

## Chapter 71

### My Ancestral Lines Back to Henry de Percy, First Baron Percy

[Originally written on 22 July 2021]

#### ***Introduction***

I have been 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 those 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 July 2021, there are over 158 million individuals in the World Family Tree –

**Profiles connected by Geni's World Family Tree:**

# 158,326,820

Geni is creating one family tree for the entire world, built from the collaborative research of millions of genealogists. [Learn more about the World Family Tree](#)

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

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 Henry de Percy, First Baron Percy (1273-1314), who lived most of his life in northern England.

#### ***Going Back on My Ancestral Line to Henry de Percy***

I previously have written about several of my ancestral lines going back from Lucy Ann Eunice Darling (1804-1884) – Lucy was one of my 2<sup>nd</sup>-great grandmothers. Here is my line back to Lucy Darling:



This past week, I randomly picked another ancestral line going back from Lucy Darling; it seemed to lead to some interesting people, which prompted additional research, as well as the writing of this narrative. Here is the path I took: I first went back from Lucy Darling to one of her 2<sup>nd</sup>-great grandmothers – a woman named Rebecca Gregory (1673-1765):

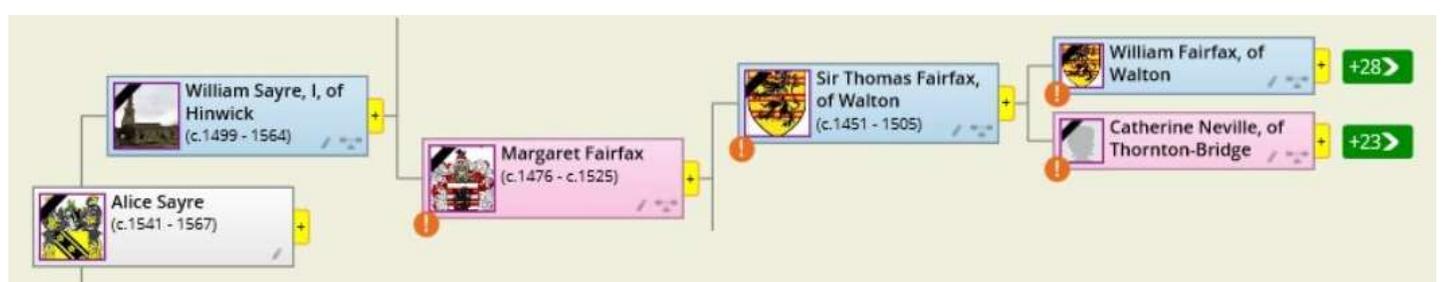


Rebecca Gregory lived most of her life in Fairfield County, Connecticut, and multiple generations of her descendants also lived in Fairfield County. I next went back from Rebecca Gregory to one of her 2<sup>nd</sup>-great grandmothers – a woman named Alice Sayre (1541-1567):

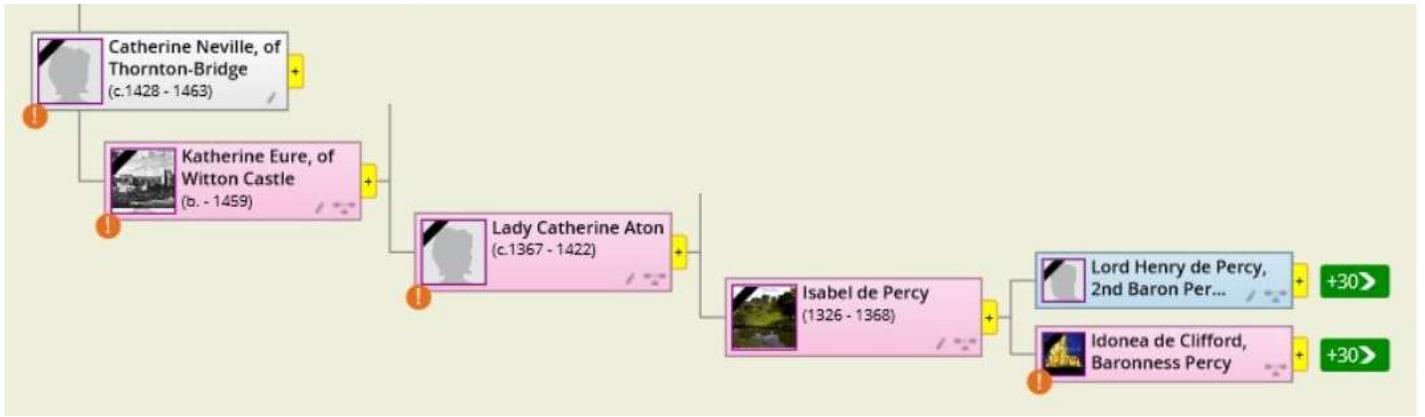


Alice Sayre lived in Bedfordshire, England. Her grandson, Sgt. Ephraim Wheeler (1618-1670), immigrated to America, settling in Fairfield County, Connecticut.

I next went back from Alice Sayre to her 2<sup>nd</sup>-great grandmother Catherine Neville, of Thornton-Bridge (1428-1463):



Catherine lived in Yorkshire, in northern England. I then went from Catherine back to her 2<sup>nd</sup>-great grandfather Lord Henry de Percy, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron Percy (1300-1352):

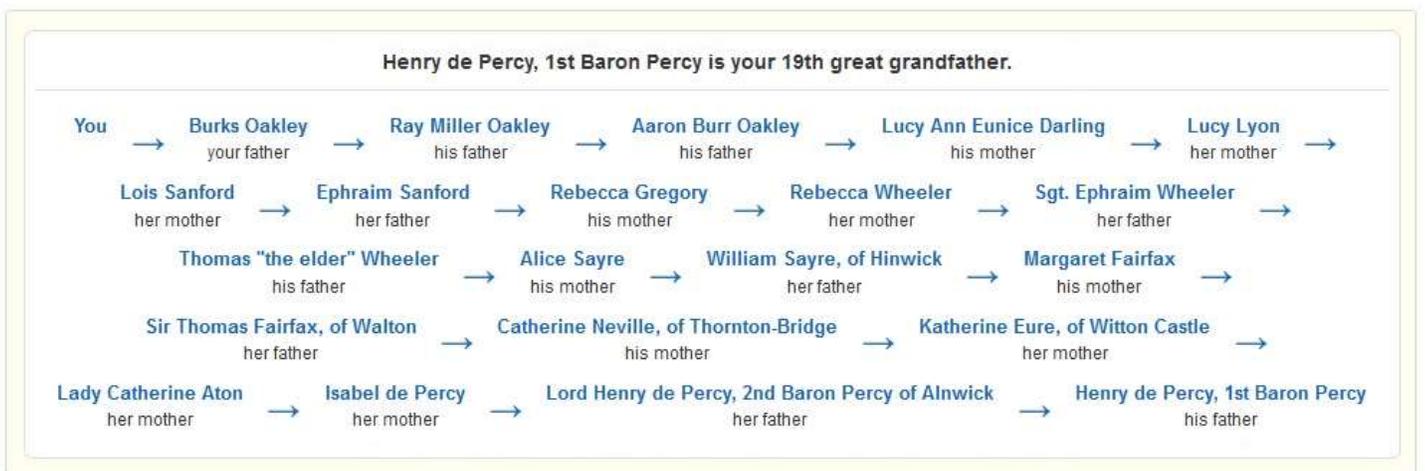


I then went back just one more generation, to Lord Henry's father:



This got me to Henry de Percy, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Percy (1273-1314). And now I was back to the late 1200's – solidly in the Middle Ages.

I'll now review my ancestral line back to Henry de Percy:



On this ancestral line, Henry de Percy was my 19<sup>th</sup>-great grandfather. Recall that this line went back through Rebecca Gregory, who was my 6<sup>th</sup>-great grandmother.

Here is Henry de Percy's profile from Geni.com:



## Henry de Percy, 1st Baron Percy of Alnwick

Gender:	Male
Birth:	March 25, 1273 Sussex, Falmer, The City of Brighton and Hove, England, United Kingdom
Death:	circa October 10, 1314 (37-45) Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, England, United Kingdom
Place of Burial:	Fountains Abbey, Yorkshire, England
Immediate Family:	Son of <a href="#">Henry 7th Baron de Percy</a> and <a href="#">Lady Eleanor de Warenne</a> Husband of <a href="#">Eleanor FitzAlan</a> Father of <a href="#">Lord Henry de Percy, 2nd Baron Percy of Alnwick</a> ; <a href="#">Alianore de Percy</a> and <a href="#">Jane Percy</a> Brother of <a href="#">John de Percy</a> Half brother of <a href="#">William Percy</a>

Henry de Percy was important enough to have his own Wikipedia entry. Here is an excerpt:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry\\_Percy,\\_1st\\_Baron\\_Percy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Percy,_1st_Baron_Percy)

Henry de Percy, 1st Baron Percy of Alnwick (25 March 1273 – October 1314) was a medieval English magnate.

