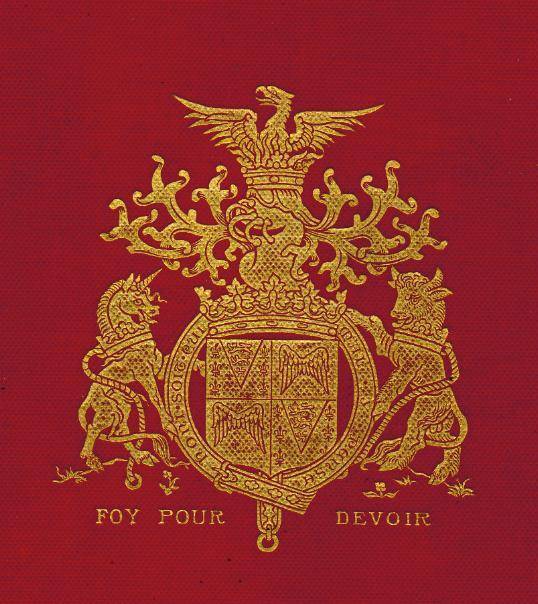
The Seymour Family:

from Northern France, to England,

the Americas, and Beyond



Duty to Faith

By Paul Carleton Seymour

**Dedicated to Tara Brooke Seymour and her descendants**

Table of contents

page

foreword 1

Chapter 1 - history of Early England from the romans,

to the anglo-saxons, and finally the Normans (400 – 1066) 11

Chapter 2 – After the norman invasion – the St maurs in

early England (1066-1500) 20

Chapter 3 – The soap opera inspiring period of the

tudors and the seymours, 16th century England.

John Seymour of Sawbridgeworth (1535-1605), Son of

Sir John and Catherine Fillol 34

chapter 4 – The Seymours in County Hertfordshire

(Herts) which includes the town of Sawbridgeworth 62

Chapter 5 - Famous writings by George Dudley

Seymour of Connecticut Presenting his Case against any

relationship to the ducal family and Final Conclusions

About our Relationship to them 72

chapter 6 – Richard Seymour of Sawbridgeworth

Arrives in Hartford in 1639, the Connecticut seymours 88

chapter 7 – William Seymour (1758 – 1811) and other Seymours

in The Revolutionary War, Then first in our line to leave Ct

For new York state 103

Chapter 8 – The Early Delaware county, new York seymours 121

Chapter 9 – famous American cousins - Direct

Descendents of Richard Seymour of Sawbridgeworth, 141

Chapter 10 – famous English cousins – Other direct

Descendents of sir john Seymour 173

Chapter 11 – History of Cannonsville, Delaware, New York 193

Chapter 12 – Henry Clinton (Clinton) Seymour (1872-1946)

and carrie cuyle Seymour (1872-1949) 205

Chapter 13 – Westley Carleton (Wes) Seymour (1910-1986)

and leone dann Seymour (1907-1990) 211

Chapter 14 – Westley francis (skip) Seymour (1944-2005)

and Sandra greene (sandie) Seymour (1942-1990) 237

Chapter 15 – The Greene family runs a parallel Course

to the Seymours, from the Norman invasion to the wacky

days with the Tudors, to Sidney, New York 256

Chapter 16 – paul Carleton Seymour (1963- )

and ana maria duran Seymour 281

Chapter 17 – Tara Brooke Seymour (1988- )

Chapter 18 – penhow castle, the Seymour museum 294

Chapter 19 - recapitulation, and parting thoughts

Appendices, Family tree spreadsheets – our lines only:

Seymour family tree

Dann family tree

Foreword

I started off by just trying to find out a little more about my family history. Where did I come from, who were my ancestors, and how in the world did I turn out like I did? It turned quickly into a labor of love. You see, I’d always been interested in history in general, and in particular our own. I used to bug everyone, especially my grandparents, for information about the family at an early age. I had an almost unnatural desire to know my ancestry, and I remember as a little kid thinking that there was a medieval knight lurking inside me. Still do, as a matter of fact. It turned out that most of my family weren’t as interested in history as I was, but I did get a decent collection of old family photos, including some information about the subjects of the photos, which I’ve held onto now for 3 decades. Then I finally got off the proverbial behind and did some research, which in the year 2010, due to the internet, was made fairly easy. That’s probably what I was waiting for.

I was absolutely amazed at how much information was available about our family, and how easy it was to learn so much about our ancestors. I didn’t purchase, nor even borrow, a single book so all of the information was found on-line, and therefore I’ve inserted the relevant links so that any of you could dig deeper if you so chose. In some instances, especially regarding the link between John Seymour of Sawbridgeworth to Catherine Fillol and Sir John, I’ve provided my own personal opinion, and supported it with available evidence. I tried hard to objectively present the facts relied upon for both sides of the story so that you can draw your own conclusion, and as throughout the document, have provided the relevant links for your own investigation. Please feel free to contact me with any further information that you might have at paulseymour1@gmail.com

The more information I found, the more interested I became to find more. Hence a labor of love, and my little search for some family historical information has now turned into a small book. I suppose that it’s primarily intended for people just like me. Those with the last name Seymour, or those who had a Seymour back in their past at one point, and are curious to know more about where they came from. What follows is much more than a family tree, although there is included a tree as appendix 1, which is helpful to refer to as you’re reading the related stories of the “characters” involved. However, just knowing the names and dates, and places of both birth and death, wouldn’t mean very much to me. I wanted to know *how* they lived, and if possible to find out why they’ve roamed the globe, and as I found out, often times been pioneers and founders of new towns, and nations, carving places out of the forest, and facing a fair amount of dangerous conditions. On that note, we have to face the fact that one could infer that many of our ancestors were dangerous characters themselves at times, as conquering warriors (probably in northern France) and certainly at the foundation and later expansion of modern England, and then later as original founders, and builders of another empire in America.

We may be from a long forgotten, small, and twisted branch of the family, but it’s quite a family. To whet your whistle for the full story, following is a brief history of the Seymour name and family according to Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seymour_family>

NOTE: Where I’ve inserted notes to quoted text, which I’ve done a lot of throughout the book, I’ve put them in *italics.*

“Seymour, or St. Maur, is the name of an English family in which several titles of nobility have from time to time been created, and of which the Duke of Somerset is the head.

The family was settled in Monmouthshire in the 13th century. The original form of the name seems to have been St. Maur, of which William Camden says that Seymour was a later corruption. It appears that about the year 1240 Gilbert Marshal, Earl of Pembroke, assisted William St. Maur to wrest a place called Woundy (now Undy), near Caldicot in Monmouthshire, from the Welsh. Woundy and Penhow, at the latter of which he made his residence, were the property of Sir Richard St. Maur at the end of the 13th century, but they died from the family through the marriage of Sir Richard's great-great-granddaughter, the only child of John St. Maur, who died in 1359. John St. Maur's younger brother Roger married Cecily, one of the daughters and co-heiresses of John Beauchamp of Hache, Baron Beauchamp de Somerset (d. 1361), who brought to her husband the greater part of her father's extensive estates in Somersetshire, Devonshire, Buckinghamshire, and Suffolk. The eldest son of this marriage was Sir William St. Maur, or Seymour (for the later form of the name appears to have come into use about this date), who was an attendant on the Black Prince *(Edward of Woodstock--(15 June 1330 – 8 June 1376) was the eldest son of King Edward III of England, and father to King Richard II of England*. *This guy conquered most of France at this time, and was very popular in England if not in France. No one is sure why he was called Black, but maybe for the color of his armor, or maybe by the French for his temper and cruelty, now back to William St. Maur*), and who died in his mother's lifetime, leaving a son Roger St. Maur, who inherited the estates and added to them by his marriage with Maud, daughter of Sir William Esturmi of Wolf Hall, Wiltshire.”

***Sir John Seymour (GGGGG+++ Grandpa? See why I think so in the related chapter)***

“During the next three or four generations the wealth and importance of the Seymours in the western counties increased, until in the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII. Sir John Seymour of Wolf Hall became a personage of note in public affairs. He took an active part in suppressing the Cornish Rebellion of 1497; and afterwards attended Henry at the Field of the Cloth of Gold (*in France, near Calais. It was the site of a meeting that took place from 7 June to 24 June 1520, between King Henry VIII of England and King Francis I of France. The meeting was arranged to increase the bond of friendship between the two kings following the Anglo-French treaty of 1514*), and on the occasion of the emperor Charles V's visit to England in 1522. The eldest of his ten children was Edward Seymour, 1st Duke of Somerset, the famous Protector in the reign of young King Edward VI *(son of King Henry the VIII and Jane Seymour, his little sister)*; his third son was Thomas Seymour, Baron Seymour of Sudeley *(and Lord Admiral of the Fleet)*; and his eldest daughter Jane was third wife of King Henry VIII, and mother of Edward VI. The Protector was married twice; and, probably owing to the adultery *(with his father Sir John)* of his first wife (*GGGG++ Grandma? Catherine Fillol)* whom he repudiated about 1535 (*the year that our proven progenitor, John Seymour of Sawbridgeworth was born*), his titles and estates were entailed first on the issue of his second marriage with Anne, daughter of Sir Edward Stanhope.

The Protector's eldest surviving son by his first marriage (*to Catherine Fillol*), Sir Edward Seymour (d. 1593), knight, of Berry Pomeroy, Devon, was father of Sir Edward Seymour (d. 1613) who was created a baronet in 1611; and the baronetcy then descended for six generations from father to son, all of whom were named Edward, until, in 1750, on the failure of heirs of the Protector by his second marriage, Sir Edward Seymour, 6th baronet of Berry Pomeroy, succeeded to the dukedom of Somerset (*therefore a direct descendent through Edward, and Catherine Fillol is the current Duke of Somerset, and therefore, if you choose to accept my theory, a distant cousin of ours*). The 3rd baronet, in whose time the family seat at Berry Pomeroy was plundered and burnt by the Roundheads *(The Roundheads were a group in the English Civil War who promoted a Republican Commonwealth instead of a monarchy)* had a younger brother Henry (1612-1686), who was a close personal attendant of Prince Charles during the Civil War, and bore the prince's last message to his father, Charles I, before the latter's execution. Henry Seymour continued his service to Charles II in exile, and at the Restoration he received several valuable offices from the king. In 1669 he bought the estate of Langley in Buckinghamshire, where he lived till his death in 1686. In 1681, his son Henry, at the age of seven years, was created a baronet.

**Sir Edward Seymour, 4th Baronet**

Sir Edward Seymour, 4th Baronet (1633-1708), speaker of the House of Commons, was elected member of parliament for Gloucester in 1661, and his influence at Court together with his natural abilities procured for him a position of weight in the House of Commons. He was appointed to the lucrative post of treasurer of the navy; and in 1667 he moved the impeachment of Lord Clarendon, which he carried to the House of Lords. In 1672 he was elected speaker, an office which he filled with distinction until 1679, when, having been unanimously re-elected to the Chair, the king refused to confirm the choice of the Commons. On the accession of James II, Seymour courageously opposed the arbitrary measures of the Crown; and at the revolution he adhered to the Prince of Orange. In 1691 he became a lord of the treasury, but losing his place three years later he took an active part in the Tory opposition to William's Whig ministers; and in later years he was not less hostile to those of Queen Anne, but owing to the ascendancy of Marlborough he lost all influence for some time before his death, which took place in 1708. Seymour was not less arrogant than his relative the proud Duke of Somerset *(These adjectives pop up again and again related to the Seymours, and I’ve been called both proud and arrogant many times myself, so if you are too, you came by it honestly)*; but he was described by Burnet as the ablest man *(again, a common attribute. Let me say here, and probably repeat later, that being proud, able and arrogant, aren’t necessarily the keys to final success, but ass-kissing has never been a Seymour trait)* of his party, the first speaker of the House of Commons that was not bred to the law; a graceful man, bold and quick, and of high birth. Sir Edward Seymour was twice married. By his first wife he had two sons, Edward, 5th baronet, whose son Edward became the 8th duke of Somerset, and William, who became a lieutenant-general; by his second wife, a daughter of Alexander Popham of Littlecote House, he had six sons, the eldest of whom, Popham, on succeeding to the estates of his mother's cousin, Edward, Earl of Conway, assumed the name of Conway in addition to that of Seymour. Popham was killed in a duel with Colonel Kirk in 1669, and his estates devolved on his next brother, Francis, who likewise assumed the name of Conway, and having been created Baron Conway in 1703 was the father of Francis Seymour Conway (1719-1794), created Marquess of Hertford in 1793, and of field-marshal Henry Seymour Conway. *You’ll see later that both in England, and in America, a great many Seymours have been military and political leaders, and is another supporting fact to my theory that we’re all directly related.*

