

EARLY RECORDS OF
THE NAME OF ELKINGTON

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by

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THE NAME OF ELKINGTON

ABBREVIATIONS.

Ann. Dunst.	Annales Monasticum. Vol. III. Part 1. Annales. Prioratus de Dunstaphia.
bapt.	Baptised.
p.	page.
P.R.O.	Public Record Office.
V.C.H.	Victoria County History.

EARLY RECORDS OF THE NAME OF ELKINGTON

INTRODUCTION

The present day families of Elkington, the variants of which are Elkerton, Elkinton, Eltinton, and Eltenton, descend from three roots, which, in all probability, can be reduced to two.

The majority spring from Richard Elkinton, circa 1505-1557, of Cropredy, near Banbury, in Oxfordshire. Another large branch descend from Richard Elkinton, circa 1510-1578 of Shawell, near Rugby, Leicestershire. A third and possibly smaller branch descend from the Elkingtons, of Elkington and neighbouring villages in Lincolnshire.

Unless a family was particularly notable or owned considerable property it is seldom possible to establish a continuous pedigree from a date earlier than 1538 when Church registers commence; moreover, comparatively few registers survive from this date. There are, however, numerous earlier records from which information can be gleaned. If the result does not give a continuous pedigree, from father to son, through successive generations, it does give a broad, though incomplete picture of the habitat and activities of some members of earlier generations.

It seemed reasonable to suppose that a connection would be established between the families who lived in Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire from the 12th century onwards, but research has shown fairly conclusively that there is no such link and, therefore, no detailed account of early records in Lincolnshire is included in this history.

Early records in Lincolnshire show that variants of the name there always had the *K*, whether the name commenced *AL* or *EL*. This one would expect, since the name, Anglican in origin, derives from *Ealac's dun* and the village is recorded as *Alchinton* in Domesday Book.¹ The earliest personal record here appears on 18 August 1206 of a William and Abraham de Alkinton,² followed in 1217 by a Richard de Elkinton.³ The spelling of the name is, however, more or less established as *ELKIN(Y)(G)TON* from 1217 onwards. Descendants of the Lincolnshire family can, therefore, fairly claim to have held the name of *Elkington* for several centuries longer than the descendants of Richard of Shawell, or Richard of Cropredy.

In Northamptonshire and Leicestershire the name has passed through many variations before finally becoming Elkington. Also Anglian in origin, it meant *hill or fortress (dun) of Elta* and is referred to as *Eltetone*, and *Elletone* in the Domesday Survey of 1086. By 1140 it had become *Eltendon* and it is at this date that the earliest reference to a personal name is found—John de Eltendon being noted as a benefactor of the newly founded (1143) Pipewell Abbey.⁴ Again as a personal name, it is found in Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire between 1226 and 1332 in the form *Eltesdon* (or

¹Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names. E. Ekwall, p. 156.

²Lincoln Record Society. Vol. XXII, p. 235. Lincoln Assize Roll 480.

³Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum. Vol. I, p. 375.

⁴Pipewell Cartulary Ms., at Northamptonshire Record Office.

Heltesdon) while in Northamptonshire it continues as *Eltendon* or *Eltindon*, developing into *Eltinton* or *Eltington* in the 16th century.¹ Though subsequently in Northamptonshire, Leicestershire and Oxfordshire the *K* was increasingly substituted for the *T* in the personal name, the Northamptonshire village was still *Eltington* in 1774 (cf map at Northants Record Office). Again, in the personal name, the *G* was sometimes dropped, possibly only for a generation or two, while *IN* may change to *ER* to give the variants *ELKINTON* and *ELKERTON*. The forms *ELTINTON* and *ELTENTON*, which appear to derive from Leicestershire, are found occasionally at the present day. The form *ELKERTON* in Oxfordshire is due, possibly, to the proximity of the village now known as Alkerton (though shown as *Aulkrinton* on Speed's map of 1627) to Cropredy, the home of Richard Elkinton.

EARLY RECORDS IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTIES

Elkington, in Northamptonshire, situated on the upland which forms a watershed between the Welland and the Warwickshire Avon, was a settled village before the Norman conquest. It was granted by William the Conqueror to his half-brother Robert, Count of Morteyn² and at that time some land there was held by Geoffrey de Wirce.³

Like many towns and villages in the Middle Ages, Eltindon was visited, from time to time, by pestilences, which caused the surviving inhabitants to move elsewhere, and, in 1412, the parish was reported "*destitute of all inhabitants save three or four servitors of the monastery (Pipewell Abbey) on account of pestilences*,"⁴ and the Pope sanctioned the Abbey's appropriation of the Church there.⁵

