

# Foster History

A compilation of information extracted from published research about Foster ancestors.

*Various researchers published works on Foster ancestors, some credible some not. This paper endeavors to iterate the significant, along with some interesting portions from a number of those works in a more condensed version for those not inclined to study this subject in depth. My objective is to impart knowledge about people who lived in the past named Foster, and may be ancestors, for entertainment or as a primer to subsequent generations if they endeavor to take up the quest. Foster families unlikely to be connected to the Irving family are mentioned only in passing or omitted.*

*I include some material to explain terms and historical facts for context that other authors assumed the reader had prior knowledge. Some researchers make assumptions they shouldn't; my approach is to point out possible disconnects or questionable assumptions as indicators to where additional research is necessary. To help the flow of the story some material is set aside into Appendices.*

*Numerous hyper-links to source information found on the Internet are included. The links were valid when this report was authored, but websites, addresses and pages change, so some links may no longer be valid.*

*I refer the reader to the original texts authored by professional historians and researchers for information in their own words (see bibliography). I recommend you read this paper on a computer connected to the Internet to avail use of embedded links to referenced material. It might also help if you have a map of England and Scotland available if you are not familiar with the geography of the United Kingdom.*

James M. Irving  
Revised 2015

## Introduction

Our IRVING family is related with two FOSTER colonists who immigrated to Massachusetts Bay during the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. One is John Foster who is known to be in Salem before 1647, and the other is Reginald Foster who was in Ipswich arriving in 1638. Daughters of direct male line descendants of these colonists became Irving wives. Tracing Foster ancestors back to these two Foster immigrants is well documented such that we can be sure those immigrants are direct ancestors of the women who married Irvings. These two original Foster immigrants to colonial America both came from England, are not related to each other (as best we know), and their origins (where in England they came from – and who their parents were) is not positively known.

Because neither John or Reginald documented where they were born nor who were their parents, and research to date has not uncovered their origins; these are “brick walls” in our family history research. But, Foster (Forster, Forrester, and other spellings) is a common name appearing throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland. Early records address the deeds and marriages of the nobles, not the average citizen, so unless we identify a notable ancestor who appears in historical records of persons of wealth or social position, we are restricted to Church records in the United Kingdom for birth, marriage, and burial events.

The Foster name first appears in England as Forestarius (old Latin for Forester) arriving with the Norman Conquest in the year 1066. Supporters of King William I, *the Conqueror*, were rewarded with titles and made governors of lands throughout the conquered England. There are three known individuals with the name Forester who became governors of English lands after the Norman Conquest. Two in southern England and one in the north along the border with Scotland.

Richard Forestarius was made knight, awarded lands in the north that he made his new home, anglicized his name to Forester, took a wife, and started a family. Thus begins the great Forster family in northern England, and most likely Scotland. Descendants of this Richard appear often in supporting roles of the history of the United Kingdom.

Meanwhile, a different Richard Forester is established as Lord over lands in today's Warwickshire and Staffordshire counties – around Birmingham (central England). While another Forster takes up lands in Worcestershire (western England near the border with independent Wales). So, by the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century there are three known Forester families overseeing lands in England. For 600 years descendants of those original families established other branches of their families throughout Great Briton. Any one of those families, or another yet unknown family, could be ancestors of our original Foster immigrants to America. But, no documented proof has been discovered as to where our ancestors: John and Reginald originated; other than somewhere in England.

This paper summarizes what is known about Forster (any spelling) families in the United Kingdom who may be relations of the Foster immigrants that settled in the Massachusetts Bay colony.

This paper is divided into the following subjects:

- Foster Surname – where did it come from and what does it mean?
- Ancient Europe – What is known of Foresters before the Norman Conquest?
- Norman Conquest – Foresters arrive in England
- Northumberland Foresters – Branches of Forster families in northern England
- Scottish Foresters – Branches of Forester families in Scotland
- Foster Throughout The British Isles – Other branches of Foster families
- Heraldry – Foster armorial bearings
- Foster Locations in Great Briton – Map of some locations significant to Fosters
- Our Foster Line – Our Foster immigrants in Massachusetts

Following a Glossary and Bibliography are Appendices which add some information. Pedigree charts for some Foster families in the UK are to be found in separate files.

## Foster Surname

The Foster surname is considered to be a corruption of Forester. Other common spellings include Forrester and Forster.

Forestarius was the name in low Latin; in French it would be Forestier; and in old German it was Vorstaere. All are nouns relating to an occupation derived from the forest – a wild or wooded area – and describing one who cares for the forest; the *forester*. But there is also the verb *foster* which derives from fostr, or fostra – meaning nursing or nurture; one who cares for and nourishes (body and mind) the children. Some societies actually had an occupation where the young were cared for by Fosterers, akin to sending children away to school to teach them the history and ways of society. The noun form relating to the occupation of keeping the forest is accepted by most historians as the true origin of the surname. So the name is Forester but over the years some families shortened the spelling to Foster.

Surnames were slow to be adopted and usually those persons who had distinguished themselves or had a position of importance used a surname. Once the nomadic life style was abandoned and peoples preferred to establish a place to call home, administrative positions for the good of the people began to appear. Generally every geopolitical subdivision had a forester to keep the forest of that subdivision. The keeper of a kingdom's forest was an important position and the forester was a trusted servant of the King of that kingdom. Medieval kingdoms in Europe all had their forester who acted more like a policeman or soldier protecting the kingdom's lands from incursion instead of what we perceive as the duties of a forest ranger today. In Scotland, the clan system also had administrative positions that included a forester as the third most important position in a given clan – below the clan chief and “Bart” (the Bart was the clan's historian and genealogist). The clan's forester had duties similar to his counterpart in medieval kingdoms of Europe.

As surnames came into use in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, initially in Europe, they were derived from places, occupations, personal traits, social position, or parents. Thus, beginning in the about the 11<sup>th</sup> century in Europe we have individuals beginning to use the surname Forester based on their occupation, or position, in their native spoken or written language. The Normans brought the use of surnames with them to Briton.

In northern England the most common spelling of the name is *Forster*; somehow the first “e” got dropped. The Forster family is found throughout Northumberland, and spread from there. In Scotland the name is most commonly spelled *Forester* but often *Forrester*. One legend for the difference is that Forester is the family surname but when a member receives a title an extra “r” is added to signify a titled noble.

Most researchers believe the Forsters in England and the Foresters in Scotland stem from a common ancestor but no documented proof has been discovered to back this claim; the evidence is circumstantial. The primary link is that the Coat of Arms for the two families match.

## Ancient Europe

Kingdoms, Duchies, and Fiefdoms in Europe with names such as: Finland, Lithuania, Flanders, Normandy, Maine, Champagne, and Aquitaine established many of the customs of medieval times such as noblemen titles including Dukes, Counts, Knights, and the feudal system.

The first Forester known to recorded history was Lydric the only son of Salualt, Prince of Dijon who was granted the fiefdom of Flanders and named Grand (first) *Forester of Flanders* by Dagobert I, King of the Franks. In 640 AD, this Lydric Le Buc built a castle and founded the city of Lille, capital of Flanders; now a city within northeastern France. Lydric Le Buc is also reported to be one of the first persons with armorial bearing, or coat of arms.

Lydric's successors lived in his castle and six generations later we come to Anacher, *Great Forester de Flanders* who had a son, Baldwin born in 837. This Baldwin (or Baudouin, in French) surnamed Bras-de-fer (Iron Arm) was the first *Count of Flanders* when Flanders became part of Charlemagne's Holy Roman Empire. Baldwin and his successors continued the fight to repulse the Norsemen and keep Flanders free from continued exploits by the Vikings. Baldwin's son and heir is referred to in history as Baldwin II; who had Baldwin III; and so on. They all held the title Forester and Count of Flanders.

We come to Baldwin V, the fifth Count of Flanders (born about 1012) who by his wife, Adelaide de France, daughter of King Robert II of France, had three children: Baldwin VI the heir to the Countship, Matilda who married William of Normandy, and another son, Robert. Some researchers attribute other children to Baldwin V including: Henry the Frisian, and Richard Forestarious.

NOTE: published accounts differ on the father of Matilda. Some claim it was Baldwin IV while others claim Baldwin V. My belief is Baldwin V was her father. There is no doubt there existed a Matilda, or Maud, who was the countess of Flanders who married, in 1053, William, Duke of Normandy. Her significance to our Forster story is that some researchers claim she had a younger brother, Richard Forestarious who would be the *brother-in-law* of William, the Conqueror. My take is that the jury is still out as to whether Richard was a literal brother-in-law of William due to Matilda being his sister. Also, there is no doubt that there existed a Richard Forestarious who is important to our Foster story. But what is in doubt is how, if at all, he was related to Matilda, and William the Conqueror.

The last of the Baldwin – Forester and Count of Flanders was Baldwin VII who died in 1118 and named his cousin, Charles his heir. The title Count of Flanders continues in the family until about 1405 when Margarette III, Countess of Flanders marries Philip II, Count of Burgundy but who dies of the plague prior to consummating the marriage causing his titles to revert to the crown of France. Flanders itself ceases to exist in 1795.

The significance to our story is that the *Count of Flanders and Forester of Flanders* is the first time in recorded history an individual is attributed with the name Forester and Flanders is possibly the birth place of Richard Forestarious – who might have been William the Conqueror's brother-in-law. Today, Flanders makes up the independent countries of Belgium and The Netherlands; with some territory in present day France.

## Norman Conquest

The significance of the Norman Conquest cannot be understated in world history. Witnesses of the Conquest would never admit it, but a few generations later the atrocities and injustices of the Normans on their Anglo-Saxon subjects would lead to the Great Charter (the Magna Carta) being signed at Runnymede thus giving all Englishmen their freedoms, all inhabitants of the land then calling themselves Englishmen (vice Anglo-Saxon or Norman) thus leading the way to the greatness of England, Great Britain and the British Empire with its impact on many far away lands throughout the World.

*And it all starts with a pretty maiden dangling her feet in a cool stream.<sup>1</sup>*

### Background

Edward was the seventh son of Æthelred, King of England and the first by his second wife Emma. Edward was born in 1003. Emma was sister of Richard II (*the Good*), Duke of Normandy. In 1013, when Edward was 10 years old the Danes invaded and seized the English throne from his father after which Emma and her son fled to Normandy; her homeland. There was considerable back and forth intrigue fit for a soap opera that I invite the reader to research. Edward ended up spending about 25 years in exile – mostly in Normandy. Edward finally became King of England in 1043.

Later, in 1051, this English King Edward, knowing he had no heir and high prospects of there being none, promised the English throne to Norman Duke William (grandnephew of Emma – King Edward's mother).

Time line note for Irving readers: *Malcolm Canmore, came to be in this King Edward's court after Malcolm's father, Duncan I (an Irving), was killed by Macbeth who seized the Scottish throne. In 1054 Edward's army, led by Siward, Earl of Northumbria, an uncle of Malcolm, invaded Scotland. Macbeth was killed and Malcolm took the Scottish throne in 1058 as Malcolm III, king of the Scots.*

Earlier, back in Normandy, when Duke Richard II (Emma's brother) died in 1026 his eldest son became the Duke, but this Richard III lived only a year and another son, Robert I, became Duke of Normandy. Robert aided his cousin Edward while he was in exile from England accepting Edward into his Court. Duke Robert had a son, William (b. 1028) by his mistress. William's moniker was William *the Bastard* (probably not to his face). After the death of his father, he became William II, Duke of Normandy.

For an interesting historical side-note see the topic *The Duke's Mistress* in Appendix I.

In January of 1066 Edward, *the Confessor* (King of England) died with no heir to the throne. Three claimants to the English throne surfaced. Harald Hardrada King of Norway, the Saxon Harold, son of Earl Godwin of Wessex, and William Duke of Normandy. Harold, the Saxon, was the favorite of the English Anglo-Saxon Lords and was anointed King two days after Edward died.

When Duke William II of Normandy decided he was probably going to have to take the English throne using force he needed an army so put out the call all over Europe and even got the Pope in Rome to

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<sup>1</sup> Explained in Appendix I – The Dukes Mistress

back his claim; which aided in his gathering an army. William promised titles, lands, and bounty to those who fought beside him and he was rewarded by knights and soldiers joining his cause from Brittany, Flanders, and all over Francia; some from as far away as Italy.

William's claim to the throne of England is based on Edward's promise of 1051, and backed up by his kinship to Emma, previous queen of England. Regardless of the legitimacy of his claim, William II (the Bastard), Duke of Normandy invaded England in the autumn of 1066 and before the end of that year was crowned William I, King of England. Thus beginning the Anglo-Norman era.

See in Appendix I the topic *Battles of Stamford Bridge and Hastings* for insight into why the Norman invasion was successful.

Although William was crowned King only a few months after landing on the south coast it took another three years to conquer the rest of England with uprisings, insurgencies, and rebellions continuing though most of William's reign of twenty years. Matilda (Countess of Flanders, daughter of Baldwin V and wife of William) gave William nine children including four sons, two of which succeeded him on the throne of England. How William came to wed Matilda is an interesting story, but is not important to our Foster story; I invite the reader to seek out that story – search the Internet for *William I and Matilda*, one write-up is included in the Bibliography.

One of William and Matilda's sons was Henry I, King of England who married Maud, daughter of Malcolm III, King of the Scots. Their son Henry II was also King of England. The marriage between the monarchs of England and Scotland was partly to blame for the hostilities on the border in subsequent centuries as later English kings tried to claim they should also rule Scotland due to the custom that lands of the wife become property of the husband.

## Richard Forestarious

In 1053 William II, Duke of Normandy married Matilda, or Maud, daughter of Baldwin V, count of Flanders. Most Foster histories support the claim that Richard Forestarious was a younger brother of Matilda. After William was made King he started making good on his promise about awarding titles and land to his loyal supporters during the conquest. It was then that William granted extensive lands in both Northumberland and Scotland to his brother-in-law, Sir Richard “Forestarious” (Forester) and his posterity. Some texts use the quote:

*... for military services rendered and ties of kinship.*

Where this quote originated is not known. I, personally, have doubts concerning this Richard Forestarious' pedigree. There are still many questions needing answers about this person. These concerns are enumerated in the topic *Concerns About Richard Forester* found in Appendix I.

Regardless of his parentage, there was a Richard Forestarious that fought with William the Conqueror, was made a knight and given lands in the north. Richard did take to living on the lands he was assigned, anglicized his name to Forester, took a wife (name unknown) and was the progenitor of a distinguished line of Forster families. Richard is believed to have died in 1105; while some researchers put his death as early as 1080.

When awarding lands, William would have placed his best loyal fighters and leaders on lands near borders to repulse invaders. So it is to his credit that Richard was placed on the border with Scotland.

## Domesday Book

After being crowned King at the end of 1066, it took another three years to subdue the rest of England. By 1070 all of the British main island except Wales and Scotland were under William's control. Many Saxons fled to Scotland and viciously fought William's drive north. In reprisal, William's armies devastated the northern counties.

Twenty years into his reign, William I, chartered the great inventory, nicknamed the Domesday Book of 1086. The survey was chartered to establish the tax base for William's new lands. However, William's rage on Lancashire, Westmoreland, Cumberland and Northumberland counties was so severe that it is reported, *few buildings were left standing in those counties*, so much so that the border counties of Cumberland and Northumberland were generally ignored in the Domesday Book, *being in a state of waste*. The Domesday Book does not include any records north of the River Tees. There is no record of Sir Richard Forester's lands in the north. However, it does include records for other Forester entitlements:

**Richard the Forester** – Before the Conquest owns nothing. After the Conquest (in 1086 when the survey was performed) is Lord or *tenant-in-chief* of 35 locations. The properties are all in either Warwickshire or Staffordshire counties – near Birmingham (central England). If interested, here is a [link](#) to a list of these locations. This Lord Richard is not the same Richard granted lands in the north.

**Forester** – Before the Conquest owns nothing. After the Conquest he is a Lord with three locations all in Worcestershire (western England on River Severn near the Welsh border). This person appears to be *tenant-in-chief* with the “owner” of all these properties in 1086 is listed as William, King. Before the Conquest, the owner is given as Brictric son of Algar. These properties include:

- *Bushley* in Oswaldslow, 13 households
- *Pull* [Court] in Oswaldslow, 13 households
- *Hanley* [Castle] in Tewkesbury; 101 households

**Foresters, three** – Before the Conquest owns Withypool in Somerset County (southwest England). After the Conquest owns nothing – property given to Lord Robert of Auberville<sup>2</sup> as tenant for King William. Suspect there were three Forester males who had their land taken and awarded to the Lord Robert, the new tenant.

So, at least in southern England there are Foresters acting as governors after the Conquest. But there is another family that lost their lands; indicating there was a Forester family with lands in England before the Conquest. Nothing is known of the Forester family who lost their land. Did they stay in the area or relocate?

This great survey omitted Northumberland so no record of lands charged to Richard Forester of Scotland and Northumberland is recorded in the Domesday book.

Sir Richard who was made knight and awarded lands by King William is believed to have resided in

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<sup>2</sup> Aubervilles is in France, now a suburb of Paris and originally an estate. Lord Robert probably came from the estate near Paris, France to join William in the conquest and was awarded these lands.

Scotland (not Northumberland – but the northern border of Northumberland is questionable and could include lands in Scotland) for the remainder of his life with an unnamed wife by whom it is believed he had several children, at least three; he died sometime between 1080 and 1105, depending on whose data you believe. This 25 year span is an example of why it is difficult to attribute truth to dated claims. Specifically where in Scotland Sir Richard resided is not known. It is presumed that at least two children, at least one was a son, stayed in Scotland, but no information on them has surfaced. Hugo is the son of Sir Richard that we know of by name. Other offspring of Sir Richard are only hinted at.



## Northumberland Foresters

After the Norman Conquest we know of three titled gentlemen named Forster or Forester in residence as tenant-in-chief on lands awarded by King William. The two Lords mentioned above in the Domesday Book topic and Sir Richard Forestarius, knight, with lands in southern Scotland and in county Northumberland, England. Due to the preponderance of information about the Forsters of Northumberland, most families with this surname try to relate their ancestors to the Northumberland Forsters. There is little information about the Forsters in the south available.

### Foster Place Names in Northumberland

Before we discuss individuals let's touch on some place names important to our story. In Forster lineage documents we see two names *Bamburgh* and *Etherstone* used often which deserve some explanation.