**Edward Seymour, 1st Earl of Hertford** (*Our John was born in Hertfordshire “Herts” County at Sawbridgeworth in 1535*)

The eldest son of the Protector's second marriage, Edward Seymour (1537-1621), was relieved by act of parliament in the reign of Queen Mary from the attainder passed on his father in 1551, and was created Baron Beauchamp and earl of Hertford in 1559. In 1560 he secretly married Lady Catherine Grey, second daughter of Henry Grey, 1st Duke of Suffolk, and sister of Lady Jane Grey, claimant of the crown as great-granddaughter of Henry VII, on whose death Catherine stood next in succession to the throne after Queen Elizabeth under the will of Henry VIII. On this account both parties to the marriage incurred the displeasure of Queen Elizabeth; they were imprisoned in the Tower of London, and the fact of their marriage, together with the legitimacy of their two sons, was denied. The eldest of these sons was Edward Seymour (1561-1612), styled Lord Beauchamp notwithstanding the question as to his legitimacy, who in 1608 obtained a patent declaring that, after his father's death he should become earl of Hertford. He, however, died before his father, leaving three sons, one of whom, William, became 2nd duke of Somerset; and another, Francis, was created Baron Seymour of Trowbridge in 1641. The latter had at first taken an active part in the opposition in the House of Commons to the government of Charles I, having been elected member for Wiltshire in 1620. He represented the same constituency in both the Short and the Long Parliaments; and he refused to pay ship money in 1639. When, however, the popular party proceeded to more extreme measures, Francis Seymour refused his support, and was rewarded by being raised to the peerage; he voted in the House of Lords against the attainder of Strafford, and in 1642 he joined Charles at York and fought on the royalist side throughout the Great Rebellion. He died in 1664. His grandson Francis *(I never realized before that my father’s middle name, Francis, was an old family name. Like Westley and Carleton, it wasn’t very common in 20th century America)*, 3rd baron, succeeded to the dukedom of Somerset in 1675; and on the death of his nephew Algernon, 7th duke of Somerset, in 1750, the male line of the Protector by his second marriage (*to Anne Stanhope*) became extinct, and the dukedom reverted to the elder line (*from Catherine Fillol*), the 6th baronet of Berry Pomeroy becoming 8th duke of Somerset.”

*So, from 1750 onward, the Dukes of Somerset have been our direct relatives, also tracing back to both Sir John and Catherine Fillol)*

The failure of Anne’s line with Edward was pure Karma. I think that during the introduction would be an appropriate time to take a look at Edward’s 2nd wife, for whom he forsake GGG++ Grandma Catherine Fillol, well, in addition to the little problem with his father. In fact, let’s be fair here to Edward. If I, or you, had just come back home from waging war against the Scots, or the French, and found your wife pregnant, and then found out that your Dad was the father, there might be a little anger involved. But we’ll see more on that whole subject later.

Anyway, this period of English, and of Seymour history, was a bit hectic. It’s when England broke away from the Catholic Church, due in no small part to Edward Seymour, and also when our branch of the Seymours broke away (or was broken away) from the recognized Ducal branch, and our John was raised as an orphan being the unrecognized son of the above mentioned affair between Sir John Seymour and his son’s (Edward the Protector) wife, Catherine Fillol. When Edward got back home and found his wife pregnant, by some reports, he then banished Catherine Fillol to an unknown convent. Historically speaking, she just disappeared, and considering Edward’s position, and his political desires, it’s no surprise that all records of her, and her rumoured child, vanished. Anyway, here’s the story of nice auntie Anne according to Wikipedia---

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anne_Stanhope>

Tomb of Anne Seymour in Westminster Abbey

“Anne was present at the wedding ceremony of Henry VIII and Katherine Parr *(by the way, Katherine Parr was the daughter of Maud Greene, and therefore another distant relative through my mother, Sandra Greene)* on 12 July 1543. After Henry VIII's death, Edward Seymour acted as King in all but name. With this power, Anne considered herself the first lady of the realm, claiming precedence over Katharine Parr, Henry VIII's widow, following the latter's marriage to Anne's brother-in-law, Thomas Seymour *(Ol’ Uncle Tom is another beautiful story that we’ll get to later. Notice here that 400 years before my Mom and Dad were married, there was another Seymour-Greene connection)*.

Anne considered that the Dowager Queen forfeited her rights of precedence when she married the younger brother of Anne's husband. Anne refused to bear Katherine's train, and even physically tried to push her out of her place at the head of their entrances and exits at court. Anne was quoted as having said of Katherine, "If master admiral *(Thomas Seymour)* teach his wife no better manners, I am she that will". Katherine, in her turn, privately referred to Anne as "that Hell". Katherine Parr won the battle by invoking the Act of Succession which clearly stated that Katherine had precedence over all ladies in the realm; in point of fact, as regards precedence, Anne came after the Princesses Mary and Elizabeth, and Anne of Cleves. Anne, nevertheless wielded considerable power for a short time, which later would reflect negatively on her husband's reputation.

Edward Seymour became de facto King and wielded almost Royal authority in effecting major Protestant reforms in the church and in relaxing such measures as the heresy and treason laws. However, he lost his position as Protector following the Coup of 1549, which was engineered by John Dudley, Earl of Warwick. Despite initially being allowed to rejoin the Privy Council, he was convicted in 1552 on a charge of high treason. At his trial, 1 December, he was found guilty of treason, and was executed by beheading, 22 January 1551/2, on Tower Hill, and buried there in the Chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula.

Anne has been described as being a "violent woman", and was held responsible for the fate of Edward Seymour, through having urged him to adopt a ruinous policy.”

*Anne and Edward’s descendents followed in the footsteps of Edward and Thomas, continually trying, and sometimes succeeding, to marry into the king’s succession, and five generations of their offspring spent some time in the Tower of London. With Catherine Fillol’s descendents we never see that. They were content being mere Barons and high ranking knights, and later, in both England and America, Generals and Admirals, etc. Okay, back to Wiki’s little biography of the family---*

“**Henry Seymour**

Henry Seymour (1729-1805), a son of the 8th duke of Somerset's brother Francis, was elected to the House of Commons in 1763; in 1778 he went to France, and fixing his residence at Prunay, near Versailles, he became the lover of Madame du Barry, many of whose letters to him are preserved in Paris. He was twice married, and in addition to children by both wives he left an illegitimate daughter, Henriette Felicity, who married Sir James Doughty-Tichborne, by whom she was the mother of Roger Tichborne, impersonated in 1871 by the famous impostor Arthur Orton.

**Lord Hugh Seymour**

Lord Hugh Seymour (1759-1801), a younger son of Francis Seymour-Conway, marquess of Hertford, was a distinguished naval officer who saw much active service especially under Lord Howe, in whose famous action on 1 June 1794 he took a conspicuous part. His son Sir George Francis Seymour (1787-1870), admiral of the fleet, began his naval career by serving under Lord Horatio Nelson; in 1818 he became Sergeant-at-arms in the House of Lords, a post which he retained till 1841, when he was promoted to the rank of rear-admiral and appointed a lord of the admiralty *(at about this same time in America was a famous Major in the American Revolutionary War against England, who is included in a painting that hangs in the Capitol rotunda in Washington, and later a couple of Generals in the Civil War, a few US Senators and Representatives in the House, and a couple of State Governors from NY and Connecticut, one of whom, Horatio Seymour, almost became President before losing to Ulysses S. Grant of 50 dollar**bill fame. Obviously it’s no coincidence that the Seymours have done so many similar things in both England and America, despite the fact that the American branch arrived with neither titles nor riches. The DNA is shared.)*; his eldest son, Francis George Hugh Seymour (1812-1884), succeeded his cousin Richard Seymour-Conway as 5th marquess of Hertford in 1870. Lord Hugh Seymour's younger son, Sir Horace Beauchamp Seymour, was the father of Frederick Beauchamp Paget Seymour, Baron Alcester.

**Sir Michael Seymour**

A younger branch of the great house of Seymour is said to have settled in Ireland in the reign of Elizabeth *(during Elizabeth’s reign was a tough time to be a Seymour in England. When you read the biography of Thomas later, you’ll see that she and Thomas had a strange little relationship when she was a teenager*, *which seems to have affected her throughout the “Virgin” Queen’s lifetime. Also, King Edward VI, son of Jane Seymour, tried to exclude her from the succession. Ooops.)* from which Sir Michael Seymour, 1st Baronet (1768-1834) claimed descent. Sir Michael, like so many of his name, was an officer in the navy, in which he rendered much distinguished service in the last decade of the 18th century. He lost an arm in Howe's action on 1 June 1794; and between 1796 and 1810 as commander of the Spitfire, and afterwards of the Amethyst, he captured a great number of prizes from the French in the English Channel. In 1809 he was created a Baronet (see Culme-Seymour Baronets). Seymour became a rear-admiral in 1832, and died two years later while in chief command on the South American station. His son, Sir Michael Seymour (1802-1887), entered the navy in 1813, and attained the rank of rear-admiral in 1854, in which year he served under Sir Charles Napier in the Baltic Sea during the war with Russia. In 1856 he was in command of the China station, and conducted the operations arising out of the affair of the lorcha Arrow; he destroyed the Qing Chinese fleet in June 1857, took Canton in December, and in 1858 he captured the forts on the Pei Ho (Hai River), compelling the Chinese government to consent to the Treaty of Tientsin. In 1864 he was promoted to the rank of admiral. Admiral Sir Edward Hobart Seymour was the nephew of Sir Michael Seymour (1802-1887).”

Following are the interesting stories of many other Seymours, but nowhere near all. If I tried to include the stories of all the Seymours who are just included on the internet, this little project would get completely out of hand. It’s getting fairly large as it is. As you can see, there have been many extremely rich and powerful Seymours during the past 1,000 years. Unfortunately, or fortunately, depending on your point of view, our little branch didn’t share in those material riches, nor create much of our own, but the genealogy is passed on. Over the last 35+ generations, from Goscelin de Ste. Maur, from Ste. Maur Sur, Loire, France, there are now many, many 1,000’s who have descended from him and share the name Seymour. The vast majority of them have not inherited the riches and power that some of our ancestors had earned, or married into, and accumulated. Oh well, that’s life...

Here’s a very good example of Paul Carleton Seymour’s arrogance: I’ve always known, from a very young age, that I could do just about anything that I wanted, including becoming rich. The only thing that was necessary was a strong enough desire, because it certainly isn’t easy. I soon realized that material gains didn’t really mean that much to me. I very much preferred travelling the world, and living in different places to building and maintaining a complicated and politically based corporate career. Therefore, no riches, at least none material, have been earned by yours truly, but I think I have a relatively rich soul, and don’t at all regret my choices to avoid extremely hard work, dedication, and the related material gains, and the complicated life that they lead to.

Back in Edward the Protector’s day, one of his primary political rivals, Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, wrote the following poem. I stumbled across this watching an episode of the Tudors on television after be guided to it by a previous nights’ dream:

Martial, the things for to attain

The happy life be these, I find:

The riches left, not got with pain;

The fruitful ground; the quiet mind:

The equal friend; no grudge nor strife;

No charge of rule nor governance;

Without disease the healthful life;

The household of continuance:

The mean diet, no delicate fare;

**Wisdom joined with simplicity**;

**The night discharged of all care**,

Where wine may bear no sovereignty;

The chaste wife wise, without debate;

Such sleeps as may beguile the night;

Contented with thine own estate,

Neither wish Death nor fear his might.

Wisdom joined with simplicity, and the night discharged of all care......I found these lines to be very meaningful to me. Without thinking much about it consciously, I’ve tried hard to bring these together, which is an elusive state. They almost seem to be mutually exclusive at times.

