

Herrick Family Association

Founded in 2001



Richard L. Herrick, Founder and President Emeritus

Kenneth Herrick, Vice President Emeritus

Joann Nichols, Editor Emeritus

Virgil Herrick, Counselor Emeritus

Vol. 17 Issue 2

June 2021

Check our Web Page: www.Herrickfamilyassociation.org or find us on Facebook!

Message from the President:

Dale E. Yoe, HFA #062

June 2021

Happy 20th! Yes- it has been 20 years since the beginning of our Herrick Family Association. As we celebrate, I want to thank the many people who help keep our group going strong. First to our Board of Directors- Merrill Herrick, VP, Dianne Herrick, Treas., Nancy Johnson, Sec. and Newsletter Guru, Jim Hilton, Membership chair and to Jimmy Yoe, our Computer guy. We also need to send out a huge thanks to those that help with research- Alice H. Reynolds, Curt Herrick and Michael Herrick.

I hope this finds everyone safe and well. I thought I should remind all about our trip to England. Once again it had to be postponed from this coming September to April of 2022. We have added some additional time into the schedule for those who have not visited some of the Herrick sites. We will begin in Leicester on Monday, 25th April with a Welcome Reception, Buffet dinner and a speaker. Then on Tuesday we begin our travels- first to York, visiting the museum and sites there; On Wednesday we go to Lincoln then on Thursday back to Leicester. Saturday night we will have our Farewell dinner and wrap-up of the week. There will be speakers and guides along the way.

I encourage all who wish to attend to contact Celtic Journeys for more info. You can reach Maria Conway or Julie White at www.celtic-journeys.com or by calling 651-291-8003. The price they are charging will not include air fare or transport from the airport to and from Leicester. What you will get is the hotels for the 6 nights, breakfast each morning, Welcome and Farewell dinners, the Bus/Driver and guides, and admission to each site.

Please let me know as well if you are going so, I can keep in touch with updates, or if you have any questions, etc. I am truly looking forward to this trip and seeing each one of you there. And, who knows, we just might learn more about our Viking Heritage.

* * *



#

The Heyricke Papers (Part 1)

By Irene Turlington



The Heyricke papers are valuable documents once preserved in old chests at Beaumanor Hall, which belonged to Sir William Herrick who became a Teller of the Exchequer in the reign of James I of England. The papers were accumulated during his long life.

John Nichols used the earlier papers extensively when writing his 'History and Antiquities of the County of Leicestershire' published between 1795 to 1811. He used to visit Beaumanor once a year staying for a week or so to work on the papers, assisted by John Herrick, brother of William Herrick VI who was lord of the manor between 1773 and 1802. He was particularly interested in the family letters of which he made many transcripts. The personal papers contain many family letters written in the 16th and 17th centuries, giving valuable details about aspects of life in Leicestershire, manners, and customs which may otherwise have remained unrecorded.

It is thanks to William Perry Herrick who inherited Beaumanor in 1832, that these documents are preserved today. He was an antiquarian and genealogist, and a friend of the historian James Thompson. Beaumanor Hall was rebuilt between 1842-53 and was designed by William Railton in the Jacobean style. John Gough Nichols sometimes travelled to Beaumanor with his grandfather and became acquainted with the family. In 1843 he undertook, at the request of William Perry Herrick, to arrange all his collection of papers. John Gough Nichols (1806-73) described the Exchequer Papers in an article printed in the Athenaeum No. 2235, dated 27th August 1870. However in the preparation of the Calendar of the Papers in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, it was found to be more convenient to present them in a different order from that created by John Gough Nichols.



View from the gardens of the present Beaumanor Hall designed by William Railton.

The Herrick Papers were purchased by the Bodleian Library, in October 1968. They consist of a file of court rolls for the manor of Beaumanor Leicestershire, eleven volumes of family letters, official, business and estate

papers accumulated by the Herrick family from the 16th century to the latter half of 19th century. The remainder of the Herrick archive was deposited by the Leicestershire Records Office in 1972. The archive included deeds and papers for the Leicestershire estates and properties in other counties, manorial records and miscellaneous Herrick family papers, as well as the Exchequer Records.

In 1988 the records were put up for sale through Sotheby's, and the Leicestershire Records Office was able to acquire the estate records, while the Bodleian Library purchased the Exchequer papers (Sotheby's 15 December 1988, Lot 20) with the aid of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, MGC/ V & A Purchase Grant Fund, the Pilgrim Trust, the Friends of the Bodleian & the Friends of the National Libraries.

