

Vaux
Fam.

Vaux of Harrowden Hall
Northamptonshire, England
by Kathleen Mason

The present title of Vaux of Harrowden was regained some years ago by Baroness Vaux of Harrowden. After her death her son, Father Peter Gilby held the title until his death on 1 November 1977. He had been a Parish Priest at St. Mary's Priory, Warrington, England. The title then passed to his brother John Gilby, of Choldmondely (pronounced Chumley) Cottage, Choldmondely, Richmond, Surry, England. This title is rare in England, as it may be claimed by the Female. Information by F. C. Topping, O.T.B., who served at St. Mary's Priory with Father Peter Gilby. Also: *Vaux of Harrowden, a Recusant Family* by Godfrey Anstruther, O. P. His references were made possible by the finding of a large bundle of books and papers that belonged to Sir Thomas Tresham, which covers the period from 1580 to 1597. The second reference was the wonderful autobiography of Fr. John Gerard, S. J. who served as chaplain at Harrowden Hall. That covered the period until 1605. The Gunpowder Plot also gave references to the family, who were uncomfortably prominent involved. Only highlights of this family are referenced.

- The Harrowden name came into the Vaux family by the marriage of William Harrowden to Margery Vaux, who belonged to a family that could trace an unbroken descent from the thirteenth century, and a less certain broken descent from the Conqueror, likely Robert Vaux. Margery's father William Vaux was a prosperous lawyer. Only a few members of this line will be mentioned.

The Vaux family of Harrowden was brought to ruin and to the brink of extinction more than once, but was destined to be a name that will live forever in the annals of the Catholic Church of England. At different times they were close to the royal family during times of prosperity, as well as the difficult times. Sir William Vaux grandson of the William Vaux who died 1405 was killed at Tewkesbury. He held some office at court in the service of Queen Margaret of Anjou, wife of Henry VI. When Queen Margaret was placed in The Tower, she was allowed to have three womanfolk to attend her. One of them was Catherine Vaux who stayed with her throughout the five years of imprisonment. Catherine Vaux was one of those who witnessed her will. Catherine was the mother of Sir Nicholas Vaux. Oddly enough, one hundred thirty years later another Vaux, for her loyalty and devotion to a priest found herself a prisoner in the same Tower.

Catherine Vaux's poverty became extreme, having lost everything in the Lancastrian cause. In August 1485 Henry Tudor, son of Margaret Beauford returned from exile, raised an army and on 22 August won the battle Market Bosworth. He was crowned 7 November and held his first Parliament. On that very first day Nicholas Vaux presented a petition praying for the reversal of the attainder of his father, and the restoration of his forfeited lands. This was immediately granted, and he became immensely wealthy. After the reversal Nicholas Vaux lived at Harrowden, as tenant to his great-aunt Margery. After her death, her only heir was a daughter, then aged sixty. It is also stated in the Inquisition that the manor of Great Harrowden called 'Harowedens Maner' was worth ten marks and held by Nicholas Vaux. Perhaps it was at this time that he built the great house that stands today.

On 27 November 1487. Dame Catherine Vaux was present at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth, (wife of Henry VII) and Sir Nicholas Vaux was one of the twelve knights who, in relays of four, carried the canopy over the royal litter from Mark Lane to Westminster Abbey. This is the last recorded public appearance of Nicholas' mother. There is a manuscript in the Bodleian that seems to indicate that this property was once hers.

When Sir Nicholas Vaux's sister Jane married Sir Richard Guildford, she was so highly thought of that her marriage was graced by the presence of the King and Queen.

Nicholas was apparently living at Harrowden in 1488, for he was on the commission for assessing the number of archers that each nobleman in Northamptonshire was bound to furnish for the King's army, preparing for the relief of Brittany, which had been overrun by Charles VIII of France. He was one of the English knights that met the French delegates and surrendered the rich province in return for a large sum of money.