But first, is the name Northumberland or Northumbria? Northumberland is the name of the present day county in England. Before England existed as a country the territory consisted of independent kingdoms, one being Northumbria. The Kingdom of Northumbria was considerably larger than today's county – it extended from the estuary of the Humber in Yorkshire in the south, to the mouth of the River Tweed, and at one time all the way north to the mouth of the Firth of Forth in Scotland. Today you will find Northumbria used in texts to refer to the historical beginnings of this area or Northumbrian to refer to the habitants of the area. But *Northumberland* is the proper name for the current county in England.

### Bamburgh

The name Bamburgh refers to multiple entities and has over the years had multiple spellings. Alternate spellings include: Bamborough and Bambough. The accepted spelling today is Bamburgh. It can refer to the village, castle, civil parish, or baronage (now extinct). Most references to Bamburgh are to the castle by that name.

Bamburgh Castle, shown in Illustration 1, is on the coast of the North Sea (previously referred to as the German Sea) in county Northumberland, one of the ancestral homes of the Forsters.

Bamburgh Castle plays a significant role in English and Forster history. There are many sources of information on Bamburgh Castle and its history available on the Internet. The strategic natural fortress was inhabited as early as 800 BC and the Romans used it during the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD making incursions into Scotland, but had to retreat south to Hadrian's Wall. In the 6<sup>th</sup> century it was the capital of the kingdom of Northumbria. The Normans use it as a base to invade Scotland after 1066 and later construct additional fortifications to defend from invading Scots. Although many Forsters were previously appointed governors of Bamburgh, in 1610 Claudius Forster is given ownership of Bamburgh castle by King James I, King of England.



*Illustration 1: Bamburgh Castle*

## Etherstone

Reviewing Forster family history you will often come across the name Etherstone. It is an old spelling for a village and an estate in that village. Today the accepted spelling is Adderstone. Other spellings over time include: Herdiston, Ederston, Eddrestone, Etherston, and Etherstan. The current village of Adderstone in Northumberland is about four miles inland from Bamburgh Castle. Early maps of this part of Northumberland show the village of Adderstone (current name) as being Etherstone and Edderstone; on a 1760 map it is Edderston; and an 1820 map has Adderstone. Old time locals pronounce “dd” as “th”; so it is not difficult to see how the name changed.

The picture to the right is Etherstone Hall, now named Adderstone Hall. The current owners rent vacation cottages on the property and claim this is the home of many generations of Forsters. I have been unable to determine when the hall pictured was built; but it appears to be Georgian style so is likely the one built in the early 1700s.

Adderstone was held by the Forster family, Governors of Bamburgh Castle from the 12th century. A pele tower of which no trace now remains existed on, or close to the site in 1415. The map in Illustration 6 shows the location of the Edderston tower. Thomas Forster (1659–1725), High Sheriff of Northumberland, built a new manor house in the early 18th century. The Forsters lived on the estate for over 600 years.



*Illustration 2: Etherstone Hall*

There is a description of Etherstone Hall in the book “Dorothy Forster” (a novel written in 1895, over a

hundred years after Dorothy Forster died) by Sir Walter Besant; which states: “*Etherstone Hall is a mile or so from the little hamlet of Lucker and four miles from Bamborough. It is a large square house, as full of modern conveniences as any gentleman may desire; the sitting-rooms are wainscoted with walnut wood; it has sash windows; glazed with crown glass, which make the rooms light and pleasant in all weathers ...*” It is not known if this is fictional or accurate description of the Hall. This book is [available](#) via the Internet (PDF). Chapter 2 includes Forster family history, and the description of the Hall.

## Etherstone Forsters

Sir Richard's first son, Hugo (Forestarious) Forester, (born about 1071) is documented as being governor<sup>3</sup> of Etherstone (in Northumberland). Presuming Sir Richard stayed in Scotland, maybe Richard sent his son to solidify the family holdings in English territory. At least one source suggests that Sir Richard was governor of Etherstone, but most sources indicate Richard did not reside there. Hugo fought for the Crown against the usurping Duke Robert de Mowbray in 1095. Mowbray was Earl of Northumbria and was hold up in Bamburgh castle to which king William II laid siege. The castle was surrendered. Later Hugo became an English general for King Henry I (reigned 1100 - 1135) aiding in the defeat of an insurgence from Magnus, King of Norway in 1101. Sir Hugo's arms were described as *a shield argent, three bugles or stringed gules*; we will discuss this later in the Heraldry Section; but this describes the Forster Arms.

Hugo died about 1121 but had two sons by an unnamed wife (*these ladies get no respect!*)<sup>4</sup>. The sons were named Hugo and Reginald. Both were knighted by King Stephen (reigned 1135 – 1141). Reginald was at the Battle of Standard (1138) for which he was knighted and was made governor of Etherstone.

Thus began a long and distinguished line of Forester descendants of Richard that served the English crown. Some of the more noteworthy descendants include:

- Sir John Forester (d. 1220) He accompanied King Richard I (*the Lion Heart*) to Palestine and was a hero of the battle of Acre (third Crusade - 1192) where he saved the life of the King for which he was Knighted and made governor of Bamburgh. He is also reported to be one of those who compelled King John to sign the Magna Carta at Runnymede in 1215; but his name does not appear as a signer (he was not a Baron) or as one even present at Runnymede.
- Sir John Forster (b. 1316) He fought in France during the Hundred Years War at the battles of Crecy (1346), and Poitiers (1356) where he was knighted. He married Elizabeth, daughter and heir of Roger Edrystone (Etherstone) thus acquiring Etherstone Hall and estates on her fathers death. Sir Hugo was governor of Etherstone (the town) before 1121 now the Forsters own Etherstone Hall and estates. The Etherstone family arms were quartered with the Forster arms; see section on Heraldry.
- Sir Reginald Forster (d. 1328) He fought at Bannockburn in 1324 on the loosing side of King Edward II (English) in this famous battle for Scottish independence.

<sup>3</sup> Governor implies an appointment from the King, or other highly placed nobleman. The owner of the land appoints a governor to be a *tenant-in-chief* to act for the owner of the land.

<sup>4</sup> In many pedigree documents of early times the wife is named only if she was well connected (e.g. the daughter of a nobleman). So when no information is recorded about the wife she is probably a local maiden.

- Sir Thomas Forster Fought at the Battle of Agincourt (in France) for King Henry V in 1415, was Knighted and made Lord of Etherstone. History mentions this Sir Thomas as being owner of the Etherstone castle, actually a pele tower. He married Elizabeth Fetherstonehaugh daughter of Thomas of Stanhope Hall, Weardale, county Durham (chief of the Fetherston clan). Sir Thomas and Elizabeth had 22 children (19 were sons). One of their sons, Roger, moved and settled in county Hertfordshire (north of London) where he started another branch of the Forster clan; discussed later. This branch in the south served the Royal family and included high judges at court.

Many Northumberland Forster descendants married well, adding lands, wealth, and titles. But there were also many intermarriages between branches of the Forster families of Northumberland. Many children of these families do not appear in the annals of history but they probably married and had families of their own spreading the Forster name throughout Northumberland. For example; as mentioned Sir Thomas and Elizabeth Fetherstonehaugh had 22 children; but the names of only a few are known. Their first-born, named Thomas, had 19 children and again only a few of those names are known. Forster families appear in most of the towns and villages of Northumberland and most, if not all, can trace kin back to Etherstone.

## Ten Generations of Thomas

Late in the 14<sup>th</sup> century a Thomas Forster appears. Thomas was raised at Etherstone, married and they have a son named Thomas which begins ten successive (except one) generations of Thomas Forster heirs in Northumberland. The sixth Thomas had a son named Thomas, but was not heir. The heir of the sixth Thomas was named Mathew, who continued the Thomas tradition by naming his heir Thomas (number seven). The tenth Thomas never married so had no heir and ended that male line; but he was also a leader of the failed Jacobite rebellion so he lost the Forster estates in 1715. He was thrown into Newgate Prison (London) but escaped with the aid of his sister, Dorothy Forster – the subject of the book mentioned above that includes the description of Etherstone Hall.

The father of the first Thomas in this line is somewhat in question. Various researchers have put forth different given names for the father of the first Thomas, but most agree his mother was Elizabeth Orde daughter and heir of Simon Orde, of Ord, who died in 1362. There is a village named East Ord in county Northumberland at the mouth of the River Tweed. The Ord, or Orde, family owned that village until the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Summary information about these generations of Thomas Forster is relegated to Appendix III. I didn't want to bore you with *Thomas begat Thomas who begat Thomas ...* here.

## Bamburgh Forsters

Sir John (second son of Thomas number four) was born about 1518 at Etherstone. By 1547 he had a knighthood, was by some accounts Constable of Bamburgh Castle (a royal appointment) and had amassed sufficient wealth to buy from Henry VIII all the church lands in the Bamburgh area after the Dissolution of the Monasteries. In 1557 he was one of the captains in a great foray into Scotland when more than 16 towns were sacked and burnt. In 1559, he was appointed Warden of the Middle Marches

(refer to the topic on Border Foresters, later) and responsible for keeping the peace on the Anglo-Scottish border. He died in 1602 and had previously arranged his own funeral feast that cost almost one-third his estate.

Sir John married Jane, the widow of Robert, 5<sup>th</sup> Lord of Ogle who was the eldest daughter of Sir Cuthbert Raydclyffe (Radcliffe) and wife Margaret who was daughter of Henry, Lord Clifford. Jane gave him a number of daughters, but no sons. Sir John's illegitimate son Nicholas was born out of wedlock by Isabel Sheppard, who John later married as his second wife making Nicholas legitimate and was named John's heir.

Nicholas Forster became sheriff of Northumberland, governor of Bamburgh, Lord Blanchland, and was knighted by Queen Elizabeth I. There is some confusion concerning Sir Nicholas's wife; most sources claim Nicholas married a daughter of the wealthy noble Clervaux family gaining the Lordship of Blanchland. However, other sources mention Jane, daughter of Anthony Radcliffe as his wife. But that is the name of his father's first wife. History of Blanchland in Northumberland indicates the estates were owned by the Radcliffes and in 1623 became possessions of the Forsters of Bamburgh Castle. Sir Nicholas died 22 July 1613<sup>5</sup>.

The son and heir to Sir Nicholas was Claudius, Constable of Bamburgh castle and Sheriff of Northumberland. After the death of Queen Elizabeth the new Stuart King James VI of Scotland became James I of England gave full ownership of Bamburgh Castle to Claudius; previous Forsters were just Governors representing the Crown which owned the Castle and lands. Then in 1613 he was knighted and in 1619 Claudius was given a full Baronetcy from King James marking the zenith of this families climb. Sir Claudius Forster, (1578 - 1623) married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir William Fenwick (his grand uncle through marriage of Thomas VII) died without issue. Without a male child the Baronetcy became extinct.

Because Baron Sir Claudius Forster died without issue his estates (but not the title Baron) passed to his brother John (1580 – 1625). This John didn't live much beyond his brother but had a son named Nicholas who in turn had a son Sir William Forster who married (1<sup>st</sup>) Dorothy, daughter of Sir William Selby, Bart. (baronet) of Twinsdal; and (2<sup>nd</sup>) Eleanor, daughter of Ferdinand, Lord Fairfax. A daughter, Frances, by his first wife married Thomas Forster – number nine in the line of Thomas'. Thus the Bamburgh Forster line begins and ends in the line of Thomas Forster. Another daughter of Sir William Forster, Dorothy, married in 1699 Nathaniel, Lord Crew, the Bishop of Durham. This Dorothy was an Aunt of the Dorothy who is the heroine of the novel.

Due to years of neglect, Bamburgh castle was in a state of disrepair. The wealthy Lord Crew comes to the rescue. Much of his wealth is directed at restoring Bamburgh and other Forster family estates.

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5 I think pedigrees and researchers have mixed up generations and there is insufficient information to confirm which is correct. So I caution the reader to tread lightly with regard to spouses and which Forster was first Lord Blanchland.

## Scottish Foresters

Recorded history in Scotland is silent about Foresters until the 14<sup>th</sup> century – over two hundred years after the Norman Conquest and Richard Forestarius arrived. The earliest Forester recorded in Scotland is William Forester who appears in Lithlingow in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century. These Foresters were in the vicinity of Edinburgh, Scotland. There was a Marnin the Forester who was a Celtic druid who held lands in Dunipace in Stirlingshire in around 1200.

The main Scot Forester family spawned many cadet branches. The Forresters of Garden<sup>6</sup>, a Stirlingshire branch, kept the Tor Wood, the royal hunting ground and forest for the Scottish kings. They held the Tower of Garden and the now ruined Torwood Castle. Eight of the family held the post of Provost of Stirling. A cadet branch of this family, the Forresters of Strathendry held Strathendry Castle (a tower house) in the town of Leslie in county Fife. There exist two French branches: Le Forestier du Buisson-Sainte-Marquerite, and Le Forestier de Foucrainville, in Normandy. The head of the original Corstorphine branch in Scotland is now recognized as chief of all of the lowland Forresters.

Are these Forester individuals descendants of Sir Richard Forestarius? The Court of the Lord Lyon believes this to be true. The arms of the Scots Foresters of Corstorphine (Edinburgh) match the arms of the Northumberland Forsters of Etherstone and Bamburgh. We will discuss this later in the Heraldry section.

### Background on Scotland

By the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century King Donald II is King of Albin (Scotland), but his territory does not include all of what we think of Scotland today. In 1005 Malcolm II unites Strathclyde in the west and Lothian in the east; and in 1018 he defeats the Northumbrians from the south who had claimed their kingdom extended to the River Forth. With the defeat of the Northumbrians the border is established at the River Tweed. In 1040 King Duncan is killed by Macbeth who, in turn is killed by Duncan's son (Malcolm Canmore) who is crowned as Malcolm III and rules for 35 years (1058 – 1093); thus Malcolm III is King of the Scots during the Norman Conquest in the south.

After being crowned King of England in London in 1066 William begins solidifying his reign over the rest of England. During his drive north, William, *the Conqueror*, pushed his army as far north as the River Forth, but did not annex this territory seeming content to place his border with Scotland back at the River Tweed. But this drive all the way to the River Forth might help explain (this is speculation) how William came to awarding lands in southern Scotland. The border region was considered a kind of *no mans land*.

Jumping ahead in history to 1286 with the death of Alexander III, king of the Scots, we find the throne of Scotland vacant with thirteen claimants. Edward I, *Longshanks*, and the *Hammer of the Scots*, King of England was invited to be arbitrator but Edward's motive was to place a stooge on the throne allowing Edward to control Scotland. Edward selected John de Balliol as King; he proved weak and incapable, and even Edward regretted his decision. In 1296 Balliol was forced to resign by Edward,

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<sup>6</sup> It is my belief the name Garden, as in *Forresters of Garden*, refers to an estate located at the current-day village of Arnprior in Stirlingshire about a dozen miles west of the city of Stirling. The estate appears on an old 1856 survey map of the area; but today's maps give no clue to its existence.

who then attempted to annex Scotland into the Kingdom of England. For the next ten years Scotland had no king of its own but the Scots refused to be ruled by the English and a rebel named William Wallace (*the Brave Heart*) led the fight starting what history calls the the first War for Scottish Independence. After Wallace's capture and execution in 1305 Robert the Bruce, a son of one of the original thirteen claimants back in 1286, took up the fight. In 1306, Robert was crowned King of Scots at Scone, the traditional place where all Scottish Monarchs were crowned. In 1314 Robert the Bruce defeats Edwards weaker successor Edward II at the Battle of Bannockburn – the turning point. Finally in 1328 a treaty is signed where in the English accept Scottish independence. King Robert the Bruce dies the next year and his young son David II (b. 1324) is crowned at age 5. According to the Treaty of Northampton which ended the First War for Scotland's Independence, David II was married to Joan of the Tower, Edward II's youngest daughter in 1328 (David was age 4 and Joan was age 7). England aids another Balliol (John's son Edward) in obtaining the throne of Scotland, young David II and his queen flee into exile in France. Edward de Balliol gives away the southern counties to the English before he is driven out leading to a second War for Scottish Independence (1332 – 1357) after which the two nations remain at peace – officially, that is.

Robert II, nephew of David II becomes King in 1371, the first of the House of Stewart. The Kings belonging to the house of Stewart/Stuart are mostly ineffective and a period where the leading nobles have their way in Scotland – an era where the nobles seem to dictate to the Monarch. Border raids begin on both sides of the border.

In 1603 James VI, a Stuart King of Scots becomes James I, King of England after the death of his cousin Queen Elizabeth and the Crowns of Scotland and England are united – but not the countries. It is not until 1707 that the Act of Union finally unites Scotland with England into the new *Great Briton*. But King James does try to put the border at peace and does much for the nobles of Scotland to appease his loyal subjects in his homeland of Scotland. James reigns until 1625 during which time England begins establishing colonies on foreign shores, notably Ireland (the Ulster plantation) and America (Virginia and unintentionally Massachusetts<sup>7</sup>).

## Tor Wood

Between, and a little north of a line connecting Glasgow and Edinburgh sits the town of Stirling on the River Forth. Stirling was the original capital of Scotland. Just south of Stirling was Tor Wood – a Royal Forest under the dominion of the monarchs of Scotland. The dense forest of Tor Wood plays a part in history in that it was used by both William Wallace and Robert the Bruce as they fought for Scotland's independence during the first War for Scottish Independence (1296 – 1328).

William Wallace hid from the English in Tor Wood after the Battle of Falkirk. Later, Robert the Bruce was often guest of the owner of Torwood Castle – Sir John Forrester. Robert Bruce and John Comyn were joint guardians of the Scottish throne during the English occupation of Scotland and would often meet at Torwood Castle to transact State business. A well respected, for historical accuracy, book trilogy by Nigel Tranter named *Steps to an Empty Throne* about Robert the Bruce includes a description of one of the meetings between Bruce and Comyn at Torwood Castle. This meeting must have happened before 1306 because in February of that year Comyn was murdered by Bruce. During this

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<sup>7</sup> The ship Mayflower in 1620 was sailing to the mouth of the Hudson River but reached Cape Cod and were unable to continue and decided to stay there settling the new Plymouth colony.

War of Scottish Independence the Clan Forrester supported King Robert the Bruce of Scotland; while their kin in Northumberland supported the English King Edward I and his successor Edward II. Robert the Bruce hid in Tor Wood planning and training his army prior to defeating the English forces at the 1314 Battle of Bannockburn. This tells us there was a Sir John Forrester residing at Torwood Castle near Stirling prior to 1306 – but history gives no clue where he or his family came from. I suspect John Forrester was of the Garden branch.