By the way, Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, utterly failed to follow the advice that he so eloquently shared in his poem. In his unbridled ambition to put the Howard’s on the throne, his own temper got him executed when it became apparent that his rival, Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford would hold power after Henry’s death. About five years after Howard’s execution, Edward would also be executed trying to put the Seymours on the same throne. Maybe the modern day Seymours are just too evolved to seek power and money? Or maybe just too lazy. I prefer to think a combination of the two.

**“Families are always rising and falling in America. But, I believe, we ought to examine more closely the how and why of it, which in the end revolves around life and how you live it.” – Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The House of Seven Gables***

Finally, I hope that you will enjoy learning about our mutual family history as much as I did, and walk away with the sense of pride that I did in the men and women who went before us. As you read the stories of how they lived, I hope that you’ll be able to put yourself in their shoes, and truly appreciate how much the world has changed over this relatively short span of time. The fact is that 1,000 years is really just the historical equivalent to the blink of an eye.

Chapter **1**

Early England, from the romans, to the anglo-saxons, and finally the normans

The Seymour name is, like all names, the modern form of an ancient name which has evolved over the centuries. It’s accepted fact that Seymour derived from St. Maur to other variations such as Semer, Seamor, Semere, etc until finally becoming Seymour. It’s also widely accepted that St. Maur is a Norman name, with a Wido St. Maur coming from France in the Norman invasion of 1066.

The term Anglo-Saxon, which many Englishmen refer to themselves as, is derived from two ancient foreign tribes, the Angles, from the modern day north German Baltic coast, and the Saxons from the same part of Germany. The Jutes, from modern day Denmark were also settling in England during this time, but were minor players. These peoples invaded and conquered England as early as the 5th century. The name England is a form of Angle as well. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglo-Saxons> The original Normans had settled peacefully in modern day Normandy, France from modern day Norway, and inter-related with the local French for 155 years. They spoke French and attended the Catholic Church, before invading England in the historically significant Norman Invasion. Before the “North men”, and the Anglo-Saxons though, were the Romans for about 400 years.

**Roman Period**

The Romans inhabited what is now England from 43 to 410 AD. Here is an interesting summary from the website - <http://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/England-History/RomanEngland.htm>

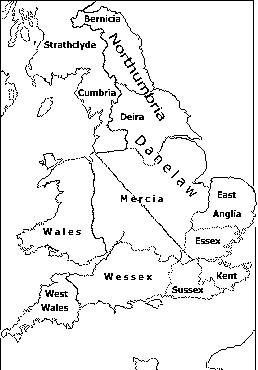
“The Romans never did succeed in subduing all of Britain. They always had to maintain a significant military presence to control the threat from the unconquered tribes. But most people in England settled down to Roman order and discipline. Towns appeared for the first time across the country, including York, Chester, St. Albans, Bath, Lincoln, Gloucester and Colchester. All of these major centres are still linked today by the system of Roman military roads radiating from the great port of London such as Ermine Street, Watling Street and the Fosse Way. These roads also allowed for the distribution of Roman luxuries such as spices, wines, glass etc. brought in from other regions of the Empire. It is likely that the Romanisation of Britain principally affected only the rich. This aristocracy may have increased status by adopting Roman ways and practices such as regular bathing. The vast majority of the populace would remain relatively untouched by Roman civilisation, living off the land and eking out a living.”

**Early Anglo-Saxon Britain**

There are very few places in the world where the Romans, the Celts, and the Vikings all occupied the same region, and mixed into the same gene pool. I can only think of England, northern France in Brittany and Normandy, and maybe Sicily.

<http://www.britainexpress.com/History/Anglo-Saxon_Britain.htm> - “We know very little of the first several hundred years of the Anglo-Saxon, or "English", era, primarily because the invaders were an illiterate people *(called the Barbarians by the Romans, maybe partly because they could never conquer them, in addition to being illiterate)*. Our earliest records of them are little more than highly inventive lists of rulers. We know that they established separate kingdoms, the Saxons settling in the south and west (*where the St Maurs started off as you’ll see later)*, the Angles in the east and north, and the Jutes on the Isle of Wight and the mainland opposite. They probably thought of themselves as separate peoples, but they shared a common language and similar customs.

**Anglo Saxon Britain 600-900 AD**

*Take a good look at this map. Later, in 1066, the St. Maurs are going to set up shop at Castle Penhow near the corner where Wales, Mercia and Wessex come together at Monmouth, in SE Wales in order to fight the Welsh who weren’t conquered in the invasion. Over the centuries they will come to be one the most important families in SW England, basically running 3 counties in Wessex; those being Somerset, Wiltshire (Wilts), and Devon, as well as Hertfordshire (Herts) which is up near London, just a few miles to the NE.*

**The king's power**. One of these customs was fighting everyone in sight. A king's power was not hereditary; it depended solely on his ability to win battles and so gain land, treasure, and slaves to give his supporters. He was obliged to fight and keep fighting. If not, he would find himself out of a job or deprived of his life, or both. Succession from father to son was never a foregone conclusion. Any relative of the old king who could muster enough support could make a bid for the throne. This helps to explain why the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms came and went so quickly. The power of any kingdom over its neighbours was only as solid as the strength of its king in battle.

**King Offa**. Roughly speaking, the 7th century was the age of Northumbrian ascendance, with Mercia playing second fiddle. In the 8th century these roles reversed. The most powerful and well known of the Mercian kings was Offa, who ruled from 758-796. A successful warrior (which is a given for anyone in those days who managed to hold onto power for so long), he defeated kings in Sussex, Anglia, and Wessex, proclaiming himself King of the English.

**Offa's Dyke**. Offa caused to be built the earthwork that still bears his name, Offa's Dyke, which stretches the 150 mile length of the Welsh border. Begun in the 780's, the purpose of the dyke seems to have been as a fortified frontier barrier, much as Hadrian's Wall some six centuries previous.

In most places the ditch was 25 feet from the bottom of the cut to the top of the bank, with wood or stone walling on top of that. The work involved has been compared to the building of the Great Pyramid. This gives us some idea of the power wielded by Offa. It seems that the dyke was not permanently manned, relying instead on the warning given by a series of beacons.

**Foreign attack**. The upper hand enjoyed by the Mercians did not long survive Offa's death. In the 820's a series of victories by Egbert, king of Wessex, broke Mercian control in the south east. The 9th century may well have turned into a struggle for the upper hand between Mercia and Wessex if not for one thing; England was once again the subject of recurring raids from across the seas. This time it was the Danes and Norwegians. The Danes attacked the east coast of England, the Norwegians attacked the north by way of Ireland and Scotland.

**The Danes**. The Danes found rich pickings in the undefended monastic settlements on Lindisfarne Island and Jarrow, in Northumbria, but they were not out solely for loot. The Danish raids were partly a response to population pressures in their homeland, so they wanted new lands to settle, not merely easy plunder. They made good use of fortified settlements as bases to expand, and their use of helmets, shields, chain mail, and particularly the long handled battle axe, meant they were better armed than most of their foes.”

*So, almost immediately after the withdrawal of the Romans, we have the Vikings coming in. I’m considering here the Angles and Saxons as Vikings, though they were from extreme northern Germany (by today’s maps) on the Baltic Sea, there wasn’t any cultural difference between them and the Danes across today’s imaginary border line that separates the two countries.*

*Let’s look at the history of the Normans. Here we can get a feel for the place and the lifestyle of where the St Maur’s emerged from, with William the Conqueror (or actually, at the time, William the Bastard) in 1066.*

**Normandy** <http://www.englishmonarchs.co.uk/normans.htm>

“Normandy gets its name from the Norsemen who invaded the region in the north of France under their Norwegian Viking chieftain Rollo or Rolf the Ganger (850-925), named because it was said that he had such long legs that he could not ride a horse. He was born in 850, at Maer, Nord-Trondelag, Norway, the son of Ragnvald 'the Wise' Eysteinson and his second wife, Hiltrude (Ragnhild) Hrolfsdottir. **Rolf was granted the region of Normandy by Charles the Simple, King of France, in 911, at the Treaty of Saint-Clair-sur-Epte**, in exchange for feudal alliegiance and conversion to Christianity at which he took the baptismal name of Robert. He was baptized in a fountain fed by a spring named in honor of Saint Clair. Rolf took as his second wife Popee, the daughter of the Berengar of Rennes, the previous Lord of Normandy, the marriage produced six children.

Rolf died at Notre Dame at Rouen, Normandy in 925 at the age of 75. Within a couple of centuries, the Normans, as they were called, became not only Christian, but French, speaking the French language, and taking on French customs.”

*I’ve read in other accounts that the French King was willing to let the Norwegians have this land, not just because he was feeling generous, but because he needed a buffer between Paris and the Vikings of modern day Denmark , Norway and Sweden. France was continually defending itself from Viking raids, and what better protection than a peaceful Viking Duchy. Fight fire with fire.*

**William the Bastard, later the Conqueror, GGG Grandson of Rollo**

“England's first Norman king, William I, was born in 1028, at Falaise Castle, the illegitimate son of Robert the Devil or the Magnificent (*I guess depending on whether or not he could hear you?)*, Duke of Normandy and Herleve, (sometimes called Arlette) the daughter of Fullbert, a tanner of Falaise. Before history renamed him the Conqueror he was more commonly known to his contemporaries as William the Bastard. Herleve was reported to have attracted Duke Robert with her dancing, in some accounts, he is said to have first caught sight of her while she was washing her linen in the castle moat.

William's mother, Herleve, also had a daughter, Adelaide, to Duke Robert. Although they had a long relationship, the gap in their social standing rendered marriage out of the question and Herleve was married off to one of Robert's vassals, Herluin, a knight. From this marriage, Herleve produced two further sons, Robert, who later became Count of Mortain and Odo, destined to become Bishop of Bayeux and also to play a part in England's history.

William, Duke of Normandy

Duke Robert decided to expiate his sins, which were many, by going on pilgrimage in 1034. Since he had no legitimate heir to succeed him, he persuaded his unruly barons to accept the illegitimate William as future Duke of Normandy. On his return journey from the Holy Land Robert died suddenly and the young William succeeded to the Dukedom by his father's will.

The barons exhibited no loyalty to the “base born" child and thereafter William grew up in the school of adversity. He had to learn, very early, how to survive. The barons constantly rebelled and anarchy reigned in Normandy during the years of William's minority. William's guardians were murdered in succession. Osbern was killed whilst guarding his door. His maternal uncle, Walter, at one point resorted to hiding the child with some poor people. William was formed and moulded by this savage and insecure childhood into the stark and often ruthless ruler he was later to become.

In 1047, *at age 19*, he asserted his authority and crushed the rebels at Val-es-Dunes after which he began to restore order in his Dukedom. At Alencon, the burghers insulted his birth by hanging "hides for the tanner" over the walls. On taking the town he exacted a terrible revenge and had both their hands and feet amputated. One of life’s great survivors, William finally emerged as undisputed Duke of Normandy.

William matured into a tall, thick set man with dark hair, which receded from his forehead early. His voice was rasping and guttural. William undoubtedly possessed considerable powers of leadership and courage. He was devout and inspired loyalty in his followers, but could also be ruthless and cruel. William of Malmesbury provides us with a detailed description of the king in his Historia Anglorum:- 'He was of just stature, ordinary corplulence, fierce countenance; his forehead was bare of hair; of such great strength of arm that it was often a matter of surprise, that no one was able to draw his bow, which himself could bend when his horse was in full gallop; he was majestic whether sitting or standing, although the protuberance of his belly deformed his royal person; of excellent health so that he was never confined with any dangerous disorder, except at the last; so given to the pleasures of the chase, that as I have before said, ejecting the inhabitants, he let a space of many miles grow desolate that, when at liberty from other avocations, he might there pursue his pleasures.

His anxiety for money is the only thing on which he can deservedly be blamed. This he sought all opportunities of scraping together, he cared not how; he would say and do some things and indeed almost anything, unbecoming to such great majesty, where the hope of money allured him. I have here no excuse whatever to offer, unless it be, as one has said, that of necessity he must fear many, whom many fear.'

William negotiated a marriage in 1049 to Matilda, a descendant of the old Saxon House of Wessex and daughter of Baldwin, Count of Flanders and Adela, daughter of Robert II, King of France. They were an ill-assorted pair, he strongly built and five feet ten inches tall and she (as it emerged when her skeleton was exhumed) just over four feet tall, almost a dwarf. It proved however, to be a highly successful union and produced a large family.

