Of that everlasting sword!*



## Notes on Song of Lowlynn

### *In Lowlynn Woods- any Spring since Prestopans*

The Battle of Prestonpans took place in September 1745 and marked the beginning of the campaign by Charles Edward Stuart (The Young Pretender) to reclaim the thrones of England and Scotland. This is about the time that Lowlynn House was built by John Gregson, so the reference establishes an historical benchmark for Lowlynn and the Gregson family. King James II (James VII of Scotland) was deposed from the British throne in 1689 for his ruthless behavior in attempting to reestablish Catholicism as the state religion. In The Glorious Revolution William III of Orange, a Dutch Protestant engaged in battle against James and in 1689 James was defeated, deposed and exiled. The Stuarts attempted to regain the throne during the Jacobite Uprisings, but failed. Bonnie Prince Charlie (grandson of James II) was trained in the military during his early years in Rome, where he and the exiled family lived a privileged life. After an aborted attempt at an invasion with the help of the French (who were enemies of the British Crown) The Young Pretender returned to Scotland. While he was not encouraged by official Scotland, Charles began a campaign of seeking support from the Highland Chiefs. These chiefs believed in the Divine Right of Kings, and recognized the Stuarts as chosen by God and supported Charles in his quest to regain the throne. William III was regarded by many as a foreigner.<sup>26</sup> Bonnie Prince Charlie gained the support of most of the Scottish clans. Charles won the battle at Prestonpans over a depleted British force which was otherwise engaged in France. Charles now turned to build support in England. In the document described earlier we read that many of the aristocracy and landed gentry in the region were supporters of the Young Pretender. Likely William III was seen as a foreign monarch. Charles began a march toward London, but turned back to Scotland when he thought his chances

**26** *The fact that Charles Edward Stuart was born in Italy, and that his mother was Polish, and was therefore also technically a “foreigner,” was ignored. He was, however, in the minds of many the rightful heir to the throne.*

of defeating the English troops was small. Eventually, Charles Edward Stuart was defeated at the Battle of Culloden in April 1746 by loyalist troops under the command of William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland. Charles deserted his troops and gave up the Jacobite cause.

The first three stanzas of the poem describes the arrival of spring at Lowlynn. Spring, the season of renewal is symbolic of the renewed return of the estate to Clarence Anthony Knight Gregson, who by primogenital precedence is the rightful heir to Lowlynn. The author describes the spirits of the past arriving at Lowlynn.

*“winds on Holy Isle...  
one spurs fast to Lowlynn,  
a spirit rides to Lowlynn,  
And leaping from saddle,  
Is now at Lowlynn door.”*

Holy Island (Lindisfarne) dates to 635 when Saint Cuthbert established a monastery for Christian evangelizing of Northumbria. It was the home of the Donaldsons, Eliza Mary’s paternal family. The story is retold allegorically of the historic support of the Gregson family for the Jacobite cause. Here the term claymore is an anglicization of the Gaelic claidheamh mòr—a great two-handed sword first used in 1772.

*“Spectral stands the old Hall  
In the murky night;  
Sudden flame the windows all  
With no earthly light;  
And the old pipes are skirling.  
And fair ghostly dancers whirling,  
And the cup and claymore lifted  
As the old troth they plight.”*

In the next stanza describes Bonnie Prince Charlie leading the troops and the oath that each Lowlynn man would fight.. till he lay a corse (Middle English: a corpse)



*“O'er the Border, up the glen  
Through the heather and the gorse  
Comes the tramp of armed men -  
The soft thunder of the horse -  
And there rides in front, I ween,  
"Of the seed of Mary, Queen  
One each Lowlynn man would fight for  
Till he lay a corse.”*

*In the Court of Chancery - Spring 1932*

The second part of the poem deals with the legal proceedings around the disposition of the estate. Had Alfred, eldest son of Henry Knight Gregson not died, the inheritance would be clear. In stanza VI we see the words:

*“And there delivereth homily  
On words which Samuel Romilly  
Spake long ago to Eldon  
Whose name shines like a star.”*

Samuel Romilly was a legal reformer. Just before he had planned significant programs of further reform, the tragic death of his wife sent Romilly into depression. In his grief, he shut himself in his house and on 29 OCT 1818 he cut his throat with a razor, succumbing in little more than an hour. The verdict of an inquiry was suicide during temporary derangement. Romilly's death was recognized as a public calamity by men of all shades of political opinion, and affected Lord Eldon, Lord Chancellor of Great Britain, to tears. Why did the poet include this allusion? Romilly wrote about primogeniture and inheritance: “The nature and character of aristocracy shows itself [in the law of primogeniture]...it is a law against nature.”

My interpretation of this stanza

*“And there delivereth homily  
On words which Samuel Romilly  
Spake long ago to Eldon  
Whose name shines like a star.”*

is that it does may not deal with the substance of the case at all, but rather may have been part of the summation of the proceedings in which the solicitor for the plaintiff may have tried to arouse a sense of sympathy by connecting the heart-rending end of Romilly and the tragic suicide of Alfred Knight Gregson, the grandfather of Clarence Anthony's grandfather.

The poem ends with another allegorical reference to the Jacobites

## Appendix D

### The Mystery of the Green Coffin Lid

It appears that the Gregsons and later the Knight Gregsons were sympathetic to the Jacobite movement. John Gregson of Lowlynn was issued a writ of protection signed by John Murray, Secretary to Charles Edward Stuart. The Song of Lowlynn written in 1932 contains the stanza:

*“O'er the Border, up the glen  
Through the heather and the gorse  
Comes the tramp of armed men -  
The soft thunder of the horse -  
And there rides in front, I ween,  
"Of the seed of Mary, Queen  
One each Lowlynn man would fight for  
Till he lay a corse.”*

This along with other imagery of the poet shows a strong leaning toward Jacobite ideals. (see Appendix C).

There is a family story that was passed down through the family of George Charles Knight Gregson, the sixth child of Henry and Eliza. Born at Lowlynn in 1851, George Charles emigrated to New South Wales, Australia before 1880. Around 1952, George Selby Knight Gregson (son of George Charles and grandson of Henry Knight Gregson) wrote a family history in which he states that a coffee table made from the coffin lid of the (mid to late 1700's) re-interred body of



General Tom Forster of 1715 Jacobite fame was in the family home, Lowlynn. Members of the Australian branch of the family stated “it was apparently painted green and to quote my grandfather – it was at Lowlynn for many years!”