He fought under King Edward I of England in Wales and Scotland and was granted extensive estates in Scotland, which were later retaken by the Scots under King Robert I of Scotland. He added Alnwick Castle to the family estates in England, founding a dynasty of northern warlords. He rebelled against King Edward II over the issue of Piers Gaveston and was imprisoned for a few months. After his release, he declined to fight under Edward II at the Battle of Bannockburn, remaining at Alnwick Castle, where he died a few months later, aged 41.

The entire Wikipedia entry is in Appendix A. The article certainly has too much detail to be readable, but perhaps it is worth skimming.

### ***My Ancestral Lines to Henry de Percy***

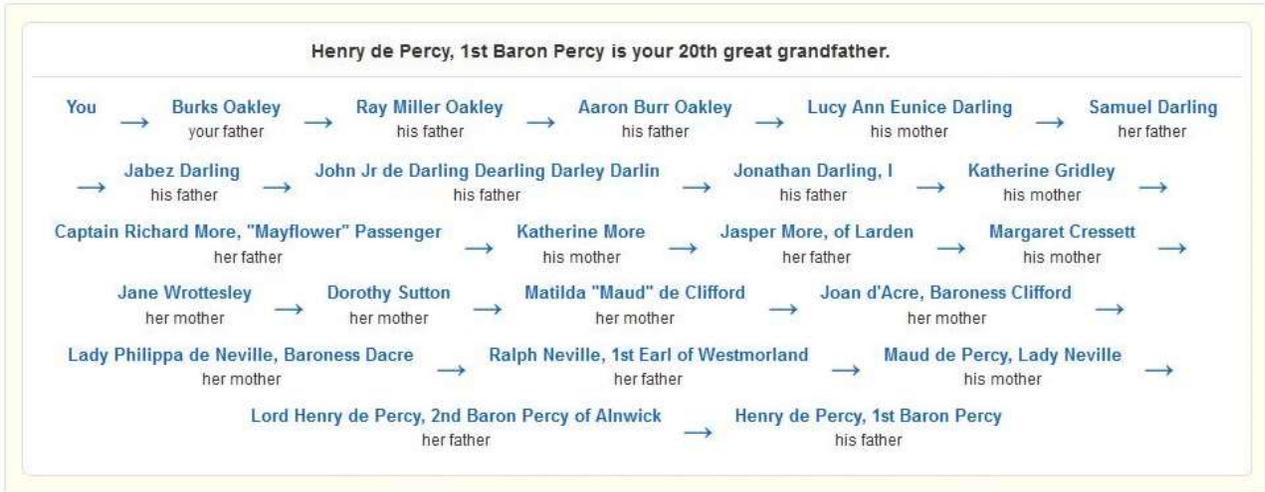
When using the World Family Tree on Geni.com, I have found a handful of cases where I have multiple ancestral lines that go back to the same English ancestor. For example, I have twelve different lines that go back to King Edward I of England – see:

<http://www.burksoakley.com/QuincyOakleyGenealogy/50-MyLines-to-KingEdward.pdf>

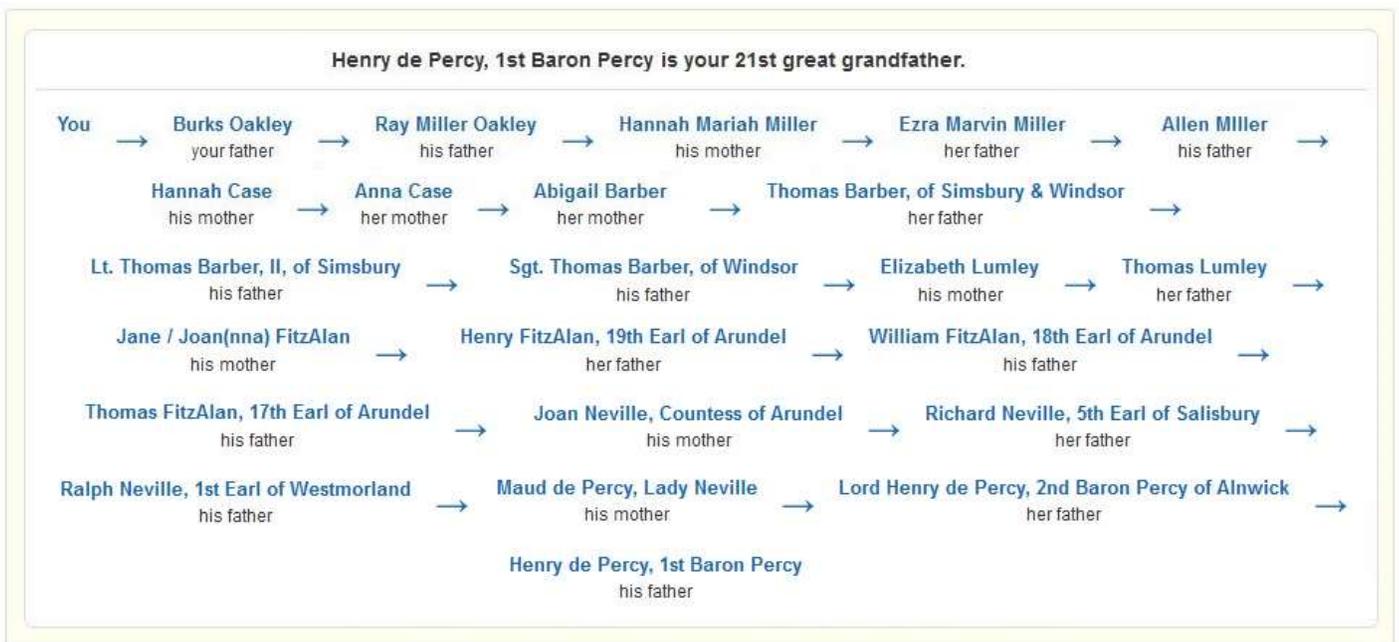
I wondered if I also had other ancestral lines going back to Henry de Percy – and of course, I did. A lot of them!

I'll call the line shown on the previous page "Line 1" – this line goes back through Rebecca Gregory.

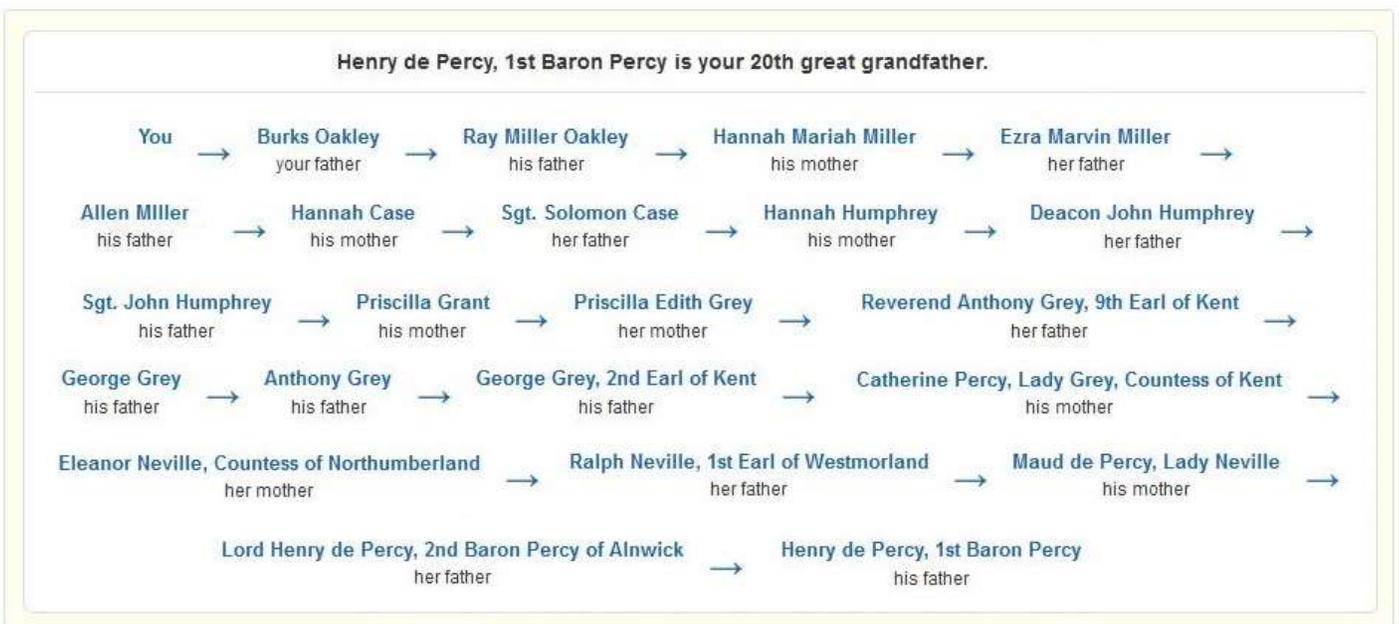
Line 2 goes back through Jonathan Darling (1654-1718):