The most interesting of the many letters written from Leicester in the 16th and 17th centuries are regarded to be those written by Alderman Robert Heyricke, an elder brother of Sir William. We learn from the correspondence that the Postal Service had been established for the service of the government and not for private people. The usual way of communication between Leicester and London was by carriers. Townsmen from Leicester made frequent journeys to London and offered their services to friends and neighbours, as it was not then illegal for them to carry letters. The majority of travellers made their journeys on foot. In 1614, Francis, the cook at Beaumanor took eight days to return from London. Those who could afford a horse travelled on horseback. Robert Heyricke prided himself on his skill with horses and on one occasion recommended to his brother Sir William '*a very pretty gelding, as well-paced and easy-going as may be, only six years old, well made and clean of his legs, milk-white, with some small spots on him, his price £10, or, if you will have him whilst he is unsold, he shall be sent you up to bring you down, and if you like not the price, you must give Fullwood 10s. for his journey, and deliver him safe again*'.

When people became infirm and not able to ride on horseback, this was an end to their travelling. In Robert Heyricke's old age he wrote to his brother '*I long to see you, and to see you here, for I shall never desire to go to London to see any such sights as heretofore, and by your means, I have often seen. I feel myself very unapt to ride*'. In a reply from Sir William, he suggests a caroché, a luxury then unknown in Leicester, unless when the king or a high ranking person passed through the town. Robert Heyricke was apprehensive about accepting his brother's kindness and he replied '*The last branch of your letter speaketh of a new caroché, which you say will carry me very easy when I am weary of my horse; but I must first make trial here by some short journey, for I dare not make trial of so long a circuit.*' The caroché was a luxurious horse drawn coach or carriage used by the wealthy in the 17th century.

Before the days of stage coaches, it was extremely hazardous to send money by road because of robbers and cozeners. Because there was no established banking system in England at this time, goldsmiths often lent money, either on bonds or on the security of Jewels pawned to them. Today these financial transactions for clients would be carried out by a banker. Sir William, the goldsmith in London, and his brother Alderman Robert Heyricke in Leicester, acted the part of bankers in the transfer of money between London and Leicester, for the convenience of both tradesmen and the aristocracy of the area. There are constant references in Robert Heyricke's letters to the means by which they carried out this service and to the accounts that they kept of these transactions. Sir William's and Alderman Heyricke's fortunes were largely increased by the business transactions they carried out resembling modern day bankers. They were very much aware of the dangers and took great lengths to provide the necessary security measures. Coins were very scarce and often William was asked to bring bags of small change to Leicester, when he first settled in London. For example in a letter from William Hudson dated 6th March, 1582:

'I pray you, good William, to send me 10s in pence and two-pennies, if you can get them, and I will send you money for them'.

On the 8th of March his father thanks him for 20s sent in new half groats, and for the 20s in pence and half pence.

Cattle dealers were glad to leave their money safe in Cheapside after selling their beasts, and then take it up again in Leicester. Their movements often relied on the great fairs held countrywide. Therefore the periods of travel and the routes taken were influenced by these fairs.

In 2009 I was able obtain a Reader's card at the Bodleian Library in Oxford. Rev'd Michael Wilson very

kindly assisted by writing a supporting statement to accompany my application. My friend Rev'd Karen Herrick in New Jersey, America, arranged for us to look at some of the Herrick Papers in Duke Humfrey's Library with the beautiful painted ceiling, parts of this library date back to 1487. We both had to swear an oath that 'we wouldn't damage any of the books or set fire to the Library', before we were given the temporary readers cards in Oxford University Administration Office. I was intrigued to see the papers connected to Sir William when he was appointed Jeweller to King James I, the Queen and the Prince of Wales, and the papers connected to the loans he made to the King. A number of papers refer to the exquisite work done on the royal jewels by Sir William in collaboration with Sir John Spilman, and to the jewels supplied by him, to the royal family. There were a number of instances where it took years before Sir William was paid for his work, and he was repaid the money lent to the King. James I did raise money from time to time by borrowing from his Jeweller. There are a number of accounts of the money lent, and petitions for its repayment, including schemes drawn up by which the King could compensate Sir William without actually repaying any money. Sir William Heyricke did suffer some considerable losses from his loans to the King.