Let’s start with “Who was Tom Forster?” From the website of the Newcastle University Library, we read about Tom Forster and his sister Dorothy:

*“Dorothy and her brother Tom lived in Bamburgh Castle which had been owned by the Forster family from the 16th Century. During the Jacobite Rebellion of 1715 Tom enlisted to fight for the Stuart cause and was known as the General of the English army. He was captured and held in Newgate Goal, London. Dorothy, disguised as a servant travelled to London, and in a daring plan using a duplicate key, helped her brother to escape and he fled to France. Dorothy arranged for a coffin to be filled with sawdust and placed in the family vault at Bamburgh to outwit the authorities.”*

When Tom died in 1738 his body was returned to England and laid to rest in the Crypt of St Aidan's Church in Bamburgh. After Dorothy's death she was buried alongside her brother.

In exploring the claim that Tom Forster’s coffin lid was in Lowlynn, our Australian cousins recently uncovered a letter written in 1933 by George Selby Knight Gregson, son of George Charles<sup>27</sup>.

Aunt Fan tells me that when the Foster crypt at Bamburgh was being altered, my great grandmother Mrs. Donaldson Selby who was a Miss Gray of Shoreston took the lid of the coffin in which General Tom Foster had been buried and had it made into a table, which, painted green, was at Lowlynn as long as she could remember. The old lady must have been like your 'Grannie' a 'contriving body'. We leave by bus from Wooler at 12.15 for Edinburgh so I must go.

Who was this conniving body? Mary Dorothy Grey was born at Shoreston Hall, Northumberland, England 26 APR 1797. On 1 JAN 1823 Mary Dorothy married John Strangeways Donaldson-Selby. Two pictures of Mary Dorothy appear on the next page. Both of these are were passed down from George Charles Knight Gregson through the Australian branch of the family.

**27** *Aunt Fan is mentioned in the letter. This is Frances, sister of George Charles. She was alive in 1933. In her later years, Eliza Mary Knight Gregson went to live with her daughter Frances in Weymouth along the south coast of England. Frances never married and lived to the age of 84.*



*Mary Dorothy (Grey) Donaldson Selby born 26 APR 1797, Shoreston Hall, Northumberland and died 7 NOV 1889 Yorkshire.*



*Frances Norris Knight Gregson (1862-1946) (Aunt Fan)*



Mary Dorothy was the child of Robert Grey (1766-1860) and Elizabeth Forster (1773-1843). Clearly, this is the connection to the Forster family. The question is how is Mary Dorothy linked to General Tom Forster, and why did she have access to the coffin lid? At this point in time, I can find no genealogical data to link General Tom Forster and Elizabeth except the family name Forster.

One of our cousins from the UK uncovered the fact that (1) Dorothy Fewster (grand-mother of Mary Dorothy Grey) died in Bamburgh Hall Farm.<sup>28</sup> On the website for Bamburgh Hall Farm (now a Bed and Breakfast Inn) we read:

*“Bamburgh Hall is a 17th century farmhouse. It was once the home of Tom Forster, self styled General in the ill-fated Derwentwater Rebellion in 1715. After defeat at Preston and imprisonment in the Tower of London, he was helped to escape by his daughter, Dorothy. He is buried in the crypt of the church next door. It is likely that plans for the rebellion were made in the dining room of this house.”*

While Dorothy Fewster (1742-1820) and General Tom Forster (1683-1738) were not in at Bamburgh Hall Farm at the same time, clearly Dorothy Fewster would have known of the role Tom played in the 1715 Rising. It is likely that when the Forster Crypt at St. Aidan’s was being renovated, grand-daughter Mary Dorothy Grey may have been given access to materials that were removed, and kept the ‘coffin lid’ as a memento. Here are a couple of questions:

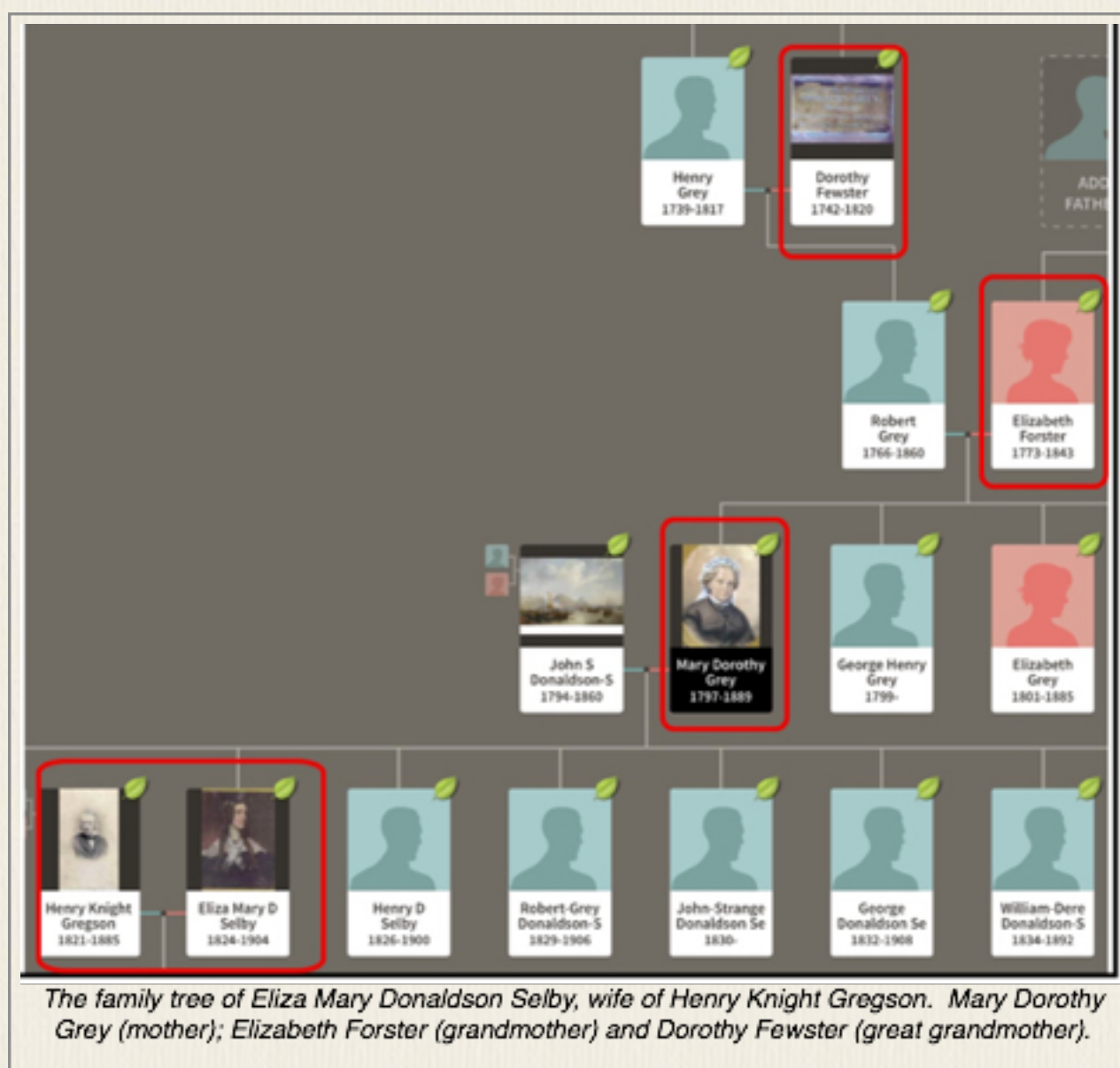
1. Why was the crypt renovated? The original memorial tablet in the Parish of St. Aidan lists lists eight persons in the crypt. I don’t know if these individuals were interred as shown in the picture of the crypt today, or if stone coffins were placed in the crypt. If the second possibility is true, real estate would be getting quite crowded as Tom and sister Dorothy (and others) joined their ancestors in the crypt. Perhaps the renovation called for burying the individuals beneath the crypt