Mr. Maurice Beresford in his *Lost Villages of England* states that there are no records of the hamlet of Elkington, Northamptonshire, after 1420, when it had 14 poll-tax payers. Bridges, referring to the hamlet as it was in 1720, says, in his *History of Northamptonshire*, here are 10 houses, 7 dispersed in the grounds. This description applies equally well today, when it forms part of the parish of Yelvertoft. From an aerial photograph it is possible to trace in the fields the site of the original village, now hidden from view at ground level. A change of ownership of the village of Eltendon is found in the reign of Henry I (1100-1135). The King confiscated the lands of the Count of Morteyn⁶ and in the middle of the 12th century, Osbert, Earl of Leycester and his wife Muriel, are recorded as endowing the newly founded (1143) Pipewell Abbey with the church of Eltendon and 1 virgate

¹English Place-Names Society. Vol. X. Northants.

²V.C.H. Northants. Vol. II, p. 327.

³V.C.H. Northants. Vol. II, p. 347.

⁴V.C.H. Northants. Vol. II, p. 119.

⁵Calendar of Papal Registers. Vol. VI., p. 393.

⁶V.C.H. Northants. Vol. IV, p. 95 (under Overstone).

(30 acres) of land, a chief house, a water-mill and 24 virgates of land in Eltendon, together with more land in the neighbouring village of Cold Ashby,¹ while John de Eltendon,² William de Kaynes and Richard de Wideville also gave land in Eltendon.³ This is the first mention of de Eltendons, but from this date onwards, we find references to them, both in their native Northamptonshire and in the neighbouring counties of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Leicestershire, showing the early dispersal and the probable continuity of several branches of the family right up to the present day.

In 1316 Eltendon was held by William de Wahull (Odell) and Sulby Abbey,⁴ but Pipewell Abbey, during its 400 years of existence, seems to have acquired the entire village.

The Pipewell Cartulary, in the British Museum, contains memoranda of the Abbey up to 1323,⁵ and it is here that we find an early reference to de Eltendons. About 1200, the Cartulary has the following entry:—"William, son of John de Eltendon, who being the son of Roger and Sussana de Eltendon, after some controversy, confirmed to the abbey the enlargement of their grange by 1 yardland (30 acres), as it was in 1194."⁶ This entry would seem to give us the parents and son of John de Eltendon who has been mentioned already as one of the original benefactors of the Abbey.

We now come to references to William de Eltendon in Northamptonshire and to William de Eltesdon in Bedfordshire and, although *Eltesdon* is a recognised variant of Eltendon, it seems doubtful if both sets of references apply to the same individual, as a writer to the Bedfordshire Record Society suggests,⁷ but any references in the neighbourhood of Eltendon can reasonably be considered to refer to William, son of John de Eltendon, of the Pipewell Cartulary, to his son in 1254, and to his grandson in 1274 and 1283.

About 1200, William, son of John de Eltendon, promises his lord, Geoffrey de Paville, that he will answer all demands of taxes, etc., upon his land in Sulbei (Sulby)⁸ (Geoffrey de Paville succeeded to the lands of Robert de Paville in Sulby and Pery (Paulerspury) sometime before 1195, when Robert is referred to as "the late," and paid 200 marks for his inheritance in 1198.⁹) This charter⁸ is of particular interest because it has attached to it William's seal, showing a four-legged animal with a long tail and an upstanding head. Early in the 13th century William witnesses grants of land to Sulby and Pipewell Abbeys.¹⁰ In 1204 he appears at Leicester as a surety for Margaret, widow of William (de Blaby?), in a dispute

¹Bridge's Northamptonshire. Vol. II, p. 332.

²Pipewell Cartulary Ms., at Northamptonshire Record Office.

³Bridge's Northamptonshire. Vol. I, p. 564.

⁴Feudal Aids. Vol. IV, p. 24.

⁵V.C.H. Northants. Vol. II, p. 116 (quoting Dugdale's Monasticum).

⁶Bedfordshire Historical Record Society. Vol. X. Note 463.

⁷Bedfordshire Historical Record Society. Vol. X. Note 463.

⁸British Museum. Additional Charter 22438 (temp. Ricd. I.).

⁹Baker's Northamptonshire. Vol. II, p. 199.

