

ART. X.—*The early Washingtons of Washington, co. Durham.* By W. PERCY HEDLEY, F.S.A., and GEORGE WASHINGTON, F.S.A.

Read at Penrith, September 6th, 1963.

THE Washingtons of Virginia, U.S.A., and formerly of Sulgrave Manor, Northants., in Tudor and Stuart times, were derived from a North-country family seated at Warton on the Lancashire-Westmorland border. These latter in turn were descended from Robert de Washington (d. 1324), *jure uxoris* of Carnforth in Warton, and M.P. for Westmorland in 1300.

The family took its name from Washington, originally Wessington, co. Durham, which vill it acquired in the late 12th century. In the 14th century the family became identified to a large extent with Westmorland. The early pedigree has never been satisfactorily worked out.

In the survey of the estates of the bishop of Durham entitled Boldon Buke and probably compiled in March 1184, it is recorded that "William de Hertburne has Washington, the church and the land belonging to the church excepted in exchange for the vill of Hartburn, which he has quitclaimed (to the bishop) on account of this, and he renders £4 and goes in the great hunt (*magna caza*) with two greyhounds, and when a common aid shall arise, he ought to give one mark at the most for aid." (*Surtees Society* xxv 44.)

It is evident that William de Hertburne is the person afterwards called William de Wessington from his new estate. The exchange of land with bishop Hugh de Puiset probably took place before 1180, for William "de Wessintun" witnesses a grant of two bovates of land in Silksworth, co. Durham, by Emma, wife of Roger de Applingdene to Philip s. of Hamon. Of the other witnesses Henry de Pusat, Jordan Escolland, Roger Burdun and

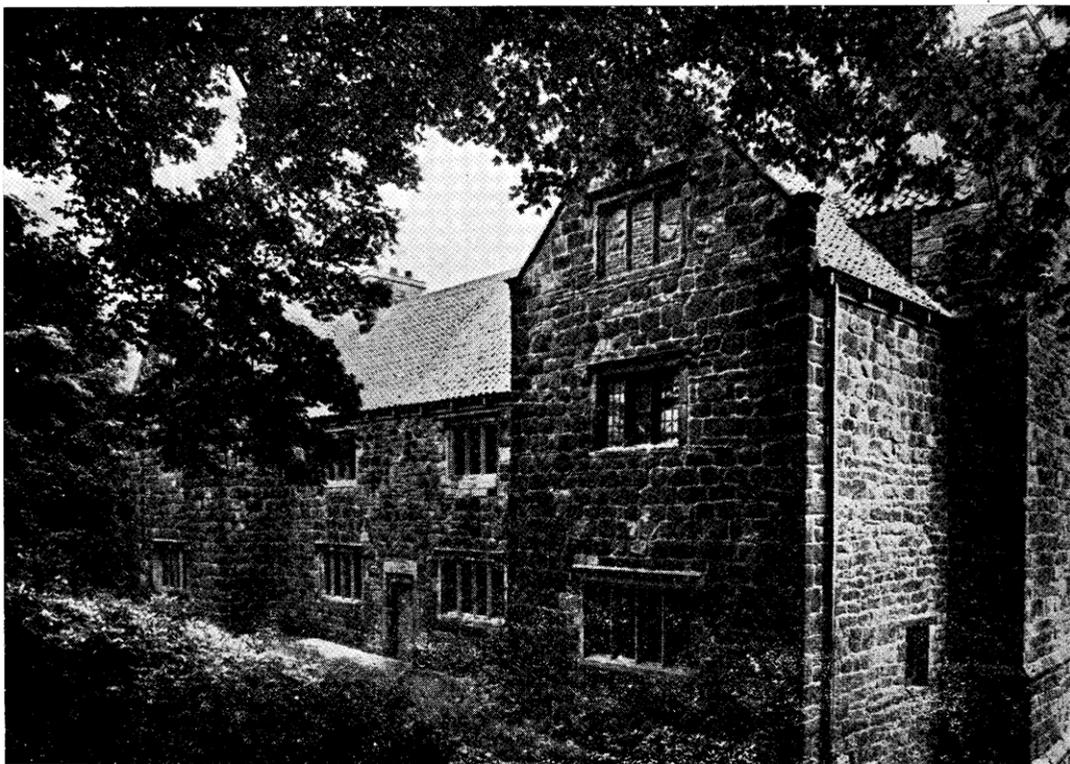


PLATE I.—Washington Hall, Washington, co. Durham.