At this time, Leicester was not then a town of any considerable trade and didn't have a large population. It was a country town in the centre of a rich pastoral district. Wool from the surrounding flocks of sheep was brought to market in Leicester. In the reign of Elizabeth I, a wool hall had been erected. From time to time efforts had been made to establish the manufacture of cloth, particularly 'kersey'.

Hosiery manufacture was in very early stages. Stockings were made from pieces of linen or cloth being cut out and joined together, and also hand knitted stockings were made. In 1597 in a paper preserved at Beaumanor, a townsman Thomas Mosely, the mayor and burgesses by the appointment of the Earl of Huntingdon, lent 10s to set poor children to work in the knitting of Jersey stockings. Although the stocking frame was in use in the late 16th century, it appeared that it was not in use in Leicester.

Look for Part Two of **The Heyricke Papers** in the September Newsletter.

* * *

By Joe Carroll

Published: Mar. 25, 2021

PAWLET, Vt. (WCAX)



The sounds of spring are sweet at Platt Herrick's sugarhouse in Pawlet.

He runs the operation with his eldest son, Platt Jr., affectionately known as 'Bony.' "No, never been skinny," commented Bony.

The 91-year-old sold his dairy farm years ago but kept 100 acres for sugaring. Bony is now the 5th generation to work this land. "He's probably in better shape than I am," Bony said.

Both he and his son have accents as thick as their syrup. The operation is a snapshot from the past. They heat with wood, there's no tubing, and they still collect the sap with buckets. It all boils down to this -- 40 gallons of sap are needed to produce one gallon of maple syrup.

"Oh It's getting there, it's still just under," Herrick explained, as he closely monitored the evaporator arch.

Reporter Joe Carroll: You still enjoy this?

Platt Herrick: Oh yeah, yeah. That's why we do it. We don't do it to make money, we do it for the soured fun of it!

'Bony' Herrick: Wouldn't be here if we didn't.

The wholesale price for maple syrup has soured. "Two dollars a pound translates to \$22 a gallon," Herrick said with a laugh. Their work is made more difficult by mega-operations, some with over 100,000 taps, that flood the market with syrup. The Herricks have scaled back their operation. At one time they put out 3,000 buckets each season, now they're down to 500. Last year they made about 200 gallons of the sweet stuff. "Most people prefer the darker grade. I do myself."

Except for the sounds of the crackling of the wood fire and the evaporator, the father/son team steams along, mostly in silence. "We don't talk too much," Herrick said. "We know what we supposed to do... so we do it!"

Like their syrup, they're pure Vermont. "Will be out here all day," Herrick said.

"Yeah, probably till dark," added Bony.

* * *

By Jim Cochrane, HFA #015

My great grandmother was Agnes Mary Herrick, She was born in Fairport Harbor or Painsville, Ohio in 1855. Her mother Nancy Cook died shortly after her birth and her father (Ezra Herrick) was supposedly a ship builder and was out on Lake Erie a lot of the time. Thus Agnes was raised by another family the Painsville. This family was owners of the newspaper in Painsville.

When Agnes was approximately 17 she learned that her father had migrated to Dakota Territory and she learned that he was in bad health, so she went out to Dakota to help him. He died shortly after Agnes got to South Dakota, but in the meantime she met my great grandfather, Byron James Cochrane. They were married and had three children before Agnes died in 1887. Byron never remarried and lived to be just a few weeks short of 100 years of age.

A few months ago I received an e-mail from Gretchen Carlson, telling me she had several letters that Agnes had written to the family that raised her back in the later 1800's. wondering if I would be interested in having them. Of course I answered immediately and she sent me the letters which I now treasure. I finally had proof of her being adopted by this family.

Gretchen, I believe is a great granddaughter of the family that raised Agnes, and she graciously sent me the letters.

Agnes was born in 1855 in Fairport Harbor, Ohio she died in 1887 at Gary, Dakota Territory (now South Dakota), She had three children, one of which died in the flu epidemic at about the same time as Agnes was when she died.

Her father was Ezra Herrick born 1800 in Fairport Harbor and died in 1877 in Gary, Dakota Territory. He was the son of Alderman Baker Herrick and Theda Ann Sweet. Alderman and his family are all buried in Painsville, Ohio. Nancy Cook, her mother, was born in 1828 in Fairport Harbor and died in 1858. but I am not sure where. Her parents were Joseph Warren Cook and Nancy Richmond,

This is a very brief story of my great grandparents. I thank Gretchen for reaching out and helping me resolve the mystery of my great grandmother.