¹⁰British Museum. Additional Charters 21475, 22541, 22544, 22563.

between her and Thomas, son of Hugh, and Stephen de Blaby, concerning a freeholding in Blaby.¹ This same William was Sergeant of the hundred of Winwick in King John's reign, and, in that capacity, gave evidence concerning property held by the de Bereville family in Thurneby. This is recorded in 1219 in a case between Adam de Bereville and the Prior of the Hospital of St. John, in the course of which Adam states that at an earlier assize, William de Eltendon, as a hundred sergeant, had testified that the disputed property had been held by Simon de Bereville, Adam's father, before the war between King John and the barons.²

In 1230 a William de Eltendon again witnesses deeds transferring land; one deed concerns land in Hotthorpe, and another, land granted in Cold Ashby by Ralph de Paville, of Welford to the abbot and convent of Pipewell for 10 years at a yearly rental of ten shillings.³ In 1254 William de Eltendon brings a case of "*novel disseisin*" against Robert de Paville of Pery and others, for holdings in Eltendon.⁴ Three more references in Northamptonshire have been found:—one, in 1283, when William de Eltendon is recorded as the King's escheator⁵ who, in 1274, assigned to Isabella, widow of John de Wolverton, a knight's fee in Maydewell as her dower;⁶ a second is the appointment of Roger de Eltingdon as vicar of Eltington in December 1317;⁷ and the third is in a Subsidy Roll of the reign of Edward III (1327-77) in which William de Eltyndon is assessed for land in Yelvertoft.⁸ This is probably the holding referred to in the suit of 1254.

These records linking William de Eltendon with de Pavilles, de Berevilles and de Wolvertons in Northamptonshire are particularly interesting as we now move south to Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire for further records of Elkingtons and in that part of Buckinghamshire where we find Elkingtons we also find Berevilles and Wolvertons, while the manor of Pery, held by Pavilles, is in south Northamptonshire, bordering on Buckinghamshire. This village is now Paulerspury, from Pavilispery.⁹

The name *Eltesdon*, a form of *Eltington*, occurs frequently in documents relating to Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire between 1226 and 1278, covering two generations, and again in 1302 and 1332. From some of these references a contributor to the Bedfordshire Record Society has built up a coherent narrative, linking them with the Eltendons of the Pipewell Cartulary as follows¹⁰ :—

"William de Eltesdon is perhaps the William, son of John de Eltendon,

¹Curia Regis Rolls 1203-1205, p. 158.

²Curia Regis Rolls 1219-1220, p. 132.

³British Museum. Additional Charters 21686, 22014.

⁴Close Rolls 1253-1254, p. 148.

⁵An Officer formerly appointed in every County to register the escheats (reversion of property to the Crown or State on the death of the owner without heirs) of the Crown.

⁶Close Rolls 1279-1288, p. 204.

⁷Bridge's Northamptonshire. Vol. I, p. 566.

⁸P.R.O. Lay Subsidy. E. 179/155/2.

⁹Baker's Northamptonshire. Vol. II, p. 198.

¹⁰Bedfordshire Historical Record Society. Vol. X. Note 463.

who, being the son of Roger and Sussanna de Eltendon, after some controversy, confirmed to Pipewell Abbey the enlargement of their grange as it was in 1194.¹ In 1228 he was Bailiff of Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire during the shrievalty of Stephen of Segrave.² Towards 1227-8 he married Margery, who, by her lands, is clearly the eldest daughter of Robert de Stodham; in her right he held at Barworth in Studham and they appear jointly in suits for land there.³ William was alive in 1240-41, when he bought up the dower of Valentina, widow of Nicholas de Landes, whose land in Totternhoe he had previously purchased.⁴ Probably he was still living in 1242,⁵ and possibly in 1246, when the Priory (Dunstable) received two of his sons for eight years."⁶

"Roger de Eltesdon, presented by the Priory to the vicarage of Studham in 1235, but not instituted till 1243, was presumably a brother of William; he died in 1246."⁷

"Simon de Eltesdon was probably another brother, who married the widow of Giffard of Tyringham in 1246,⁸ and was Sheriff of Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire, 1252-1255.⁹ Probably he left issue as a William de Eltisdon holds in Tyringham in 1278."¹⁰

"John de Eltesdon, the son of William, seems to have first mortgaged, then sold, his lands at Totternhoe and Studham.¹¹ The lands he sold to the Priory were confirmed to it by George de Cantilupe.¹² John has not been noticed after 1263 and the name seems to have disappeared from the county."

From the Dunstable Cartulary and various state documents, we can fill in and extend this outline and discover possible links with Northamptonshire. In 1236 William is granted permission to found a chantry in Barworth and promises that it shall not interfere with the tithes of the mother church in Studham.¹³ Reginald de Esserage gives the Priory 3 acres in Wadelowe (Wadlow), which he holds of William de Eltesdon.¹⁴ The V.C.H. in an article on Studham says that William granted land in Feldmerishall (Studham) and all the services of Reginald de Heseriche (Esserage) to Dunstable Priory.¹⁵ A further record for 1236 concerns a grant of 3 acres of meadow-land in Edlesburgh (Edlesborough, Bucks) to Thomas and Cecily de Bergavini at an annual rent of three shillings.¹⁶

In 1242, William is recorded as holding, with Roger de Welton, a knight's

¹Pipewell Cartulary. Stowe Ms. 937. ff. 31d., 32d.