Later, the Royal Forest of Tor Wood was chartered in 1450 and again in 1463 to the Forrester of Garden family who would be responsible for providing wood for the King's army. The *Forresters of Garden* estates were about five and a half miles (as the crow flies) north west of Tor Wood.

In 1496 the Forresters of Stirling got Strathendry Castle (a tower house) in the town of Leslie in county Fife, which remained in their possession for 200 years. See Illustration 3.



*Illustration 3: Strathendry Castle*

Around the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Sir Alexander Forrester, Laird of Garden was made Lord Provost of Stirling. The castle of Stirling is shown in Illustration 4. He bought Torwood Castle grounds and built a new castle in Torwood.





*Illustration 4: Stirling Castle*

The present day ruins of Torwood Castle are of the castle constructed by Sir Alexander Forrester in 1566 (a newer structure than that visited by Wallace, Bruce and Comyn). The ruins of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Torwood Castle are shown in Illustration 5 which is slowly being repaired. This is the second castle of this name at the same spot.



*Illustration 5: Torwood Castle Ruins*

## Barony of Corstorphine

**Corstorphine** was originally a village to the west of, and separate from, Edinburgh, Scotland, and is now a suburb of that city. There are at least two legends for the origins of the not-so-Scottish-sounding name of this village.

One origin is that the name stems from the “Cross of Torphin” *Crostorfyn* from Torfin, grandson of King Malcolm II, alternatively Torphin – archdeacon of Lothian who had a stone cross built where Corstorphine village was later established. Another legend for the origin of the name is that a newly arrived Norman (or Flemish) knight came to take up his grant of lands in the region. To establish his Christian credentials with the local people, he presented the church with a “Croix d'or fin” - a magnificent cross, made of fine gold.

This second legend sure sounds like the knight could be our Sir Richard Forestarius. If Sir Richard married a local maiden (highly likely) and a son stayed in the area we have answers to the origin of Foresters in Scotland who were kin to Forsters in Northumberland, England. So, maybe this is where Sir Richard settled in Scotland. But, there are no surviving records that provide proof of this claim. Dates do not support Sir Richard Forrester settling at the village of Corstorphine because the village probably did not exist in his lifetime – it is believed the village began in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and most believe Richard died in 1080, but maybe not until 1105, just into the 12th century.

There is, however a record that there was at Granthouse village, about 16 miles northwest of Berwick-upon-Tweed in the reign of Scottish King, William the Lion (about 1165) a Richardus Forestarius (recorded as Ricardus de Reningtona). The original Sir Richard Forestarius has been dead for about 80 years – so we are probably one or two generations from the original. The Rentons of Renton hail from Coldingham (between Berwick-upon-Tweed and the village of Granthouse) and the Rentons were hereditary Foresters of Coldingham. These places are all within 50 miles of Edinburgh. This gives us another possibility for where Sir Richard Forestarius settled in Scotland.

The lands and Barony of Corstorphine have long been associated with the Forrester family. The earliest known individual of that name in the neighborhood was a William Forester, Esquire, who appears on the muster roll of the Peel of Linlithgow in 1311. However, the first firm link with Corstorphine comes with Adam Forrester a wealthy burgess of Edinburgh in the 1360s when he begins to acquire land in the vicinity. Adam Forrester was the keeper of the Great Seal of Scotland and made various trips abroad on State business. Adam Forrester is considered the founder of the Clan Forrester in Scotland.

Adam Forrester's arms has three hunting horns and chevron – similar to the arms of the Northumberland Foresters. The book *Scotland's Historic Heraldry* by Bruce A. McAndrew includes some history about the Forresters Corstorphine and their arms; beginning on page 405<sup>8</sup>.

On 4 February 1431 King James I, King of the Scots, confirmed Sir John Forrester of Corstorphine in the house and lands of Corstorphine which would be thereafter known as the Barony of Corstorphine. It is unknown if this Sir John Forrester is a relation to Sir John who was at Torwood Castle before 1306, the host to Robert the Bruce and John Comyn.

If interested, the book: *House of Forrester* contains more information about the Corstorphine branch of the Forresters in that book's chapter 2. Refer to the bibliography.

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8 Excerpts only are available via the Internet for this book. This is a large expensive book possibly available in libraries.

Corstorphine and the Barony fell out of the Forster family around the year 1700; the same time the Forster family in Northumberland lost Bamburgh Castle. So for over 300 years there were Forester Barons in the Edinburgh area seated in Parliament and representing the Scottish and later the English King. The crowns of Scotland and England were united in 1603.

## Border Foresters

The Scottish Forrester Clan is not often referred to as a *Border Clan*, but there are records of Forresters raiding across the English border. In England we know the Northumberland Forsters were involved in raids into Scotland with Sir John Forster being one of the more renown antagonists.

## Background

England and Scotland were frequently at war during the late Middle Ages. During these wars, the livelihood of the people on the borders was devastated by the contending armies. Even when the countries were not officially at war, tension remained high, and royal authority in one or the other kingdom was often weak. The uncertainty of existence meant that communities or peoples kindred to each other would seek security through their own strength and cunning, and improve their livelihoods at their nominal enemies' expense. Loyalty to a feeble or distant monarch and reliance on the effectiveness of the law usually made people a target for depredations rather than conferring any security. So people on either side of the border relied on themselves for survival. Much of the border region is mountainous or open moorland, unsuitable for arable farming but good for grazing. Livestock was easily rustled and driven back to raiders' territory by mounted reivers<sup>9</sup> who knew the country well. The raiders also often removed "insight", easily portable household goods or valuables, and even took prisoners for ransom.

Border Reivers were raiders along the Anglo–Scottish border. Their ranks consisted of both Scottish and English families, and they raided the entire border country without regard to their victims' nationality.

The attitudes of the English and Scottish governments towards the border clans alternated between indulgence or even encouragement, as these fierce families served as the first line of defense against invasion from the other side of the border, and draconian and indiscriminate punishment when their lawlessness became intolerable to the authorities.

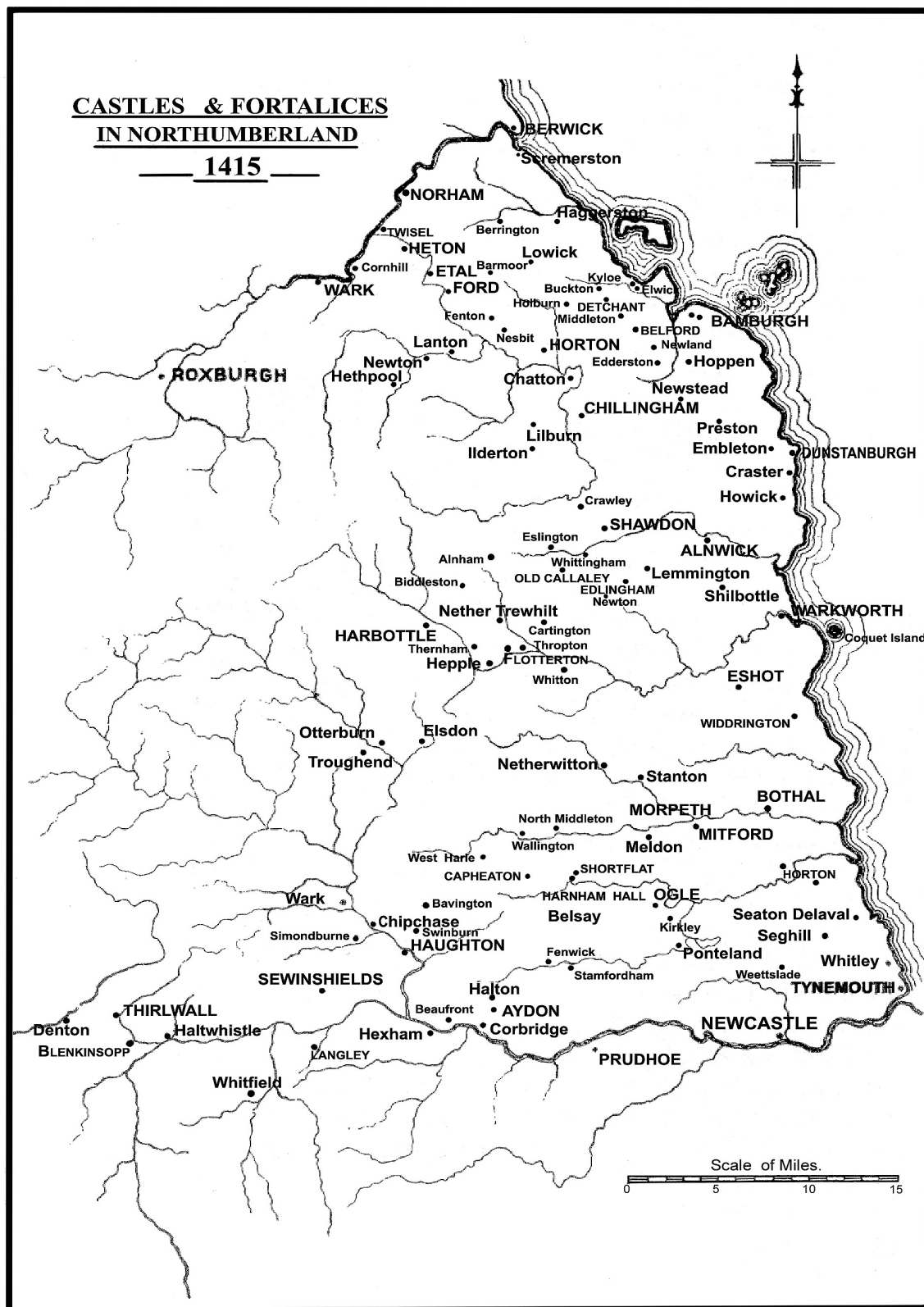
The term *Marches* refers to the border regions on both sides of the border between Scotland and England. From the Norman conquest of England until the reign of James I of England, border clashes were common and the monarchs of both countries relied on Earls of March and Lord Warden of the Marches to defend and control the frontier region. Both countries divided their border territories into three sections identified as the East, Middle, and West Marches. Sir John Forster (see Bamburgh Forresters) was appointed the Warden of the English Middle Marches.

Many families in the Marches build fortified houses, pele towers, or even castles as protection from the raiders. These strongholds sacrificed comfort for safety but as the hostilities lessened these strongholds were added to, or replaced, with comfortable manors. To show the extent of these fortifications Illustration 6 shows where in Northumberland towers and castles were constructed. Notice

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9 "Reive" is an early English word that means "to rob".

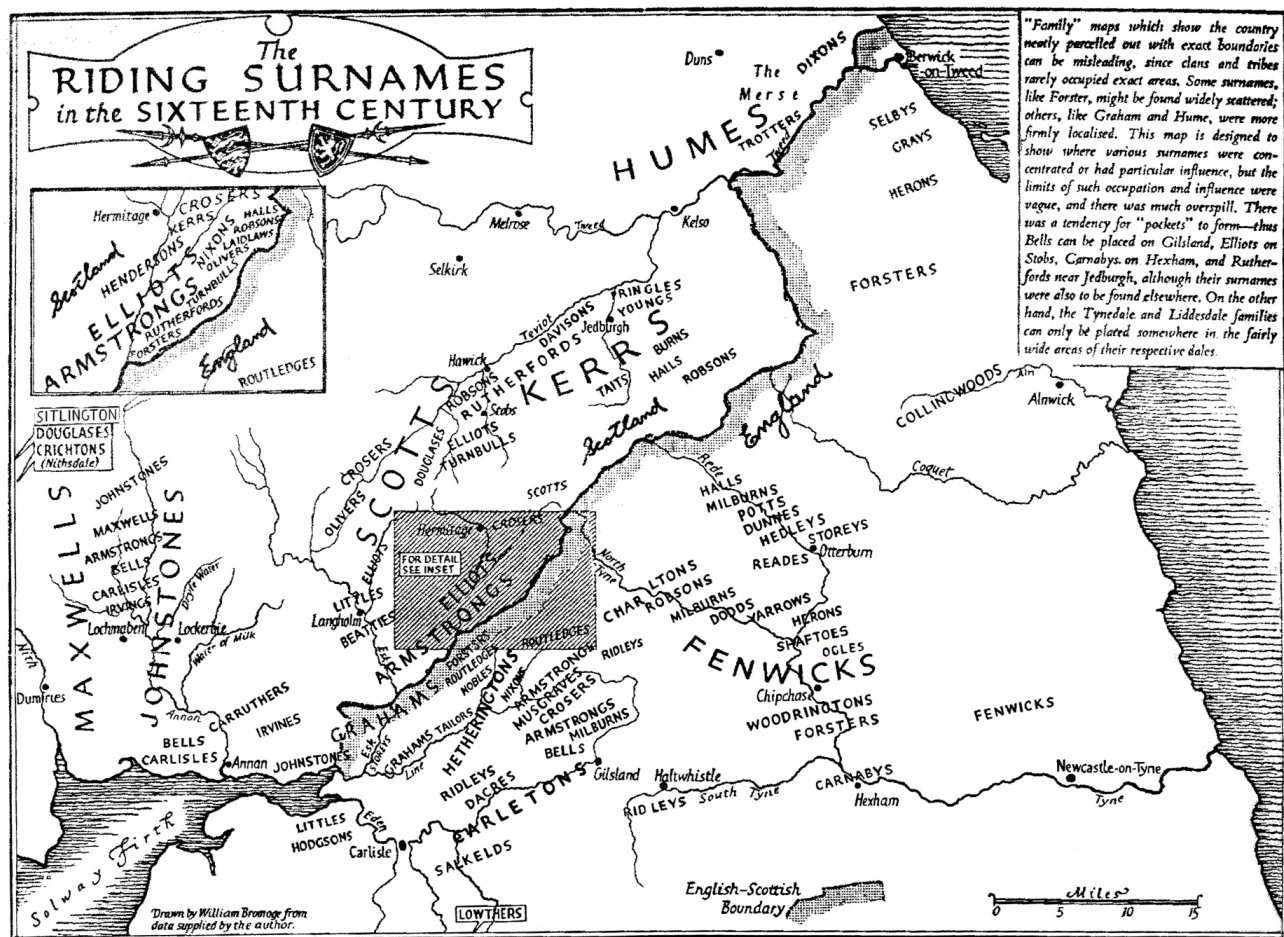
“Edderston” just west of Bamburgh, this is Etherstone (tower), near today's village and estate of Adderstone. The map shows how far south from the border Northumberland residents felt the need for fortifications. Reivers from Scotland raided as far as Newcastle, and on at least one occasion made it as far south as Durham and even threatened York.



*Illustration 6: Castles and Fortified Homes in Northumberland*



The areas of influence where various surnames involved in border reiving is depicted on the map in Illustration 7. Notice the map identifies three areas identified for Forster south of the border. Notice also, family names which intermarried with Forster in Northumberland such as Selby, Gray, Ogle, and Fenwick. The Forrester name does not appear north of the border; but the Irving name appears twice (once as Irvines and once as Irvings) in western Scotland. As the note on the map says, the intent is to show locations where families were concentrated or has particular influence. The Forrester clan in Scotland were not one of the surnames of influence in the border region, but they were in residence in Scotland in the Jedburgh and Galashiels area. Galashiels does not appear on the map but is just north-west of Melrose which does appear on the map, as does Jedburgh. Note that in the inset the Forsters appears to be north of the border – Forsters were south of the border; but indicates how families didn't respect imaginary lines on some map.



**Illustration 7: Border Reiver Surnames**

### Forester vs. Forster

The Scottish Forester Clan were as savagely anti-English as their Northumbrian cousins, the Forsters appeared to be fervently anti-Scottish.

The substantial clan of Forrester spread from Edinburgh to the towns of Galasheils and Jedburgh, both close to the border and became Forrester strongholds. The Scottish Foresters near Galashiels, established a fortification (castle or tower) which they named Torwoodlee. Galashiels and Jedburgh were border towns often the subject of attacks from across the border. Galashiels is and was a commerce center, market town, on the Gala Water (Gala River) while Jedburgh sits on the Jed Water. Jedburgh Castle is one of the castles where Mary Queen of Scots was imprisoned by Elizabeth.

Poet Sir Walter Scott wrote about Forresters, and some say he is the best historian of the Foresters on either side of the border. Many of Walter Scott's works feature Forrester individuals or families. With Forresters spread over the Scottish Lowlands and Forsters residing throughout Northumberland and somewhat in Cumbria to the west, these kin undoubtedly clashed with each other. Walter Scott's works include Forresters in Galloway and northern Cumbria in the west on either side of the border.

We know there were Forsters near Kershopefoot village in 1583 who held four small towers on the English bank of the Liddel Water (a stream you can spit across). Lord Armstrong of Mangerton Castle (Newcastleton), on the Scottish side of the border, married a daughter of John Forster of Kershopefoot. This marriage is typical of cross-border marriages done for the safety of both families. Kershopefoot is in county Cumbria, west of Northumberland, in the Western Marches.

**Flodden Field** The Battle of Flodden Field was not associated with these ongoing border raids; but must be included in any discourse of this border area. James IV, King of the Scots<sup>10</sup>, declared war on England primarily to honor a mutual defense agreement with the French King Louis XII but also because English King Henry VIII had renewed his claim of being overlord of Scotland. The Scots, with their best fighters – the border reivers, invaded northern England with a force of 30,000 to divert Henry VIII's English forces from French campaigns against Louis.

The 1513 Battle of Flodden Field (in Northumberland) was the largest (in numbers of participants) battle of the time. In two hours time 10,000 Scots were dead; including the King, 12 Earls, 14 Lords, and 68 Knights. Every Border farm and family had someone to mourn. The subject of many ballads such as “The Flowers of the Forest” which speaks of the dead flower of Scotland's manhood, and poems: the most famous being Sir Walter Scott's “The Last Stand At Flodden”. Many Foresters were among the casualties. Undoubtedly Forster kin fought on both sides. Many Irvings from the Bonshaw branch were also casualties at Flodden Field.

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10 Notice that monarchs of Scotland are referenced as being king or queen *of the Scots*; not *of Scotland*. The Scottish monarchs reigned over the people, not the land.

## Foster Throughout The British Isles

The Forrester, Forester, Forster, and Foster name appears all over Great Briton. Our interest is in families prior to the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century when Fosters emigrated to the American colonies, specifically in New England. In addition to Forster families in the north, Northumberland and Scotland already mentioned, Forsters (any spelling) have been discovered elsewhere in England. See also Appendix IV.

### County Hertfordshire

Roger Forster second son of Sir Thomas Forster, Lord of Etherstone, moved south from Northumberland to escape feuds with the Kerr family (and the law). He settled in Hunsdon, county Hertfordshire, north of London. Here he started a new branch of the Forster family.