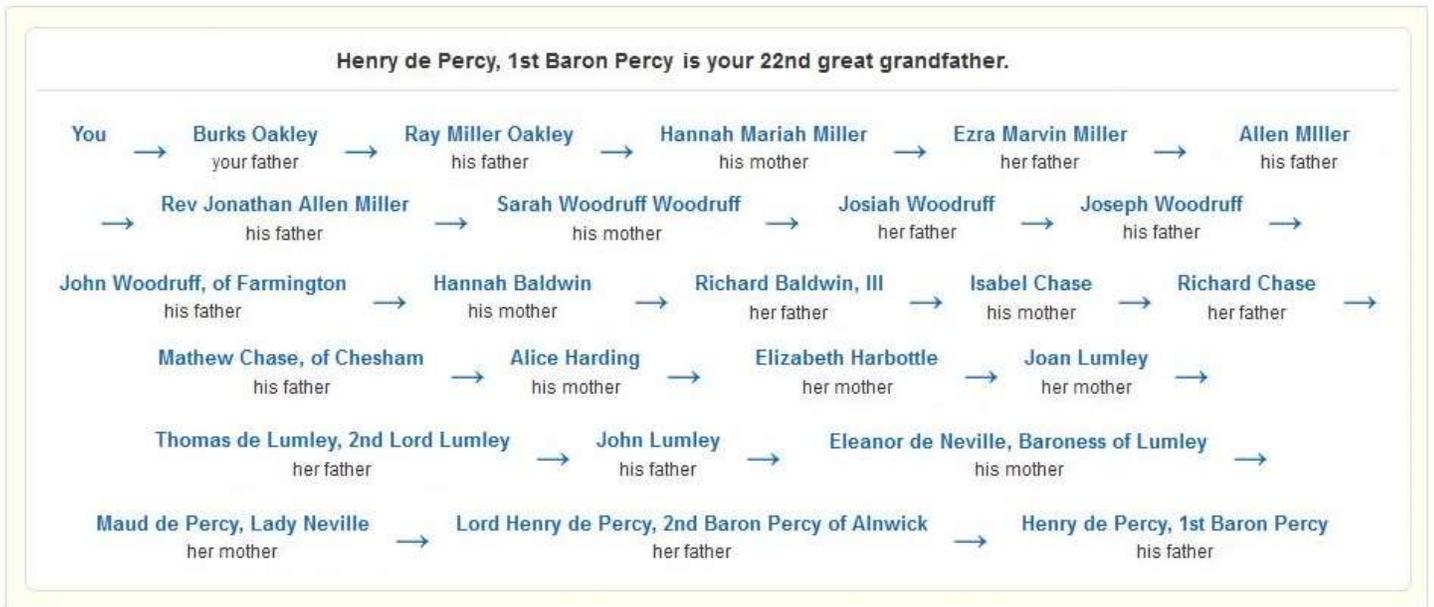
Line 3 goes back through Abigail Barber (1706-1779):



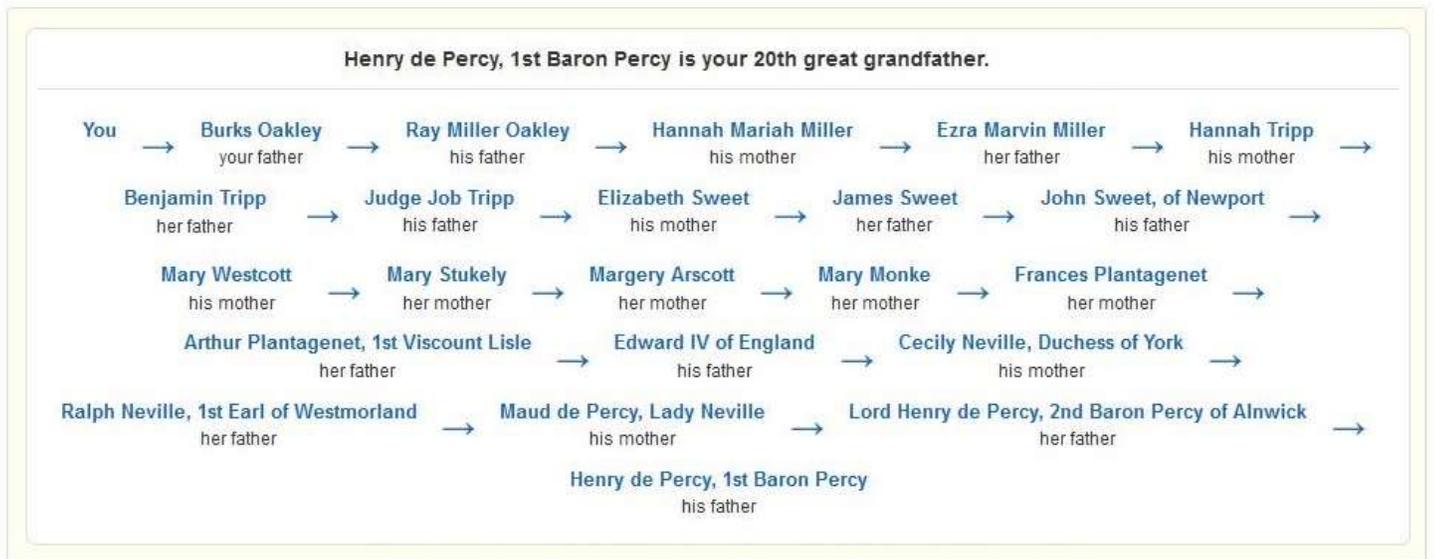
Line 4 goes back through Hannah Humphrey (1701-1782):



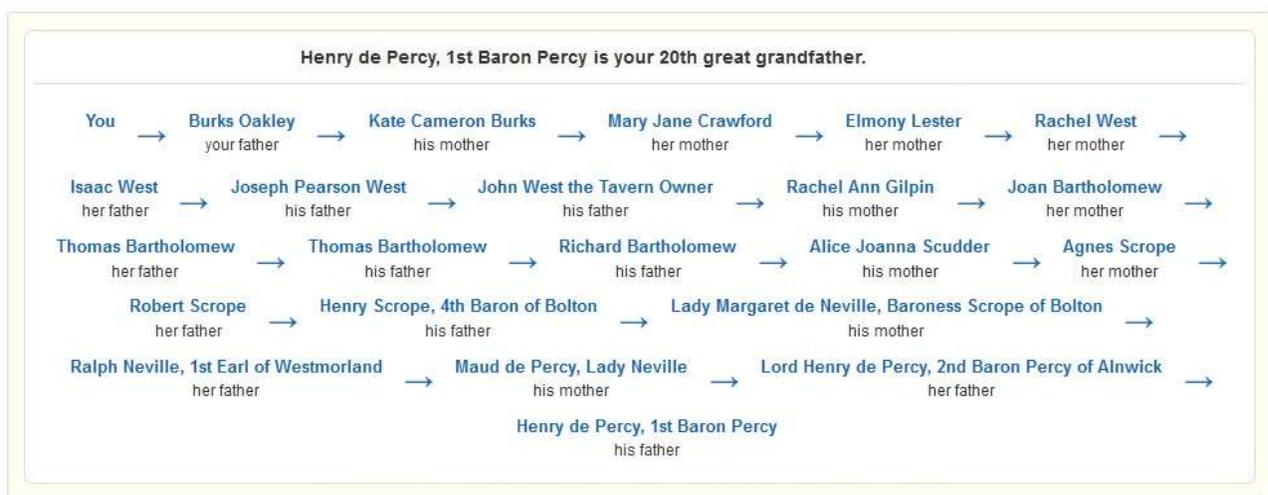
Line 5 goes back through Josiah Woodruff (1706-1789):



Line 6 goes back through Elizabeth Sweet (1675-1755):



Line 7 goes back through John West, the Tavern Owner (1690-1776):



Note that this line goes through the **Burks** family, whereas the six previous lines all went through the **Oakley** family.

