

ART. XII.—*Farmanby and the Thompson family*. By
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Read at Penrith, July 12th, 1955.

THE fragmentary Cumberland Lay Subsidy Roll of the reign of King John,¹ either of the first or of the fifth year of his reign, contains seven names under Farmanby in Addingham parish, only two less than under its neighbour Gamblesby. This presents a problem of population: it is difficult to see how Farmanby, which now bears one medium-size farm, could then have provided for half a dozen more households. Changing routes for communication may have been the cause. The most direct way from Penrith to Hartside went through Hunsonby, by-passing Melmerby; and the ridge on which Farmanby stands hung over it like a bandit's eyrie.

In 1170 Fareman, who gave his name to Farmanby, rendered an account of half a mark for hogs taken in the forest.² His misdemeanour probably indicates how Farmanby maintained its surplus population. In 1180 the sheriff of Cumberland rendered account for the chattels of two outlaws, Orm son of Leising, and Ketel.³ In 1186 Farmanby was in the king's hands, and it may be that one or other of these outlawries was the reason. Robert son of Orm is included among the residents of Farmanby in the Lay Subsidy Roll already mentioned, and under Old Salkeld the name of Kettel of Hunsonby appears; it must be emphasized, however, that Orm and Ketel were common names at that period.

Before we leave the Subsidy Roll, the only genealogical surmise that can be made is that William son of Emma,

¹ P.R.O., E.179/242/77.

² Pipe Roll.

³ *Ibid.*

who figures in it under Farmanby, may have been ancestor of the next recorded tenant, William de Farnandby, who was alive in 1272.⁴ He, by right of Mabel his wife, held a messuage and land in Old Salkeld, and he had a son who at the same time held land from year to year from Adam of Ulvesby. That this property was held in addition to Farmanby itself can only be accepted as probable. In later times tenants of Farmanby held land by ancient rights in Little Salkeld (as Old Salkeld was coming to be called); the Lay Subsidies of 12 and 18 Edward III include in each case a William de Farmanby, who twice heads the lists. The genealogy so far indicated is therefore as follows:—

William son of Emma, alive *c.* 1200.

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?

William de Farmanby, alive 1272 = Mabel.

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Thomas de Farmanby, adult 1272.

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?

William de Farmanby, alive 1333-45.

In 1488 one William Thompson, being seised of the capital messuage and demesne lands called Farmānby, rode the bounder of the said lands, which were 200 acres in extent, with the prior and convent of Carlisle, and “opened or otherwise renewed the antient metes and bounder”. Details were engrossed on parchment, and the land itself was marked by “Many meer stones which several oxen cannot carry, anyone of them.”⁵ This statement was made by Isaac Thompson, who declared that the above-named William Thompson was his great-grandfather or other ancestor. He also declared that he and his predecessors had lived at Farmanby since the

⁴ CW2 xxii 66 f.

⁵ Dean & Chapter MSS., Carlisle, C.5, 190/26.

days of Henry VII, and that they had in their possession a deed relating to Farmanby of March, 3 Edward I."

Nothing more is known of this ancestor of Isaac Thompson. The next record of a Thompson of Farmanby is in the Carlisle episcopal registers, 1561-1643, at p. 129, recording a faculty for a "staule" in Addingham church, granted 16 February, 1583:—

"We George Stubb Clerk vicar of Addingham, Edward Hay, James Thomson, John Westgarth and Richard Newton jnr., and other principal inhabitants of Addingham do give license to James Thomson of Farmanbie to make and build a staule in the bodie of the church for his own proper use to sit on. The said James Thomson did give ten grotes to the church wardens for the use of the church 16th Sept. 1576 and he hath paid to John Johnson, Edward Benson, William Gray and John Bleckett church wardens after the above church wardens two shillings which was the cost and charge for glassonyng the glasse window that is at the end of the same staule."