Roger was 17 years old when he fled Northumberland. How he ended up in Hunsdon is not known; but he certainly did well. I suspect he must have had help from his family and landing in Hunsdon was not an accident. Hunsdon is the town where King Henry VIII had a home (Hunsdon House). Both princesses, and future Queens, Mary and Elizabeth spent time at Hunsdon House.

Roger married, in Hunsdon Joan Hussey (maybe Hosee), believed to be of a family in county Sussex (on the English Channel) which could be the well connected Hussey family. Information is scarce on Roger's wife, even her name Joan or Jane has been questioned.

Roger and Joan's first son was named John of whom all we know is that he married and had children. Roger's second son, Thomas was yeoman to Queen Elizabeth. He married Margaret Browning (of Chelmsford, Essex). Thomas died in 1599. Roger's third son, Richard, was usher to Queen Mary and he also married and had children. It is not known how Roger's sons came to be in the Royal household; was it due to Roger's connections to the Hussey family (with close ties to the Tutors) or the Forsters lived in the proximity of Hunsdon House?

Thomas (Roger's second son) and wife Margaret had Thomas Forster (born about 1548) who married Susan, daughter of Thomas Forster of Iden, county Sussex. This Sussex Forster family had a house in London which might be how the two met. Thomas was chief justice of the Court of Common Pleas and is the person who received the letter from Sir John Forster of Northumberland; see Appendix II. Sir Thomas changed the spelling of his surname to Foster when he married Susan. The second son of Sir Thomas and Susan was Sir Robert Foster (born about 1589) who resided at *Great Fosters* (Illustration 8) at Egham, Surrey<sup>11</sup> (near Windsor Castle) was chief justice of the Court of King's Bench and died at Great Fosters in 1663.

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11 Originally a royal hunting lodge, Great Fosters is now a first class hotel. See <http://www.greatfosters.co.uk/> History of this place is available from the hotel's Website. Alternatively, the [Great Fosters](#) Wikipedia article.





*Illustration 8: Great Fosters*

Sir Robert married twice, both times to ladies from county Sussex. In fact, there were many marriages between descendants of Roger Forster of Hunsdon and families from the county of Sussex. Hunsdon Forster descendants must have acquired a house in the town of Battle, in county Sussex, not far from Hastings because some pedigree records show these Forsters being “*of Battle*”. Most of Sir Robert's children by his first wife were baptized at Eastbourne, Sussex.

Another son of Sir Thomas and Susan was Thomas who married Mary Baskerville. Their second son was Col. John Foster who lead a military expedition to Jamaica where he stayed and began another branch of the Foster family.

One of Judge Sir Thomas' daughters, Susan, married Thomas Brooke of Whitchurch, in county Hampshire where they lived and had 11 children. One of their sons, Robert, was friends with Lord Baltimore who was establishing a new colony in America. Robert Brooke emigrated with his family, servants, even his hunting hounds on a private ship in 1650 to the Colony of Maryland in America where he became a major landowner; with multiple tracks of land each over 2,000 acres.

In summary, the Hunsdon, Herts branch of the Forster / Foster family prospered with close ties to the Crown becoming high court judges and married into other powerful families. We know at least two Foster descendants of this branch relocated to the Americas (Jamaica, and Maryland). See the Foster of Northumberland and Hertfordshire pedigree charts.

## Channel Counties

Forster families existed in southern counties of England along the English Channel. At the extreme south-east is county Kent, heading west is county Sussex (now split into East Sussex and West Sussex), then county Hampshire. Forster families existed in Kent and Sussex and Foster women married into families in Hampshire and moved there. For the purpose of locating possible origins for Foster immigrants to New England, Kent and Sussex hold possibilities.

There are Foster families in county Kent, in the Cranbrook area in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. During the 16<sup>th</sup> century there are Fosters in the Horsmonden, Kent area and in the 17<sup>th</sup> century there are Foster families in Ashford, Kent. These Kent Foster families were researched for a possible connection to John and Reginald Foster immigrants to New England by the genealogist Elizabeth French Bartlett in about 1910; but no connection was ever found. Her research is kept by the New England Historical and Genealogy Society (NEHGS). I transcribed her results into pedigree charts available as companion diagrams<sup>12</sup>.

Based on the towns in Kent in which these families resided it is reasonably safe to assume these families worked the land as yeomen or husbandmen and do not appear to be landed gentry. Ms. Bartlett's research does show that five descendants ended up in New England (Situata and Dorchester) but no connection to our ancestors has yet been discovered. See Fosters of Kent pedigree.

As mentioned in the previous section, Sir Thomas Foster of Hunsdon, county Hertsfordshire (north of London) married (in 1575) Susan, daughter and heir of Thomas Forster of St John Street, London and Iden, in county Sussex. Little is known of the Forsters of Iden, Sussex but if they also had a home in London they probably had some social standing. Susan, who married Sir Thomas was the daughter of Thomas of Iden, who was in-turn the second son of Thomas of Iden. That there were two generations of Forsters in Iden before Susan was married implies the Iden Forsters were in that place probably by 1525. Maybe not of any relevance, but Iden, in Sussex is just over the border with county Kent. Possibly the Forsters of Iden are related to a Foster family of county Kent. There is a pedigree chart of this Forster family in the book *County Genealogies – Sussex* that appears to have been drawn up in 1634 but does not extend back far enough to include Susan. The Iden, Sussex Forsters were at least landed gentry and probably titled because they had a Coat of Arms, their Arms differ from the Northumberland Forsters and is discussed in the Heraldry section. A will of Thomas Forster of Iden, dated 1543 also gives no clue other than that Thomas lived in Iden then and that he had a number of land holdings. That will does not mention Susan but does mention there are sons and his heir is named Goddarde of Battle.

A John Foster, Esq. of Iden, co. Sussex married Mary the eldest daughter of Ralph Pope of Hindall in Bucksted, co. Sussex who was widow of Nicholas Gildridge of Eastbourne co. Sussex, who died 3 Nov. 1605. So, John Foster of Iden was esquire (landowner) in about 1606. My source does not indicate that there were any offspring from this marriage. If John had children it is likely a son would have the name John and the date is close to when our John of Salem, Massachusetts Bay Colony would have been born – but this is simply a statement of possibility.

William Stonestreet of Hailsham, co. Sussex married Mary, daughter of Nicholas Foster of Hailsham in 1605. Hailsham is about ten miles north of Eastbourne. So there was a Foster family in Hailsham prior to 1605.

Edward Alfrey, of Gulledge in East Grinstead, county Sussex married Anne, daughter of Mr. Forster of Crowhurst in Lingfield, county Surrey and sister of Sir William Forster of Crowhurst. A grandson, Edward Alfrey was 14 years old in 1634, so the grandson was born about 1620 implying Anne Forster of Crowhurst in Lingfield and her brother Sir William Forster might be alive around 1580. Crowhurst and Gulledge appear to be estate names in the respective towns of Lingfield and East Grinstead so one could speculate, having estates, the families have some social standing and thus might appear in local

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12 These pedigree charts are in files available were you probably obtained this document; the [irving-fam.com](http://irving-fam.com) website.

contemporary records. But this tells us there was a Forster family along the Sussex – Surrey border in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century.

In western county Sussex there is a town named Trotton where there was a Forster family that owned land. Anthony Forster of Trotton, Esq. in 1634 with wife Elizabeth Buckland of Standish, county Wilts (Wiltshire) had five daughters and co-heirs who sold the estate. Anthony's parents were Thomas Forster and Constance, daughter and co-heir of Sir Roger Lewknor, knight, of Trotton, county Sussex. The Lewknor family was a large and prominent family in county Sussex. Thomas' ancestors came from the west midland county of Worcester from villages named Knighton and Newnham. These locations might signify a relationship with the Forester families listed in the Domesday Book in the western counties.

## West Midlands Counties

The counties in western England with names: Shropshire, Staffordshire, and Warwickshire had Forester families since the Norman Conquest as listed in the Domesday Book.

Beginning in the reign of Henry III (1216 – 1272) there is a prominent Forester family living in County Shropshire (Salop or Shorps) which is in western England on the border with Wales in the area near Shrewsbury. Some members of this family received titles, but prior to the 17<sup>th</sup> century little is known of these Foresters. The Visitation<sup>13</sup> of Shropshire for 1623 includes Forster, but those records are written in Latin and are of little help.

In 1821 the Barony of Forester was established at Wiley Park in Broseley, county Shropshire (near Shrewsbury) with Cecil Forester as the first Baron, who later changed his surname to Weld-Forester. The Barony continues to this day with the ninth Baron. The only possible significance to our quest being ancestors of these Foresters are possibly descended from those awarded lands in this area after the Norman Conquest. Meaning they have been in the area for centuries – including when Fosters emigrated to America in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. But we know very little of these Foresters.

Foresters in Staffordshire and neighboring Warwickshire are those identified in the Domesday Book as receiving lands after the Norman Conquest. The Heraldic Visitation of Warwickshire of 1619 contains a pedigree of those Forsters but includes only one date (1556) and over ten generations; thus is difficult to associate. The arms provided are very different than any of other Forster arms; implying they are not related to Forsters of Northumberland or Sussex.

So, there are definitely Forster / Foster families in the west country of England but the only information discovered thus far is not very useful pedigree diagrams. But these Forsters cannot be ruled out until additional information is uncovered.

## Oxfordshire and Berkshire

There was a Forster family in Harpden, near Henley-on-Thames, in county Oxfordshire. Some claim this Forster family is a branch that moved south from Northumberland, but no records have been uncovered to validate where they came from. Forsters do not appear in heraldic visitations or Burke's Landed Gentry for Oxfordshire. This suggests they were not titled or owned land in Oxfordshire. Due

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<sup>13</sup> Heraldic visitations were authorized periodically for counties in England. They were visited for the purpose of verifying those using titles and coats of arms were legitimate. Refer to the section of Heraldry for more information.

to the proximity with Oxfordshire, it seems more likely (speculation) they came from the Forster families of the west midland counties instead of Northumberland.

According to the 1532 Heraldic Visitation of Berkshire county there were (at least) two generations of Humphrey Forster followed by a George Forster of Henley-on-Thames, county Oxfordshire, who married Elizabeth de la Mare in about 1490 and became owner of the Aldermaston Court; a country home in Aldermaston, county Berkshire, near Reading. This magnificent estate was operated as a hotel named Aldermaston Manor<sup>14</sup> but it's future is in question. The Forsters retained ownership of Aldermaston until 1752 when their male line died out. The magnificent current buildings (Illustration 9, at right) were built after the Forsters owned the estate.



**Illustration 9: Aldermaston Court**

The Berkshire Heraldic Visitation of 1664 includes the Forsters of Aldermaston and describes their arms as a chevron between three arrows; refer to the Heraldry Section. Inspection of the pedigree provided in this visitation gives no clues that help our search for possible ancestors. The most complete pedigree for this Forster family is in Burke's book on Extinct Baronetcies, see bibliography.

## Fosters in Ireland

The Foster name is widespread in Ireland and there seems to be a connection with the Foresters of Northumberland. There were many Forster families on the Irish west coast near Galway in the 15<sup>th</sup> century – before the Ulster Colony was established in northern Ireland. The Forsters in Fermanagh (central Ireland), by contrast, came originally from Scotland.

John Forster of Edinburgh was one of the original Scottish "undertakers" (land owners) granted land in Ulster. So, like the Irvings, when the Ulster Colony was established (1609) Forster individuals from Scotland took up the challenge of locating in Northern Ireland.

Forsters were in Dublin before the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The name Robert Forster appears in a 1489 document relating to the merchant's quay on the river Liffey. These Forsters became one of the well-connected and well-to-do families in Dublin. Their numbers included Sir John Foster, the last Speaker of the Irish Parliament before its dissolution in 1800. Forster had by then become Foster. The same name transition was also occurring in Galway.

Our Foster ancestors in America originate from England, or less likely, Scotland so if the reader is interested in Irish Foster families I leave it to the reader to research the Foster families in Ireland.

Appendix IV contains other Forster / Foster families who were Baronets as possible clues to where other families of the surname might have resided.

<sup>14</sup> Berkshire county history of Aldermaston Court: [http://www.berkshirehistory.com/castles/aldermaston\\_court.html](http://www.berkshirehistory.com/castles/aldermaston_court.html). Alternatively, [Aldermaston Court](#) Wikipedia article.

## Heraldry

In medieval times warriors in their metal suits needed a way to identify themselves, thus knights painted designs on their shields. The shield was held on the knight's arm so the design on the shield became known as the knight's Arms (or Armorial). These designs were intended to prevent friendly fire mistakes so to speak and aid followers to rally around their leader. The design on the shield was duplicated on a cloth worn like a vest so when the knight was not holding his shield he could still be identified; this vest was called the sur-coat (surname coat). A few knights added some ornamentation to their helmet. The design on the helmet is called a *Crest*. The crest was an added way to identify the knight who lost his shield and maybe the sur-coat was lost or covered with dirt or blood. Obviously every knight needed a unique design.

The figure below shows an example coat of arms. The *Arms* is the design within the shape of a shield and the *Crest* is above the helmet. This example is for the Northumberland Forster and Etherstone families combined implying the owner is a descendant of parents with the father named Forster and his wife was an heiress of the Etherstone family.



*Illustration 10: Arms Forester Quartered with Etherstone*

The illustration includes the motto, in black on a golden scroll. This is the original family motto of “Sta Saldo”, a corrupted form of ancient Latin-French which means “Stand Firm”. These are believed to be the arms of Sir John Forster of Etherstone and Bamburgh.

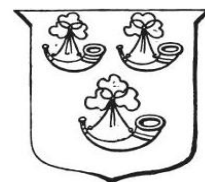
Ensuring unique designs lead to the creation of an administration industry associated with recording the



designs (called charges) and ensuring no two were alike. Words were used to describe the arms and you needed to understand the lingo, to make sense of these descriptions, which was primarily Latin-based. If you are interested in this subject I suggest you review the book: *The General Armory of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales* by Sir Bernard Burke; published in 1884 and available via the Internet<sup>15</sup>.

## Northumberland Forster Arms

The earliest mention of Forester arms is that of Sir Hugo Forester, grandson of Sir Richard Forestarius. Hugo was knighted by King Steven about 1137 with arms described as: *a shield argent, three bugles or stringed gules*; which translates to: a shield colored silver or white (*argent*) with three hunting horns (*bugles*) colored gold (*or*) with cords (*stringed*) colored red (*gules*) attached to the bugles.



In 1192 Sir John Forester was knighted by King Richard, *the Lion Heart*, for deeds at the battle of Acre and directed to “add a chevron vert (green) to his arms”. From this time forward until 1316 Forster arms of this Northumberland line would use arms based on the 1192 arms containing the three horns and green chevron. Each titled descendant would use these arms with some minor change to identify the unique individual. Some of these differences might have been altering the color of the bugles, the strings, or the direction the bugles are facing. The most common “*difference*” would be the addition of a small crescent somewhere on the charge.

Both color and symbols have meanings<sup>16</sup> on arms. Common Northumberland Forester components and meanings include:

- Colors (tinctures):
  - Argent (silver or white) - Peace and sincerity
  - Vert (green) - Hope, joy, and loyalty in love
  - Sable (black) - Constancy or grief
  - Or (gold) - Generosity and elevation of the mind
  - Gules (red) - Warrior or martyr; Military strength and magnanimity
- Shapes (charges):
  - Chevron - Protection; Builders or others who have accomplished some work of faithful service
  - Horns - Strength and fortitude

Later, another Sir John Forester, in 1316, acquired Etherstone estate through marriage. Children of this

15 Link to Burke's General Armory book: <http://www.archive.org/details/generalarmoryofe00burk> which you can read and search on-line or download in various formats.

16 A somewhat complete list is available via the Internet see [here](#) if interested. Also see Burke's General Armory book for a more official explanation; and <http://www.heraldsnet.org/saitou/parker/index.htm> has an easier to use explanation of the terms used.

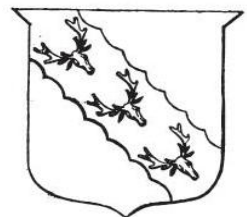
marriage would use the quartered arms of Forester arms with the arms of Etherstone. The result is that shown above in Illustration 10 sometimes referred to as the Forsters of Etherstone arms. So after 1316 titled members of this Forester family would use the quartered arms with Etherstone.

**Quartering** as described by Burke's General Armory book: *The intent of quartering is to show the descent of one family from an heiress or co-heiress of other houses, and exhibit and perpetuate this representation. Thus, children of an heiress are entitled, at her death, to quarter with their paternal coat of arms ... an heiress is a daughter with no living male siblings or male descendants of deceased male sibling.* This and much more concerning the marshaling (conjoining two arms) is explained in Burke's General Armory book.

The Etherstone arms are described as: *argent, on a bend sable cotised, three martlets or.* In heraldry a martlet refers to a *forth son* or *one who subsists by virtue and merit, not inheritance.* I have not discovered the significance of there being three martlets, if any. A martlet is a heraldic charge depicting a stylized bird (martlet being the diminutive of martin) with short tufts of feathers in the place of legs. Swifts, formerly also called martlets, have such small legs that they were believed to have none at all. The implied inability of the martlet to land is often seen to symbolize the constant quest for knowledge, learning, and adventure – many colleges and universities include martlets in their arms relating this meaning. It is my belief the Etherstone Arms includes gold martlets to signify *constant quest for knowledge, learning, and adventure.*

Shown in Illustration 10 above is a full Blazon (artfully decorated) Coat of Arms for the quartered Forster arms of Sir John Forster of Etherstone and Bamburgh. Above the helmet is the wreath or the *mantling*, which is green with a silver lining, above that is the crest of “*a stag’s head at gaze, erased proper, attired or*”, in other words: “A stag’s head, torn off at the neck, naturally colored, with complete gold-colored antlers”. This crest was granted 27 Feb. 1604 according to a heraldic visitation of Hunsdon, Hertfordshire (the London area branch). A commonly found Forster badge or crest is knight's gauntlet (arm in armor) holding a broken spear – as shown below – with the motto *Though broken, still strong.* Both the Stag and the gauntlet are used by the Bamburgh branch and the gauntlet crest is also described for Forsters in Ireland (Dublin) by Burke in his many books.