²Close Rolls 1234-1237, pps. 248, 249.

³Patent Rolls 1225-1232, p. 280.

⁴Calendar of Fines. 1234. No. 358. 1241. No. 450.

⁵Book of Fees. Vol. II, 891.

⁶Ann. Dunst., p. 171.

⁷Ann. Dunst., p. 170.

⁸Ann. Dunst., p. 171.

⁹P.R.O. Lists and Indexes. Vol. IX, p. 1.

¹⁰Hundred Rolls. Vol. II, p. 348b.

¹¹Ann. Dunst., pp. 206, 207.

¹²Ann. Dunst., p. 257.

¹³Ann. Dunst., p. 144.

¹⁴Bedfordshire Historical Society. Vol. X, p. 152.

¹⁵V.C.H. Herts. Vol. II, p. 276 (quoting Feet of Fines. Hen. III).

¹⁶Bucks. Archaeological Society Record Branch. Vol. IV, p. 70 (quoting Feet of Fines 42a).

fee of land in Toterho (Totternhoe) of the honour of the barony of Wahull (Odell, Beds.).¹ This record seems to provide a link with Northamptonshire, since Welton, in the hundred of Fawsley, is only a few miles south of Elkington, and at the beginning of the 14th century the landowners in Elkington were :—William de Wahull, Sulby Abbey, and Pipewell Abbey.² About 1257 the manor of Totternhoe passed from the de Weltons to the Cantelowes³ (see footnotes 12 page 5 and 7 page 7) as the feudal lords. William de Eltesdon's share in the fee in Totternhoe comprised property he had acquired from the de Landes—a house and a carucate of land (120 acres).⁴

It seems fairly certain that William died in 1246, for in 1247, John de Eltesdon, his son, was defendant, with the Prior of Dunstable, in an action brought by William and Hawise Russel to regain a carucate of land in Totternhoe and Whipsnade.⁵

Following on references to land held by William de Eltesdon, some description of the three neighbouring parishes of Studham, Totternhoe, and Edlesborough is of interest. Studham is the highest village in Bedfordshire and, at the time when William was living there, a new church, whose fine carved capitals still exist, was being built.⁶ Totternhoe also stands high and the summit of its hill, 524 feet, was ideal for beacon fires. Its quarry was then providing stone for Windsor castle. The river Ouzel runs through Totternhoe, down to Edlesborough and on to Dunstable,⁷ where the Priory church had been completed about 1216. Some five years later, a storm destroyed the two western towers and much of the west front of the church. The rebuilding was probably carried out by craftsmen from Lincoln, as it is similar in style to the Cathedral at Lincoln, then being built under the direction of Bishop Hugh. Dunstable had a royal castle, built in the reign of Henry I, and was visited by King John in 1216. Its site, opposite the church, is now occupied by Kingsbury House.⁸ So it seems that the first half of the 13th century was a time of considerable activity in the district.

To return to the de Eltendons :—the next mention of John comes in 1257 and it seems likely that he was one of William's two sons entrusted to the care of Dunstable Priory in 1246, and that as a minor, the Prior represented him in the case brought by the Russels in 1247. By 1257 he would have become of age, and he now proceeds to dispose of his inheritance. First he mortgages his land in Totternhoe, on the downs and in the valley (*Sub Duna et super Duna*) to Thomas Hynge (Inge).⁹ Later that year Dunstable Priory bought some of his arable land and a grove on the downs and cleared it of the mortgage to Thomas Inge,¹⁰ while Thomas bought the valley property outright, including rents and homages of tenants.¹¹ In 1258, the

¹Book of Fees. Vol. II, p. 891.

²Bridge's Northamptonshire. Vol. I, p. 564.

³V.C.H. Beds. Vol. III, p. 448.

⁴V.C.H. Beds. Vol. III, p. 449. Totternhoe (quoting Feet of Fines).

⁵V.C.H. Beds. Vol. III, p. 449 (quoting Assize Roll 4, No. 11).

⁶Bedfordshire. A. Mee, p. 150.

⁷Bedfordshire. A. Mee, p. 157.

⁸Bedfordshire. A. Mee, p. 60.

⁹Ann. Dunst., p. 206.

¹⁰Ann. Dunst., p. 207.

¹¹Ann. Dunst., p. 207.