Line 8 goes back through Hannah Maris (1698-1752):



Line 9 goes back through John Owen (1692-1752):

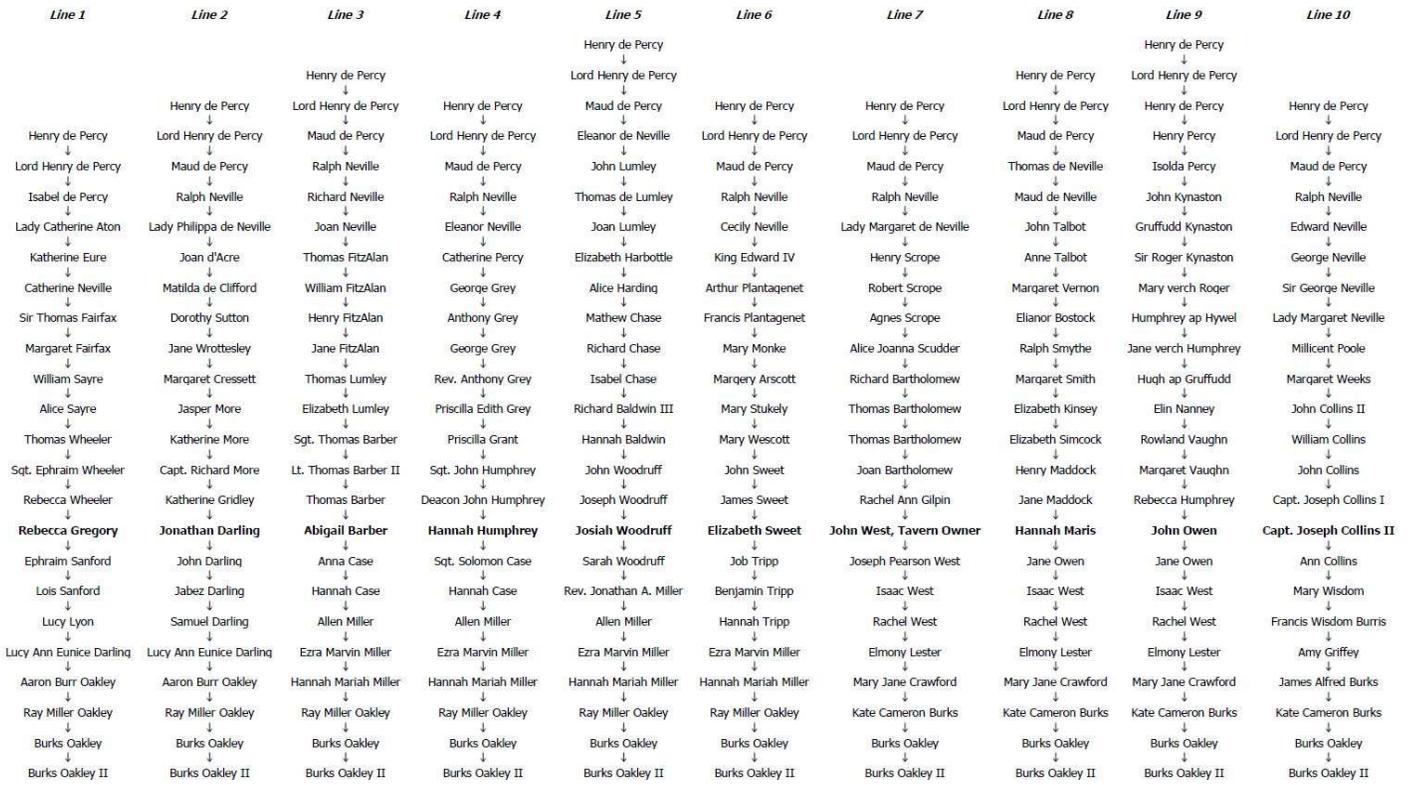


Line 10 goes back through Capt. Joseph Collins II (1704-1757):



This is pretty amazing – ten different ancestral lines that go back to Henry de Percy! The first six lines were on the **Oakley** side of my family, while the last four lines were on the **Burks** side of my family. On the various lines, Henry de Percy ranged from my 19<sup>th</sup>-great grandfather to my 22<sup>nd</sup>-great grandfather. Line 1, which goes through Rebecca Gregory, is the “shortest blood line”, and that is the line where Henry de Percy is my 19<sup>th</sup>-great grandfather.

Here are all ten lines:



This chart is unreadable at this magnification, so I will show it in landscape view on the next page:



I find it really amazing to see all of these ancestral lines that stem from the same individual, who was born in England in the late 1200's.

All ten of these lines go back to Henry de Percy through his son Lord Henry de Percy, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron Percy of Alnwick. Lord Henry lived from 1300 until 1352.

In Lines 8 and 9, my 6<sup>th</sup>-great grandparents Hannah Maris (1698-1752) and John Owen (1692-1752) were married to each other – and, of course, they both were descended from Henry de Percy. I doubt that they knew that they were distant cousins.

The same holds true for Joseph Pearson West and Jane Owen in Lines 7 and 8. And Hannah Case and Rev. Jonathan Allen Miller in Lines 4 and 5. And Lucy Lyon (Line 1) and Samuel Darling (Line 2). And Allen Miller (Lines 3-5) and Hannah Tripp (Line 6). And Aaron Burr Oakley (Lines 1 and 2) and Hannah Mariah Miller (Lines 3-6). And Mary Jane Crawford (Lines 7-9) and James Alfred Burks (Line 10). And of course, Ray Miller Oakley (first six lines) and Kate Cameron Burks (last four lines). Oh my! Amazing to see all these distant cousins marrying!

### ***Henry de Percy and Alnwick Castle***

I have mentioned Alnwick Castle several times in this narrative. It is located in Northumberland County, in the far northeast corner of England:



Alnwick (pronounced /AN-ik/) Castle is located adjacent to the market town of Alnwick in Northumberland.

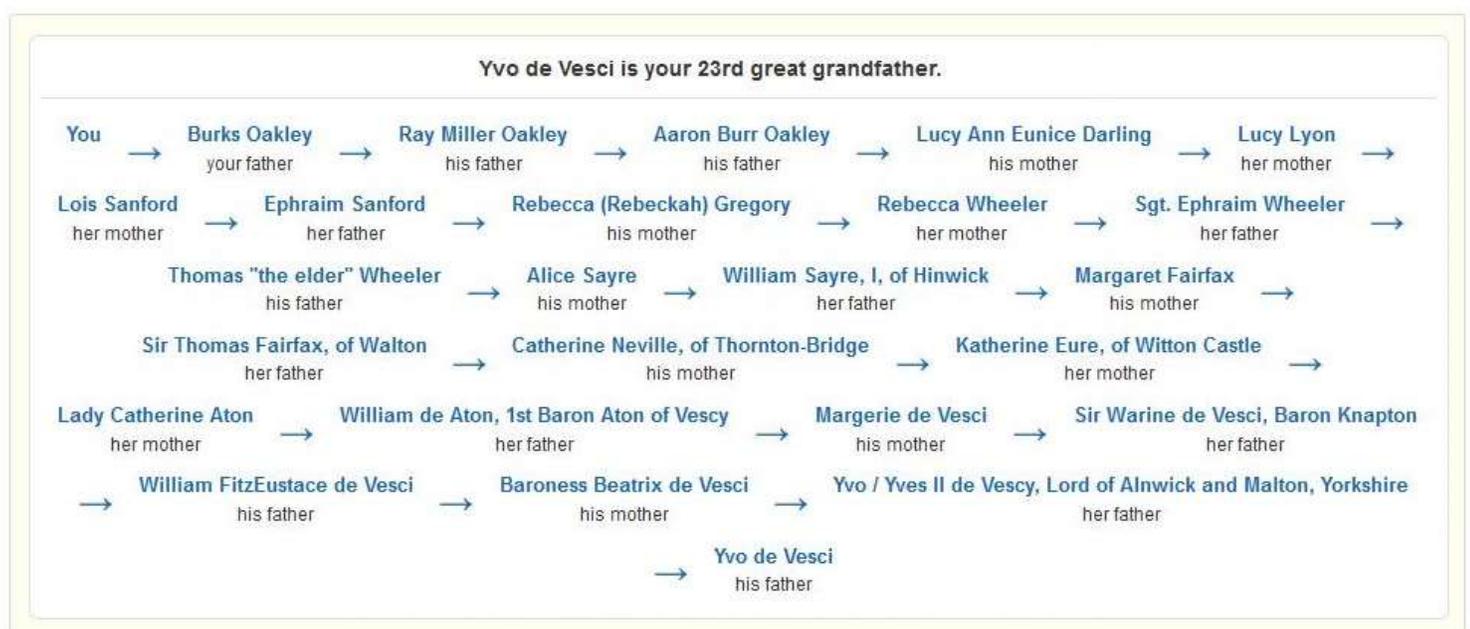
Here is an excerpt (with minor edits) from the Wikipedia article about this castle:

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

Alnwick Castle had been founded in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century (following the Norman conquest) 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. As John was underage, King Henry III of England conferred the wardship of his estates to a foreign kinsman, which caused great offence to the de Vesci family. The family's property and estates had been put into the guardianship of Antony Bek, who sold them to the Percys. From this time the fortunes of the Percys, though they still held their Yorkshire lands and titles, were linked permanently with Alnwick and its castle, and have been owned by the Percy family, the Earls and later Dukes of Northumberland, since. The stone castle Henry Percy bought was a modest affair, but he immediately began rebuilding. Though he did not live to see its completion, the construction program turned Alnwick into a major fortress along the Anglo-Scottish border.