Another Forster arms is depicted at right and in photographs, below, of the tomb of Sir Thomas Foster (the Thomas who married Susan Forster of Iden, Essex). The tomb in these photographs is inside the church in Hunsdon, Hertfordshire<sup>17</sup>. The tomb includes two arms; one matching the quartered Forster & Etherstone and the other introduces the bend with stag heads. One presumes the arms in the right-hand photograph are depicting Thomas's arms next to Susan's family arms; so the Forsters of Iden arms are presumed to be the bend with three stag heads, shown at right. His wife Susan's unadorned tomb is outside the church in the burial grounds. The bend with stag heads is also seen in arms of families in the north, in county Cumbria which might mean the Sussex Forsters originated in the western English and Scottish Marches. But that is pure speculation.



One description of arms for Forester descendants in county Sussex include a variation that changes the third (lower-left) quadrant of the Forster, quartered with Etherstone, arms to a bend with three stag heads instead of the three martlets of Etherstone and claims the stag heads are for Forster. To picture this – replace each of the birds in the lower-left quadrant with a the head of a stag.

<sup>17</sup> The photographs were taken by LeRoy Foster; a fellow Foster researcher.

### Sir Thomas Foster Tomb at Hunsdon, Hertfordshire





### Scotland Forrester Arms

The hunting horns seem to be traditional symbols of Flemish or Scottish practitioners of the keeper of the forest. There is a chance that the horns indicate a link to Flanders.

Adam Forrester of Edinburgh in the 1360s was keeper of the Great Seal of Scotland and is considered the founder of the Clan Forrester in Scotland. Adam Forrester's arms has three hunting horns and chevron – similar to the arms of the Northumberland Forsters and his Crest is that of a hound. The chevron was dropped by later Forrester generations in Scotland.

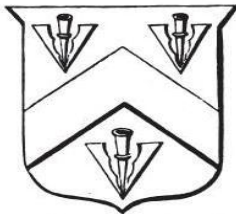
On 4 February 1431 King James I, of Scotland, confirmed Sir John Forrester of Corstorphine in the house and lands of Corstorphine which would be thereafter known as the Barony of Corstorphine. The armorial bearings of the Lords Forrester of Corstorphine are depicted below; compared with those of the Northumberland Forsters.

Northumberland	Comparison of Armorial Bearings	Scotland
	<p>The arms of the Forresters of Scotland and Forsters of Northumberland match; this is significant. The Arms issued by The Court of the Lord Lyon (Scotland) match with Northumberland Forester arms meaning these two families descend from the same ancestor – probably Sir Richard Forester of the Norman Conquest.</p>	



## Other Foster Arms

In the General Armory section of Burke's book there are multiple pages with descriptions of arms for Forester, Forrester, Forster, Foster individuals and families from many locations throughout the United Kingdom. This implies individuals named Foster (multiple spellings) all over the United Kingdom were at least knighted and many had titles and lands. The average citizens would not appear in such a book.



A common component of the arms of another Foster line includes: a silver chevron between three silver arrows, arrow-heads, (or pheons) on a black background. The pheons are associated with: *Dexterity and nimble wit; readiness for battle*. The pheons are arrow-heads of a bolt fired by crossbow. The arms of the Forsters of Aldermaston are similar – instead of depicting the pheons those arms use a traditional arrow with full shaft and feathers.

Burke's Armory book describes the black with pheons Arms attributed to Christopher Foster of Weeke, county Somerset grandson of William Foster of Reading and younger brother of William Foster of Aldermaston in county Berkshire. The Aldermaston Forster website includes information on this Forster family at: <http://www.berkshirehistory.com/gentry/forster.html> including a rendition of those arms with the arrows. Yet another Foster from county Cornwall (extreme south west England) in the same book has arms described as a single bugle horn between four escallops (scallop shells). Some renditions combine these two designs placing escallops on the chevron.

Maybe significant is that the Nicholl family of Merthymawr in County Glamorgan, Wales has arms that match the black southern Forster but without the chevron. Which implies to me that there is a Nicholl family connection with Forster, that eludes me.

There is still much we don't know regarding the Arms associated with Forster knights and Barons. Did Sir Richard Forestarius receive Arms when he as knighted by William I? I suspect he did have Arms and that they were very similar, if not the same as his grandson Sir Hugo. Did the Court of the Lord Lion collaborate with College of Arms in England? I think yes they did, because the Arms of Northumberland Forsters (England) match the Arms of the Forresters in Scotland.

A study of all the Forster (different spellings) arms as described in Burke's Armory book and other sources might show interesting relationships and identify different families in the UK. But I doubt such an undertaking would shed any light on associations with what is known about our initial Foster immigrants to America in New England.

## Administration of Arms

In Scotland the *Court of the Lord Lion*; which began in the 14<sup>th</sup> century is the official administrator of Armorial Bearings and all things associated with heraldry. The counterpart in England is the *College of Arms* which was chartered in the 15<sup>th</sup> century (but was active as early as the 12<sup>th</sup> century).

The English College of Arms conducted Heraldic Visitations throughout England to record Arms and pedigrees. These visitations began with Henry VIII with the aim to validate titles being used, and prevent continued use of unauthorized titles or Arms. Some Arms existed prior to the charter of the College of Arms and the visitation officers were authorized to validate those early claims. Most gentry did not like the intrusion and in 1688 William III did not authorize continuation of these visitations.

Results of these visitations are recorded in books that now reside in the College of Arms in London.

In Scotland, the Court of Lord Lion works differently; in order to use a Coat of Arms, each generation is required to request authorization to use the Arms; submitting data to be substantiated by that court. Thus, in Scotland visitations are not necessary; it is up to an individual who wants to use a title or Arms to obtain authorization – nothing is automatic.

Records for some of the heraldic visitations survive and are available via the Internet. For example; the record for the 1615 Heraldic Visitation to Northumberland is available on the Internet at this [link](#).<sup>18</sup> An inspection of that record shows many names that intermarried with Forster are included and a Forster pedigree beginning with Thomas III starts on page 29 and agrees - somewhat - with the discussion about the line of Thomas Forster up till 1615 included in this paper, Appendix III – but does show some differences. The Forster Arms described in 1615 are quartered with the Etherstone as shown in Illustration 10.

For genealogy research, these visitation records present limited information due their original purpose being to show the male line of descent to a current claimant of a title or Coat of Arms – not a complete descendant chart accounting for all children and they often exclude dates. An index of visitation records and other heraldry books available via the Internet can be found at: <http://www.heraldry-online.org.uk/Archivebooklinks.htm> for those who desire to learn more.

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18 URL for heraldic visitation of Northumberland in 1616 is: <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/njp.32101073398446>

## Foster Locations in Great Briton



*Illustration 11: Some Foster Locations*

Some of the locations in Great Britain where Fosters lived are shown in the map. Locations tagged on the map are explained in the table below. If you are viewing this document on a computer with Internet access you can follow this [link](#) to view the map in a browser and will permit zooming to see greater detail and panning to move around the map.

ID	Name	Description
A	Torwood Castle	One of the many Forrester family possessions in Scotland, now in ruins. Second Castle built around 1566 for Sir Alexander Forrester. Outside Stirling – the old capital of Scotland.
B	Bamburgh Castle	(hidden behind “H” flag on map) Forster family seat from about 1192 to about 1700. The site was used by the Romans as a forward outpost during construction of Hadrian's Wall. Original inhabitants of the area used its natural fortifications as early as 800 BC.
C	Barony of Corstorphine	Forester Barony for 300 years beginning in 1431. A village, now a suburb of Edinburgh, Scotland.
D	The Great Fosters; in Egham, county Surrey, England	This was originally a royal hunting lodge, home of Foster chief justices. Both Mary and Elizabeth (Queens) resided here. Now a first class hotel.
E	Cranbrook, county Kent, England	Many Foster families are recorded as residing in the Cranbrook area and other surrounding towns in County Kent
F	Hunsdon, Hertfordshire, England	Roger Forster moved from Northumberland to Hunsdon and established the Foster family line in the south (London area)
G	Tewkesbury, Worcestershire, England	Within the Oswaldslow Hundred (area) of the Domesday Book which records lands awarded to a Forster family after the Norman Conquest
H	Adderstone, Northumberland	Adderstone village, originally Etherstone home of the Forsters of Northumberland
I	Stratheny Castle Scotland	One of the castles (this is a tower house) at which the Foresters were once governor

Named, but not flagged on the map, in Ireland are Galway and Dublin. Fosters resided in both.

## Our Foster Line

History records the actions or accomplishments of people that affect others. Naturally historical texts include the actions of Kings and Generals due to the impact of their actions on people and nations. Authors of entertaining works tell of heroic and romantic deeds often based on historic events. It is from these sources future generations learn from those that have gone before them. Foster ancestors seem to have been on the sidelines of history over the ages, therefore you will be hard pressed to find the Foster family name in the history books. Students educated in England will know the name William *the Conqueror* but few will know the name of his wife. A few Foster (or Forster) knights had their moments in history but few did much to cause a line in the history books.

Governments attempt to maintain tax rolls or census records of their subjects that support the form of government. Such records did not include commoners until 19<sup>th</sup> century in Great Briton. Prior to then records include nobles and some landed gentry. The only records for commoners that might survive prior to the 17<sup>th</sup> century in Great Briton are church parish records which would record baptism, marriage, and burial events. Access to those church records is difficult and when located a typical baptism record usually gives a date, child's first name and fathers name. It is not uncommon for the mother's name to be omitted. One baptism record uncovered for St Giles Church, Durham, England is as follows: *Year 1615: Aug 25 John, s of James Foster, Skinner*. All this tells us is that James Foster had a son named John baptized on that date; and James' occupation was that of a skinner. We can presume that James was married but we don't know his wife's name. We must also presume that James lived in the parish of this church. In other records of this church we might find other baptism, marriage, or burial entries identifying James in those entries – but is it the same James?

When the British crown started establishing colonies on foreign shores in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, notably Ireland and North America, the Foster surname was common throughout England so it is not unexpected that on the rolls of the early colonists the Foster name should appear. English colonies in New England and Virginia list Foster families as some of the early settlers arriving from England, it is the New England ones that might be our kin.

A number of different and, to our knowledge, unrelated Foster individuals or families emigrated to New England in the first half of the sixteen hundreds. Our Irving family has ancestral ties to two such individuals; one being John Foster and the other being Reginald Foster.

### John Foster

John was at Salem, Massachusetts sometime before 1646 – in an affidavit written down in 1670 he states that he is 52 years old and was born in England. If he was 52 in 1670 – he would have been born in 1618. Town records of Salem state John Foster was, in 1657, paid for work he performed on the bridge. There is no surviving records for when John arrived in America, his parents, or from whence in England he came. Many researchers have tried in vain to identify John Foster's origins. Records tell us John married Martha Tompkins in 1646 at Salem, MA and they had thirteen children. Martha is believed to have sailed from England on the ship Truelove when she was 14 years old arriving with her parents in Salem, MA in 1635. But some mystery surrounding her remains. Is Marie Tompkins, listed as a passenger on the Truelove, actually Martha? Based on a 1670 deposition in which she states she

was 43 years old, her calculated birth year 1627 implies she was 8, not 14 years old in 1635.

Like Reginald Foster, discussed below, very little is known as fact – but many have speculated about the origins of John Foster. Some theories with little, if any proof, about John include these:

1. John Foster, according to a couple of sources, is believed to have been in Roger Conant's Company which coming from Nantasket, now Hull, established and settled Naumkeag, now Salem, in 1628. That Conant and others disagreed with the leaders in Plymouth on the south shore and relocated to the north shore of Massachusetts Bay is well established – whether John Foster was with this group is not established. Records of Roger Conant's party do not list John Foster, but those records are incomplete. The John Foster of interest to us would have been 10 years old in 1628 so, while not impossible it is unlikely he was with Roger Conant in 1628; unless he was an unrecorded indentured servant of one of the families of the Conant group.
2. In the 1930 book “Planters of the Commonwealth” Charles Edwards Banks provides evidence that a John Foster came over in 1635 on the ship Hopewell of London – Thomas Babb, Master. The passenger list for that voyage exists and does include a “Jo. Forten” listed as age 14 and seems to be traveling alone (not listed with another family group – a servant or apprentice would have been listed with the family he was employed by or apprenticed to). But is that person the John Foster the immigrant that married Martha Tompkins in 1646? What was a 14 (or even 17 – if born in 1618) year old boy doing sailing to America alone? One interesting possibility is explained by Banks: the churches of the London area collected and pooled money to pay for orphans of the area to be sent to America for the purpose of reducing the over-population in London and improve the hopes of a better life for the individual than the streets of London. The established rules included that the child had to be at least 14 years old and would be “public” apprentices in the new world. So – the timing and age seems about right; this John arrived the same year as the Tompkins family. If true, this means that John was an orphan in London and there is little hope his parents will ever be uncovered.
3. Research uncovered a baptism record for a John, son of James Foster at St Giles Church in the city of Durham, county Durham, dated 25 August 1615. The same church has a baptism record for James son of Thomas, dated 29 Sept. 1588, presumed to be the father of John. It is possible that this John Foster is the immigrant in Salem, Massachusetts; but the only association is the date. No other records for this John have yet been uncovered. If this John Foster was baptized soon after birth, meaning he was born in 1615 his age in 1670 would be 55. John Foster the immigrant stated he was age 52 in 1670 – close enough to not be ruled out completely.
4. The least likely suggested option is that in County Kent, England there is record of Richard Foster who married Patience Bigge. Richard died in 1630 with no Will and the Court awarded care of the young children, including: Mary, Hopestill, and John to their uncle John Bigge (Patience's brother). In 1635 Richard Foster's widow, Patience along with her son Hopestill Foster and Patience's mother, a widow – Rachel Bigge, sailed to New England on the ship Elizabeth, eventually residing in Dorchester, MA (South Boston). On the same ship were the James Bates family, cousins of John Bigge, including a daughter Mary (Marie) age 17 who became the wife of Hopestill Foster. Church records of Biddenden county Kent, England indicate that Richard and Patience Foster had two sons named John, both died young (before 1624). But the Court record of Richard's Administration indicates a living son named John (whose baptism does not appear in the church records). The only hint that there was a third son

named John is that of the Administration Court records. No other records of this John Foster have been uncovered<sup>19</sup>. If our ancestor, John Foster of Salem, was a relation of Patience Foster residing in Dorchester, after 1635 – why is there no mention in Wills or other records of the relationship or that John of Salem ever contacted the Foster or Bigge families living about 15 miles away. Considerable research on the Foster family of County Kent, England was performed by Elizabeth French Bartlett (about 1910) and exists in the NEHGS special collections department. This research includes at least seven generations of Fosters in Kent beginning with John Foster of Cranbrook in about 1450. Another member of this Foster family, Edward Foster (1590 – 1643), emigrated to Massachusetts and resided in Scituate on the South Shore, but a son of Edward, named Timothy, later resided in Dorchester, so probably connected up with the Foster / Bigge / Bates relatives in Dorchester.

5. An interesting, possibly (but unlikely) relevant, fact is that John Foster's mother-in-law (Ralph Tompkins' wife) – Katherine – was a Foster (her maiden name was Foster). The passenger list of the ship Truelove voyage of 1635 survives and includes Ralph Tompkins, his wife Katherine, and three children: Samuel, Elizabeth, and Marie. Marie or Mary is presumed to be Martha who married John Foster – but one must tread carefully making assumptions like that. There is the chance – although slim – that our John Foster is some relation (but not son) of Katherine. Nothing is known of Katherine's parents or where she was born. Earlier, but now disproved researchers thought that Katherine was a widow when she married Ralph and that Foster was her married name, thus thinking she might have had a son named John Foster. It is now believed Katherine Foster is her birth name. It is believed she originated in the area of Wendover, Buckinghamshire where she married Ralph and had baptized their children, as the Wendover church records support. The ship Truelove, like the Hopewell sailed from London in 1635; which may, or may not, be relevant. Our John Foster immigrant might be some relation (a nephew, perhaps) to Katherine.

One must tread lightly with the ages of children recorded on passenger lists who sailed from England to America in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. There is something significant about the age 14 years. As mentioned above the churches of London established that orphans had to be 14 years old to be eligible for them to be transported to America. I suspect there is more to it; such as the fee charged for passage, so parents might lie about a child's age to reduce the cost of passage. Some lists omit ages for adults (over 14). There are also stories that children were abducted off the streets in England, sailed to the colonies and sold as indentured servants upon arrival. It became a lucrative trade of owners or ship masters to augment the cargo. To be indentured or an apprentice in the colonies I suspect a child had to be at least 14, so children arriving were listed at that age, regardless of their true age.

John Foster and wife Martha's descendants are well documented. They had thirteen children, not all of which lived to reach adulthood. Their son Samuel Foster (b. 1651) is our direct ancestor.

## Reginald Foster

Reginald Foster was one of the colonist in America “... *from which are descended a very numerous*

<sup>19</sup> More speculation – Richard Foster (husband of Patience) had a brother Thomas who had a son named John (b.1610). Thomas died in 1626 so it is possible that Thomas' son John was taken in by Richard and Patience – thus there would be a child John Foster under the care of Richard and Patience upon Richard's death and listed in Administration Court records.

*progeny, which in every case has been highly respected ...*” – James Savage, *Genealogical Dictionary of the First Planters*.

Reginald sailed to America in 1638 with his wife, Judith (Wignol?), and children (five sons and two daughters); they settled in Ipswich, Massachusetts (established in 1634 by John Winthrop Jr.). Early records of Ipswich, MA confirm Reginald was there with his family, built a house there, and contributed to the establishment of that community. Descendants of Reginald are well documented. They resided in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Connecticut with many male descendants of this family taking up the pulpit.