The Duke of Normandy visited his English cousin, Edward the Confessor, in 1051. Edward and his brother Alfred had spent much of their childhood in exile at the Norman Court, their mother, Emma, had been a daughter of the House of Normandy. During this visit, Edward is purported to have promised his Norman cousin the crown of England, should he die without issue. The real heir was Edgar the Atheling, Edward's great-nephew, the grandson of his elder brother Edmund Ironside, but he was still a child and knew little of England, having spent much of his life in exile in Hungary. Others also coveted the English throne, the chief candidate amongst these was Harold, son of the powerful Godwine, Earl of Wessex.

Harold was unfortunately shipwrecked on the coast of Normandy, where he found himself the unwilling guest of Duke William. The Confessor was now unlikely to survive long and Harold was anxious to return to England to forward his ambitions there. However, before he would allow his guest to leave, William required him to swear an oath to support his claim to the crown upon Edward's death. Under duress, Harold finally consented and swore the oath on holy relics.

Edward the Confessor finally breathed his last in January, 1066, and was buried in his foundation of St. Peter, Westminster, which had been consecrated but ten days previously. It was reported that on his deathbed he had nominated Harold as his successor who was duly accepted as King by the Saxon Witangemot or council of elders, which traditionally elected the next English King.

Back in Normandy, on receipt of this ominous news, the formidable Duke William flew into a rage. He began to build an invasion fleet to take by force what he considered to be his by right. The Pope himself, due to Harold's foresworn oath on holy relics, supported William's enterprise. After Harold was crowned by Archbishop Stigand, a portentous star was seen in the skies, this has now been identified as Halley's Comet, many in that superstitious age saw it as an omen of the wrath of God on the perjured King Harold and his followers.

Harold assembled the fyrdd, the Saxon militia of freemen, in preparation for William's imminent landing, whilst the Duke prepared his fleet and waited for good weather to set sail for England. In mid September, Harold Hardrada, King of Norway, invaded England, accompanied by Tostig, Earl of Northumbria, Harold's unruly and discontented brother, who had earlier been banished and his earldom confiscated.

Harold marched his army north in haste to meet the invaders at Stamford Bridge in Yorkshire, where he won a decisive victory over the Viking army. At this time, the winds William had been pensively awaiting turned favourable and he set sail with his massive invasion fleet. News of his landing at Bulverhythe was conveyed to Harold, who responded by hurrying south to meet him, giving his exhausted army no respite. Had Harold rested and reorganized his army, the outcome of the impending battle and English history could have been very different.

On 14th October, the Saxon and Norman forces clashed in the fateful Battle of Hastings. Harold took up a defensive position on Senlac Ridge. The Norman army was thus forced to attack uphill, placing them at a disadvantage.

The Saxon army formed a shield wall along the edge of the hill which rebuffed repeated Norman attacks. A rumour arose in the Norman ranks that Duke William was dead, causing panic and flight. Many of the Saxon fyrdd pursued the fleeing Normans down the hill. William put heart into his army by loudly announcing he still lived. The Normans rallied, Harold's brothers Gyrth and Leofwine were both slain on the battlefield.

The battle continued for most of the day, Harold and his Saxons fought with steely determination for possession of their country. As dusk began to fall over Hastings, William ordered his archers to fire high into the air and one of these arrows is said to have hit Harold in the eye, blinding him, although this point is disputed by some sources. Whether this was the case or not, Harold fell mortally wounded under the dragon standard of Wessex.

The Saxon army, seeing that the day was lost, began to flee the field. The houscarls, Harold's trained professional militia, loyally and valiantly defended the body of their King to the last, but they too finally fell and Harold's body was mutilated by the Normans, a vindictive act, which William punished. The battle was lost and Anglo-Saxon England died with Harold on the battlefield that day.

Harold's deeply distressed mistress, Edith Swan-neck came to William pleading for her lover's body and offering him its weight in gold in exchange, but William coldly refused her distraught request. He had Harold buried in a secret location.

William proceeded to London, where he was crowned King of England at Edward the Confessor's foundation of Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day, 1066. He accepted the surrender of the Saxon Earls Edwine and Morkere along with that of the child claimant, Edgar Atheling and defeated the heroic Hereward the Wake at Ely. On the whole the south of England submitted to Norman rule, whereas in the north resistance was more prolonged. William responded by subjecting the English to a reign of terror. Determined to punish and crush rebellion to his rule and strike abject fear into English hearts, he laid waste vast tracts of Yorkshire, which suffered under a great famine for nine years after as a result. He rewarded his Norman and French followers by distributing the confiscated lands of the English to them. *Here are referenced “French followers”, which we’ll learn later includes the St Maurs.*

William was a savage and formidable ruler, by modern standards an exceedingly cruel one, but his methods produced the desired results and extinguished the fires of opposition. Many castles and keeps were built across the country to enforce his rule *(including the St Maurs’ Penhow Castle in Monmouth, Wales)*, originally wooden towers or earthen mottes, in all over 80 castles were established during the reign, including the White Tower, the first building in the Tower of London complex. The dominating shadow of the White Tower loomed menacingly over medieval London, a visible expression of Norman power.

The new King's half brother, Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, commissioned a tapestry to commemorate his brother's victory in 1078. It depicts a series of scenes leading up to and during the conquest. William's conversion of the New Forest into a royal hunting ground saw the introduction of harsh and severe forest laws, which caused great resentment amongst the Anglo-Saxons. William changed England's laws and inflicted harsh punishments for offenders. Murder became an officially punishable crime in England and slavery was abolished.”

*I looked up forest laws -* [*http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal\_forest*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_forest)*, here’s a summary – “*William the Conqueror, a great lover of hunting, established the system of forest law. This operated outside of the common law, and served to protect game animals and their forest habitat from destruction. In the year of his death, 1087, a poem, "The Rime of King William", inserted in the Peterborough Chronicle expresses English indignation at the forest laws.

Offences

Offences in forest law were divided into two categories: trespass against the vert (the vegetation of the forest) and the venison (the game). The five animals of the forest protected by law were given by Manwood as the hart and hind (red deer), boar, and hare and wolf. (In England, the boar had become extinct in the wild by the 13th century, and the wolf by the late 15th century). Protection was also said to be extended to the beasts of chase, the buck and doe (fallow deer), fox, marten, and roe deer, and the beasts and fowls of warren, the hare, coney, pheasant, and partridge.[1] The rights of chase and of warren (i.e., to hunt such beasts) were often granted to local nobility for a fee but are a quite separate concept.

Trespasses against the vert were rather extensive: they included purpresture, the inclosure of a pasture or erection of a building on forest lands, assarting, clearing forest land for agriculture, and felling trees or clearing shrubs, among others. Note that these laws applied to any land within the boundary of the forest, even if it were freely owned.

In addition, inhabitants of the forest were forbidden to bear hunting weapons, and dogs were banned from the forest; mastiffs *(we had a mastiff as a pet when I was a kid. They’re good, loyal dogs, and really big and strong)* were permitted as watchdogs, but they had to have their front claws removed to prevent them from hunting game.

Disafforested lands on the edge of the forest were known as purlieus; agriculture was permitted here and deer escaping from the forest into them was permitted to be killed if causing damage.” *It sounds like the legend of Robin Hood may have been linked to this forest law. Now back to the history of William:*

Anglo-Saxon England was radically altered by the Norman conquest, it changed the entire way of life then established in the country. Its laws, aristocracy and church were altered and it introduced the French feudal system. The Anglo-Saxon language was replaced by Norman French as the language of the upper classes, modern English is the natural outgrowth of both. The role of the conquerors and the conquered can still be detected in many English words, the Saxon cow, tended by the lowly Saxon villein became the Norman beef when it appeared on the lord's table. The Saxon swine became Norman gammon. There are countless other examples in modern English which amply illlustrate the role of Saxon servant and Norman master.

The Norman Feudal System, which William introduced into England, was a complicated hierarchical structure at whose apex sat the king. That lords held their lands under the king in exchange for homage and military assistance rendered to him in times of need.”

*The St Maurs were one of these families who were made lords as they had obviously served William well. Here I learned that we’re not Anglo-Saxon, but instead Anglo-Norman. I had previously thought the two synonymous. Where did the St Maur’s come from?*

**Origins of the St. Maurs (*pronounced in French as Sahn Mour, so you can see how it evolved into Seymour as the Germanic speaking Anglo Saxons wrote it phonetically*)** <http://www.s560.com/dokuwiki/annals>

“There is in France a small but very ancient village named “Saint Maur-sur- Loire.” It is supposed to have been named thus on account of a black hermit, famous for, his goodness and piety, who is said to have lived in the 7th century, and to have been an Abyssinian prince, descended from the royal race of Solomon and (sad to relate) the Queen of Sheba, (*I’m not sure why he’s sad to relate a supposed descendency from Sheba, but I find it hard to believe since Sheba was a Queen in Yemen, East Africa and southern Arabia 3,000 years ago. Although the current Ethiopian Royals do claim a direct blood line*) but who had been obliged to leave his country during some insurrection in which his father and his nearest relatives had been massacred. In the year 710 this village is said to have been in the possession of the family of St. Maur, who no doubt must have taken their name from the place, from being the most important owners there, for it is beyond the bounds of possibility that they can have been the Issue of the hermit. The head of the family is supposed to have been Richard de St. Maur, and he is said to have been mentioned in a grant to the royal Abbey of Villers, founded by Queen Frédégonde.”

*Saint Maur-sur-Loire isn’t easy to find on a map. It’s also not where I expected to find it. It’s fairly far south of Normandy and west of Paris. Look for Le Thoureil between Le Mans and Nantes on the Loire River, a few miles up the river from Saumur, which is also an interesting name, isn’t it?* *One should also be aware that there are several towns in France called St Maur, including one in Normandy*, *but in this case, I guess we have traced Wido from the invasion force back to this town in Loire.* <http://iguide.travel/Chartres/Introduction#Map>

“In addition to Richard, a Guy de St. Maur is said to have performed his fealty and homage at the same Abbey in 701, and a Ludo de St. Maur is said to have been mentioned in a list in 919”.

*So apparently St Maur is an old French family, since the Norwegians arrived in 911. Following is a very detailed account of 2 or 3 different lines of St. Maurs, two of which dead-end with all female offspring, leaving the only one which still survives to today. Our tree begins with Goscelin.*

“Even legend, however, does not supply us with any account of these or their descendants, and it is necessary to go on to Goscelin de Ste. Maur or Maure, surnamed Peitazinua, probably on account of some voyage, pilgrimage, or exploit, that he performed in Aquitaine.

This Goscelin de Ste. Maur is mentioned: In a charter of Foulque Martel, Comte d'Anjou, in the year 1000 in the foundation of the Abbey of Beaulieu, with Suhard de Craon, and other gentlemen.

He is always styled 11 Castri Sanctæ Mauræ dei gratiâ jure hereditario possessor et dominus.” Pope Gregory VII wrote him a letter (the 22nd in the second volume of his letters) which is reproduced in “I'Histoire de Sable” P. 254.

Goscelin de Ste. Maur married Aremburge in the year 1000, and by her had four sons, viz., Josbert, Guillaume, Hugues, Goscelin. Of these the latter had a son Guillaume who died s.p., and Hugues married Alner de Berlay de Montreuil by whom he had several children, only one of whom, Hugues (1087 to 1105), however, left any issue. This was a son Gautier, whose son Guillaume left an only daughter who married the Seigneur de Pressigny in Tourraine, who took the name of the heiress and founded the second house of Ste. Maur. The above Guillaume is mentioned in 1198 as being in Normandy.”