Although there are at Carlisle more than a dozen wills of Thompson of Addingham, in the latter half of the 16th century, all of whom were no doubt near relatives of this James, there is no evidence as to the name of his father; but his mother was probably the widow Janet Thompson, whose will was proved on 23 February 1565. She had two sons, James and John, and two daughters, Janet Burn (?) and Mabel. The only possible guess as to the father of James Thompson of Farmanbie is that he was the John Thompson who was bailiff to the prior of Carlisle at the Dissolution. A Lancelot Salkeld was witness to one of the Thompson wills in 1567. The possibility of his father residing at Denton Holme, Carlisle (where the bailiff lived), might explain why James had to establish a Farmanby "staule" in his parish church. It is not certain whether James attended the border muster as a bowman: there was another James Thompson in Addingham, somewhat his junior, whose father was Hugh, and both names are on the muster roll. James of Farmanby was buried on 14 November 1613.

⁶ Holme v. Thompson, 1694.

The will of Isabel his widow, dated 1628, provides most of the remaining information concerning him. One of the witnesses was a John Birkbecke; it is therefore concluded that James Thompson was married to Isabel Birkbecke of Penrith, as entered in the register of that church under 28 January 1570/1. They were survived by four sons and a daughter: John, Jeffrey, George, Anthony and Bridget (who married William Bleaymire).

James Thompson was succeeded by his eldest son John, whose first wife's name was Juliana. There is a baptismal entry in the Penrith register of Juliana, daughter of John Thompson, 22 January 1593/4. A son John, who did not survive, was born in 1611; the only daughter to outlive their mother was Ann, born 1615.

In July 1619 Juliana brought forth an heir to Farmanby, Christopher, who was baptized on 7 July; she was buried four days later. The register suggests that Juliana had little will to live: a few months later, a base-begotten son to John was baptized, and buried. If ever the curse for an evil deed was to extend to the third and fourth generation, it was here: three minors were to follow one another in the most critical half-century of Farmanby's history.

John took a second wife, Blanche (possibly Bell), who bore him one surviving son, James, and one daughter, Marie. In 1630 John Thompson's name appears in a list of jurors, with the style "gent"⁷; he died four years later. In his will, he gives to his son Christopher "all my title and right of all my lands at ffermonbie and my tenements in Little Salkeld and 12d. rent Mr Anthonye Hutton doth paye the house of ffermonbie". This last item might be for the property held by William de Farmanby in right of his wife in 1272. John's will ends with a prayer to his brother and his brother-in-law Henry Bell, to "see that my poore children be not wronged".

In 1641 Christopher married someone within the parish;

⁷ Holme Cultram church MSS.

the register is defective, and only the Christian name, Margaret, of the bride appears. Within two years she presented him with a son and heir, George, and a second son, John; there were later two daughters, Isabel (who married one Jordan) and Margaret (who married Henry Atkinson of Melmerby in 1678).

When the "troubles" began, they fell heavily upon Farmanby. "In the time of King Charles of glorious memory Christopher Thompson went to serve his then Majesty according to the duty of his allegiance and continued in his service for several years." Where and when Christopher went fighting is not known, but it was because of his continued service that "he had rendered himself very obnoxious to the then prevailing powers". His house was "several times plundered". It is not difficult to imagine one of these occasions. After Marston Moor General Leslie fought a successful engagement at the ford between the two Salkelds, and then turned away towards the east coast; Farmanby would be on his direct route, and would certainly have been pillaged were it known that its owner was with the enemy "so that for some time the hedges of the outfield totally lay down".

Christopher died in 1651; nothing is said as to the manner of his death — perhaps he was hanged at Wigan! One can imagine such things being hushed up, if those in higher walks of life at that time were inclined to think even the beheading of Sir Timothy Fetherstonhaugh inglorious. There were now two widows on Farmanby, and the heir was only eight years old; "they were very hard put to it for subsistence". The temporary, Commonwealth-run, manorial court took advantage of the occasion: in 1658 there is the entry, with reference to the death of Christopher, that "he died seized of a tenement at ffarmanbie holden in socage tenure of the chief lord of the fee by paying the yearly free rent of 3s. 8d.", and this sum was to be extorted from George, now 16 (a freeholder only needed to do suit of court).

