

THE FAMILY OF PHILLIMORE

The Distribution of the Names

Now in considering the distribution and migration of a clan surname, i. e., a name borne by persons who are presumably of the same stock, what maybe termed the principle of family radiation comes into play. Branches radiate from the original home in various directions.

Some of these rays or branches come to an end, others form new permanent centres, from which in turn there are fresh radiations. In obscure or small families the radiation may be confined to a single district or small area - in others it may become very complex. How this principle has operated in the Fynamore families is illustrated by the accompanying diagram, which is not to scale, nor must it be assumed that all the radiations are proven. The radiations are primarily from Finmere, but, as might be expected, there are various radiations both from that as well as from the subsidiary points to London, which in turn becomes an important radiating centre.

These various surnames are to be mainly found in certain areas fairly well defined, and their lines of migration can be traced with a certain amount of probability, though it is not always possible to say whether any given settlement was made direct from Finmere or by some cadet line throwing off a new shoot. Finmere, as the earliest place at which the name is mentioned, it will be seen is therefore taken as the centre of departure, and is indicated in the diagram by the initial **(F)** within a double circle, the radius being approximately some 75 miles, except in the case of the Devonshire settlements, which are somewhat further off. And, moreover, with the exception of the Shropshire Fennymere, there seems to be no other instance of a place giving its name to a family, and in that instance evidence of its continuance as a family bearing the name is at present totally wanting.

This illustrative diagram shows how limited, comparatively speaking, are the migrations of a family, at least until modern times, when we find also settlements in far off lands. In this sketch, moreover, it must be remembered that the lines of migration are for the most part merely suggestions. Some attempt has been made, though perhaps not with any great accuracy, to indicate the relative importance of the settlements by different sized circles. In studying this diagram map it will be seen how strong a tendency is displayed, as might be expected, towards migration to London, though of course that tendency is not so marked in earlier as in later times. Considerations of business, in other words the facilities for obtaining a livelihood, are obviously the principal determining factors in all these various family migrations. Doubtless the ancient trade attractions of Wiltshire, a district once relatively far more populous and important as a trading locality than it has been for a very long period, had not a little to do with the early migration from Oxfordshire. How far they have affected the families of Phillimore, Fynamore, and other allied names will be gathered from the ensuing narrative.

The Finnimores, using that as the generic name for all the variants, are to be found in all directions from Finmere, but their more important settlements, and where they are chiefly to be found, are to the south and south-west of that village. Disregarding settlements since the commencement of the last century, we find an early reference dating from the early thirteenth century (see p24 ante) at Keyham in *Leicestershire* a member of the soke of Rothley Temple, where Rosanna de Finemere, mother of Petronella, who was the wife of Robert le Templer, held a hide of land by purchase from William Sconard, her former husband. A solitary instance occurs amongst Leicestershire wills before 1650. The will of John Fynnimore, of Norborowe, was proved in 1576. (Leics. Prob., fo. 25.)

In *Nottinghamshire*, the parish registers show isolated instances of the name at Normanton-on-Soar and at St. Mary's, Nottingham, in the latter part of the sixteenth century. These places are within easy reach of Keyham, but at present it is impossible to say if there be any connection between the two settlements in those counties.

In *Derbyshire* occurs, in the sixteenth century, what appears to be the solitary instance of the name in that county. The Lichfield Probate Registry records in 1545 the will of Thomas Fynmore, of Mackworth, about three miles west of Derby.

In *Staffordshire* we find Finneymores settled at Uttoxeter in the middle of the sixteenth century, as is indicated by wills at Lichfield:

1554	John Fynmore	Uttoxeter
1561	Robert Fynmore	Uttoxeter
1585	Joan Fynnmore	Bromshelf
1603	Edward Finnimore	Uttoxeter
1640	Jane Finnimore	Uttoxeter
1640	Edward Finnimore	Uttoxeter
1648	Walter Finnimore	Uttoxeter

John Fynnmore and Elizabeth his wife were deforciantes in a fine of lands at Uttoxeter in 1676. The Parliamentary Return of landowners in 1873 gives, under Uttoxeter, the name of Mrs. Ann Finneymore, doubtless a relative of William Finnimore, who lived near Uttoxeter, and died in 1807. From him are many descendants, and some of them have been settled at Seighford since 1828.

