

VYNER, A FAMILY HISTORY

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Vyner, A Family History by Charles James Vyner

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CHARLES JAMES VYNER

**VYNER, A
FAMILY HISTORY**



EATHORPE, WARWICKSHIRE, 1858.

VYNER.



A Family History.

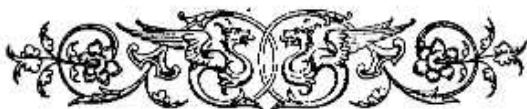


“Et genus, et proavos, et quæ non fecimus ipsi,
Vix ea nostra voco.”

Ovid Metam: lib. 13.

“A line of long descended Ancestors
Is but by grace of imputation ours.”

Dryden.



VYNER.



THIS Surname, which is found spelt in various ways in the Heralds' Visitations and in the ancient Records of the Kingdom as Venor, Venur, Venour, Viner, Vinour, Vyner, Vynor, Vynar, Veynour, &c., &c., is derived from the Latin word "Venator," a huntsman, which, when abbreviated, is written Venōr; or from the French equivalent of the same word, which is Veneur or le Veneur, also Venur, as we find it in the French Dictionary of Arms.

We know that, after the Conquest, the Conqueror granted to his companions in arms large portions of the lands of the conquered. These grants were made subject to the performance of certain services for the king, regulated by the extent of land granted, and the rank and qualifications of the Grantees. The services ordinarily reserved were of a military character, in which case the grantees or tenants of

the lands were said to hold the same "per servicium militare;" but in other cases, where some particular service was to be performed by the tenant, the tenure was called "Tenure by Serjeanty"—per serjeantiam. The nature of these particular services was various; thus we find recorded grants—to Johannes de Wilford "ut sit *Forestarius Regis*," that is Keeper of the King's forests—to Galfridus Luttrell "ut sit *Venator Regis*," that is Huntsman to the King—to Ricardus de Luscombe "per serjeantiam custodiendi canes Regis," that is, by the service of keeping the King's hounds. The grantees of the lands direct from the King sub-divided them amongst their sons and dependents, reserving from their sub-grantees the performance of similar services, either to the King, or to themselves.

As the Conqueror and his followers were, when not engaged in actual warfare, or in securing to themselves possession of the lands taken from the conquered people, occupied chiefly in hunting, the service of "*Venator*," or huntsman, was the service most frequently reserved by the Grantors, and accordingly we find in "Domesday Book" that Waleran, otherwise *Walerannus Venator*, held of the King (de Rege) extensive lands in Hampshire, and in other parts of England, and that *Robertus*, *Rogerus*, *Radulphus*, *Walterus*, *Ricardus*, and others, who also all bore the distinctive title, or sur-name, of "*Venator*," held portions of such lands from him (de eo); and we also find there that Croc, or Croch, *Venator* (to whom reference will be made hereafter), and Rinaldus his son, held lands in Hampshire direct from the King; and that Comes Hugo, otherwise Hugh Lupus, held extensive lands by direct grant from the King, and that *Robertus* his son held some of such lands from him; and that *Ranulphus* and others held lands from *Robertus*, and so on; nearly all these grantees bearing the title or sur-name of "*Venator*."

The first historical mention we have of the name now under consideration is in the history of the "Battle of the Fords," which was fought A.D. 960 between Lothaire, King of France, and Richard Sans-peur, Duke of Normandy; and we find in Palgrave's "History of Normandy," vol. ii, p. 738, the following passage in reference to this battle:—

"But who so prominent in the group as Gautier le Veneur?
 "All the interest in the battle seemed at one juncture
 "to be concentrated upon the Huntsman, as though he
 "had been the sole object of the conflict. Dragged
 "from his horse, seized by the enemy, rescued and
 "remounted by the ready Duke upon the best horse he
 "had, perhaps his own charger, and now again for the
 "battle."

The ancient seat of the "le Veneurs" appears to have been Venables, near Evreux in Normandy, and they bore for their arms "Or," or "Argent, a bend azure," (La Roque, *Histoire d'Harcourt*, ii, 1881), which arms were also borne by several of their English descendants, as well as by other Venatores, who came to England at the time of the Conquest, and their descendants (the colours being varied, or additions made to them, for difference) as, for example, by Walerannus Venator, who bore "Argent, a bend engrailed gules;" and by the Family of Vyner, who have from time out of mind borne "Azure a bend Or," with the addition of a "Chief argent charged with two Cornish choughs proper in fesse;" and with the further addition by one branch of the Family (the Condover branch) now supposed to be extinct, of a "Saltire engrailed gules" between the choughs, representing their connection, by marriage, with the Family of Tibtoft, through that of Scrope. (*See Appendix A for the Pedigree of this branch of the Family.*)