Two years later on 13 November 1484, he was present at the elaborate ceremony and banquet on the occasion of conferring the Knighthood of the Bath on Henry Duke of York, the King's second son, then a child of five, and later Henry VIII. On 5 November 1497, Nicholas became the Sheriff of Northamptonshire. Shortly after he had been in office for a year he took part in the suppression of yet another pretender, Perkin Warbeck. He fought in the battle of Blackheath on 14 June, 1497, and was rewarded by being made a knight banneret, a higher and hereditary form of knighthood.

Nicholas' wife died and he later married in 1507 Ann Green, daughter and heir of Sir Thomas. She brought the manor of Green's Norton, as well as at least a dozen other estates in Northamptonshire alone, and a great deal of property in Bedfordshire and beyond. Nicholas Vaux had nothing to complain, for he had risen from the depths of poverty to become the friend of the royal family. His name is found in the play 'Henry VIII' by Shakespeare. . He was by now among the richest men in the kingdom. Later some of his descendants would struggle to exist, as mentioned by his son Thomas Vaux, a poet.

*The higher that the Cedar tree, under the heavens do grow,
The more in danger is the top, when sturdy winds gan blow.
Thomas Vaux*

The second Baron Vaux was Thomas Vaux, son of Nicholas Vaux who was only fourteen when his father died. He was already married to Elizabeth Cheney, one of his father's wards. When he was only eighteen he was chosen to accompany Wolsey on an important embassy to France. Wolsey had been commissioned by the King to negotiate a marriage between the French king and Henry's only daughter Mary, then aged eleven. They traveled in more than regal splendor.

With them were the earl of Derby, the bishop of London, Lord Sandys, the Chamberlain, and his cousin Sir Henry Guildford, and Sir Thomas More. With their servants and retainers they numbered nine hundred! This must have been a sight to behold, with the elegant velvet clothes, and great chains of gold about their necks. How his father Nicholas Vaux would have loved this. The group did meet the king of France at Amiens and discussed the preliminaries of the marriage.

In 1535, Lord Vaux again crossed the channel, this time in the train of Henry VIII. They were in attendance the duke of Richmond (the King's illegitimate son), the dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, six earls, four bishops and sixteen other peers. Sir Thomas More was not there. If Thomas Vaux had misgivings about the divorce King Henry VIII sought, he kept it to himself.

Lord Vaux became of age in April 1530 and was summoned to Parliament on 19 January, 1531. If the seventy-five days on which Parliament met in the Spring of 1534, Vaux was present on sixteen. No session of parliament has even done more to change the face of England. The conclusion was the King demanded a promise of allegiance simply, but from the clergy he required an additional declaration that the bishop of Rome had no more authority in England than any other foreign bishop. In 1535, Lord Vaux again crossed the channel, this time in the train of Henry VIII. They were in attendance the duke of Richmond (the King's illegitimate son), the dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, six earls, four bishops and sixteen other peers. Sir Thomas More was not there. If Thomas Vaux had misgivings about the divorce King Henry VIII sought, he kept it to himself.

When he was only twenty four, he was one of eighteen chosen by the King for a singular honor. On May 30 they waited on the King at dinner, and afterwards, according to ancient customs, were bathed and shriven, and on the morrow were solemnly dubbed Knights of the Bath. When parliament assembled in November Lord Vaux was not there, and he never set foot again in the House of Lords for twenty years. His name continued to be given in the list of peers entitled to sit, but he was never marked 'present'. On 17 June 1536 his name drops out, and was not replaced until Mary's reign on 1 March 1554, Thomas Vaux retired from political life.

We get a glimpse of Lord Vaux's life at Harrowden from his book of accounts, kept by his steward, Robert Downall. It covers the quarter from 2 August to 28 October 1535. The household numbered forty six persons. There were, my Lord and my Lady, followed by mistress Maud, their first born. Then come three gentlewomen and two laundress; then the steward, followed by Mr. Moore the chaplain and twelve others who are designated "gentlemen". Then follow twelve yeomen, including Spring the baker and John Bing the cook. There was the inevitable "imbrotherer" or embroiderer. There were three housekeepers, five grooms, and finally four gentlemen's servants. Out of forty-three servants only five are women.