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Roger Daudrei attest a charter of bishop Hugh de Puiset *c.* 1185, but Radulf Haget, vicecomes, was not sheriff after *c.* 1180. The date of the grant must be *c.* 1170-*c.* 1180. (SS lviii 124 n.) William de Wessington also witnesses a quitclaim by Peter s. of Simon de Hettewurthe (Hedworth, co. Durham), to the prior and convent of Durham of lands in Hedworth; sir Roger de Eplingdene is another of the witnesses. (*Ibid.* 116 n.) Another deed witnessed by William de Waissenton is a grant by Robert Raveneswrth to Radulf de Gatesaphed (Gateshead) of lands formerly held of the grantor by a certain Meldred. (SS cxxxvii 113.) This is dated by the editor to *c.* 1185-1194.

Thorald de Lunden who had received the vill of Follansby, co. Durham, from Geoffrey, bishop of Durham (1133-1140), conveyed it to his son Nicholas with the consent of bishop Hugh de Puiset (1153-1195). Amongst the witnesses are Bertram, prior of Durham, Philip vicecomes, Thomas de Mundavill, and Walter de Weissigton; Bertram was prior 1188-1208. Thomas de Mundavill held Coatham Mundeville, co. Durham, 1189 x 1206, Philip s. of Hamon was the bishop's sheriff *c.* 1180-*c.* 1195. This charter must date *c.* 1180-*c.* 1195, so Walter de Wessington had apparently succeeded his father William some time before *c.* 1195. (SS lviii 113 n.) Nicholas de Folettebi gave certain lands in the fields of Follansby to the prior and convent of Durham, and afterwards with Helias his brother quitclaimed the vill to Robert s. of Roger; both deeds are witnessed by Walter de Wessington. (*Ibid.* 113 n., 114 n.)

The customs by which the vill of Washington was held were very simliar to drengage, a form of tenure peculiar to the north of England and south of Scotland. A dreng ranked in social standing next below a thegn, and his holding was normally one vill as opposed to the latter's three.

In the county court for Northumberland, Roger de

Glanville being sheriff, Alan s. of William de Milleburne impleaded Robert de Divelstone for two carucates of land in Milbourne. Roger de Glanville was sheriff 1186-1190. Robert de Divelstone was dead in 1203 when his s. Thomas paid relief on the barony of Dilston. Alan s. of William de Milleburne quitclaimed to Thomas de Divelstone all his rights in two carucates in Milbourne and in the quitclaim he mentions the plea which there had been with Thomas' father Robert; Walter de Wessenton is one of the witnesses. (Dur. Treas. Misc. Chart. 5227 in NCH x 236 n.) Thomas de Divelstone, about the same time, made an agreement with Walter de Wessington about a carucate of land in the vill of Milbourne which Walter had in free marriage with Thomas' sister Diana. Attached to the deed is the seal of Walter filii Willi de Wessigt. with the device of a lion walking to left. (Dur. Treas. Misc. Chart. 1472 in NCH x 237 n.)

The editor of Durham Seals (AA3 xi 262 n.), referring to this Wessington seal states that Walter was among the knights of the palatinate of Durham who were present at the battle of Lewes in 1264, and that he was son of William de Wessington who was dead before 1257. He has got the generations hopelessly mixed, for the deed to which the seal was attached must certainly be dated before 1212.

The statement made (*Ibid.* 237) that Thomas settled the land in Milbourne in marriage on Walter and Diana is not strictly correct; the settlement could have been much earlier and Walter had come of age many years before. As Thomas de Divelstone succeeded his father in 1203 and died in 1212, both deeds must be dated between these years. The lords of Dilston had held North Milbourne in the barony of Mitford as one knights' fee as early as 1166.