The Walsall Registers show the occurrence there of Fynimores from 1571 to 1635, and also at Pelsall and Bloxwich. In 1882 the name Phillimore occurred at Beamhurst, near Uttoxeter, but it has not been ascertained whether this was recent immigration or a variant spelling of the Uttoxeter Finnimores. Of this latter family no detailed pedigree has been traced out.

In *Shropshire* the name is found in the seventeenth century at Shrewsbury, Sheinton, Tugford and Bridgnorth. An illegible Deposition by Commission *temp.* James I is ascribed in the calendar to Sir Thomas Fennymore, though there seems to be no other evidence of any knight of this name. A Shrewsbury lease of 1617 (Pen. W.P.W.P.) names Francis Fennymore and his sons George and Thomas. Thomas Fenimore, of Tugford, clothworker, who had a house at Shineton², in his will 1669, of which his wife Jane was executrix, names various relatives: his cousin Abel Fenimore's six children (under age), Thomas, Elizabeth, Mary, John, George, William; his cousin, Thomas Fenimore, of Bridgnorth. Mr. Thomas Fenimore was buried at St. Leonard's, Bridgnorth, in 1674. Thomas Fenimore, gent., in 1680, was one of the bailiffs of Bridgnorth. Mrs. Mary Fenimore, was buried there in 1700-1. All these persons were presumably of the same family, but their origin is at present unknown. Doubtless they were immigrants, perhaps cadets of the Staffordshire family long settled at Uttoxeter, and not connected with the Shropshire hamlet of Fennymere, for Bridgnorth is but seven or eight miles from the Staffordshire border.

It is interesting to note also that a branch of the Cam Phillimores in the early part of the eighteenth century became connected with Bridgnorth, being drawn there by trade reasons. Jonathan Phillimore, of Cam, married Anne Wells, of Bridgnorth, in 1729, and some of his descendants have remained interested in that town ever since. It is a coincidence, but probably nothing more, that both these families of Fenimore and Phillimore were connected with the clothing trade.

In *Worcestershire* the name occurs in the seventeenth century in the district between Kidderminster and Bromsgrove. The administration of John Finimore, of Chadsley Corbet, is dated 1658. The will of his widow, Katherine Fynnimore, proved in 1659, names: Elizabeth Fynmore, mother-in-law, Gilbert Finnimore and his wife, besides other relatives. At Old Swinford, close to Sturbridge, we find the burial of Elizabeth, wife of Richard Finmore, in 1638, the marriage of Richard Fynnmore and Joan Styer in 1641-2, and the burial of Richard Finnimore in 1650. It is not unlikely that here we have a settlement of the Hinksey Fynmores, who migrated from Reading, for Dr. Simon Ford, some time vicar of St. Lawrence's, in that town, afterwards became rector of Old Swinford.

North east of Finmere, in the Fens, there were, in the middle of the seventeenth century, various persons of the name, evidently related, who are known to us from Probate records, the Royalist Composition papers, and Chancery proceedings.

They were settled on the borders of Huntingdonshire, Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire, and Lincolnshire, as the annexed map shows.

Vincent Fynmore, of Upton in Castor, in *Northamptonshire*, not far from Peterborough, made his will in 1638, which was registered as Finnmore. He was son of Robert Fynmore, his own children being named as Finnmore.

Henry Fynmore was of Yaxley, *Huntingdonshire*, in 1634 and 1651, his name being also spelt Finnmore and Fennymore. He, and Wilbore Fynmore, also of Yaxley, were brothers of Vincent, as was Robert Finmore, of Whittlesea, in *Cambridgeshire*, whose estates in the town of March were sequestrated by the Parliament. At Bourne, in *Lincolnshire*, we find Henry Finnmore, who asked to compound for estates in March, alleging that he had not acted against the Parliament since 1640-1.

Of the descendants of this family nothing is known, nor has their remoter origin been traced. It is not unlikely, however, that Vincent Finnmore, of Ethalston³, 1571, and William Finnmore, 1543-56, whose wills are recorded at Lincoln, may be ancestors of this family.

Nearer to Finnmore, in *Bedfordshire*, some 20 miles away, may be found the still existing family of Finnmore, or Phillimore, which was settled in and about Woburn and at the villages of Eversholt and Clophill. Some of them are still known as Finnmore and Fenmore, but their near kindred about Woburn, early in the nineteenth century, altered the spelling of their name to Phillimore, though for what reason is not very apparent.