Priory sues Thomas for 4 acres in Shortgrave Close (Studham), which he had by gift of John, who testified to having given the Priory 4 acres in Hocfield in exchange,¹ and John exchanges land in Heydun (Herts) with the Priory of Grovebury, for the same acreage in Feldmere, both pieces of land in the parish of Studham.² In 1262 John sold some more land in Studham, Totternhoe and Barworth to Dunstable Priory,³ and, the following year the Priory redeemed bonds held by him.⁴ This seems to be the last mention of John himself, though his land in Studham, in the possession of Dunstable Priory, is referred to in its Cartulary and in the Hundred Rolls in 1273, 1275, and 1283 as follows :—in 1273, George de Cantilupe, the feudal lord, confirmed the Priory in its tenure of land bought from John de Eltesdon;⁵ in 1275 an inquiry into land tenure disclosed that the Prior of Dunstable held land in Barworth, in the hundred of Dakore (Dacorum, Herts) of John de Eltesdon and did not “do suit at the tourn” as John used to do;⁶ and in 1283, Millicant de Muchave (Muchaut), sister and heir of George de Cantelowe (Cantelupe) again confirms to the Prior the land of John de Eltesdon in Totternhoe.⁷

We now go back to 1245, when Simon de Eltesdon, presumably William's brother, married the widow of Gifford of Tyringham (see p. 5). This must have been the Gifford who succeeded to the manors of Tyringham and Newport Pagnell in 1220,⁸ and whose son, John, died about 1274.⁹ In the year of his marriage, Simon was confirmed in the holding of property at Filgrave (the next parish to Tyringham), consisting of 24 acres of land, 1 acre of meadow and 4d rent, which he had acquired from Laurence de Brock and Matilda his wife for 22 silver marks and a yearly payment of 1 pair of gloves or 1d, and by doing service for the land to the chief lord.¹⁰ In 1248 Simon appears as one of seven sureties of Alan, son of Hamo, baron of Wolverton, for payment of £100 tax on his inheritance of the barony from his brother William; Laurence de Brock was another surety and a third was the Prior of Bradwell.¹¹ This contact with the barony of Wolverton is an interesting link with Northamptonshire, where, in 1274, the manor of Maydewell, as part of the barony, was assigned as dower by William de Eltendon, as Kings escheator, to Isabella, widow of John, son of Alan de Wolverton.¹² Later in the same year, 1248, the Sheriff of Buckinghamshire, is instructed to return to the Prior of Bradwell and to Simon de Eltesdon, all their goods and chattels which had been held for debts.¹³ This is obviously connected with their both having stood surety for the new baron Wolverton.

¹Ann. Dunst., p. 211.

²Catalogue of Ancient Deeds. Vol. III. Beds. & Herts. D. 222.

³Bedfordshire Historical Record Society. Vol. VI, p. 180. No. 640.

⁴Ann. Dunst., p. 223.

⁵Ann. Dunst., p. 257.

⁶Hundred Rolls. Vol. I, p. 190.

⁷Ann. Dunst., p. 290.

⁸V.C.H. Bucks. Vol. IV, p. 482.

⁹V.C.H. Bucks. Vol. IV, p. 482.

¹⁰Bucks. Archaeological Society Record Branch Vol. IV, p. 85. (quoting Feet of Fines).

¹¹Excerpta e Rotulis Finium. Vol. II, p. 36.

¹²Calendar of Fine Rolls 1272-1307, p. 29, and Close Rolls 1279-1288, p. 204.

¹³Calendar of Close Rolls 1247-1251, p. 57.

In 1251 Simon was exempted for life from serving on assizes, juries and recognitions,¹ and, from 1252 until 1255 he was Sheriff of Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire, succeeding Alexander de Hamden and handing over to Robert de Sauvage.² During this period he was witness to a charter transferring land in Newington (Newton) Longville, near Bletchley, from Robert de Newington Longville to the Abbey of Longville Gifford.³ In 1254 there is a record of Simon acquiring land at Sherington from William le Vineter and his wife Emma for 7 silver marks and a yearly payment of 1 pair of white gloves or 1 obolus (one half-penny) for all services and warranty.⁴

The handing over of the shrievalty in 1255 seems to be the last record of Simon in his lifetime; that he died before 1271 is evident from a record of payment of 2 marks by Constance, widow of Simon de Eltesdon, to Gilbert de Preston for "*novel disseisin*" of land in Buckinghamshire.⁵ The Prestons, as descendants of Winemar the Fleming, held the manor of Hanslope,⁶ close to Tyringham. In 1275 it is mentioned that Simon, when Sheriff, had raised the rate of taxation in the hundreds of Stodfolde, Roulowe, and Lamuhe,⁷ (these three hundreds were later united as the hundred of Buckingham).

¹Patent Rolls 1247-1258, p. 83.

²P.R.O. Lists and Indexes. Vol. IX, p. 1 and Patent Rolls 1247-1258, pp. 163, 448.

³Oxfordshire Record Society. Vol. III, p. 17. (Newington Longville Charters).

