

## Chapter 70

### William de Tyson, Lord of Alnwick – One of My English Ancestors from the Middle Ages

[Originally written 7 November 2020]

#### **Introduction**

I have started using the Geni.com website to expand my knowledge of my family tree. A key feature of this website is its “World Family Tree”. Unlike Ancestry.com, where everyone has their own complete (or incomplete) family tree, Geni.com is having its users collaboratively build just a single family tree. On Ancestry.com, there can be one thousand or more duplicate entries for the same person – and these entries often have conflicting information. On Geni.com, there should only be one entry on the entire website for any given person. Individual users on Geni.com can add their ancestral lines until they connect with people already in the World Family Tree. And then their lines immediately become part of this enormous family tree. As of early November 2020, there are just over 150 million individuals in the World Family Tree – see:

<https://www.geni.com/worldfamilytree>

Profiles connected by Geni's World Family Tree:

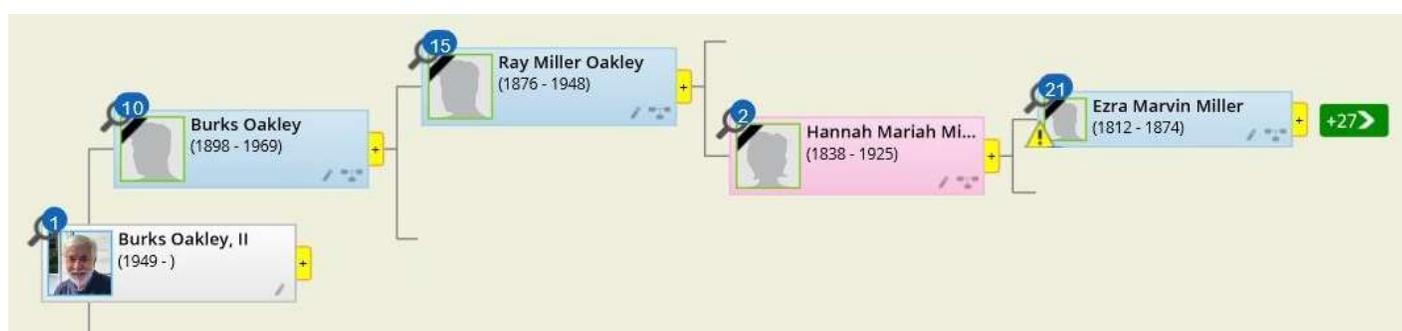
# 150,006,327

A number of my ancestral lines in the World Family Tree on Geni.com go back twenty or thirty generations into the past. This chapter is about one particular ancestral line, which goes back to William de Tyson, Lord of Alnwick.

#### **Going Back Many Generations on an Ancestral Line**

I am voluntarily self-quarantining (or is it self-isolating?) during the coronavirus pandemic of 2020, so I have lots of free time. A few days ago, I went to the Geni.com website and started going back on various ancestral lines, just to see if I could find an interesting ancestor to write about. Here is the path I ended up taking.

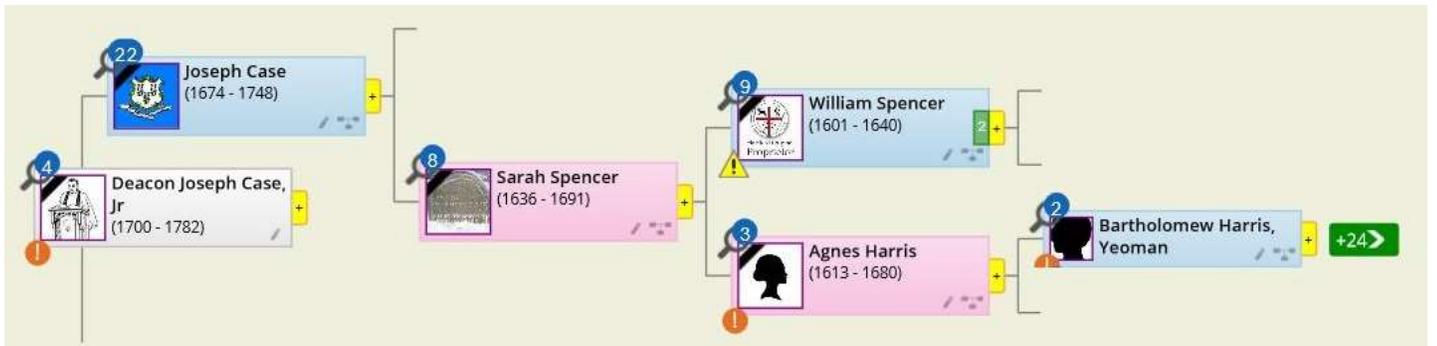
Burks Oakley II to Ezra Marvin Miller:



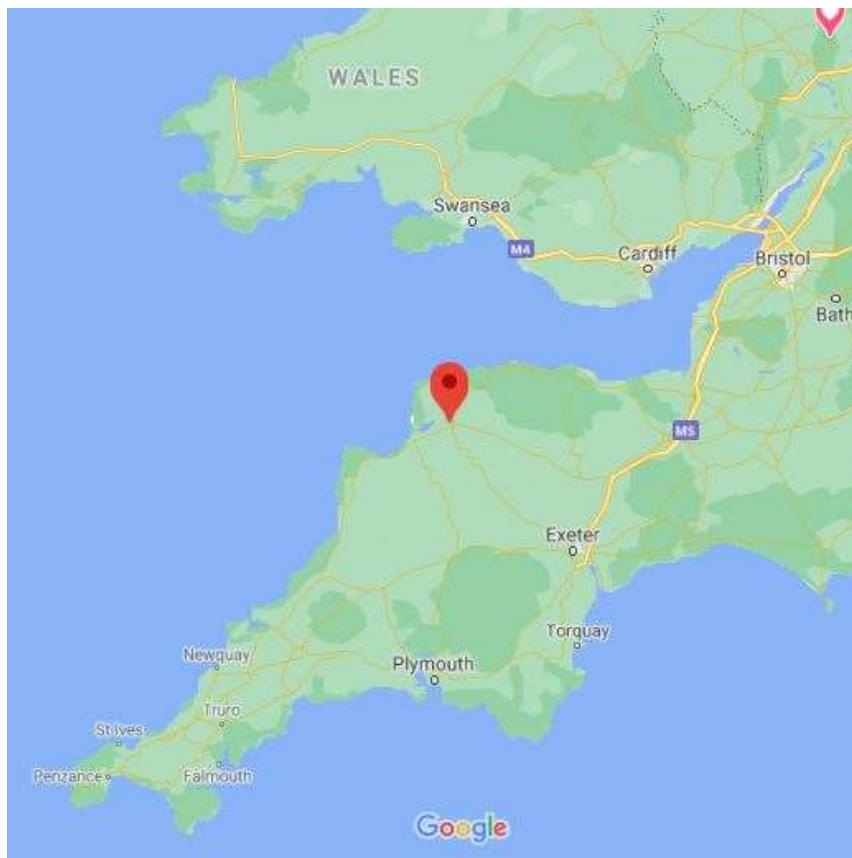
Ezra Marvin Miller to Deacon Joseph Case Jr.:



Deacon Joseph Case Jr. to Bartholomew Harris, Yeoman:

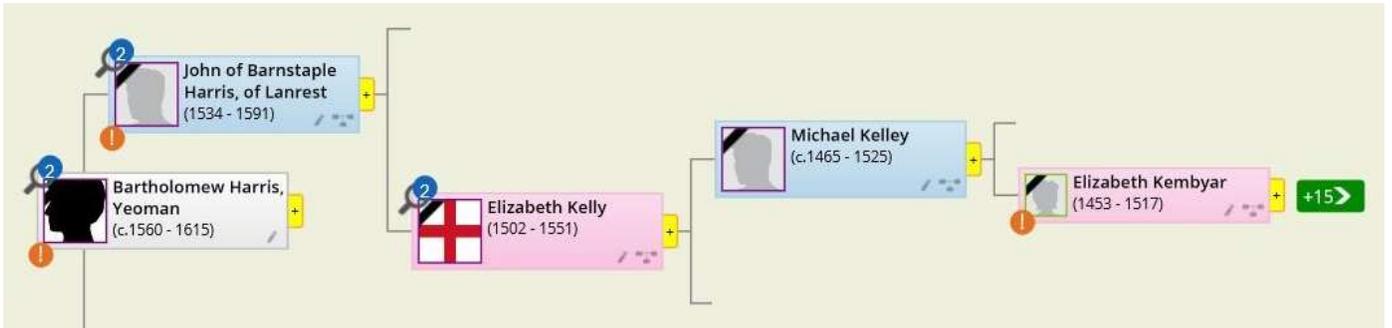


Let me stop here for a minute – Bartholomew Harris was an interesting fellow – he served as the Mayor of Barnstaple, North Devon, England.