As already has been noted, the earliest instances of the name are to be found in *Oxfordshire* and in *Buckinghamshire*, obviously derived from the village of Finnmore. At the present time several families of the name are to be found settled round about that village, the orthography adopted being usually Fenmore. Farmers of the name are living at Launton, a mile and a half east of Bicester, which town is only seven miles south of Finnmore, being on the Roman road which runs between the two places, and also at Arcott, Steeple Aston and Horley, all of which places are in the same district.

The family of Finnmore, or Vennmore, long settled at Wendlebury, two miles south on the same road, which passes Alcester, supposed to be the site of Aelia Castra (ii, 420), where, as White Kennet relates, "one Fynmore, a husbandman, of Wenelbury, ploughing very deep, lighted on a rough round stone, which being digged out was found to be hollowed within," and the learned writer proceeds to suggest that it contained the ashes of some great man, "most like Carausius", though there does not appear to be the slightest evidence in proof of the suggestion. Extracts from the register given in Dunkin's *Oxfordshire* show that in the early seventeenth century this family frequently used the Christian name of Roger. It is a curious coincidence that within recent years descendants of this family, with their name spelt as Fenmore, have lived at the village of Ferry Hinksey, so long associated with the Fynmores.

Hugh de Fynmore, rector of the Oxfordshire village of Shabbington, exchanged, in 1354, for the Buckinghamshire rectory of Kingsey, which villages are near one another, being separated only by the parish of Thame.

Another early Oxfordshire instance occurs in 1449, when John Fynamour, of Henley-on-Thames, with John Bartelot, of Stamford, Berks, was sued by Robert Dautesey in a plea of debt.

It is difficult to always distinguish those families who have never left the county, and those who have formed fresh settlements in the district. The probabilities are that those families of Fenmore which we now find in the Finnmore district have always lived thereabouts, though obviously it would be hopeless, except by inference, to attempt to trace out the successive habitats of families most of whom have filled an undistinguished and often, in many cases, but a humble position.

Two families, both of whom in their earliest recorded history, i.e. in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, spelt their name as Fynmore or Finnmore, have been afterwards intimately connected with Oxfordshire, the one being the still existing family of Fynmore who came from Berkshire, and the other being the Gloucestershire family of Phillimore, one branch of which, that distinguished in the legal world, after migrating from Gloucestershire to London, has, in a way, retraced its steps, and has settled at Shiplake, near Henley-on-Thames. This Gloucestershire family is the one with whose detailed history for the last four hundred years we are chiefly concerned in this volume.

The places round Finmere with which the name is, or has been, chiefly associated are indicated in the accompanying map.

With *Berkshire* there has been a very intimate connection, and it will be seen from the map that the name is chiefly associated with Hendred and the villages east and west of it adjoining the road which runs in the valley below the White Horse. Thomas Fynmore, as already mentioned, was lessee of the tithes of East Hendred in 1410. It is clear that Adam Fynmore, one of the poor knights of Windsor in the reign of Elizabeth, was of this family, and it seems probable that to it also belonged those who about that period were settled in and around London, at Wandsworth and Southwark. Whether the Fynmores of Hinksey were closely connected with the Hendred Fynmores is quite uncertain. That family descended from a certain William Fynmore, a mercer of Reading, and twice mayor of that town, whose name was very variously spelt. His descendants migrated to Oxford, and afterwards were chiefly settled at Hinksey and Abingdon, and their history has been fully traced out to the present day. They have, however, now ceased to have any direct connection with either county, and their remoter origin is at present unknown, for we cannot even surmise whether they came directly from the Finmere district or are a return settlement from Calne. The name is also to be found recorded in the sixteenth century in one form or another in the parish registers of the town of Newbury and various Berkshire villages.

Into *Wiltshire*, as already has been noted, there was a very early migration of the name, certainly before the middle of the thirteenth century, the town of Calne being the centre from which, apparently, later representatives in this county have radiated, though no direct evidence thereof can be adduced. Whetham, by Calne, is even now the seat of the descendants by the distaff side of these medieval Fynamors. A Wiltshire settlement, which can be traced back to the sixteenth century, still exists at Netheravon, and probably from that district comes one family of Phillimore, unconnected with the Gloucestershire and Kensington families, now to be found in and about London.

Other instances of the name are to be found in *Hampshire*, as at Stratfield-saye, in the registers of which village we find both Finimore and Philmore, though it would not be easy to say whether they came eastward from Wiltshire or southward from Berkshire. They are to be found mostly borne by persons in humble rank, scattered sparsely through the county from Andover to Winchester, where the name occurs variously spelt as Phillemore, though the tendency here, as elsewhere, of all the lesser known families, is to assimilate the spelling to the now more familiar form of Phillimore.