The origins of Reginald (or Renold as in some records) are questionable; for no documented proof has been uncovered as to where he was born or who his parents were. However, a number of possibilities have been put forward. Family histories of Reginald and his descendants were authored as early as a few generations from Reginald, but none were able to provide solid proof of Reginald's origins back in England. Various published genealogies include the following possibilities:

1. F. C. Pierce's book *Foster Genealogy* lists Reginald (the immigrant) a son of Thomas Forster of Brunton, Esquire; who was son of Cuthbert Forster (will dated 1589), who in turn was a son of Sir Thomas Forster of Etherstone – thus connected to the Etherstone & Bamburgh Forster line. This Reginald of Brunton, county Northumberland did exist but no records have been uncovered to prove he migrated to New England.
2. The 1966 Book: *House of Forrester*, see bibliography, states *Reginald is the son of Thomas Forster; Esq. of Brunton, Northumberland and Jane Carr, Thomas' second wife*. It is likely this book used F. C. Pierce's book as a principle source.
3. Some reports give Reginald's place of birth simply as Brunton, England. However there is more than one village with that name. There is the village in county Northumberland by that name as well as a village named Lower Brunton in the same county. Other villages with the name Brunton are in county Wiltshire and one in Scotland in county Fife.
4. One early (1779) account claims that Reginald is “*of the same family as Sir Reginald Foster who was made Baronet in 1661*”. That Sir Reginald was of East Greenwich, England. See Appendix IV.
5. A pedigree chart created by Theodore Foster between 1777 and 1779 states Reginald (the immigrant) “*was born in the reign of Queen Elizabeth at (or near) Exeter in England the latter end of the fifteenth century<sup>20</sup> was married and settled at (or near) Exeter ...*”. Exeter is in Devonshire county in southwestern England about 30 miles from Plymouth.
6. From yet another, unsubstantiated source we find: “*Reginald Foster, of Little Badlow, County Essex, England; landed in Ipswich, Mass. In 1638. He belonged to the Foster family of Bamborough and Etherstone Castle, County Northumberland ...*”.
7. An 1888 genealogy of the Forster, Foster, and Forester families includes a Will of Reynowld Foster of Harlowe in the County of Essex (near Epping) dated 18 September 1622 mentions sons: Reynold, William, Peter, and daughters: Sarah and Elizabeth. It has been suggested that the Reynold mentioned in that Will is Reginald (the immigrant) based on Reginald (the immigrant) named his children (Reginald, William, and Sarah) for himself, a brother, and a sister. Again, no proof has been uncovered to substantiate this theory.

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<sup>20</sup> Queen Elizabeth I reigned from 1558 to 1603. The original author should have written sixteenth century.



8. One last possibility is that Reginald and Judith resided in Theydon Gamon, County Essex, England where their children were Christened - unsubstantiated. Theydon Gamon, near Epping is just north of London and about 20 miles south east of Hunsdon, Herts and a similar distance north of Greenwich; both locations where Foster families resided.

It seems that published genealogies place Reginald in either county Northumberland, Devonshire or Essex. The Northumberland Forster pedigree does include the Reginald that F. C. Pierce claims is the immigrant but it would help if some family record could be uncovered that claims he emigrated to America or to disprove this connection that he or his wife were buried in Northumberland.

It is difficult to believe that with all these possibilities some church records have not surfaced that could shed some light on where Reginald was baptized or married or his children's baptisms in England. Hopefully records will one day be uncovered that identify Reginald's origins.

Reginald died 1681 in Ipswich, MA. All of Reginald's seven children married and had families. Our family connection descends from the third child and first son, Abraham Foster (b. 1622) who sailed with his parents from England.

## **Foster – Irving Connection**

In 1941 Laura A. Foster, a direct descendant through the male line of John Foster of Salem, married John F. Irving. One of their sons married a direct male line descendant of Reginald Foster of Ipswich. Reports documenting the connection from the immigrants John Foster of Salem and Reginald Foster of Ipswich to our Irving family are available at the Irving Family website at: <http://irving-fam.com/family.html>. The files for John Foster and Reginald Foster include descendant reports of those immigrants in New England.

If interested, the reader can learn more about all descendants of John Foster and Reginald Foster (not just the ones connected to our Irving family) in the book Foster Genealogy, by Fredrick Clifton Pierce; see bibliography. In the hundred years since that book was published some new information has been unearthed and some errors have been identified – but most of the information on the descendants of John and Reginald is correct. Some critics of Pierce's work claim much of his information on Forsters back in England is very subjective; but information going forward from the immigrants is accurate.

Due to the lack of evidence concerning the origins of John Foster of Salem and Reginald Foster of Ipswich we cannot make assertions about connections to particular Foster families in the United Kingdom. Hopefully in the future records will be uncovered that connect these Foster immigrants to families in England or Scotland.

With so many Foster lines back in England maybe DNA tests can help identify which line(s) are possible matches and which can be eliminated as not being ancestors of John and Reginald. A direct male descendant of the immigrant needs to be identified and perform the Y-DNA test. But that test is not conclusive; it is better for eliminating non-ancestors than proving ancestors.

## Glossary

Terms and their meanings as used in this and referenced texts.

Term	Meaning
Albin or Alba	Celtic name for what is now referred to as Scotland. In Gaelic it referred to the lands north of the Firth of Forth and the Firth of Clyde – the kingdom of the Picts. In Latin texts it appears as Albion, but in those texts it referred to Briton as a whole.
Adderstone	A village in the old Parish of Bamburgh, Northumberland. About 4 miles inland from Bamburgh village and Castle. The manor of Adderstone was anciently the property of the great family of Forster, who had a seat here and spread over a large part of Northumberland. The manor formed part of the Barony of Alnwick. A number of different names and spellings are associated with this place, including: Herdiston (Subsidy Roll of 1296), Edd'stone (Sir Thomas Forster's will of 1526), Edderstoun, Ederstone, Eddrestone, Etherston, Etherston, and probably others. See Etherstone. The name originates from <i>Eadreds Homestead</i> (or farmstead) and has nothing to do with Ether stones or Adder stones to which some attribute its origin.
Bamburgh	Civil parish, Castle, and village on the North Sea that was home to 12 generations of Forsters. Over the years a number of different spellings have been used, including Bamborough, Bambrough; but today it is spelled Bamburgh. A castle existed on the spot as early as 547 AD. The core of today's castle was built by the Normans after the Conquest. Today Bamburgh is a Parish with 22 townships many of which names appearing in Foster family history.
Barony	In the Middle ages transportation was slow, and communication over a distance practically impossible. If the King didn't extend his rule out to the territories, he risked inviting revolt. Baronies were established, with the Crown in Chief selecting landowners of large territories and sealing them as Barons. The Baron was charged with ensuring that the laws were being upheld on his land; he attended Parliament and exercised jurisdiction through his own court. As a regional power, "Baron" was a role that commanded respect. The Barons of England were the ones who forced King John to sign the Magna Carta which spelled out the monarch's powers and limitations.
Baronet	A Baronet is the title holder of a hereditary baronetcy awarded by the British Crown. The Crown initiated making Baronets to raise money – a Baronet agreed to pay annual sums for the title. Large land owners that could afford it was the prerequisite. Abbreviated as Bart. This title is one less than a Baron in the noble ranks. The practice is seldom done today.
Bishop of Durham	County Durham (southern neighbor of Northumberland) was a county <i>Palatine</i> which is described as a kingdom within a kingdom. A county palatine was an area ruled by a hereditary nobleman possessing special authority and autonomy from the rest of the kingdom. The nobleman swore allegiance to the king yet had the power to rule the county largely independently of the king. This nobleman had the title <i>Bishop</i> who was leader of the government and the church of his domain. There was little separation between church and state then. Besides Durham only a few counties ever had this status.

Term	Meaning
	Dorothy Forster married Lord Crewe, Bishop of Durham in 1699.
Caledonia	Circa 150 A. D. Roman name for present day central Scotland. Residents were referred to by the Romans as Caledonians or later as the Picts.
Dissolution of the Monasteries	King Henry VIII split from the Catholic Church in Rome and established the Church of England (1531). Over the next ten years he disbanded monasteries, priories, convents and friaries; appropriated their income, and disposed of their assets to enhance the Crown's coffers. Most church properties were raided for bounty, buildings destroyed and the land sold. Sir John Forster, Governor of Bamburgh purchased all the monastic lands in Bamburgh Parish, Northumberland from Henry VIII.
Domesday Book	<p>The great survey of England chartered by William I in 1086. The survey was recorded in books intended to identify who had what and establish a tax base. The local people being surveyed had no recourse, property values and tax amounts established were final. That is why the collection of these books got the name Domesday Book - like 'the Book of Judgment' because its decisions, like those of the Last Judgment, are unalterable.</p> <p>No survey like this had ever been done before and despite being unwelcome to those being surveyed it was a gold mine to historians in subsequent generations. The survey included land, livestock, farm implements, etc. But was not a census of households of tenant farmers or villagers.</p> <p>Internet accessible at <a href="http://www.domesdaymap.co.uk/">http://www.domesdaymap.co.uk/</a> which you can search by Place or Person names; however, northern counties (bordering Scotland) were skipped.</p>
Etherstone	Place name is Anglo-Saxon Old English 'Eadred's farmstead'. This is the current village of Adderstone in Northumberland. See Adderstone, above.
Gaels	Or Goidels are people that spoke one of the Goidelic Celtic languages (Irish and Scottish Gaelic). So, Gaels does not refer to a tribe or invading people specifically. The Latins referred to the Gaelic language as Scottish. See <i>Scotti</i> .
Hundred	A division of a County. Derives from the number one hundred and is thought to be based on a subdivision of a county able to supply 100 men under arms. A Hundred was an administration, military, and judicial subdivision. Hundreds is the division used in the Domesday Book. The Saxons originated the use of the Hundred in England as early as the 7 <sup>th</sup> century. Look to the Internet for more on this subject.
Husbandman	In the medieval and early modern period was a free tenant farmer who rents the land. The social status of a husbandman was below that of a yeoman; see yeoman, below.
Jacobite	<p>A political movement beginning in 1688 with the deposing of King James II of England (James VII of Scotland) and the crowning of the <i>German</i> King George I (of the Hanover's House of Brunswick) as the new King of England. Two armed uprisings, the first in 1715 and the second in 1745-6; principally ending in 1788 with the death of Bonnie Prince Charles.</p> <p>The term Jacobite derives from Latin <i>Jacobus</i>, the Biblical name Jacob from which the name James derives. Followers of the Jacobite movement wanted the Stuarts returned to the Throne of England, Scotland and the Kingdom of Ireland and the</p>

Term	Meaning
	return of Catholicism as the national religion. The movement had supporters throughout the United Kingdom, foreign monarchs and naturally the Pope in Rome, but was not successful.
Knight	A title bestowed on an individual by a monarch initially for military actions but later for other actions not necessarily of a military nature. For example high court judges usually receive a knighthood. The Normans introduced knighthoods to England. Knights are generally <i>armigerous</i> (bearing a coat of arms), the holder is referred to as “Sir” or if female, “Dame” (female equivalent of a knight). It is <u>not</u> a hereditary peerage title, meaning the title is not passed on to heirs.
Magna Carta	“Great Charter” which limited the powers of the monarch and gave basic civil liberties to all freemen. Barons forced King John to sign this document in 1215 at Runnymede. It is akin to an English Bill of Rights. It has been described as “the greatest constitutional document of all times – the foundation of the freedom of the individual against the arbitrary authority of the despot” <i>Freemen</i> were land owners, not serfs or tenant farmers.
Northumberland	County in northern England on the east coast bordering Scotland. The name derives from the old kingdom of Northumbria which was larger than the current county.
Pele Tower	Also spelled Peel is a small fortified Tower or Keep on the Anglo-Scottish border used as a place of refuge when border raiders attacked.
primogeniture	<p>Primogeniture is the right, by law or custom, of the firstborn to inherit the entire estate, to the exclusion of younger siblings. Historically, the term implied male primogeniture, to the exclusion of females. According to the tradition, the first-born son inherited the entirety of a parent's wealth, estate, title or office and then would be responsible for any further passing of the inheritance to his siblings. In the absence of children, inheritance passed to the collateral relatives, in order of seniority of the males of collateral lines.</p> <p>The principle has applied in history to inheritance of real property (land) and inherited titles and offices, most notably monarchies.</p>
Royal Forest	A royal forest is an area of land with a different meaning as it is understood today, as an area of densely wooded land. In England a royal forest was an area so designated by royal prerogative where <i>forest law</i> applied. The law was designed to protect the animals and the greenery that sustained them. Forests were designated as hunting areas for a monarch or (by invitation) the aristocracy. The concept was common on the European Continent and introduced by William I to England in the 11th century, and at the height of this practice in the late 12th and early 13th centuries, fully one-third of the land area of southern England was designated as royal forest. Forest law prescribed harsh punishment for anyone who committed any of a range of offenses within the forests; by the mid-17th century, enforcement of this law had died out, but many of England's woodlands still bear the title <i>Royal Forest</i> .
Scotti	Scotti (or Scoti) was a Latin term used by the Romans during their occupation of Briton to refer to those from Ireland who raided the Roman settlements in western Briton. In the 5 <sup>th</sup> century these raiders established a kingdom in southwestern <i>Albin</i> (Scotland) that grew leading to the use of the terms Scot, Scottish, and Scotland.

Term	Meaning
	Later two groups of Scots where distinguished as Irin-Scots (Irish) and Albin-Scots (Scottish). Over time those from Irin dropped the word Scot to become Irish and those of Albin dropped the Albin and became just Scots.
Tenant-in-chief	Overseer of lands representing the owner of the land. This term is used often in the Domesday Book referring to an individual awarded to this position as representative for the King who retained ownership of the land. The overseer would deal with the daily needs of the lands and the owner often never even saw his possessions. The tenant-in-chief is often referred to a the governor of the named lands.
Yeoman	a free man owning his own farm, especially from the Elizabethan era to the 17th century. Work requiring a great deal of effort or labor, such as would be done by a yeoman farmer, came to be described as "yeoman's work".

## Bibliography

The following published works are significant sources used for this paper. Where possible I include where you can obtain copies of these works. "PDF" indicates the source is available, probably via the Internet, in the Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF). If you are, or think you might be in the future, interested in pursuing family history I recommend saving copies of these documents because over time documents seem to disappear and URLs can change on the Internet.

- [a] Forrester, Wallace Redmond et al; *The House of Forrester – Volume I*. Leesburg, Georgia: The Forrester Genealogical Association, 1966. (PDF)
- [b] Forster, Gearald; *The History of the Forster Family and Clan*. Gold Coast, Australia: 2003, (Internet) *Gearald has passed away and his research is no longer available via the Internet*. I have access to an archived copy of his data if anyone is interested I can provide you a copy.
- [c] Pierce, Frederick Clifton; *Foster Genealogy*<sup>21</sup>. Chicago: W. B. Conkey Company, 1899 (PDF)
- [d] Creasy, Edward S.; *The Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World*, fifth Edition; 1854; republished Norwalk, Connecticut: The Easton Press 1966. (Print)
- [e] Bateson, Edward; *History of Northumberland Volume I The Parish of Bamburgh*; 1893; London: Andrew Reed, Sons & Co. (PDF)
- [f] Selected Heraldic Visitations of the College of Arms; compiled index available via the Internet at URL: <http://www.heraldry-online.org.uk/Archivebooklinks.htm>
- [g] Forster, Edward Jacob; *Descendants of Reginald Foster*. Boston: David Clapp & Son, 1876 (PDF)
- [h] Burke, John Bernard; *Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Extinct and Dormant Baronetcies of England, Scotland, and Ireland*. London: Scott Webster & Geary, 1890 (PDF)
- [I] Burke, Bernard, Sir; *General Armory of England Scotland, Ireland and Wales – with a supplement*, London: Harrison, 1884 (PDF) <http://www.archive.org/details/generalarmoryofe00burk>
- [j] Burke, Bernard, Sir; *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Landed Gentry of Great Briton and Ireland in two Volumes (Vol. I) fifth edition – with supplement and addenda*. London: Harrison, 1875 (PDF)
- [k] Berry, William; *County Genealogies Pedigrees of Families of County Sussex*. London: Sherwood, Gilbert and Piper, 1830 (PDF)

Other sources of relevant information include:

Mr. Hugh Forster undertook the task of integrating information from multiple published Forster genealogies for the Northumberland Forster families and pointing out differences in those genealogies. I applaud his effort. His results, disappointingly, are no longer available via the Internet.

Most old printed genealogy and pedigree documents make considerable use of abbreviations to the point they can be difficult to read. Many of the abbreviations are of Latin terms which compounds the difficulty. There are aids to decipher these abbreviations available via the Internet; just search for

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<sup>21</sup> Pierce's book is considered accurate for families in America, but many genealogists consider his data pertaining to origins for immigrants from Europe as conjecture and supposition.

*genealogy abbreviations*. One is at: <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~rigenweb/abbrev.html>

Sally Moore Koestler maintains a website named Sally's Family Place that includes a running commentary on her ancestors, including Fosters. Sally adds information when new information is provided to her; including new data which either supports or contradicts previous findings. Periodic review of that site might show new information appropriate to our quest. Her website is at: <http://www.sallysfamilyplace.com/Wheeler/foster-england.htm>

There is a Foster Surname website at: <http://research.surnames.com/default.htm> with ties to the Foster DNA project. This is another good website to watch for new information pertaining to Foster research. Most information on that site is currently related to Fosters who settled in the southern states of the USA but the maintainer intends to expand to all states.

William the conqueror and wife Matilda – Blog entry available at: <http://arrayedingold.blogspot.com/2011/08/wife-of-conqueror-matilda-of-flanders.html>

I like maps, especially old ones related to the period being investigated. Place names change borders change and I think it helps put things in context to know the surroundings. Old maps were instrumental for me in solving place names like Etherstone and Garden. The Internet is a great source of old maps. Some university libraries make old maps available as do some governmental libraries. One useful site is: <http://etc.usf.edu/maps/galleries/Europe/uk/index.php>. Searching a place name or region name for maps often results in repositories of old maps; for example search for *Northumberland Maps*.

Because over time websites come and go, access to some of the linked references in this paper may change. Use your favorite Internet search tool to identify different, new, websites that might provide additional information on Foster/Forster/Forester (whatever spelling) surname genealogy and histories.

## Appendices

Information I thought interesting and worth including but not wanting interrupt the flow of the body of the paper is delegated to these appendices. The appendices include:

1. Norman Conquest and Richard Forestarius (Forester)
2. Letter from Sir John Forster of Alnwick, Northumberland to Thomas Foster of Hunsdon, Hertfordshire April 17, 1590.
3. Successive Generations of Thomas Forster in Northumberland
4. Clues to Foster Families in the United Kingdom

Forster/Foster Pedigree Charts – separate files - **do not attempt to print** due to their large size. These pedigree charts include people found in church and government sponsored records. None of these individuals have been proven to be our ancestors although a few have been speculated about being ancestors.

1. Forster of Northumberland and Hertfordshire counties; includes a Reginald Foster who might be the immigrant to Ipswich.
2. Foster of Kent county (includes emigrants to New England)
3. Foster of Ashford and Horsemonden (Kent and Sussex)



## Appendix I

### Norman Conquest and Richard Forestarius (Forester)

This appendix includes information on William the Conqueror's birth and how the Normans were successful at the Battle of Hastings resulting in William becoming King of England thus awarding lands and titles to those who helped him become King – including Richard Forester.

There are some unanswered questions concerning Sir Richard Forestarius which I address in this appendix.