Vaux has problems with Cromwell, but survived that. He returned to public life and was present at the coronation at Westminster on 1 October and on 1 March, 1554 his name was placed on the list of those entitled to sit in the Lords though he was not marked present until 7 April. A plague later was in that area and Lord Vaux was one of the first victims. He died in the middle of October 1556, and his wife on 20 November. Compared with his father's gay and picturesque career, Thomas' was uneventful. It reflected the disappearance of colour and gait which followed the spread of Calvinism.

There are two drawings of him by Holbein in the royal collection at Windsor, and one of his wife Elizabeth. There is also a small portrait on wood by Holbein, which is supposed to be Lord Vaux, but the identification is by no means certain. It was formerly in the collection of Sir John Ramsden at Butstrod, but in 1917 it had to be sacrificed to pay death duties, and it is now in the Deutsches Museum in Berlin.

Time passes - During the time frame of 1586, Mary Queen of Scots had been a prisoner in England for eighteen years. In the eyes of Catholics, she was the rightful successor to the throne, and the fact that she was Catholic made her more acceptable. Sir Thomas Tresham and Lord Henry Vaux were prepared to wait patiently for the death of Elizabeth. They however needed relief from heavy fines and penalties. Many wished to kill Elizabeth, and the Vaux family were wrong in supposing that Elizabeth would not dare to put her 'dear cousin' Mary to death. In December 1587 Lord Vaux was confined by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Tresham was confined in the Bishop of Lincoln's palace at Buckden. They were graded as "not so obstinate", and not sent to an ordinary prison. They remained a full seven months. However Lord Vaux was not allowed to return to Northamptonshire for nine years. His friend Tresham was allowed to return to his home after an absence of twelve years.

Lord Vaux was summoned to attend Parliament, which was to meet on 19 February 1595. On the 18th he wrote a pathetic letter, excusing his absence: "My debts and miseries beyond measure multiplied, I am come up raggedly suited and clothed unfittest to give dutiful attendance on royal Presence. Yea, I protest to you on my faith and honour that I am moneyless and creditless to provide me better or defray my daily expenses....moreover my parliament robes are at pawn to a citizen, where I have offered large interest (unable to disburse the principal) to borrow them for a few days....nevertheless, I cannot obtain them...(He signs himself) "Infortunatest peer of parliament for povertie that ever was, W. Harrowden."

Bowed down and broken Lord Vaux died at Irthingborough, aged sixty one, and buried there in the church. In fourteen years the wealthy cultured patron of learning, the proud father of promising children, had been reduced to a pathetic, poverty-stricken, week-minded wreck. But he bequeathed to his descendants a pearl of great price, the Faith of his ancestors, and the determination to cling to it, whatever the price. There was conflict between the Vaux descendants and Sir Thomas Tresham, and he washed his hands of Harrowden.

As time passed, Harrowden Hall became known as a place to look for priests, hiding holes, secret correspondence in orange juice, and other subterfuges. Soon, some of the children would go to Flanders, another to Rome. If a family did not pay the fine as a convicted recusant, usually two-thirds of the lands were seized, who farmed it out to speculators, who paid the fine out of the rents and pocketed the rest. This happened to the Vaux family, and finally the Anne Vaux, a daughter was sent to the tower. Elizabeth Vaux had tried to hold the lands and the family together. When her son returned to England, he and his mother were placed in prison. There are still two letters extant from Albert, Archduke of Austria to James I on behalf of Elizabeth Vaux dated December 1611. A trial was held for Lord Vaux by his peers, and his possessions were to go to the King, and he was to be imprisoned for his life. However, this forfeiture was considered invalid as Lord Vaux had conveyed his property prior to the trial. He remained in prison for a while, but on 14 January 1614 he was allowed to return to Harrowden. He later fulfilled a military commitment and appeared at parliament. King James died and his son Charles I was proclaimed King.