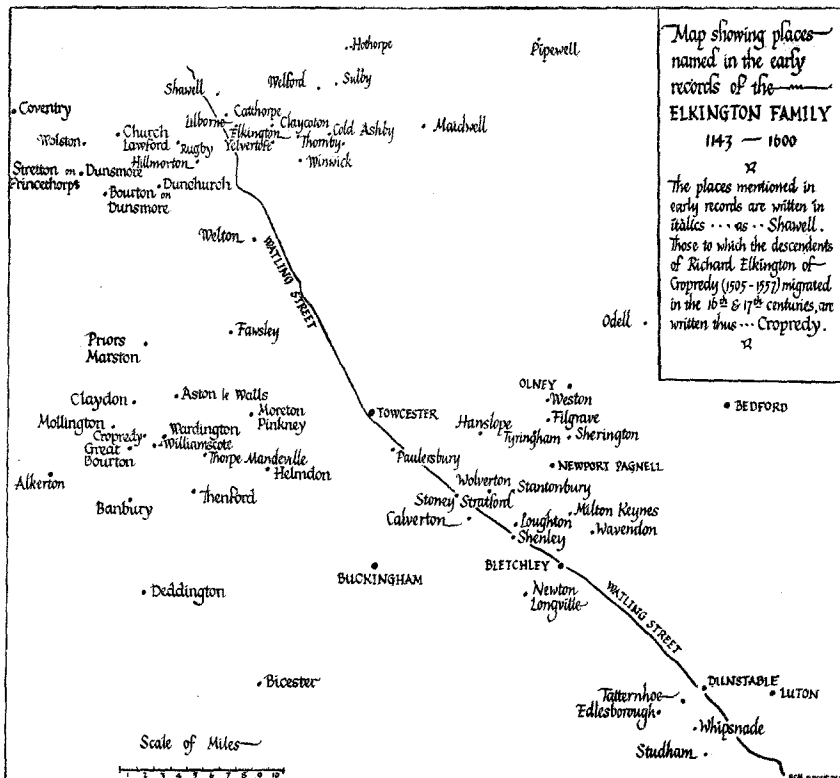
⁴Bucks. Archaeological Society Record Branch Vol. IV, p. 102. No. 14 (quoting Feet of Fines).

⁵Excerpta e Rotulis Finium. Vol. II, p. 541.

⁶V.C.H. Northants. Vol. I, pp. 289, 290.

⁷Hundred Rolls. Vol. I, p. 40.

Fig. 1.



William de Eltesdon, who was probably the son of Simon, is recorded, in 1278, as holding land in Tyringham ($12\frac{1}{2}$ acres) of Roger de Tyringham, his step-brother, and 1 virgate (30 acres) in the neighbouring Weston of William de Nodar, with Robert le Cobeler as his sub-tenant.¹ There is no further mention of William de Eltesdon in Buckinghamshire, but William de Eltendon, the King's escheator in 1274 (see page 7 footnote 12) could be the same person, while William of 1254 (see page 4 footnote 4) could be a son of the William who had married Margery of Studham (see page 5 footnote 3) and who died in 1246, entrusting two of his sons to Dunstable Priory for eight years. Following up this theory we envisage William, the elder son, inheriting the Eltendon property in Northamptonshire, while the younger, John, inherits the property in Studham and Edlesborough, which, as we have seen, he sells between 1257 and 1262.

There does not seem to be any further record of de Eltesdons in North Buckinghamshire until 1302, when John de Eltesdon served as one of the "jurators" at a land inquisition held at Stony Stratford. Two landowners recorded in this inquisition have a later connection with John—they are :—Robert Barry, who holds a knight's fee in Stanton, of the Count of Cornwall ; and Henry Spigurnel holding land at Shenley and Loughton, villages about 2 miles south of Stanton (Stantonbury).²

A later reference to John is in 1332, when he is giving evidence at Buckingham concerning the age of a Robert Barre (grandson of Robert Barry of 1302), who had inherited the manor of Stoneton Barre (Stantonbury) from his father Thomas.³ In his evidence, John gives his age as 52 (born, therefore, in 1280), so it seems reasonable to suppose him to be the son of William, who held land in Tyringham and Weston in 1278. Stantonbury, on the Newport Pagnell to Stony Stratford road, is about 5 miles from Tyringham. Other deponents in this inquiry were John de Bereville, aged 43, who refers to a hall he built recently in his manor, and John de Walche who says that he married a kinswoman of Henry Spigurnel. We have already noted de Berevilles in Northamptonshire in King John's reign (page 4 footnote 2) ; their main property in Buckinghamshire was at Middleton (now Milton) Keynes,⁴ but they also held at Wavendon,⁵ Stratford and Calverton.⁶ As we saw in the 1302 inquisition, Henry Spigurnel was also an owner of land in north Buckinghamshire, while an inquisition in 1328 shows a Henry Spigurnel with property and rights in Studham and Edlesborough,⁷ and the Victoria County History states that Spigurnels held Dagnell manor in Edlesborough from 1199 to 1386.⁸

No later reference to any de Eltesdon has been traced in north Buckinghamshire, but, in the Subsidy Roll of 1524 we find a John Eltyngton assessed

¹Hundred Rolls. Vol. II, pp. 348, 350.