In *Gloucestershire*, as will be seen from the sketch map, the Phillimores who were anciently Fynamores still occupy a small but well-defined area round Cam and Dursley, with which their connection began as early as the fifteenth century. As will be seen hereafter, considerations of distance and trade and indications of intercourse between the two districts suggest that the Cam Phillimores may have been an off-shoot of the Calne family, though positive evidence so far is lacking, and the chance of any definite proof coming to light must be regarded as very remote.

With *Devonshire* the name was associated at a very early period, as early indeed as in Oxfordshire, for the Red Book of the Exchequer records that Gilbert de Finemer held half a knight's fee in Devonshire as of the Honour of Gloucestershire. This would be about 1210. The chartulary of Buckfast Abbey has several references to William Fynamur as tenant or witness in various charters undated, but probably belonging to the first half of the thirteenth century.

In 1219 Richard Finamur and Matilda his wife occur as parties to a fine of lands in Woodhewish, a place in South Devon, while the Chartulary of Tor Abbey has mention, at an uncertain date but probably about the latter part of the thirteenth century, of William Finamor the holder of lands in Lidewigeston, and of Thomas Finamor his son and heir. Again Thomas Fynamour was one of a jury in an extent of land taken at Exeter, 1st September 1301, relating to the lands and adowsons of Joce de Dynham, when it was found that Thomas de Cyrecestre was tenant of premises in Wodehywysche and Seyntemarie Church.

Whether these early Finemurs and Fynamours left descendants in the county, or whether there were later immigrations of the name, it is at present impossible to say, for sufficient record information of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries relative to this district is not at present available. However that may be, there are now, and long have been, two groups of Filmores and Finnimores, who seem to have been separate families there at least as early as the reign of Elizabeth. The former group, whose earliest appearance, as far as at present traced, was at Rockbeare, were chiefly settled along the valley of the Exe,

and are a still extant family in this county, spelling the name as Filmore. There is some reason to believe that the still existing American family, which, in 1850 gave to the United States President Fillmore, as the name there is now usually written, emigrated from Devonshire about the end of the seventeenth or beginning of the eighteenth century, The district in which the Filmores mostly occur is shown in the annexed diagram, though it must be observed that a few Finnimoires are also found thereabouts, as at Halberton, where there was a numerous family of Phenimoires or Finnimoires, now represented by the Anglo-Indian family bearing the latter name.

A district also closely associated with the name is that extending north and south of Barnstaple, and shown in this plan, though here they seem to be numerically fewer than those in the Exe Valley. It seems not improbable that the Irish Finnemores and Finnemors of County Wicklow are descendants of this family. Obviously the port of Barnstaple would be a likely point of departure for emigrants to Ireland in the seventeenth century. That country in Stuart times was to England what Manitoba and the Western States are in our day. It is but rarely we can trace the connecting links with the old country; too often we may trace the family of emigrant origin to the water's edge on both sides of the Atlantic, and the link between is all lost or becomes a matter of inference from a few scanty indications, even that being possible only when, as in the present instance, we are dealing with a limited clan bearing an uncommon and distinctive surname.

The Finnimoires may yet be found in Devonshire, but the more important line migrated from the country to London in the eighteenth century. Of these Finnimoires one branch settled in India and another in Mauritius. A brief account of these Finnimoires, who came from Halberton, is given in *Memorials of the Family of Fynmore*.

Few instances of the name have been traced in *Somerset*, but a medieval instance occurs near the Dorsetshire border close to Sherborne, at Henstridge, where Ralph Fynamour was a parishioner in 1322. And at Old Cleeve, on the northern coast of the county, we find the name of Humphrey Fynymore occurring in 1657.

In *Kent* the family of Filmer has been a conspicuous one for upwards of three hundred years, and it may be traced back in that county to a much earlier period. This family is to be found chiefly in a small district lying north of Otterden and East Sutton, the last named having long been the seat of the baronets of the name. The researches made almost seventy years ago by Sir Edmund Filmer show that the earlier form of this name was Finamore, and that the family was settled at Herst in the parish of Otterden, four miles from Badlesmere, which gave name to a family who for a time were lords of the manor of Finmere in Oxfordshire Further, there was a close manorial connection, for one of Sir Edmund Filmer's deeds shows that the land in Otterden known as Finamores⁴ was held of the manor of Sutton Valance. Of this last the lord was Lawrence Hastings, Earl of Pembroke, brother-in-law to Edmund Mortimer who, *jure uxoris*, was lord of Finmere. The association of the two manors is illustrated in Pedigree A.