It is believed that the present representative of the French

branch, Comte le Veneur, resides at Carrouges, in the Department of Orne, and that he bears for his arms "Argent a bend Azure, charged with three Crosslets Or.*"

Three brothers of this Norman Family of le Veneur are said to have come to England with Comes Hugo, otherwise Hugh Lupus, at the time of the Conquest, namely :

1.—Gislebert, or Gilbert, Venator, or de Venables, said to be the ancestor of the Barons of Kinderton (a title which is now extinct or merged in that of Vernon) and ancestor also

* In the early days of chivalry, arms were assumed by, not granted to the bearers of them. In Burton's "Antiquities of Leicestershire" (pp. 7, 8, 2nd Edition) is the following passage (quoted by Dugdale in his "Antiquities of Warwickshire") with reference to the assumption of Coats of Arms by persons, whose descendants thenceforward continued to bear them, which appears to be in point in this place, as explaining the various colours and differences in the Arms of different members of the same Family, and the origin of their descent.

"In this Town (Abkettleby, in the Hundred of Framland, in the County of Leicester) sometimes dwelt an ancient Family of the Oreby, who, for their Arms bare 'Or, two chevrons, and a *canton* gules,' taken from the Coat of Albany, Lord Belvoire, who bare 'Or, two chevrons and a *bordure* gules,' which manner of bearing arms was very ancient, for in the infancy of hereditary armory, about the beginning of the Reign of King Henry III, (as that learned and judicious Mr. Camden, Clarendon, and Pierre Pithou, a Frenchman, do note), Arms in Christendom became hereditary and descendible, which before were *su placito*, as by divers instances might be shewed. About that time I have observed that those, who were either menial attendants, or else Feodaries to any noble personages, who held lands of them by any certain service, or otherwise devoted to them, did usually assume to themselves, for their Arms, the device of the Coat of their Lords, either changing the colours retaining the charge, or by adding something to them ; as Charrels of Muston, near Belvoire, who bare "Gules two chevrons and *bordure* Or"—the colours from Albany counter-changed. Oriol, or Keriel, of Croxton, bare "Argent two chevrons and a *canton* gules, charged with a lion passant argent."

Apropos of the Family of Oreby, it may be mentioned, as a further instance of the practice of assuming Coats of Arms in the early days of chivalry, that Sir Richard Fytton of Gawsorth, in the County of Chester, having a grant from Earl Hugh Cyvallic (Hugh II, Earl of Chester) of lands in Fallybrome in the same County, in the reign of King Henry II, his son, Sir Lawrence Fytton, bore for his arms "Argent on a bend azure

of the French line of "le Veneur," who bore for his arms "Argent a bend azure fretty Or" for difference. (*Anselme* *iii*, 256.)

2.—Another, from whom are said to have been derived the Butlers of Chester, Barons of Warrington, who bore for his arms "Or a bend azure, differenced by the garbs, or wheatsheaves, of Chester."

3.—Radulph, or Ranulph, Venator, who held lands in chief from Hugh Lupus; and who, it appears in Ormerod's "History of Cheshire," witnessed the Foundation Charter of Chester Abbey, and was a benefactor to it; and whose son, Robert le Veneur, received from Hugh Lupus Over Lostock, in Cheshire; his son Robert (the grandson of Ranulph) receiving, in the year 1160, from Earl Hugh Cyvellioe a grant of the Manor of Budworth, in the same county, with a Moiety of the Forestership of the Forest of Mara, now (or what remains of it) Delamere Forest; and from him were said to have descended the Grosvenors of Budworth, who bore for their arms "Azure a bend Or," one of whom, Richard le Grosvenor, Lord of Budworth, appears by their Pedigree in Ormerod's "History of Cheshire"

three garbs Or," taken from the Coat of the said Earl, who bore "Azure six garbs Or, 3, 2, and 1;" and sometimes a Coat taken from that of the said Family of Oreby, viz.: "Argent two chevrons gules and a canton gules," and sometimes "Argent a canton gules, over all a bend azure charged as in the original coat," the Arms taken from the Oreby Coat being assumed on the occasion of the marriage of Thomas Fytton, of Gawsworth, a younger son living in 1335, with Isabel, daughter and heiress of Thomas Oreby, of Gawsworth. The Founder of the Family of Oreby of Gawsworth was Herbert Oreby, of Hagnaby, in the County of Lincoln, in the reign of King Henry II.

So the first English members of the Norman Family of "le Veneur" assumed for their Arms "Azure a bend Or;" and the same shield and bend, with or without the variation of colours for difference, were afterwards borne by some of their descendants or dependents, or with something added thereto, as in the instance of the Family of Vyner, who added a "Chief argent two Cornish choughs proper in fesse."