Lord Vaux reaped some advantage by taking the oath of allegiance. He, of course, remained a recusant, refusing to attend Protestant worship, and was subject to the penalties of recusancy. He had satisfied the King as to his loyalty but received no relief from the fines and restrictions.

Sometimes when he was absent from Harrowden Hall, as on 10 January, 1641, parliament ordered Harrowden Hall to be searched. He began to sell some of his property. He requested permission to leave England with four servants, and this was granted 11 May, 1650.

Charles II was restored to the throne 5 May 1660. On 28 June Lord Vaux addressed a petition to the new King, pointing out that for many years he had suffered under a decree of sequestration of his estate in Northamptonshire, upon pretense of recusancy, whereas by the law of the realm he was not, nor ought to be liable thereunto. His petition was allowed and all sequestration's were suspended. He died shortly thereafter. When his brother Henry succeeded and became the fifth Baron Vaux, he was left with more than an empty title. Eighty years of persecution had left them impoverished. The last of this main line was Joyce Vaux who died in December 1660. Throughout most of these two depressing centuries the Vaux family had lost all contact with Northamptonshire and the title remained in abeyance between the heirs of Mary and Catherine, the sisters of the last Lord Vaux. Mary was married to Sir George Simon, died about 1622, leaving an only surviving daughter Elizabeth. Catherine who married Henry Neville, Lord Abegavenny, died 5 July, 1659 leaving a son John and a daughter. From Mary the elder daughter, through the Butlers of Ballyraggett and the Brown Mostyns, the claim to the title was handed down, together with the old faith.

On 13 March, 1838, Queen Victoria was pleased to terminate the abeyance in favor of George Charles Mostyn, who thus became the sixth Baron Vaux of Harrowden. He was succeeded by his grandson, Hubert George Chares, the 7th Baron, in 1883. In 1899 he purchased the ancient family estate of Harrowden, and in 1905 he built a chapel as a memorial to his wife. Thus the Vaux family and the Mass returned to Harrowden after a break of more than two hundred years.

Hubert, 7th Baron Vaux died 25 October 1935. On his death the barony once more fell into abeyance between his three daughters, but was called out on 12 July, 1938, in favor of the eldest daughter, Grace Mary Eleanor. She was the mother of the present day holder of the Vaux title. Hubert, the 7th Baron lies buried in the chapel he built, under a brass that is only a few yards from the brass with which this story began. Between these two brasses lies five hundred momentous years of history..

References: *Vaux of Harrowden, a Recusant Family*, by Godfrey Anstruther, O.P. Research of Kathleen Mason. Sketches of Thomas and Elizabeth Vaux and of Harrowden Hall enhanced by Betty Silfies from xerox copies. Deborah Sturdavent called from England to ask what she could do to assist VFA. I asked her to visit Harrowden Hall. It is now a Golf Club, but I do not know if it has been sold or leased. Deborah furnished the photo on the front of this newsletter.

Burke's Peerage and *Debrett's Illustrated Peerage*, Research of Delilah Foster.

Two slightly different coats of arms are represented in Debrett's and Burkes books, as shown below:

Debretts Illustrated Peerage

Burke's Peerage

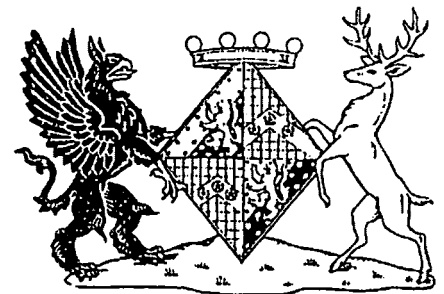
VAUX OF HARROWDEN, BARON. (Gilbey.) [Baron E. 1523.]
 (Title pronounced "Vawks of Harrowden.")

VAUX OF HARROWDEN.