A charter of Bertram, prior of Durham (1188-1212) is attested by Walter de Wessington and William his

brother. (*Surtees*: Durham, iv 3.) Sometime between 1185 and 1195 bishop Hugh de Puiset confirmed to Adam the clerk of William de Hoveden 70 acres in the vill of Esh with certain tofts and crofts; one of the witnesses is William de Wessington. (AA4 xxxiv 89.) It is evident that Walter died without issue and was succeeded by his brother William.

In 1211 William de Wessington was charged 60 marks and 2 palfreys to marry Alice, widow of sir John de Lexington; he paid this in 1214. (Pipe Roll.) It cannot be taken as certain that Alice de Lexington was mother of William's son Walter.

In 1227 the king (Henry III) instructed master Stephen de Lucy, then custos of the bishopric of Durham, not to exact six marks as he had done, but one mark only, from William de Wessington, since the said William's charter shows that he holds the vill of Washington of the bishop by £4, and one mark towards the Common Aid. (Rot. Litt. Claus. ii 179.) William attests a charter with Brian s. of Alan, whilst the latter was sheriff (1237-1239).

At Trinity term 1254 Walter de Wessington claimed the wardship of the heir and lands of Margery daughter and heiress of Joan, wife of Robert de Lisle of Chipchase and daughter and heiress of Simon de Welteden of Welton. (Northumberland Pleas 186, 188.) This Walter s. of William de Wessington was "a son of an uncle of the said heiress on the mother's side". Another claimant was sir Malcolm de Ingo and Margery his wife. "Margery was the sister of Agnes who was the wife of Simon de Welteden and grandmother of the said heiress"; "Walter was a son of a brother of the aforesaid Agnes grandmother of the aforesaid heiress". A full account of the conflicting claims was entered in the Tynemouth Chartulary, folio 157, b. (AA3 viii 1-18).

At Michaelmas 1259 and Michaelmas 1260 Walter de Wessington had a plea of *mort d'ancestor* against Sibil de Craudon (Crawedon). (Northumberland Pleas 197.)

This was probably in respect of lands to which he had succeeded in right of his wife Joan, sister and heiress of Roger de Whitchestre. These lands were part of the Bolebec barony of Styford and were held by the family of Crauden, of whom the Whitchestres were sub-tenants. Between November 1221 and October 1222 an agreement had been made between John de Crauden and Robert de Whitchester about the manors of Whitchester and Houghton and part of Wallington. John admitted Robert's right to these lands and Robert granted them to John for life at a nominal rent, with reversion to Robert, and his heirs by Isabel his wife who were to hold of John's heirs at a rent of £5 a year; if Robert should die without heirs by Isabel, the lands were to revert to John and his heirs. (Northumberland Fines, *Newcastle Records Society*, x 61.) In 1242/3 Sibilla de Crauden held Whitchester, Houghton and Wallington of Hugh de Bolbec as one knight's fee. A fine of 3 February 1248 between Sybil daughter of Hugh de Crauden versus Roger de Wycestre is endorsed "Joan de Reyhill and Walter de Wassington put in their claims". (Newcastle Record Series x 81.) Walter de Wessington was perhaps dead by 7 November 1262 when in the i.p.m. of Hugh de Bolebek it is stated that lady Joan de Riel held a quarter of the manor of Benwell as one knight's fee. Actually the manor of Benwell was only half a knight's fee. In 1242/3 Richard de Kenebell held half of the manor as one quarter of a fee, and Robert de Wycestre and Henry de la Val held the other half as another quarter of a fee. (Book of Fees.) Joan de Riel's holding, if she only held the Whitchestre share, and there is no evidence that she held any more, was therefore a quarter of the manor, which was only one-eighth of a fee. It seems likely that Riel (Ryhulle, Rylil) was the surname of a previous husband of Joan. At Trinity term 1270 Joan de Ryhulle was at law with Philip de Craweden, s. of Sibil de Craweden. (Northumberland Pleas 293.) Much later, in 1422, John

Burcestre and Elizabeth his wife (who was a Whitchestre) claimed from Elizabeth, wife of William de Whitchestre, two parts of the manor of Benwell, which with the other third part, Johanna de Ryil and Walter de Wessyngton gave to John s. of Robert de Whitchestre and his heirs. (de Banco Roll.) It is evident that this Walter de Wessyngton was not the husband of Johanna de Ryil; he must have been her son. It has been suggested that Robert de Whitchestre was a son of Walter and Joan de Wessington who had succeeded to the Whitchester lands of Joan's brother Roger de Whitchestre, and taken his mother's surname. It is much more likely that Roger was the male heir of Roger de Whitchestre, perhaps a cousin.