* * *

By A.B. (Alice Herrick) Reynolds

Erick the Forester – Summary, Resources and Questions

Lucius C. Herrick, in his *Herrick Genealogical Register*, 1885 (HGRII), mentions Erick the Forester as a “direct-line” ancestor of the Herrick family in Leicester. It is likely that Lucius discovered this information as he reviewed the works of two Leicestershire historians completed nearly 100 years previously. Although the Herrick family, in search for its roots in England, has discovered many exciting details including the possible identity of Henry Hericke, the progenitor of many of the Herricks in the United States, little progress has been made on confirming (or disproving) a link to Erick the Forester. This paper summarizes information found to date about Erick the Forester and his connection to the Herrick family, provides additional resources to search, and offers questions to guide future research.

What Throsby and Nichols said about Erick the Forester

The historians likely referenced by Lucius C. Herrick were John Throsby and John Nichols. They communicated with William Herrick (whichever one was the head of the Herrick family at Beaumanor Hall) about 1795 when their works were published. William Herrick shared the Herrick family letters that had been collected starting with Sir William Heyricke (1557 to 1652/3). Both historians used this information and other sources to provide the lineage of the Herrick family. Eric the Forester was mentioned by both historians but with no additional references. It was the Herrick family lore (possibly true, partly true or not true at all) that Eric the Forester was the family’s direct ancestor. The historians dutifully included his name in their 1795 Herrick articles.

Throsby said, “I have given in my *Leicestershire Views* a pretty full pedigree of this ancient and respectable family, who derive their lineage from Erick the forester, a great commander, who opposed the landing of William the conqueror. This veteran retired to Leicestershire, in his old age, after being employed in the service of the Conqueror, where his descendants, in succession, have continued ever since.” (*The History and Antiquities of the Ancient Town of Leicester; Attempted by John Throsby. Leicester: Printed by J. Brown for the Author, M DCC XCI, p. 271*)

John Nichols added more information in *The History and Antiquities of Leicestershire*, Vol iii, p. 227 in a section called *Minor Queries and Answers* dated Sept. 22, 1855:

Q: Eric the Forester. – Who was Eric the Forester? He is mentioned in Potter’s *Charnwood*, p. 80, as having harangued his forces in that forest in the time of the Norman invasion. Beyond this no mention is made of him, nor have I been able to ascertain anything concerning him elsewhere. Doubtless there are particulars to be found of this Robin Hood of Leicestershire, and such a will be worthy when found to be “made a note of”. Can any studious friend shed any light on this matter? Pedro.

A: Eric, surnamed Silvaticus, or the Forester, was the son of Alfrike, Earl of Mercia, and appears by the Domesday Book to have had afterwards possessions on the north side of Herefordshire. Not having fully acknowledged the Norman authority, he availed himself of the temporary absence of William to take up arms. This garrison of the castle of Hereford, under Richard Fitscroe and others, marched against him, and laid waste his lands in several expeditions, but sustained themselves a considerable loss from the resistance opposed to them. At length Eric formed an alliance with Blethyn and Rywalhon, princes of Wales, in conjunction with whom he revenged the affront, ravaging the county as far as the bridge of Hereford and returning with a marvelous great spoil. (*Duncumb’s Herefordshire, i. 57., quoted from Hoveden and Chronicle of Wales.*) Hoveden further states, anno 1070, “At this period the most valiant man Eric, surnamed the Woodsman, was reconciled to King William; “ it is therefore probable that he continued in the royal service and favor till his death. In *anecdotes of the Family Swift: a fragment written by Dean Swift (Scott’s edit, vol i, p. 508)*, it appears that “the Dean’s mother was Abigail Erick of Leicestershire, descended from the most ancient family of the Ericks, who derive their lineage from Eric,

the Forester, a great commander, who raised up an army to oppose the invasion of William the conqueror, by whom he was vanquished, but afterwards employed to command that prince's forces and in his old age retired to his house in Leicestershire, where his family has continued ever since." Of the two branches, the Herricks of Leicester town, and the Heyrickes of Beaumanor, distinct pedigrees, and many curious historical anecdotes are given in Nichol's Leicestershire, vol. ii, p. 215; vol. iii, p. 148.

Look for more about Erick the Forester in the September HFA newsletter.