Chapter 2 – After the norman invasion – the St maurs in

early England (1066-1500)

“Of Goscelin's two elder sons one appears to have been a priest. This must have been Josbert, for the second son Guillaume seems to have had a son Wido de Ste. Maur who came to England during the Norman invasion. It is of course impossible to show any proof as to who did or did not actually accompany the Conqueror, as there is no list of names in which the least reliance can be placed. In an account of the Battle Abbey Roll (the inaccuracy of which is, I believe, generally admitted) in Fuller's Church History by Brewer, where the lists in Holinshed and Stow's Chronicle are compared, the name appears in both. In Holinshed, P. 5, as Sent More and in Stow, P. 107, as Seint More. The difference in spelling has probably caused the name to be overlooked, but I feel confident that it is intended for Saint Maur. This name indeed has undergone very many changes of spelling and even pronunciation. In Latin deeds it generally became de Sancto Mauro, but we also find Saynt-Mor, Sayn-Maur, Seyne-More, SenneMaur, Seyne-Maure, Semor, Semore, Seimour, and finally Seymour. Even in Queen Elizabeth's time I have found it spelt Seymaur, and in Queen Anne's reign Seimour, whilst in these days of education I frequently receive letters addressed Saint Mor, St. Mor, St. More, and even St. Muyre.

Wido de St. Maur, as we have seen, came over to England in 1066. He died before 1086 leaving a son, William Fitz-Wido, who held a barony in Somerset, Wilts, and Gloucester, and ten manors in Somerset. Most of this property he no doubt inherited from his father, who must have received them from the Conqueror, as there is no mention of either marrying an heiress. We may therefore conclude that Wido must have rendered some service to the Conqueror to merit such a reward.

During the period immediately following the Conquest, when the country was still far from being settled down, very few records appear to have been kept or, if they were, they have for the most part been lost. It is not surprising, therefore, that we should find but little mention of a private family. There appears, however, to have been a Roger de St. Maur living in the year 1100, a son, apparently, of William Fitz-Wido, and in 1129 he appears as a witness to a charter of Richard de Cormeil to the Priory of Monmouth.

This deed has no date but it must have been signed in that year, for Baderon, Lord of Monmouth, and Rohesia his wife, who were married in 1128, also signed it as witnesses, and it was made prior to the death of Prior Godfrey which occurred in 1130. This Roger had therefore some connection with the county of Monmouth, and it may not be unreasonable to suppose that he had settled at Penhow, for we find the family owning that place not many years after. He is stated to have been the founder of two families, but there is some confusion in tracing them. An Almericus de Sancto Mauro is mentioned as being master of the order of Knights Templars, and also a Bartholemew de Sancto Mauro who witnessed a charter of William, Earl of Gloucester, to Keynsham Abbey about 1170. This Bartholemew seems without doubt to have been a son of Roger, and father of William de Sancto Mauro, one of the King's esquires in 1175. This William apparently had a son, Milo, for in 1217 we find a Milo de St. Maur who is stated to have been without doubt a direct descendant of Roger. But little is known about him, except that he took part with the rebellious Barons against King John, on the occasion when the latter was forced to sign the Magna Charta, and that he left two sons, Geffrey and William.

In the Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine, vol. xv, P. 142, we see Mr. J. R. Planché (Brit. Archæol. Journ., 18 5 6, P. 3 2 5) says : There are two families of St. Maur. The St. Maurs or Seymours of Kingston Seymour, in Somersetshire, who trace their pedigree to Milo de Sancto Mauro, who with his wife Agnes, is named in a fine roll of King John ; and the St. Maurs or Seymours of Penhow, Monmouthshire, from which the present ducal house of Somerset descends. All our genealogists, from Dugdale downwards, are scrupulous in observing that there is no connection whatever between the two families, who bore different arms and settled in different counties, and I freely admit there is no connection to be traced between them from the earliest date to which they have proved their pedigree; but that fact by no means satisfies me that they did not branch from the same Norman stock. We have no proof that there were two St. Maurs who came over with the Conqueror (probably from St. Maure-sur-Loire in la Haute Touraine), nor can we assert that if there were two or more they were not, as in many similar instances, near kinsmen . . . . That their arms should be different is no proof at all, for, although a similarity in their bearings would be strong evidence in favour of some connection, it is one of the most common things in the world to find, in 'those early days of herald the son bearing a coat quite distinct from that of his father, as he frequently did a perfectly different name.” The St. Maurs of Kingston bore Argent, two chevrons gules, a label of five points. The St. Maurs of Penhow, Gules, a pair of wings conjoined in lure, or.”

*As we see here again, there are disputes between the historians. Again in this case, one historian is taking the line “if it isn’t 100% proven with documentation, then it never happened”. I agree more with the author, that in some cases where written proof doesn’t exist, one must use common sense and interpret the known facts which do exist. This does, of course, leave the possibility for error, and you the reader should decide which philosophy as regards interpreting history makes more sense to you. For example, in Delaware county New York, one could make the logical assumption that anyone with the name Seymour can trace their name back to Richard of Sawbridgeworth, but there is a very slight possibility that a Seymour from another line has immigrated to the same area very recently. In the case above, there only exists evidence of one St Maur arriving in England, that being Wido, and therefore all Seymours in England must trace back to him, in my humble opinion, of course.*

“It would appear, therefore, according to Dugdale and others, that the two families were entirely distinct, but I am more inclined to agree with Mr. Planché’s reasoning and even to go further and assert that as far as probabilities can be made to take the place of evidence, these probabilities all tend to show that the two families were the signatures we find an Aymer de Sancto Mauro, Master of the Temple.-Cott. MS., Aug. 1 1106 connected, though, for some reason or other, they were neither of them inclined to acknowledge the fact.”

*In my time I’ve personally seen family feuds which cause members to disown one another. It’s not a big stretch of the imagination, for me, to assume that two St Maur brothers had a nasty falling out.*

“To begin with, we must notice that the St. Maur family obtained lands in Wilts and Somerset through Wido de St. Maur. Afterwards, Roger de St. Maur obtained additional lands in Monmouth**.** Milo de St. Maur undoubtedly held these lands in Monmouth, as well as those in Wilts and Somerset yet, immediately after him, we are told that the St. Maurs holding the Monmouthshire property and the St. Maurs holding the Somerset and Wilts property are separate families, having absolutely no connection. And yet Milo left two sons! There is, however, no record of whom he married, and it is possible that the sons were by different wives, or even that one of them may have been a natural son, which might account for their disclaiming each other. It would be futile to enter into any long argument either for or against the descent of the Seymour family from Milo de St. Maur in the absence of any proofs which could prove or disprove it. The reader must draw his own conclusions from the slender materials here produced, always remembering that Dugdale is by no means an authority to be absolutely relied on, and that many later genealogists have merely copied what he wrote.

Of Milo's sons the elder, Geffrey, married a daughter of William de Rughdon, but beyond this there appears to be no mention of him except that he was succeeded by a son, Laurence de St. Maur, who in 1274, obtained from King Edward 1 a grant for a market, to be held at his Manor of Rode in Somerset upon the Thursday in every week, and also to hold a fair there every year upon the eve, day, and morrow of St. Margaret, the Virgin. In 1282 we find him acknowledging the service of half a knight's fee for his own inheritance in Wilts, and one-third of a knight's fee for the inheritance of Sibilla, his wife, in the county of Northumberland. In August of the same year he led an expedition against the Welsh. In 1295 he was exempted from the general summons of persons holding land by military tenure, for the King's expedition to Gascony (June 14). In July, 1297, he was summoned to perform military service beyond the seas. This summons can only have arrived after his death which had taken place the previous winter. He left one son, Nicholas.

Nicholas de St. Maur did his homage, and had livery of his father's lands. He also had been summoned in July, 1297, for military service abroad, and appears to have attended the summons, and gone furnished with horses and arms. In 1298 he was summoned to perform military service against the Scots, by a letter dated May 25, and in June, 1300, he was again summoned for a similar purpose. In 1306 he again served there in the retinue of Henry of Lancaster, the younger son of Edward Crouchback, Earl of Lancaster. In 1313 he obtained a pardon, as 1313 an adherent of the Earl of Lancaster, for having participated in the death of Gaveston, and in the same year was summoned to Parliament as representative of Gloucester. In the following years, 1314, 1316, 1317, he was summoned to perform military service against the Scots. In 1316 he was certified as Lord or joint Lord of the following hundreds and townships :-North-Molton in Devon, Hampton-Maysi in Gloucester, Yonkill and Weston in Hereford, Woolverton and La Road in Somerset, Eton- Maysi, Poulton, and Witham in Wilts. His first wife had been Eve de Meysi, who had brought him considerable property, but had not lived long. (Note i.) His second wife was Helen, the eldest of the three daughters and coheirs of **Alan la Zouche** of Ashby, in Leicester. By this marriage he gained considerable importance as well as more property. He died in 1317, leaving a son, Thomas. His wife, Helen, survived him, and married Alan de Cherleton.

*This is very interesting to us, since the la Zouche family name later evolved into Greene, named after their manor Grene de la Boketon in County of Northampton*, *and my mother was Sandra Greene. See chapter 14. In another meeting of the Seymour and la Zouche families, Thomas Seymour married Katherine Parr, whose mother was Maud Greene.*

Thomas de St. Maur was only 9 years of age at the time of his father's death. He became, in consequence, a ward at the disposal of the Sovereign, Edward XI, who almost immediately granted letters patent to Hugh le Despencer, the elder, giving him the wardship of the Manors of Hampton-Maysi, in Gloucester, and Eton- Maysi, in Wilts, which the late Nicholas had held, as part payment of certain debts which were owed him by the King. This wardship was to be held during the minority of Thomas, who does not, however, appear to have lived many years after coming of age. Little further can be found about him, except that he founded the Priory of Dulton, in Wilts, annexing it, as a cell, to the Priory of Semplingham, in Lincoln. The successor to the estates was Sir Nicholas de St. Maur, Knight, who served in the wars in France in the retinue of Maurice de Berkeley in 1348, and again in the 1348 retinue of Thomas de Holland in 1360. He was summoned to Parliament from 1352 to 1361. He married Muriel, the daughter and heiress of James, the son and heir of Richard, Lord Lovel, by whom he had two sons, Nicholas and Richard, the former of whom died young.

Richard de St. Maur inherited all his father's estates, which appear to have been considerable. In 1387 he served in the wars in France, in the retinue of Richard, Earl of Arundel, Admiral of England. He was also summoned to Parliament from 1381 to 1401. He married Ela, the daughter and coheir of Sir John St. Loe, Knight, and died May 15, 1401, leaving three sons, Richard, John, and Nicholas of whom both the latter died without issue. By her testament, dated 1409, Ela bequeathed her body to be buried in the new chapel of Staverdale Priory, next to her husband's grave. She left her son Nicholas twenty pounds, her son John a set of beads of coral, garnished with gold, and made him her heir male, whilst Alice, her grand-daughter, was made her heir female.

Richard de St. Maur served in Ireland under Thomas, Duke of Surrey, the Lieutenant of that realm, in 1399, and afterwards in France, in 1402. He was summoned to Parliament from 1402 to 1407, and died the following year, leaving no male issue. His wife Mary, received at his death a considerable dowry, and his daughter, Alice, inherited the remainder of his property. This daughter was born either just before or just after his death in the house of Thomas Cressy, citizen and mercer of London, in the parish of St. Laurence, in Cripplegate Ward, and was baptised in the church of St. Laurence. She married Sir William le Zouche, Knight, of Totnes, who performed fealty, and had livery of her lands. *Here it looks like the Seymours are transferring back to the Greene’s some of the properties gained in an earlier marriage.*

Thus the elder of the two families started by Milo de St. Maur came to an end in an only daughter. We will therefore now go back to his second son, William, for from him apparently are descended the St. Maurs or Seymours of the present day. Sir William de St. Maur, Knight, was expressly called “of Penhow,” which was one of the border castles in Monmouth erected against the Welsh, and which, as has been already noticed, had formed part of the possessions of the family for some time.”

*Photo of Penhow Castle*:



“These possessions Sir William evidently determined to increase, for, in 1235-6, he entered into an agreement with Gilbert Marshall, Earl of Pembroke, to wrest the Manor of Woundy or Undy (as it was called later) from a Welshman, Morgan ap Howell, Lord of Caerleon, an attempt which appears to have been successfully carried out, the manor being subsequently divided between the Earl and Sir William. An old Latin record, which is transcribed in Vincent's manuscript baronage in the College of Arms, No. 20, says: “Gilbertus Marescallus., comes Pembrochiae tenetur praebere domino Willo de S. Mauro consilium in quantum poterit, secundum leges Angliae, ad perquirendum manerium de Woundy, de Morgano filio Hueli, tali conditione quod si praed ; Willus dictus menerium perquirere poterit. dictus Gilbertus habebit medietatem dicti manerii, et aliam medletatem ciat extendi dicto Willo, per probos et legales homines ad hoc ex utraque parte electos ita quod pro qualibet summa 20 L. redditus dictus Gilbertus dabit Willo de S. Mauro decem libras. Et quod idem Willus de S. Mauro teneat medietatem dicti manerii in manu sua, donec inde plenam solutionem, sicut praescriptum est, receperit. Et si forte contigerit, quod idem Willus de consilio dicti Gilberti defecrit, dictus Willus de S. Mauro remaneat soiutus et quietus de obligatione, quam dictus Gilbertus fecit super dictum manerium de Woundy.”