**28** *An obituary which was said to have been printed in the Newcastle Courant in 1820 cited 'Mrs Grey relict of Henry Grey of Shoreston' and states that she died at Bamburgh Hall. At first I thought that Fewster might be a variant of Forster, but I have found no connection. I found the following reference North Country Diaries (Second Series) Pub for the Surtees Society by Andrews & Co. Durham 1915, p. 256 : “The Fewsters were a Derwent valley family.” The reference is to Dorothy Fewster wife of Henry Grey of Shoreston. familysearch.org has a record indicating that Dorothy Fewster was Baptized at Bamburgh 5 AUG 1742. The record lists her father as Robert Fewster.*

floor with tablets marking their resting places (as shown in the picture of today's crypt). If so, there may have been materials left over which had to be disposed of. This could be the source of the mysterious coffin lid.

2. Was the coffin lid (which was painted green) from an older inner wooden box placed within a stone coffin, or was it a heavy stone lid. In either case, I am sure that Mary Dorothy did not secret it away one dark night carrying a slab of granite across her back. I am reasonably sure that this was not a grave robbery, but an opportunity to retrieve materials that were to be disposed.

Mary Dorothy, her mother Elizabeth Forester and grandmother Dorothy Fewster are memorialized at St. Aiden's Bamburgh—the same resting place as General Tom Forster. At this point I am not sure if all three are buried in the churchyard at St. Aiden's, but there are brass plates remembering them.