At Michaelmas term 1266 Juliane, widow of Walter de Wessington made a claim for dower against seven persons. It has generally been accepted that she was the same person as Joan de Ryil but it is quite evident that she was widow of another Walter de Wessinton.

Juliane's claim for dower was against:

Bartholomew the clerk of Newcastle for a third part of 4 bovates in Higham.

Symon de Dyveleston for a third part of 4 bovates and half a mill in Milbourne.

Robert de Wessinton for a third part of 30 acres in Milbourne and 12 acres in Slaley.

Marmaduke Basset and Isabel his wife for a third part of 8 bovates in Eachwick, 35 acres in Besside and 80 acres in Cowpen.

Nicholas de Skyringham for a third part of a moiety of a rent of one mark in Heddon.

Robert Scot for a third part of a moiety of 5s. rent in Heddon.

John s. of Robert de Wycestre for a third part of a moiety of the manor of Benwell.

It is possible that Juliane was successful in part of her claim, but at Hilary term 1266/7 she repeated the claim against Bartholomew the clerk and against the Bassets.

Bartholomew called to warrant John BENEY and the Bassets called to warrant William de Wassinton. The verdict was that these persons should attend in the quindene of Easter by aid of Court and William was to be summoned in the county of York. (Cur. Reg. Roll in Northumberland Pleas 226.) It would be interesting to know why William de Wassinton should have been called in the county of York, and if in fact he was.

An examination of the title to the various lands on which the widow Juliane claimed dower produces further evidences about the Wessington family. The lands in Milbourne and Higham (the latter place being part of Milbourne) were apparently the dower lands of Diana de Divelstone who had married the first Walter de Wessington. These lands later became the property of Newminster abbey and the early deeds relating to them were entered in the abbey's chartulary. (SS lxvi 109-116.) Walter de Wessington gave to Adam de Novo Castro, clerk, for his homage and service the half carucate in the vill of Milbourne occupied by Thomas s. of Helias, paying a rent of one penny a year for all services; at the same time he gave to Adam one other half carucate in the vill of Higham in the occupation of John Benet, together with half the mill on the west side of North Milbourne. Adam de Novo Castro was succeeded by his daughter Dionisia who m. Bartholomew de Pampeden, clerk; this is Bartholomew the clerk of 1266. Bartholomew acquired from sir Simon de Divelstone certain meadows in the fields of Higham in exchange for the mill of North Milbourne. The same Simon, with the consent of his s. and heir Thomas, gave (or perhaps merely confirmed) to Adam de Novo Castro four bovates in Higham and four bovates in North Milbourne. All these lands came eventually to Newminster. It is evident that the two demises by Walter de Wessington to Adam de Novo Castro and John Benet had been made some little time before 1266, presumably by Juliane's late husband.

Robert de Wessinton who held lands in Milbourne and Slaley in 1266 was perhaps Juliane's brother-in-law. Robert de Wessington was attorney for Henry de la Val in 1269. (SS lxxxviii 218.)

In 1293 Hawise, daughter of Ralph Fabian, claimed from Walter de Wessington 20 acres and 2 parts of a messuage in South Milbourne as part of her inheritance from her grandfather Robert Fabian; Walter was able to prove that Robert Fabian had sold the land to John de Normanville, from whom he had acquired it. At the same time Hawise claimed from Walter a messuage and 30 acres in South Milbourne, also as part of her grandfather's property; in this case Walter proved that the land in question was held in dower by Joan, widow of Robert de Wessington. Hawise thereupon began a new action against Joan. (Northumberland Assize Rolls 21 E.I.) These lands in South Milbourne were quite distinct from the dower lands of Diana de Wessington which were in North Milbourne. In *Early Westmorland M.P.'s 1258-1327* (CW Tract Series no. xv 86), Robert de Wessington, M.P. 1300, is identified as "third son of sir Walter de Washington of Washington, co. Durham, and North Milbourne, co. Northumberland, by Joan, sister and heiress of Roger de Whitchester". This cannot be correct for Robert de Wessington "of North Milbourne" was dead in 1293. If Walter de Wessington who owned lands in South Milbourne in 1293 can be identified with Walter who was the owner of Washington at this time it would seem certain that Robert de Wessington had no issue. It is possible, however, that Walter was a son of Robert's and therefore a cousin of the owner of Washington.