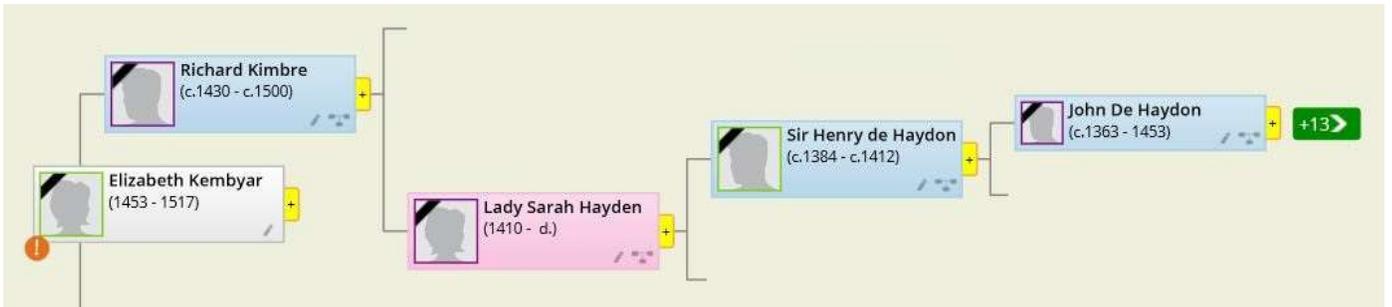


He had four sons and seven daughters, and of course, his daughter Agnes married William Spencer and that connects my line to the Spencers and Lady Diana Spencer and Sir Winston Spencer Churchill – but I digress.....

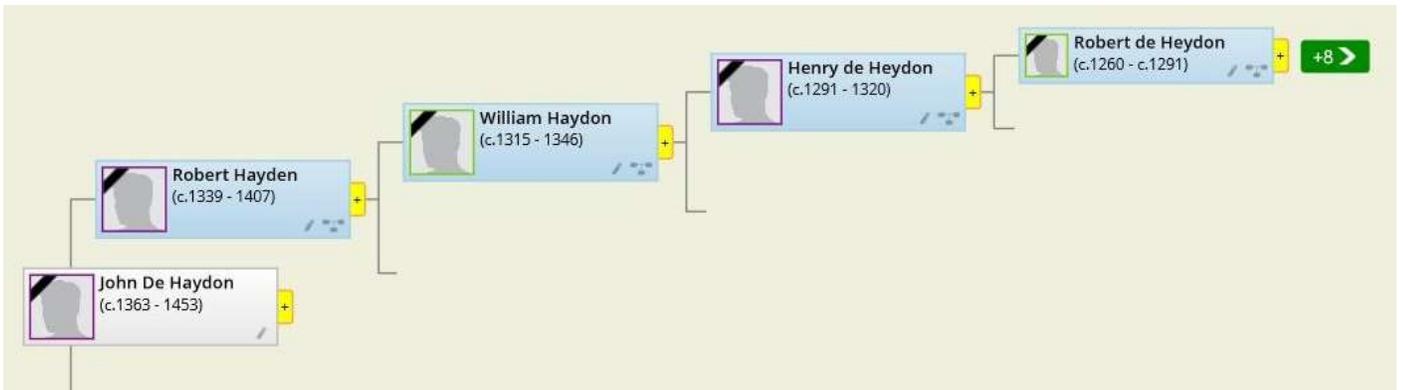
Continuing on back, here is the line from Bartholomew Harris to Elizabeth Kembyar:



Elizabeth Kembyar to John De Haydon:



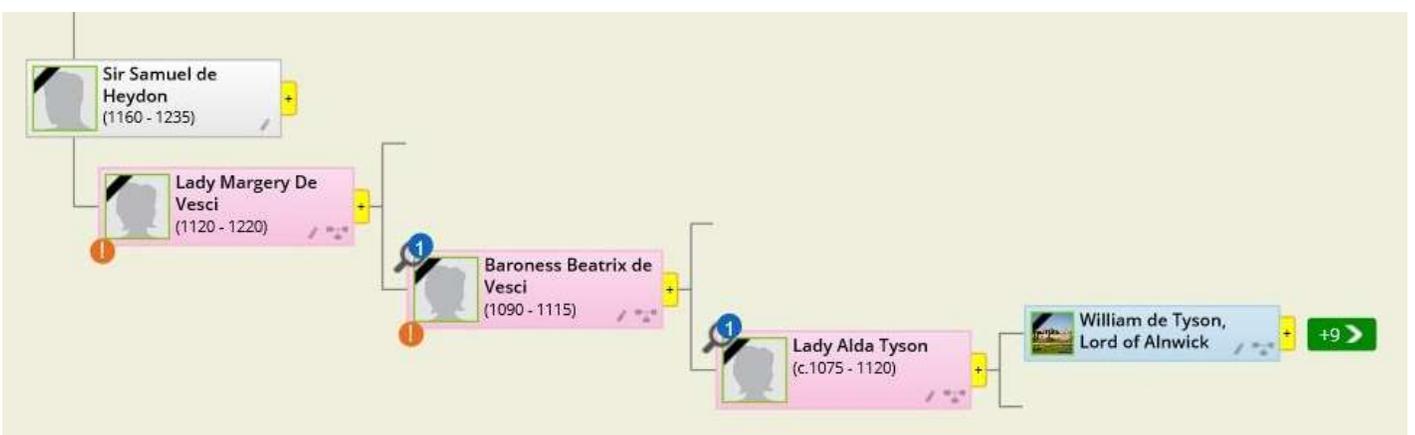
John De Haydon to Robert de Heydon:



Robert de Heydon to Sir Samuel de Heydon:



Sir Samuel de Heydon to William de Tyson, Lord of Alnwick:



OK, now I'm getting somewhere – William de Tyson was Lord of Alnwick<sup>1</sup>, and according to his profile on Geni.com, he was born in 1050 in Alnwick Castle in Northumberland, England:



### William de Tyson, Lord of Alnwick

Gender: Male

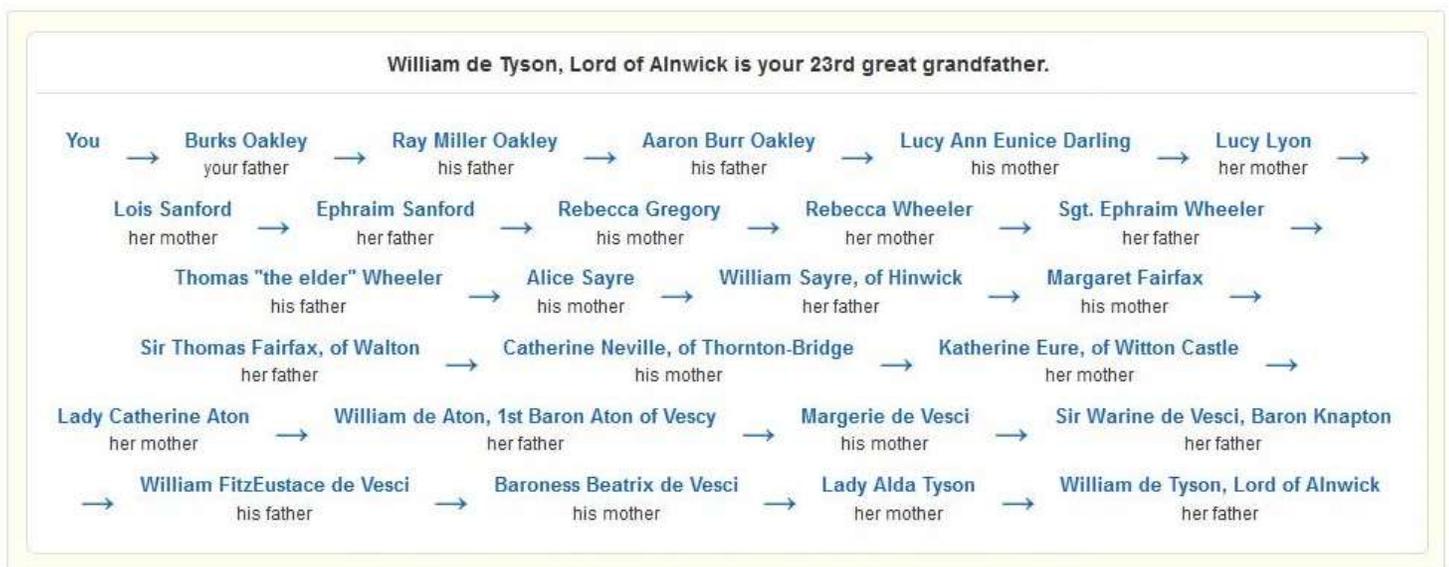
Birth: 1050  
Alnwick Castle, Northumberland, England

Death: 1096 (45-46)  
Malton, North Ride, Yorkshire, England

Immediate Family: Son of Gilbert de Tyson, Lord of Alnwick & Malton and Beatrix Normanica  
Husband of Beatrice de Normandy  
Father of Lady Alda Tyson and Richard de Tyson

I assume that the photo on his profile page is Alnwick Castle (much more about this below).

At this point, I had lost track of how many generations I had gone back to get to William de Tyson, Lord of Alnwick. So I looked at the chart on Geni.com showing how William and I are related:



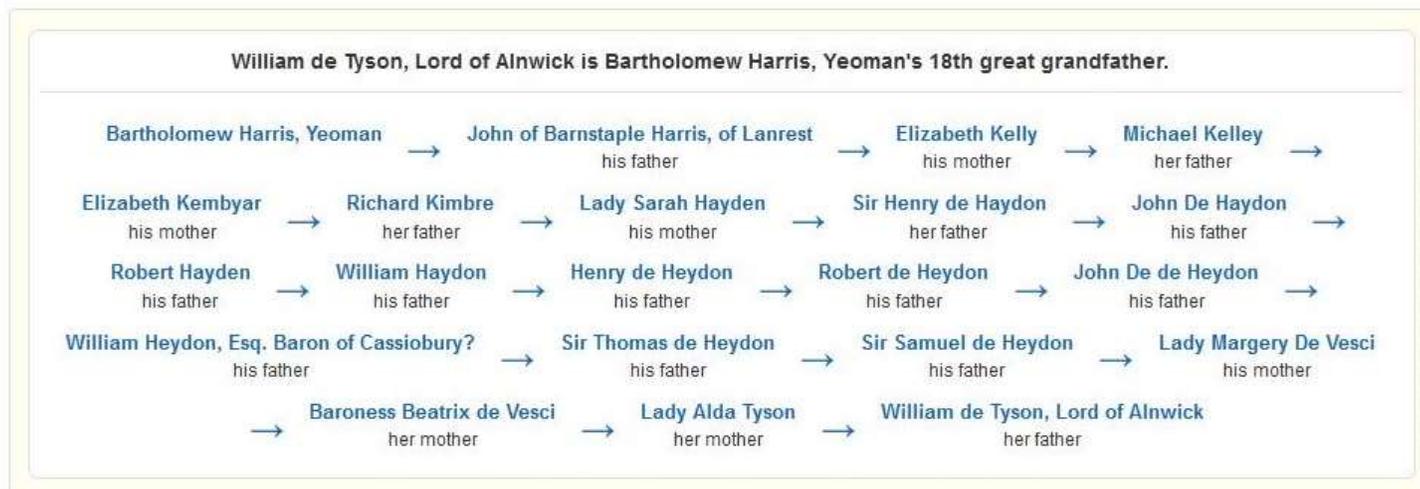
Oh no! This path is the “shortest blood relationship” – and it isn’t the pathway that I took to get back to William. Geni.com always displays the shortest path connecting two people. On the line shown in this chart, William de Tyson was my 23<sup>rd</sup>-great grandfather – I’ll call this one “Line 2”, because it is the second ancestral line I found. This line goes through my great-grandfather, Aaron Burr Oakley, whereas the original path (which I’ll call “Line 1”) went through my 2<sup>nd</sup>-great grandfather Ezra Marvin Miller.

I was able to reconstruct the path I originally took to get back to William de Tyson. Recall that it went through Bartholomew Harris, Yeoman. Here is the path from me to Bartholomew:

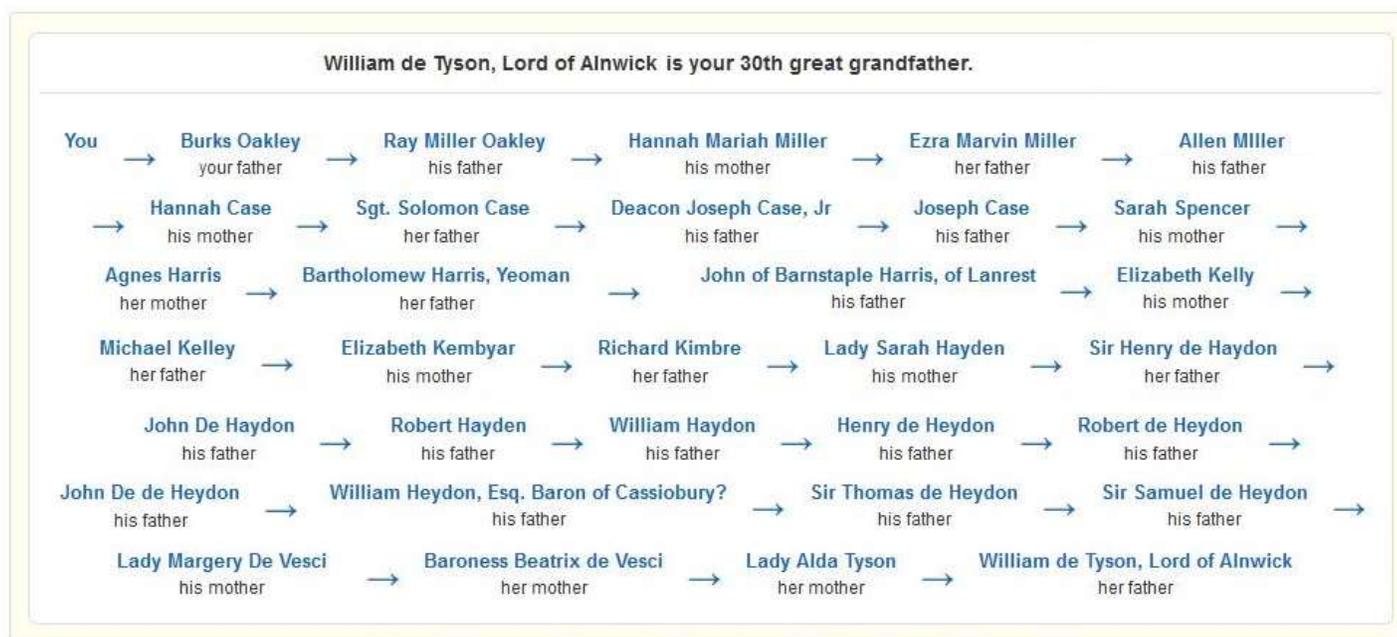
<sup>1</sup> I have to admit that I immediately liked the name Alnwick, since for the last half of my career at the University of Illinois, I was supported by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and their program in “Asynchronous Learning Networks”, or ALN. So a “Lord of ALNwick” certainly got my attention.