It must be regarded as certain that the Filmers derive from a family named Fynamere, but it must not be assumed that the Kent Filmers are cadets of the Finemere family, although it is quite possible that they are. If they were so it is quite certain that in the 250 years which in 1570 had elapsed since they settled at Herst they had lost all tradition of any kinship with either the Oxfordshire or Wiltshire Finamores, for, on obtaining arms in that year, they assumed a totally different coat, the three bars of which may be based on the arms of their feudal superiors, the Badlesmeres, which show a fess double cotised. And later we see the arms which were granted to the Phillimoires are formed on those of Filmer. Nevertheless, having regard to the fact that they were evidently persons of some means and position when they first appear in Kent, and also to the manorial connection, the probabilities are rather in favour than otherwise of their being of the same stock as the Fynamores of Finmere.

At the present day the name of Filmer is, comparatively speaking, of not infrequent occurrence in the county. It is chiefly to be found in the district lying north of Otterden and East Sutton. Those bearing the name are presumably of one and the same stock, though in most cases it might be difficult to trace the connection.

Instances of the names Finnimore and Fynnymore also occur in the Dartford Register in the reign of Elizabeth. And some of this form also, who were demonstrably modern immigrants from the Midlands, settled in the last century, at Cranbrook.

As might be expected, almost every variation of the name may be found at one period or another in *London*, the earliest recorded instance being in 1281 in the lately published letter books of the City of London; but beyond the Midlands northwards these names, until recent years, are practically non-existent.

Many migrations of the name into other lands have taken place. Settlements of Finnemore are still to be found in Ireland, originating probably in the Cromwellian emigrations of the seventeenth century, their principal residence being at Ballyward in County Wicklow. And from the branch settled there descended the Finnemores of Natal. In Central Italy there are families of Finamore who claim an English origin, though the Italian Finamores seem to have settled there at least one hundred and fifty years, and in the United States there are families of Fenemore and Fillmore which have been settled there something like two hundred years or more; to the last named, as already mentioned, belonged Millard Fillmore, President of the United States. In more recent times, as might be expected, there have been various settlements in the remoter English colonies. There are Finnimores in India and Mauritius, Finnemores in Natal, Fynmores and Phillimores in Australia and New Zealand. And as this process of emigration must continue, the writer of family history will find the task of tracing out the radiations of a family from the various points of settlement to be an increasingly difficult one; though it may well be that by the greater number of records available through the agency of the printing press his labours will be lightened in a way hardly thought of by genealogists in the past.

The founder of a family hopes that his family will remain firmly seated in that spot in which he himself has settled. Rarely indeed is it but a fond dream, for the number of families of any note which continue to reside in the same town or village for more than three or four generations is indeed small, and fewer still is the number of those who dwell in the same house for three generations in succession. Movement is a sign of vitality with the family as it is with the individual; and that race, the members of which are content to remain generation after generation in the same hamlet, is not one which is likely to be notable for the number of eminent men belonging to it.

Yet this necessity for movement need not prevent intimate associations with the same district through many generations. Such associations have ever proved beneficial to a family, so long as they are not allowed to unduly restrain the ambition or needs of a family, for they tend to give to it both that stability and position which it has ever been the cherished aim of the founder of a family to acquire for his posterity, while its energy and enterprise are indicated by the movement of individual members of the race.

1. Since the above was written a fine of lands, dated 16 Edw. III (1342-3), has been discovered, by which Master Richard de Longenolre and William de Fenymere, chaplain, assured the manor of Mudle, i.e., Middle, to John Lestranger and Ida his wife. It is more likely that he was of the Wiltshire family rather than a member of the twelfth century Shropshire family of that name.
2. The Sheinton registers lately printed by the Shropshire Parish Register Society contain no reference to the name. But the registers before 1711 have been missing for many years.
3. Ethalston is evidently a clerical blunder for Chalston or Chawston, a hamlet in Roxton parish, a few miles north-east of Bedford.
4. It has been asserted that there was a place so called in Kent from which the family derived their surname. No such place is known to exist, and the idea doubtless derives from the fact that the farm owned by the Filmers was once known, as not infrequently happens, by the owner's name.