Isabel, wife of Marmaduke Basset, was a Wessington. About 1262 sir William de Wessington gave to Marmaduke Basset and Isabella his wife, "presumably upon marriage", 8 bovates in Eachwick and 80 acres in Cowpen to be held by knights' service. This statement

is made in NCH ix 318, quoting as reference Cur. Regis Rolls, nos. 177, 178, but this is merely Juliane's claim for dower in 1266. There is a similar statement in NCH xiii 89, where the name is again given as sir William and the date as 1262. In the pedigree of Whitcheester and Benwell in NCH xiii 225, it is said that William of Washington sold 8 bovates in Eachwick to William Basset in 1260; the references for this are NCH xii 548 and NCH ix 319; in the first of these references there is no mention of the Eachwick lands. We can take it as certain that these lands had belonged to the Wessingtons, as otherwise Juliane could have no claim to dower therein. The Eachwick lands had belonged to Robert de Whitcheestre in 1220, for in that year Gilebert de La Val was charged half a mark for having a pone against him for 8 bovates of land there. (Pipe Rolls.) Sir Marmaduke Basset was succeeded by his son sir William Basset who sold the manor of Offerton in 1310 to John de Denum. Marmaduke Basset, s. of sir William took part in the rebellion of Gilbert de Middleton. He received a pardon for this on 3 September 1322. (*Cal. Pat. Rolls.*) In 1328 Basset claimed restoration of the manor of Offerton which had been sold by his father. He stated that Wauter de Wessington had given the manor to Marmeduk Basset and the heirs he should have by Isabel, daughter of the said Wauter. (*Rot. Parl.* ii 14). It seems that he is claiming that Offerton was entailed on his grandfather Marmaduke and his heirs, and that consequently his father had no right to sell it. It should not be presumed from this that Offerton had ever belonged to the Wessingtons.

It was stated at the inquest in 1259/60, after the death of Nicholas de Bykere, that Nicholas was (once) in the wardship of Robert s. of Roger, sometime sheriff of Northumberland who sold his wardship to Reginald Basset of Offerton. (*Cal. inq. p.m.'s* i 129.) Robert s. of Roger had been sheriff 1200-1213 (AA4 xx 27) and Reginald Basset had died before 1242. (Assize Roll, no.

225, m. 3d in SS 127.) The fact that Basset was described as "of Offerton" would suggest that he was then owner of Offerton. Sir William Basset, father of Marmaduke Basset who married Isabel Wessington is also described as "of Offerton". (AA4 xxiv 195.)

Sir Edmund Craster, who edited NCH ix, has since admitted in a letter to one of the writers of this article, that he was wrong in saying that William de Wessington settled the Eachwick, Cowpen and Bebside lands on his daughter Isabel in 1262; what he should have said was that William was summoned to give warranty in 1266.

The names of Walter de Wassington, Joan de Rihull and Marmeduc Basset appear in consecutive entries in the Pipe Roll for 1262 although there are no apparent connections. Walter de Wassington owed half a mark for a fine for a licence to come to an agreement. Joan de Rihull owed half a mark for a fine for herself and her pledges because she withdrew herself, i.e. she had not proceeded with whatever legal business she had embarked upon. Marmeduke Basset owed ten marks for a fine because of a trespass on a chase, his pledges being John de Biker and Fulco Tybenham. The three debts remained unpaid for several years; Joan and Walter's debts were probably paid in 1270 but the Pipe Roll for that year is no longer extant. The fine of ten marks is still charged against Marmeduke in 1272 but is not thereafter carried forward.

At the assizes held in Newcastle in 1279 Hawise de Burton and Ivetta, her sister, appointed Robert de Burton or William de Wurssington as their attorney in a plea of land versus John son of John de Selby. (SS lxxxviii 305.)