*Forster family crypt Church of St. Aidan, Bamburgh, Northumberland.*

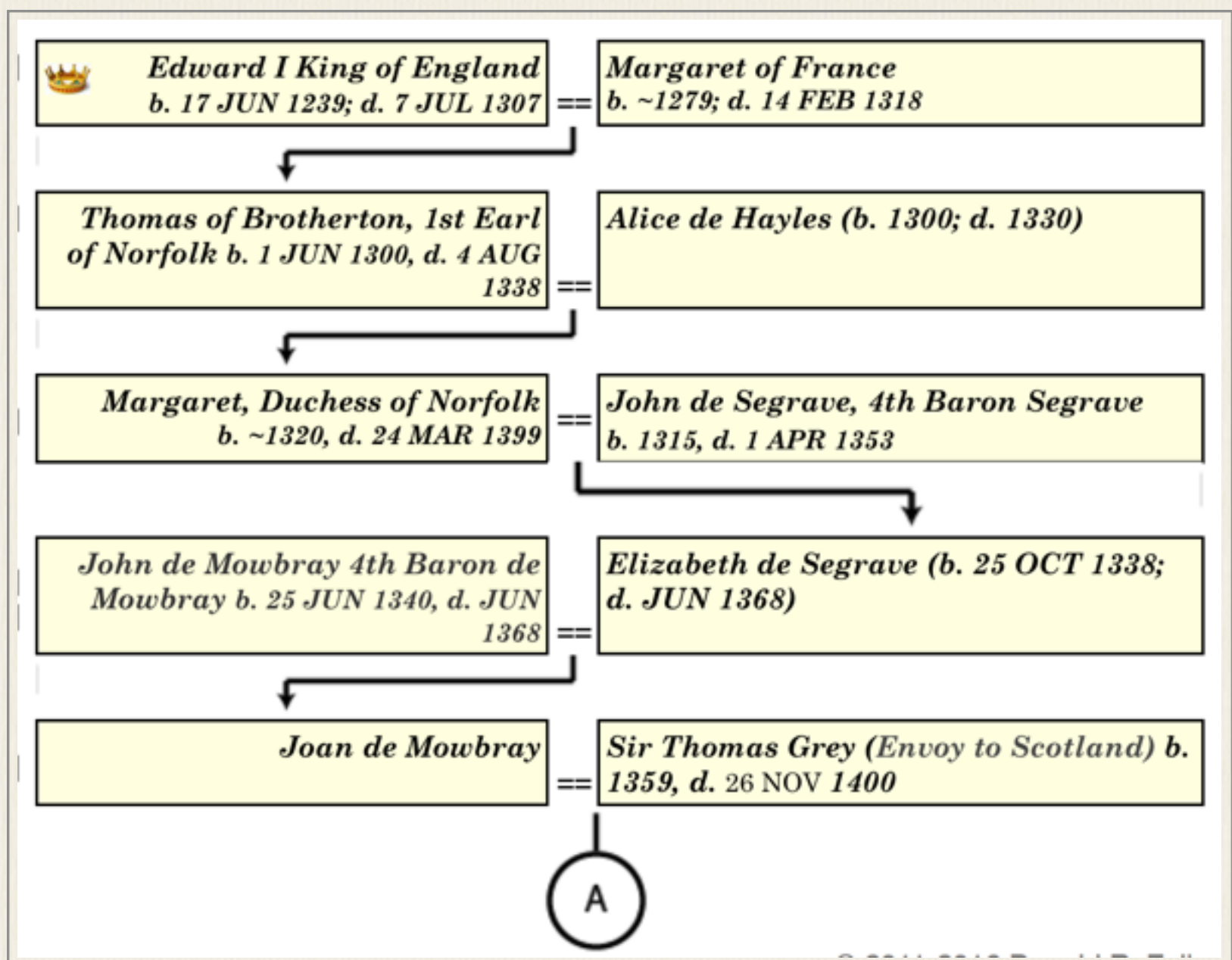


*Brass Plate Memorials at St. Aidan, Bamburgh*

## Appendix E

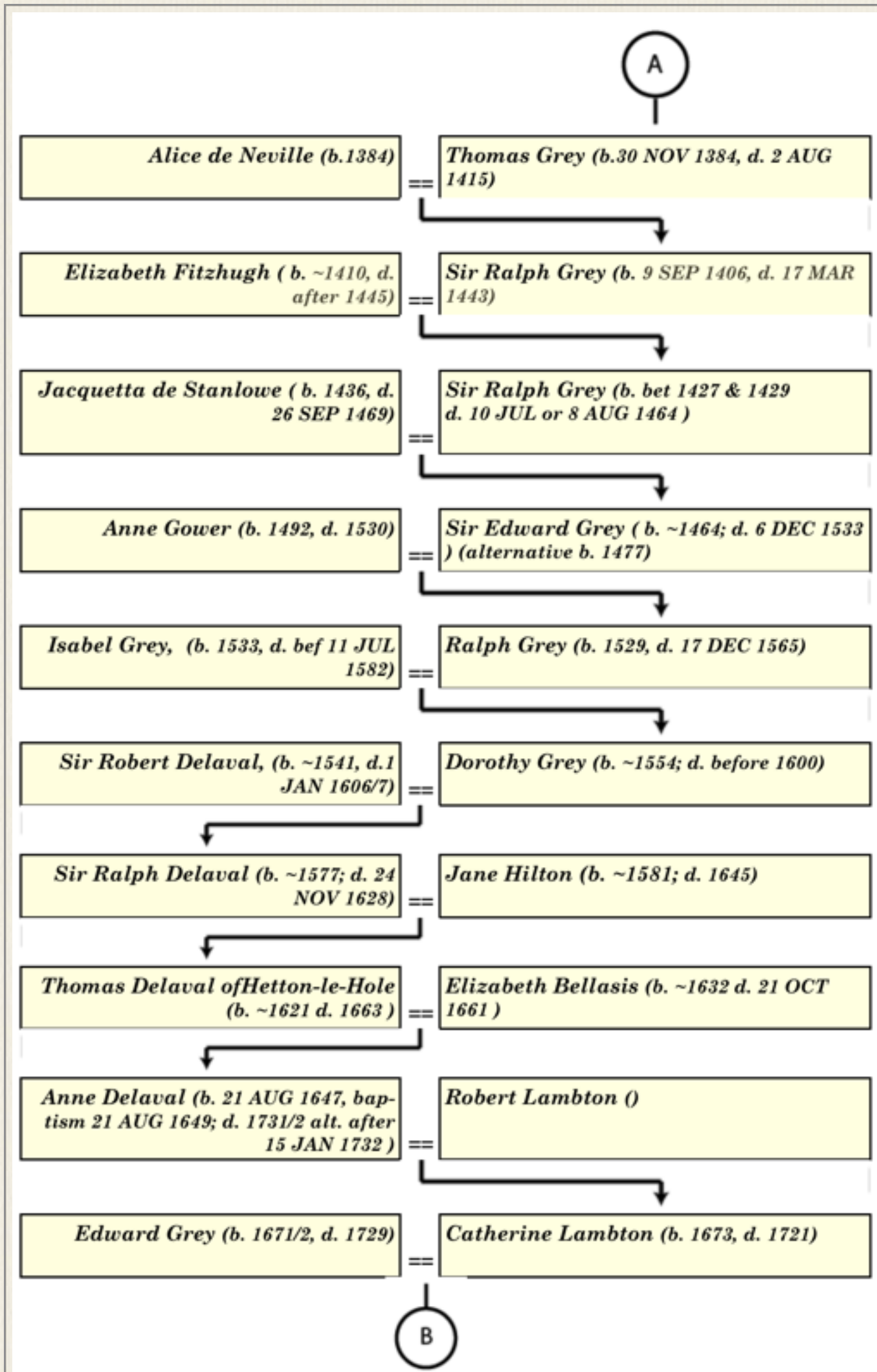
### Connection to Royal Blood

It is always exciting when we can trace our ancestry to a person of historical note. Our Knight Gregson family (my mother's family) is linked to the Royal House of Plantagenet kings. Before the twelfth century, England was largely ruled by foreign monarchs with raids from Viking kings and Norman invaders. With the House of Plantagenet, England emerged from a colonial realm into one of the most deeply engaged and mature kingdoms in Europe.

