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Hanford Family Genealogical Roll of Arms or Pedigree Scroll

In English, illuminated manuscript scroll on parchment and paper

England, perhaps c. 1545(?), 1660-1670s (before 1679), with later additions continuing to c. 1940

Scroll composed of six membranes of parchment and one sheet of modern paper, of varying dimensions, the first five parchment membranes pasted together end to end in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the sixth parchment membrane sewn to the front of the fifth membrane, a paper sheet pasted end to end to the sixth parchment membrane, no ruling, names of family members written in cursive and hybrid scripts by seven different scribes within ninety-two roundels outlined in red or blue (membranes 1 and 2 of thin and flexible parchment are by scribe 1 written in brown ink in small cursive hand, membrane 3 of thick and rigid parchment is by scribe 2 written in brown ink in large cursive hand, membrane 4 is by scribe 3 written in gray ink in small cursive hand, membrane 6 has three different modern hands using cursive and hybrid scripts and capitals, final paper sheet is written in one modern cursive hand), forty-six armorial shields outlined in black and painted in vivid colors, roundels and armorial shields joined by red and blue lines, designed to be read vertically from top to bottom, ONE GRAND COAT OF ARMS (338 x 220 mm.), membrane five, painted with delicate shading and rich colors, two armorial shields slightly rubbed with no loss of legibility, a few small stains, otherwise in very fine condition. Housed in the original tin container. Dimensions 3123 x c. 280-295 mm. (length of individual membranes: 625, 265, 350, 333, 413 and 464 mm., paper sheet: 673 mm.).

Rolls are interesting forms of the medieval and early modern book and survive in surprisingly large numbers. This one, a genealogical roll of arms or pedigree scroll, is modeled on genealogical rolls of the late medieval kings of England and represents a type that functioned as an important record of a family's status, asserting and affirming the family's identity over time. Originally commissioned in the sixteenth century during the reign of King Henry VIII, the members of this family were faithful stewards of their own history for a remarkably long time, continuing the genealogy into twentieth century. Long (10 feet two inches in length) and colorful, with forty-six armorial shields, and a splendid family crest, this family pedigree offers rich opportunities for historical research.

PROVENANCE

1. This family roll of arms or pedigree scroll was created for the Hanford family. Its earliest section (membranes one to three) displays the ancestry of the Hanford family (various spellings: Handford, Honford, Handforth, Honefort) from the fourteenth-century John Hanford of Handford (various spellings) in Cheshire until Thomas Hanford (1525-1603) and his wife, Margaret Huford (1527-1594) of Woolas Hall in Eckington, Worcestershire. The text of this section was commissioned by Thomas on the occasion of his marriage to Margaret in 1545. The date when these membranes were copied, is however, difficult to ascertain with confidence. They may date c. 1545, but it seems possible that they were copied and illuminated in the seventeenth century from an earlier scroll.

2. The second section of the scroll dates from the seventeenth century and continues the genealogy with Thomas's son, John Hanford (1566-1616) (membrane four) and includes the grand coat of arms displaying the armorial bearings of ten noble families from whom the family descended, which occupies all of membrane five, and once served as the conclusion to the scroll. Membrane four begins with John, and continues to his grandson, Walter Hanford and his wife, Frances. Walter died in 1679; we have not been able to establish the date of his birth or of his marriage, but this section obviously dates after then, perhaps as late as the 1670s. The fourth membrane and the grand coat of arms are very carefully and crisply executed, contrasting with the more "homemade" appearance of the first three membranes.
3. The roll remained in the family into the twentieth century: membrane 6 dates from the nineteenth century (continuing the pedigree until 1816). The final part of the roll, on a sheet of modern paper, continues the pedigree into the 1940s.

TEXT

[The roll of arms of the Hanford family, read vertically from top to bottom], incipit, [first roundel], "Sir John Hanford of Hanford in Cheshire" [coat of arms: Sable, an estoile of eight rays argent] ... [last roundel], "James Henry Whitworth Born 14 April 1949."

The text of the first sections of the roll date likely date from a commission made by Thomas Hanford (1525-1603), eighth in descent from the fourteenth-century Sir John Hanford of Hanford in Cheshire (with whom the pedigree begins, although the family can be traced to the thirteenth century), at the time of his marriage in 1545 to Margaret Huford (various spellings), the heiress of Woolas Hall (various spellings) in Worcestershire. The roll of arms traces the genealogy of these two families: Hanford and Huford. At this stage, the roll contained three parchment membranes (written by scribes 1 and 2).

Membrane 4 continues the genealogy with Thomas Hanford's son, John Hanford (1566-1616), until John's grandson, Walter Hanford (d. 1679); the grand coat of arms (on membrane 5) includes, as the last quartering, the arms of the family Rake, for John's wife, Ann, who was the daughter and heir of Richard Rake.

Membrane 6 dates from the nineteenth century, and continues the pedigree with Walter's son, Compton, his grandson, Edward, who inherited Woolas Hall in 1722, Edward's son Charles, who inherited the manor in 1797 (his brother Edward had died childless), and Charles's cousin Charles Edward Hanford, to whom the estates passed in 1816 (Charles had also died childless). "1809" is written in pencil above Charles Edward Hanford.