Note that the text on the previous page mentioned that Alnwick Castle was founded by "Ivo de Vesci, a Norman nobleman from ...." Being a curious chap, I decided to see if I was descended from Ivo de Vesci – and son of a gun! He was my 23<sup>rd</sup>-great grandfather:



I wonder if I have any other ancestral lines going back to Ivo de Vesci.... [Don't worry – I'll save this for another time.]

### ***Alnwick Castle Today***

Alnwick Castle has been home to the Percy Family for over 700 years. Here are some photos of the castle as it is today:





There is a really nice YouTube video of Alnwick Castle with scenes shot from a drone – see:

<https://youtu.be/tXh8Ue2cr2o>

The Alnwick Castle folks also have a YouTube video with a “virtual tour” of the castle – see:

<https://youtu.be/SEJYzremMII>

Alnwick Castle is the second largest inhabited castle in England, second only to Windsor Castle. It is open for visitors, and there is a lot to do there – here is the visitor’s map:



## Ralph Percy, 12<sup>th</sup> Duke of Northumberland

Some of the history of the Percy family can be found on the Alnwick Castle website:

<https://www.alnwickcastle.com/explore/the-history/the-percy-family>

Alnwick Castle is now owned by Ralph George Algernon Percy, 12<sup>th</sup> Duke of Northumberland, who was born in 1956. More about Cousin Ralph at:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ralph\\_Percy,\\_12th\\_Duke\\_of\\_Northumberland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ralph_Percy,_12th_Duke_of_Northumberland)

Even though Ralph Percy has the **Percy** surname, he doesn't come from a line of **Percy** males. His 5<sup>th</sup>-great-grandfather was born a **Smithson**. However, this man married a woman who was the heiress to the Percy estates, and he changed his surname to **Percy** and became the 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Northumberland. See more at:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugh\\_Percy,\\_1st\\_Duke\\_of\\_Northumberland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugh_Percy,_1st_Duke_of_Northumberland)

Here is the line from Ralph Percy back to Hugh Percy:



Is Ralph Percy descended from Henry de Percy? Is Ralph really my cousin? The answer to both questions is YES. Here is the line back from Ralph Percy to Henry de Percy:

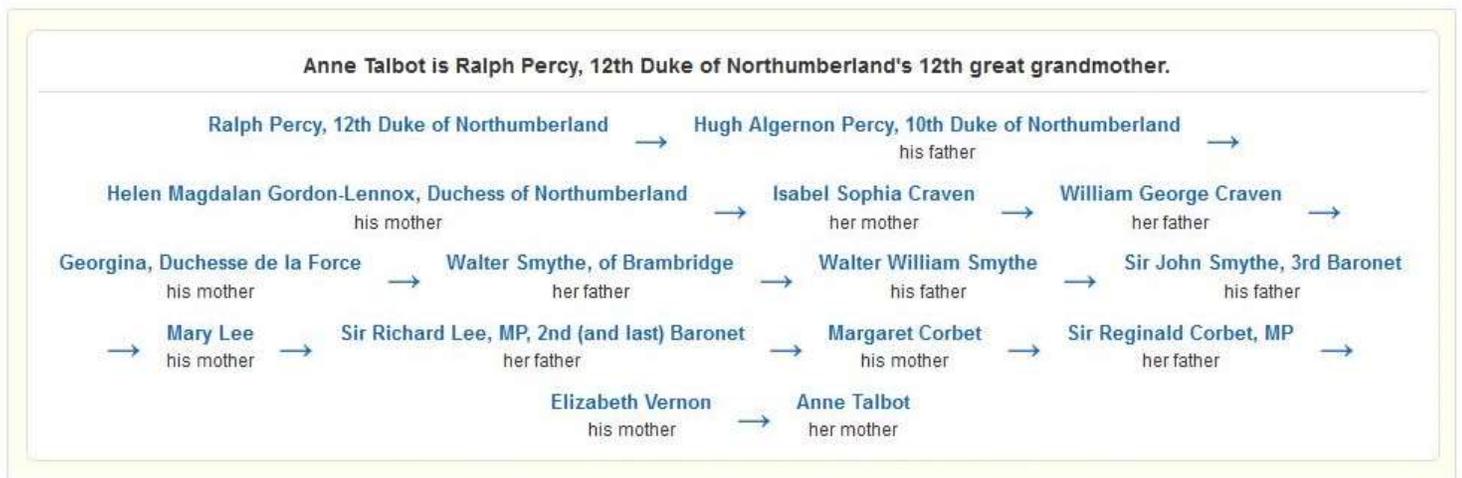


So Ralph Percy, 12<sup>th</sup> Duke of Northumberland, is indeed my (distant) cousin.

As I looked at this ancestral line, I realized that Ralph Percy and I actually have a much closer relationship – Anne Talbot (1445-1494), who appears in the lineage shown on the previous page, is my 15<sup>th</sup>-great grandmother.

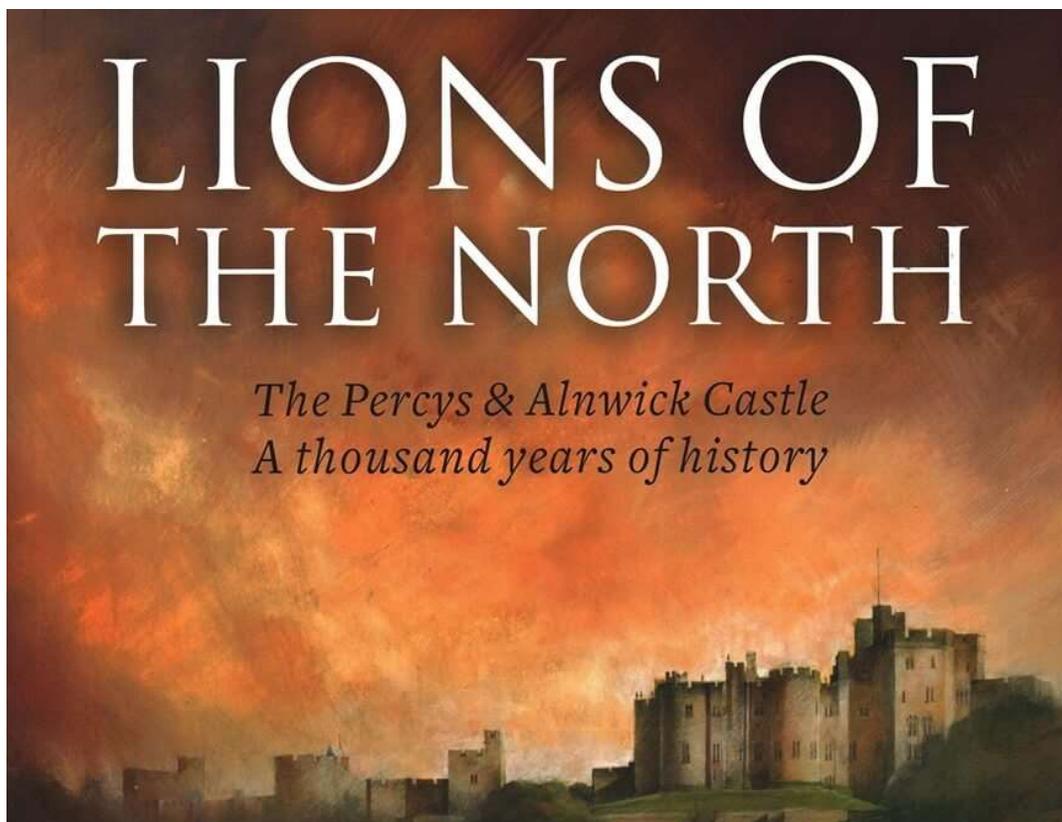


And Anne Talbot is Ralph Percy's 12<sup>th</sup>-great grandmother:



I wouldn't be surprised to learn that Ralph Percy and I are related in other ways.