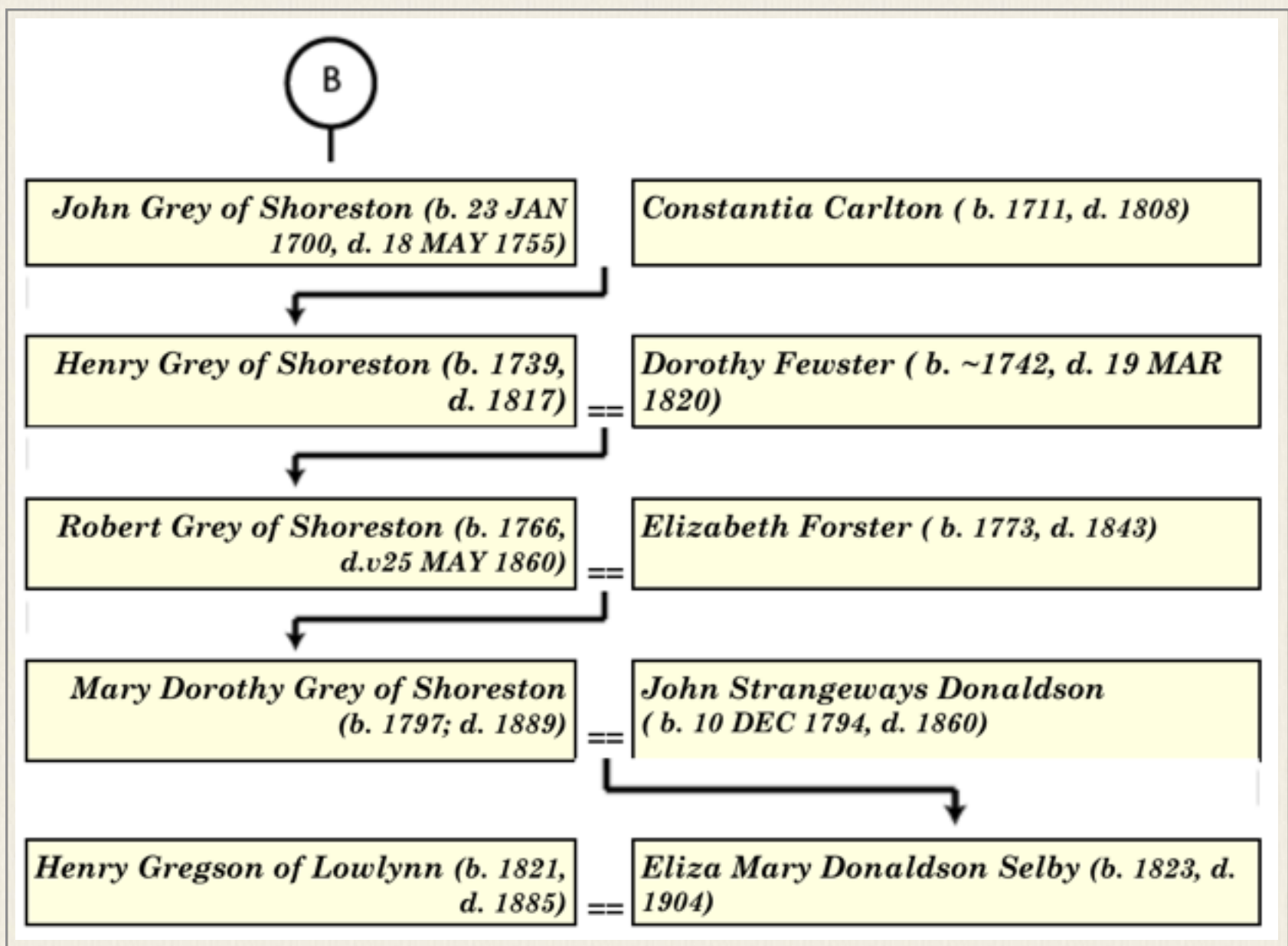


**References:** *Edward I* [35]; *Thomas Brotherton* [36]; *Margaret of Norfolk* [37]; *John de Mowbray* [38], [39]; *Sir Thomas Grey* [40]





**References:** *Thomas Grey* [41]; *Sir Ralph Grey (b. 1406)* [42]; *Sir Ralph Grey (d.1464)* [43]; *Edward Grey* [44]; *Ralph Grey (b. 1529)* [45]; *Robert Delaval + Dorothy Grey* [46]; *Sir Ralph Delaval + Jane Hilton* [46]; *Thomas Delaval + Elizabeth Bellais* [46]; *Anne Delaval + Robert Lambton* [46]; *Edward Grey* [47]. Some have multiple listed: see References Chapter 12.



**References:** *John Grey, Henry Grey, Robert Grey and Mary Dorothy Grey* see [12.47];  
*Henry Gregson* [12.48]

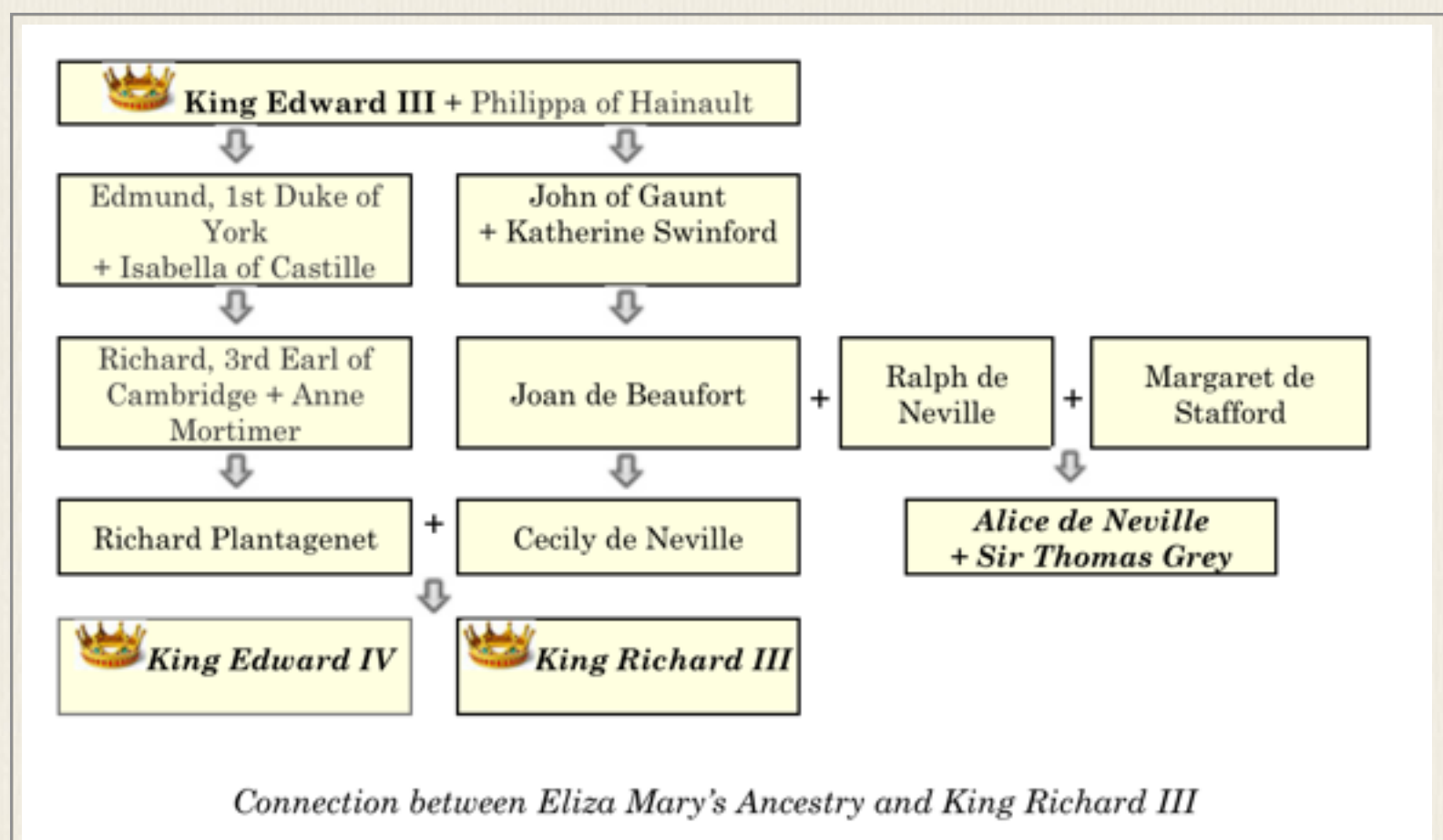
Our direct connection to Royal blood is through the family of Eliza Mary Donaldson Selby, wife of Henry Knight Gregson. Eliza was my 2<sup>nd</sup> great grandmother. Her mother was Mary Dorothy Grey. The Greys are believed to have originated in Normandy and came to England with William the Conqueror. Anchetil de Greye is named in the Domesday book of 1086 and is believed to be the ancestor of the Grey/Gray aristocratic families of England. The genealogy ending on this page shows twenty generations linking the blood-line of Eliza Mary Donaldson Selby with Edward I, King of England who reigned from 1274 to 1307. Since Eliza Mary was my 2<sup>nd</sup> great grandmother, then King Edward I and Margaret of France are my 21-greats grandparents!