A strange event followed soon after the Restoration: the descendant of a family which presumably had given loyal service to the Church as well as to the King, made a full-circle turn. George, son of Christopher the Cavalier, married Jane, daughter of William Jameson of Parkhead, Kirkoswald. This was an alliance with a stronghold of Independence. Jane's brother in 1672 obtained a licence for Parkhead as a presbyterian conventicle. "Before the marriage he and other friends as trustees for the woeman did goe to ffarmanby to see the estate there and what sort of dower might accrue to the woeman". It is obvious that she brought with her another dower, which was ultimately to accumulate a hoard of trouble.

On 12 June 1666 George Thompson and Jane his wife were excommunicated for "not resorting to their parish church either to service or sermon at any time during ye last year". In 1667 George's mother died. She had played her part well — Farmanby had not been defenceless, even though without fences: —

"She has oft catch'd people of Melmerby pulling ling on the place and took it from them till they promised never to trespass again. During the time that the hedge lay down the Thompsons did herde and hound from off the lands the goods of Salkeld or any other when they knew of 'em."

George Thompson had four sons (Isaac, Jonathan, Phillip and Aaron) and one daughter, Sarah, who married a Walton. George seems to have lived a quiet life, gradually enclosing the outfield; he had completed about half before he died at the age of 47, presumably once more within the fold of the established church. His will, proved in 1689, shows that he had been remarkably successful despite the bad start, and it also shows that he wished his sons should have the education which had been denied to him. After giving Isaac all his estate and living at Farmonby and Hillmire Head, he bequeaths £100 to each of the other boys, with the request that "he shall be brought up to learn and read English perfectly and also to write a good hand".

Aaron, the youngest, born 1680, appears to have responded best to his father's wishes. He matriculated at Queen's College, Oxford, in 1700, was elected Taberdar and took his degree in 1704. In 1718 he published a translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's History, with a long introduction; Hearne's criticism of the author ends, "He is but a dabbler", but the book has a place in the reading-room of the British Museum. He obtained the living of Broadchalk, near Salisbury, in 1724; he was twice married, and (so far as is known) had four children: Tabitha by his first wife, and Daniel, Jane and Henry by his second wife, Jane of Fovant. One of the subscribers to the History was the Rev. Jonathan Thompson of Bishop's Itchington, Warwickshire, who ordered a copy on royal paper; this may be Aaron's elder brother, who married Bridgett Porter of Brockhall, Northampton, and was survived by four children (Jane, John, George and Jonathan). Of Phillip nothing is known.

The storm which had been brewing for Isaac, the son and heir, barely waited for his father's death. Before he had come of age, there is the following entry in the manor roll of the court baron at Little Salkeld, 1689: "We do present Isaac Thompson lord of ffarmanby for taking and engrossing the common belonging to the Lords of the Manor, 6s. 8d." Similar presentations continued year by year to 1693 and the ameracements rose to 39s. 6d. This is how Isaac viewed the matter in his Chancery bill of 1691:—

"They the said Dean and Chapter John Nicholson and the other persons aforse confederating and combining together how to disseize and defeat your orator of the said outfield do now pretend the same to be part of the waste of the sd Mannor of Little Salkeld and the said Dean and Chapter hath been prevailed upon to grant lease thereof unto the said John Nicholson, who hath caused a destraint to be served upon your orator whereby to evict your orator out of the premises which he and his ancestors have constantly held and enjoyed as part and parcell of the said Capital messuage, tenement and demeizne land for some hundreds of years."

William Nicolson, then archdeacon of Carlisle, entered in his diary on 20 November 1690 that he had been granted the lease of Farmanby Intake, but added, "Quod jure nondum constat". An indenture was drawn up, the same day, in which he granted "three closes now or late in the possession of Isaac Thompson of Farmanby, yeoman, containing by estimacion 50 Acres paying therefore yearly 6s. 8d."