* * *

By Matthew Sibson, 2012 Leicestershire Review
Vestiges of the Danelaw in Humberstone

The Vikings swarmed down the River Soar and invaded Leicester in 868, partly destroying the ancient Roman city walls and within the next ten years, Burhed, King of Mercia, was defeated. In 886, the losses of Anglo-Saxon territory in Mercia were clearly defined by a treaty that gave the Danes a permanent 'country' within England known as the Danelaw. Leicestershire fell within this territory and when the city's Bishop retired to safety at Dorchester-on-Thames, churches were destroyed and Christian rites trampled.



The Vikings swarmed down the River Soar to Leicester

Leicester, as a former Anglo-Saxon royal city, continued its importance under Danish rule. Although short-lived, the existence of the Danelaw left an everlasting mark on Leicestershire. Despite this, there aren't many archaeological finds to be seen; visible remains of the Norsemen are hard to come by. Leicestershire's archaeological record lacks burials, pottery and everyday implements. Finds that we do have are generally personal ornaments such as brooches, horse accessories, coinage and weaponry.

Place-names show the extent of Danish-occupied Leicestershire with 56 villages ending with -by, half of which contain a Danish personal name as their other element. The sounds of the Scandinavian invaders gives way to names of an older Mercian origin with names ending in -ton. Thrussington, Syston and Cossington all speak of an earlier period in Leicestershire's settlement history. Even though the -ton element suggests the presence of a settlement that survived the impact of the Danish army, the first element in these names is frequently a Scandinavian personal name.

This article explores the history of the village of Humberstone and mounts evidence for its origin as a Danelaw settlement with new place-name interpretations and a fresh look at local legends. For the first time I also attempt to decipher the meaning of a collection of stone reliefs that, until now, have an unknown origin, an unknown meaning but clearly predate the Norman church they are incorporated into.

The Hel stone

To the north of Humberstone village, next to a roundabout and close to the Porsche Garage, is a standing stone – Leicestershire’s only ancient monolith known today as the Humber Stone. Throughout history the stone has gone by many names, Humber Stone being the most recent, named after the closest village. The village being named after the stone is a common misconception.



The Humber Stone was once known as the Hel Stone

A hundred years ago the stone was called the Hoston Stone, but it has been called many things through antiquity, including the Holstone, the Holy Stone the Hell Stone but another ancient name for it is Hel Stone. Interestingly, about 100 yards to the north-east of the stone was a plot of land known as Hell Hole Furlong. Its exact location is recorded by Alice Dryden in her book *Memorials of Old Leicestershire*.

“It may be of some interest to know that the field on the south-west of the Thurmaston Lane, at the corner opposite the point at which the Barkby Thorpe bridle path leaves the lane, is and has been for many years, known as Hell Hole.”

So where does this reference to Hel and Hell come from? Anybody with an understanding of Norse legends knows that Hel is the name of the mythological underworld, the land of the dead that was ruled by a goddess of the same name – Hel. Even the old Humberstone Reverend and antiquarian, John Dudley, made this connection when he wrote an article in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* in 1813. He stated:

“No circumstance belonging at present to this spot seems likely to have given rise to this strange name; it leaves room, therefore, for the conjecture that in this quarter the sacrifices, too often human, were wont to be performed, and that from this it obtained the Saxon name of Hela.”

Dudley refers to Hela as Saxon, but Hela is a derivative of Hel, the name of the Norse underworld and also the name of the ruling goddess of the underworld. But why would the stone have this association? The key here is the name of the furlong – ‘Hell Hole,’ which would assume there was a hole, or cave, nearby. Hel is the perfect name for a cave discovered (or created) by the Vikings – a real life underworld in the conquered landscape.



19th Century depiction of the Norse Goddess, Hel

Sadly no underground cavern has ever been discovered but there is an old legend from the English Civil War that says that one did exist. The tale says a group of Royalists were captured by the Roundheads and imprisoned in St Mary's church in Humberstone village. They escaped from the church via a secret passage to emerge in a field just by the Humber Stone. When the Roundheads finally discovered the stone, they levered it over the entrance to the passage to stop anybody from following them.