Eliza Mary Donaldson Selby is also related to Kings Edward IV and Richard III through Ralph de Neville, 1st Earl of Westmorland. Westmorland and first wife Margaret de Stafford was one of Eliza's 17<sup>th</sup> great grandparents. Alice de Neville



who married Sir Thomas Grey was the daughter of Ralph de Neville and Margaret de Stafford. After Margaret de Stafford died, Westmorland married Joan de Beaufort, daughter of John of Gaunt, 1st Duke of Lancaster who was the son of King Edward III. Cecily de Neville, the daughter of Joan de Beaufort and Ralph de Neville, married Richard Plantagenet 3rd Duke of York. Kings Edward IV and Richard III were sons of Cecily and Richard Plantagenet. This royal connection to Eliza Mary Donaldson Selby is not a blood relationship, but is linked through the second marriage of Ralph de Neville, Eliza Mary's 15th great grandfather.

**Richard Plantagenet** 3rd Duke of York served in various offices of state in France at the end of the Hundred Years' War—the struggle for control over the throne of France. In England he held governing power as Lord Protector during Henry VI's madness. His conflicts with Henry's court were a leading factor in the political upheaval of mid-fifteenth-century England, and a major cause of the Wars of the Roses. Richard eventually attempted to claim the throne but was dissuaded, although it was agreed that he would become King on Henry's death. Within a few weeks of securing this agreement, he died in battle.





**Edward IV** was born at Rouen in France, the second child of Richard, 3rd Duke of York and Cecily Neville. Edward, the eldest of the four sons who survived to adulthood, claimed the throne of England by dint of the agreement reached by his father before his death. Edward's assertion of his claim to the crown in 1460 was the key escalation of the conflict known as the Wars of the Roses. The Wars of the Roses was a series of dynastic wars fought between supporters of two rival branches of the royal House of Plantagenet: Lancaster and York whose heraldic symbols were the "red" and the "white" rose, respectively.



**Richard III** (2 October 1452 – 22 August 1485) was King of England for two years. When his brother Edward IV died in April 1483, Richard was named Lord Protector of the realm for Edward's son and successor, the 11-year-old King Edward V. As the young prince travelled to London, Richard met and escorted him to lodgings in the Tower of London where Edward V's brother Richard joined him shortly afterwards. Arrangements were made for Edward's coronation on 22 June 1483, but before the young king could be crowned, his father's marriage to his mother Elizabeth Woodville was declared invalid, making their children illegitimate and ineligible for the throne. On 25 June, an assembly of lords and commoners endorsed the claims. The following day, Richard III began his reign, and he was crowned on 6 July 1483. The young princes were not seen in public after August, and a number of accusations circulated that the boys had been murdered on Richard's orders, giving rise to the legend of the Princes in the Tower. Shakespeare portrayed Richard as a physically deformed machiavellian villain in his famous work Richard III.

In 1485 Richard III led his troupes in the Battle of Bosworth Field against the House of Lancaster led by Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond. Richard was killed in the battle and Henry would become King Henry IV. Henry ended the War of Roses by marrying Elizabeth of York the daughter of the late King Edward IV. With this negotiated settlement with Yorkist supporters, Henry symbolically joined of the House of York to the House of Lancaster



and signified the end of the Wars of the Roses and a unified leadership of England.

Over 500 years after his death, the skeletal remains of King Richard III of England were discovered. The following article from the New York Times, February 4, 2013.

LEICESTER, England — Until it was discovered beneath a city parking lot last fall, the skeleton had lain unmarked, and unmourned, for more than 500 years. Friars fearful of the men who slew him in battle buried the man in haste, naked and anonymous, without a winding sheet, rings or personal adornments of any kind, in a space so cramped his cloven skull was jammed upright and askew against the head of his shallow grave.

On Monday, confirming what many historians and archaeologists had suspected, a team of experts at the University of Leicester concluded on the basis of DNA and other evidence that the skeletal remains were those of King Richard III, for centuries the most reviled of English monarchs. But the conclusion, said to have been reached “beyond any reasonable doubt,” promised to achieve much more than an end to the oblivion that has been Richard’s fate since his death on Aug. 22, 1485, at the Battle of Bosworth Field, 20 miles from this ancient city in the sheep country of England’s East Midlands.



## War of Roses and the knights de Grey

Ralph de Neville, the First Earl of Westmorland and his wife the Countess Margaret de Stafford were my 17th great grandparents. Westmorland received his earldom from King Richard II in recognition of support during an unsuccessful attempt by Thomas of Woodstock, the king’s uncle, to depose the monarch. When Margaret de Stafford died, Ralph de Neville married Countess Joan de Beaufort. With this marriage Ralph became the son-in-law to John of Gaunt, 1st Duke of Lancaster. After the death of John of Gaunt, King Richard banished Henry Bolingbroke, John’s son and heir. This time instead of advocating the position of King Richard, Ralph de Neville put his support behind Bolingbroke. Westmorland was present when King Richard abdicated at the Tower of London in 1399 and

participated in the coronation of King Henry IV, establishing the House of Lancaster. Westmorland was portrayed in Shakespeare's Henry IV. Royalty in the days of the Plantagenet kings required ruthless behavior. Those who survived to retain power indeed exemplified Darwinian evolution. This was the beginning of the War of Roses in which the Yorkist and Lancastrian cadet houses of Plantagenet kings would battle for control of the monarchy.



*Raby Castle, home of Ralph de Neville,  
1st Earl of Westmorland*

Alice de Neville daughter of Ralph de Neville and Margaret de Stafford married Sir Thomas Grey. This is the ancestral line leading to Eliza Mary Donaldson Selby. The knights de Grey, of whom this Thomas was a member, have a long history reaching back over 150 years. The story of these knights, contains tales of power and intrigue. Many served their king in distinguished military service and were knighted by the monarch. The Thomas Grey who appears in the table of ancestors at the left is the fourth Sir Thomas in a line of the Grey (sometimes spelled Gray) family. In the following table of ancestors, I have given each Sir Thomas Gray a label: Eminent Soldier, The Chronicler, etc. rather than identify them as I, II,... As the reader will see, there were many named Thomas and Ralph in this family.

### ***Sir Thomas Gray, Eminent Soldier***

Sir Thomas Gray (great grandfather of Thomas Grey who married Alice de Neville) served Edward I and Edward II, and Edward III during the Anglo-



*Painting depicting Norham Castle  
in the late middle ages*

Scottish wars. He held the post of constable of Norham Castle from 1319 to 1331, and resisted two long sieges of the castle by the Scots. Norham Castle was a strategic border defense located on a ford of the Tweed separating England and Scotland.