There is much to suggest that this was a shady piece of business. It is the only occasion on which Isaac is designated a yeoman (possibly that was begging the question of the rights and wrongs of the question of title). Two factors cast doubts on the integrity of John Nicholson, apart from the evidence furnished at the trial in Carlisle, in 1694, before Sir Edward Lutwych. In the first place, there is no mention of Farmanby intake in all the records of the Dean and Chapter leases; then, on a slip attached to the brief, there is this note: —

"The dean and chapter let a lease of the land in q(uest)ion to Mr. Jo. Nicholson, who brought his eiection for the same in the yeares 1691 and 1692 ag(ains)t Isaac Thompson and gave notice of trial. We attended both yeares with council and witnesses and Nicholson never brought on either cause, which almost ruined Isa(ac) Thompson."

If such brutality was a consequence of Isaac's Quakerism, then this young man, barely of age, can hardly be accused of wearing false colours.

There is some indication that this case was only part of a general attempt to level down owners of lands which retained some vestiges of a feudal status. The brief states that

"The dean and chapter lately commenced suit agt. Roberby people within Salkeld Mannor for some of their lands wch. they called parcell of their waste. Thereupon the Roberby people submitted because of noe title and the dean and chapter have now the sd. lands."

To this Isaac had the devastating rejoinder: —

"Robt. Hutchinson (lately dead) held his lands at Skelling

where he lived by lease under the Dean and Chapt. that he enjoyed one moyety of the lands at Roberby wch. they sued for and expecting some severe usage from them for his lands at Skelling, if he had not surrender'd his interest in Roberby with quiett, did assign his interest therin and would not contribute with the other tenants and they being poor were forc'd to part with their interest."

One allusion is made in the brief, which suggests a direct inheritance from the de Farmanby family: —

"Isaac Thompson and his predecessors have been all along and yet are l(or)ds of severall customary estates within Salkeld and constantly enjoyed the seigniorie th(e)reof, the tenants yet pay ffines on changing of the L(or)d and tenant and the lands in qu(est)ion are one part in three of what the said Isaac has to live upon."

The dean and chapter apparently lost their case, for Isaac remained in possession of four separate estates, but it was a very hollow victory, for everything was now mortgaged. He sometimes heads the list of jurors at the court baron, and is styled "gent" in those lists.

In the *Westmorland Note Book*⁸ Mr M. Bennet, writing on Thomas Lawson, Quaker botanist and schoolmaster, gave a brief account of Isaac Thompson (though he did not know of his Farmanby demesne); he says, "Isaac Thompson was the heir to an ample estate situate at Aldby or Motherby", but he has confused Aldby in Dacre parish with Aldby Croft, which was in Addingham and was another family possession. Mr Bennet says that Isaac was a student under Lawson, but here he makes a discreet omission from his source, an early 18th century Thompson MS., which states that

"in order to gain the hand of Hannah Lawson, Isaac joined the Society of Friends, but when he married he threw off its restraints, being more addicted to dogs, sport and horse racing."

This unexpurgated portion turns the rest of the account in the *Notes* into a rake's progress.

If Isaac gambled, it was a desperate venture to provide for his family as he once had done. When he brought

⁸ i 349.

Hannah Lawson, his bride of "singular merit and intelligence", to Farmanby the long drawn-out lawsuits had only just begun; she had borne him two children before they ended. There were no baptisms; the family entries in the church register are of births, written sometimes by an agitated Clerk: "The birth of Lawson Thompson was born Feb. 12th 1694". Before Lawson came James, and after him Sarah, Isaac, Jonah and lastly Jonathan; there is also an illegible Christian name for a girl born 29 March 1692, who may be the daughter otherwise recorded, Dinah.