St Mary's Church, Humberstone

We actually know that Humberstone church had a passageway to the nearby (but now demolished) Monk's Rest, but we don't know if there's a tunnel beneath the Humber Stone itself. But that's not the only reference of a tunnel at the stone. Another legend speaks of a subterranean chamber that linked the Humber Stone with Leicester Abbey, but again such a tunnel has never been discovered. Humberstone's Reverend Dudley was a real authority on village history and legends and in his article of 1813 he stated:

“There are, or rather were, about fifty years ago traditionary tales in the village that a Nunnery once stood on Hoston, and that steps had been found communicating subterraneously with the monks of Leicester Abbey, about two miles distant. But no religious house of this kind is to be traced here. The tale must have owed its origin to circumstances connected with the religion of earlier times, probably anterior to the introduction of Christianity into Britain, and therefore during the prevalence of idolatry of the Britons.”

Thirty-three years later, Reverend Dudley wrote about the stone's subterranean legend once again. He states:

"It [the myth of the nunnery tunnel] may have been founded on a tradition that a Celtic cave was once extant at the place, perhaps beneath the stone on which the amber [Humber Stone] stood. In the ages of Christianity which followed the suppression of the Celtic religion, it seems to have been designated by the name of Hell Hole. This name is still retained by the lands forming the slope of the eminence on which the Holy [Humber] stone is situate, although the richness of the lands and their pleasant aspect seems to demand a less offensive name. These circumstances afford evidence which cannot be reasonably contravened, that the name of Hell Hole was given to a Celtic cave, which, from the tale of the nunnery, may be inferred to have been dedicated to a female divinity."

The cave may well have had a Celtic origin but it is easy to assume that it was subsequently reused and renamed by the Viking invaders, as the underworld Hel. The fact that there was an ancient tunnel in the landscape would have been important to the Vikings who may have viewed the land as a possible representation of Hel for religious and ceremonial purposes, and therefore an important location to settle in.

There are a number of caves underneath the city of Nottingham but whether such a cave system exists in Leicester, or indeed Humberstone, is unknown. A geophysical survey may well clear this up. What we do know is that the nomenclature of Leicester's only remaining monolith, and a patch of nearby land, was once named 'Hel/Hell.' After 'Hel' the stone became the Holy Stone (most likely after the re-Christianisation of the land), then Holstone, followed by Hoston and most recently the Humber Stone. The name Hel and Hell in Humberstone are likely to originate from the times of the Danelaw when a nearby Celtic cave was named after the Norse underworld, Hel. The stone, which stood close to the cave's entrance, could have possibly been seen to represent the guardian of the underworld, the goddess Hel and the name remained preserved in village folklore.

What's in a name?

If the standing stone and ancient cave were so important to the Vikings, you'd expect to find a settlement nearby. This brings me to Humberstone village. Humberstone has a long history; it is mentioned in the Domesday survey of 1086 but present thought doesn't take it back to the time of the Danelaw.

In the Domesday Survey the village name is spelt Humerstane, then Humberstane (1130), Humbrestein (1205), Humbrestain (1229), Humbreston (1299) and finally Humberstone. In 'The Place-Names of Leicestershire' Barrie Cox alludes to the origin of the name being Hunbeort's Stone. He states:

"The township was named from a glacial erratic to the north of its site. It is uncertain whether the stone constituted a boundary marker for the Anglo-Saxon Hunbeorht."

Even though the author is uncertain, he states that the origin of the village name is Hunbeorht's Stone. Cox is an authority on Leicestershire place-names but where the evidence for Hunbeorht's boundary stone theory comes from, I am unsure. Hunbeorht was the Bishop of Elmham who died around 856 but there is no known connection between him and the village in question. Therefore, the place-name can only be viewed with conjecture, not certainty.

I would suggest that the origin of the place-name is more likely to arise from the county's Danelaw era. Due to the very few relics attributed to the Danish invasion in the archaeological record the bulk of the evidence for a substantial Danish settlement comes from place-names. Every village that ends in -by, -toft or -Thorpe, for example, have a Danish origin. Many villages also used a Scandinavian first element with the English habitat element -tun, for example Thurmaston. This would infer villages taken over by Danish newcomers and hence renamed.

Many Leicestershire villages were named after powerful gods and famous Danes. Oadby is named after Oadby and Thurnby comes from the god Thor. Two villages close to Humberstone, namely Hungerton and Ingarsby are named after a powerful Danish leader called Ingvar Ragnarsson (also known as Hingwar and Ivarr the Boneless). Ingarsby literally translates to Ingvar's Village. Ingvar was a prince, son of Ragnar Lodbrok, ruler of an area probably comprising parts of modern-day Sweden and Denmark. Ingvar had a brother called Prince Hubba Ragnarsson (also known as Ubbe and Huber). Some scholars believe that the name Humerstane may originate from Hubba's Stone.