Ralph Percy has written a book entitled *The Lions of the North: The Percys & Alnwick Castle. A thousand years of history*:



The promo for this book on the Amazon.com website includes:

<https://www.amazon.com/Lions-North-Alnwick-Castle-Thousand/dp/1785511297>

*Lions of the North* tells, from a unique and personal perspective, the stories of the Percy family and Alnwick Castle over a thousand years of British history. Generations of Percy barons, lords, earls and dukes played vital parts in great historical events, from the Norman Conquest to the two World Wars, and the castle, once battered by marauding armies, is now a major tourist attraction. The Duke has drawn on his unparalleled access to the Percy archives to paint this fascinating portrait of a British dynasty and its survival against the odds.

As an aside, the paperback edition of this book sells for \$139.50 on Amazon, but a much more reasonable £15 on the [alnwickcastle.com](http://alnwickcastle.com) website. Go figure!

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

Alnwick Castle was featured as the “Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry” during the 2001 movie *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* and the 2002 movie *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. More about this at:

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

Of course, one of the on-site activities at the castle is called “Broomstick Training”.



## ***Henry de Percy and Fountains Abbey***

Henry de Percy, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Percy of Alnwick, is buried at Fountains Abbey, Yorkshire, England (about 25 miles north of Leeds):



Here are some photos of Fountains Abbey as it looks today:

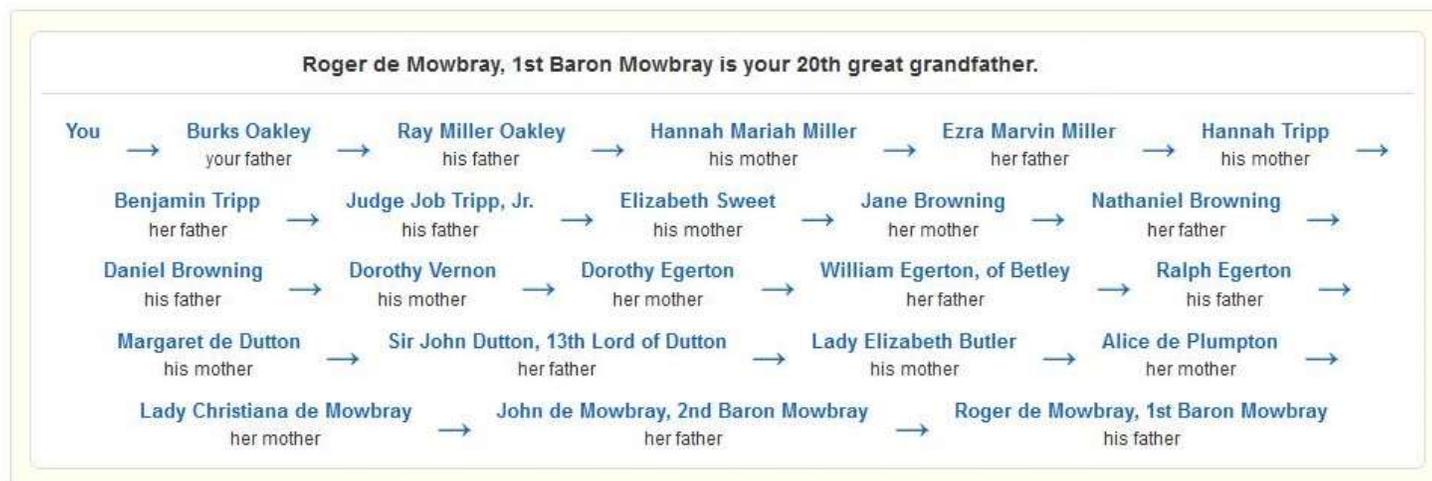


The Fountains Abbey entry on Wikipedia includes:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fountains\\_Abbey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fountains_Abbey)

Fountains Abbey is one of the largest and best-preserved ruined Cistercian monasteries in England. It is located approximately 3 miles (5 km) southwest of Ripon in North Yorkshire, near to the village of Aldfield. Founded in 1132, the abbey operated for 407 years, becoming one of the wealthiest monasteries in England until its dissolution, by order of Henry VIII, in 1539.

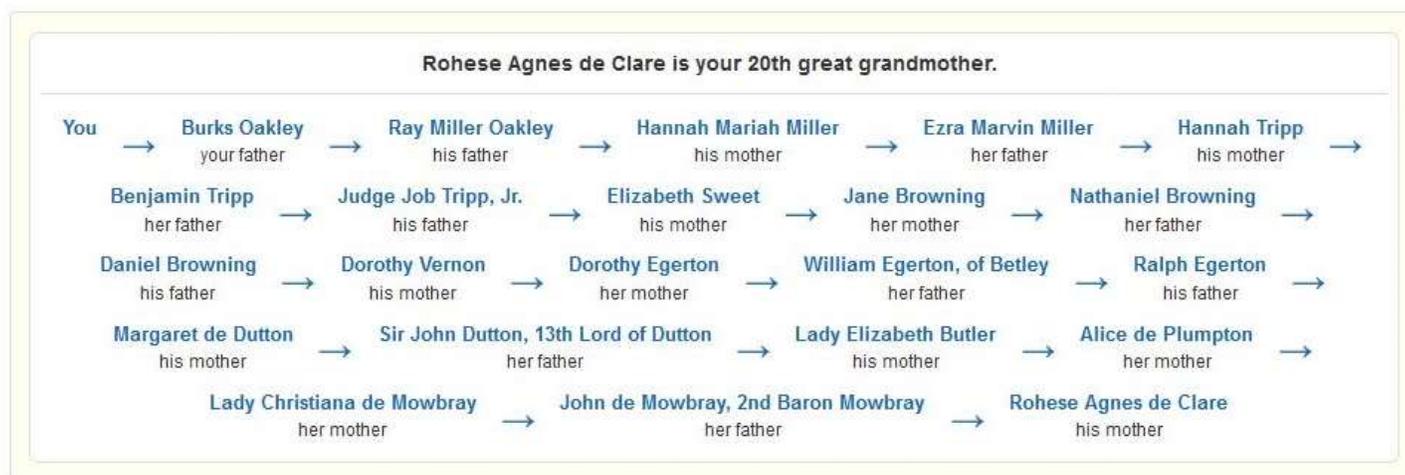
Henry de Percy is indeed one of six people listed on the Wikipedia page as being buried at Fountains Abbey. One of the others is Roger de Mowbray, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Mowbray – and wouldn't you know it? He is my 20<sup>th</sup>-great grandfather:



Hmmm.... I wonder if I have any other ancestral lines going back to Roger de Mowbray .....

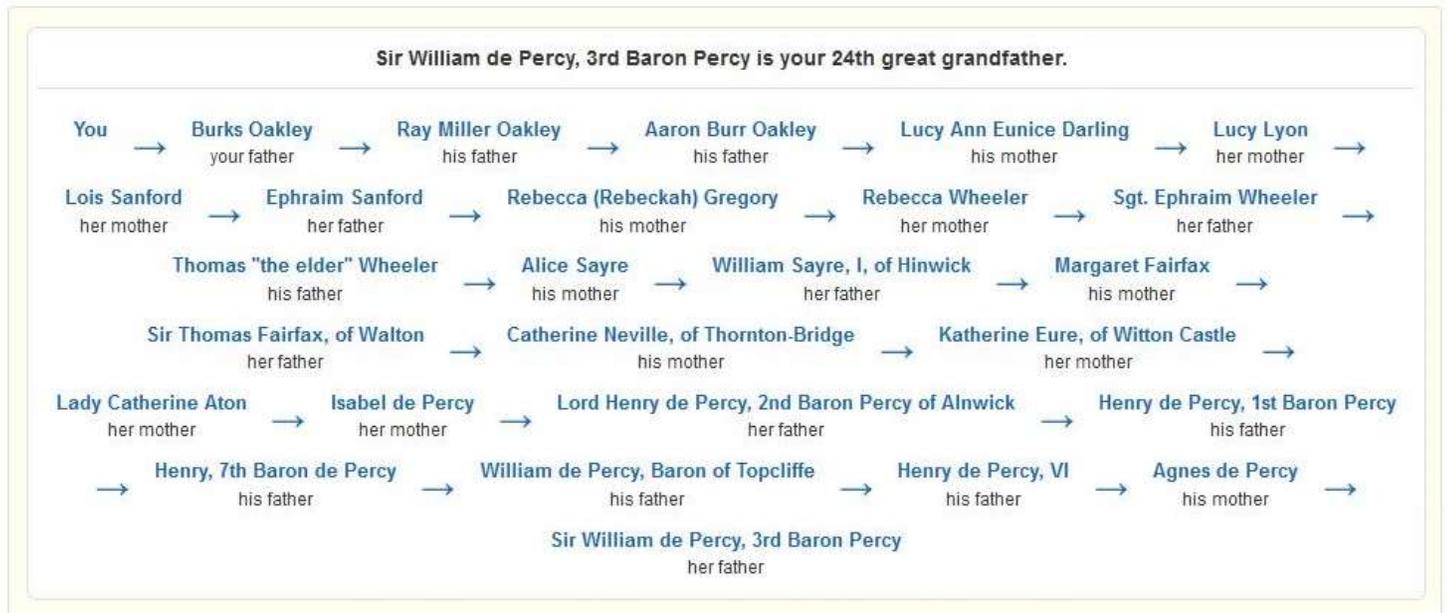
Who else is buried at Fountains Abbey?