### The Duke's Mistress

Robert, duke of Normandy (beginning in 1027) was the son of Richard II. There are many variations on the story of Robert's mistress – the more romantic version is -

*Arletta's pretty feet twinkling in the brook gained her a Dukes love. The daughter of a tanner in the village of Falaise was cooling her feet in a brook when Duke Robert happened by. The Duke was smitten and she became the Duke's mistress. Class difference prevented a marriage. They had a son, William who the Duke assigned his heir, as is the custom of Normandy (a leader announces his heir prior to his death and makes his subjects swear allegiance to that heir). So the illegitimate son ends up being William II, Duke of Normandy and later William I, King of England. The story goes that Robert always loved Arletta, but could not marry her due to social standing. To ensure she had a good life Robert married her off to one of his favorite noblemen to whom she gave two other sons.*

As mentioned, there are other, less romantic versions of the story of Arletta and Robert and how they met. Her name, her father's occupation and even social standing have been questioned. Scribes through history have allocated no fewer than five different names to Arletta and her father has been attributed as having four different occupations, mostly lowly professions consistent with that of a tanner and some even report that he was the Duke's Chamberlain.

As I understand it the version of the story of how Robert and Arletta met as told on tours at the Château de Falaise in Falaise, the Duke's castle, is that Robert was up in the ramparts, looked down and saw Arletta working in the die pits within the courtyard of the castle. Arletta had her skirt lifted high, maybe too high, and Robert summoned her to his chambers. This version seems more realistic, but I still like the other version.

### Battles of Stamford Bridge and Hastings

This section has nothing to do with our Foster family history. So skip it if you want. While researching for this paper I found this interesting enough to include here and explains why the Norman invasion was a military success.

As mentioned already, Edward *the Confessor*, King of England died in January of 1066 and there were three claims to the English throne; two from outside England and one within. Harold of the powerful

Goodwin Saxon family was crowned King of England. William II, Duke of Normandy tried diplomatic means to get Harold to relinquish the throne but Harold refused all requests. Armies began to assemble on both sides of the English Channel during the summer of 1066. Then, the third claimant to the English throne, King Harald III of Norway invaded northern England in early September, leading a fleet of over 300 ships carrying perhaps 15,000 men. This invasion succeeded and the Norwegian army occupied the town of York. *Please note the names of these two kings (Harold the English king) and Harald (the Norwegian king).* The similarities can get confusing.

Learning of the Norwegian invasion, English King Harold rushed north, and took the Norwegians by surprise. The Norwegians established a defense at Stamford Bridge that the English just couldn't break. English King Harold used a ruse of a disorderly retreat to get the Norwegians to break their defensive ranks and chase after the English army – just what the English needed – get the Norwegian army out in the open to turn the battle in their favor. The English defeated the Norwegians in the exceptionally bloody Battle of Stamford Bridge on 25 September. Harald of Norway was killed, and the Norwegians suffered such horrific losses that only 24 of the original 300 ships were required to carry away the survivors. The English victory came at great cost, however, as Harold's English army was left in a battered and weakened state.

On 28 September (three days after the battle at Stamford Bridge) William's army crossed the English Channel and landed unopposed. The English army marched south and met the Normans at Hastings on 14 October. The English took defensive positions near the top of a hill – making the Normans press the attack uphill. The battle lasted most of the day but the Normans were unable to break the English defensive positions. King Harold was wounded by an arrow in the right eye leaving the English without their general. Duke William faked a retreat in hopes that the English would follow – exactly the same as had been done at Stamford Bridge by Harold weeks before. And that worked. The English saw what appeared as success and broke ranks to chase after the Normans to push them into the sea. Just what the Normans needed – get the Saxons in the open where they were slaughtered. If Harold had not been mortally wounded he might have prevented the ruse from being successful and held the field.

There are a number of ironic turns of fate associated with the Conquest that I invite the reader to seek out on your own, if interested. This is the stuff movies are made of. After Hastings, William's army marched north to London where he was crowned William I, King of England. But it took three more years to subdue the rest of England; leaving Wales and Scotland unconquered on the island of Briton. William's forces laid waste to Yorkshire in the northeast (from the Humber estuary to the river Tees) destroying everything from farm implements, crops, livestock, to villages and whole cities including York. Northern counties of Durham and Northumberland were also laid to waste and William's army continued north all the way to the estuary of the river Forth (Edinburgh area). But backed off and established his northern border at the river Tweed.

## Concerns About Richard Forester

Sometime after William was made King at the end of 1066 one of his supporters was made a knight and made *tenant-in-chief* of lands in southern Scotland and Northumberland. His surname was the Latin “Forestarius” which he anglicized to Forester when he took to living on his new lands. His given

name is accepted to be Richard. One source<sup>22</sup> states this person's name was William de Forestier, the French version of the surname. But all other sources give his name as Richard with the Latin version of the surname.

Most published genealogies of the Forster surname attribute this Richard as being a younger brother of Matilda, Countess of Flanders and wife of William the Conqueror. But history says Baldwin V – Matilda's father – had only three children, none with the name Richard. Years ago, Forster family researchers seem to take the statement of Richard being brother-in-law to William the Conqueror literally, then go and add another child (Richard) to the list of children of Baldwin V. I believe this is wrong, but I have no proof one way or the other. The old saying: *don't ask the question if you can't live the answer* comes to mind. But it is my belief that some researchers have changed the facts to fit their desired results.

I do not have answers – but here are concerns that need to be resolved related to the progenitor of the Forster name in northern England and southern Scotland:

- Richard truly was a son of Baldwin V and a younger brother to Matilda.
  - Most authoritative histories for the Baldwin, Count of Flanders line do not include a son of Baldwin and younger brother of Matilda named Richard. However, maybe Richard is a legitimate son of Baldwin V and thus was a literal brother-in-law of Matilda's husband – William II, Duke of Normandy and William I, king of England.
- Richard may have been an illegitimate son of Baldwin V that historians elected to omit. Illegitimate children was common – take William (the bastard) of Normandy (Matilda's husband) for example.
  - Over time other children have been attributed to Baldwin V, but all have since been rejected. No illegitimate children have been attributed to Baldwin V. Even if Richard was an illegitimate son of her father, I doubt Matilda would have recognized the fact. Matilda has strong feelings on the subject of illegitimate children and even initially rejected William for that very reason.
- Researchers might have associating the title Count of Flanders and keeper of the Forests (Forester) too literally when looking for where Richard Forestarius originated.
  - Ancestors of the Baldwin line were the first in recorded European history to be named as keepers of the forest. It is not unreasonable that researchers looking for a Forester to latch onto they make a connection to the Count of Flanders family for someone with a surname of Forester (Forestarius). But if they had looked further they would discover Baldwin V did not have a son named Richard. The two sons of Baldwin V (Baldwin VI and Robert) are accounted for and did not follow William of Normandy on his conquest of England.
- Most kingdoms, duchies, and fiefdoms in Europe had someone in the important role of Forester. Our Richard could be a son of the person with that title from any realm. Remember, to build his army William, Duke of Normandy, put out the call all over Europe for supporters and by having the blessing of the Pope the invasion was seen as a righteous undertaking, with the prospects of attaining titles and land.

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22 This source is Burke's Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Landed Gentry; volume 1, page 458.

- This option says Richard Forestarius might have held the title of Forester of some land in Europe or Richard's father held that title in some land. Possibly not one of the provinces of France or his name would be the French spelling *de Forestier*, but he could be from France and used the Latin spelling. I, personally, believe this to be a reasonable possibility.
- Current day literal meaning of “kin” might be the root of some misunderstandings associated with Richard Forestarius' relationship to William I. Whoever attributed that to the relationship might have had a different context in mind.
  - When Richard Forestarius was knighted and received lands in the north the word “kin” was claimed to be used. The reference to “kin” might not be family, but of the same race or kingdom.
- One source document puts forth an unsubstantiated claim that Richard was poisoned by his brother when Richard was in his thirties. This might attribute Richard's death to the earlier date, about 1080, but opens the door to Richard not being a brother to Matilda – for all Matilda's brothers are accounted for, they are back in Flanders.
- One of the published histories mentions that Richard was given lands in Scotland while his father was given lands in Northern England. If his father (whoever that was; but not a Count of Flanders) did in fact fight along with William at Hastings and was given lands in Northumberland that could explain two different Forester family groups – one in Northumberland and another in Scotland – but of the same family.
  - This has possibilities; If Richard and his father joined William's army and were awarded titles and lands it might explain one getting land in Northumbria and the other getting land in Scotland. If Richard was the first born son there is a chance his father was also named Richard, thus adding to the confusion of who was governor of Etherstone (father or son); but two persons, not one.
- Another concern regarding Richard Forestarius relates to the lands awarded. What possessed the new King of England to award lands in another sovereign kingdom – Scotland?
  - On this question we can speculate and provide a plausible answer. Basically, the two countries disputed the border; Scotland claimed the border was further south than what the English claimed. Also, I doubt the English (Normans) really recognized Scotland as a nation at that time. William's armies pushed north all the way to the River Forth, beyond where the accepted border was at the River Tweed after the Northumbria defeat at the battle of Carham, or Battle of Coldstream, by the Scottish King in 1018.

Just what lands were awarded to Richard Forestarius is unknown. In Northumberland the son, Hugo, is documented as being governor of Etherstone but in Scotland no records have been uncovered that pin-point where Richard resided. It is believed that Richard, himself, lived on lands in Scotland, not in Northumberland.

## Appendix II

### Northumberland and Hertfordshire Connection (1590 Letter)

John Forster replied to a letter he received from a cousin (Thomas Foster) requesting information about Thomas' ancestors. John's reply letter survives and appears in the book: *Genealogy of the Descendants of Roger Foster of Edreston, Northumberland. With Appendix*, compiled by Alkman Henryson Foster-Barham (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1897). To my knowledge this book is on Microfilm at US Library of Congress, but not currently available in other forms.

Here is the contents of that John Forster's reply letter:

Cousin Forster

After righte heartie commendations unto you, ye shal understand yt I have received your letter wherein you desire to know or yr pedigree, for that yr grandfather, as ye have learned descended out of the house of Etherstone, and to know whether he was one elder, second, or third, or forth brother, and wherefore he fled the countrie of Nothumberland, I assure you I can thoroughlie satisfie you therein: for your grandfather, called Roger Forster, was my great uncle, and there were XIX brothers and he was the second brother. His father was called Thomas Forster, and his mother's name was Featherstonehaugh; his eldest son was called Thomas Forster, who was my great-grandfather; and it happened that for of the said brethern at a hunting, and riding homward through a town called Newham for the bitting of a greyhound they and a company of Karrs fell out, and there began bloodshed and feuds which continued until there was but one Karr of the greyhound living: during which time my grandfather and yours and another brother of theirs, called Nicholas Forster-mine being 20 years old, y<sup>s</sup> 17 years and Nicholas, a child of 14, being a-hunting-were waited on by one of the Karrs and two of their allyance called Too an King, who sett upon the three brothers, and thought well to have slaine them at a place besides Branton where there stands a crosse yet; but the said Too were slaine there and Karr fled, insomuch that after the said slaughter my grandfather fled to Ridsdale in ye countie, because he was safe there and yours fled into south parts, of whom I never heard of since yt time till now; and so far surre yourself I know of certaintie and can well prove, being glad to hear the good report of you my kinsman, but sorry I was not acquainted with you at my last being in London, although I understand you desir'd Mr. Nelton to bring you to me there, who never shewed me of the same, or else I would gladlye have known you; and if there be any thing in this country wherein I may stand you in steed. I pray you charge therewithall, and ye shall find me willing to accomplish the same, and that I may commit you to the tuition of the Almighty. At my house near Alnwick 17th April 1590.

Your loving cousin,  
John Forster.

This letter substantiates the relationship between the Forster family of county Northumberland with the Forster/Foster family of Hunsdon, county Hertfordshire.

Thomas (grandson of Roger Forster), to whom the letter was addressed had married (in 1575) Susan Forster of Iden, county Sussex at which time Thomas changed the spelling of his surname to Foster. Susan was born at Iden, Sussex in about 1551 and was daughter and heir of Thomas Forster of St. John Street, near London; 2<sup>nd</sup> son of Thomas Forster of Iden, Sussex. It is understandable that Thomas (recipient of the letter) was interested in proving that there was no relationship to his wife's family and he might be submitting to the College of Arms to validate his Arms. Thomas Foster, to whom the letter was written, was Judge Sir Thomas Foster, and, in 1604, became Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas. His son, Sir Robert Foster became Chief Justice of the Court of the Kings Bench and resided at Great Fosters (manor) in Egham, county Surrey.

As explained in the letter, Roger Forster, was the second son (of nineteen sons) of Thomas Forster, Esq of Etherston and the daughter of Miss Fetherstonehaugh. Further research reveals that her given name was Elizabeth and her father was Thomas Fetherstonehaugh of Stanhope Hall, county Durham and Chief of the Fetherston Clan. Stanhope Hall is about 45 miles south of Adderstone (Etherston).

#### Stanhope Hall Description

*Stanhope Hall, above Stanhope Burn Bridge, is generally accepted to be one of the most impressive buildings in Weardale. This huge, fortified manor house was designed to repel Scottish raiders. It was the home of the famous Fetherstonehalgh family who lived there from the mid-12th century until the last male heir was killed at the Battle of Blenheim in 1704. The hall itself is part medieval, part Elizabethan and part Jacobean. The outbuildings included a cornmill, a brew house and cattle yards*

As not directly related to our Foster quest, I leave further research on the Fethersonehalgh family and and their significance to the reader.

Roger Forster, settled in Hunsdon, in Hertfordshire (often abbreviated *Herts*), where he married a daughter of \_\_\_\_ Hussey. This Hussey family was well connected with the royal family and had significant land holdings in counties Lincolnshire and Suffolk. We believe Roger's wife's name was Joan, maybe Jane; but have not been able to validate her name or her parents. Pedigree information indicates that Miss Hussey was from Sussex county in the south. Regardless, Roger and his children prospered due to this marriage with the Hussey family.

**Hussey Family** The Hussey family was descended from a Norman noble, who followed William (the Conqueror) during the Norman Conquest and received lands; like the Foresters. The most famous of the Hussey's was Sir John Hussey (1465 – 1537) of Sleaford, Lincolnshire who served the families of both Henry VII (r. 1485 - 1509), and Henry VIII (r. 1509 – 1547); but Sir John Hussey was beheaded in 1537 due to his presumed support of the *Pilgrimage of Grace* - a protest against Henry VIII split with the Catholic Church in Rome and the *Dissolution of the Monasteries*. Later descendants of this Hussey family immigrated to New England (1632), settled in Hampton, NH and later on Nantucket Island, MA. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century a descendant from Nantucket sailed on a whaling ship to the Pacific; and stayed in Hawaii where a large new family was begun.

Overview information about the Hussey family can be found [here](#).

I speculate that Roger Forster must have had help from his family in Northumberland to establish himself in his new home of Hunsdon, Herts; probably in the form of money and letters of introduction. Remember Roger was only seventeen when he fled to the south. John in his letter implies the family, at least himself, did not know where Roger went. It is likely that Roger's father provided help but kept Roger's whereabouts secret from other family members.



## Appendix III

### The Many Thomas Forsters of Northumberland

As mentioned during the discussion of the Forsters of Northumberland there were a number of successive generations of Forster heirs named Thomas. So as to not include information on this line in the body it has been removed to this appendix. Provided here is an overview; if you desire to know more see the published genealogies identified in the bibliography; and pedigree charts.

Source documents disagree on who the father was of the first Thomas in this line. More on this is at the end of this appendix. Regardless of who his father was this Thomas begins ten successive – except one – generations of Forster sons named Thomas who we believe are descended from Sir Richard Forestarius, originator of this family. Available records are lax about dates (birth, marriage, and death) so where possible I mention battles the individuals fought in, or other historical events to associate dates with that persons lifetime. We can look to the history books for the dates of those events.

1. Thomas I<sup>23</sup> was born at Buckton but raised at Etherstone; wounded at the battle of Otterburn (1388). He and wife, Joan de-Elmedon, had a son Thomas
2. Thomas II was Lord of Etherstone. He married Elizabeth Fetherstonhaugh. Thomas II fought in France at the Battle of Agincourt (1415) for which he received his knighthood and title. Elizabeth bore him 22 children of which the eldest son was Thomas III who inherited his father's title, Lord Etherstone.
  - (a) Their second son was Roger. Roger moved to Hunsdon, Hertfordshire (Herts) county in the south where he married and began a new branch of the Forster family
3. Thomas III married a daughter (maybe Jane) of Baron Hilton, of Hilton Castle in Durham; who gave him 19 children. Cautionary note: reviewing the Hilton family data no mention of a Hilton daughter marrying a Forster can be found.
4. Thomas IV of Etherstone married Dorothy, daughter of Ralph Lord Ogle obtaining significant lands in Northumberland. Thomas IV fought at the battle of Flodden Field (1513) and was created Marshall of Berwick-on-Tweed by Henry VIII (reigned 1509 - 1547). Thomas IV and Dorothy had eight children including: Thomas V and John.
  - (a) The second son of Thomas IV was the notorious Sir John Forster. Sir John and his descendants are discussed in the topic Bamburgh Forsters. Sir John became governor of Bamburgh, Warden of the Middle Marches, expanded the Forster land holdings by purchasing the monastic lands from Henry VIII. He is the author of the letter in the preceding appendix.
5. Thomas V was appointed high sheriff of Northumberland by Henry VIII, married Florence, sister of Thomas, Lord Wharton by whom he had four children; including Thomas VI, Margret, and Cuthbert<sup>24</sup> that we know of. His will is dated 4 April 1589.

<sup>23</sup> This is the first of many Thomas, so we will number them to help distinguish them, as does many Foster genealogies.