And here is the path from Bartholomew Harris to William de Tyson:



Using the magic of cut and paste, as well as graphics editing software, I then put these two lines into a single chart:



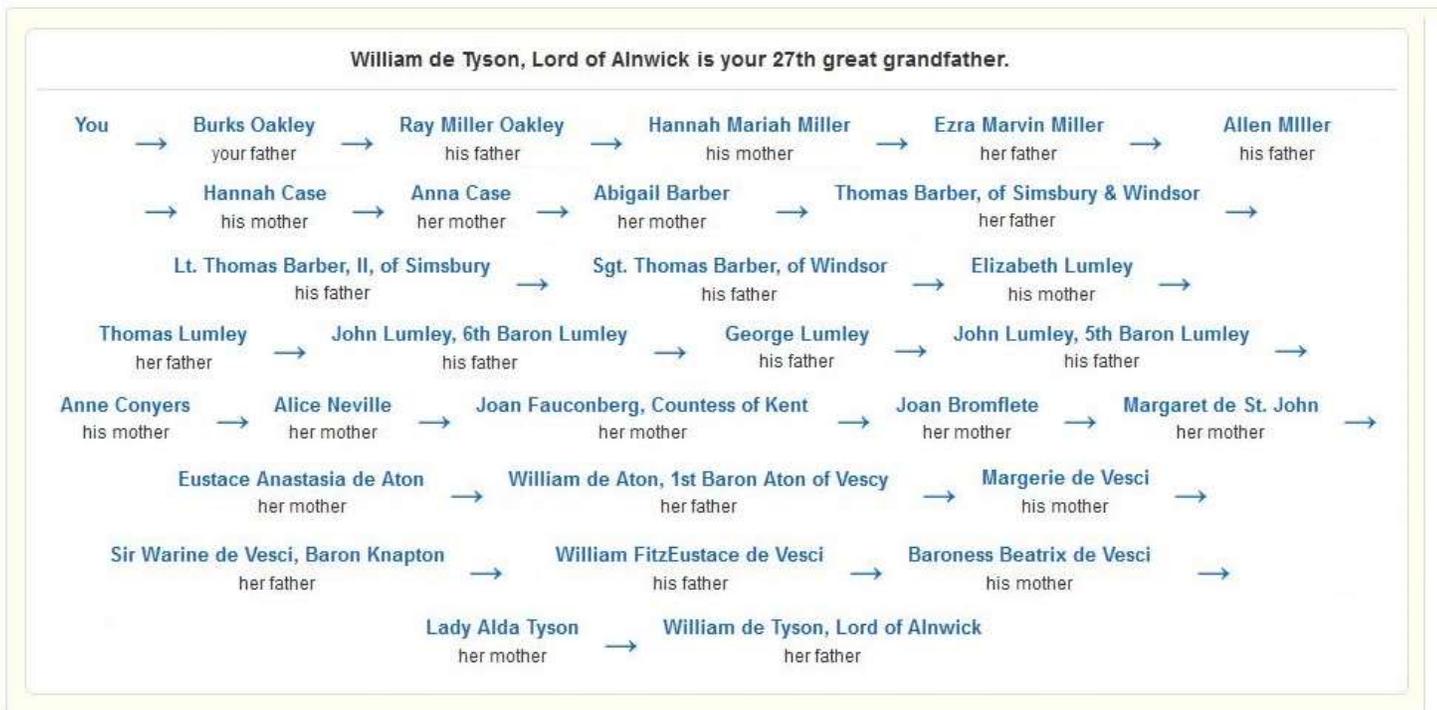
William de Tyson was my 30<sup>th</sup>-great grandfather on this line – which is quite different than the “shortest blood relationship”, where he was my 23<sup>rd</sup>-great grandfather. Again, I’ll call this one “Line 1” – and note that it does go through my 2<sup>nd</sup>-great grandfather Ezra Marvin Miller.

In the past, I found cases where I have more than one line going back to an ancestor in England in the Middle Ages. For example, I have twelve distinct lines going back to King Edward I – see:

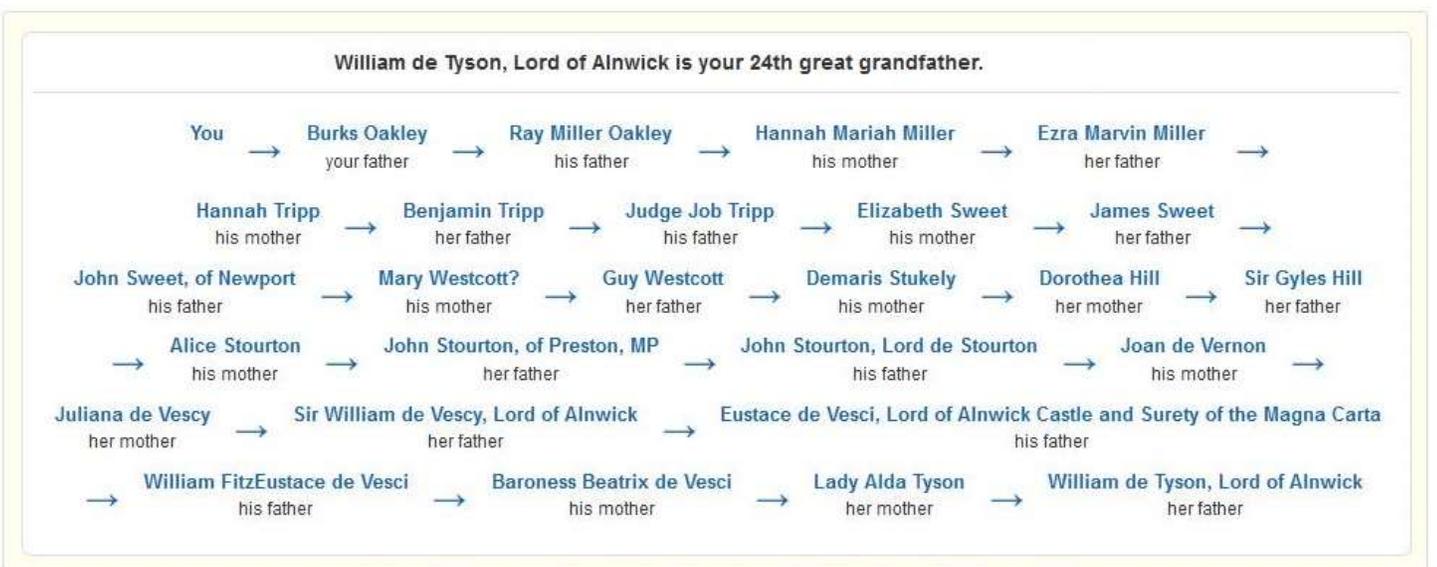
So that got me to thinking – do I have other lines going back to William de Tyson, Lord of Alnwick? And you, as the reader, must know by now that I wouldn't ask a leading question like that unless I knew that the answer would be a resounding YES!!

I started looking at various ancestors in order to see if they were descended from William de Tyson, Lord of Alnwick. So here we go! Note that for all of these lines, I had to “cut and paste” to create the overall chart.

