

SWINNERTON

FAMILY HISTORY

HERALDIC AND GENEALOGICAL STUDIES

of the Swinnerton family

edited by

Lt. Col. I. S. SWINNERTON, T.D., J.P.

Beech Tree House, Norton Road, Stourbridge, Worcs.

VOLUME ONE No. 1

MAY, 1974.

The first known complete history of the Swinnerton family was published in 1886 as Part II of Volume VII of the "Collections for a History of Staffordshire" edited by the William Salt Archaeological Society (now the Staffordshire Record Society).

It was written by the Hon. & Rev. Canon G.T.O. Bridgman with additional chapters by the Rev. Charles Swynnerton. A limited number of copies of Part II were bound separately for the Rev. Charles who gave them to members of his family.

Only two copies are known to survive, one is in the possession of the writer - the other belonged to the late Major General C.R.A. Swynnerton, CB, DSO (CS/19) a nephew of the Rev. Charles and is now in the possession of his son, Colonel J. C. A. Swynnerton, OBE. (JS/130)

GEORGE THOMAS ORLANDO BRIDGMAN, MA, JP, (born 21. 8. 1823, died 25. 11. 1895) was the second son of the 2nd Earl of Bradford of Weston Park, Shifnal, Salop. The Bradfords took their title from Bradford in Salop, not from the better known Yorkshire town and had connections with the Midland Counties going back to the 13th century. He was Rector successively of Willey, Blymhill and Wigan and Rural Dean successively of Brewood and Wigan; an Honorary Canon in turn of Chester and Liverpool Cathedrals and Chaplain in Ordinary to Queen Victoria.

A keen historian, he was a member of the Editorial Committee of the William Salt Society and was responsible for the early work on the Society's great history of the manor and parish of Weston under Lizard which was continued after his death by his sons, the Rev. E. R. O. Bridgman, MA, Rector of Blymhill, Staffs. and G. C. O. Bridgman, MA, Barrister-at-law of Lincoln's Inn.

THE REV. CHARLES SWYNNERTON, MA, FSA, (CS/15) was the second son of Charles Swynnerton (CS/14) of Douglas, I.O.M. and Mary Callister and a great grandson of WILLIAM SWINNERTON of Betley (WS/14; 1772-1839) from whom many of the present day Swinnertons are also descended. He graduated from the University College of London 1866, the University of Oxford 1870 and was made FSA in 1889. In 1879 he joined the William Salt Archaeological Society and in addition to the chapters in Vol. VII mentioned above, he also wrote for the "Collections for a History of Staffs" :

"The Swynnerton Family of Eccleshall & Chell"	Vol. III N.S. 1900
"The First Two Generations of the Swynnerton Family"	Vol. for 1912
and "Two Early Staffordshire Deeds"	Vol. for 1926

He was Headmaster of Ramsey Grammar School and Curate of St. Olave's, Lezayre, I.O.M. from 1868-73 but in 1877 joined the Army and was appointed a Chaplain on the Calcutta Establishment. From 1879-84 he served in Ceylon, then went back to India and served with the Afghanistan Black Mountain Expedition 1891 and the Waziristan Expedition 1894. In the Army List of 1889 he is given as Senior Chaplain, Sealkote, Bengal Ecclesiastical Establishment. Sometime at the start of this century he retired and went to live in Gloucestershire.

Having taken on the mantle of family historian he wrote prolifically on the subject from the 1870's until his death. He contributed to 'The Genealogist' and 'Notes & Queries'; wrote two major articles for 'The Ancestor' - 'Some Forgotten Swynnertons of the XIVth Century' (Vol. VII 1902) and 'The Angelo Family' - Louise Angelo was his sister-in-law - (Vol. VIII 1903) and a long series of articles for 'The Reliquary'. He also published a book 'Romantic Tales from the Punjab' and even found time to write some poetry.

Curiously, for a historian, he was very reticent about his own dates and the exact dates of his birth, marriage and death are not yet known.

A further 'potted' history of the family was published in 1971 under the title of "Swynnerton & the Swinnertons". It was originally written as a series of articles for the parish magazine of St. Mary's Church, Swynnerton by the then Curate, the Rev. B. T. Swinnerton (BS/19). Edited and put into book form by the author it had a very good sale, raising a considerable sum of money for the Church but very few copies are now left.

The foregoing are the principal printed works dealing with the overall history of the family. Miscellaneous references occur in other volumes of the 'Collections for a History of Staffs.'; in the Shropshire Archaeological Society's Volumes - particularly Vol. VI 3rd series; in the publications of the North Staffs. Field Club and many other printed books. We hope to publish many of these in future issues.

THE NAME "SWINNERTON"

There appear to be divided opinions as to the origin and meaning of the name. The first reference to it is in Domesday Book :-

Folio 249

Isdem Robertus tenet II hides in
Sulvertone & Aslen tenet de eo
Broder
tenuit & liber homo fruit. Terra
est VIII carucis. In dominio
est una & X villani
& V bordarii cum VI carucis
Ibi X aerae prati Silna I
lania longa & I lata
Valet XL solidos

Robert holds 2 hides in Swynnerton
and Aslen holds them of him
Broder
held them & was a free man.
There is land for 8 ploughs. One is in
the demesne and 10 villeins
and 5 Scottages with 6 ploughs.
There are 10 acres of meadow. The
wood is 1 mile long and 1 wide,
It is worth 40 shillings

("STAFFORDSHIRE DOMESDAY" by H. Malcolm Frazer. 1936)

Duggan says that Domesday Book & earlier forms were unquestionably Anglo-Saxon - Seolfor (Middle English selfer, selver, sulver and svelfer) = silver and ton = silvertown.

("NOTES ON STAFFORDSHIRE PLACE NAMES" - W. H. DUGGAN. 1902)

Eilert Ekwall, however, gives a completely different version :-

Swynnerton, Staffs. (Sulvertone D. B., Swinnerton 1242, fees, Swynaferton, Swynforton 1272 Ass.) O. E. Swinford - tun "Tun by the pig ford".

(THE CONCISE OXFORD DICTIONARY OF ENGLISH PLACE NAMES, 4th EDN. - EILERT EKWALL)

It is certainly quite possible that the Boar's Head borne as a crest by all mediaeval armigerous Swinnertons was a punning allusion to the name.

As well as the variations given by him it is also found spelt Selverton (1205), Soulverton (1206) Swineforton (15th century), Sonnerton and even Swinduna.

Even today, an examination of the Indexes to Births, Marriages & Deaths 1837-1920 reveals these variations :- Swinnerton, Swinerton, Swynnerton, Swinnington, Swinington, Swinniton, Swiniton, Swineraton, Swinnorton, Swinarton, Swinervon, Swinaton, Swinneton, Swineston, Switherton, Swinnirton and even Swinentons.

The present day variation of 'Swynnerton' can be traced back to the Rev. Charles who in the middle of his genealogical career adopted the 'y' and persuaded one of his brothers to do likewise, the other brothers did not comply and their descendants still use the 'i'.

The commonest variation - Swinnington - is traced to a branch of the family who moved from Shropshire to the West Bromwich area in the middle 1800's and were thereafter always registered as Swinnington - probably a question of regional accents and dialect. This shows a failure - or an inability - to check the entries. I am glad to say that Registrars are much more strict today.

Note: The letters and number after a person's name indicate their identification number in the index to the whole family and on the family trees.