“Sir William de St. Maur thus became possessed of the Manor of Undy in addition to that of Penhow. The latter place he made his residence, and soon transformed it into a larger and more important castle, surrounded by a large park, both of which he named St. Maur. He also dedicated the church there to St. Maur the patron saint of the family, who seems to have been of some importance in ancient days, for even now churches are to be found abroad that were dedicated to him. Camden, in his chronicles of events in Ireland, 1361, also mentions him: “On the feast of St. Maur the Abbot., there happened a violent wind, that shook or blew down the pinnacles, chimneys, and such other buildings as overtopped the rest ; trees without number and several steeples ; particularly the steeple of the Friar's Preacher's.”

Sir William's signature appears as witness to two charters of Gilbert Marshall, and to three of Walter Marshall, two being undated, and the third bearing the date 1245. He married the 3rd daughter of William Marshall, Earl of Pembroke, but nothing more is to be found about him except that his son, Roger, is mentioned as succeeding him.

Sir Roger de St. Maur inherited his father's possessions at Undy and Penhow. He is mentioned as Lord of the Manor of the former in 1269. He died before 1300 and was succeeded by his eldest son, Roger.

It is at this period that we first find mention made of the arms of the St. Maur family which, from a seal appending to a grant of message to Thomas Elliot, of the chapel of Undy, surrounded by this inscription: Sigill, Rogerii de Seimour,” appear to have consisted of two angel's wings, joined, tips downward. In an MS. of Percy Enderby, which was in the possession of S. R. Bosanquet, Esq., in 1867, he records that in the “South windows at Penhow there were in the centre the arms of Seymour, Gules, 2 wings conjoined, or.” In his History of Modern Wiltshire, vol. i, p. 115, Sir Richard Colt Hoare says: “Percy Enderby, in his book entitled Cambria Triumphans, informs us, that the arms, now borne by Seymour (viz. : a pair of wings) Were, in his time, visible in the church at Penhow ; both cut in stone and in painted glass ; and I have been informed by a friend of mine, who lately visited Penhow at my request, that he perceived the wings on two old windows, belonging to a tenant at that place, and which being rather singular as to their application and situation, I think worthy of remark.”

“Of Roger de St. Maur but little is known, except that he lived in the year 1314, and married Joan, daughter of ??? Damarel, of Devonshire, by whom he had two sons, Sir John St. Maur and Sir Roger St. Maur, the former of whom died about 1358, leaving a son, Roger, born in 1340, who in turn left an only daughter who married into the family of Bowlays, near Penhow, and apparently brought her inheritance of Penhow Castle into that family.

Sir Roger St. Maur, or Seymour as we may now call him, became Lord of the Manor of Woundy in succession to his father. He does not, however, appear to have spent much of his time there, preferring to reside at Evinswinden, in Wilts. He married Cecilia, daughter of John de Beauchamp, Baron of Hache, in Somerset.

Camden says: “From William de St. Maur, knight, who first settled at Woundy, descended Roger de St. Maur, knight, who married one of the heiresses of the illustrious John Beauchamp (this John Beauchamp of Hache married Cecilia, daughter of Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, as may be seen in Sir William Dugdale's Antiquities of Warwickshire), the noble Baron de Hache, who was descended from Sybill, one of the coheiresses of that most puissant **William Marshall** (so called from his office), Earl of Pembroke ; and from William Ferrers, Earl of Derby; Hugh de Vivon ; and William Malet, men of eminent worth in their times. The nobility of all which, as also of several others, have (as may be made evident), concentred in the Right Honourable Edward de St. Maur or Seymour, now Earl of Hertford *(note Hertford here, as our proven progenitor, John Seymour, was born in Sawbridgeworth, County Hertfordshire)*, a singular encourager of virtue and learning ; for which qualification he is deservedly famous.”

*If you buy the scenario that our John Seymour of Sawbridgeworth is the son of Sir John and Catherine Fillol, then this impressive guy is also in our bloodline since Sir William St Maur married one of his daughters in the early 1200’s:*

**William Marshal, 1st Earl of Pembroke**

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Marshal,_1st_Earl_of_Pembroke>

“William Marshal was the greatest jouster of his age. From Matthew Paris's Chronica Major, Marshal unhorses Baldwin de Guisnes.

William Marshal, 1st Earl of Pembroke (1146 – 14 May 1219), also called William the Marshal (Guillaume le Maréchal), was an Anglo-Norman soldier and statesman. He has been described as the "greatest knight that ever lived" by Stephen Langton. He served four kings — Henry II, Richard the Lionheart, John and Henry III — and rose from obscurity to become a regent of England for the last of the four, and so, one of the most powerful men in Europe. Before him, the hereditary title of "Marshal" designated head of household security for the king of England; by the time he died, people throughout Europe (not just England) referred to him simply as "the Marshal".

Early life

His father John Marshal had originally been a supporter of King Stephen when he took the throne in 1136. But the collapse of England into civil war in 1139 (often referred to as The Anarchy) persuaded John to switch sides. The civil war was between King Stephen and Empress Matilda, both of whom claimed to be legitimate successor to Henry I of England. According to William's biographer, when King Stephen besieged Newbury Castle in 1152, Stephen used the young William as a hostage to ensure that John kept a promise to surrender the castle. John however, used the time allotted to reinforce the castle and alert Matilda's forces. When Stephen ordered John to surrender immediately or watch as he hanged William in front of the castle, John replied that he go ahead, saying "I still have the hammer and the anvil with which to forge still more and better sons!" Fortunately for the child, Stephen could not bring himself to hang young William.

As a younger son of a minor nobleman, William had no lands or fortune to inherit, and had to make his own way in life. Around the age of twelve, when his father's career was faltering, he was sent to Normandy to be brought up in the household of William de Tancarville, a great magnate and cousin of young William's mother. Here he began his training as a knight. He was knighted in 1166 on campaign in Upper Normandy, then being invaded from Flanders. His first experience of warfare was not a great success. He failed to take advantage of the knights he had managed to overcome in the street skirmish at Neufchâtel-en-Bray. In 1167 he was taken by William de Tancarville to his first tournament where he found his true métier. Quitting the Tancarville household he then served in the household of his mother's brother, Patrick, Earl of Salisbury. In 1168 his uncle was killed in an ambush by Guy of Lusignan. William was injured and captured in the same skirmish, but was ransomed by Eleanor of Aquitaine, who was apparently impressed by tales of his bravery. Thereafter he found he could make a good living out of winning tournaments. At that time tournaments were dangerous, often deadly, staged battles, not the jousting contests that would come later, and money and valuable prizes could be won by capturing and ransoming opponents. His record is legendary: on his deathbed he recalled besting 500 knights during his tourneying career. However his biography admits that even the Marshal occasionally lost, and without good grace. He cherished a long grudge against a Hainaulter knight, Matthew de Walincourt, who had defeated him as a youngster.

William Marshal and the Young King Henry

The Marshal's career entered a new phase in 1170 when he was appointed to the household of the Henry the Young King eldest surviving son of Henry II of England, crowned that year as associate king to his father. William was intended to be the boy's tutor-in-arms, but became his mentor and idol. He infected the boy with his passion for the tournament, and for the next twelve years he was the Young King's constant companion and tournament team manager. He followed the Young King in his abortive rebellion against his father in 1173–74, and William makes his first appearance in the historical record in a list of rebels compiled by the clerks of Henry II. William is alleged by his biographer to have knighted his young master during the course of the rebellion, but we know from other sources that Young Henry had in fact been knighted by his father before his coronation in 1170.

Between 1174, when Henry was reconciled to his father, and 1182, William led his master's Anglo-Norman team in all the major tournaments of the day, especially frequenting the huge international meetings in Picardy. His job was to devise tactics and during the course of the tournament to act as minder to the Young King, to make sure he avoided the embarrassment of capture. By the time of the French state tournament of 1179 at Lagny-sur-Marne, held to celebrate the coronation of Philip II of France, William Marshal was sufficiently wealthy to raise his own banner over his own company of knights. He was also by then subject to the envy and conspiracy of rivals at the Young King's court. In 1182 they engineered his downfall, by claiming (with some justice) that Marshal was more interested in profiting from tournaments than protecting his lord. There were also accusations of disrespect to the king in his choice of war cry for his company ('God aids the Marshal') and the way his men trumpeted his fame above the king's. His biographer attempts to deflect these serious charges by his enemies, by adding to them the preposterous charge that William Marshal had seduced the king's wife. He was treated coldly by the king, until fed up by the insults, Marshal left to join the tournament team of the Young King's rival and cousin Philip of Flanders. He was however recalled to the Young King's household following the king's second rebellion against his father, and was at his side when he died of dysentery near Limoges on 11 June 1183. The Marshal undertook to complete the crusade vow his dead master had made, and took his cloak stitched with the cross to Jerusalem, with the approval of the bereaved father, Henry II.

Royal favour

Upon his return during the course of 1185 William rejoined the court of King Henry II, and now served the father as a loyal captain through the many difficulties of his final years. The returns of royal favour were almost immediate. The king gave William the large royal estate of Cartmel in Cumbria, and the keeping of Heloise, the heiress of the northern honour of Lancaster. It may be that the king expected him to take the opportunity to marry her and become a northern baron, but William seems to have had grander ambitions for his marriage. In 1188 faced with an attempt by Philip II to seize the disputed region of Berry, Henry II summoned the Marshal to his side. The letter by which he did this survives, and makes some sarcastic comments about William's complaints that he had not been properly rewarded to date for his service to the king. Henry therefore promised him the marriage and lands of Dionisia, lady of Châteauroux in Berry. In the resulting campaign, the king fell out with his heir Richard, count of Poitou, who consequently allied with Philip II against his father. In 1189, while covering the flight of Henry II from Le Mans to Chinon, William unhorsed the undutiful Richard in a skirmish. William could have killed the count but killed his horse instead, to make that point clear. He is said to have been the only man ever to unhorse Richard. Nonetheless after Henry's death, Marshal was welcomed at court by his former adversary, now King Richard I, who was not foolish enough to exclude a man whose legendary loyalty and military accomplishments were too useful to ignore, especially in a king who was intending to go on Crusade.

During the old king's last days he had promised the Marshal the hand and estates of Isabel de Clare (c.1172–1220), but had not completed the arrangements. King Richard however, confirmed the offer and so in August 1189, at the age of 43, the Marshal married the 17-year-old daughter of Richard Strongbow. Her father had been Earl of Pembroke, and Marshal acquired large estates and claims in England, Wales, Normandy and Ireland. Some estates however were excluded from the deal. Marshal did not obtain Pembroke and the title of earl, which his father-in-law had enjoyed, until 1199, as it had been taken into the king's hand in 1154. However, the marriage transformed the landless knight from a minor family into one of the richest men in the kingdom, a sign of his power and prestige at court. They had five sons and five daughters, and have numerous descendants (see below). William made numerous improvements to his wife's lands, including extensive additions to Pembroke Castle and Chepstow Castle.

William was included in the council of regency which the King appointed on his departure for the Third Crusade in 1190. He took the side of John, the king's brother, when the latter expelled the justiciar, William Longchamp, from the kingdom, but he soon discovered that the interests of John were different from those of Richard. Hence in 1193 he joined with the loyalists in making war upon him. In spring 1194, during the course of the hostilities in England, before King Richard's return, William Marshal's elder brother John Marshal was killed defending Marlborough for John, whose seneschal he was. Richard allowed Marshal to succeed his brother in the hereditary marshalship, and his paternal honour of Hamstead Marshall. The Marshal served the king in his wars in Normandy against Philip II. On Richard's death-bed the king designated Marshal as custodian of Rouen and of the royal treasure during the interregnum.