Here is a line through Anna Case, which I'll call “Line 3”:



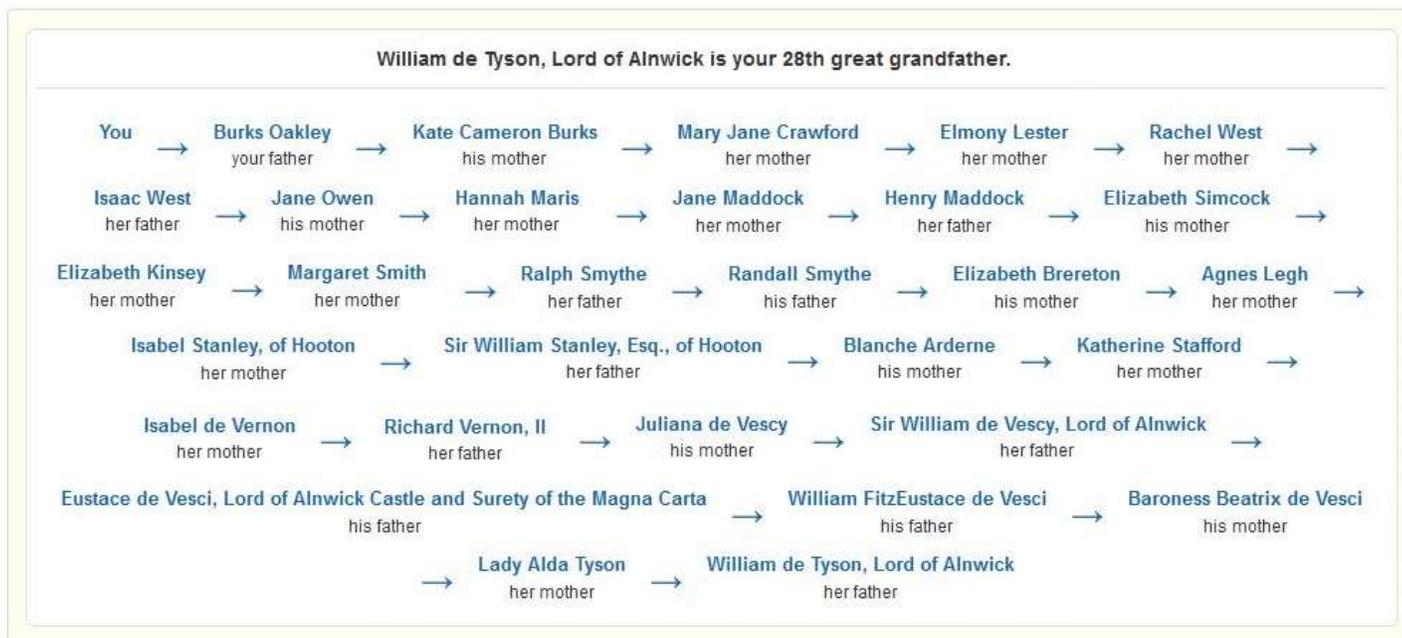
Here is a line through Hannah Tripp, which I'll call “Line 4”:



Note that Line 4 includes Eustace de Vesci, Lord of Alnwick Castle and Surety of the Magna Carta. I wrote about my ancestors, including Eustace de Vesci, who were sureties of the Magna Carta earlier – see:

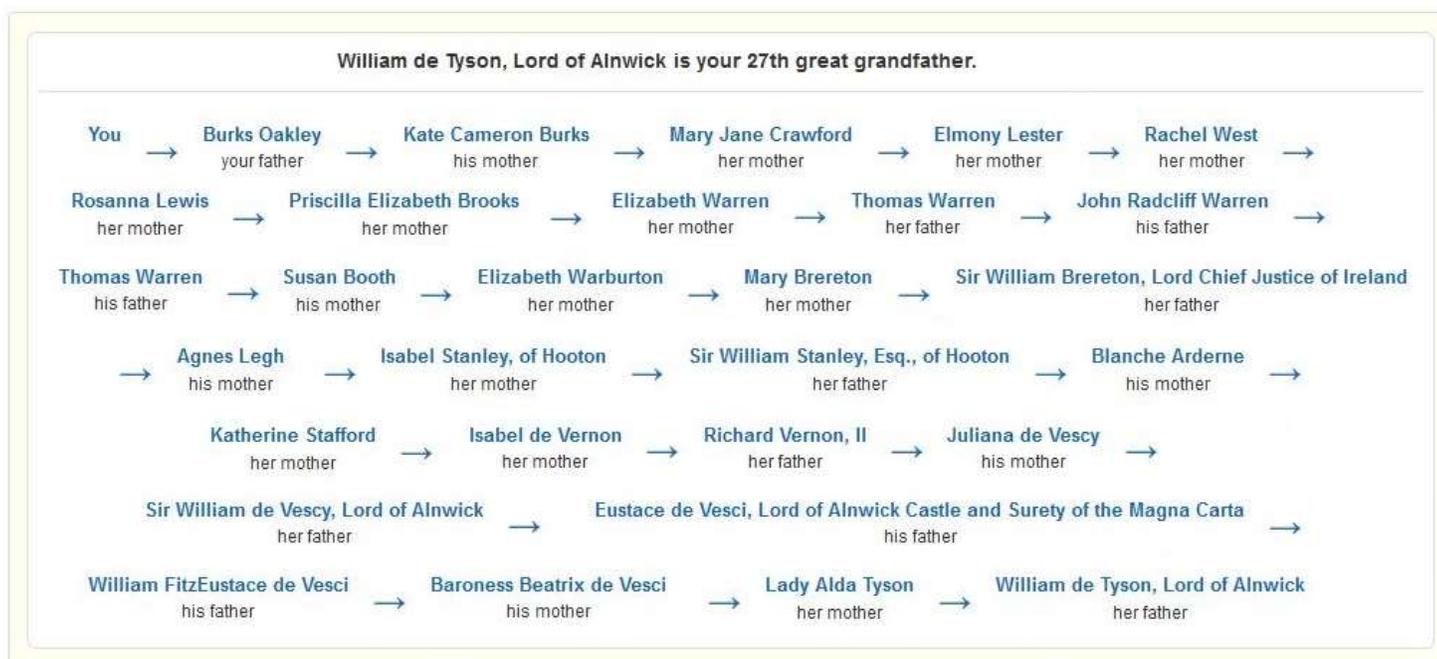
<http://www.burksoakley.com/QuincyOakleyGenealogy/55-Suretities-MagnaCarta.pdf>

Next is the line that goes through Hannah Maris, which I'll call “Line 5”:



Note that the first four lines were on the “Oakley” side of my father’s pedigree, but now Line 5 is on the “Burks” side of his pedigree.

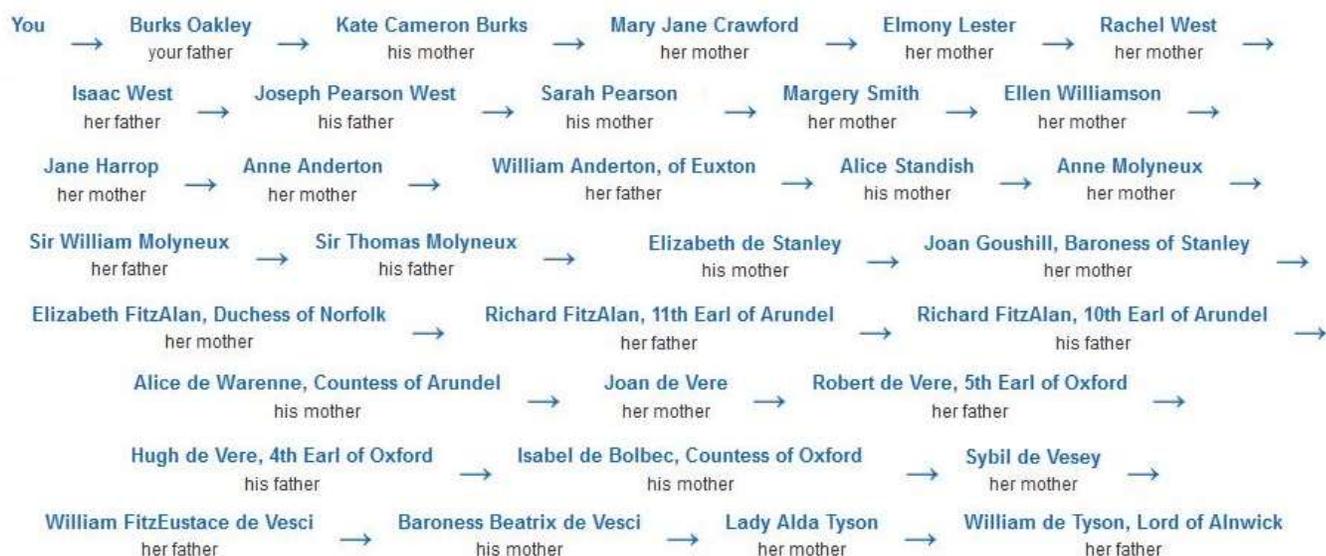
The next line goes through Rosanna Lewis, and I’ll call this “Line 6”:



Note that this line goes through Sir William Brereton, Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, and also through Eustace de Vesci, Lord of Alnwick Castle and Surety of the Magna Carta.