### **Sir Thomas Gray, the Chronicler**

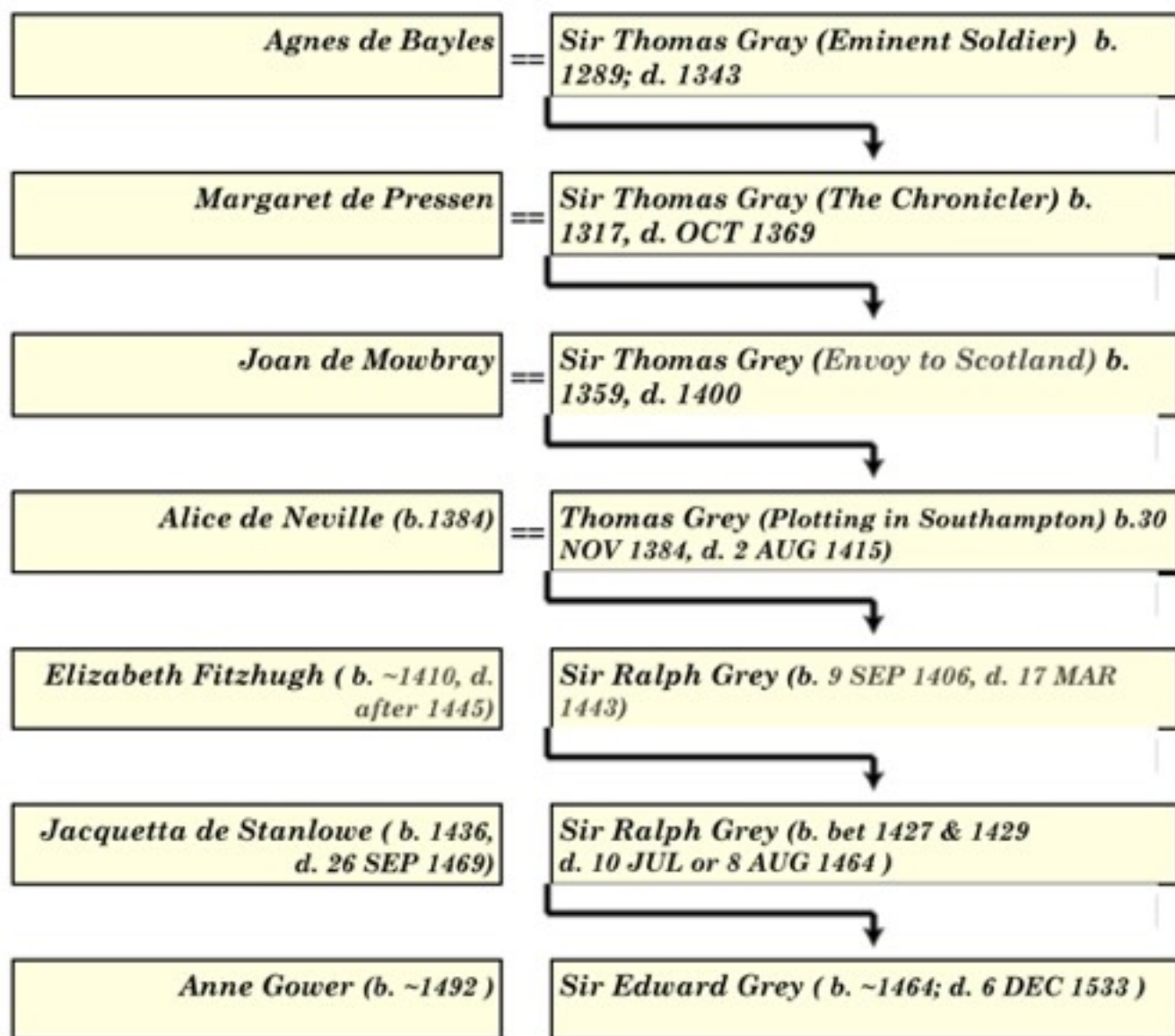
It is believed that Thomas Gray, son of Thomas Gray eminent soldier, served alongside his father in the Scottish campaigns and was knighted by the king before his father's death. In consideration of Thomas' military service in France and Scotland, Edward II granted him the manor of Middlemast Middleton. Over the next few years, this young knight amassed considerable lands and fortune. Like his father, young Thomas served as constable of Norham Castle. In 1356 the Scots attacked Norham Castle and in retaliation Thomas Gray pursued Sir William Ramsay architect of the attack. Ramsay laid a trap for Gray and was captured and imprisoned in Edinburgh Castle. Grey was held captive at Edinburgh Castle. While in captivity, Grey composed the Scalacronica, a chronicle written in Anglo-Norman French which describes English history from the earliest times to about the year 1362. Evidently, Grey had access to the library at Edinburgh Castle which he used in his writing. The parts dealing with the reigns of Kings Edward I, Edward II, and Edward III drew from his personal experience as a soldier in the Anglo-Scottish and French wars. It is remarkable that a knight during this period of the late middle ages had the skill and the interest to record this history. The title Scalacronica links two words from Norman French: scala (a scaling ladder used in sieges to breach the walls of a castle) and cronica (a chronicle). [56]

### **Sir Thomas Grey, Envoy to Scotland**

Thomas Gray was the second born son of Sir Thomas, The Chronicler. His elder brother John predeceased his father and when Thomas was ten years old, Thomas became heir to his father's estates including manors in Heaton in Wark, Doddington, Howick, Hawkhill, Earle, Eworth and Neverton, together with land in Bamburgh, Middleton, Alnwick, Coldmartin and Lofthouse as well as properties in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Thomas was knighted about 1385. Sir Thomas served a number of diplomatic missions to establish peace with the Scots. While engaged in peacemaking, he is reported to have lost none of the enthusiasm of the Grays to participate in illicit raiding parties into enemy territory. In about 1384 Thomas married Joan de Mowbray, daughter of Lord John, 4th Baron de Mowbray. Joan was a 2-greats granddaughter of King Edward I (Longshanks).



*The coat of arms of Sir Thomas Gray of Heaton, Envoy to Scotland recorded in Scalacronica*



**References:** *Sir Thonas Gray (soldier)* [49]; *Sir Thomas Gray (Chronicler)* [50]; *Thomas Gray (Envoy)* [51]; *Thomas Grey (plotting)* [52]; *Sir Ralph Grey (b. 1406)* [53]; *Sir Ralph Grey (d. 1464)* [54]; *Sir Edward Grey (b. 1464)* [55].



During the life of this Sir Thomas Gray, the dynasty of Plantagenet kings divided into two rival branches, Lancaster and York. The War of the Roses, which strongly influenced the affairs of the family Gray/Grey, was a thirty-three year struggle between these two cadet houses to assume what each considered its God-given right to the throne. The following is a much abbreviated version of the affairs of the times.