King John and Magna Carta

William supported King John when he became king in 1199, arguing against those who maintained the claims of Arthur of Brittany, the teenage son of John's elder brother Geoffrey Plantagenet. William was heavily engaged with the defence of Normandy against the growing pressure of the Capetian armies between 1200 and 1203. He sailed with King John when he abandoned the duchy in December 1203. He and the king had a falling out in the aftermath of the loss of the duchy, when he was sent with the earl of Leicester as ambassadors to negotiate a truce with King Philip II of France in 1204. The Marshal took the opportunity to negotiate the continued possession of his Norman lands. When William paid homage to King Philip, John took offence and there was a major row at court which led to cool relations between the two men. This became outright hostility in 1207 when John began to move against several major Irish magnates, including William. Though he left for Leinster in 1207 William was recalled and humiliated at court in the autumn of 1208, while John's justiciar in Ireland Meilyr fitz Henry invaded his lands, burning the town of New Ross. Meilyr's defeat by Countess Isabel led to her husband's return to Leinster. He was once again in conflict with King John in his war with the Briouze and Lacy families in 1210, but managed to survive. He stayed in Ireland until 1214, during which time he had Carlow Castle erected and restructured his honour of Leinster. In 1214 he was summoned to return to the English court. Despite their differences, William remained loyal throughout the hostilities between John and his barons which culminated on 15 June 1215 at Runnymede with the sealing of Magna Carta. William was one of the few English earls to remain loyal to the king through the First Barons' War. It was William whom King John trusted on his deathbed to make sure John's nine-year-old son Henry would get the throne. It was William who took responsibility for the king's funeral and burial at Worcester Cathedral.

On 11 November 1216 at Gloucester, upon the death of King John, William Marshal was named by the king's council (the chief barons who had remained loyal to King John in the First Barons' War) to serve as protector of the nine year old King Henry III, and regent of the kingdom. In spite of his advanced age (around 70) he prosecuted the war against Prince Louis and the rebel barons with remarkable energy. In the battle of Lincoln he charged and fought at the head of the young King's army, leading them to victory. He was preparing to besiege Louis in London when the war was terminated by the naval victory of Hubert de Burgh in the straits of Dover. William was criticised for the generosity of the terms he accorded to Louis and the rebels in September 1217; but his desire for an expeditious settlement was dictated by sound statesmanship. Self-restraint and compromise were the key-notes of Marshal's policy, hoping to secure peace and stability for his young liege. Both before and after the peace of 1217 he reissued Magna Carta, in which he is a signatory as one of the witnessing barons. Without his prestige the Angevin dynasty might not have survived the disastrous reign of John; where the French and the rebels would not trust the English king's word, they would trust William.

Death and legacy

William Marshal was interred in Temple Church, London

William Marshal's health finally failed him in February 1219. In March 1219 he realised that he was dying, so he summoned his eldest son, also William, and his household knights, and left the Tower of London for his estate at Caversham in Oxfordshire, near Reading, where he called a meeting of the barons, Henry III, the papal legate Pandulf Masca, the royal justiciar (Hubert de Burgh), and Peter des Roches (Bishop of Winchester and the young King's guardian). William rejected the Bishop's claim to the regency and entrusted the regency to the care of the papal legate; he apparently did not trust the Bishop or any of the other magnates that he had gathered to this meeting. Fulfilling the vow he had made while on crusade, he was invested into the order of the Knights Templar on his deathbed. He died on 14 May 1219 at Caversham, and was buried in the Temple Church in London, where his effigy can still be seen.

After his death, his eldest son, also named William, commissioned a biography of his father to be written called L'Histoire de Guillaume le Marechal. This book, written so soon after his death, has preserved (and probably enhanced) the legend of William Marshal for posterity. While his knightly achievements may be debatable, there is no doubt of his impact on the history and politics of England, from his stalwart defence of the realm to his support of the Magna Carta.”

*Wow, what a life. Someday I hope to get to the Temple Church to see his grave/effigy. Now back to the St Maurs:*

“In his description of the county of Somerset, Camden again says: “The Beauchamps, otherwise de Bellocampo; have flourished in great honour from the time of Henry II, especially since Cecilia de Fortibus, descended from the Earls of Ferrariis, and from the famous Marshall of England, William, Earl of Pembroke, was married into this family. But in the reign of Edward III, the estate was divided by sisters, between Roger de Sancto Mauro and John Meriel, both of them sprung from ancient and honourable ancestors. This is the cause why Henry VIII, after he had married Jane Seymour, Edward VI's mother, made Edward Seymour, her brother, Viscount Beauchamp.”

This marriage not only greatly advanced the importance of the Seymour family, but brought them a considerable increase in wealth for, as we have seen, the Lady Cecilia was one of two sisters, the last of the Beauchamp 1363 family, and, in, the entire possessions of that family were divided between them. She died in 1393, having survived her husband, by whom she had five sons, the eldest of whom, William, being the only one about whom any information is to be gathered.

This Sir William Seymour, knight, resided for the most part at Undy. He is mentioned, in 1362, as attending the Prince of Wales to his government of Gascony, after first obtaining the King's letter of protection, dated from Bamberg on February 8 of that year. He married Margaret, daughter of Simon de Brockburn, and died in 1390, leaving a son, Roger, born in 1366.

Within three years of the death of his father, Roger Seymour inherited all the possessions of his grandmother, Cecilia, in addition to the property already received from his father. He was at this time 27 years of age. He married Maud, daughter and coheir to Sir William Esturmy, knight, of Wolfhall in Wilts, and died in 1420, leaving a son, John, born in 1402. Camden says:” The Esturmies had been bailiffs and guardians of the forest of Savernake by right of inheritance, from the time of Henry III. The Earl of Hertford, descended from this Roger, had in his possession their hunter's horn of a mighty bigness and tipped with silver. The Esturmies are famous for being the founders and patrons of the hospital of the Holy Trinity at Easton, near Marlborough, in Wilts.”

John Seymour inherited all his father's possessions, which had been so greatly increased by his marriage, at the age of 18. Being also heir to his cousin, Sir Peter de la Mere, knight, he became of still greater importance. In 1431 he served as Sheriff of the county of Southampton, and in the following year of Wiltshire. Soon after this he was made a knight, and appears to have become one of the most important of the gentlemen of Wilts; for, in the list of names of the gentlemen of that county returned by the Commissioners in 1434 his name appears first, after those of the elder knights and William Westbury, Justiciarus. He also served as Sheriff of Gloucester and Somerset, and again of Southampton in 1437. In 1451 he served in Parliament as one of the knights for the county of Wilts, this Parliament being one held at Reading. His wife was Isabel, daughter of Mark Williams, of Bristol, by whom he had a son, John.

Isabel Seymour, who had been married in 1424, survived her husband for many years, dying April 14, 1485. Two years after her husband's death, in 1463, she took the vow of perpetual chastity in the collegiate church of Westbury, inter missar solempnia, in the presence of Bishop Carpenter, who gave her his benediction and put upon her the vidual vesture, June 3, 1465. She was possessed in fee of divers messuages, cottages, and gardens, in the town and suburbs of Bristol ; and held in dower, or by joint feoffment with her late husband Sir John Seymour, various lands in the counties of Southampton, Wilts, Hereford and Somerset. Her heir was found to be her grandson, John Seymour of Wolfhall, in Wilts, who at the time of her death was 34 years of age. His father and mother had both predeceased his grandmother.

John Seymour, described as of Wolfhall (the Ulfela of the Saxons), in Wilts, served as Sheriff for that county in 1458. He married Elisabeth, daughter of Sir Robert Coker of Laurence Lydiard, in Somerset, and died in 1463, a month or two before his father, leaving two sons, John and Humphrey, the latter of whom settled at Evinswinden, and married the daughter and coheiress of Thomas Winslow of Burton, Oxon. The Seymours of Oxford and Gloucester were directly descended from him. Elisabeth Seymour died 1472.

The elder brother, John Seymour of Wolfhall, was born in 1450 He was, therefore, barely 14 years of age when his father and grandfather died. He was twice married, first to Elizabeth, daughter of Sir George Darell, of Littlecote in Wilts, by Margaret, daughter of John, Lord Stourton; secondly to a daughter of Robert Hardon, by whom he had one son, Roger, who in turn left four daughters, his coheirs. The death of John Seymour occurred in 1491. By his first wife, Elizabeth, he left numerous issue:

Sir John Seymour, of whom we will speak next.

George Seymour, who was Sheriff of Wilts in 1499.

Robert Seymour.

Sir William Seymour, who was made a Knight of the Bath at the marriage of Arthur, Prince of Wales, November, 1501

Margaret Seymour, who married Sir William Wadham, knight.

Jane Seymour, who married Sir John Huddlestone, of Warleston, in Cumberland.

Elizabeth Seymour, who married John Crofts, Esq.

Catherine Seymour, who died unmarried.”

Chapter 15

Penhow castle, modern day Seymour family shrine



<http://www.castlewales.com/penhow.html>



Church next to the castle:



“Official Guidebook

A perfect example of the smaller type of fortified manor house, Penhow was developed from a heavily-built keep necessary to protect the knightly retainers of the local earl, who lived in almost impregnable majesty at nearby Chepstow Castle. This great Norman stronghold and bridgehead into Wales was the first castle with a stone keep to be built in Britain by the conquering Normans in 1070. "Knight's Fee" manors and castles like Penhow were established to protect the outlying farmlands and give advance warning of any Welsh uprising. The area that is now known as Gwent was settled by families that had come over from France with or in the wake of William the Conqueror, and we know that Sir Roger de St Maur was at Penhow by 1129, for he witnessed the charter that founded the priory of Monmouth in that year. In return for the task of keeping down the Welsh, providing a quota of men for guard duty at Chepstow every month, and for supplying one man mounted on a horse in times of War, Sir Roger was permitted to usurp the Manor of Penhow from its native Welsh prince, and gain a toehold on the feudal ladder. Sir Roger's home was a cold stone Pele tower that stood alone on its rocky knoll, and directly overlooked the conquered natives in their 'Welshry' at Talgarth. It was the first home in Britain of a family destined to become one of the greatest in the land.

But it was more than a century after the foundation of the castle before the fortunes of the St Maurs - or Seymours as they came to be called - really began to prosper. By the mid 13th century the great marcher lordship of Chepstow was in the hands of the powerful Marshal family, who were also the earls of Pembroke. Penhow's then seigneur *(French word for Lord)*, Sir William de St Maur, had married the 3rd daughter of the earl of Pembroke, and in 1240 entered into a nefarious agreement with Gilbert Marshal, his overlord and brother-in-law, to deprive Morgan ap Howell, the last prince of Gwent, of his manor at 'Woundy', four miles from Penhow and now called Undy. The agreement still exists in the public records office in London, and provides that if there was any resistance to this 'annexation' of Woundy, St Maur could call on the might of Marshal's army. For St Maur's presumption and Marshal's backing, the two divided the proceeds of the manor between them. In the later documents the St Maurs are recorded as having the vineyards of Woundy, and in that village today there is still a Vinegar Hill, which presumedly marks their site. When the castle moat was re-excavated by University College Cardiff in 1978-9, a number of circular sling-shot stones were recovered from the 13th century layers. Perhaps they were thrown at the castle by the angered citizens of Woundy in 1240. But if so, it could only have been a futile protest, for within a generation all Welsh claims to the manors had been extinguished.

While the cadet branch of the family had moved to green pastures in Wiltshire, the senior branch found itself by the end of the 14th century without a male heir, and Isabella Seymour married one John Bowles, who died in 1430. The Bowles of Penhow adopted the arms of the Seymour family, the simple paired wings of the hunting lure, and in 1438 Thomas Bowles, John's grandson, led a small force of men from Penhow all the way to Berwick-upon-Tweed on the Scottish border to assist in the siege of the town. The siege was part of the complicated politics of the War of the Roses. For his services, Thomas Bowels was knighted by the Duke of Gloucester and returned to Penhow with a substantial pension. He then married Maud, daughter of Sir Thomas Morgan of nearby Pencoed Castle. His arms, the paired wings, and hers, the griffin or dragon of the Morgans, are carved in stone on the outside of one of the windows of the great hall. Sir Thomas's son produced an only daughter, Maria, who married Sir George Somerset, brother of the 2nd earl of Worcester, Lord of Raglan Castle.