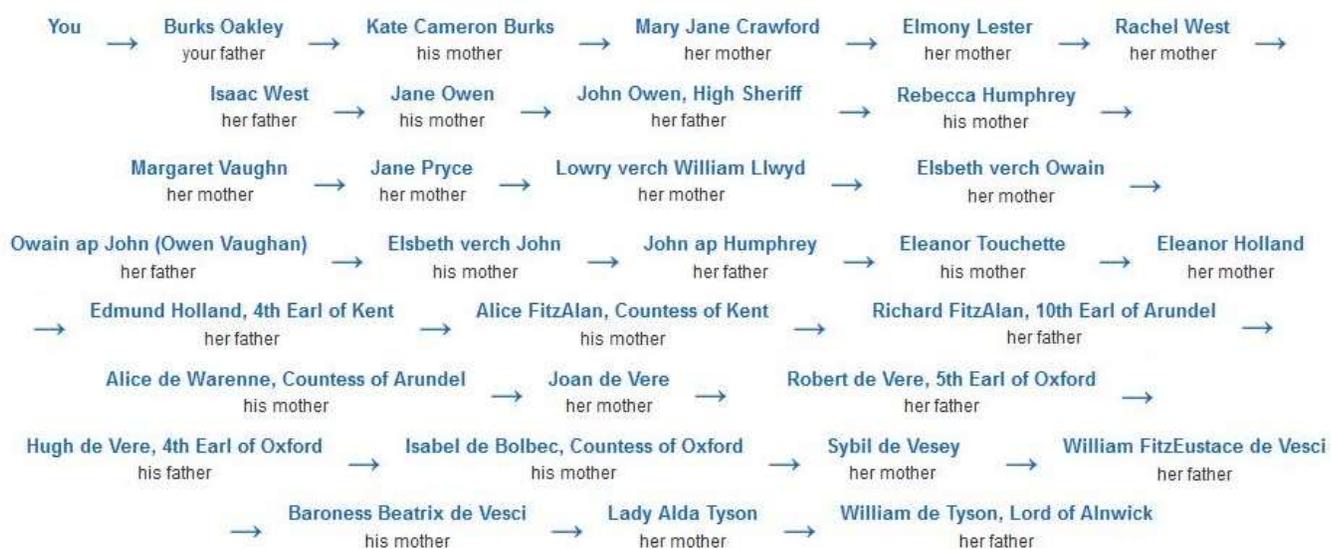
The next line goes through Sarah Pearson, and I’ll call it “Line 7”:

**William de Tyson, Lord of Alnwick is your 30th great grandfather.**



The next line goes through Jane Pryce – I’ll call it “Line 8”:

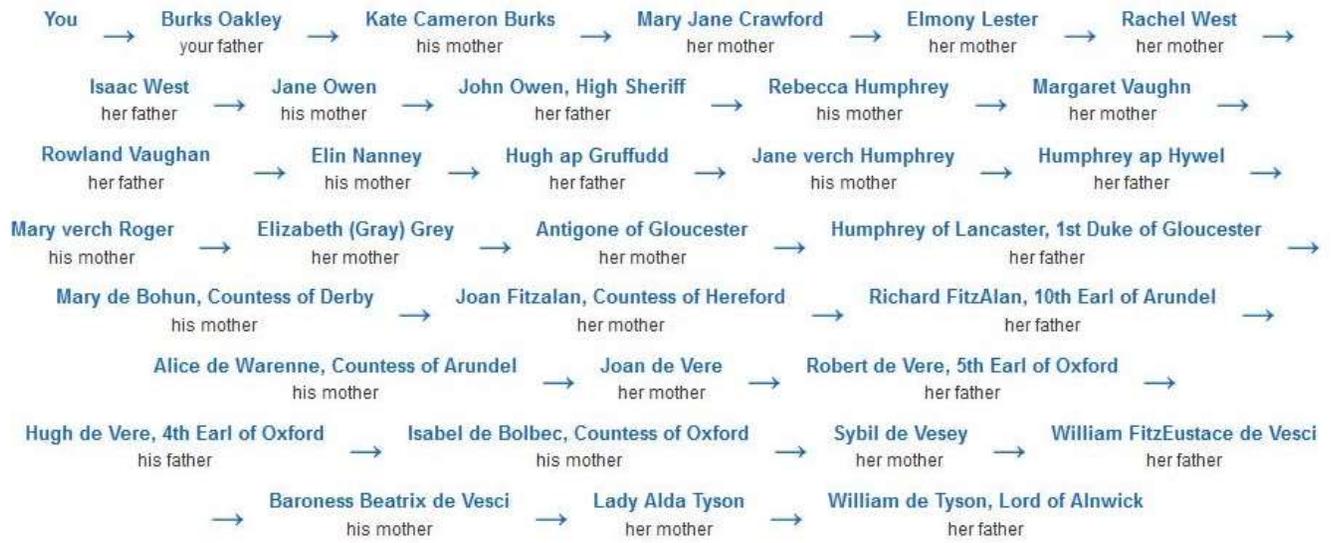
**William de Tyson, Lord of Alnwick is your 29th great grandfather.**



Note that Line 8 includes a number of generations of Welsh, with names like Elsbeth verch Owain.

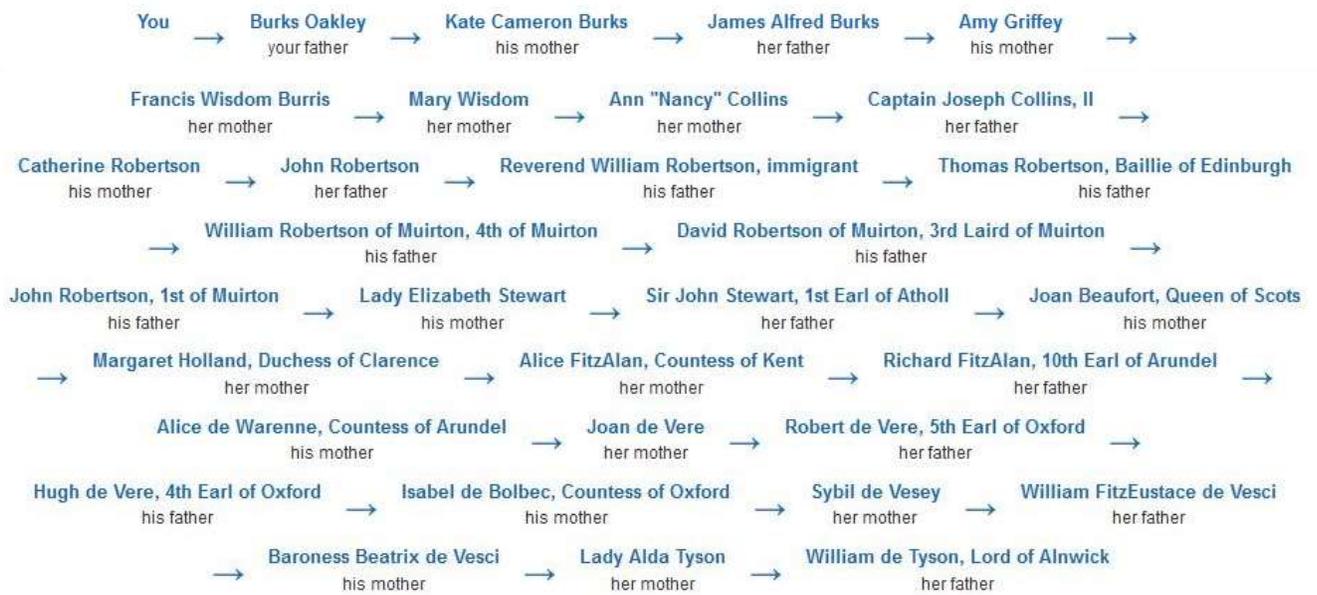
The next line goes through Rowland Vaughn; I’ll call it “Line 9”:

**William de Tyson, Lord of Alnwick is your 30th great grandfather.**



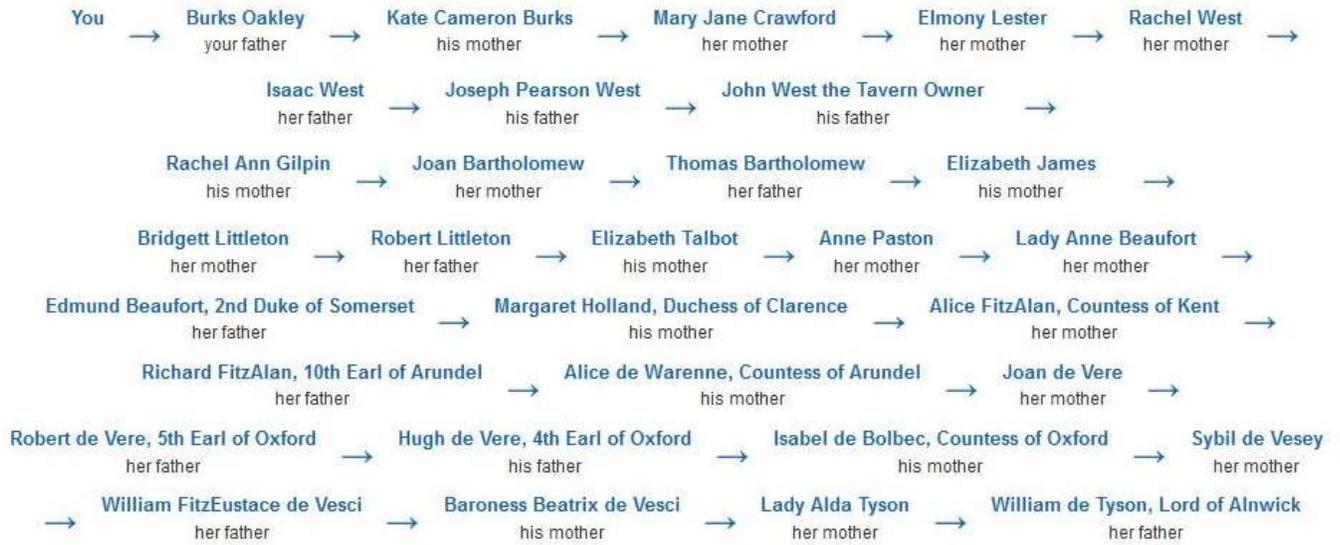
The next line goes through James Alfred Burks; I'll call it "Line 10":

**William de Tyson, Lord of Alnwick is your 29th great grandfather.**



The last line I found goes through John West, the Tavern Owner; I'll call it "Line 11":

**William de Tyson, Lord of Alnwick is your 29th great grandfather.**



Phew! I guess that there could be a few more lines to be found, if I had a more systematic approach; I found these lines by randomly searching through my ancestors and seeing if they were descended from William de Tyson. But eleven lines is more than enough for now. In looking back at these lines, I see that the first four were “Oakley” lines, while the last seven were “Burks” lines.

All eleven lines are shown on the next page in landscape orientation:



A few observations. The “shortest blood relationship” is found in Line 2. On that line, William de Tyson is my 23<sup>rd</sup>-great grandfather. On Lines 1, 7, and 9, William de Tyson is my 30<sup>th</sup>-great grandfather. That really is quite a spread in the number of generations – of course, William was born in 1050, so there has been a long time for the generations to spread out or to contract.

Since I have lines going back to William de Tyson on both the Oakley and Burks sides of my family, this means (once again) that my grandparents Ray Miller Oakley and Kate Cameron Burks were distant cousins. Very, very, very distant cousins. And in looking at the lines on the previous page, the same can be said for Aaron Burr Oakley and his wife Hannah Mariah Miller, for Allen Miller and his wife Hannah Tripp, for Sgt. Solomon Case and his wife Anna Case, for Isaac West and his wife Rosanna Lewis, for James Alfred Burks and his wife Mary Jane Cameron Crawford, for Joseph Pearson West and his wife Jane Owen, and for John West (the Tavern Owner) and his wife Sarah Pearson. It’s quite amazing to see these couples where both the husband and the wife were descended from William de Tyson!

### ***Going Back Another Generation***

According to Geni.com, William de Tyson’s father was Gilbert de Tyson, Lord of Alnwick:

<b>Gilbert de de Tyson, Lord of Alnwick</b>	
Gender:	Male
Birth:	circa 1035 Cotentin Peninsula, Normandy, France
Death:	1066 (26-35) Hastings, Sussex, , England (Killed at Battle of Hastings)
Place of Burial:	Fought at Battle of Hastings on Anglo Saxon side
Immediate Family:	Son of <a href="#">Raoul de Roche-Tesson</a> and <a href="#">Albérède de Moulins</a> Husband of <a href="#">Beatrix Normanica</a> Father of <a href="#">William de Tyson, Lord of Alnwick</a> Brother of <a href="#">Lord Osberne fitz Tezzon de Dodleston</a> and <a href="#">Ralph Tesson de la Roche-Tesson, III</a>

This entry shows that Gilbert de Tyson’s father was Raoul de Roche-Tesson. The profile page for Raoul has:

Trisoun, for Tesson or Taisson, the Norman-French for badger. The Tessons, Lords of Cinglais, were one of the most powerful houses of Normandy. They obtained their surname, the badger, from their peculiar talent of burrowing or fixing their claws wherever they could gain possession; a significant, if not a noble epithet.

So it looks like Tyson came from Tesson or Taisson.

The profile page for Gilbert de Tyson on Geni.com has the following:

Tyson or Tisson or Tesson is a baronial name. The Tessons were commonly said to have possessed a third of Normandy.

Ralph Tesson led 120 knights of his barony to the aid of Duke William at the Battle of Val des Dunes, 1047, and was created Viscount of the Cotentin. He founded the Abbey of Fontenay, near Caen, and from him descended the powerful family of Tesson in Normandy. **Gilbert Tyson or Tesson, his brother, obtained the barony of Alnwick from Edward the Confessor, and fell at the Battle of Hastings.** Gilbert's son William had a daughter who married Ivo de Vesci. Gilbert Tyson, another son, held great estates in York, Lincoln and Notts 1086.

excerpted from *The Norman people and their existing descendants in the British dominions and the United States of America*, Henry S. King & Co, 1874, p. 427. Reprinted online (Google Books and archives.com).

Of course, I had to get this book. It was digitized by Google and is available online for free.<sup>2</sup>

## *THE NORMAN PEOPLE*

AND THEIR EXISTING DESCENDANTS IN

THE BRITISH DOMINIONS AND THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

HENRY S. KING & CO.

65 CORNHILL & 12 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON

1874

Digitized by Google

I next started searching online for more information about the "Lord of Alnwick", and I found a book *The History of the Borough, Castle, and Barony of Alnwick*, written by George Tate and published in 1866.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.google.com/books/edition/The\\_Norman\\_People\\_and\\_Their\\_Existing\\_Des/TVMBAAAAQAAJ?hl=en](https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Norman_People_and_Their_Existing_Des/TVMBAAAAQAAJ?hl=en)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.google.com/books/edition/The\\_History\\_of\\_the\\_Borough\\_Castle\\_and\\_Ba/GDWevgEACAAJ?hl=en](https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_History_of_the_Borough_Castle_and_Ba/GDWevgEACAAJ?hl=en)

THE  
HISTORY  
OF THE  
BOROUGH, CASTLE, AND BARONY  
OF  
ALNWICK,

BY GEORGE TATE, F.G.S.,

Corresponding Member of the Society of Antiquaries for Scotland; Local Secretary of the  
Anthropological Society, London; Secretary of the Berwickshire Naturalists'  
Club; Honorary Member of the Hasting's Philosophical Society, &c.