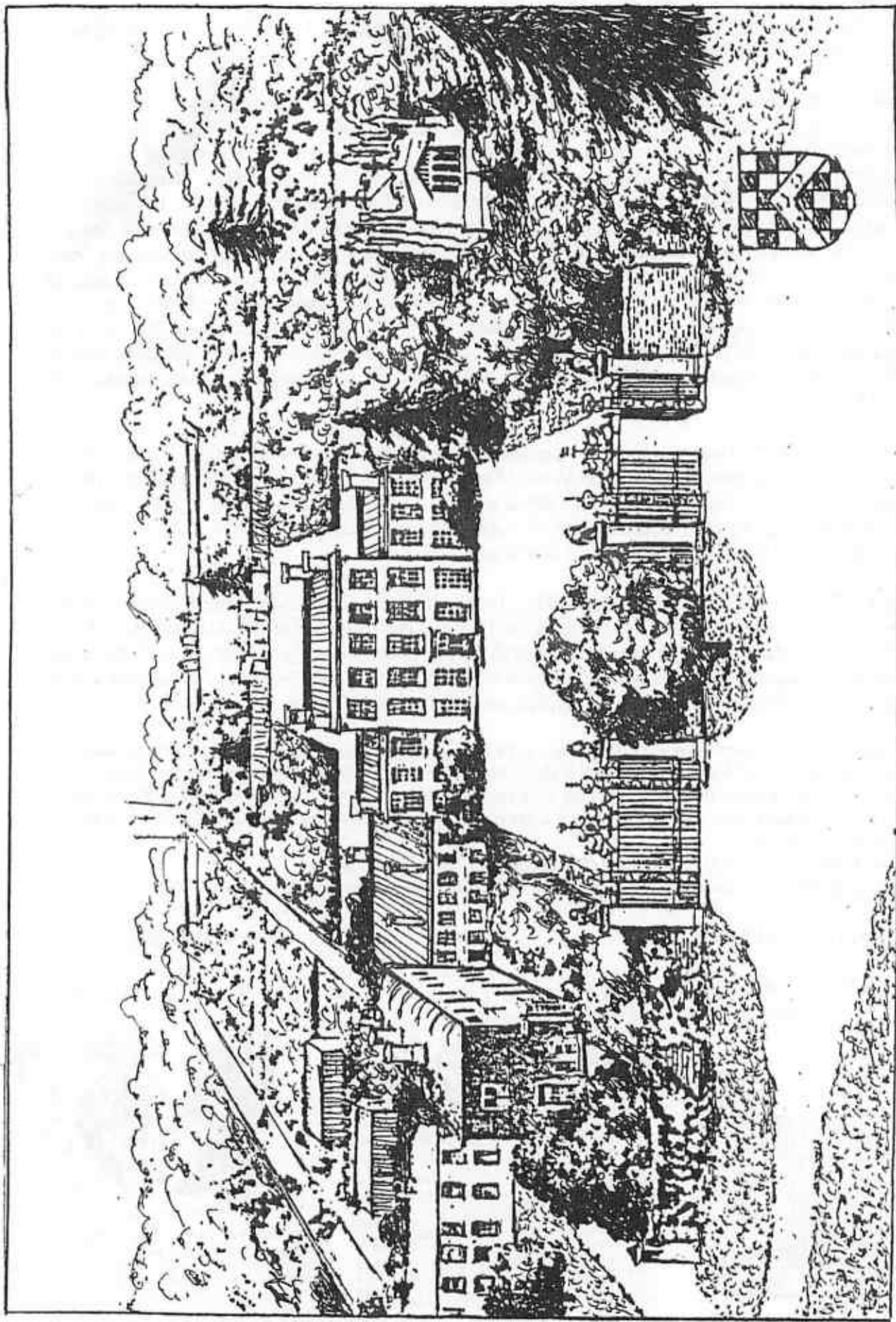
Rev. PETER HUBERT GORDON GILBEY, 9th Baron; b. June 28th, 1914; s. 1958; ed. at Ampleforth Coll., and at St. Bonet's Hall, Oxford (B.A. 1939, M.A. 1943); is in Holy Orders of Church of Rome, and a Monk of Ampleforth Abbey.