King Ragnar Lodbrok as depicted in the Nuremberg Chronicle

Interestingly, the surname 'Huber' gave rise to many variants due to varying dialectal pronunciation, and one such variant is 'Humer,' Therefore Humberstone's original name, Humerstane, literally means Hubba's Stone (or Hubba's boundary stone).

This association between Humberstone and Hubba was also observed by Kendall in his book *Humberstone: A Brief History of the Church and the Manors*. He states:

“Then there is the Danish derivation from Hubba. It is a fact that in 874 the town of Leicester was seized by the Danes under Hubba, and continued to be held by them from 925 to 940. Danish place names abound in the locality, and I have heard it stated on good authority that the ancient earthworks in Swan's Orchard, a close at the extreme east end of the village on the right hand of the first footroad field to Scraftoft, is attributable to the Danish occupation of the eastern side of Leicestershire. Swan's Orchard, by the way, doubtless owes its name to the yeoman family of Swan, who were living in the village at the beginning of the 17th century, and of whom, in 1614, John Swan desired to be buried in the north chapel of Humberstone Church, the chapel for some time afterwards being known by the name of Swan's chapel. A Danish Chieftain, Inguar, son of Ragnar Lodbrok, King of Denmark, says Mr. Carter in his *Danish place names of Leicestershire*, with Hubba, headed an expedition against this country. His name appears in Ingarsby, and some people are inclined to trace it also in Hungerton (Inguarton). As a coincidence, it has been noticed that there is a Hunger Hill close to Humberstone on the Humber, in Lincolnshire, a Humberstone Gorse close to Hungerton, near Grantham, and thirdly, we have Hungerton, Humberstone and Ingarsby in close neighbourhood in Leicestershire. This is hardly convincing argument, but it is quite possible Humberstone may be derived from Hubba's-ton.”

Hubba, like his brothers, was an extraordinary character who led the Viking warriors across England and Wales as they successfully won battle after battle against the Saxon defenders. To understand why Humberstone would be named after Prince Hubba, it is worth understanding his importance in Viking history.

It all began in the autumn of 866 when Hubba, with his brothers Halfdan and Ingwar led an enormous Viking army across the sea, landing in East Anglia to avenge the death of their father Ragnar. There they set up camp, fortified their position and waited for reinforcements. In February 867 they marched inland and seized York. Ingwar set up a king clearly showing that his goal was conquest, not plunder. From there, Ingwar and Hubba went south into the kingdom of Mercia, collecting huge swathes of land along the way. The Mercian King Edmund made a disastrous assault on their entrenchments at Thetford in November 870. Edmund was captured and asked to forsake Christianity and serve as a vassal under Ingwar and Hubba in return for his life. He refused. He was then tied to a cross and used as an archery target.

In 872 the three brothers continued to ravage Mercia and by the end of 874 they totally controlled the kingdom. Leicester, Nottingham, Lichfield and Tamworth had fallen and the new Mercian king, Burhed, abandoned his country. The antiquarian William Kelly interpreted Ingarsby to be an encampment of Prince Ingwar

and a place of considerable military importance. Therefore we can assume Humberstone offered the same level of importance for Prince Hubba as the two villages were in close proximity of one another. Kelly states:

“It is not improbable that about the time Prince Ingar established himself there [Ingarsby], and according to the usual custom, called the place after his own name.”

Leicester would have been the frontier fortress to the Saxon boundary is bordered and it is highly likely that Hubba's famous flag, the Raven Banner, would have been hanging from the city walls to strike fear in their opponents. The banner was said to have been woven in one noon by the sisters of Ingwar and Hubba, when the warrior princes departed from their homeland to avenge their father's death. The banner, which displayed a raven, was said to appear before every battle and fly like a living bird if the Danes were victorious, but hung down motionless if they were defeated.

After taking Leicester the brothers continued to ravish the country and they even joined up with their fourth brother, Guthrum, but in 878 things started to change for the worse. One night a Saxon army near Devon, led by Odda, their alderman, silently travelled to Hubba's camp, slew him and many of his warriors. This became known as the Battle of the Raven Flag as Hubba's famous Raven Banner was captured by the Saxons. The tide was beginning to turn and soon afterwards Ingwar was killed while invading Ireland. The slain princes' successors, Halfdan and Guthrum made a credible stand against Alfred the Great but they too failed. Halfdan's fate is unknown but Guthrum gave in to King Alfred and was even baptised into Christianity. Alfred even became Guthrum's godfather and soon, a pact between the Vikings and the Saxons would be signed.