<sup>24</sup> Cuthbert Forster married Elizabeth Bradforth (Bradford) step-aunt to Governor William Bradford of the Plymouth

6. Thomas VI married Isabell, daughter of John Brewster of Lucker (located between Adderstone and Bamburgh). They had eight legitimate children, but Thomas also sired several illegitimate children, one of which, Mathew, eventually became Thomas' successor. Some believe Mathew was actually the first son of Thomas VI and Isabell born out of wedlock. Thomas VI died about 1587 when all his children were underage; per probate Uncle Sir John Forster cared for the children. Isabell's will was dated 14 July 1610.
  - (a) Thomas VI and Isabell had a son Thomas but nothing is known of him other than he was not named heir by his father. One guess is he died young.
7. Mathew, son and heir of Thomas VI was knighted, made sheriff of Northumberland in 1617 by King James I and married Catherine, daughter of Sir Ralph Grey of Wark who bore him eight children the eldest son being Thomas VII.
8. Thomas VII was named son and heir by Mathew. This Thomas was age 11 in 1615, per the Heraldic Visitation of 1615. He married Mary, daughter of Sir William Fenwick. He left six children of whom Thomas VIII was the heir.
9. Thomas VIII was a Colonel in Royalist forces during the Civil War between King Charles' Cavaliers and Cromwell's Roundheads, at the end of which Thomas VIII was fined by Cromwell one-sixth of his estate (the going rate as punishment for supporting the Royalist). Thomas VIII married Mary, daughter of Sir Nicholas Cole and had one son, Thomas IX.
10. Thomas IX was a Member of Parliament (MP) for Northumberland and married his cousin Frances Forster, daughter of Sir William Forster of Bamburgh Castle by whom he had three children: Thomas X, John, and Dorothy. His wife Frances died in 1697 and Thomas IX had other children by his second (Mary) and third (Barbara Law, or Lawes, of Lucker) wives.
11. Thomas X never married and was the first of this line to change the spelling of the surname to Foster. This Thomas is the Tom Foster who took part in the unsuccessful 1715 Jacobite rebellion which resulted in his loosing all the family estates, including Bamburgh. Lord Crewe, Bishop of Durham, was awarded Bamburgh and other Foster estates. Lord Crewe had married Dorothy Foster, daughter of Sir William Forster of Bamburgh Castle and aunt of Thomas X Foster. For his part in the Jacobite rebellion Thomas X was imprisoned in Newgate prison but escaped with the aid of his sister (Dorothy) and fled to the continent where he died.
12. There was another Thomas which might be referred to as Thomas XI. Thomas IX (above) had a son, John who married Isobella, daughter of William Orde of Sandybank who produced a son Thomas who died when he was only 20, never married and was the last of this Thomas Forster line.

Some sources, the book *House of Forrester* for one, indicate that paternal grand-fathers of the first Thomas for at least two generations were *Master of the Game and Chief Foresters* to the Bishop of Durham and went by the name *de Bucton* with Thomas' grandfather named Gilbert de Bucton who changed his name to Gilbert Forester (d. 1342). Most sources omit the de Bucton name either because they don't want to open that can of worms or they truly do not believe it is relevant.

My take on this subject is that the name de Bucton should be de Buckton meaning *of Buckton*, a village plantation in Massachusetts. Her father was grand-father to the Governor.

about five miles north of Adderstone. Thus these Forsters lived in the town of Buckton. Gilbert's son was Sir John Forster who was knighted at Poitiers in 1356 and became owner of Etherstone estate through marriage. Sir John had a son Robert; who in turn had a son Thomas – the first Thomas.

The first Thomas married Joan de Elmedon. Joan was the daughter of William de Elmedon and Elizabeth de Umfreville. Joan was born at Embleton (village and estate) in county Durham. Elizabeth descended from the Earl of Angus (Scotland). Some pedigrees for this line of Thomas Forster and wives include dates (birth, marriage, death) that are estimated and cause concern. For example, some family histories claim Joan was born about 1420, after the presumed death of her husband by some accounts. Others state the first Thomas was born about 1397, if so – he could not have fought at the battle of Otterburn (1388). Some of those pedigrees have differences of over one hundred years. So I caution the reader that there is still uncertainty concerning some of the information, due to date disconnects with various published family histories.

## Appendix IV

### Clues to Fosters in the United Kingdom

As mentioned, there are no records of the common folk before the 19<sup>th</sup> century when census recording was begun in the United Kingdom, long after our ancestors left for America. Therefore, all there is are records pertaining to nobles or landed gentry; unless an in-person search of individual church records is undertaken.

This appendix identifies the Baronets named Forster or Foster as well as the families of social standing that Foster individuals married into as clues for further research.

### Barons and Baronets Named Foster

Because there are records of titled individuals we know that these Forster Baronets existed and where their property was. Thus we know there were people of the Forster name at these locations and have possible clues that other individuals of the surname were in these areas. Maybe they had ancestors in the same area.

Originally, a *barony* was the land subject to a baron and could, in England after the Norman Conquest, consist of estates scattered throughout several regions. A barony is one of the hereditary titles that passes from the current baron to the heir. In England this means father to first-born son; but in Scotland it passes to the heir named by the current holder (either sex). Baronies go extinct if there is no heir. For additional information about titles of nobles such as baronets, look to the Internet.

The Baronies discussed earlier are Corstorphine and Bamburgh.

The **Barony of Corstorphine** was established on 4 February 1431 by James I king of the Scots with Sir John Forrester as the first baron. Refer to the section Scottish Foresters. This barony continues today, although not in the hands of the Forrester family.

The **Barony of Bamburgh** was established on 7 March 1620 by King James I of England (and James VI of Scotland) with Sir Claudius Forster (c. 1575-1623) as the 1st Baronet. The Barony became extinct on his death due to he having no children.

In addition to those Baronies there were also Forster and Foster *Baronets*. The Crown needed money, so the concept of Baronet was established by King James I of England; this practice was basically the Crown selling titles. Wealthy landowners were invited to pay monies in return for a title. These Baronets are not our Foster ancestors; the timing is just not right – but could be kin due to ancestors of these baronets might turn out to be ancestors of our Foster immigrants. The problem is tracing the ancestors of these Baronets – before they were titled they do not appear in available records.

The **Baronetcy of Forster of Aldermaston** was created in the Baronetage of England by James I for Humphrey Forster of Aldermaston Court, Berkshire on 20 May 1620. The family seat was Aldermaston Court (a country manor house) now a magnificent hotel named Aldermaston Manor. These Forsters became owners of this estate when George Forster married Elizabeth de la Mare in 1490. The Forsters retained ownership of the land until 1752 when their male line died out. The current buildings were built after the Forsters owned the estate.

The Forsters of Aldermaston descended from the Forsters of Harpsden in Oxfordshire and supposedly from the Forsters of Bamburgh Castle in Northumberland. After 1711 when the male line died out, Elizabeth Forster married a William Pert, of Essex and had a daughter, also named Elizabeth who married William Forster of Bamburgh Castle from the Northumberland branch but they had no Children that survived. So, saying there is a Northumberland Forster connection due to this marriage is a stretch. But, Burke's book on Baronetcies states that the Forsters of Aldermaston originate from the Northumberland branch. He states: *from Thomas Forster, a younger son of Anthony Forster by Thomasine, daughter of Sir Edward Bray descended the branch of Forsters long seated at Aldermaston in county Berks.* I have not discovered any Forsters of the Northumberland line with the Christian name Anthony; but there sure were plenty with the name Thomas; two of which had many children that we do not know their names. I estimate this Anthony would have been born in the early 1400's. That would imply the father Thomas should be the second Thomas who married Elizabeth Fetherstonehaugh. They had 22 children with 19 being sons. We know the names of the first three sons (Thomas, Roger and Nicholas). We do not know the names of the other sixteen sons – but by my estimate of birth dates for the children of Thomas and Elizabeth are just not consistent. So, my belief is that the Fosters of Aldermaston are not descended from the Northumberland Forsters; but there is so little information on either side of the argument – who knows. Some information on this Forster family is available at: <http://www.berkshirehistory.com/gentry/forster.html>

Forster of Aldermaston (1620) baronets include:

1. Sir Humphrey Forster, 1st Baronet (1595-1663)
2. Sir Humphrey Forster, 2nd Baronet (d. 1711) Extinct on his death

The **Baronetcy of Forster of Stokesly**, county York was created on 18 September 1649 in the Baronetage of England for Richard Forster. This barony became extinct when the third baron died unmarried. The grandfather of the first Baronet was John Forster of Everswick, county York; a Forster branch of the house of Edderstone (Etherstone). The father of the first Baronet was William Forster of Erdswyck.<sup>25</sup> William had a son named Richard III (the first Baronet) – implying there were two previous Richards of this line; but no further information has been discovered of this line. The arms for this Baronetcy match, exactly, the arms of Forster of Etherstone, prior to these being quartered with Etherstone arms; thus contain the three horns and the chevron. The chevron was added to the Forster arms in 1192 and the arms were quartered with Etherstone before 1316 so it is reasonable this Forster family was established in county York between those years.

Forster of Stokesly (1649) baronets include:

1. Richard Forster 1st Baronet (d. 1661) m. Joan Middleton of Leighton, Lancashire
2. Sir Richard Forster 2nd Baronet m. Clare Meynell of North Kilving, Yorkshire
3. Sir Richard Forster 3rd Baronet (d. before 1714) Extinct on his death

The **Baronetcy of Forster of East Greenwich** was created on 11 July 1661 in the Baronetage of

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<sup>25</sup> Unable to locate villages with either name Everswick or Erdswyck. Could be old or corrupt spellings for the village of Earswick, north of the city of York.

England for Reginald Forster, a London goldsmith who served at the Court of Charles I. The 2nd Baronet married first a Miss Nash, an heiress, and secondly a Warwickshire heiress but he died childless and the Baronetcy became extinct. At this time, Greenwich was in county Kent, because Kent reached all the way from the English Channel to London. This is the baronetcy mentioned in some sources associated with Reginald Foster (immigrant of Ipswich, MA), but no firm link has been uncovered.

Forster of East Greenwich (1661) baronets include:

1. Sir Reginald Forster, 1st Baronet (1618-1684)
2. Sir Reginald Forster, 2nd Baronet (1640-1705) Extinct on his death

The **Baronetcy of Forster of Coolderry**, County Monaghan was created in the Baronetage of Ireland on 15 January 1794 for Thomas Forster.

Forster of Coolderry (1794) baronets include:

1. Sir Thomas Forster, 1st Baronet (1751–1853)
2. Sir George Forster, 2nd Baronet (1796–1876), MP for Monaghan 1852-1865
3. Sir Thomas Oriel Forster, 3rd Baronet (1824–1895)
4. Sir Robert Forster, 4th Baronet (1827–1904)

The **Baronetcy of Forster of Lysways Hall** was created in the Baronetage of the United Kingdom on 17 March 1874 for Charles Forster, of Lysways Hall, Longdon, Staffordshire, Member of Parliament for Walsall 1852-91, son of Charles Smith Forster, banker, of Walsall, and High Sheriff of Staffordshire 1845. The arms of this family are the three peons and chevron on a black background, not the Northumberland arms.

Forster of Lysways Hall (1874) baronets include:

1. Sir Charles Forster, 1st Baronet (1815-91)
2. Sir Charles Forster, 2nd Baronet (1841-1914)
3. Sir Francis Villiers Forster, 3rd Baronet (1850-1930) Extinct on his death

The **Baronetcy of Forster of Sutton** was created 2 Feb. 1912 for Sir Ralph Collingwood Forster first Baronet of the Grange, Sutton, county Surrey. His arms include two bugle horns like the Northumberland arms but instead of the third bugle horn there is a deer-hound head.

The **Baronetcy of Foster of Glyde Court**, county Louth, Ireland created 30 Sept. 1831 for Sir Augustus John Foster who was born in Dec. 1780 and was appointed envoy to the United States in 1812 and later to Sweden, Denmark, and Sardinia. Their arms match the Northumberland arms with three hunting horns and chevron. Glyde Court house is in ruins but still exists.

1. Sir Augustus John Foster, 1st Baronet (1780-1848)
2. Sir Frederick George Foster, 2nd Baronet (1816-1857)
3. Sir Cavendish Hervey Foster, 3rd Baronet (1817-1890) brother of Frederick
4. Sir Augustus Veer Foster, 4th Baronet (1873-1947) Extinct on his death

The **Baronetcy of Foster of Norwich**, county Norfolk was created 20 April 1829 for Sir William Foster. Residing at Hardingham, Attleborough, Norfolk. He was born in 1798 and is the (at least) third generation of Forster in Norwich. His arms are the three horns and chevron of Northumberland Forsters but has two Stag heads on the chevron.

1. Sir William Foster, 1st Baronet (1798-1874)
2. Sir William Foster, 2nd Baronet (1825-1911)
3. Sir William Yorke Foster, 3rd Baronet (1860-1948)
4. Sir Henry William Berkeley Foster, 4th Baronet (1892-1960) Extinct on his death

The **Baronetcy of Foster of Bloomsbury**, in the County of London, was created in the Baronetage of the United Kingdom on 5 February 1930 for the university administrator Gregory Foster. He was Provost of University College London between 1907 and 1929 and Vice-Chancellor of the University of London between 1928 and 1930. This Baronetcy continues to this day.

## Allied Families in United Kingdom

As another possible aid in finding information on Foster families in the United Kingdom prior to the 17<sup>th</sup> century one could look into the prominent families Foster individuals married. *Prominent* implying the families might appear in Heraldic Visitation, Landed Gentry or other similar documents; because there were no censuses of common folk. Searching the family name, towns, or estates associated with these families might turn up new information relating to Foster families; such as solidifying some dates or the name of children hither unto missing in Forster annals. One must be careful reviewing some of these old documents, mindful that they seldom contain dates. Family researchers create genealogical reports they sometimes insert dates as guesses to match historical events or desired connections with other families. Just be careful concerning dates.

## Northumberland

These names married Forster individuals and show up often in the history of Northumberland. Reviewing pedigrees one notices these families intermarried often; unions of social standing peers for the mutual benefit of both families.

**Fenwick** Thomas Forster married Mary Fenwick, daughter of Sir William Fenwick of Wallington Hall (previously Fenwick castle), near Morpeth, Northumberland. The Fenwick family were Baronets as of 1628 and owned estates in Northumberland and Durham counties. There is a poem *Fair Mary of Wallington* by Frank Sigwick that refers to the wife of Sir William Fenwick the possible father of the



Mary who married Thomas Forster. Without dates in the Fenwick pedigree there is no telling what generation the poem refers to. There was a Thomas who married Mary Fenwick; this is Thomas number VII in the line of Thomas (see appendix III) and he was eleven years old in 1615 per the heraldic visitation of that year. But we don't know if the Mary Fenwick is the Fenwick heir mentioned in the poem.

**Gray** Mathew Forster married Catherine Gray. The Gray family descends like the Forster from Norman invaders with king William I and were awarded lands in Northumberland.

**Hilton** Thomas Forster, Lord of Etherstone married Jane?, the daughter of Baron Hilton of Hilton Castle in county Durham and sister to the Blind Baron Hilton. No information about a Blind Baron Hilton has been uncovered. Caution: Thomas' wife's pedigree is questionable; it is believed her maiden name was Hilton; her Christian name might be Jane or Joan and which branch of Hilton is unknown. The Hiltons (Hylton) were in England since the 9<sup>th</sup> century and joined William the Conqueror during his advance to London after his success at Hastings. After the conquest the Hiltons were awarded the lands on the river Wear and built first a fortified tower and later Hilton Castle. Twenty three generations over six centuries the Hiltons have been Barons. No record of a Hilton marrying a Thomas Forster appears in the Hilton family records that I have found. The Hilton (Hylton) family ancestral home is Hilton Castle ( [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hylton\\_Castle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hylton_Castle) ) and some information on the family's history is at: <http://www.david-hilton.net/hilton-family-history/hiltons-of-northeast-england.html>

**Ogle** Sir Thomas Forster of Etherstone married Dorothy, the daughter of Lord Ralph Ogle and Thomas' son, Sir John Forster of Bamburgh Castle married Jane Rayclyffe, widow of the fifth Lord Ogle. Ogle was a prominent family initially in Northumberland with many land holdings. The family spread to many locations throughout the United Kingdom. Ogle family information is available at: <http://oglekin.org/>

## **Hertfordshire**

The Forster branch started in the London area, first county Hertfordshire by Roger who moved there from Northumberland includes high court judges and associations with the royal family. Surnames these Forsters are allied with include:

**Brooke** Sir Thomas Foster of Hunsdon, Herts had a daughter Susan, named for his wife. Susan married Thomas Brooke of Whitchurch, county Hampshire. Susan and Thomas had a son, Robert Brooke, who settled in Maryland colony in America with vast estates there. The Brooke family of Whitchurch were landowners in county Hampshire connected with the Twine family of Southampton. Monuments to Thomas Brooke and wife Susan Foster in the church show the Brooke arms as being quartered and include the Forster of Northumberland arms. The text of a book *The Brooke Family of Whitchurch, Hampshire, England* by Thomas Balch published in 1898 provides some information on the Brooke and Forster families. The text of this book is available via the Internet.

**Forster** Sir Thomas Foster married Susan Forster of Iden, county Sussex. Little has been found about the the Forsters of Iden. But they also had a home in London, so they probably had some social standing – maybe in business. The origins of the Forster family of Iden has not been discovered.

**Hussey** or Hosse – Roger of Etherstone moved to Hunsdon north of London and married a

Hussey daughter believed to be of county Sussex. One Hussey family was very closely connected to the Royal family (Henry VII, Henry VIII, and his daughters). This Hussey family<sup>26</sup> had lands in Lincolnshire (not far from Hunsdon) and other counties including lands in the south. The family Roger married with is usually identified as being from county Sussex, on the English Channel. Whether the Sussex family is related to the Lincolnshire Husseys is not known. However, there was a Hosee, Hoese, Hosatus, de Hoese family who had a Barony with lands in Oxfordshire and Sussex (Lord of Harting, county Sussex) as early as 1165. The town of Harting is about 15 miles north of Portsmouth. A pedigree chart of this family can be found in the book *Country Genealogies – Sussex*.

**Sackville** (various spellings) Sir Robert Foster, Chief Justice of the Kings Bench married secondly Ann Sackville the widow of John French. Ann Sackville's date and place of birth/baptism are unknown. She was the daughter of John Sackville of Sedlescombe and Jane Downton. The will of a John Sackville of Chiddingfold was proved on 9 May 1593. Ann's first husband was John French of Stream House in Chiddingfold and of Estons in Framfield, both in Sussex. Ann's second husband was Sir Robert Forster of Battle and Egham (married on 22 September 1631 by license). The Sackville family is an old Sussex family with ancestors including Queen Elizabeth's treasurer and high court judge as well as founder of Sackville College, a Jacobean almshouse in the town of East Grinstead, West Sussex. This family also includes Barons, Earls, and the Duke of Dorset. However, no further information about Ann who married Robert Forster has been uncovered.

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26 Hussey overview on Internet at: [http://www.kekoolani.org/Pages/9033 Hussey Genealogy No.1 WEB/9033 Genealogy 33 Hussey Normandy HTML.htm](http://www.kekoolani.org/Pages/9033%20Hussey%20Genealogy%20No.1%20WEB/9033%20Genealogy%2033%20Hussey%20Normandy%20HTML.htm)