²Feudal Aids. Vol. I, p. 106.

³Calendar of Inquisitions. Vol. VII, p. 344. No. 482.

⁴Bucks. Archaeological Society Record Branch. Vol. IV, p. 57. No. 31 (quoting Feet of Fines).

⁵Curia Regis Rolls 1213-1215, p. 78.

⁶Bucks. Archaeological Society Record Branch. Vol. IV, p. 44. No. 47 (quoting

⁷Inquisitions and Post Mortems. Ed. III. Vol. VII, No. 128. [Feet of Fines].

⁸V.C.H. Bucks. Vol. III, p. 353.

in Olney.¹ Since Olney is about 2 miles from Weston, which it probably included for subsidy assessment, this John might be a descendant of William de Eltesdon, who held land in Weston in 1278 (see page 9, footnote 1). John was assessed on his wages so one assumes that he was in humble circumstances. By 1594 a Richard Elkinton was living in Buckingham, marrying in that year and eventually bringing up a family. He was a witness to various official documents and thus seems to have been a person of some standing in the town. His grandchildren were born in Buckingham,² but the later generation either died out or moved from the town since the parish registers contain no further records of the name.

Having taken the records of Elkingtons in Buckinghamshire to the end of the 16th century, an attempt should be made to bring their records to that date also, in their native Northamptonshire, though, there also, it seems impossible to fill the gap between 1330 (see page 4 footnote 8) and 1524. As we might expect from information that a series of pestilences led to the village of Elkington being abandoned in 1412, the later Eltingtons are to be found in the neighbouring villages of Lilbourne in Northamptonshire, Catthorpe and Shawell, just over the county border, in Leicestershire, and Hillmorton near Rugby, in Warwickshire. In these villages they are well established by the beginning of the 16th century. Our earliest information comes from the Subsidy list 1524, when Nicholas Eltington was assessed on goods in Shawell. In 1538 the will of Thomas Elkyngton, of Lilborne, was proved;³ he mentions his wife and one son John. In 1559 Robert Eltyngton, of Hillmorton, names his late wife Alice, two sons William and John, and his daughters Elizabeth and Joane.⁴ In 1544 there is a record of a case between Richard Eltington, of Shawell, and William Grosse concerning three houses and 26 acres of land in Shawell.⁵

From a grant of arms in 1608 to the Elkingtons of Shawell, we know that they claimed descent from the Elkingtons of Elkington, Northants. The will of Richard Elkington, of Shawell, who died in 1607, mentions land held at Sulby, Northants;⁶ the occupation of this land may have been continuous since the early 13th century, when William, son of John de Eltindon is recorded as holding land there (see page 3 footnote 8), thereby confirming the descent.

In Catthorpe the earliest record comes from the Church register, with the baptism of Richard, son of William and Eleanor Eltyngton, in 1574. Numerous early entries in the registers of Catthorpe and Lilbourne show that there were several families of Elkingtons living in the district, probably all nearly related to each other, judging from the wills that have survived. A Chancery case during the first 20 years of Elizabeth (1558-1579) shows a Hugh Eltington, of Swynford (some 2 miles from Shawell), whose wife was the daughter of Hugh Hatton of Lutterworth and Swynford.⁷

¹Bucks. Archaeological Society Record Branch. Vol. VIII, p. 83 (quoting Lay Subsidy Roll 1524).

²Buckingham Parish Registers.

³Northamptonshire Wills. Book F. fo. 180. Birmingham Probate Registry.

⁴Lichfield Wills. No. 179. Birmingham Probate Registry.

⁵P.R.O. Fine Rolls. 36. Henry VIII. 1544.

⁶P.C.C. Huddleston. No. 58. Somerset House Probate Registry.

⁷P.R.O. Chancery Proceedings. C.3, E, 58/47.

A more detailed reference to the grant of Arms mentioned above is warranted because they have been used for many generations by the Elkingtons of Bath and by the Birmingham branch, who descend from George Richards Elkington, who, with his cousin Henry Elkington, founded the Birmingham firm of Silversmiths in the middle of the 19th century.

The grant reads as follows :—¹

“ To Thomas Elkington of London, Gent, son of Humphrie Elkington, son of Richard Elkington, son of Richard Elkington, of Shawell in the County of Leics. Descended from ye family of Elkington of Elkington, County Northampton, and confirmed to the said Thomas and his Uncles Henry, Thomas and Edward Elkington and their issues 2nd October 1608. 6 Jacobi. p. Wm. Camden. Clarendiaus.”