The final twentieth-century part of the roll, on a sheet of modern paper, continues the pedigree: as Charles Edward Hanford's son had died childless in 1860, Woolas Hall passed to his only surviving sister, Frances, who had married William Lloyd Flood, who assumed the additional name Hanford. Their son, John Compton Hanford, assumed the name and arms of Hanford, by royal license, in 1893. He and his two brothers died childless, and the pedigree continues three more generations from their sister Mary Frances, who no longer used the Hanford name, nor arms, until her great-grandchildren, Rodney Compton and James Henry Whitworth, both born in the 1940s.

ILLUSTRATION

Family names are inscribed within red roundels, with the appropriate armorial shields (forty-six in total) painted below. The grand family coat of arms and crest occupies the entire fifth membrane, painted in the seventeenth century:

Quartering 1st., Sable, an estoile of eight rays argent, for Hanford; 2nd, Vert, on a chevron between three stag's heads cabossed or, as many mullets gules, for Hugeford; 3rd, Argent, a pile sable, for Dickleston; 4th, Gules, a fesse between six pears or, for Besford; 5th, Azure, an eagle displayed argent within a tressure flory and counter-flory or, for Vampage; 6th, Argent, a wolf passant sable, for Wollashull; 7th, Argent, a chevron azure between three garbs vert banded or, for Sarrell; 8th, Sable, on a cross engrailed within a bordure or, five pellets, for Greville; 9th, Or, a bird rising vert within a bordure argent charged with fleurs-de-lis azure (cf. sable in Grazebrook), for Arle; 10th, Argent, a chevron engrailed between three griffin's heads erased sable, for Rake. Crest: On a chapeau, a wyvern gules, wings expanded (cf. argent in Grazebrook 1873, I, p. 252, but gules in our roll; see also College of Arms, C. 30, f. 113; British Library, Harley MS 1566).

Although this genealogy begins in the fourteenth century with John Hanford of Handford, earliest recorded member of the Hanford family in Cheshire is Henry de Honefort (variant of Hanford), who was granted the hamlet of Bosden by a deed in 1233-1237 (Ormerod, 1819, III, p. 324), whereupon the town of Handford assumed the name Handforth-cum-Bosden (a parish of Cheadle). Thomas Hanford, who likely commissioned the original genealogy, was son of Lawrence, second son of Robert Hanford of Hanford, who was sixth in descent from Sir John Hanford of Hanford in Cheshire. The elder line of the Hanford family became extinct in 1513; the branch presented in our roll was seated at the manor of Woollas Hall in Eckington in Worcestershire from 1545 onwards (Ormerod, 1819, III, p. 327; Shirley, 1859, p. 280; various sources give different dates for the marriage of Thomas Hanford and Margaret Hugeford, including 1536 and 1578; however the date 1545 appears most likely; see "John Hanford," Online Resources).

Woolas Hall (various spellings) is identifiable with land mentioned in the Domesday Book in 1086. In 1428 the manor of Woolas Hall was held by William Wollashull (William, the son of Robert de Muchgros of Wollashull), whose daughter (Joan or Catherine) inherited the property on her marriage to Sir John Vampage in 1436: see our roll for the union of Sir John Vampage, knight, with "daughter and heire of William Wolleshall" (first membrane, fifth line, and "Eckington" Online Resources). The manor followed the descent to Sir John's son, also called John Vampage (who married the daughter and heir of John Sarrell), who in turn was succeeded by his son, Robert Vampage (who married Elinor Greville). Robert's son, John Vampage died in 1548, and the manor was divided between his nephew Edmund Harewell (the son of his sister Margery (or Margaret)) and his sisters Mary and Dorothy ("Eckington" in Online Resources). Mary and her husband Josey (or Joyce) Harsey gave their third of the manor to John Vampage's widow, Anne (or Ann), who in turn with her new husband granted this third to Thomas Hanford, who had married Margaret Hugeford, the daughter of Dorothy three years earlier (all these marriages are recorded on the pedigree scroll described here). Thomas Hanford thus came into possession of two-thirds of the manor. Sir Edmund Harewell conveyed his third of the Woolas Hall manor to Thomas Hanford, or his son, John Hanford, who had the existing

manor house built in 1611. The sculpted funeral effigies of John Hanford (1566-1616) and his wife Anne (heiress daughter of Richard Rake of Allesley) are found in the Eckington church.

Family pedigree scrolls from early modern England often originated with heraldic visitations, which were state visits to different regions of England specifically to confirm the validity of coats of arms used by families. The interest in family genealogy continued after the Restoration of the Stuart monarchy in 1660, even though by then wealth and lifestyle were increasingly "proof" of the status of a gentleman and his family, rather than their right to a hereditary coat of arms. The family document described here is a remarkable testimony of one family's continued interest in their own genealogy and noble status beginning in the sixteenth century and continuing into modern times.

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ONLINE RESOURCES

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<https://archive.org/details/historyofcountyp03orme/page/324/mode/2up>

"John Hanford Lord of Woolash Hall"

<https://ancestors.familysearch.org/en/LX91-P1N/john-hanford-lord-of-woolash-hall-1566-1616>

Heraldic visitation

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heraldic_visitation

Pedigree rolls in the College of Arms

<https://www.college-of-arms.gov.uk/news-grants/news/item/100-pedigree-roll>

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