The only woman listed as being buried there is Rose/Rohese (daughter of Richard de Clare, 6<sup>th</sup> Earl of Gloucester, and wife of Roger de Mowbray, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Mowbray). Of course, she was my 20<sup>th</sup>-great grandmother:



Roger de Mowbray and his wife Rose Agnes de Clare had a son John de Mowbray, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron Mowbray. And yes, he is one of the six people buried at Fountains Abbey.

The fifth person buried at Fountains Abbey is William II de Percy, 3<sup>rd</sup> feudal baron of Topcliffe. This man was the 3<sup>rd</sup>-great grandfather of Henry de Percy, so of course he was my ancestor:



On the ancestral line going back through Rebecca Gregory, Sir William de Percy was my 24<sup>th</sup>-great grandfather. But if you have been paying attention, you will know that I have at least nine other ancestral lines back to Sir William.

The only one of the six people buried at Fountains Abbey from whom I am not descended is Abbot Marmaduke Huby (d. 1526). Of course, if he was dedicated to the monastic life, he might not have had any descendants.

Pretty cool to be descended from five of the six people buried at Fountains Abbey. And on that positive note, I'll conclude this chapter.

## Summary

In this lengthy chapter, I started with my ancestral line back to Henry de Percy, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Percy (1273-1314). Henry de Percy was the first in the Percy family to own Alnwick Castle, in northern England, near the border with Scotland.

I found a total of ten different ancestral lines going from me back to Henry de Percy – six on the **Oakley** side of my family, and four on the **Burks** side of my family.

I discussed some of the history of Alnwick Castle, which was originally founded by Ivo de Vesci, who just happens to be my 23<sup>rd</sup>-great grandfather.

I also discussed Alnwick Castle as it is today – its present owner is Ralph Percy, 12<sup>th</sup> Duke of Northumberland, and he and I are related in several different ways. Alnwick Castle has served as the set for several Harry Potter movies.

Henry de Percy is buried in Fountains Abbey in North Yorkshire, and five of the six people buried there are my ancestors.

Gosh, I sure had a lot of interesting ancestors in medieval England!

## ***Appendix A***

Wikipedia entry for Henry de Percy:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry\\_Percy,\\_1st\\_Baron\\_Percy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Percy,_1st_Baron_Percy)

Henry de Percy, 1st Baron Percy of Alnwick (25 March 1273 – October 1314) was a medieval English magnate.

He fought under King Edward I of England in Wales and Scotland and was granted extensive estates in Scotland, which were later retaken by the Scots under King Robert I of Scotland. He added Alnwick to the family estates in England, founding a dynasty of northern warlords. He rebelled against King Edward II over the issue of Piers Gaveston and was imprisoned for a few months. After his release, he declined to fight under Edward II at the Battle of Bannockburn, remaining at Alnwick, where he died a few months later, aged 41.

### Origins

Henry was born at Petworth in Sussex in 1273, seven months after his father's death, saving the family line from extinction, as two older brothers had died in infancy, and all six uncles had died without leaving any legitimate heirs. He was fortunate in having the powerful John de Warenne, 6th Earl of Surrey as his maternal grandfather. Henry was the son of Henry de Percy (d.1272), 7th feudal baron of Topcliffe, Yorkshire, by his wife, Eleanor de Warenne, daughter of John de Warenne, 6th Earl of Surrey by Alice de Lusignan, Countess of Surrey, half sister of King Henry III. His great-great-grandfather was Jocelin de Louvain (d.1180) who had married Agnes de Percy (d.1203), one of the two daughters and co-heiresses of William II de Percy (d.1174/5), 3rd feudal baron of Topcliffe, whose descendants had adopted the surname "de Percy".

### Majority & change of arms

In 1293, Henry came into his inheritance of estates in Sussex and Yorkshire, including Topcliffe Castle, the ancient family seat. In 1294 he married Eleanor, daughter of the Earl of Arundel. He then proceeded to change the family coat of arms from Azure, five fusils in fess or ("Percy ancient") to Or, a lion rampant azure ("Percy modern"). Blue and gold were the Earl Warenne's colors and a gold lion rampant had been the Arundel's arms. Alternatively, the arms are said to be the arms of Brabant. This emphasized his royal and noble connections and marked his ambition. This was also the year he went to war for the first time, summoned to fight in France, but then diverted to Wales to join Edward I in suppressing a Welsh rebellion. There he learned the grim business of medieval warfare, and command and supply of armies in the field.

### Marriage and progeny

Henry de Percy married Eleanor FitzAlan, daughter of Richard FitzAlan, 8th Earl of Arundel, and had two sons:

- Henry de Percy, 2nd Baron Percy (b.1299), who succeeded his father
- William de Percy (c.1303-1355)

## Knighthood and war in Scotland

By the summer of 1295, Henry was in the north with his grandfather Earl Warenne. Edward I's deliberately humiliating treatment of King John I of Scotland and his nobles was making war inevitable. Warenne was King John's father-in-law, used as an intermediary by Edward. In 1294 Philip IV of France had taken back Aquitaine from the English crown and now negotiated a treaty with the Scots to wage war on Edward on two fronts. During March 1296 Edward I's army surrounded Berwick on Tweed, then the largest town in Scotland and an important seaport. It was here on 30 March that Henry Percy was knighted by the King. Later on the same day the town was taken and the ruthless king, apparently provoked by the inhabitants previously baring their buttocks at him, ordered the city put to the sword "whatever the age or sex" and according to the *Scotichronicon* 7,500 were executed.

Percy, under Warenne's command, was sent north to Dunbar where the castle was held by the Earls of Mar, Menteith and Ross, together with many lesser nobles. After they had beaten a Scottish force outside the castle the king joined them, and the castle soon surrendered. The rest of Scotland was occupied in the space of a few weeks and English administrators installed. King John Balliol was forced to abdicate and Warenne appointed to govern Scotland as a province. Having proved his ability, Henry Percy was given the task of governing Ayr, Galloway and Cumberland, based at Carlisle Castle. With King Edward now turning his attention to affairs in France, there was only a year or so of peace before the situation in Scotland began to unravel. In the summer of 1297, William Wallace murdered the English sheriff of Lanark and was joined by Robert Bruce, Bishop Lockhart, James Stewart and Sir William Douglas in the Scottish lowlands while Andrew Murray started a Highland uprising.

Working closely with Robert Clifford from Westmorland, Percy confronted the other rebels at Irvine while Wallace was in central Scotland, and negotiated their submission, subduing southern Scotland for a while. Warenne then began an expedition to hunt down Wallace and Murray, finding them waiting north of the River Forth near Stirling Castle. The ensuing Battle of Stirling Bridge was a disaster for the English army. Percy and his fellow commanders could only watch helplessly from the castle as their infantry, caught on the far side of the one narrow bridge were slaughtered. Murray, however, was mortally wounded in the battle and died sometime later. The English were temporarily expelled from Scotland and on the defensive, with the Scots raiding northern England. In the following spring of 1298 King Edward returned from France and assembled a large army, including many Welsh longbow archers, to begin a new and determined assault on Scotland. They caught up with Wallace at Falkirk on 22 July where Henry Percy was part of the fourth reserve division of experienced and highly mobile cavalry.