The lands in Heddon for which Nicholas de Skyringham and Robert Scot paid rent in 1266 were probably the 40 acres held by Robert de Whitchestre, and the 40 acres held by Roger de Whitchestre in 1242/3. (Book of Fees.)

The third part of a moiety of the manor of Benwell, from which Juliane, widow of Walter de Wessington, claimed dower in 1266, is clearly the part of Benwell held by Joan de Riel in 1262; it was then described, more accurately, as a quarter of the manor. Between 1262 and 1266 Johanna de Ryl and Walter de Wessington had given this part of Benwell to John s. of Robert de Whitchestre. The fact that Joan de Riel held the Benwell lands in her own right in 1262 and shortly afterwards joined with Walter de Wessington in conveying them to John s. of Robert de Whitchestre might suggest that Walter de Wessington had recently come of age.

With the exception of the four bovates in Milbourne and four in Higham, all the properties from which Juliane claimed dower in 1266 had belonged to the Whitchestres. As eight bovates were the equivalent of one carucate the Milbourne and Higham lands are evidently the original dower lands of Diana, wife of Walter de Wessington I. They had been disposed of, probably by Walter de Wessington III, before 1266.

There are two striking omissions from the estates on which the widow Juliane claimed dower in 1266. These are Whitchester and Washington. The manor of Whitchester, like the quarter of Benwell, passed to the Whitchestres in the person of John s. Robert de Whitchestre. This may have been as a result of the agreement made 1221 x 1222 between John de Crauden and Robert de Whitchestre. About 1266 Washington was held by William de Wessington, and the fact that he succeeded to none of the Whitchestre family lands must surely mean that he was not a son of the lady Joan de Riel, the Whitchestre heiress. He was probably son and heir of Walter de Wessington II by another, earlier, wife.

A John de Wessington who appears in the records about this time was perhaps a member of the family. At the assizes of 1279 John de Wessington and Agnes his wife, Matilda, sister of the said Agnes, Agnes, daughter

of Roger Modok and Idonea, sister of the same Agnes, instituted a writ of *mort d'ancestor* against Matilda, widow of Roger Modoc. (SS lxxxviii 229.) As they failed to prosecute their case they were fined $\frac{1}{2}$ a mark. (*Ibid.* 390.) If, however, John can be identified with the John de Wessington who paid the subsidy of 1296 in the parish of St John, Newcastle, he may have derived his surname merely from his late place of residence.

Another member of the family living at this time was perhaps master Simon de Wessington of Dissington who in 1275 claimed a messuage and 12 acres in South Dissington as having been conveyed to him by Joan, daughter of John de South Dissington. Joan's sister Emma disputed the claim stating that Joan had died at the age of ten and could not therefore have made a legal conveyance. Master Simon had spent a year studying in Paris where perhaps he had gained his description of "master". Judgment was finally given against Simon in 1293 and he was fined 30s., for an unjust claim. (Assize Roll, Northumberland, 4 E.I, 7-9 E.I, 21 E.I. in NCH xiii 179-180.) In 1294/5 master Simon and Robert the harper sold a messuage, three bovates and 18 acres in South Dissington to Robert s. of John de Dalton and Maud his wife. (Assize Roll, Northumberland, 23 E.I in NCH xiii 180.) The name of Robert de Wessington appears on the Subsidy Roll for Dissington in 1296; it is well known that many names on this roll are out of date, so that this might represent the Robert de Wessington whose widow Joan was living in 1293. Alternatively master Simon may have died before 1296 and been succeeded by Robert de Wessington.

When sir Robert de Morville, of Helton Flecket in Westmorland, died in 1290 it was found that his heirs were his two sisters, Margaret, widow of sir William de Washington and Idonea, wife of sir Robert l'Engleys. After this time the main scene of activity of the Washington family lay in Westmorland. Sir William left a son

and heir, sir Walter, whose direct line ended with his grandson, another sir William, whose only child, Eleanor, carried Washington by marriage to the Tempest family.

The writers hope to continue the account of the Washington family in another article.

WESSINGTON of WASHINGTON, Co. Durham.