VOL. I.

ALNWICK:  
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY HENRY HUNTER BLAIR.

MDCCLXVI.

Here is part of the Table of Contents:

CHAPTER IV.

SAXON AND DANISH PERIODS.

**Legendary Accounts of the Saxon Lords of Alnwick—Chronicle of Alnwick  
Abbey—The Tysons—Saxon Settlements in Alnwick—Bocklands and  
Folclands—Saxon Dwellings and Vills—Alnwick Subordinate to Lesbury  
—Saxon Churches—Alnmouth Saxon Cross—The Danes—Close of the  
Saxon Period . . . . . 32**

CHAPTER V.

TYSON AND DE VESCY PERIOD, FROM 1066 TO 1297.

**Doomsday Book—Gislebert Tyson and His Descendants—Malcolm Caenmore  
Slain—Malcolm's Cross—Yvo De Vescy—Eustace Fitz-John—Lands  
Granted to Him—Siege of Bamburgh Castle—Battle of the Standard—  
Churches and Abbeys Founded—William De Vescy—Siege of Alnwick  
Castle—William the Lion taken Prisoner—Glanville the Chief Justiciar  
—Gifts to the Church—Eustace De Vescy—War with Scotland—King  
John at Alnwick—His Attempt to Dishonour Eustace's Wife—He Burns  
Alnwick—William De Vescy—Testa De Neville—John De Vescy—Civil  
War—Montford—Alnwick Castle Besieged by Prince Edward—John De  
Vescy in Holy Land—William De Vescy Accused of Felony—Claims to  
the Kingdom of Scotland—Character of the De Vescys . . . . . 43**

Certainly a lot about the Tyson family, and also the De Vescy family – recall that several of my eleven ancestral lines go through the De Vescy (de Vesci) family.

George Tate lived in Alnwick, and he seems to have been a renaissance man. His Wikipedia article includes:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George\\_Tate\\_\(topographer\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Tate_(topographer))

*Tate's History of the Borough, Castle, and Barony of Alnwick*, which appeared in parts between 1865 and 1869, was his major publication. It included the history of **Alnwick Castle** and the Percy family, with accounts of old customs, sports, public movements, local nomenclature, the botany, zoology, and geology of the district, and biographies of the notabilities of the town. On the completion of its publication, a banquet was given in Tate's honor in the town-hall, 21 May 1869.

And this now brings me to Alnwick Castle.

## ***The de Tyson Line and Alnwick Castle***

In going back on the original line discussed in this document (Line 1), I stopped with William de Tyson since he was listed as Lord of Alnwick and he was born in Alnwick Castle.

Alnwick Castle is located in Northumberland, which is an historic county in north-east England and is the northernmost county of England:



The castle is situated by the River Aln:



Let me start with some photos of the castle:







There is an extensive Wikipedia article about Alnwick Castle:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alnwick\\_Castle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alnwick_Castle)

Alnwick Castle is a castle and country house in Alnwick in the English county of Northumberland. It is the seat of the 12th Duke of Northumberland, built following the Norman conquest and renovated and remodeled a number of times.

Alnwick Castle guards a road crossing the River Aln. Yves de Vescy, Baron of Alnwick, erected the first parts of the castle in about 1096. [Note from Burks – According to his profile on Geni.com, William de Tyson was born in 1050 in Alnwick Castle. Something appears off here.]

The castle was first mentioned in 1136 when it was captured by King David I of Scotland. At this point, it was described as “very strong”. It was besieged in 1172 and again in 1174 by William the Lion, King of Scotland. William was captured outside the walls during the Battle of Alnwick. Eustace de Vesci, Lord of Alnwick, was accused of plotting with Robert Fitzwalter against King John in 1212. In response, John ordered the demolition of Alnwick Castle and Baynard’s Castle (the latter was Fitzwalter’s stronghold), but his instructions were not carried out at Alnwick.

The castle had been founded in the late 11th century by Ivo de Vesci, a Norman nobleman from Vassy, Calvados, in Normandy. A descendant of Ivo de Vesci, John de Vesci succeeded to his father’s titles and estates upon his father’s death in Gascony in 1253. These included the barony of Alnwick and a large property in Northumberland and considerable estates in Yorkshire, including Malton.

Today, Alnwick Castle is open for tours and other activities. See:

<https://www.alnwickcastle.com/>

Here is a visitor's map from their website:



### ***Alnwick Castle and Harry Potter***

Note in the visitor's map shown above, the area inside the castle walls in the lower right corner is labelled "Broomstick Training Classroom". Broomsticks? You mean as in Harry Potter? Exactly!



Here is some material from the castle website:

<https://www.alnwickcastle.com/explore/on-screen/harry-potter>

*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* filmed on location at Alnwick Castle in autumn 2000. The following year, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (the second film in the series) used Alnwick Castle for shooting.



The Outer Bailey is recognizable as the area where Harry and his fellow students learned to fly broomsticks with Madam Hooch (Zoe Wanamaker). Harry also learned the rules of wizarding sport Quidditch in the Outer Bailey.

The courtyards and baileys of Alnwick Castle were used to film Hogwarts students and staff going about their daily activities. Harry and Ron crash-landed the Weasley family's flying car in the Inner Bailey.



The Lion Arch was a way in and out of Hogwarts, heading towards Hagrid's cabin and the Forbidden Forest.



Broomstick training.

### ***Alnwick Castle and Downton Abbey***

Just when I thought the story about Alnwick Castle couldn't get any better – well, then I learned about the connection of the castle with Downton Abbey:

<https://www.alnwickcastle.com/explore/on-screen/downton-abbey>

Alnwick Castle starred as the magnificent Brancaster Castle in two Christmas specials of world-famous drama series Downton Abbey.



The cast and crew of Downton spent two busy weeks at the castle in July and August 2014, filming extensively in the spectacular State Rooms, as well as in the grounds and at the semi-ruined Hulne Abbey in the Duke of Northumberland's parklands in Alnwick.



The episode finds the Crawley family in 1924. When Lady Rose's father-in-law, Lord Sinderby, rents out Brancaster Castle, the family are invited to a shooting party. Surprises are in store when a scandalous secret threatens to undermine the holiday, and some new faces arrive on the scene.

In July 2015, Downton returned for another week of filming in the State Rooms, the ramparts, and in the nearby Bow Alley and St Michael's Church Hall. These scenes would become part of the final-ever episode of the series, broadcast in the UK on Christmas Day that year.



This episode features Brancaster under the ownership of Lady Edith's fiancé Bertie Pelham, now Lord Hexham. Lord and Lady Grantham join Edith at Brancaster, where they meet Bertie's formidable mother and decide the future of Edith's relationship with Bertie once and for all.



Never did I think that family genealogy would connect me to a castle in the far north of England, and that this castle then would connect me to Harry Potter and to Downton Abbey. Amazing!

### *Summary*

In this chapter, I traced one of my ancestral lines back to William de Tyson, Lord of Alnwick. I ended up finding eleven different lines going from me back to William de Tyson – four of these lines went back through my Oakley ancestors and seven of these lines went back through my Burks ancestors.

A number of my ancestors who were descended from William de Tyson had spouses who also were descended from this man.

The de Tyson family goes back to Norman times in France, and at least one fought (and died) at the Battle of Hastings in 1066.

The de Tyson family is closely associated with Alnwick Castle. This castle has a rich history, right up to the present time – and it has served as a set for Harry Potter and Downton Abbey.