King Richard II, the ten-year-old grandson of Edward III, ascended to the throne on 12 JUN 1377. The monarchy was run as a regency with Richard's uncle John of Gaunt having considerable influence on the affairs of state. Sir Thomas Gray found favor with the king and was rewarded with an annuity of £50, payable for life at the Exchequer. Henry Bolingbroke, son of John of Gaunt, made a comment about King Richard that was interpreted as treasonous by Thomas de Mowbray, 1st Duke of Norfolk (brother-in-law to Sir Thomas Gray). After reporting to Richard, the king called for a duel of honor between Bolingbroke and Mowbray, but changed his mind and banished Henry from the kingdom. When John of Gaunt died, King Richard took legal action to make it impossible for Bolingbroke to inherit his father's properties. In June 1399 Henry of Bolingbroke, invaded England with a small force raised in France. He stated that his goal was to claim the properties that were rightly his. Henry's support grew as he built influence among a number of barons who were disgruntled with King Richard. It soon became apparent that Bolingbroke aimed at usurping the throne. Bolingbroke defeated Richard in battle, and took him prisoner. Although Henry's claim to the throne was weak, he deposed Richard, bypassed the rightful heir to the throne, and had himself crowned as King Henry IV. Weary of Richard's rule, Henry's usurpation was approved by Parliament and public opinion. Sir Thomas Gray was present at the Tower of London for the deposition of King Richard II and the elevation of Henry Bolingbroke to King Henry IV.

### **Sir Thomas Grey, Plotting in Southampton**

Thomas Grey who married Alice de Neville (daughter of Ralph de Neville and Margaret de Stafford) was born in le Midyllgathouse at Alnwick Castle. He was the son of Sir Thomas Grey (envoy to Scotland) and Joan de Mowbray. At age 16 Thomas succeeded his father and found favor with Henry IV (Bolingbroke). Grey

married Alice Neville, in 1408. After Bolingbrooke's death in 1386, the king was succeeded by his son crowned Henry V 16 SEP 1386. Recalling that Bolingbrooke had usurped the throne and had but a weak claim to the throne, the door was open to another contest over monarchy.

In 1415 Thomas Grey was part of a plot to replace King Henry V with Edmund Mortimer, 5th Earl of March. Mortimer was a descendant of Henry III and Edward III. Edmund's father, Roger Mortimer, 4th Earl of March, was heir presumptive at the time Bolingbrooke usurped the throne. Sir Thomas' son (b. 1404 who again was named Thomas) was betrothed to Isabel, daughter of Richard of Conisburgh, 3rd Earl of Cambridge (brother-in-law to Mortimer). The king found out about the plot and Thomas Grey along with other conspirators was arrested. Sir Thomas Grey was beheaded on 2 AUG 1415 in Southampton, England. Breaking this conspiracy, the Lancastrians strengthened their hold on the throne.

### **Sir Ralph Grey of Chillingham**

Sir Thomas Grey who died as a result of the Southampton plot had seven or eight children. Of course, the eldest he named Thomas. Thomas died at the early age of 22. Second born son Sir Ralph Grey, Knight Banneret is believed to have been knighted at Leicester, on Whitsunday, in 1426 by Lancastrian King Henry VI. Sir Ralph married the daughter of William FitzHugh, 5th Lord FitzHugh, on 1 July 1435 at Ravensworth, Yorkshire, England. He was Captain of Roxburgh Castle strategically located at the confluence of the rivers Tweed and Teviot. James I of Scotland ordered a siege of Roxburgh. A huge army was assembled with cannons and including mortars manned by German gun crews. A tactical error was



*The tomb of Sir Ralph Grey and his wife Elizabeth*



made in splitting the attack, causing the siege to disintegrate into a complete fiasco. Ralph Grey, then captain of the castle, with only 80 men-at-arms held off the attack against great odds until the arrival of the Earls of Northumberland with a force of northerners, at which time James and his army abandoned the attack, leaving behind his expensive arms. Sir Ralph died in Guyenne, France during a campaign by Henry VI to secure Normandy during the Hundred Years War. He is buried at Chillingham, Northumberland, England, in an elaborate alabaster tomb along with his wife. His effigy is clad in battle dress befitting a knight. [57]

### **Sir Ralph Grey Sheriff of Northumberland**

Ralph Grey, Knight of Wark, Heaton, Chillingham, Doddington, etc., served as Sheriff of Northumberland 1455-6 & 1459-60, and as his father he had responsibility as the Keeper of Roxburgh Castle. He married Jacquetta Stanlow about 1451/2. Jacquetta is believed to be the damsel of Queen Margaret of Anjou, wife of Lancastrian King Henry VI. In 1461 Edward of York won a series of victories in The War of Roses gaining control of London, after which Edward had himself crowned King Edward IV; the House of York was now in control of the throne. The knights who served Henry were expected to switch their allegiance to Edward. For Sir Ralph Grey the test came in 1462 when the Lancastrians led by Lord Hastings made siege of Alnwick Castle. Sir Ralph assisted in the capture of Alnwick Castle. As a reward, Sir Ralph was made constable of that fortress. Having sworn his allegiance to the the Yorkist king, Sir Ralph was now targeted as a traitor. In the same year he joined the retaking Duinstanborough for the house of Lancaster. In 1463 he handed Alnwick Castle over to Queen Margaret, no doubt prompted by the former relationship of Jacquetta with the queen. Sir Ralph fled, but was captured by the Yorkists at Bamborough Castle. Held for treason, Sir Ralph was removed from the order of knighthood. His spurs were hacked off, his coat of arms torn from his body and his armor was broken up. For Ralph Grey, justice was meted out by beheading. The elaborate ceremony for treason of a knight included the following sentence for Sir Ralph. [58]

"Notwithstanding, of the disgrading of Knighthood, and of thine arms and noblesse, the King pardons that for thy noble grandfather, the which suffered trouble for the King's most noble predecessors.\* Then, Sir Rauf Grey, this shall be thy pen-

ance: thou shalt go on thy feet unto the town's end, and there thou shalt be laid down and drawn to a scaffold made for thee, and on that thou shalt have thine head smit off; thy body to be buried in the Friars, thy head where it pleaseth the King."

## Royalty plus Royalty

Having made a connection between Eliza Mary Donaldson Selby and King Edward I opens the door to many royal connections. The royal families of England and the European continent intermarried to maintain divine right to rule and to form alliances expanding power and dominion. The descendants of Henry and Eliza Knight Gregson are, therefore, related to many of Europe's royal families.

Edward I descended from the royal line of Plantagenet kings including Henry II, Richard the Lionheart, John Lackland, Henry III, Edward I, Edward II and Edward III. The royal ancestry continues back to the ninth century to Charlemagne, Holy Roman Emperor crowned by Pope St Leo III on Christmas Day 800. Charlemagne's royal descendants continued thru ten generations to Matilda, Countess of Flanders who married William, Duke of Normandy (the Conqueror). King Henry I (1068-1135) of England was the son of the Conqueror. Henry had nine wives! His third spouse Matilda of Scotland bore a daughter Matilda of Normandy. This young Matilda would become Queen of England. Matilda's title was disputed and she reigned for only 147 days beginning 7 APR 1141. Matilda's second spouse was Geoffrey V, Count of Anjou and Maine (1113-1151), who was father to Henry II the first of the Plantagenet kings of England.



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