## Baron and Scottish landowner

Early in 1299, the King granted the estates of Ingram Balliol, who had been involved in the Scottish rebellions, to Henry Percy, including land in England and south west Scotland. This not only gave him greater income and status, but also a vested interest in the continuing conquest of Scotland. The king also summoned Percy to attend parliament as a peer of the realm, making him a baron by writ. His family had previously had the courtesy title of baron because of their land holdings. Percy had proved himself an able soldier and administrator and found

royal favor. The rest of the year was spent skirmishing with Scottish guerilla groups, and the following summer campaigning with the king although little was achieved other than the capture of Caerlaverock Castle after a long siege, at which he was present with his elderly grandfather Earl Warenne. The Caerlaverock Poem or Roll of Arms made at the siege by the heralds records the armorials of Warenne and Percy in a single verse, translated from Norman French into modern English thus:

“John the good Earl of Warenne  
Of the other squadron held the reins  
To regulate and govern,  
As he who well knew how to lead,  
Noble and honourable men.  
His banner with gold and azure  
Was nobly chequered.  
And he had in his company  
Henry de Percy, his nephew (son nevou) (sic)  
Who seemed to have made a vow  
To rout the Scots.  
A blue lion rampant on yellow  
Was his banner very conspicuous”

Correspondence in late 1301 shows Percy at his estate at Leconfield in Yorkshire, where his wife probably lived, at a safe distance from Scottish raiding parties. In February 1303 Percy was sent north in a cavalry force led by Johannes de Seagrave which was defeated at Roslin. He then joined King Edward's summer offensive, reaching Dunfermline in early November. Robert Bruce had already changed sides to support Edward and in February 1304 most of the Scots negotiated a settlement with the English king. Henry Percy is known to have played a prominent role in the negotiations. Only Stirling Castle now remained to be subdued, and was battered by catapults during the spring of 1304, while King Edward's militant queen, Marguerite of France, watched from a specially built wooden shelter.

The siege culminated in the commissioning of Warwolf, a giant trebuchet which flattened the curtain walls. The defenders had tried to surrender four days earlier, but had been made to wait by the king while he tried out his new toy. In September 1305, the first joint English and Scottish parliament met at Westminster to agree a constitution for the unified state, with Percy playing a leading role in the negotiations, but Robert Bruce, a leading representative of the Scots, was already conspiring to rebel. On 25 March 1306 Robert Bruce was crowned King of Scotland at Scone Abbey, upon which Edward confiscated his lands and gave them to Henry Percy. The King now appointed Percy to command northwest England and southwest Scotland, with orders to suppress the rebellion without mercy. Bruce's army was soon defeated in battle, but Bruce escaped to wage a guerilla campaign against the English from the wild countryside of Galloway. For several years afterwards the English Barons held the castles of southern and central Scotland, but were ambushed and harried in the countryside.

A new monarch

Edward I, on his way to launch a new campaign against the Scots, died on 7 July 1307 before crossing the border. The dying Edward I, asked his assembled

barons to give the succession to his only surviving son Edward. He also asked them to maintain the banishment Piers Gaveston from England. Henry Percy was not present, being left in charge of southern Scotland. The death of Edward I, with the conquest of Scotland incomplete, was a personal disaster for Percy. After years of hard fighting, he now had extensive land holdings in southern Scotland, but this was of less interest to Edward II who promptly recalled Gaveston and made him Earl of Cornwall, an office of great wealth. Gaveston, a formidable tournament fighter in the melee, openly despised and insulted the old king's stalwart warriors.

Edward II left Scotland in August 1307 after replacing his father's loyal and experienced commanders, Clifford, Valence and Percy who were sent home, only to be recalled to Scotland in October. By then, however, Robert Bruce had escaped from Galloway to the Highlands, and had raised new forces and taken eastern Scotland by the end of the year. In August 1308 Bruce captured Argyll, previously loyal to King Edward and then raided Northumberland. Percy and Clifford were again summoned to defend Galloway, at their own expense, against an onslaught by Robert Bruce's surviving brother Edward. They were able to hold the castles, but not the countryside. Percy had travelled south to Westminster in February that year for the king's coronation, where he would have seen Gaveston's arrogance.

The ceremony was delayed for a week while the French delegation, alarmed that the king preferred Gaveston's company to that of Isabella, his 12-year-old French bride, threatened to boycott the coronation. In the event Gaveston was given precedence over the other Earls. At the following feast, Gaveston dressed in an outfit of royal purple and pearls, and called the king over to sit with him, instead of with Queen Isabella. The French delegation walked out and one earl drew his sword and had to be restrained from attacking Gaveston. During the spring of 1308, the barons in parliament pressed the king to exile Gaveston, developing the Doctrine of Capacities, distinguishing between loyalty to the king and loyalty to the crown. On 16 June 1308, Gaveston was appointed Lieutenant of Ireland, to get him out of the country, with Henry de Percy as a witness.

### Founding a dynasty in Northumberland

In 1309, Henry was able to buy Alnwick Castle from Anthony Bek, the Prince Bishop of Durham, giving him a base near to the action in Scotland and a substantial annual income of about £475 from the associated lands. To make the purchase price of £4666 he borrowed £2666 from Italian merchant bankers, the Lombard Society. When William Vesci had died in 1297 without a legitimate heir, Bek had been entrusted with the estates of the Vesci family on behalf of his son, the illegitimate William Vesci of Kildare. Vesci of Kildare did receive the other family lands in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire and it is unclear whether he was defrauded by the greedy bishop over the sale of Alnwick. In the same year of 1297 Henry obtained a royal licence to fortify his mansion at Petworth and two mansions in Yorkshire.

### The return of Gaveston

By the summer of 1309, Edward II had managed to cajole most of his earls into allowing Piers Gaveston to return to England, although the most powerful earl, Lancaster, was implacably opposed. On 27 June 1309 Gaveston, restored to the Earldom of Cornwall, returned to England and soon proved as obnoxious as

before, calling Lancaster “Churl” and Warwick “Black Cur”. Henry Percy would have been preoccupied with the purchase of Alnwick at that time and generally tried to stay out of the trouble with Gaveston.

At the parliament of February and March 1310 the King was forced to accept the election of twenty-one Lords Ordainers to govern the country. In June the king began a campaign in Scotland in which Percy fought, although many barons senior to Percy declined to take part. Robert Bruce continued to fight a guerilla war, refusing to give battle, so little was achieved, while relations between the king and his earls further deteriorated. In May 1311, Gaveston ordered Percy to hold Perth for the summer with two hundred knights and no infantry, a dangerous task at a time when the king’s army was withdrawing to England. Surviving this Percy was back in London in October.

The barons now forced the king to send Gaveston into exile in Flanders, but he was soon recalled and was in York with his heavily pregnant wife in January 1312, with his lands restored. Percy was ordered out of Scarborough Castle and Gaveston took it over. Violence was now inevitable. In April the king and Gaveston were chased out of Newcastle by the sudden arrival of an army under Lancaster, Percy and Clifford, fleeing to Scarborough. In their haste they left behind Gaveston’s wife and baby daughter and a great hoard of treasure, which it took Lancaster, Percy and Clifford four days to catalogue. Lancaster held onto this for future bargaining with the king. Gaveston was soon besieged at Scarborough Castle by Percy, Clifford, and the earls of Warenne and Pembroke, surrendering after a month. Percy remained in York when Gaveston was taken south to Warwick and then executed.

### Imprisonment

The king, seeking revenge for the death of his friend, stopped short of civil war with the rebel earls but made an example of the less powerful Baron Percy by confiscating his lands on 28 July 1312, and having him imprisoned by the Sheriff of Yorkshire. The earls made Percy’s release a priority in their difficult negotiations with the king and he was freed in January 1313 and was formally pardoned in October. Gaveston’s treasure was returned to the king soon after.

### The final year

King Edward now prepared for a campaign in Scotland in 1314, culminating in his total defeat at the Battle of Bannockburn. Percy, along with five of the earls and many other nobles refused summonses to this campaign because it had not been sanctioned by parliament, as required by the Ordinances. There are no contemporary records of Percy being at Bannockburn and it seems that he remained at Alnwick, defending his land against Scottish raiders. His friend and comrade Robert Clifford did go, and was killed in the battle. Within days of the battle Percy was summoned to Newcastle to prepare an emergency defense of northern England against an invasion. Instead of an all-out invasion, Robert Bruce sent raiding parties to extort money from the northern counties. Only a few months later in the first half of October 1314 Henry Percy died, aged 41, of unknown causes.