Arms.—Quarterly, 1st and 4th gules, a fesse nebulee or, in chief a horse rampant between two estoiles and the like in base, all of the last, *Gilbey*; 2nd and 3rd: Per bend sinister ermine and ermine a lion rampant or, *Mostyn*.—Supporters—*Dexter*, a griffin sable beaked or the forelegs gold; *sinister*, a buck or each gorged with a torse argent and gules pendant therefrom by a ring gold an escutcheon of the Arms of Vaux (*checky*, or and gules; on a chevron azure, three roses gold).



The Baroness Vaux of Harrowden (Grace Mary Eleanor Gilbey), co. Northampton; educ. Hillside Convent, Farnborough; b. 22 May, 1887; s. as 8th holder of the Barony, on the termination of the abeyance in her favour, by Letters Patent, 8 July, 1938; m. 15 July, 1911, William Gordon Gilbey, of The Grove, Denham, co. Buckingham, eldest son of William Crosbie Gilbey, of The Lea, Denham, Bucks, and has issue.

Seat.—Harrowden Hall, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire. Address.—St. Albans Priory Warrington, Lancashire.



HARROWDEN HALL



THOMAS LORD VAUX

PHOTO ENHANCED BY BETTY SILFIES



ELIZABETH ~ HIS WIFE

PHOTO ENHANCED BY BETTY SILFIES

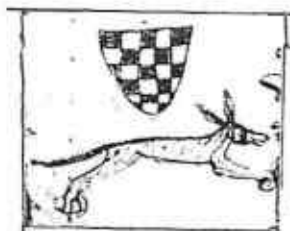
Lanercost Cartulary

By Kathleen Mason

Lanercost Priory has a well documented history. In a recent edited book by Dr. John M. Todd, he abstracted and translated into English sundry legal documents concerning Lanercost Priory known as Lanercost Cartulary. Lanercost Priory is located near Brampton and Carlisle, England. These abstracts are particularly interesting because beside each document is a drawing that gives a hint to what the document is about. For example, if the land donated contained fishing rights, a fish will be sketched, or if it concerns a church or chapel, that drawing will be beside the document. Some of the abstracts and drawings:



Robert I deVaux grants the *landa* (bounds stated) of Lanercost, the vill (bounds stated) of Walton, the churches of Walton with Triermain chapel, Irthington, Brampton, Carlatton, Farlam, the lande of Warthcoleman, Roswrageth and Apeltrethwayl, and land in the moor (bounds stated) of Brenkibet, once held by Gille son of Bueth and granted to Robert and his father by King Henry II, with pasture and a shieling, also pasture for cows, sows and oxen, pannage in Walton forest, timber and wood, rights of way to named properties, land for a tithe-barn in Brampton wood, and the right to make a dam for a mill or fisheries. [Date: 1165-1174]



Robert I de Vaux grants the tithe of meat, hides and particularly fox skins, wherever he shall hunt in his land in Cumberlond. (This drawing shows coat of arms for Robert as well as a fox) [Date 1167-1181]



Robert I de Vaux confirms the canons' right of free election, so that on the death of the prior D. (?) or any of his successors the prior shall be the man whom the canons, or the larger and sounder part of them shall elect. [Date 1164-1181]



United States History

FINCASTLE COUNTY VIRGINIA RECORDS

The Commonwealth of Virginia

To the Sheriff of Montgomery County greeting, we command you that you Summon Jacob Vance Heir at Law of John Vance to appear before the Justices of our said Court at the Court-house of our said County in Chancery, on the First Tuesday of next month to Answer a Bill in Chancery Ececuted against him by Walter Beaty, and this you shall in no wise omit under the penealty of one hundred pounds, and havr then there this witness James McCorkle Clerk of our said Couty this 4th day of February in the fifth year of the Commonwealth.

Botetourt County Alexander Vance this day brought before me the head of one old Wolf & took the Oath by Law Required Certified under my hand 15th July 1772. James Thompson

These records were provided by Tom Vance and transcribed by Grace Dotson.