Hubba left many traces of his remarkable marches. His rapid and extensive movements across England and Wales, and his penchant for camping upon and fortifying high places, has been of great interest to archaeologists and historians. Hubba and his brothers were mighty leaders, Viking heroes, and settlements named after them appeared across England and Wales, probably in the places they had settled during their conquest. For Hubba in particular seven historic eminences have borne the name Hubba's Hill and the town of Hubberston in Pembrokeshire was also named after him.

Like the seven Hubba's Hill locations, the standing stone of Humberstone also stands on an eminence and has been a landmark in the East Leicestershire landscape for 440,000 years due to its origin as a glacial erratic rock, i.e. deposited from a glacier during the last ice age. When the Vikings invaded Britain, the landscape at Humberstone, with its very own underworld and stone guardian, would have been the perfect place to settle. If the subterranean tunnel was already ancient, as the Reverend John Dudley believed (Celtic), then it is plausible that the Viking settlement would have been built at the locality where the tunnel culminated – the present day Humberstone village. With such an important, almost ceremonial landscape, the settlement would certainly have been named after an important figure, and during the Viking invasion nobody was more important than the mighty conqueror, Prince Hubba. The ancient monolith may have been given the name of Hel after the goddess of the underworld, but the important, iconic landmark was claimed by Hubba; it was the Hel Stone, but it was Hubba's Stone and so the ancient village took this name.

There is yet more place name evidence which alludes to a Norse origin in that in 1205 Humberstone was recorded as Humbrestein. Steinn is the Old Norse word for stone. As already stated Humberstone's name at Domesday was Humerstane and therefore we could assume that the -stane element may well have been recorded phonetically by the Normans. -Stane and -stan appear as place name endings at various localities throughout Britain and are interpreted as late Saxon, but there is some body of thought that they originate from the Old Norse -steinn. Whatever the truth, during the 13th century, the village name seems to have retaken its original Scandinavian element of -stein. Interestingly there is an ancient meadow in Humberstone once known as Steine Meadow and this gave rise to the street name Steins Lane which remains to this day as a continuance of Main Street.

* * *

By Karen E Herrick PhD, #148

According to legend, it was on this day April 17th in 1397 that **Geoffrey Chaucer** recited *The Canterbury Tales* (**books by this author**) to the court of Richard II. Although there is no evidence that this actually happened, it is easy to imagine the scene, in part because of a famous painting of Chaucer reciting his poetry to the court, painted in the early 15th century. The prologue of *Canterbury Tales* opens with the famous lines:

Whan that Aprill, with his shoures soote
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote
And bathed every veyne in swich licour,
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eek with his sweete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours yronne,
And smale foweles maken melodye,
That slepen al the nyght with open eye-
(So priketh hem Nature in hir corages);
Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages
And palmeres for to seken straunge strondes
To ferne halwes, kowthein sondry londes;
And specially from every shires ende
Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,
The hooly blisful martir for to seke
That hem hath holpen, whan that they were seeke.

The Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* is one of the most famous examples of Middle English. Translated into modern English, it's something like:

When April with his showers sweet with fruit
The drought of March has pierced unto the root
And bathed each vein with liquor that has power
To generate therein and sire the flower;
When Zephyr also has, with his sweet breath,
Quickened again, in every holt and heath,
The tender shoots and buds, and the young sun
Into the Ram one half his course has run,
And many little birds make melody
That sleep through all the night with open eye

(So Nature pricks them on to ramp and rage)
Then do folk long to go on pilgrimage,
And palmers to go seeking out strange strands,
To distant shrines well known in sundry lands.
And specially from every shire's end
Of England they to Canterbury wend,
The holy blessed martyr there to seek
Who helped them when they lay so ill and weak.

* * *

Message from the Editor:

Nancy Johnson, HFA #212

Email NancyJohnson206@gmail.com

I would like to thank our members, Dale E. Yoe, HFA #62, Alice Herrick Reynolds HFA #03, Karen E Herrick PhD, #148, Jim Cochrane, HFA #015 and Irene Turlington, HFA Honorary Member, for contributing to this newsletter.

I'd like to remind everyone that I'm happy to accept articles and stories for the next newsletter at any time.

* * *