In 1674 Thomas Lewis of St Pierre, a grand estate near Chepstow, bought the castle. His son was High Sheriff of the County, and in him the refurbished Penhow Castle had a resident Lord of the Manor for the last time until the lordship of the manor was conveyed back to Stephen Weeks in 1979. Of what happened to Penhow during the Civil War that preceded the Lewis' ownership, very little is known, however it appears to have survived as a habitation, unlike almost every other castle in Monmouthshire. By 1714 the castle was owned by absentee landlords, and it was tenanted as a farm, remaining that way until 1966 under a variety of owners. In 1973 the castle was sold to Stephen Weeks, a young film director and writer, who began the full-scale restoration of the castle. By 1978, having suffered arctic winters with the roof off and all the usual privations of restoring a building while living in it, he had completed enough of the castle to allow visitors, and work on the restoration continues to this day.

Less than a century after the keep tower was built, the larger area of the inner bailey was enclosed within a thick stone curtain wall, provided with a wall-walks, battlements and look-outs. One of the look-outs is visible from the courtyard. By the 14th century Penhow was quite a stronghold. The drawbridge which traversed the moat was operated by counterweights of stone and flanked by a strong square guard tower (rediscovered in 1979) and by the projecting wall of the great hall block. Inside the bailey was a series of structures, the lower portions of which are incorporated into the present buildings. On the east was an undercroft (excavated in 1979), which was used as a wine store. The north range has now been absorbed into later buildings, and it is impossible to determine its medieval functions. The south range contained the hall, lower than the level of the present great hall, and narrower. The lower hall, now the entrance hall to the castle, was probably used as a retainer's hall in the time of Sir Thomas Bowles, and adjoining it was the tiny Porter's Room, which overlooked the drawbridge and which had a stout barred door to contain the castle's valuables. Above the lower hall, and reached by a spiral staircase, is the Great Hall, which achieved its present shape in the late 1480s. At one end is the screens passage, with a minstrel's gallery above. The north range displays the work of the Lewis family in converting Penhow from an old-fashioned castle to a modern house shortly after 1674. The north side of the curtain wall was pierced for large windows and an impressive front door. Penhow Castle gives us a fascinating look at a smaller-type medieval fortification once numerous throughout Wales, and provides insight into the way the British house has developed over the centuries.”

*From a different website written by a Seymour family historian*--- http://www.s560.com/dokuwiki/puritan\_migration#fnt\_\_3

“Where is Penhow? Look at southeast Wales, near the English border, close to the Severn Estuary. By automobile take the M4 Motorway across the Severn bridge and head west about twelve miles on route A48. As you approach from any direction, the compact stone mass dominates the roadside, perched on top of a small hill, with a working farm surrounding it on all sides. Drive up through the farmyard on a public way and park your vehicle in a small area in front of the new iron gates across from the church. Stephen Weeks, an artist, writer, and motion-picture director, bought Penhow for a song. The wrecked oldest part was restored lovingly with the help of grants in funds and labor by the Welsh government together with donations from American Seymours, not to mention Weeks's own fortune and personal labor and that of his parents.

The castle had been the dwelling of a farm couple, but the oldest parts-the keep tower, the upper hall, and the hall below it-were completely disused, being storage for hay and fodder.

In 1979 Mr. Weeks presented the Seymour family with a festival commemorating the 850th anniversary of the building of the first Seymour home in Britain. This unforgettable experience, captured by BBC radio and television, may never be duplicated in the near future, but the emotional experiences of the fortunate few who were there will live forever in their minds. The official opening at noon on May 19, 1979, was made by His Grace the Duke of Somerset, present with Her Grace the Duchess. The marquess of Hertford also attended, accompanied by the earl of Yarmouth. The forty-one American Seymours in attendance represented only a fifth of those who had helped reconstruct the oldest parts of Penhow. Penhow now remains a true Seymour museum and a family shrine. [Open Good Friday to end of September, Wednesdays to Sundays inclusive, 10:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. Telephone: Penhow (0633) 400800. – Editor's Note: When I visited in the summer of 2003, Penhow castle was a private residence and no longer open to visitors.

It does not take too much imagination walking up the circular stairway, from the lower hall to the beautifully reconstructed upper hall, to imagine the festivities that took place there, the judgments meted out by the lord of the manor, and the sadness, as well. Enter the small masonry tunnel, leading into the earliest part of the castle, the keep tower. Before the addition of the hall block, the St. Maurs would reach the first floor of the keep tower through a small opening, about twelve feet above the ground level, using a ladder that could be pulled up at night and in times of trouble. Access from this room to the floor above was by means of a staircase built into the rock wall. Here the St. Maurs would have slept, hopefully keeping warm in great bearskin coverings, with a meager fire in the hearth for minimum comfort. Above the sleeping chamber are the ramparts where crenellated walls look down on approaches. A sentinel's seat faces the east and south, the weakest side of the castle. Far away, the vista of the hills that slope and fall away have not changed in these 850 years. Pigeons still beat a hasty retreat at the sight of the falcon, as reenacted during the Seymour Festival of 1979.

The author read about Penhow and the famous arms of the golden wings and, as part of a pilgrimage, at last came on the historic ruin. After that first visit, followed by revisitations each year thereafter, Penhow is considered as a great Seymour monument to the past.”

*Next is a BBC special done on Penhow Castle, about some unexplained occurrences.*

<http://www.psychicinvestigations.net/html/psychic_investigations_3.html>

“This investigation has been shown on BBC 1, BBC Wales and BBC 2 PENHOW CASTLE - Nr Newport, Gwent

Psychic Investigators: Chris and Jane McCarthy, Dave Coggins and Gaynor Mullins with the BBC Film Crew

Penhow Castle's owner, Stephen Weeks, has lived in Penhow Castle for over thirty years and has experienced many ghostly manifestations. A dinner party was interrupted by music from a ghostly string quartet playing in the drawing room and many times he has heard footsteps on the wooden staircase which had the initials AK carved into it. In the cemetery, attached to the small church outside Penhow Castle, there is the grave of a young girl called Ann Keene aged nine years old. The Psychic Investigators were called in by the BBC to investigate. None of the team were told of any of the history of the castle.

The picture to the left hand side was just taken before the team was split up into groups. The intention was for the groups to search through the castle for paranormal activity. Chris and I were in a large room which was open to the public which looked like a banqueting hall with a large table in the middle. On the walls were plaques showing coats of arms. Here there was a very strong male spirit energy. I got out the sketch pad and drew a psychic art picture of a man aged around 40s with a beard. Gaiety, laughter and also tragedy happened in this room which led into another large room where there was an old fireplace - see paranormal photograph below.

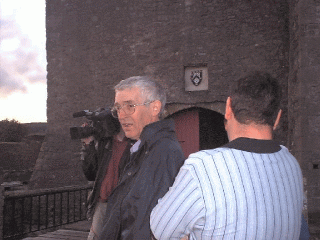


If you notice at the bottom left hand side of the fireplace is a large orb. A close up of this orb can be seen in the picture below on the right hand side. In another part of the castle Dave and Gaynor were going up the stairs where Gaynor felt a cold spot and the hairs on her arm stood on end.

She felt the energy of a young lady standing behind her. This was where Stephen Weeks had heard the footsteps. Later we all congregated at the top bedroom which contained a large four poster bed. Both Gaynor and I felt this room had experienced some misfortune and I got the sketch pad out and drew a psychic art picture of a young girl. This picture was later given to Stephen Weeks as a memento of our visit. Above the bed was a spirit orb and Chris took a picture of the orb which was captured by the BBC film crew. The following paranormal photograph shows the picture that was taken.

A close up of the orb photograph is by the side - please note that this picture has been slightly lightened. Finally, we all went out into the courtyard where many paranormal photographs were taken. Spirits were all around us. One thing that came through very strong were the letters CM over and over again until the letters sounded like the name Seymour. Looking back over the history of the castle after the psychic investigation the name Seymour is mentioned. Sir Roger de St Maur was at Penhow by 1129 and the name was pronounced or known as ‘Seymours.’

The photograph to the left hand side shows the entrance to Penhow Castle. Notice the Coat of Arms above the doorway. Dave Coggins and Chris are with the camera man from the BBC.



All of us felt that the castle is haunted and that the courtyard was one of the strongest areas of spirit energy. Several paranormal photographs showed orbs in the courtyard. The Castle is on an energy line which will increase any paranormal activity. Indeed, when I sat alone in my front room after the visit looking through the photographs I saw a spirit orb right in front of me. It looked like a golf ball and then it slowly vanished but a shadow in full figure was in the room - spooky. If you want a real ghostly experience this castle is worth a visit.

UPDATE 9 APRIL 2006

An enlightening and interesting email received from Christopher Weeks April 2006 explaining what it was like to live in Penhow Castle:-

I just read your investigation article of Penhow Castle done on August 29th 2002. It is very interesting that you found so many orbs all over the castle and learnt about Anne and the Seymours. My name is Christopher Weeks and I am the nephew to the previous owner Stephen Weeks. Unfortunately he and I don't keep in contact but I keep track with the castle on websites to see it progress. But the information I get online is old. I have just learnt that it has been sold to a London businessman and his family in December 2002 and intends to make the castle into a fully private residence. I hope they can live along with Anne Keen and the Seymour family. Did you investigate the 17th century rooms at all? That stair case with Anne's initials’ in the bottom is where I heard the footsteps too. I have also heard the music and felt the cold presence while walking through the castle. I can't say I am psychic but I do have a little bit of a gift. Sometimes the feelings I got were unpleasant but not always. I don't know if ghosts/spirits get used to people but I found that the more I occupied the castle and its rooms, the nicer the castle became. Whenever I would enter the castle I would tell it ‘hello’. Call me crazy but it helped. The Seymour Chamber is quite spooky and I have as much as I tried, I always felt uneasy there. I used to stay in the Tudor room where I was visited once. I woke up one night dripping with sweat, my heart racing fast and sat straight up in my bed to a feeling that someone was very close in the room. Eventually the feeling eased off and I went back to sleep but I knew there was something in the room. On the opposite side of the wall in my room was the Seymour chamber which could have something to do with it. Stephen had 2 black cats also. (Swords taken during psychic investigation - notice orb by the side of them)

Close up of orb in the roof - please note that the outside has been darkened and the inside lightened in order that you can see inside the orb.

Runsey and Sophie who would follow me up to the battlements and follow me back down with no problems or hesitation to anything in the rooms. My father is the one who discovered that Secret passage way that links the Great Hall to the dining room under the Seymour Chamber. It was once used that a cloak room before the other part (the dining room and Seymour chamber) was built. I am so glad a team like yours has visited the Castle and you found out and know what I know, plus have proof to show it. If you have any more photos that you could share I would be grateful. Recently I have become interested in ghost hunting after watching these ghost hunting programs on tv. I hope the new owners treat the castle with respect as I have said before the spirits present aren’t keen on strangers who aren’t pleasant in spirit themselves

I cleaned, polished, dusted, built fires in the fireplaces, all the usual household chores. It was funny when I watched the BBC footage video clip and at the end when the host said that if you are going ghost hunting in the castle, don't go alone. I used to do the guided tours almost every day and late into the night, and have to walk through the castle alone. Come to think of it another spooky place was the sitting room behind the lower hall. As you are in there it feels as if someone tall is there with you, and follows through the old wine cellar, into the victorian sitting room. I felt that several times but I didn't mind. While I was there we had done an excavation of the court yard and found it to be a huge hole for garbage, we found bones, broken plates, cups, and I found a needle. I seems that when its real use was done with (collecting water probably) it was filled in and is now what it is.

To right hand side is one of the orbs taken in the courtyard - notice it looks like a doorway - can you see a shelf with something on?

Funny how the courtyard had the most spiritual activity, because that was the most comfortable place to sit, relax in the sun and read a book, or chat with friends. When you were talking about someone standing on the stair case who would wait for people to pass, that is where I would stand also, no matter if someone was at the top coming down, I would stand there and wait....weird huh? - Christopher Weeks

If you now own Penhow Castle, Christopher Weeks and the Psychic Investigators team would love to undertake another Psychic Investigation there. God bless and thank you Christopher for allowing us to publish your email and your kind comments.

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