ARMS. Gules, six cross crosslets or, three in chief and three in base, between two flaunches argent.

CREST. Out of a mural coronet chequy or and sable, embattled of the first a demi griffin segveant argent, winged gules holding in the dexter foot a gold ring gem of the second.

MOTTO. Omnia tuta deo servanti.

Inquiry at the College of Arms has failed to establish when or why the Bath and Birmingham branches adopted the Arms. Both branches descend from Richard Elkinton, of Cropredy, who died in 1557. Thomas Elkington, of London, to whom the arms were granted in 1608 was no relation or, at the best, only a cousin many generations removed.

The Heralds' Visitation of London 1633-35 records arms held by another Thomas Elkington of London (a grandson of the uncle Thomas named in the Leicestershire visitation); except for the arrangement of the cross crosslets the arms are identical with those described above. The assumption is that this record does not refer to another grant but rather confirms that the arms were in use by an Elkington entitled to them by inheritance.

While there is no definite proof there is evidence to suggest that Richard Elkinton of Shawell, whose ancestors are known to have lived at Elkington, Northants, descended from John de Eltindon (c.1140-1200). Research has failed to establish a definite link between Richard Elkinton, of Cropredy (1505-1557) and the Northamptonshire family, but, as the earliest record in Oxfordshire appears in 1445 of a William Elkynton, of Williamscoate, a hamlet about 2 miles from Cropredy, when he was granted land by John Danvers of Wardington² it seems almost certain that he came from Elkington, Northants, or from one of the neighbouring villages, some 22 miles distant from Cropredy, when the family scattered from Elkington early in the 15th century. That he might have come from Lincolnshire, the other county in which Elkingtons were native, seems so improbable that the supposition can be discarded. This William was probably the grandfather or great grandfather of Richard of Cropredy. Another reference in the district is in 1453 when a Ralph Elkynton was the incumbent of Thorpe Mandeville, a village about 4 miles from Williamscoate.³

¹Harleian Society. Heralds Visitation of Leicestershire, p. 153.

²Overstone Deeds 2029. Northamptonshire Record Office.

³Bridge's Northamptonshire. Vol. I, p. 208.

In 1490 Bicester Priory granted Robert Elkyngton and Elizabeth, his wife, a 70 year lease of land (about 30 acres) in Wretchewyke in the parish of Burchester (Bicester). There is no other record of this Robert and Elizabeth and by 1539, when the Priory was dissolved, this land was granted to Roger More, without any reference to Robert and Elizabeth or to his descendants as tenants at that later date.¹



FIG. 2. The Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Cropredy.

Cropredy, in Domesday "*Cropelie*," situated on the river Cherwell, is close to the borders of Northamptonshire and Warwickshire, into which counties many of Richard's descendants migrated. The Church of St. Mary the Virgin (Fig. 2) was rebuilt about 1320, and restored in the 19th century. It stands, however, virtually in the same form as it was when the first Richard Elkinton was a Churchwarden there in 1543. Its ancient oak chest, probably of the 12th century, with iron scroll work, and three separate locks, was used as the Churchwardens' chest for several centuries, and many of Richard's descendants must have used it in their offices as Churchwardens. The battle of Cropredy Bridge was fought on the 29 June 1644, between the troops of Charles I, who led them in person, and the Parliamentary troops. The latter were defeated, and the neighbouring town of Banbury surrendered to the King. The Church displays relics of the battle in the form of breast-pieces, helmets, and cannon shot, together with some gravestones in the Churchyard inscribed "a faithful soldier of King Charles ye First." The bridge, first built in 1312, is still in use though of course, it has been repaired and altered considerably.

¹Letters and Papers of Henry VIII. Vol. 14, Part I, p. 251.

Briefly summarising this chapter, we have shown that Richard Elkinton (1505-1567) of Cropredy probably descended from William Elkynton of Williamsote (1445) who almost certainly came from Elkington in Northamptonshire, or from one of the neighbouring villages, and that there is strong evidence to suggest that the family there sprang from John de Eltenton (Elkington) first mentioned in 1140.

Richard, of Cropredy, was the ancestor of many branches of the family and the name is still found (1957) in Banbury and the district. The Bath family, who appear to be the senior branch, spring from his grandson, George, who went to Bath about 1580. The Birmingham family of Silversmiths descend from his grandson Zacharias, who, early in the 17th century, was a yeoman of Marston, near Wolston, in Warwickshire. The American family of Elkinton trace their descent from his great grandson George, a blacksmith of Mollington, near Cropredy, who emigrated to America in the ship *Kent* in 1677. The descendants of this George are recorded in *The Ancestry and Descendants of George Elkinton of Burlington Co. New Jersey*.¹

¹By Professor Arthur Adams, Ph.D., F.A.S.G., F.S.A. Published 1945 for private circulation.

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