It was Farmanby itself which was first sacrificed to keep this growing family; according to R. S. Ferguson,⁹ Dorothy Hasell, as executrix for her husband, Edward Hasell, sold Farmanby for £395; the deed of 1710, which supplied this information, was preserved in the Dean and Chapter registry, but was lost about 1919. Only 15 years after that sale, the dean and chapter, as trustees for Carlisle grammar school, bought Farmanby for £500. They remained owners until 1919; now the farm is once more in the possession of the Thompson family.

The real tragedy of Isaac Thompson's downfall is evident in the other sales, which came all at once, just before he disappeared and his family was widely dispersed. There are three presentments on a loose sheet,¹⁰ dated 9 October 1713 and made at the Little Salkeld court. In each case Isaac Thompson, gent, is co-vendor of freehold property, with Thomas Pattinson of Breaks, Esq., and William Rawlinson of Graithwaite, gent — who had lent him the money necessary to keep him going after his lawsuits. Mr Bennet states that the final collapse came through Isaac standing as a surety, but it was more likely due to an untimely foreclosure on his mortgaged property. It is perhaps relevant to note that in 1711

⁹ CW1 vii 215.

¹⁰ Dean & Chapter registry, Carlisle, box 691.

William Rawlinson formed the Backbarrow Company, and he would need all available capital for that great venture, which was to advance to fortune in perfect time with the Industrial Revolution — whereas the loss of so much capital was to end the hopes of his brother Quaker, who had wasted his substance to preserve little more than an archaic privilege.

The family MS. says that Isaac “lost his estates, joined the army and went to India, leaving his wife and children to the care of his friends and to a brother, who held the living of Broadchalke.” Shortly afterwards, in 1713, Hannah died. Of her, Mr Bennet writes:—

“All of Lawson’s family, and particularly Hannah, were described as persons of singular merit and intelligence. She received from her father a classical education and imbibed his fondness for botany.”

Although no information as to Isaac’s place of residence, after Hannah’s death, is provided by the family record, the Quaker registers show that his daughter Sarah and his son Jonathan were married from their father’s house at Scaly Sealy. At Whitfield, Northumberland, the register contains entries under 30 April 1719 of the marriage of Isaac Thompson, widower, of Scaly Sealy and Margaret, daughter of Thomas Thompson, and under 11 November 1720 of the baptism of their son William.

It is difficult to associate with this record the tradition of an adventure in India. Yet the gloom overshadowing the last of Isaac’s life is best shown by the account by his son Jonah, the proprietor of a flourishing Quaker school at Nether Compton, Dorset, some years after his marriage to Mary Beaton in 1735:—

He was one day walking in a lane some distance from his house and observed an old man coming towards him and the thought at once struck him that it was his father, although he had not seen him for more than 30 years and was then a boy. The old man enquired of him if Jonah Thompson resided in the village and after directing him to his house, he went a shorter

way and got to it before the old man and found that he really was his father, who had lately been discharged from the army and returned from India enfeebled in health. He remained for some time with his son at Compton and then went into the north where he died."

The descendants of Isaac are to be found in every continent today, and are too numerous to indicate here on a table; but two lines, which have local interest, have been provided. The ancient house at Farmanby was replaced, in the middle of the 19th century, by a small, compact farm; in 1934 there remained the ruin of one wall of the old house, with the base of a mullioned window, at the east end of the kitchen garden, but this too has now been demolished.

APPENDIX:

Mr. C. Roy Hudleston, F.S.A., contributes the following note. "It is necessary to point out that Chancellor Prescott's suggestion (*Register of Wetheral*, 258 note) that *Arphinebi*, mentioned in the Pipe Rolls in 1193, is to be identified with Farmanby, is untenable. T. H. B. Graham made the same suggestion (CW2 xxiv 39 note), qualifying it by the equally erroneous assumption that, if it is not Farmanby, *Arphinebi* may be Maughanby. See now *The Place-Names of Cumberland*, i 194 and 208."