

The Vernon Line

Vernon family historians seem to agree that the Vernon family story begins around 911 AD, when the Vikings under Rollo Rognvaldsson, also called "Marching Rollo," "Rolf the Ganger," or "Rollo the Dane" invaded and conquered Normandy, including the ancient town of Vernon. The town dates back to Gallo-Roman times and is located in a valley on both sides of the Seine River, about 30 miles northwest of Paris.

Richard de Reviers, the first Vernon in England, was an officer serving the Duke of Normandy, William the Bastard (future William the Conqueror). In 1050 he was given the little town of Vernon-sur-Seine as a reward. From then on, Richard de Reviers and all of his descendants took the name of their town for their name. Sixteen years later, when William the Conqueror invaded England in 1066, Richard de Vernon as well as many others of the family participated. For this service, great estates in Normandy and England were granted to the Vernon family, and its members were ranked among the wealthiest and most powerful in both countries. For Sir Richard de Vernon, this meant becoming Baron of Shipbrook.

Over the intervening centuries the Vernons spread across the countryside, Cheshire, Staffordshire and Derbyshire. It is widely believed that The Quaker Vernons, and specifically brothers Thomas, Randall and Robert Vernon, descend directly from Richard de Vernon, although exactly where the connection occurs is not yet known.

Thomas Vernon

Thomas Vernon, the eldest of three brothers to immigrate to America was born Cheshire, England in 1640. His parents were James Vernon and Hester Brown who probably lived in the neighborhood of Davenham, between Northwich and Middlewich. James Vernon's father was Hugh Vernon.

While it is unclear whether Thomas parents became Quakers, it is clear that he and two of his brothers did. Thomas and his wife and children, who lived near Middlewich, Cheshire for their beliefs were persecuted during the years 1678 & 1679, apparently losing land and having cattle taken. They appear to have known William Penn, and it is likely that Thomas was on the surveying voyage to Pennsylvania in 1681, returning later that year to England. As such, Thomas and his brothers were among the first to obtain property in Penn's newly acquired land in America. Land Titles in Delaware County Records the Three Vernon Brothers purchase of 625 acres each in March 1681. Randall Vernon purchased a further 829 acres in 1711 and 1712. Robert Vernon purchased a further 330 acres in 1684.

Thomas and Elizabeth Vernon had several children.

Thomas Vernon, his wife Elizabeth, and their children arrived at Upland (now Chester,) Pennsylvania, with his brothers and their families on or about August 14, 1682 on board the ship Friendship. The Friendship was one of William Penn's fleet of ships filled mostly with Quakers to establish and settle Pennsylvania. While the brothers Vernon occupied the same house for some time after settling into Nether Province. Chester (now Delaware) county, PA, they eventually each built large homes.

Monthly Meetings of the Society of Friends were often held at Thomas' house. He was described as an exemplary member of the Society and a good citizen¹. Thomas Vernon died on December 8, 1698 and wife Elizabeth died six year later on May 24, 1714. They are most likely buried in unmarked graves (Quakers did not use headstones) at the Chester Meeting House burial ground.

Elizabeth Vernon

Elizabeth Vernon, daughter of Thomas Vernon married Andrew Job, Jr. on November 7, 1692.

¹ History of Delaware County, Pennsylvania, published 1862, page 509.